

***Joint Media Release from the Department of Water Resources and the Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-hazards Department***

**Vanuatu marks World Water Day and World Meteorology Day with the theme Water and Climate Change.**

Vanuatu will join the world to celebrate the World Water Day and World Meteorology Day this year from Monday 23 to Tuesday 24 March in Luganville, Santo. This year's joint celebration will focus around water and climate change as the theme for both events. It will be the first time to celebrate these events outside Port Vila this year. The preparation of the celebration events is jointly organized by the Department of Water Resources under the Ministry of Lands, Geology and Mines and the Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-hazards Department (VMGD) under the Ministry of Climate Change and Natural Disasters.

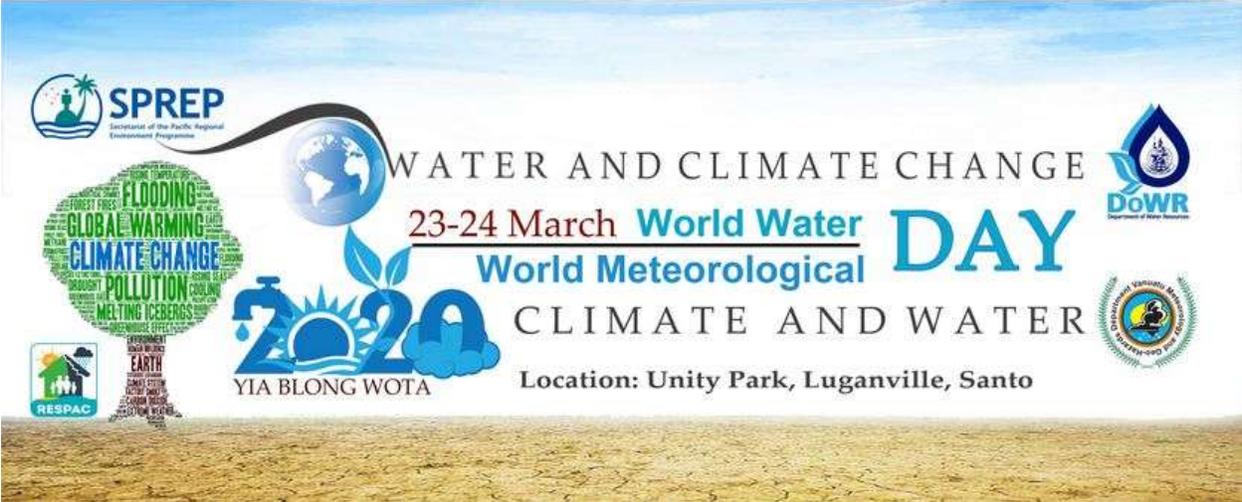
The World Water Day is an annual United Nations observance of freshwater and is used to advocate for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. This day is commemorated every year on March 22. This year's theme 'Water and Climate Change' explores how water and climate change are inseparably linked. It is important for our people to understand and be educated on areas around water and climate change. Let us not forget that as the global population grows, so does the demand for water, which depletes natural resources and damages the environment in many places. Solutions include protecting carbon sinks such as oceans and wetlands, adopting climate-smart agricultural techniques, and increasing the safe reuse of wastewater is becoming more relevant today. The key messages for this year's WWD are, We cannot afford to wait, climate policy makers must put water at the heart of action plans, Water can help fight climate change and there are sustainable, affordable and scalable water and sanitation solutions and everyone has a role to play in our daily lives there are easy steps we can all take to address climate change.

The World Meteorology Organization Day similarly takes place every year on March 23 to commemorate the coming into force on 23 March 1950 of the Convention establishing the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). This day is celebrated with the aim to showcase the essential contribution of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services to the safety and wellbeing of society. The theme for this year is 'Climate and Water'.

Vanuatu is vulnerable to all weather and climate related events. With the increasing impacts of Climate variability and climate change in Vanuatu and other small islands states in the Pacific region, it is only proper to explore all avenues to advocate and make people aware on these issues. Hence Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-Hazards will be in Luganville, Santo during this two days to exhibit to the students, youths and general public.

Various government and non-government stakeholders are also invited to attend the two days events at the Unity Park in Luganville, Santo. All residents living in and around Luganville are welcome to join in the events.

The Program for the two days will begin with an opening parade from Unity Shell to Unity Park on Monday 23 March with an opening welcome address from the Luganville Municipal Lord Mayor and followed by other speeches from the Sanma Provincial Government and the Department of Water and VMGD. There will be display of booths staged at Unity Park for the two days, showcasing the work of various stakeholders in the areas of Water, Climate, Climate Change, hydrology and Meteorology related focus in Vanuatu.



*Caption: The banner for the celebrations to mark the two events in Vanuatu.*