



MALFFB Risk and Resilience Unit

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Press Statement

Ministry of Agriculture's Risk & Resilience Unit reflects on Cyclone Pam Lessons Learned regarding Food Security and Agriculture

Two months after Pam government officials, private sector and NGO representatives involved in the Ministry of Agriculture's Risk and Resilience Unit (responsible for food and agriculture disaster response coordination) met to reflect on the successes and possible improvements to the cyclone Pam response. The workshop, organized by the RRU and facilitated by Care International, was held at the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Abel Tapisuwe, conveyed the congratulations of the Minister of Agriculture, the honorable David Tosul, for the outstanding work of the RRU¹/FSAC, acknowledging the dedication of all its members and insisted that this positive collaboration among private sector, government and civil society should continue in future disaster scenarios.

On the day after the cyclone, the Risk and Resilience Unit was able to quickly plan for relief, communicate with the public via multiple channels, set food rations, plan for seeds and planting material distributions, coordinate the UN food relief, undertake detailed economic loss and damage reports, survey food security gaps on all islands, establish an emergency food donation website for schools, compile a list of 84 programs for agricultural recovery, lobby for VAT exemptions on agricultural supplies, and much more.

The meeting enabled those involved in food security across all sectors to review what had been achieved so far and identify how the Risk and Resilience Unit (RRU) can perform better in future disasters. 35 participants representing the Government of Vanuatu, the private sector and local and international NGOs contributed their feedback on the RRU's performance in the key areas of assessments, communications, seed and tools distributions, recovery planning, and coordination/policy.

Key recommendations emerged, including smarter real time assessment, including the use of SMS and mobile phone technology. Other areas for future work include, advanced identification of standard seed/tool rations, stockpiling of emergency food, and innovative approaches to ensure the needs of the most vulnerable are better met. Many felt that Central Agencies could learn from the excellent coordination and planning undertaken by all partners from the agriculture and food security sector. In

¹ The RRU is technically supported by SPC/GIZ and FAO



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closing, the Director of Agriculture, Mr James Wasi, applauded the high capacity of the sector to quickly respond to, coordinate and even prepare long term recovery and rehabilitation strategies and priorities for the next 3 years.

For those who were unable to attend the workshop, and would like to contribute lessons learned and experiences with food security and agriculture response, please visit the Food Security page of the nab portal: www.nab.vu where you will be directed to an online survey.

For more information, contact the Secretariat of the Ministry of Agriculture's Risk and Resilience Unit on fsacreport@gmail.com.

