



April 8th 2014

**Hon. Moana CARCASSES KATOKAI KALOSIL
Honourable Prime Minister of Vanuatu and
Minister Responsible for ICTs and Telecommunications**

**Official Speech: Honourable Prime Minister at the Pacific Islands
Telecommunications Association (PITA) Annual General Meeting in
Port Vila, Vanuatu 7- 11 April 2014**

Honourable Ministers, Government Officials, Telecommunications
CEOs, Members of the Press, Distinguished Guests, Technical
Experts, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bien venue and welkam long Vanuatu!

As Prime Minister and Minister responsible for ICTs and
Telecommunications in the Republic of Vanuatu, it is a pleasure to
speak today at the opening of the Pacific Islands
Telecommunications Association (PITA) 2014 Annual General
Meeting.

Today I will take a few minutes to talk with you about our thanks to
PITA; my country; our ICT achievements; and our goals and views
on telecommunications development.

First, I want to thank PITA for its collaborative and important efforts
to improve, promote, facilitate and provide telecommunications
services in the Pacific region.

PITA has done excellent work in fraud prevention, with careful analyses of problems in “grey-routing,” “re-filing,” “number hijacking,” “SIM card fraud,” and “revenue assurance.” And PITA has helped guide Vanuatu and other countries in achieving successes in ICTs.

So many thanks to PITA and to all its Members, Associate Members, and Government Members.

Second, our country. Vanuatu is an archipelago of 82 islands and just over 250,000 proud Melanesian people. It is one of the most exotic island countries on Earth, with beautiful beaches, excellent resorts, and a mild climate year round. We have the best wreck dive in the world, and fantastic snorkeling and diving. We have the most accessible volcano in the world, which puts on an amazing show every five minutes. Our people are open and friendly, with no ethnic tensions. Our government is democratic and welcoming to foreign investors.

Our islanders are so friendly and happy that we were twice voted as the happiest country on earth!

This is “My Vanuatu.”

We hope you will stay a while after the conference and see a bit of our amazing country.

Third, our ICT achievements. Our people, our press, and all our political parties support the expansion of ICTs and Telecommunications.

We have an open market with two major operators. Vanuatu has an excellent, independent Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Regulator who is fair and open. Our mobile penetration has gone from just five percent to over 90 percent of households, in just six years.

We have built a \$28 million dollar Government Broadband Network that functions extremely well. We established the first Internet Exchange Point – IXP -- in the Pacific islands.

We established the Integrated Government Initiative, our version of e-government, which is installing modern applications in all government ministries and provincial head offices throughout Vanuatu.

Our government has inventoried all its ICT assets, and has established an Enterprise Architecture for our ICT systems. We have created the post of Chief Information Officer, one of the first in the Pacific, filled it with a native Vanuatu expert, and given him extensive responsibilities and an active staff.

On November 7th 2013 we passed three major policies, namely:

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

All of these policies were drafted using experts, drawing on international experience, but customizing them to local conditions. All the policies were subjected to very broad public consultation, including video-conferences with villagers and chiefs in outer islands.

The arrival of the Interchange Submarine Cable from Fiji will totally change the ICT and Telecommunications landscape of Vanuatu. It will link Vanuatu to the outside world with fantastic speed and capacity, for the first time in our history. All of our major operators are now signed up to the cable, and are in the process of rolling out these marvelous benefits to customers.

Because of all this activity, Vanuatu has moved up in the United Nations ratings of e-readiness and e-government, by almost an entire standard deviation, in just two years.

All these success are a result of a multistakeholder approach between the government, private sector, and civil society, which makes Vanuatu one of the best places in the Pacific to invest in ICTs.

We are committed to using ICTs to achieve our national vision of “A just, educated, healthy and wealthy Vanuatu.”

Third, our views and goals. Vanuatu sees ICTs as a key enabler and energizer for our efforts across all sectors. We see ICTs as important in themselves, and also key in achieving all our Millennium Development Goals.

In our National ICT Policy, we have directed all ministries, policy-makers and major project managers to allocate a reasonable percentage of their budgets to ICTs, as enablers of success.

We think that mobile broadband is the wave of the future. We know that the United Nations recently stated that mobile broadband is the “fastest growing technology in human history.” Mobile broadband is growing at an amazing 30% per year, compounded.

Vanuatu is determined to participate in this important trend. Our Universal Access Policy directs our operators to connect 98% of our population by 1 January 2018, mostly with mobile broadband. A major emphasis will be on connecting schools, health facilities and public offices.

Our goal is to be a leader in ICTs in Melanesia and the Pacific. We think we are well on the way to achieving this.

We believe that international ICT fora need more input from Pacific island nations, and we are ready to step forward into that gap.

In conclusion, I want to thank PITA for choosing Vanuatu for this important meeting. I want to thank TVL, our host, and the other sponsors. I hope you enjoy Port Vila, and I wish all participants a happy and successful meeting.

Merci beaucoup!

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