

WCC expresses solidarity with churches in Vanuatu after the cyclone

16 March 2015

The World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit has expressed concern and grief over the destruction caused by the cyclone in Vanuatu. In a letter issued to the WCC member churches in Vanuatu and the Pacific region, Tveit offered his prayers for the people and churches.

Cyclone Pam, which hit Vanuatu on 15 March, has destroyed most buildings in the capital Port Vila, including homes and schools. At least eight people are reported to have been killed, according to early media reports.

“At this moment of crisis, it is our faith in God, the knowledge that we are not alone in our darkest moments, which can sustain us. We pray that you are able to be a voice of hope for those who are in pain. Be certain that Christians around the world stand with you in solidarity,” said Tveit in a letter addressed to the Vanuatu Christian Council, issued on 16 March.

Tveit also conveyed a message of solidarity to the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu. He said, “No doubt your church faces a crisis, having lost many of its buildings, and with many of the faithful people of your congregations having lost their homes. We know that as foreign aid begins to arrive in Port Vila, the need for clean water, food and shelter will be great, and will continue to be so.”

“We know too, that the need for spiritual comfort and vision is vital in such a time. Be assured that the prayers of the World Council of Churches are offered for your church and for your leadership in such a testing moment,” Tveit added.

“Our Christian faith is one of hope, built upon the certain sign of the resurrection. In this moment of darkness may your church be a place of hope and strength for all who currently suffer in Vanuatu,” said Tveit.

The WCC general secretary has urged the United Nations, local government and churches to work together to respond to the needs of the communities devastated by the cyclone.

In Vanuatu, Act for Peace – a member of ACT Alliance (a partner organization of the WCC) has responded to the crisis with emergency food, shelter and water. Anglican Overseas Development is also working in the northern area of the country. An [ACT Alert](#) has been issued and an Appeal will follow shortly.

[WCC general secretary's letter to the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu](#)

[WCC general secretary's letter to the Vanuatu Christian Council](#)

[WCC member churches in Vanuatu](#)

The World Council of Churches promotes Christian unity in faith, witness and service for a just and peaceful world. An ecumenical fellowship of churches founded in 1948, by the end of 2013 the WCC had 345 member churches representing more than 500 million Christians from Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican and other traditions in over 140 countries. The WCC works cooperatively with the Roman Catholic Church. The WCC general secretary is the Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, from the [Lutheran] Church of Norway.

Media contact: [+41 79 507 6363](tel:+41795076363); www.oikoumene.org/press

Visiting address: 150 route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland