

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ChildFund responds to Cyclone Pam

RICHMOND, Va. (Mar. 17, 2015) – Thousands of children in cyclone-ravaged Vanuatu, an island nation located in the South Pacific Ocean more than 1,100 miles east of Australia, are in desperate need of safe water, following the destruction of local water supplies and sanitation facilities by Tropical Cyclone Pam.

ChildFund International, a global child protection and development organization working in 30 countries, has launched an emergency appeal to help provide safe water and sanitation facilities for affected children and their families. The funds will go to ChildFund International's Alliance partner, ChildFund Australia. ChildFund Australia is partnering with Live & Learn Vanuatu, a child-focused organization that has been operating in Vanuatu for many years, to respond to this disaster and ensure that children are protected.

With wind gusts reaching up to 198 mph, Pam was one of the strongest cyclones ever to hit the South Pacific, leaving at least 24 people dead, thousands of homes, schools and buildings damaged or destroyed and an estimated 3,300 people displaced.

“One of the main concerns now is to restore clean water to help ensure the health of children in cyclone-ravaged areas,” said ChildFund Australia CEO Nigel Spence. “Contaminated water can contain diseases such as cholera, which causes severe diarrhea and can lead to death. ChildFund Australia is working with Live & Learn to restore water systems and sanitation facilities in schools and to protect and support children in Vanuatu whose lives are in upheaval as a result of this disaster.”

On Efate Island, where the capital, Port Vila, is located, an estimated 90 percent of structures are either damaged or destroyed. Shefa, Tafea, Malampa and Penama are emerging as the worst impacted areas, although Shefa remains the only province declared an emergency.

Anjali Nelson, an Australian aid worker based in Port Vila, is a technical advisor with Live & Learn Vanuatu and part of the team currently conducting assessments.

“The situation in Vanuatu is unfolding,” said Nelson. “While the main center of Port Vila has been reconnected to the water supply, there are many communities in the surrounding areas that still have no access to water, and sanitation is a huge issue for these people. We expect things are even worse in other areas. Priorities may change as more information becomes known, particularly from the outer islands.”

Donations made to ChildFund International's emergency appeal will help ensure restoration of safe, clean drinking water. Donations will help

- Reconstruct damaged water tanks to restore safe water supply.
- Rebuild sanitation facilities to help contain disease and prevent it from spreading.
- Provide water purification tablets as a temporary measure to prevent illness.
- Educate children on hygiene and sanitation practices.

To donate to ChildFund International's Vanuatu emergency response, visit

<https://www.childfund.org/Vanuatu-response-fund/>.

About ChildFund International

ChildFund International is a global child development and protection agency serving more than 18.2 million children and family members in 30 countries. For more than 76 years, we have helped the world's deprived, excluded and vulnerable children survive and thrive to reach their full potential and become leaders of enduring change. As a member of ChildFund Alliance, we create supportive environments in which children can flourish. For more information about ChildFund, visit www.ChildFund.org.

About ChildFund Australia

ChildFund Australia is an independent and non-religious international development organization that works to reduce poverty for children in the developing world. ChildFund Australia is a member of the ChildFund Alliance – a global network of 12 organizations which assists more than 15 million children and families in 57 countries. ChildFund Australia is a registered charity and is fully accredited by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade which manages the Australian Government's overseas aid program.

About Live & Learn Vanuatu

Live & Learn is a network of locally registered organizations operating in 10 countries across the Asia and Pacific regions. Live & Learn has been operating in Vanuatu for 14 years and is a trusted, locally registered NGO. A child-focused organization, it is currently active in four provinces, employs local people and has an extensive network of volunteers and contacts. Live & Learn has undertaken a range of development projects in Vanuatu with a major focus on education and water/sanitation.

About Nigel Spence

Nigel Spence has been the CEO of ChildFund Australia since 2006. During this time, he has overseen the expansion of ChildFund's child-focused development programs in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea and Vietnam, as well as continuing aid and development work through ChildFund Alliance partners in Africa, Asia and the Americas. During his 30-year career, Nigel has gained extensive experience in the provision of services to vulnerable youth and children, including senior roles with the Association of Children's Welfare Agencies (CEO), and Children and Youth Services with Centacare, Catholic Community Services, Sydney (director).

About Anjali Nelson

Anjali Nelson has been engaged with Live & Learn since 2010, and moved permanently to Vanuatu to take on the role of REDD+ (Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) Technical Advisor in 2011. Prior to this, she worked at the Alternative Technology Association in Australia in the role of Water Conservation Program Manager. She holds a Bachelor of International Studies, First Class Honours Bachelor of Arts (Politics) and a Masters of Environment. She lives with her husband and child in Port Vila, Vanuatu.

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