



## UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

### Press Release

#### UN Supports Vanuatu to Upgrade its Passenger Data Exchange Systems

**Port Vila (Vanuatu), 30 April 2025** - This week, the Government of Vanuatu became the third Member State in the Pacific Community to complete a national consultation with the [United Nations Countering Terrorist Travel \(CT Travel\) Programme](#).

A three-day consultation plans to introduce Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) systems and upgrade the existing border management information system "Migration Information and Data Analysis System" (MIDAS) that contribute towards an enhanced national capacity to identify, detect, and intercept foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) and other serious criminals.

This consultation was held under the auspices of International Organization for Migration (IOM) Vanuatu's Japan funded project on *Strengthening Capacity of Border Control for Responding to Infectious Diseases in Pacific Island Countries*. In mid-2024, the project facilitated the launch of MIDAS at Port Vila and Santo international airports and provided MIDAS mobile kits for immigration clearance purposes at maritime borders.

The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) in partnership with IOM in Vanuatu facilitated the national consultation to identify specific capacity-building support and technical assistance needs based on the national counter-terrorism architecture and priorities and the assessment Vanuatu's existing level of API and PNR implementation at the legal, operational, and technical levels.

Over 60 representatives from the Government of Vanuatu's national agencies responsible for border management and passenger processing including: Department of Vanuatu Immigration and Passport Services (VIS), Department of Customs and Inland Revenue, Vanuatu Police Force, Ministry of Justice, Department of Communications and Digital Transformation (DCDT), as well as the transportation industry and a regional organization participated in the consultation.

Participants mapped existing national border management capabilities and discussed next steps to establish a national system to collect and process passenger data, in accordance with international standards and recommended practices and human rights principles.

**Motaz Al-Rababah**, UNOCT CT Travel Programme Management Officer highlighted the importance of the discussions and noted, *"This consultation launches our long-term partnership with Vanuatu to establish a fully operational API and PNR system that is in line with international standards. The initiative will significantly strengthen Vanuatu's compliance with international security obligations while simultaneously modernizing border management processes to meet 21st-century challenges."*

The event concluded with the signing of a Letter of Agreement formalizing the new partnership under the framework of the CT Travel Programme.

During the signing ceremony, **Leith Veremaito, Director General of Internal Affairs** welcomed the partnership, which reinforces *“the importance of integrating API and PNR as a key priority in enhancing the country’s national security, counter-terrorism, immigration and border management capabilities.”*

During the ceremony, **Naohisa OKUDA, Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Vanuatu**, expressed his support for the initiative, noting, *“The workshop exemplifies Japan’s enduring commitment to helping Pacific Island nations build resilience against a wide range of security threats. Japan believes that upgrading MIDAS to receive API data directly contributes to the project’s objective in enhancing seamless border management through advanced infrastructure, equipment, and capacity-building.”*

As a next step, the CT Travel Programme will finalize a comprehensive roadmap with recommendations to guide implementation in Vanuatu via a phased approach. Once the roadmap is formalized, the CT Travel Programme will work with national partners to provide technical assistance to enhance Vanuatu’s legal framework, operational capabilities, support with transport industry engagement, and technical infrastructure including the planned deployment of the United Nations’ – owned ‘goTravel’ software solution. This full support will empower Vanuatu to further enhance its national security, comply with international counter-terrorism obligations, and modernize its immigration and border management processes.

Within the framework of the CT Travel Programme, UNOCT and IOM are working together to develop and strengthen Member States’ API and PNR capabilities. This includes joint efforts to support interoperability between the UN ‘goTravel’ system and IOM ‘s MIDAS system. This initiative is expected to provide front-line border control officers with enriched passenger data, enabling facilitation of legitimate travelers, and allowing the Government to allocate resources towards those who pose a risk to national security.

For more information about the CT Travel Programme, click [here](#).

For more about IOM Vanuatu’s Immigration and Border Governance Programme, click [here](#).

For further information, please contact:

- ❖ Siripa Anuntawong, Immigration and Border Governance Project Officer, IOM Vanuatu at [snuntawong@iom.int](mailto:snuntawong@iom.int)
- ❖ Antoine Andary, Associate Public Information and Communications Officer, UNOCT at [antoine.andary@un.org](mailto:antoine.andary@un.org)

