

## OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-VUT\_D\_1.1

**By 2027, more people, especially those at risk of being left behind, contribute to and benefit from sustainable, resilient, diversified, inclusive and human-centred socio-economic systems with decent work and equal livelihoods opportunities, reducing inequalities and ensuring shared prosperity [PCF Strategic Priority 3: Prosperity]**

This outcome is on track. In 2023, Vanuatu found itself in the throes of a six-month State of Emergency, a period that marked a pivotal shift in the nation's priorities. During this time, the Government of Vanuatu redirected its focus and resources, galvanizing efforts towards critical response and recovery endeavours. This urgent pivot was necessitated by the aftermath of three catastrophic tropical cyclones and a 6.6 magnitude earthquake, wreaking havoc on infrastructure and homes across the nation. As a result, the momentum toward advancing new policies with government partners was slowed down, halting the progression of market ordinances and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that had been poised for adoption. Despite the economic and environmental challenges and setback in the policy development process, in Vanuatu, UN Women through the Markets for Change (M4C) project continued its work in the markets by promoting sustainability, resilience, diversification, inclusivity, and human-centeredness, while providing decent work and equal livelihood opportunities for individuals, especially women market vendors. Individuals, particularly women market vendors, are prioritized in the human-centered socio-economic approach undertaken by the Markets for Change (M4C) programme. Through a multifaceted strategy encompassing capacity building, resource access, and women's leadership development, these efforts aim to enhance the well-being and agency of all members of society. By emphasizing dignity, agency, and prosperity, these initiatives contribute to a more compassionate and equitable socio-economic landscape. Market Vendors Associations (MVAs) continue to be the backbone of support for market vendors, particularly women, championing their welfare and ensuring that economic development initiatives are tailored to meet their specific needs. The leadership of twelve women executive members from six MVAs in Vanuatu is evident in their effective governance and participation in decision-making processes within their respective associations. These women leaders play a crucial role in elevating the voice and agency of women market vendors and shaping their MVAs into inclusive, efficient, and representative advocacy groups. By providing platforms for vendors to voice challenges and recommend solutions, MVAs contribute to a more resilient marketplace. The MVAs proactively engage with stakeholders, for the collective benefit of vendors, such as through consultations with government bodies like the Shefa Provincial Government and leading vibrant community events like the International Day of Rural Women celebration. In 2023, a dedicated emphasis on inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development, particularly aimed at women market vendors in the informal sector, prioritized resilience for the long-term viability of businesses, livelihoods and prosperity in Vanuatu. Central to this resilience-building effort were capacity-building programmes tailored for women market vendors. These equipped 490 women market vendors with essential skills and resources, including financial literacy training and access to mobile money apps, enabling them to better withstand and recover from crises. Additionally, agricultural training focused on resilient farming practices empowered vendors to adapt to climate variability and mitigate the impacts of natural disasters on their livelihoods. Furthermore, the women market vendors had improved access to and utilisation of essential services, resources, protective goods and information through the programme. By addressing specific needs and challenges faced by women vendors, such as gender-based violence services and maternal health, the programme has created a more supportive and inclusive marketplace environment. This has broken barriers to access and empowered women market vendors to actively

engage in economic activities and decision-making processes to support a landscape where all individuals can thrive and contribute to economic growth. Market administrators in Vanuatu continue to grow in their capacity to provide support to market vendors to enhance decent work conditions. Through their emphasis on promoting gender equality and embracing a collaborative, inclusive approach to socio-economic development, these institutions guarantee that decision-making processes at both the local and provincial levels are responsive to the diverse needs of market vendors. In 2023, the work of market administrators focused on the ensuring safe and hygienic marketplaces and tackling the real-life challenges encountered by vendors, ranging from damages to market shelters due to natural disasters to issues concerning land resources. Importantly, the initiative extends its impact beyond safeguarding against potential pandemics and diseases, to also instigate a cultural shift within the marketplace. By promoting a culture of collective responsibility, a collaborative community environment is being nurtured among all stakeholders. This holistic approach to health and safety represents a fundamental behaviour change, emphasizing shared responsibility marketplace well-being and prosperity.

#### OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-VUT\_D\_2.1

**By 2027, more people, particularly those at risk of being left behind, benefit from more equitable access to resilient, and gender-responsive, quality basic services, food security/nutrition and social protection systems.**

This outcome is on track. In Vanuatu, the year saw transformative progress towards ensuring that victims and survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) access gender-responsive support services. The Department of Women's Affairs (DWA) and the Vanuatu Women's Centre (VWC) developed the Multisector Service Delivery Protocol (MSDP) and are expected to launch and operationalize the protocol in early 2024. The Protocol outlines how formal and non-formal actors responding to GBV can work together to best support survivors. It also commits these responders to a common set of principles and guidance. DWA, VWC, and UN Women made the collaborative efforts in drafting, refining, and preparing the MSDP for validation and eventual launch in early 2024. This signifies a substantial shift towards a more systematic and unified response to GBV. The protocol not only outlines the collaborative framework for formal and informal actors but also commits responders to a common set of principles and guidelines, ensuring a survivor-centred approach in GBV response services. Male leaders on the rural island of Gaua have mobilized to contribute towards the prevention of Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) through their participation in a male leaders training organized by the Vatsur Council and the establishment of an island-wide VAWC Taskforce of Chiefs, supported by the Vanuatu Women's Centre (VWC) and Torba Counselling Centre (TOCC). Male village chiefs attended a 5-day male advocacy training program, facilitated by VWC in the local language and cultural context which covered a range of topics including gender, VAW and domestic violence, sexual violence, child sexual abuse, human rights, and the Family Protection Act (FPA). The training challenges men to identify their own unacceptable behaviours; change those behaviours and then influence other men in the community to change their behaviours. Pre- and post-training questionnaires at the Gaua training showed significant changes in participants' understanding of gender equality, human rights, and violence against women and children. Notably, 97% of participants reported an improved ability to explain the Family Protection Law, and there was a universal increase in the belief in equal rights for women and men, and boys and girls. These men are now more prepared to take action to promote gender equality and human rights in their families and communities. The active engagement of the chiefs led to the formation of a Taskforce to prevent and respond to cases of VAWC. The Taskforce's effectiveness is evident in the increased referrals and proactive actions taken by VWC's Gauan Community Educator and local police. Additionally, a workshop for women in North East Gaua led to the establishment of a Committee Against Violence Against Women (CAVAW), which has been effective in client support and advocacy. Established by the Vanuatu Women's Centre (VWC), CAVAWs are a network of island-based committees against VAW. CAVAWs are composed of members of women's groups, traditional leaders, police officers and church leaders based in villages. CAVAWs

