



NATIONAL FOREIGN POLICY

“A Foreign Policy for Vanuatu & its People”

“The Community sense of living is both wise & practical” Walter Lini

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International
Cooperation & External Trade



REPUBLIC OF VANUATU

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

• ACP	African Caribbean and Pacific group of states
• ADB	Asian Development Bank
• ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
• AUKUS	Australia-United Kingdom-United States
• BIE	Bureau International des Expositions
• BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
• CCFR	Consultative Council on Foreign Relations
• CIIE	China International Import Expo
• CROP	Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific
• EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
• EU	European Union
• FFA	Forum Fisheries Agency
• FPP	Foreign Policy Paper
• FSA	Fisheries Subsidies Agreement
• GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
• iEPA	Interim Economic Partnership Agreement
• ICJ	International Court of Justice
• IMF	International Monetary Fund
• LDC	Least Developed Country
• MFAICET	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and External Trade
• MSG	Melanesian Spearhead Group
• MSGTA	Melanesian Spearhead Group Trade Agreement
• MSP	Marine Spatial Plan
• NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
• NSDP	National Sustainable Development Plan
• OIF	Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie
• PACER Plus	Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations Plus
• PALM	Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting
• PASO	Pacific Aviation Safety Office
• PICTA	Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement
• PIF	Pacific Islands Forum
• PPA	Pacific Power Association
• RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands
• SIDS	Small Island Developing States
• SPC	The (South) Pacific Community
• SPTO	South Pacific Tourism Organisation
• TFA	Trade Facilitation Agreement
• UN	United Nations
• UNGA	United Nation General Assembly
• UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
• UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
• VANGO	Vanuatu Association of Non-Government Organisations
• VCC	Vanuatu Christian Council
• VNCW	Vanuatu National Council of Women
• USP	University of the South Pacific
• VFSC	Vanuatu Financial Services Commission
• VIPA	Vanuatu Investment Promotion Authority
• WTO	World Trade Organisation



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FOREIGN MINISTER'S FOREWORD

Foreign policy is the way that independent, sovereign nations navigate their journey in the world. It is an expression of who we are as a people and it shapes how others see us. It is an essential responsibility of the government, and it affects all our citizens. It plays a vital role in defining Vanuatu's national sovereignty, our national development, our national security, and the expression of our national identity.

The Foreign Ministry has come a long way since its creation on independence. Up to this period, Vanuatu Foreign Policy has been informed by Party Platforms and regenerated through government policies that have defined national interests; and through this trajectory, adjusting and responding to changes in the international landscape. Overall, Vanuatu has a proud history of foreign policy achievements and leadership in the region and globally.

Yet, until now, governments in Vanuatu have not set out a vision and a statement of foreign policy in a reasoned and succinct way. This Foreign Policy Paper seeks to do just that as it brings together our nation's common principles and shared values. It builds on history and the evolution of decisions that have shaped this framework.

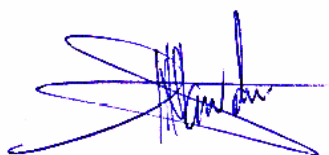
Why is the timing right for this Paper?

Today's world provides Vanuatu's diplomacy with both challenges and opportunities. Notwithstanding the existential threat posed by climate change, the issue has driven ever closer cooperation among Pacific Small Island Developing States, and among SIDS more broadly. In doing so, it has become an important platform for Vanuatu's diplomacy and leadership across the globe.

Equally, geostrategic competition in our region has put significant demands on our diplomacy and has thrust us, unwillingly, into a situation of great power competition in our region. It has tested the robustness and resilience of longstanding foreign policy positions and relationships. At the same time, it has provided opportunities for leveraging our new-found strategic relevance into tangible development gains for our people. These are just two examples of the increasingly complex and challenging international environment that we face. In this situation, we will need to be innovative and alert to new opportunities that can promote our national development and resilience. At the same time, we will be faced with difficult choices, and we need to be clear-headed about our priorities. Therefore, the decisions that we do make must be based on a clear understanding of the national interest, and of our ultimate objectives.

The purpose of this paper is to make those national interests, and those objectives, clear. I am confident that this paper can serve as a guiding light not only for the Foreign Service of the Republic of Vanuatu but also across government, civil society, and the community in general, as well as our valued partners across the world.

Hon. Matai Seremaiah
Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Foreign Affairs,
International Cooperation & External Trade



DIRECTOR GENERAL - PRELUDE & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I refer to this document as the People's Foreign Policy that takes its directions from the People's Plan (National Sustainable Development plan). In support of this statement has been the culmination of consultations across all six (6) provinces of the Republic of Vanuatu, reaffirming a national agenda that places the interests and well-being of ni-Vanuatu at its core. This is a living document and will be subjected to regular reviews to ensure it remains relevant to the heavily contested and rapidly changing environment.

