



**Advocating for Rights &
Promoting Abilities of People
with Disabilities since 1999**

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MEDIA RELEASE

Cyclone Pam opens opportunities for inclusive education

Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association Coordinator, Ms Nelly Caleb says schools and dormitories to be rebuilt after Cyclone Pam must have disability friendly features so an inclusive education policy is fully implemented in Vanuatu.

“This does not only include ramps for wheel chair users, but also sky lights for children with low vision, accessible foot paths and toilets, wide door entrances, sufficient room for wheel chairs in classrooms, hand rails, emergency exits, tactile symbols, braille signs and accessible book shelves,” she said.

“Now we have a great opportunity to include inclusive education in our schools as many classrooms need to be rebuilt after the cyclone.

“There has been very little work done on an Inclusive Education Policy launched in 2011 until this year when a group was established to advocate and review the policy.

“The policy encourages children to attend schools but most children don’t attend because of their impairments, age and the lack of accessibility.

Ms Caleb has been attending a meeting in Port Vila of a working group on inclusive and gender policy, disability and child safe environment and inclusion for people with disability.

“I’m disappointed very little has been done on the Inclusive Education Policy until this year when a group was established to advocate and review the policy.

“The group’s priorities are that children with disability have routine protection monitoring and have access to ‘child friendly spaces’ and education programs.

“Other priorities are monitoring, reviewing and providing feedback on all key documents, activity and resources. Here are some examples:

- Ø School improvement
- Ø Legislation, Policies and Planning
- Ø Early learning inventions
- Ø Human resources

“Our meeting aim to improve the learning skills and environment for children with disability and a better future for all.

“It also ensured ‘build back better’ and ‘universal design principles are followed in reconstruction of homes and community buildings which should be disability friendly for everyone who is accessing the building.”