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Mr Yasuda explaining water grid to police, VMF and NDMO representatives in the operation room.

UNELCO prepares for Cyclone Season

By Fern Napwatt

As VANUATU IS NEARING ITS cyclone season, UNELCO is also gearing up its preparedness measures for the cyclone season.

UNELCO went through an exercise yesterday (Tuesday) to evaluate their team and equipment to be ready in advance for the cyclone season.

A meeting was also held between UNELCO, Police

and the VMF Fire section as key persons during and post-disaster events.

Technician Officer, Stéphane Garlopeau reiterated that VMF, Police and UNELCO must work together during and after cyclone and it is really important after lessons learnt from TC Pam.

"The purpose of the meeting is to find priorities where we can work on together in terms of danger areas," he said.

"For instance, UNELCO will need police to help in terms of traffic diversion to fix connection after a cyclone because it's a dangerous exercise. We need everyone's cooperation, if there's a fire, the Fire Service

Garlopeau explained features of electricity and wiring sections that can be dangerous, especially during cyclones and will only need UNELCO personnel to handle

it.

"There are times when people think that when there's a power cut there's not electricity in the wires, but there is and people should stand clear of the area. In addition, some people often take advantage of transferring electricity from a fallen cable to their house without safety and that is very dangerous," he said.

UNELCO's water section Technical Manager, Toshi

Yasuda conveyed that water is also critical after a cyclone and cooperation is needed.

"For water to be restored in a city affected by cyclone usually takes up to 24-48 hours and UNELCO has a standby generator that is able to work right after a cyclone to power water. This is the number one priority for the people," he said.

"One of our water tanks was destroyed by TC Pam and it took a day to restore water

for areas affected. We are now preparing for the cyclone season as the cyclones we will face are now stronger and we have to be prepared."

The representatives from the Police, Fire station and NDMO were taken on a tour of the operation room and shown how the operation room functions during and after a cyclone through radio calls with teams that were out on the field for the exercise.