In 1980, Vanuatu formalized diplomatic relations with fifteen (15) countries. Today that number has increased to 125, and will continue to grow. From the opening of Vanuatu's first Mission to the United Nations in New York Vanuatu's diplomatic and consular footprint has expanded to key strategic corners of the globe. In addition, Vanuatu's membership to regional and international organisations has risen to over seventy (70). These reflections are important to deepen understanding and appreciation of the reforms and institutional changes that have and will be necessary in equipping an organisation mandated to represent the country's national interests abroad. Moreover, global and regional dynamics are making their presence felt on national sovereignty that is prompting adjustments to this central organisation. Hence, our young pool of diplomats are being nurtured to look at the world through the eye of a needle and the tool of kava diplomacy now an important facet in the conduct of promoting friendly relations here and overseas.

I acknowledge here the forbearers of our nation. It is fitting that the launching of the Foreign Policy takes place in this very compound that housed the official residence of Vanuatu's first Prime Minister, Father Walter Hayde Lini. We can envision that these very surroundings unearthed ideas and gave birth to policies that navigated Vanuatu in those turbulent early days and which have formed central pillars in the Foreign Policy. I also acknowledge all governments and Foreign Ministers who have been involved in this journey from the beginning.

Finally, accomplishing this major national undertaking would not have been possible without the able support from Team Foreign Affairs, both here in the Ministry and those serving in our Missions abroad. They will be the stalwarts in ensuring delivery and implementation of this Plan. My appreciation is also extended to Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies for their invaluable input towards the finalization of Vanuatu's first Foreign Policy.

May God Almighty continue to be that beacon of hope for our country.

Mr. Kalfau Kaloris
Director General
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation
& External Trade



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Vanuatu's foreign policy is grounded in our values as a country and a community: our Christian principles; our Melanesian culture; the principle of sovereign equality of nations; human rights, democracy and the rule of law; and non-alignment.

Our foreign policy is shaped by our country's distinct characteristics: our geographic location, our archipelagic nature, our history, our cultural diversity, our economy and our development needs, and the resources available to us. It is further shaped by our immediate region – who our neighbours are – and the many benefits we gain through regional cooperation. More broadly, we are affected by trends and developments that are occurring on a global scale. Such challenges can only be addressed through international collective action - our foreign policy must take account of these challenges, and seek to influence global responses.

Within this context, the core mission of our foreign policy is to advance the interests of Vanuatu and its people through international engagement and cooperation. Flowing from this, our foreign policy has four overarching objectives:

- i. To promote our sovereignty and to protect our national boundaries**
- ii. To enhance the prosperity and well-being of the people of Vanuatu at home and abroad, through effective bilateral, regional, and international cooperation and trade**
- iii. To promote a stable, secure, and prosperous region as a responsible member of the Blue Pacific Continent**
- iv. To contribute to global well-being through international cooperation on key global challenges**

This mission, and these objectives, are consistent with and support Vanuatu's umbrella National Sustainable Development Plan 2016-2030. In other words, foreign policy is an essential building block of our national development.

Vanuatu pursues its foreign policy objectives bilaterally (that is, country-to-country), through sub-regional and regional organisations (such as the Melanesian Spearhead Group and the Pacific Islands Forum) and multilaterally (for example through the United Nations system, the Commonwealth and the Organisation de la Francophonie).

We engage strategically with countries and regions around the world although our most substantive bilateral relationships are within our region including our Pacific Island neighbours and our key development and security partners.

Our commitment to Pacific regional cooperation, above all through the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), strongly complimented through MSG, is a core element of our foreign policy. As opportunities arise and as resources permit, we aim to expand our diplomatic engagements internationally.

Multilateral diplomacy plays a vital role in our foreign policy because it allows us to contribute to, and to influence, global debate and action on issues that affects our well-being. In addition, our active participation provides us with important development benefits. On the multilateral stage, our focused interest include climate change, denuclearization and disarmament, international terrorism, oceans management, human rights and decolonisation.

Vanuatu is a member of the World Trade Organisation and strongly supports the multilateral trade system. Trade and economic diplomacy play a vital role in our national development. The key objectives of our trade policy are to reduce barriers to trade, to increase access to markets for Vanuatu's exports, to encourage productive inward investment, and to ensure that all trade agreements bring tangible benefits to the people of Vanuatu. With the internationalisation of Vanuatu's labour force in recent years, labour mobility and trade in services has become an increasingly important aspect of our foreign policy.

Several thousands of ni-Vanuatu are living, working, and visiting overseas at any one time and consular work has become an important aspect of our work overseas. Our citizens abroad can be affected by unexpected setbacks or may be caught up in events beyond their control such as natural disasters, pandemics or political crises. Our diplomatic and consular network overseas provide a point of contact for ni-Vanuatu in such circumstances, although the extent to which support can be provided is limited in both a practical and a legal sense. The government is exploring the possibility of entering into formal consular support arrangements with relevant partners, to help respond to such situations in the future.

