Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction 2019

Geneva, Switzerland

**Statement by the Government of the Republic of Vanuatu**

Excellencies, warm greetings from the Republic of Vanuatu. On behalf of the Prime Minister, Hon. Charlot Salwai Tabimasmas and the people of the Republic of Vanuatu, it is my honour to bring you this statement.

Since the last Global Platform held in Cancun Mexico in 2017, Vanuatu has continued to make considerable progress in achieving the goals set out in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, including reducing the risks to life and livelihoods of communities impacted by disasters.

Like many island nations in the Pacific and other regions, Vanuatu is exposed to a high number of natural hazards, and has already started experiencing the negative impacts of climate change, especially in relation to the increased frequency and severity of natural disasters. For the last four years, Vanuatu has held the unfortunate title as the world’s most at-risk country to natural disasters, according to the World Risk Index. As an island nation located on the “ring of fire” as well as within the Pacific cyclone belt, we frequently face particular challenges and limitations in preparing, responding to and recovering from disasters. As a result, in an average year nearly 65% of the Vanuatu population is exposed to natural hazards, and nearly 30% have been displaced by natural disasters at some point.

However, despite all of those challenges, the Republic of Vanuatu has fully encompassed the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and has taken necessary actions and policy measures to ensure disaster risk reduction and climate change measures are integrated into our legal framework and national planning processes. Vanuatu has put numerous policies and national plans in place; which to name a few include:

# The National Sustainable Development Plan 2016-2030, which outlines our commitment to enhanced resilience and adaptive capacity to climate change and natural disasters

# The Vanuatu Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2016 -2030

# The recently amended Bill for the Disaster Risk Management Act and the National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement.

# In addition, we also have formed Vanuatu’s National Advisory Board on Climate Change & Disaster Risk reduction which was established as the supreme policy making and advisory body for all disaster risk reduction and climate change programs, projects, initiatives and activities.

# Such national policies and plans are not only for Vanuatu to meet the global targets under the Sendai Framework but also to act as guiding tools to invoke transformational partnerships and actions at the local, national, regional and global levels.

# In implementing actions on the ground~~,~~ we are incredibly grateful for the solidarity of bilateral and multilateral donors and partners which comprises both international, national and local partners. Through these partnerships, we have been able to adopt disaster risk reduction strategies and carry out effective planning at the provincial and community level.

# It is important to note that the commitment shown by the Vanuatu Government and development partners in protecting our islands from disaster risk is mirrored by the inspiring resilience of our citizens. Ni-Vanuatu communities have long understood the risks posed by disasters and continue to actively work to reduce these risks and work together as a community to provide support and care for those displaced or impacted by disasters.

# In expressing our thanks to the international community, we also ask that the distinctive needs of small-island-nations are considered given the increasing pressures exerted on the coping capacities of affected communities. The financial and technical assistance that we have access to and receive, in comparison to the remote geographical locations and the extreme hazards and vulnerabilities faced by many communities, is still comparatively very small.

# Excellencies, Vanuatu is at the frontline of the battle against climate-induced hazards. Our survivability is not only dependent on our DRR and CCCA policies, planning and guidelines, but also on the actions and support of the global community for us to continue to achieve the Sendai Framework Disaster Risk Reduction Targets. Indeed, what we experience here in Vanuatu, in the Pacific, will only equip brothers and sisters around the world to better prepare and respond to climate-induced hazards.

I thank you Mr Moderator

Jesse Benjamin