



**Human Rights Council**

12<sup>th</sup> session

Item 6: UPR: Vanuatu

25 September 2009

Speaker: Br. James Jolley, FMS

*Please check against delivery*

Mr. President,

Franciscans International<sup>1</sup> welcomes the presence of the Vanuatu delegation today. We understand the constraints and delays in providing its comments, but regret that these were only distributed during this segment.

We are pleased with Vanuatu's commitment to achieve free education for all children from grade 1 to grade 8 by 2010 and its acceptance of the recommendations put forward by Algeria, Germany and the Philippines (Recommendation 42).

Additionally, we recommend the Republic of Vanuatu to commit to finding effective ways to support children whose families cannot afford to pay the additional expenses related to compulsory primary education.

With approximately 20% of all children being selected for secondary education, we encourage Vanuatu to seek ways of expanding its schooling infrastructure to enhance the capacity for all children to have access to free education beyond Grade 8.

We recommend Vanuatu to consider a secondary school curriculum that is creative in its diversity in order to address the challenges faced by the large number of unemployed youth, a curriculum that can cater for the diversity of children from the villages as well as the larger towns.

Furthermore, we strongly encourage the provision of vocational/education services in order to assist young people in finding paid and meaningful employment.

Additional to the recommendation by Canada and France (Recommendation 43) on the promotion of efforts to keep children in schools, particularly girls, we recommend Vanuatu to take steps to collect statistical data and analyze, in particular, the causes for the low transition rate from primary to secondary school and drop-out rates affecting schooling.

<sup>1</sup> This statement is also made on behalf of the Marist Foundation for International Solidarity (FMSI)

The recommendation made by Austria (Recommendation 20) on the promotion of awareness-raising programs on the importance of education of children should be followed up to positively influence cultural attitudes in relation to education.

Finally, we are pleased with Vanuatu's standing invitation to Special Procedures. In view of challenges faced in education, the Special Rapporteur on Education's visit could contribute to the improvement of the right to education in the country, as well as an opportunity to share best practices with other countries in the region.

Thank you Mr. President.