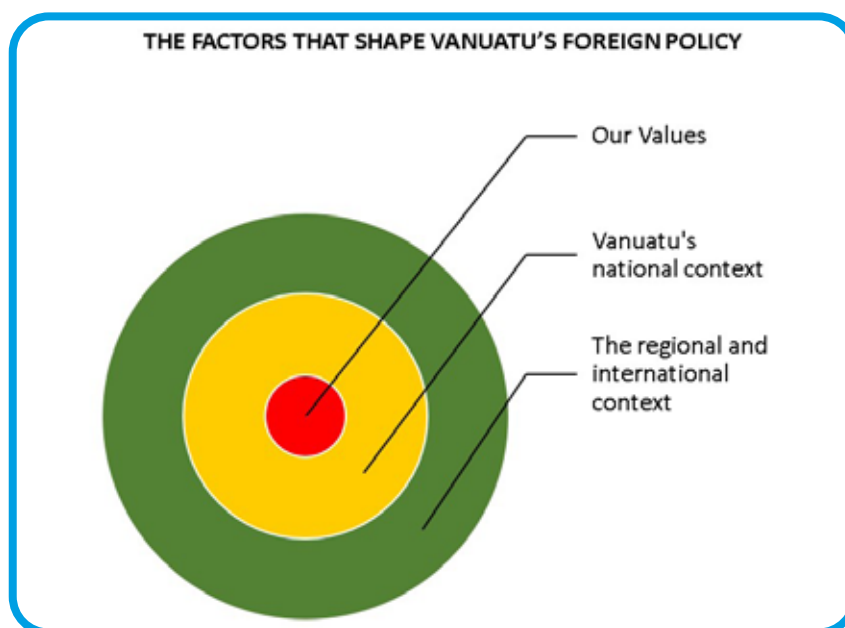
A key initiative to emerge from this Foreign Policy Paper is the establishment of a Consultative Council on Foreign Relations. The Council will provide a platform for exchanges of view and information between government and civil society on matters relating to Vanuatu's foreign policy and foreign relations. The objective of the Council is to strengthen public awareness of Vanuatu's foreign policy, and to provide a stronger foundation for the development of policy advice by officials. It will be chaired by the Director-General of MFAICET and include representatives from Vanuatu's provinces and municipalities as well as a range of non-government bodies.



1. What Shapes Vanuatu's Foreign Policy

In a democracy such as Vanuatu, policy is set by elected governments. But policy does not grow in a vacuum. The context in which foreign policy decisions are taken is shaped by many factors, both internal and external. Many of these factors are long-term and structural ones.

This section looks at this question through three perspectives: our fundamental values; Vanuatu's national context (ie what is distinctive about Vanuatu itself – its geography, its economy, its culture - and how this shapes our foreign policy); and the international context (ie the broad trends in international relations and global issues which impact Vanuatu, and areas in which Vanuatu seeks to influence the thinking and behaviour of the international community).



I. Values

Reflecting our deepest beliefs, our culture, our history and our National Constitution, Vanuatu's foreign policy is based on, and will seek to uphold, the following fundamental values and principles:

- i. Our Christian principles, which are referenced in the Preamble to our Constitution
- ii. Our Melanesian culture, which respects traditional knowledge and cultural diversity, placing a premium on the importance of relationships, and of mutual respect
- iii. The principle of sovereign equality of nations
- iv. Human rights, democracy and the rule of law
- v. The principle of non-alignment, or of 'friends to all, enemies to none'.

II. The National Context

Vanuatu's geography – our place on the map – is a fundamental driver of our foreign policy. We are an island nation whose immediate neighbours are also island nations. The Archipelago of Vanuatu extends from Hui Island in the North to Umainupne (Hunter Island) in the South. Independent since 1980, we are yet to delimit our outstanding maritime boundaries. Our population and our land area are small compared to most other countries, although our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is among the 40 largest EEZs across the globe.

This means that we have a special interest and stake in the health and vitality of our oceans. According to some measures, Vanuatu is the most at-risk country in the world for natural hazards such as storms, earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunamis, and sea level rise.

Our history is multilayered and influences our approach to foreign policy in many ways. The deep history of our Melanesian culture provides us with distinctive approaches and ideas about the conduct of diplomacy. The era of colonisation has left an enduring mark on our forms of government, our national institutions and our languages. That period of colonial rule influenced our fathers of independence in shaping foreign policy fundamentals from independence.



Vanuatu Children at the independence Day

And our post-Independence history has allowed us to build a range of relationships that may have been unimaginable to our ancestors, but which have become an indispensable part of Vanuatu's links across the globe.

