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After devastating earthquake in Port Vila, Vanuatu's health system faced significant challenges, but thanks to effective response efforts, the country has made progress in protecting its citizens from disease outbreaks and ensuring their safety. The emergency response began immediately after the 7.3 magnitude earthquake struck on December 17, 2024, causing widespread destruction and claiming 14 lives. The Vanuatu Ministry of Health (MOH), supported by its partners including WHO, activated its incident management system to coordinate the response was preventing outbreaks of disease, particularly diarrheal diseases and respiratory infections, which were prevalent in damaged water and sanitation systems and crowded evacuation centers. The Early Warning and Response Surveillance (EWARS) system was used to monitor outbreak-prone conditions, and the team enhanced their surveillance efforts by transitioning from weekly to daily disease signal reporting. Thanks to these efforts, the team detected an outbreak of influenza-like infections and responded quickly to minimize its impacts. However, the earthquake also caused significant damage to the laboratory at the Vila Central Hospital, which was critical for providing diagnostic services. To address this challenge, WHO provided rapid diagnostic tests that enabled faster confirmation of suspected cases. Additionally, risk communication efforts were crucial in empowering communities with knowledge on what to do, where to go for help, and how to stay safe during aftershocks and other hazards. The MOH coordinated these efforts, working closely with WHO and UNICEF to disseminate life-saving information through radio broadcasts, posters, and community outreach teams. These efforts helped ensure that people had access to critical information, even in areas without internet connectivity. In February 2025, WHO supported Vanuatu's Ministry of Health to conduct an After Action Review (AAR), bringing together various stakeholders to assess what worked and what can be improved for future emergencies. Key lessons learned included the importance of clearer standard operating procedures for health emergency coordination, securing contingency funding for rapid response, regular stocktaking of essential health supplies, and developing offline communication strategies. These findings are particularly relevant given that Vanuatu is located in the Pacific Ring of Fire, which is responsible for 90% of the world's earthquakes. The country's resilience is critical to protecting its citizens from health and safety risks. Multiple devastating earthquakes struck the region near Mandalay, Myanmar on March 28th, followed by a series of aftershocks that disrupted rescue operations. The first quake measured 7.7 magnitude and was closely followed by a second of 6.4 magnitude. Reports indicate widespread damage to critical infrastructure including health facilities, roads, bridges, and communication networks. As of March 30th, authorities have confirmed 1644 deaths and 3408 injuries. The WHO has activated an Incident Management Support Team (IMST) and is working closely with local health partners to respond to the crisis. In response to the disaster, WHO has released \$5 million from its Contingency Fund for Emergencies to rapidly scale up operations and support lifesaving health interventions. Medical supplies, including trauma kits and tents, have been dispatched to hospitals in Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw. The organization is also issuing Situation Reports and disseminating key public health advice through various communication channels. In a separate incident, on February 6th, 2023, massive earthquakes struck southern Türkiye and northern Syria, resulting in significant loss of life and destruction of infrastructure. WHO is supporting the response efforts by dispatching life-saving medical supplies, activating its Emergency Medical Emergency Response Teams (MERTs) were conducting a training exercise when the earthquake struck, which was rapidly concluded to enable the teams to respond to the crisis. The country has a strong history of responding to natural disasters, having successfully applied for accreditation of a "type 1 fixed Emergency Medical Team" under the global EMT initiative in 2019. WHO is working closely with Thailand and partners to support the response efforts. A 6.4 magnitude earthquake also struck Nepal's Western Province of Karnali on November 3rd, 2023, resulting in significant loss of life and displacement of thousands. WHO personnel are working closely with local authorities to support urgent health needs. WHO supports Vanuatu's response to devastating earthquake, providing critical health care and coordination to the affected population. The country has shown remarkable resilience in the face of disaster, with health facilities operating soon after the earthquake, ensuring continued access to care. Decentralized outpatient services have eased pressure on the main hospital, allowing it to focus on more complex cases. Health leaders provided lifesaving services, continuing work to care for those in need. The response is supported by partners like WHO, who have coordinated deployment of international emergency medical teams and shared life-saving information in local languages. ###ARTICLEWe require an urgent injection of US\$ 8 million to ensure the delivery of life-saving trauma care, prevent the spread of disease outbreaks, and restore essential health services within the next 30 days. Your contribution is indispensable in this fight for lives.

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