



REPUBLIC OF VANUATU

Statement by

Ms. Dorosday Dhoron Kwaathorn
Director, Department of Women's Affairs

On the occasion of Fifty-Sixth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

United Nations Headquarters, 20th Floor, 15 July 2012

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 56th Commission on the Status of Women and be able to make this statement on behalf of the Vanuatu Government.

The theme of this year's commission is 'Gender Equality: Accelerating Action for the MDG Goals for 2015 and Sustainable Development'. 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 her commending the reports of the Secretary-General on the theme of 'Gender Equality'.

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

In Education sector, Gender parity has now been achieved at school level in the primary school level and efforts are being made to achieve this at secondary school level by 2020. The 2011 Revised National Curriculum has been developed to be more child and gender friendly and to address the needs of the rural population and Skills Development centres and strategies have also been developed in complementing the implementation of the revised curriculum. The need to provide quality education throughout our education system, the high literacy 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 Vanwads to engage in business and fulfil basic needs of items such as children's school fees and basic home equipment.

On health issues, continuous progress and improvements been made in medical services 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 and 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 an intricate society, require serious thought in terms of focus on 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