We are a proud and vibrant parliamentary democracy which operates under the rule of law through an independent judiciary, accountable institutions and regular elections. We treasure the rights we gained at Independence, just as we hold tight to our customary traditions and ways.

Vanuatu is a developing country. Our economy, while growing, is small by world standards and our geography places us at some distance from the world's largest economies and markets. This places a premium on our ability to foster relationships – through trade, investment and development cooperation – that can support our national development.

In December 2020 Vanuatu achieved a milestone in its national development by graduating from the UN's Least Developed Country category, notwithstanding its ongoing vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change. Over the past decade, Vanuatu's workforce has become internationalised. Many thousands of ni-Vanuatu now work overseas (mainly in Australia, New Zealand, and New Caledonia) and these diaspora communities have become both a vital contribution to Vanuatu's economy and an important part of the work of our overseas representatives.

A key constraint on our foreign policy pursuits is the availability of resources. Vanuatu has a limited diplomatic footprint around the world and can only afford to expand its international network gradually. Equally, the resources of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and External Trade, and of other government agencies involved in our international engagement, are limited. This situation requires effective coordination, and clear prioritisation, to ensure we get the most value from our scarce resources.

Vanuatu's foreign policy is also influenced and shaped by broader and existing government policy settings. Chief among these is the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) (see Box 1), but they also include the National Security Strategy (which identifies "Effective promotion and defence of Vanuatu's external interests and engagement" as one of the pillars of national security, see Box 2), the National Ocean Policy, the Trade Policy Framework and the National Aid Management Policy.

Our foreign policy should also reflect, and be shaped by, the views of our people. The Ministry conducted a program of community consultations in 2020-2021 to sound out the views of citizens in different parts of the country.

Those consultations revealed that people's expectations regarding what should be the priorities of our foreign policy fell into four main categories.

- i. These were first, that foreign policy should directly serve our national development (through what is sometimes known as economic diplomacy);*
- ii. second, that our foreign policy should focus on questions of national sovereignty, including in particular the final settlement of our maritime borders;*
- iii. third, that our foreign policy should maintain its traditional focus on questions of decolonisation and human rights;*
- iv. and finally that a key task of foreign policy must be to manage our bilateral relationships with prudence, responsibility and the right to impose reciprocal measures on actions that affect our national well-being.*

These four areas are, of course, not incompatible with each other and readers will see the way they are reflected in this Foreign Policy Paper.

Box 1: Foreign Policy aligns with Vanuatu's National Sustainable Development Plan (2016-2030)

Vanuatu's foreign policy priorities are consistent with and support the objectives of the NSDP. The following foreign policy priorities/themes are derived from the NSDP, and are reflected elsewhere throughout this Foreign Policy Paper:

I. Climate Change and Environmental Protection:

Vanuatu will prioritize multilateral cooperation on climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience, reflecting the NSDP's focus on safeguarding the environment. Vanuatu will advocate for the implementation of international climate agreements and encourage countries to commit to more robust emissions reductions. It will also seek international support for preserving its unique biodiversity and protecting its marine ecosystems from pollution.

II. Sustainable Development and Economic Growth:

Vanuatu will focus on fostering sustainable economic growth in its foreign policy. By partnering with regional and international organizations, we will aim to develop our infrastructure, agriculture sector, and tourism industry while preserving our cultural heritage. Vanuatu will also emphasize the importance of digital connectivity and renewable energy to achieve its development goals and enhance its economic resilience.

III. Human Capital Development:

Vanuatu's foreign policy will prioritize human capital development by promoting access to quality education, healthcare, and social services for its citizens. This includes engaging with international organizations and partners to improve educational opportunities, support healthcare initiatives, and facilitate capacity-building programs for its workforce.

IV. Expanding Trade and Investment:

Vanuatu will prioritize expanding trade relations and attracting foreign investment in order to diversify its economy and promote growth. We will seek to enhance economic cooperation with partners in the Asia-Pacific region and further integrate our economy into global value chains. This includes pursuing new trade agreements, investment partnerships, and promoting a favourable investment climate.

V. Regional Stability and Security:

Vanuatu will work towards strengthening its relationships with regional partners to promote peace and stability in the Pacific. This includes participating in regional forums and cooperating on issues such as disaster response, maritime security, and transnational crime prevention.

VI. Good Governance and Rule of Law:

Vanuatu's foreign policy will prioritize promoting good governance, transparency, and the rule of law. It will work closely with regional and international partners to enhance democratic institutions, combat corruption, and uphold human rights standards.

VII. Strengthening Multilateralism and International Cooperation:

Vanuatu will continue to be an active participant in international organizations and promote the interests of small island developing states (SIDS). It will work to ensure that their voices are heard on the global stage and promote multilateral cooperation in addressing pressing global challenges, such as climate change, poverty, and conflict.



