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## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Nutrition response during Emergency**

A week training on **Nutrition in Emergency** training held in Port Vila this week to address **nutrition response during emergencies**. The Ministry of Health through Nutrition Unit has organized this meeting attended by participants from the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education, National Disaster Management office and Save the Children Vanuatu.



*Participants for Nutrition in Emergency training in Port Vila*

The Training objectives are to develop the capacity of front-line programmers and workers on emergencies to improve a multisectoral response during emergencies aiming at preventing malnutrition and reducing childhood mortality, develop a recommended food basket to be distributed in emergency that covers the main caloric and nutrient requirements of the affected population and develop specific action plan for nutrition preparedness to be included into standard operating procedures

Acting Director of Public Health, Doctor Jenny Stephens stated that Ministry of Health has led Nutrition in Emergencies over the past years ensuring affected population are not faced with issues of malnutrition during disasters.

“It is our goal that during disasters Communities, Food security, social protection and Health care workers work together in emergencies to ensure food assistance reaches affected population but at the same time meet their nutritional needs” Mrs Stephen stated.

Vanuatu is prone to natural disaster and so when disaster strikes, people who are already malnourished before the emergency are more vulnerable to illness. The communities affected by the emergency are also at risk of malnutrition because of lack of food or only access to inadequate food and water, poor sanitation and lack of access to health services.

This training enhance the participants to strategies and collaboration to engage with people and prevent malnutrition during disasters especially the most vulnerable groups of women and children. It is important to inform the public about the importance of preparedness during emergencies, how to respond and what recovery measures can be taken to prevent worsening of malnutrition of affected populations

Protecting the nutritional status of vulnerable groups affected by emergencies is crucial and a humanitarian right. Individuals who suffer from acute malnutrition are much more likely to become sick and to die. At the same time, sick individuals are more likely to become undernourished.

Emergencies have an impact on a whole range of factors that can increase the risk of malnutrition, illness (*morbidity*) and death (*mortality*). Unfortunately, high malnutrition and mortality rates continue to occur during emergencies.

Training participants came from all six (6) provinces. The Ministry of Health acknowledged ongoing funding support towards this important meeting.

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