undertake local community awareness activities and assist women and children living with violence in remote communities. VWC carries out this work with the support and funding of UN Women. In their humanitarian response in the wake of Tropical Cyclones the Vanuatu Christian Council (VCC) in North Pentecost, Malekula and Ambrym and Vanuatu Women's Centre (VWC) in Penama, Malampa, Shefa, and Tafea provinces contributed to ensuring the safety and recovery of vulnerable populations, especially women, girls, and individuals with special needs. The gender-responsive humanitarian response has significantly improved the lives of women and girls in the affected communities by providing essential aid including over 1,086 water tanks, 115 solar lights, seeds for Bak choi and tomatoes, and 130 sets of gardening tools were distributed to communities in North Pentecost, Malekula, Ambrym, and parts of Efate in Vanuatu, supporting disaster recovery and enhancing resilience. Furthermore, the response included conducting mobile counselling sessions in all affected communities across Penama, Malampa, Shefa, and Tafea provinces, reaching a total of 1,464 individuals, including 1,330 women, 43 girls, 66 men, and 25 boys, with 10 women and 2 men having disabilities. Care packages, were distributed to clients on Pentecost and selected areas of Malakula, along with solar lights. Capacity-building training on gender-based violence prevention during disasters was provided for 37 church leaders in North Efate, and volunteer training was conducted for 4 volunteers after Tropical Cyclones Kevin and Judy, with a further 22 volunteers trained in awareness on EVAWG and disaster preparedness and response. The Mobile Counselling Centre saw 94 new clients, including 57 for domestic violence and 19 for child maintenance, with 2 clients assisted with the safe house. The gender-responsive humanitarian response has made a significant difference for women and girls in several ways. Firstly, it has led to improved access to essential services, with women, girls, and individuals with disabilities having better access to vital services such as counselling, care packages, and water supply, contributing to their overall well-being and safety. Secondly, the response has reduced vulnerability to GBV by raising awareness and providing support to survivors of GBV, thereby mitigating the risk of violence against women and girls during and after disasters. Additionally, enhanced community preparedness has been achieved through training and capacity-building activities, enabling communities to better respond to disasters and address the specific needs of vulnerable populations, including women, girls, and individuals with disabilities. While UN Women funded VCC and VWC immediate relief activities in the aftermath of the three tropical cyclones in Vanuatu in 2023, UN Women support also extended beyond immediate relief to encompass a comprehensive approach to gender-based violence in emergencies (GBVIE). UN Women contributed significantly to the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) report, providing valuable insights and recommendations regarding GBVIE. Rapid assessments conducted in the cyclone-affected areas enabled the collection of crucial data and identification of key messages related to GBVIE. The Information, Communication, and Education (ICE) materials were then reviewed and updated to ensure they effectively disseminated information on GBVIE, empowering individuals with knowledge and resources for protection. UN Women also offered strategic advice on the dissemination of these materials, striving to reach the widest possible audience. Through active collaboration with the national disaster office, UN Women facilitated the dissemination of vital information in the ICE materials to the communities in need. The collaborative project between the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UN Women, 'Famili I Redi Reintegration,' exemplifies an innovative approach to supporting returned women migrant workers and their families in enhancing their relationship skills and financial stability post-mobility. The development of Reintegration Training Materials, informed by gender vulnerabilities and the needs of migrant worker returnees, promises to enhance the well-being of returning workers and their families. The ToC and strategy remains unchanged for 2024. Collectively, these initiatives and achievements reflect Vanuatu's concerted effort to foster a more inclusive, supportive, and responsive environment for addressing GBV and promoting gender equality. The year's outcomes not only demonstrate institutional and behavioural changes but also pave the way for sustained progress in the years to come.

#### OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-VUT\_D\_2.2

**By 2027, the operational, normative and collaborative potential of the UNCT Cooperation Frameworks to contribute to greater gender equality is fully optimised**

## by UN Women's interventions

This outcome is on track. There has been some progress towards the realisation of the operational, normative, and collaborative potential of the Pacific United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) to contribute to greater gender equality and women's empowerment in Vanuatu. The United Nations in the Pacific has committed to the rollout of a comprehensive assessment of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan (UNCT-SWAP) Gender Equality Scorecard for a second time in less than 5 years. This commitment demonstrates willingness to being able to more concretely understand areas that need further joint action to progress gender mainstreaming and advance gender equality and women's empowerment. The assessment will be undertaken across all three sub-regional United Nations Resident Coordinator Offices (RCOs) in a separate but coordinated manner as the RCOs come under one Pacific regional UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023-2027). The Fiji RCO, overseeing the Vanuatu Joint Presence Office, will be included in the UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard assessment. In December 2023, the Government of Vanuatu signed the Vanuatu Country Implementation Plan 2023-2024 (CIP), signifying a country-level agreement with the Pacific UNSDCF. The Vanuatu CIP builds upon the Pacific United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-2027 (UNSDCF) developed by the United Nations (UN) and 14 Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs). The Vanuatu CIP is firmly anchored to country-level priorities and structures and defines the UN actions and deliverables in Vanuatu, including those of UN Women, to help achieve the outcomes of the Pacific UNSDCF. The CIP will guide the joint efforts, and the collective results expected will help Vanuatu to ensure all people are equal and free to exercise their fundamental rights, enjoy gender equality and peace, remain resilient to existential threats, and live in harmony. Throughout 2023, UN Women played a pivotal role within the Joint Programme Presence in Vanuatu to advance and ensure the inclusion of gender equality and women's empowerment throughout the Vanuatu CIP. Capacity building of agencies through training and access to tools and guidance on gender responsive programming was undertaken which in turn has advanced joint action on gender equality in Vanuatu. UN Women's overarching commitment focused on supporting Vanuatu's national development priorities on gender, Sustainable Development Goal 5, and alignments with international standards such as CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action.