

## **VANUATU DELEGATIONS OPENING STATEMENT**

Thank you very much madam chair, distinguished expert members of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women committee and NGO representatives, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a true honour and privilege the Vanuatu Government Delegation to be present today and to present its 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> combined periodic report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

I believe that girls and women's rights is of more importance now than ever before.

This dialogue is of great importance to my Government as it provides our delegation an opportunity to inform the committee on our significant development in complying to CEDAW and to highlight the challenges we have encountered after the submission of our 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> combined periodic report.

I am joined by representatives of several Ministries who are all actively involved in the implementation of CEDAW in Vanuatu. I am pleased to introduce the rest of my delegation:

- Mr. Setariki Waqanitong, Policy Advisor to the Ministry of Justice and Community Service;
- Mrs. Apisai Tokon, National Reproductive Health, family planning coordinator, Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health;
- Mr. Roy Ben, Gender and Child Protection focal point, Policy Planning Unit, Ministry of Education and Training,
- Mrs. Jenny Tevi, Acting Head, Treaty and Conventions Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation,
- Mr. Joe Junior Natuman, Assistant Senior State Counsel, Parliamentary Counsel's Unit, State Law Office

For the Vanuatu Government, gender equality is a fundamental factor of human rights, democracy and social justice and for sustainable development.

Since Vanuatu's initial 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> combined periodic report in 2007, new policies and legislation to address CEDAW in the Country and thus been reported in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Periodic report in 2014.

The Ministry of Justice and Community Services was established in 2006 to independently address the issues of justice as it was formerly under the Prime Minister's Office. This has assisted greatly in the monitoring and evaluation on the compliance to Convention on then Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women. Madam Chair Lady and distinguish expert members, I am glad to confirm that as of last year, the Government has been able to increase the capacity of the Ministry of Justice through implementation of a new structure which was proposed in 2013-2014.

With the current Capacity, the Ministry has now formed the Justice and Community Services Head of Agencies Working Group which include Judiciary, Public Prosecutors Office, Public Solicitor's Office, Police Force, Correction Services, Law Reform Commission, Customary Land Management Office, Department of Women Affairs – Disability and Child Desk and Council of Chief.

The Justice Sector Agencies currently implements a 7 sector strategic plan 2014 – 2017 monitored by the Ministry of Justice and Community Services new capacity structure.

The Agencies Sector agencies include ;

1. Customary disputes resolution – STRENGTHENING THE KASTOM SYSTEM OF MANAGEMENT AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND THE LINKAGES WITH THE FORMAL SYSTEM.
2. Juvenile justice – DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTEGRATED JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM INSIDE THE SECTOR.
3. Victim support - IMPROVE THE SECTOR RESPONSE TO PROTECTION AND SERVICES PROVISION FOR VICTIM SUPPORT.
4. Infrastructure needs - DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN.
5. Human rights – DEVELOPING OF A NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF TREATIES AND CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS.
6. Crime and impacts of crime - DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE CRIME PREVENTION AND PROTECTION STRATEGY THAT ENGAGES GOVERNMENT, COMMUNITIES, KASTOM, AUTHORITY, BUSINESS, and NGOS.
7. Case progression - REDUCE UNNECESSARY DELAYS IN CASE MANAGEMENT ACROSS THE SYSTEM.

Ministry of Justice and Community Services (MJCS) developed a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (MEP) for use by the sector to track its progress against the Justice and Community Services Sector Strategy 2014-2017. The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan was approved by Heads of Agency in December 2014 and has been implemented since January 2015. The MEP contains performance indicators which facilitate measurement of the extent of implementation of the Justice and Community Services Sector Strategic

In addition, the Government to our response to the list of issues raised by the Committee, the government has taken some important policy and legislative changes in the past 3 years, Committee to take note on the following;

1. Establishment of working Group on Gender statistics data collection and dissemination and ensuring the Inclusion of Gender sensitive indicators in National Sustainable Development Plan which still in draft, now replace the PAA.
2. A Gender Cluster was formed in the National Disaster Office post cyclone Pam to address the needs of mothers and girls in the recovery process assisted by UNFPA.
3. National Children Policy and National Child Protection Policy has been developed with a lot of emphasize on promoting and strengthening community based child protection.