Box 2: The ten pillars of Vanuatu's National Security Strategy

Vanuatu's foreign policy plays a crucial role in the country's national security. As Chair of the National Security Council (National Security Act), the Prime Minister has the principle responsibility in setting foreign policy directions

1. National security forces that are able to protect the nation and provide security for all citizens
2. Effective monitoring and protection of Vanuatu's borders and its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)
3. Justice and rights for all
4. Resilient national systems for disaster preparedness, response and recovery; and climate change adaptation
5. Protection of individuals, government and the private sector against cyber crime and other malicious cyber activity
6. Robust human security for individuals and families
7. Political stability and strong governance of institutions, including the security sector
8. Effective promotion and defence of Vanuatu's external interests and engagement
9. A strong, well-managed and resilient economy
10. Well-coordinated and effective government machinery to manage national security issues, and a high-quality intelligence and assessment capability.

II. The International Context

Finally, Vanuatu's foreign policy is shaped by developments in the region and globally. Vanuatu is deeply enmeshed in the Pacific Islands regional architecture. Pacific Island countries have a long and a proud tradition of collectively asserting their interests and positions on issues as diverse as nuclear testing, fisheries and decolonisation. In recent years Pacific Island countries have used their collective voice more assertively, and more effectively, than ever. The issue of climate change, in particular, has become a platform on which Pacific Island voices have been heard on global stages and has become a galvanising force in Pacific Islands diplomacy.

The Pacific Islands Forum's continuing central relevance has been demonstrated by our Leaders' endorsement of major statements and initiatives such as the Boe Declaration (2018) and the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent (2022). Meanwhile, the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) has been reinvigorated under

Vanuatu's chairmanship after a period of years in which the global pandemic severely limited opportunities for face to face contact. Effective regional cooperation is, and will remain, one of the cornerstones of Vanuatu's foreign policy.



On a broader canvas, the past decade or so has seen irrevocable shifts away from the international order of the late-Cold War and post-Cold War periods, which dominated global affairs in the first few decades following Vanuatu's independence. While the United States remains a global superpower with unparalleled resources, its relative strength has been challenged as emerging powers and groups have asserted a greater regional and global role. The world has become more multi-polar and new relationships and alliances are developing. As the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and the outbreak of hostilities in the Middle East in 2023 have showed, international relations are in some ways becoming unforeseeable and intractable. This uncharted and unpredictable process of change poses threats to international peace and security if it is not well managed. And it carries risks, as well as some opportunities, for a country like Vanuatu.

We have seen the establishment and growth of major international ventures such as China's Belt and Road Initiative and Global Development Initiative; the BRICS grouping; the Quad (involving the US, Japan, India and Australia); and the AUKUS arrangements (between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States). Meanwhile, there is clear evidence that the Pacific Islands region - including Vanuatu - has become a site of strategic competition and contestation between major powers. Our foreign policy must take account of, manage and where we can, help shape these developments for regional peace and prosperity.

Against the background of these geostrategic developments, the global community is grappling with a diverse and proliferating set of challenges which touch the lives of our people directly or at least potentially. Vanuatu's foreign policy must address these issues and position us to play a part in influencing the way the global community responds to them. For Vanuatu climate change will always remain the most pressing security issue. As the PIF's Boe Declaration (2018) stated, climate change is 'the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of the peoples of the Pacific'. This will remain a key priority for our foreign policy, both regionally and internationally.

But other issues remain of concern and demand our attention. These include the growing risk of nuclear proliferation, and related questions; the threat of international terrorism and transnational crime, including cybercrime; dangers posed by pandemics such as experienced from 2020 with the COVID-19 virus; the protection and management of the world's oceans and maritime resources; the unfinished business of decolonisation and self-determination; and the importance of maintaining a rules-based and open global framework for international trade.

While numerous commitments, organisations and networks are in place, at both regional and international levels, to manage and regulate these global challenges, in many cases the levels of international cooperation and ambition are insufficient to meet the challenges at hand.

Indeed, in some areas we are seeing a deterioration in commitment to international cooperation and collective action. Vanuatu's foreign policy must be engaged in these global issues and challenges.

IV. Trends in International Trade

The post-1945 international economic order was built on a belief that interdependence among nations through increased trade and economic ties would foster peace and shared prosperity. Today, however, global trade is at risk of fragmentation, affected by geopolitical, social, environmental and economic pressures. This state of affairs exposes countries like Vanuatu to a heightened risk. Vanuatu believes that the multilateral trade system, and the World Trade Organisation in particular, must reform in response to these challenges if it is to remain relevant and effective in future.

The WTO's own World Trade Report (2023) Re-globalization for a secure, inclusive and sustainable future reviewed the evidence in these debates. It asked whether members' objectives would be better served by fragmentation of the world economy or by a renewed drive towards a broader and more inclusive integration – what some have termed “re-globalization”. This statement challenges WTO members to respond to the need for reform.

