GOUVERNEMENT DE LA
REPUBLIQUE DE LA
VANUATU

**MINISTERE DE LA SANTE**




GOVERNMENT
OF THE
REPUBLIC OF VANUATU

**MINISTRY OF HEALTH**

# MINISTER OF HEALTH

**SEVENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY**
**24 May – 1 June 2021**

**AGENDA ITEM 33 Updates and future reporting - Rheumatic fever and Rheumatic heart disease, Report by the Director-General**

Vanuatu conducted the Rapid Situation Assessment (RSA) for Acute Rheumatic Fever (ARF) and Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD), in 2020. The assessment identified social and environmental factors that increase the risk of ARF in school aged children including, overcrowding, poor housing quality, poor hand hygiene (poor sanitation) and finally lack of access to appropriate medical care. The government is lacking in their capacity to identify and properly manage children who present with sore throats at primary health care (PHC) facilities and then to provide effective clinical management which leads to the necessity for surgical interventions and high-cost tertiary care abroad. Lastly, the government didn't have baseline indicators integrated in the routine health information system (HIS) that would allow them monitor and report on ARF and RHD.

In response to the assessment and previous recommendations, the Government of Vanuatu adopted National guidelines on ARF and RHD. Priorities include strengthening the capacity of PHC facilities and integrating program elements into multiple high-level health strategies such as Health Sector Strategy 2021-2030 and RMNCAH Policy 2021-2030 and Role Delineation Policy to create a more systematic approach.

The Government of Vanuatu is also requesting support from the WHO in the following areas.

First, assist in strengthening the capacity of primary and provincial level health care to prevent ARF cases by developing a curriculum and training for nurses in the diagnosis and proper management of sore throats, ARF and RHD. The program also includes providing health education and routine screening at schools and developing IEC materials for community education.

Second, assist in developing core indicators and notification forms specific to ARF and RHD to be integrated into National Health Information System (NHIS).

Third, assist the Government of Vanuatu to ensure that the basic laboratory analyses can be performed and that appropriate medicines for sore throat, ARF and RHD are accessible and affordable.

Fourth, assist in identifying and engaging potential in-country and regional partners who can provide further support, particularly for program implementation and case referrals.