

**Presentation of Franciscans International and Marist International Solidarity Foundation**  
**Pre-session for UPR Vanuatu, 14 December 2108**  
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Mi glad tumas blong mitim yu!

We would like to thank to the UPR Infor for providing us the opportunity to make our presentation today. It is very unfortunate that our colleague from the Pacific could not come to Geneva to present this submission.

Our submission focuses on two issues, the rights of the child and the impact of climate change on human rights. I will speak on the issue of the rights of the child, with the specific focus on **Children with disabilities in Vanuatu**. On the issue of impact of climate change and human rights, my colleague from Earth Justice will incorporate our concern in his presentation.

### **Children with disabilities in Vanuatu**

In 2014, Vanuatu accepted four recommendations on the rights of people with disabilities, namely continue to promote legislation and actions to eliminate discrimination and strengthen protection of rights of vulnerable groups such as women, children and people with disabilities; Continue its work progressing towards implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), including through prompt implementation of the new Building Code for the Public Works Department to ensure buildings and amenities are disability-friendly; Adopt measures to ensure the accessibility of persons with disabilities to places such as schools, hospitals, markets and public offices; and Continue with the measures aimed at improving the protection and integration of persons with disabilities, in particular in the areas of access to education and public transport.

We received information that most of the disabled children in Vanuatu do not have access to schools. There are no special schools for such children, the government only provides for mainstream schools. Some disabled children tried to attend these mainstream schools, but the majority could not cope and withdrew. We recognize government's program called "Early Intervention Program", initiated by Vanuatu Society for Disabled People (VSDP) which aims to provide effective early intervention services to support and prepare children with disabilities to access education. However, many children with disabilities, do not progress academically or drop out from schools prematurely because teachers in mainstream classes are not well trained, well supported or provided with appropriate resources. In addition, children with disabilities are often not capable of coping with main stream classes.

Concerning the inclusive education system, Vanuatu has yet to come up with one. Having an inclusive education system will help the Government and the Ministry of Education to identify resources (material and human) which can help to deliver education recognising the situation and rights of those who are, or have been, excluded from learning and participating. There are already two Inclusive schools in Vanuatu that help children with disabilities but no special schools. These two inclusive schools are Fresh Wota Bilingual School in Port Vila and Santo East School in Loganville, Espiritu Santo Island.

However, there is a need for more inclusive schools in order to realise the vision of the Inclusive Education Policy & Strategic Plan 2010-2020: "By 2020 all schools will have inclusive practices to meet the educational needs of all students" to be achieved.

Finally, we would like to recommend to the Government of Vanuatu the following:

- 1. To continue to find relevant and appropriate ways to come up with more inclusive schools for children with disabilities, especially by providing support to the Early Intervention Program**
- 2. To formalise and implement EI Curriculum / Early Intervention Program through capacity building for field workers and those who are involved**

3. **Through its the Child Desk of the Ministry of Justice and Community service with, to assist Child Protection Officers to go out to rural areas to create awareness about the rights to education, including the children with disabilities.**
4. **To ensure all relevant departments and ministries within the Government of Vanuatu work collaboratively with non-governmental organizations and other service providers to establish community-based rehabilitation to help children with disabilities.**

### **Human Rights and Climate Change**

In the second UPR cycle in 2014, Vanuatu accepted three recommendations related to climate change: Continue to seek technical assistance to address the specific problem of the disproportionately negative impact of climate change on women and children; Continue to develop awareness-raising and action programmes for its population, with the necessary international cooperation and solidarity of the community of nations, in order to deal with the impacts of climate change; Continue its current momentum and efforts on democracy, good governance, legislative reform and capacity building for national human rights mechanisms, with more focus on employment for youth, education, health care, social welfare and preparedness and resilience in response to climate change.

We acknowledge the Government of Vanuatu's policy Vanuatu Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2016 - 2030, which aims to prepare the nation to be resilient to the impacts of climate change and disaster risks. Furthermore, Committee Disaster and Climate Change Committees (CDCCC) have been set up in every province.

Due to the Cyclone Pam in March 2015, water systems were damaged throughout the regions and many drinking water supplies were contaminated. Cyclone Pam also wiped out 96% of the island's crops, putting the country's food security in jeopardy for years to come. The damages to roads and infrastructure, such as public health centres, schools, affected Vanuatu's population severely. The Cyclone damaged both the country's main tertiary hospital in Port Villa and the main hospital on the island of Tanna. World Health Organisation (WHO) reported that at least 51 health facilities were damaged. In addition, those affected by the cyclone continued to face life-threatening risks from a lack of food and safe water, growing disease outbreaks and a health system struggling to get back to provide services for the population

We recommend the Government of Vanuatu the following:

1. **To ensure the provision of clean drinking water and sanitation for all, and availability of adequate food, especially in times of climate change related disasters.**
2. **To provide sufficient care and health centre infrastructures in each province to shelter the population during the times of climate change related disasters.**
3. **To take measures for alternative livelihood for the population, especially for those who are prone to climate change related disasters.**
4. **To effectively implement the Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2016 – 2030 so as to guarantee the protection and enjoyment of their human rights in times of climate change related disasters.**
5. **To provide technical and financial support for the Committee Disaster and Climate Change Committees (CDCCC) to ensure their role in providing services to the community affected by climate change related disasters.**

***Tangkyu tumas!***