Like many Pacific Island countries, Vanuatu is not immune from these trends. While Vanuatu is an independent country, we are dependent on the global economy through trade, foreign direct investment, donor financing, tourism and worker remittances. This can leave us vulnerable to global economic developments.

In this situation the regional free trade agreements signed by Vanuatu (including PACER Plus, MSGTA and PICTA) represent essential and relevant frameworks that complement our global commitments, in support of our national sustainable development and economic goals.



2. Mission and Objectives of our Foreign Policy

Taking into account our values, our national context, the international context and the trend in international trade and capital flow the fundamental Mission for our Foreign Policy is “Advancing the interests of Vanuatu and its people through international engagement and cooperation.”

Flowing from this basic Mission, the key objectives of Vanuatu’s foreign policy, implemented through our diplomacy, are:

- i. To promote our sovereignty and to protect our national boundaries
- ii. To enhance the prosperity and well-being of the people of Vanuatu at home and abroad, through effective bilateral, regional and international cooperation and trade
- iii. To promote a stable, secure and prosperous region as a responsible member of the Blue Pacific Continent
- iv. To contribute to global well-being through international cooperation on key global challenges

The totality of our foreign policy approaches should satisfy one or more of these fundamental objectives.

As described earlier, this mission and these objectives are consistent with and support Vanuatu’s overarching NSDP 2016-2030. They also supplement and support other key government policy frameworks.





3. How we will pursue our objectives

In order to pursue our foreign policy objectives, we have an interest in investing in:

- i. Strong and reciprocally-respectful relationships with our key partners. This includes economic partnerships, trade agreements and security partnerships with key nations
- ii. Effective regional cooperation and integration, where it meets our interests;
- iii. The capacity to analyse evolving international developments, and to develop and implement policy in order to influence events and ideas;
- iv. The capacity to participate in key regional and international organisations and activities in ways that serve our interests and objectives;
- v. A cost-effective and well established international network of Embassies, High Commissions, and Consulates;
- vi. Effective cross-government coordination structures and mechanisms. This is particularly important in areas such as national security policy, and development cooperation: both of these are areas of shared responsibility across government agencies;
- vii. Cultural diplomacy which can build people-to-people links and help to put genuine substance into our official relationships.
- viii. Sport diplomacy uses sports to boost international relations, promote cultural exchange, and foster dialogue, transcending barriers to cooperation and understanding.



4. Key Relationships

In pursuing our objectives, Vanuatu engages purposefully and selectively with a range of countries across all regions of the world. Our national interests guide the extent to which we can invest in specific relationships. This section of the Paper is not intended to be an exhaustive description of all of Vanuatu's international activity and relations, but to give a sense of our key bilateral and regional priorities, and the national interest drivers that inform those priorities.

I. The Pacific

Vanuatu has a particular affinity for its Pacific Island immediate neighbors – Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Fiji, and New Caledonia. These are among our closest relationships. To varying degrees – but with important differences – we share similar cultural heritages and historical backgrounds, including through our colonial histories. Through education, work, church, and family, our societies have intermingled for generations, and continue to do so, even as our distinct personalities have grown and developed. Papua New Guinea, in particular, played a fraternal role in our emergence as a free and independent country through the intervention of the Kumul Force in 1980, for which we will be forever thankful. With the Solomon Islands, we are proud that our common Melanesian values allowed the historic conclusion of our shared maritime boundary - the Motalava Treaty. Vanuatu is privileged to host the headquarters of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), the key political body in our immediate region. The MSG demonstrates in a concerted way through the MSG 2038 Prosperity for All Plan, that these relationships can help to amplify our concerns and our priorities on the regional and global stages.

Vanuatu's objective is to continue to strengthen and deepen our links with our nearest neighbors through growing trade, increased transport and communications links, educational opportunities, and movement of labor. This can be achieved both through the MSG and bilaterally. Greater access to markets in this region and better connectivity will benefit Vanuatu.

Our other key priority is the finalization of our maritime boundaries. While we have settled our maritime boundary with the Solomon Islands, the boundary with Fiji remains unresolved, as does the maritime boundary with France (in New Caledonia), which refuses to acknowledge Vanuatu's rightful claim over Matthew and Hunter Islands. Resolving this issue remains a matter of the highest priority. Vanuatu also deeply values its links with the countries of the Pacific's other sub-regions of Polynesia and Micronesia.

Although geographically more distant, Vanuatu highly values its important cultural and historical links with these countries, including through the legacy of church and missionary work, educational opportunities, and family ties, as well as our shared commitment to regional cooperation.

