



## SITUATION REPORT

**INCIDENT/ EVENT:** Volcanic Activity – Ambrym

**SITREP:** 01

**Reporting Period:** 24/08/17 - 07/09/17

**COPIES TO:** NDMO, Malampa SG

### 1] SITUATION OVERVIEW

The Ambrym volcanic activities still remains at level 3 as reported by the VMGD. The Vanuatu Meteorological & Geo Hazards Depart has providing information via internet and direct contact with the area council secretaries on three area councils on Ambrym Island. The government through civil servants and leaders on the ground are monitoring the activities and its impact by reporting to the provincial authorities. Community Disaster and Climate Change Communities (CDCCC's) have been issuing alert warning to the communities.

### 2] CURRENT SITUATION

1. **Weather.** From the current volcanic situation reports from Ambrym Island by different sources. It has been reported that the volcanic cloud has been blocking sunlight for a few days. A report being confirmed by Jeffery Bong a police officer on ground that yesterday at 11:00 am Vanuatu time, full West Ambrym was dark as if it is during early night time, and that a long period of time for people to see sunlight again. It has been reported that yesterday evening around 6.00pm, West Ambrym was really dark and people had to use flash lights to walk around the place. Most sources on the island have confirmed that the weather was very hot on Ambrym Island and seems to be raining in some places. Eruption of lava is still within the crater of the volcano and seems quiet at the moment. Reports are indicating increase in volcanic activities with lava flows, ash falls with smoke clouds.

2. **Water & Food.** Police officer, Mr. Jeffery had confirmed through phone interviews that due to light showers of rain causing bleaching signs to vegetable leaves and if this continues, there will be more damages to plants leaves. At this early stage all food stock is still ok in food gardens and same goes to the processed food in shops. In terms of water, information sources have confirmed that all rain water sources had dried up and what is left for people are underground water which people are using for drinking and other domestic uses.
3. **Tourist Attraction.** Since the volcano is a source of income for local people on Ambrym, a lot of tourists go to Ambrym to visit the volcano. A tour guide confirmed that lava flows from the volcano, rises upwards above normal level that causes thick gas deposits into the air. These activities are now diverting tourist to the island to go trekking further in the East and North of the island to have a view of the volcano crater. All tourists arriving on Ambrym are given information about the alert level and also activities associated with the danger zone around the crater.

At the provincial level, the NDMO Disaster & Climate Change Officer has held meetings with the Malampa travel call center and the department of tourism. These meetings is to assist with the dissemination of the volcano situation reports and information to their clients and also the risks with visiting this volcano during this time.

#### **4] COMMUNITY RESPOND**

The Malampa Province disaster office had received information from the area council secretaries on Ambrym that head chiefs from rural communities have issued warning alert by all forms of communication to local people and especially to the vulnerable members of communities (disable people, elderlies, pregnant women, children, etc). The police officer on ground have confirmed that CDCCC's, police, area council secretaries and community leaders have been working together to provide information to the local people on preparedness activities.

### Mindset for people on Ambrym

Some sources have reported that the local mind set of people has never changed in regards to the effects of volcano activities. Most people on the ground take it as normal volcanic activities going around for many years. Preparedness activities are not very much considered by the local people and they are saying “ol pupu oli pas tru lem finis bifo”. (Our ancestors have gone through this in the past). This mind set will not change for some local people on Ambrym Island.

### **5] PROVINCIAL RESPOND**

The Malampa disaster office has been working together with the provincial authorities and the area council secretaries in updating information and keeping track on the situation at Lakatoro. Area Council Secretary in West Ambrym is fully involved with the process of ‘Key Message’ dissemination. The Area Council Secretary together with the Vanuatu Red Cross and assistance from the Police have visited the Community Disaster and Climate Change Committees (CDCCCs) on Ambrym, targeting communities to make sure that preventive measures are being implemented and that communities have received and understood key messages

### **9] RECOMMENDATIONS**

- i. Malampa EOC must be activated to coordinate the dissemination of information to people on Ambrym and updates to the NEOC in Vila and ready to respond if volcanic activities pick up further.
- ii. For the Malampa Disaster Office and Malampa Provincial Government to put together a Contingency Plan for Ambrym to be in standby in terms of preparedness should the volcanic activities increase and situation gets worse;
- iii. Awareness must continue to be carried out by responsible authorities (VMGD, NDMO, Malampa Provincial Government, etc) to people on the island to change the mindset of people to seriously consider preparedness activities in light of the changing volcanic activities and alert levels; and
- iv. VMGD to continue monitoring the volcanic activities and updating the NDMO and Malampa Provincial Government.