



# REPUBLIC OF VANUATU

Statement by

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Madam Chair, Excellences, Honorable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Representatives from Development Partners, Civil societies, NGOs , Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am very pleased to be part of this 56<sup>th</sup> Commission on the Status of Women and be able to make this statement on behalf of my country, Vanuatu

The theme of this year's commission is a timely one as it is central for the attainment of the MDG Goals for 2015 and for sustainable development. As such, Vanuatu wishes to associate its comments with the statement made by Honorable minister for Women of Samoa on behalf of our Pacific Islands Forum member countries in commending the reports of the Secretary General on the theme of our discussions.

Vanuatu Government remains committed to gender equality and women's empowerment of women and girls through its various strategic plans, legislation, training and project in partnership with development partners. NGOs and civil society organization. The revised Priority Action Agenda for 2012 – 2015 which is the Government's highest policy and planning document now reflects the commitment of Government to Gender equality and empowerment of women. After 15 years of lobbying and awareness raising, the Vanuatu Family Protection Bill became law in 2009. This act now criminalizes all cases of Gender based violence in the country. The national implementation framework has been developed for all law and justice agencies in delivering justice to everyone.

In Education sector , Gender parity has now been achieved on school enrollment at the primary school level and efforts are being made to achieving this at the secondary school level by 2020. The 2011 Revised National Curriculum has a change in focus to more civic and moral education for national development. The first national population and Skills Development policies and strategies have also been developed in complementing the implementation of the revised curriculum. The need to provide quality education throughout our education systems, the high illiteracy rate amongst rural women, high rate of girls drop out from secondary education level and implementing an inclusive education system remain as some of our challenges for this sector.

On economic development, rural women have access to a micro credit scheme, the Vanwods to engage in business and for basic needs at home such as children's school fees and basic home equipment.

On health issues, continuous progress and improvements have been made in the areas particularly of cervical screening, primary health care, antenatal care and malaria in the rural areas.

Finally, the inequalities and access to affordable services for Food security, business development and employment remain the challenge of our rural women and farmers. The complexities of rural life, the dual administrative and economic systems coupled with the multiple roles played by women in Vanuatu society today requires much thought in terms of focus for strategic policy and planning, resource allocation and decision making for rural development within the overall national development framework in addressing women's empowerment and gender equality.

**Thank you**