

**GOVERNMENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF VANUATU**

**MINISTRY OF  
AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK,  
FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND  
BIOSECURITY**

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**GOUVERNEMENT DE LA  
REPUPLIQUE DE VANUATU**

**MINISTERE de L'AGRICULTURE,  
de L'ELEVAGE, de la  
SYLVICULTURE, des PECHES et  
de la BIOSECURITE**

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**OFFICE OF THE MINISTER**

**Agri-Tourism Policy Setting Workshop**

*organized by the Government of Vanuatu and CTA  
in collaboration with ICCA and PIPSO*

Port Vila, Vanuatu, 25-27 May 2016

**OFFICIAL OPENING SPEECH**

Delivered by Hon Matai Seremaiah Nawalu  
*Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity*

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Colleagues from the Private Sector,

Ms. Isolina Boto, Head of Brussels Office  
EU/ACP Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation;

Mr. Sakiusa Tubuna, Sub-Regional Coordinator, Pacific Islands  
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD);

Ms. Ena Harvey, IICA Representative in Barbados  
Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA);

Ms. Mereia Volavola, CEO  
Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation (PIPSO);

Ms. Kathryn Beckett, Development Counsellor

New Zealand High Commission, Port Vila;

Mr. Matthew Harding, Director  
Governance for Growth, Australian High Commission, Port Vila;

Mr. Lennox Vuti, Director of Research  
South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO), Suva;

Dr Henry Sanday, Private Sector Advisor, MSG Secretariat;

Ms Cheryl Thomas, Policy Research Officer,  
Pacific Agriculture Policy Project (PAPP)/SPC, Suva;

Mr Jimmy Andeng, Representative  
International Finance Cooperation (IFC), World Bank Office, Port Vila;

Mr. George Borugu, Acting Director General  
Ministry of Trade, Tourism, Cooperatives, Industry & Ni-Vanuatu Business;

Mr. Jean Jacques Rory, Acting Director General, Ministry of Health;

Senior Officials from the Government, Ladies and Gentlemen:

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A very good morning and warm WELCOME to you all, those who have come from regional organisations and from Europe and Madam Ena Harvey all the way from Barbados in The Caribbean region.

I sincerely welcome you to this very important national Agri-Tourism Policy Setting Workshop.

Let me first of all thank the Director and staff of the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) notably acknowledging the presence of Madam Isolina Boto and her Brussels office for your commitment to this important exercise.

By the same token, I sincerely thank the Rome-based International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) for generously supporting the cause of agricultural development in Vanuatu and in the Pacific and for providing funding support to strengthen the CTA's outreach to remote ACP member countries such as Vanuatu.

Allow me this opportunity to also thank our sub-regional, regional and international partners such as PIPSO, the MSG Secretariat, SPC, SPTO, the PAPP project and NZ Aid and the Australian Government's Governance for Growth (GfG) program and the EU for your ongoing support to the development of our two very important sectors - Tourism and Agriculture - in Vanuatu.

The Vanuatu Government recently made a firm decision for the first time since independence, to accord strong financial commitment and dedication to increasing budgetary support to the productive sector under the '100 Day Plan' of Hon. Prime Minister Charlot Salwai's Government, and to remain committed to this vision from 2017 onward.

Vanuatu is still recovering today from the adverse challenges posed by TC Pam in March 2015 and the El Niño which has ravaged the country for well over half a year.

But Vanuatu is a resilient country. We are very mindful of the fact that Vanuatu is considered a 'hotspot' location when it comes to the challenges of climate change in the Asia-Pacific region.

That though will not deter our resolve and our dreams to make Agri-Tourism work for our economy and for our people.

Mindful of the alarming rise and prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the region, where for instance Vanuatu has recently been ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in the world on the issue of diabetic cases in the country, we have structured this very important workshop to also link Trade and Agriculture to our Health Sector.

In that regard, on behalf of the Deputy Prime Minister/ Minister of Trade and the Ministry of Agriculture, I pleased to note the presence of the Acting DG and very senior officials of the Ministry of Health and of the World Health Organization office in Vila at this very important workshop.

