



United Nations
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
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United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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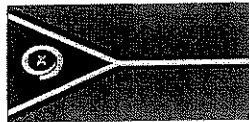


International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop on School Education and Disaster Risk Reduction 8-10 October 2007, Bangkok, Thailand

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Ministry of Education Statement

By Hon Minister Leinavo Tasso Thompson

Courtesy Statement:

Mr Chairman, distinguish guest ladies and gentlemen, coming from Melanesian county I speak today on behalf of Vanuatu and Fiji. Firstly we would like to acknowledge the invitation we received to participate in this important workshop here in Bangkok. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the organisers and especially the sponsoring agencies to commit so that we can avail our representation to this important conference. We also commend the Host Country, Thailand for all the arrangement and the hospitality provided.

Being the new Madam Minister of Education in Vanuatu, I share and have the same concerns as a mother to care and educate children so they can better take care of themselves when they are grown up. Though this is the first time a Government Minister of Education attends we acknowledged that children of today will become leaders and decision makers of our future country policies, therefore, it is timely to address these issue at this highest level. Similarly, disasters are really unwanted business that becomes enemy to family, society and country at large. Undoubtedly, mothers, children, elderly and disable people are the most vulnerable human beings when there are disaster impacts in any country.

The Republic of Vanuatu as a small island nation in the Pacific with widespread of services throughout the country, education plays an important role in ensuring kids are educated to contribute to sustainable development in Vanuatu. However, sustainable development must be address with other associated issues such as disaster risk reduction programs. During this globalization era, Vanuatu similar to most countries noted that the education sector is a high priority growing sector due to increase challenges and developments based on rapidly growing population, natural and human disasters plus other social, economic and cultural issues, changes and new challenges which of cause has placed and put pressure on the government to either review, modify or add new policies to accommodate and facilitate the governments commitment towards the safe, secure, resilience, educated, healthy and wealthy people of Vanuatu, Which is the National Government Vision as reflected in the National Priority Action Agenda (2006 – 2015).

The theme for this weeks workshop is very important and timely to be discussed particularly, when the Vanuatu government have just endorsed a National Action on DRR and DM 2006-2016, which places emphasis on mainstreaming DRR and DM into all sector, policies, legislation, corporate plans/business plans and budgetary program. As the new Minister responsible for Education I appreciate very much the opportunity to be here this week to learn and to be convinced to undertake this challenge on behalf of the Government of Vanuatu. Children have the right to information as well as the right to be aware of disaster risks and what action to take to safe his/her life and to contribute to community safety. Children from such small island nations, with remoteness of communities can be use to educate their parents and communities to change their mind-sets from being reactive and be more proactive and resilient to disasters and risks which they are or to be exposed to.

In conclusion, having been brought up in rural village in Vanuatu, I have lived and experienced to survive a lot of natural disasters. Now that I am at this level of government as a Government Minister, I would pioneer and take the lead role in ensuring that the Ministry of Education in Vanuatu review the MOE policies in ensuring DRR and DM is included and stipulated in its legislative, policy and planning frameworks to allow more commitment and accountability to undertake this challenge which has been a gap within good governance system as well as to be able to implement the Government National Plans as reflected in the country's vision.

Finally, I would like to invite our external regional partners to continue to dialogue with the Ministry of Education on related issues and where possible to provide further technical inputs and advise on areas which are essential to the Government. I would like to thank the UNESCO on the initiative to have select Vanuatu to do the feasibility study in integrate DRR and DM into Education Curricula. Secondly, the UNDP pilot project on CBDRM in two provinces in Vanuatu. And other initiative that are in progress in other pacific countries. As the Minister of Education I will ensure that this initiative or program is carried out effectively, efficiently and urgently.

With these short remarks, Mr Chairman, I would like to thank you all for your attention.