



Situation Report

Response Name	Volcanic Activity – Ambae & Ambrym
Situation Report	02
Time & Date	12.00pm 22 nd September 2017
Reporting period	08/09/2017 – 22/09/2017
Provinces affected	Penama, Malampa
Attachment(s)	Ambae & Ambrym Volcano Alert Bulletin's
NEOC Status	Readiness

Situation Overview

The volcanos on both Ambae and Ambrym remain at Alert Level 3 'minor eruption stage'. Volcanic gas and ash are coming from the craters and elevated seismic activity continues. Vanuatu Meteorology and GeoHazards Department (VMGD) continues to closely monitor the situation.

Seasonal winds are coming from the east and south-east and pushing volcanic gas and ash in a west, north-west direction. The north west, western and southern part of both islands are the most affected areas. Reports from Penama and Malampa Provincial Governments indicate ongoing effects including: health issues; contaminated water; and damage to garden crops.

No displacement or evacuations have taken place on either island. Further escalation in volcanic activity could result in the need for residents to move to safer areas on the island or in the event of a major eruption to be evacuated off island. Both scenarios whilst unlikely, remain a possibility and are being planned for. Partner agencies should remain aware of the situation and follow reports from Provincial Authorities and the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO). Partner agencies will be requested to assist if the situation escalates.

General Coordination

The National Disaster Committee (NDC) will meet today 22nd September at 2pm for an information briefing.

Provincial authorities are the lead coordinating authority at this time. The Provincial Disaster & Climate Change Committee (PDCCC) is fully active in Penama coordinating activities for Ambae. Malampa Provincial Government continue to address the situation in Ambrym. The NDMO is providing support to provincial authorities and is liaising with line ministries in Port Vila on support arrangements. There is a Provincial Disaster Officers working full time in each Province on response planning.

The NDMO undertook aerial surveillance over both islands on the 16th of September 2017 with a team from VMGD. The National Emergency Operation Centre remains on a state of readiness. Clusters and partner agencies should continue to be on stand-by to support if required.

PENAMA

The (PDCCC) have been having regular coordination meeting and have been coordinating field visits. Field visits have been to monitor affected communities, raise awareness of the situation and distribute key messages. The Provincial Disaster Officer (PDO) in Penama is currently working with the PDCCC on coordination. The Red Cross and Save the Children staff are supporting the assessment, monitoring and awareness raising activities.

The PDCCC has been undertaking contingency planning in case the situation escalates. The PDCCC have developed a preliminary evacuation plan for on island movements. The team has undertaken field visits to identifying suitable evacuation sites on Ambae and has worked through evacuation scenarios. They are now liaising with Pentecost and Maewo Area Secretaries to identify suitable areas for relocation for off island evacuation, as well as with the Sanma Municipal and Provincial authorities.

Health workers have undertaken a preliminary field assessment. Three teams investigated issues across the island and have reported a number of effects from volcanic ash affecting water sources and causing respiratory problems. The Provincial Health Coordinator is overseeing monitoring activities, with support from the Ministry of Health and Northern Health in Santo. Ongoing monitoring and more detailed assessments are being planned.

Field teams have reported water contamination and shortage issues in West Ambae. Assessment teams have been distributing messaging about safe drinking water practices. A drilling rig for new boreholes is active in West Ambae as part of regular ongoing work from the Department of Water Resources. This work will help to address reported water shortage issues in the medium term.

MALAMPA

Effects from volcanic activity have been ongoing in Ambrym since May 2017 when a detailed assessment was undertaken. In June, the National Disaster Committee approved 9.5 million Vatu in funding to implement recommendations from the assessment report by the WASH and Food Security clusters. These recommendations are currently being implemented and include awareness raising, infrastructure upgrades and assistance.

The Provincial Disaster Officer (PDO) in Malampa has been in contact with Area Secretaries for situation updates from the field. Reports indicate that the volume of volcanic ash has decreased in the month of September. Despite this there are on ongoing reports concerning drinking water quality and damage to gardens crops in the western part of the island. The PDO will be travelling to Ambrym next week to continue the monitoring of affected areas and support the Provincial authorities.

Further Information

Volcanic bulletins: <http://www.vmgd.gov.vu/vmgd/index.php/geohazards/volcano/alert-bulletin>

Weather: www.vmgd.gov.vu

Prepared by: NDMO Information Management Unit

Released by: Mr Shadrack Welegtabit, Director, National Disaster Management Office

Next situation report: As required depending on the situation.