II. Pacific Regional Organisations

Vanuatu benefits from, and is deeply committed to, regional cooperation in the Pacific Islands region. Pacific Island countries have found their strength through working together. The primary regional organisation is the Pacific Islands Forum: the PIF is a crucial and indispensable body for the management of regional affairs, and the promotion of our interests, across all dimensions of policy cooperation: economic and social development, climate change and environment, security, trade, resources and technology. The PIF is increasingly central as a focus for regional diplomacy. Vanuatu is proud to have hosted Forum Leaders Meetings in 1981, 1990 and 2010 (and would have hosted the 2020 meeting but for the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic). Vanuatu is also an active member of many other regional organisations including the suite of CROP agencies- (PIFS, SPC, USP, SPREP, FFA, PASO, PIDP, PPA, SPTO). One of these, the Pacific Aviation Safety Office, is headquartered in Port Vila, of added value is also hosting the Pacific Fusion Center. Vanuatu will always strive to be a responsible and constructive member of the community of Pacific countries.

III. Australia and New Zealand

Vanuatu's multidimensional relationship with Australia makes it one of the highest importance for us. Diplomatic relations were established at Independence in 1980 and since then the relationship has flourished. Australia remains our major security, trade and development partner, our main destination for offshore workers, our largest source of tourists and a major source of investment. Australia has long been in the forefront in responding to natural disasters in Vanuatu. We are both members of the PIF and of many other regional bodies. While the number, and visibility, of ni-Vanuatu living in Australia has grown rapidly in recent years through labour mobility programs, Australia's South Sea Islander population is a reminder of deeper links in our two countries' pasts and this is a connection that both countries should look to foster as the relationship continues to expand and grow.



Vanuatu & Australia Foreign Ministers (Mick Tsikas/AA)

Since independence, New Zealand has also consistently been a highly valued diplomatic, economic, development and security partner. A strong history and shared views on the global agenda have been the cornerstone of an important and growing partnership. New Zealand is also a growing market for our products. New Zealand led the way on providing

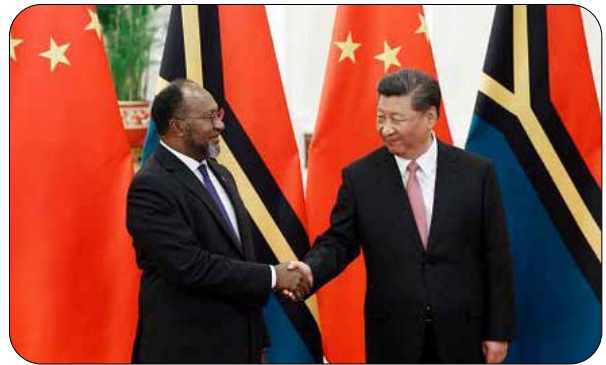


Vanuatu and New Zealand relations(Photo: NZHC)

access for Pacific seasonal labourers and remains an important destination for our people. Vanuatu values the constructive role that New Zealand has played as a fellow member of key Pacific Islands networks and institutions. New Zealand also plays an important role in post-disaster response.

IV. Asia

Vanuatu established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China in 1982, adhering to the 'One China Policy,' a key pillar in Vanuatu's foreign policy. Since that time, China has become one of Vanuatu's most significant and valued development partners, with a particular focus on major national infrastructure projects and a growing security partnership. China exerts increasing influence in regional and international affairs. Vanuatu joined the Belt and Road Initiative in 2018, and our relationship continues to develop on various fronts, including political exchanges and Vanuatu's interest in joining the Global Development Initiative. Education and people-to-people links have also grown significantly over recent years.



Vanuatu China Relations (Florence Lo/Pool Photo AP)

Japan is a long-term and valued development partner that has made a very positive contribution to Vanuatu's development over many years, across a number of sectors. Vanuatu welcomes Japan's longstanding commitment to the region as a whole, including as the host of regular Pacific Islands Leaders Meetings (PALM). Vanuatu looks to strengthen its diplomatic engagement with Japan in the coming years.

To date, Vanuatu's relations with India, a fellow member of the Commonwealth, have been friendly and growing. The relationship holds much promise as a source of ideas and support for our national development. Vanuatu seeks to strengthen and deepen its ties with India. As a token of this, Vanuatu is committed to opening a High Commission in New Delhi in the near future.

Vanuatu enjoys ties of various depths and maturity with the countries of ASEAN and aspires to strengthen those relationships through a mutually beneficial framework for development cooperation. Vanuatu potentially has much to learn from these countries regarding the development of its economy. We already benefit from technical and economic cooperation, as well as educational opportunities provided by countries such as Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, and Indonesia.

Vanuatu's relationship with Indonesia is influenced by our concern for the human rights situation in its eastern Papuan provinces, particularly as it affects the indigenous Melanesian population. This is a complex set of issues that Vanuatu has pursued through both bilateral and multilateral efforts. Through the PIF and MSG, we remain committed to constructive engagement with Indonesia on this important issue, at the same time recognizing the economic opportunities that can be developed through this important relationship.