I also thank the Hon. Minister of Health for championing major reforms at the Ministry of Health lately to address this common enemy called 'NCDs' in the country, which the Director General of the UN's Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) recently referred to as an 'epidemic'.

I look forward to our health officials' contributions over the course of the next three days to this important exercise as we forge linkages and closer collaborative efforts to jointly addressing NCD a bit more systematically and jointly than ever before.

The need for us to talk and work more closely together today is of paramount importance.

## **AGRI-TOURISM – THE CASE FOR VANUATU**

The concept note you each have in your folders details the background, context and the opportunities available for Vanuatu to seriously tap into the 'agrifood sector'.

We have organised this workshop to address three key objectives:

*i) to promote linkages between the agrifood sector and the tourism industry to increase sustainable local sourcing through an agritourism policy in Vanuatu;*

*ii) to increase the understanding and awareness of the current deficiencies in the supply of produce along the value chain and the actions needed; and*

*iii) to design inter-sectoral and inclusive policies which promote Public-Private-Partnerships (PPPs) for improved local food use and consumption.*

The timing for this very important policy setting workshop for agritourism in Vanuatu at this point is perfect.

Within a matter of less than 10 months since the *Pacific Agritourism Week* in Nadi from 1-3 July 2015 organised by PIPSO, SPC and the CTA, and the *2<sup>nd</sup> Caribbean Agribusiness Forum* in Barbados in October 2015, Vanuatu has taken major steps forward to promoting and advocating for agri-tourism development in the country.

Vanuatu has, since December 2015 established an Agri-tourism Steering Committee (ATSC) comprising senior officials of both the Ministries of Trade and Agriculture. Recently a taskforce was launched to prepare for our hosting of the first ever 'Agri-Tourism Week' in late June this year. And to add to that, Vanuatu will be hosting the first ever Pacific Week of Agriculture (PWA) in May 2017, emulating the model of our colleagues in The Caribbean.

On that note, let me take a brief moment here to sincerely thank Madam Ena Harvey of IICA in Barbados for availing time out of your very busy schedules to come over to Vanuatu at this time to help share your expertise and experiences with us and to help Vanuatu advance in its vision of developing agri-tourism/agro-tourism. Please convey my and the Vanuatu Government's sincere gratitude to your Director General Dr Victor Villalobos for this kind gesture of Pacific/Caribbean cooperation and collaboration.

A few more details on the policy setting I will allow my Director General to brief participants on during the First session of the workshop today.

In our midst today we also have Mr. Ross Hopkins, the consultant who has been selected to help prepare Vanuatu's Agri-Tourism Strategy. I understand Mr. Hopkins that you are not new to Vanuatu, which is very good to know. At this juncture, let me sincerely thank the New Zealand Government for funding this exercise in order to help the Government of Vanuatu better map out its annual plans re: agritourism development.

I am fully aware of the important role that the South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) plays in promoting tourism in the Pacific region. SPTO has been around for quite a while. And whilst its efforts on the tourism side are noted, we would like to see it play a stronger role in linking Agriculture to Tourism in the Pacific and more so, here in Vanuatu. Let me therefore thank the Director of Research Mr. Vuti and also for the presence of Madam Linda Kalpoi – SPTO Board member, for both your presence at this workshop.

Though we are aware of the inherent challenges that our desire to push for agri-tourism will entail, I remind us all of the words of former US Secretary of State Mr Collen Powel who once said, 'a dream doesn't become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work'.

Vanuatu is prepared to work hard to achieve this dream. We seek stronger engagement of our donor partners in this drive. We call on our colleagues within the Health sector to think outside the box and to also see agriculture and tourism as vital linkages to the great work you are already doing to try and combat NCDs.

And to our very own senior officials and staff at the Ministry of Agriculture and Trade, as Minister responsible and on behalf of the Trade Minister, I want to see your full commitment to this very important workshop and agritourism work for the country.

On this note, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of my colleague Minister of Trade and Deputy Prime Minister, and on behalf of the CTA/IFAD and PIPSO collaboration, I wish you all a very fruitful three days of deliberations, and look forward to the outcomes of the workshop and ways forward....

*I now have the honour and take this opportunity to declare this 3-Day Workshop on Agri-Tourism Policy Setting in Port Vila ...OFFICIALLY OPEN....*