



## Pacific Disability Forum

Phone: (679) 331 2008/ 773 0200/ 331 0469

Website: [www.pacificdisability.org](http://www.pacificdisability.org)

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Vanuatu National Disaster Management Office  
Government Office in Port Vila  
Vanuatu

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Dear People and Government of Vanuatu,

On behalf of the Board, Members and Staff of the Pacific Disability Forum, I am writing to express my deepest condolences and heartfelt sympathy to the people of Vanuatu, particularly to those individuals with disabilities and their families who reside in Vila and those who have been profoundly affected by the devastating earthquakes that struck on December 17th and 18th (this morning), 2024. Our thoughts are with you during this incredibly challenging time. The impact of these natural disasters is immeasurable which often lead to profound emotional, psychological, and physical consequences and financial strain for individuals and communities.

The Pacific Disability Forum stands in solidarity with the Government and people of Vanuatu, as you work through the challenges posed by the recent earthquakes. We recognize that individuals with disabilities and their families often face additional challenges in disaster situations, including barriers to accessing emergency services, assistive technology, healthcare, information and safe shelter. PDF wishes to advise that it is essential that the needs and rights of persons with disabilities are prioritized in response and recovery efforts both by the Government of Vanuatu and her partners.

We commend the resilience and strength demonstrated by the people of Vanuatu in particular persons with disabilities in the face of adversity. While planning for emergencies interventions and rebuilding your communities, we urge all stakeholders; government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and community and faith-based leaders to ensure that inclusive practices are at the forefront of all response and recovery initiatives. This includes providing



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accessible information about available resources and support services. In this time of crisis, it is crucial that we come together as a Community of Pacific Islanders to support one another. PDF stands ready to provide essential technical support tailored to the needs of persons with disabilities during response and recovery efforts. This includes guidance on accessible communication methods, ensuring that information reaches all community members effectively. PDF also assists in developing inclusive disaster response plans that consider the specific needs of persons with disabilities, thereby enhancing their safety and well-being during emergencies.

As Vanuatu embarks on its journey towards response and recovery efforts, prioritizing inclusivity and equity will not only strengthen community ties but also ensure that no one is left behind in this critical process. By fostering an environment where every individual has access to necessary resources and support services, Vanuatu will emerge from adversity stronger than ever.

Please know that you are not alone; our thoughts and prayers are with you as you work towards healing and rebuilding your lives. Together, we can foster an environment where every individual is valued, supported and protected.

With deepest sympathy,

**Sainimili Tawake (Ms)**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Pacific Disability Forum**