



IN NUMBERS



176 161 people

estimated to be affected by Tropical Cyclone Harold in Vanuatu



17 500 ha of cropland

exposed to hurricane force winds in Vanuatu



USD 3 million

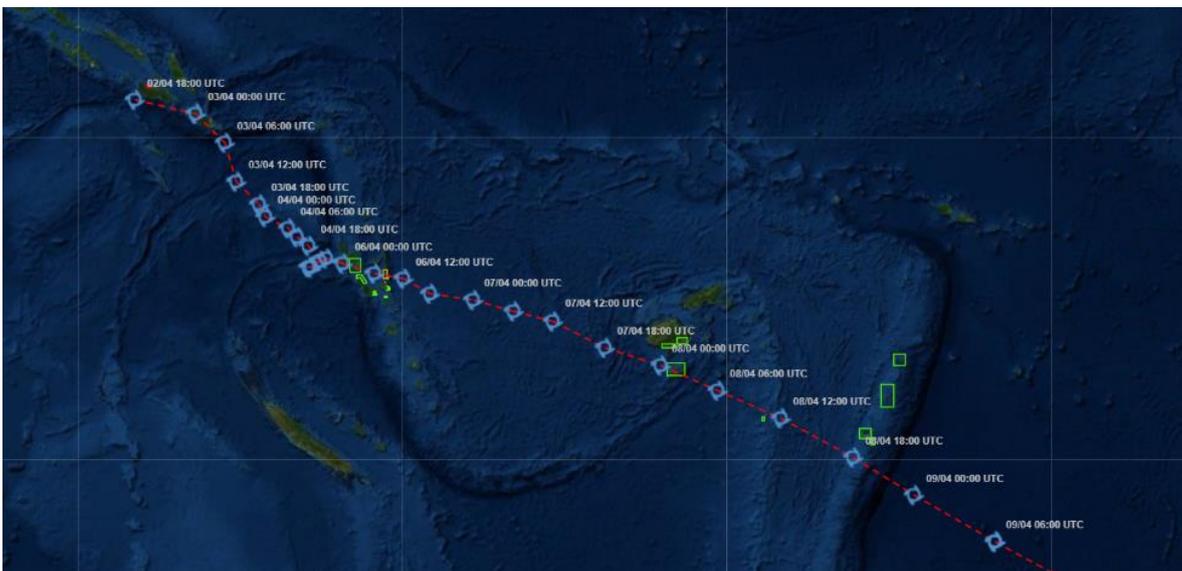
needed to support 159 817 people in Vanuatu

KEY POINTS

- Severe Tropical Cyclone Harold struck the Pacific Island countries of Solomon Islands, Fiji, Vanuatu and Tonga in April 2020, causing the most significant damage in Vanuatu and Fiji.
- In Vanuatu, Tropical Cyclone Harold impacted an estimated 176 161 people (65 percent of the total population), destroyed crops and cut many communities off from support due to flooding and destruction of roads.
- Extensive damage to staple crops across Vanuatu has been reported in a recent assessment, demonstrating that food security is a major concern for all affected provinces.
- FAO is collaborating with the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) to lead the regional Pacific Food Security Cluster to assess the food security and nutrition situation and share information, building a coherent and coordinated response to the impacts of Tropical Cyclone Harold and restrictions put in place, including border closures, in response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.
- FAO urgently requires USD 3 million to assist 159 817 people to rapidly respond to the impacts of the Cyclone in Vanuatu by supplying agricultural inputs (seeds and tools) and building the capacity of crop and livestock subsistence farmers and fisherfolk to protect and restore food availability and livelihoods. Facilitating replanting before the dry season begins is essential as missing this time critical window will create unsurmountable barriers to farming households to meet their food needs or restore their livelihoods and maintain their dignity and self-reliance, ultimately prolonging the need for expensive and unsustainable humanitarian assistance.

MAP

Tropical Cyclone Harold trajectory



Source: United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Programme

BACKGROUND

Tropical Cyclone Harold made landfall on Vanuatu on 6 April 2020 as Category 5 cyclone, causing widespread and severe destruction. The Cyclone brought hurricane force winds of 215 km/hr to 235 km/hr to Penama, Sanma and Malampa provinces along with heavy rain and flash flooding. It then moved southeast, hitting Fiji on 8 April as Category 4 cyclone and Tonga on 9 April, where it damaged homes, the water supply and crops.

CHALLENGES FACING FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE

In the Pacific Islands Region, the combined effects of Tropical Cyclone Harold and the measures implemented to protect countries against the spread of COVID-19, including lockdowns and border closures, are anticipated to negatively impact food security, value chains and livelihoods.

In Vanuatu, the damage to crops poses severe food security risks for the worst affected areas, particularly Penama, Sanma and Malampa provinces. The Cyclone exposed more than 17 500 ha of croplands (including mixed croplands/natural vegetation systems) to wind speeds exceeding 120 km/h, potentially causing substantial damage just as the growing season was beginning. A significant proportion of staple crops across Vanuatu were destroyed, including vegetables and fruit trees. In some of the worst affected areas, root crops such as manioc, taro and sweet potato were not yet ready for harvest when the Cyclone struck. In similar locations, bananas, another staple crop, were completely decimated. On Pentecost Island, food crops like avocados, mangoes and citrus were damaged and 65 percent of the taro water gardens were destroyed due to flooding and landslides. Further, no food aid is permitted into Vanuatu as the border is closed to prevent an outbreak of COVID-19 in the country, which has no confirmed cases to date, making the need to provide agricultural and livelihood-based support even more critical.

FAO RESPONSE

PRIORITY ACTIVITIES



159 817 people targeted



Crops Distribute early maturing crops, including tomato, onion, cabbage, leaf cabbage and okra, pumpkins, and common beans, along with tools (hoes and watering cans). Provide solar-powered refrigeration units for safe food storage. Provide trainings on vegetable processing and conservation.



Fisheries Provide technical assistance on fish production and trainings on fish processing and conservation.



Livestock Provide technical assistance on livestock production and trainings on livestock processing and conservation.

FUNDING



- Funding to-date: USD 500 000
- Funding gap: USD 2.5 million

FAO requires
USD 3 million for Vanuatu

To assist
159 817 people in Vanuatu

Resource partners: Central Emergency Response Fund and the Government of the Kingdom of Belgium through the Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities

COORDINATION

FAO is co-leading the regional Pacific Food Security Cluster with WFP and SPC.

FAO is working closely with WFP, Vanuatu's Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries & Biosecurity and other organizations in the region to target communities and build on activities implemented by FAO and other partners.

FAO is providing technical support to the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster and supporting the newly established Risk Resilience Unit in Vanuatu.

ASSESSMENTS

FAO conducted a geo-spatial impact assessment in Vanuatu utilizing satellite images from the United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Programme.

In Vanuatu, the National Disaster Management Office and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries & Biosecurity in coordination with the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development extension officers and with support from the national Food Security and Agriculture Cluster recently conducted a rapid technical assessment (household survey) across the affected provinces, the results of which will guide response activities.

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