



December 12, 2013

**Right Hon. MOANNA CARCASSES
KATOTAI KALOSIL, M.P.
Honourable Prime Minister
Minister Responsible for ICT and Telecommunications**

**Official Speech: Honourable Prime Minister at the Launch
of Three Major ICT Policies**

Ministers, Directors-General, CEO's, Government Chief Information Officer, Regulator, Directors, Distinguished Officials, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Today I have the great pleasure of officially launching three major policies in the area of information and communications technologies, or ICTs. These measures were adopted by our Council of Ministers last month, and are now the policies of the Republic of Vanuatu. As you know, the three are:

- The National ICT Policy,
- The National Universal Access Policy, and
- The National Cyber-security Policy.

Together these three policies set the roadmap for the future of ICT development in Vanuatu. These three policies help to implement our national vision of "a Just, Educated, Healthy and Wealthy Vanuatu".

ICTs are critical to achieving this vision in every sector and field of endeavour. It is vital that all new programs and

projects be planned with ICTs involved, as enablers of success, of openness, and of outreach to citizens.

ICTs “supercharge” economic development. ICTs can substantially improve e-democracy, openness, and transparency. ICTs are essential to e-commerce and e-government. ICTs are vital to our children’s future.

Adoption of these three policies places Vanuatu in a leadership position in Melanesia and the Pacific. This is an achievement to be proud of.

We have several other recent ICT developments to be proud of. First and foremost is the arrival of the submarine cable in Mele Bay. This important cable is now complete. It is now linked in to our Vanuatu Internet Exchange point, is available to all commercial operators, and is linked to our Government Broadband Network. This is a tremendous achievement.

Second is a study underway in Vanuatu by the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organization and the United Nations University. This is a study of “mobile e-government” or “M-Gov.” This study recognizes that mobile penetration is very high in Vanuatu, and that mobile is the wave of the future. The study will develop an M-Gov strategy that will support the three major policies we are launching today. It will identify individual mobile e-government applications that can be launched quickly and in the future. Importantly, this detailed study and strategy will be the first of its kind in the world! We are already an ICT leader in Melanesia and the Pacific. This study will help make us a world leader in ICTs.

Third, we have recently heard from the World Bank that they are very impressed by our progress in ICTs. They praised our efforts in telecom regulation, stating that “TRR is one of the leading ICT regulators in the Pacific.” In e-government the World Bank noted the “considerable progress” made by our

Chief Information Officer's office. The World Bank offered to provide grants and low or no interest loans in ICTs. In general we are hesitant to add to our debt burden. But these terms are so favourable, ICTs are so important, and under-investment in ICTs in the past has been so high, that we will begin immediate discussion of this important ICT offer.

Fourth, I am very proud of the way in which all this progress has been made. The three policies we are launching today went through a very thorough public consultation process, involving all sectors and groups in society. In fact, I think this consultation process set the bar very high for all future government policies. The openness and transparency of the process again places Vanuatu in a leadership position in the Pacific. It helps show people that Vanuatu is one of the best places in the Pacific to invest in ICTs. We really, really listen to our businesses, operators, consumers and the public.

So let me thank all the people involved in these exciting efforts. You have done a great job. Congratulations!

But don't rest now. You can take a little break for Christmas. But then I want our efforts in ICTs increased!

In 2014, we must make sure that everyone takes advantage of the submarine cable. We must develop action plans in each sector for using ICTs. All agencies and donors must recognize – and this is now official policy -- that a reasonable portion of all project and operating budgets must be devoted to ICTs, as enablers.

In 2014 we must get external donor assistance and more inward investment in ICTs. We must take advantage of our high mobile penetration to launch M-Gov applications.

We must begin to use ICTs to preserve and celebrate our unique languages and cultures. We must use ICTs in vital areas such as disaster warning and preparedness. We must

get mobile banking off the ground – now. And we must get ICTs into our schools and rural areas – fast!

So, congratulations to all those who worked so hard on these three policies and all our ICT achievements. These policies are a great Christmas present for 2013. Let's make sure that Christmas 2014 brings even more reasons to celebrate!

Tank you tumas and merci beaucoup.

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