4. National Disability Policy Review has been carried out in 2015 recommend for greater support for women and girls with disability in leadership and participation without any forms of discrimination.
5. Government is working to have legislative amendments of Penal Code according to the Vanuatu Law Reform Commission review in 2013 and binding Court decisions for the Ministry of Justice and Community Services.
6. Vanuatu Reproductive Health Policy 2015 and Implementation Strategy 2016-2018 which will focus on 7 policy areas including Family Planning, STI's including HIV and Gender-based violence and sexual assault, incorporating also an Implementation Strategy and Plan, 2016 – 2018, and its M&E Plan and Framework, this project is being sponsored *Rmncah Reproductive Maternal Neonatal Child Adolescent Health Strategy*, this is jointly funded by the Government and Development Partners. Purpose really is to Strengthen the Health System, Depending on priorities, funds continue to be manoeuvred.
7. Rmncah has assisted in provinces in identifying suitable personnel working with UN Agencies such as UNICEF to go in to strengthen the health system in the provinces.
8. Vanuatu National Strategic Plan on HIC and STIS 2014 – 2018 still in working in draft but is in its final stage, guides the implementation of controlling and preventing the spread of HIV and STIS.
9. The number of Sexual assault and domestic violence seen in health facilities around Vanuatu in 2012 & 2014 is 271, number of female cases of domestic violence is 503 compared to males on 163 during that period.
10. Total number of Cervical Cancer between 2012 – 2014 is 13, for Breast Cancer 3, no case of prostate cancer was recorded in the above years.
11. 2010 – 2013 there were several factors that affected the delivery picture, now in 2014 and 2015 there is a Health Information System Unit that captures the data and thus making it more transparent.
12. Total Deliveries in 2010 was 2695, in 2011 was 2480, 2012 was 3126, 2013 was 2938, 2014 was 8879 and in 2015 recorded 8457 so was a slight decrease but still teenage pregnancy increased 2014 in age group 251 and 2015 to 315. Jaydelle was introduced in 2014 to prevent unwanted pregnancy among teenagers of 15 – 19, total of 36 users. Apart from Jaydelle records show that the same age group used 1550 family planning methods.
13. There is the need for more awareness on behavioural styles especially on unsafe sex, using traditional medicines to cure when the virus is still alive,. One way to address this will be to insert in the curriculum.
14. Other contraceptives include the following : Depo Provera – 5682 used in 2015  
Microgynon – 3726 “ “  
Microlut – 2292  
IUCD – 735

Total of teenage users in 2015 was 12,476.



15. The Family Life Education (FLE) syllabus and teachers guide have been developed and is currently going through Minor changes and awaiting verification from Vanuatu Qualification Authority (VQA).
16. Progress made on mainstreaming gender into curriculum has been done to get rid of stereotypes such as curriculum materials ( graphics and language used), VIT & TVET courses and technology courses in secondary schools
17. The Inclusive Education Policy (2010) has advocated for accessibility in terms of physical access, curriculum development and teacher training.

Madam Chairlady and distinguish experts, I would like to make mention of some specific impact of implementation of policy and legislative changes in realizing gender equality in the past three years.

1. With the amendment to Municipality Act in 2013, there is now the introduction of 30% quota of women seats within Port Vila Municipal Council, there has been stability in attendance of council sitting by members, there is reduction in debt incurred by previous Municipal Council from 96 million Vatu to 3 million vatu in 18 months and the establishment of business arms of the council with revenue of VT10, 000,000 for the effective operation of Municipal arms.
2. From .....The constant change in Government has also affected the enactment and proposed amendment to the legislation to address changes
3. The PAA prioritises reproductive health through 'promoting child spacing and reducing teenage pregnancy, and establishes a number of reproductive health indicators through which to measure performance, including maternal and child mortality, antenatal care coverage, skilled attendance at birth, adolescent fertility, family planning and incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- 4.