

CITY OVERVIEW

The Republic of Vanuatu, located in the south western Pacific is an archipelago of volcanic islands with an estimated population of 240,000 (preliminary 2009 national census results) of which approximately 25% live in towns. Port Vila, the national capital of Vanuatu is located on the island of Efate and serves a population of over 50,000, many of who reside in informal settlements on the peripheries of the municipal council boundary. Port Vila's population is expected to double in 16 years – leading to concerns on the impact that an additional 30,000 people might have on social, economic and environmental issues by 2015.

CLIMATE CHANGE RISKS AND VULNERABILITIES

Vanuatu is affected by the cycles of El Niño and La Niña, and ranks as the world's most vulnerable country out of 111 countries on the Commonwealth Vulnerability Index. The results of climate scenario models and historical trends suggest warmer and drier conditions in the future, though it is expected that some parts of the country may receive more rainfall due to the greater frequency of tropical depressions and storms likely to develop around the islands. Cyclones are also likely to become more intense and frequent.

Vanuatu's climate is changing as a result of human induced activities. Port Vila and Luganville which house the majority of the country's urban population are major emitters of greenhouse gases and consumers of fossil fuels (transport and energy industries). Droughts, cyclones and other natural hazards are increasing in intensity and becoming more frequent. The most evident impacts of climate change in Port Vila are: coastal erosion, flooding, sedimentation (drainage) and compromised coastal infrastructure.

KEY ACTIVITIES PLANNED

1. Brief the National Advisory Committee on Climate Change (NACCC) on the objectives of the Cities and Climate Change Initiative to obtain commitment at national level; provide foundation for the inclusion of local governments and; enhance partnerships with national and international stakeholders on climate change plans, mitigation and adaptation activities.
2. Conduct Vulnerability & Adaptation and GHG emissions assessments and National Scoping Study for Port Vila.
3. Introduce elements of climate change in existing zoning and physical plans and strategies,



Eroding coastline Port Vila ©Brian Phillips

Population: 45,694 (prelim 2009 census data)

Growth rate: 4.0% per annum

Economy: Tourism, Financial centre, Agriculture

Political/administrative Structure: Decentralised - Municipal Council with elected councillors serving 4 year terms

City's role in the country: Capital city (seat of national government), Economic and commercial centre



Climate indicators

Mean annual temperature: 25 °C

Average annual rainfall: 2,400-3,000mm

Seasons: Two main seasons, the cooler (dry) season from May to October and the hot (wet/cyclone) season from November to April.

Relative humidity: 84%



Port Vila informal settlement - post cyclone ©Alastair Wilkinson

harmonizing an integrated, multi-sectoral approach to addressing the impacts of climate change.

4. Capitalise on recent studies and commitments to resolving rapid urbanisation with particular regard for the Risk Management component in the draft national urban policy (October 2009).
5. Strengthen the ability of the NACCC Secretariat's facilitation of local government participation/role in climate change planning and decision making.
6. Enhance education and public awareness on climate change impacts and adaptation.

THE NATIONAL CONTEXT: VANUATU

In the late 1980s a National Advisory Committee on Climate Change (NACCC) was established to advise the government on climate change and in 2002 it was mandated to oversee all climate change activities. The

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was signed in 1992 and ratified in 1993. Vanuatu's 10 Year Development Plan - the Priorities and Action Agenda for Vanuatu 2006 to 2015 - identifies key policies and high priority strategies required to increase community safety, security and resilience to disasters using general principles articulated in the National Action Plan, the World Bank's Policy Note and the Pacific Plan. The Vanuatu Climate Change Policy recognises local authorities as vital to addressing climate change and the department of Local Authorities is represented in the NACCC, while the 9 municipal council/provincial councils have identified climate change focal points. Vanuatu has identified the need for improved coordination and implementation of climate change projects and initiatives at the local and provincial government level and the need to build capacity and cultivate greater ownership of these activities.

UN-HABITAT'S CITIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVE

UN-HABITAT launched the Sustainable Urban Development Network (SUD-Net), an innovative network of global partners, promoting inter-disciplinary approaches to sustainable urban development.

The Cities and Climate Change Initiative (CCCI) is the flagship programme of SUD-Net. The initiative aims to strengthen the climate change response of cities and local governments. Cities are key drivers of climate change due to their high energy consumption, land use, waste generation and other activities that result in the release of the vast majority of greenhouse gases. At the same time, it is cities, and in particular the urban poor, in the developing world, that are most vulnerable to and have the least resilience against, for example, storms, floods, and droughts. Cities need to respond to Climate Change by cutting their greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation). The negative impact of climate change seems however unavoidable and for most cities in developing countries adaptation to the risks is a must.

The Cities and Climate Change Initiative brings together local and national governments, academia, NGOs and

international organizations with the aim to alert cities to the action they can take and by strengthening capacities of cities and their partners to respond to Climate Change. The key components of the Cities and Climate Change Initiative are:

- Advocacy, policy dialogue and policy change
- Tool development and tool application
- Piloting climate change mitigation and adaptation measures
- Knowledge management and dissemination, through, amongst others, the UN-HABITAT partner universities and the partnership with UN-HABITAT's Local Government Training Institutes Network.

The following cities are currently participating in CCCI. In Africa - Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina Faso; Kampala, Uganda; Kigali, Rwanda; Mombasa, Kenya; Maputo, Mozambique; Saint Louis, Senegal and Walvis Bay, Namibia. In Asia and the Pacific - Apia, Samoa; Batticaloa and Negombo, Sri Lanka; Lami, Fiji; Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea; Port Vila, Vanuatu; Semarang, Indonesia; Sorsogon, Philippines; Thanh Hoa, Viet Nam and Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. In Latin America - Esmeraldas, Ecuador.



For more information, contact:

UN-HABITAT Global Division, Urban Environmental Planning Branch
P.O. Box 30030, 00100 Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254 20 7625404 • Fax: +254 20 7623715
Email: uepb@unhabitat.org • www.unhabitat.org/sudnet

UN-HABITAT Fukuoka, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
ACROS 8F, 1-1-1 Tenjin, Chuo-ku, Fukuoka 810-0001, Japan
Tel: (81 92) 724 7121 • Fax: (81 92) 724 7124
www.fukuoka.unhabitat.org

Mr. Lawson Samuel, Legal Officer
Department of Local Authorities, Ministry of Internal Affairs
Port Vila, Vanuatu
Tel: +678 24659 • Fax: +678 26405 • Email: lsamuel@vanuatu.gov.vu

Mr Brian Phillips
Senior Climate Change Officer, National Climate Change Office
Vanuatu Metrological Services, Port Vila, Vanuatu
Tel: +678 23866 • Fax: +678 22310 • Email: piccap@vanuatu.com.vu

Port Vila looking North - Paray Bay ©Brian Phillips.