V. Europe

Vanuatu has major interests at stake in its relations with European institutions and individual countries in Europe. Vanuatu's Embassy in Brussels is a mark of the importance of our ties with Europe. The European Union is a key strategic development partner for Vanuatu. Relations with the EU are now governed by the Samoa Agreement, which provides for a regular Vanuatu-EU Partnership Dialogue, which is an important mechanism for exchanges of views on bilateral and global issues. At present, Vanuatu is negotiating its market access offer with the EU to accede to an interim Economic Partnership Agreement (iEPA). A key priority in our relations with the EU is the restoration of the Vanuatu-EU Visa Waiver Agreement. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that Vanuatu will continue to value its bilateral relations with its European countries partners.

Among European countries, Vanuatu has important ties with France, which date back to its role as one of the two Condominium partners during the colonial period of our history. Our relations in the present day are underpinned by a strong development partnership and ongoing high-level links. France's constitutional role in New Caledonia adds another dimension to our relations. The unresolved maritime boundary issue between Vanuatu and New Caledonia, noted above, is an issue of the highest priority in Vanuatu's relations with France. Relations with the United Kingdom, the other colonial era Condominium partner, remain friendly with scope for further growth in the future.



France Vanuatu Relations v© Ludovic Marin, AFPv

VI. Americas

Vanuatu enjoys friendly relations with the United States of America, driven by our shared history and a common desire for equitable development. In recent years, the US has become an important market for Vanuatu's kava exports. Vanuatu hopes to see an expansion in bilateral cooperation in the future, building on the Millennium Challenge Account infrastructure program, the US-Pacific Island Forum Leader's Summit, and through the establishment of a resident diplomatic presence of the United States in Port Vila.

Elsewhere in the Americas, Vanuatu engages selectively and strategically with large and emerging economies such as Canada, Mexico, and Brazil, underlining our interest in expanding south-south cooperation. Vanuatu hopes to strengthen its diplomatic engagement with Brazil in the coming years. Cuba is a long-time friend of Vanuatu, going back to the struggle for independence. Vanuatu values the benefits it derives from cooperation between the two countries, mainly in the areas of health and education.

VII. Middle-East and Africa

Consistent with its membership in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Vanuatu enjoys diplomatic relations with both Israel and Palestine. Vanuatu supports a two-state solution as the appropriate way forward for reaching a lasting settlement in the region. Vanuatu benefits from targeted assistance from Israel, particularly in the area of agriculture.

Recognizing the value and friendship of the Gulf region, Vanuatu has established formal diplomatic relations with all member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council, a body of regional and indeed global influence.

Building on development initiatives with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates, we intend to expand these engagements to Bahrain, Oman, and Qatar. Links with these countries hold the promise of economic, development, security, and diplomatic benefits.



Signing of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia

While Vanuatu's trade and diplomatic links with countries in Africa are limited at present, we should not ignore the potential for focused cooperation with African countries to further our international objectives on issues such as climate change and to advance our national development through trade and other exchanges. Morocco and Nigeria have been identified as potential partners in technical and economic cooperation. The African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States (ACP) provides a valued and established platform for Vanuatu's relations with Africa, as does membership in the Commonwealth and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie in many cases. Vanuatu acknowledges Africa's growing influence in the international community and looks forward to deepening ties with African regional organizations and countries as resources permit.



5. Multilateral Diplomacy & Global Issues

Multilateral diplomacy is vitally important to Vanuatu because it gives us a platform to engage with the global community, especially in cooperation with like-minded countries. As a small island developing state, Vanuatu has an interest in the development and upholding of universally-observed international rules and standards. Vanuatu has and will continue to encourage the importance of collective approaches as a platform for addressing global challenges. Multilateral diplomacy allows Vanuatu to contribute to, and to influence, global debate and action on issues that concern us. In addition, it provides us with important development benefits through links with key international organisations.

I. Key Organisations

From Vanuatu's perspective the **United Nations** is the most important international organisation, and it is one to which Vanuatu is deeply committed. The UN system plays a vital, indeed indispensable, role in the regulation and management of relations between states large and small, and in addressing global challenges. That said, there is scope for reform of the UN's organisation and architecture to make it more fit for purpose.

Vanuatu is a member of the L.69 group of 32 countries supporting reform of the UN Security Council, particularly in terms of its membership, to align better with contemporary geopolitical realities. Vanuatu is in favour of the inclusion of a rotational seat on the UNSC for small island developing states, which historically have been essentially unrepresented at this level of the UN system.

Vanuatu has been a member of the **Non-Aligned Movement** since independence. This is a practical expression of our long-standing foreign policy posture of seeking to pursue friendly relations with all states, and of declining to formally align ourselves with any particular bloc or country.

Vanuatu acknowledges and welcomes the role that international financial institutions such as the **World Bank**, the **Asian Development Bank**, and the **International Monetary Fund** have played over many years in support of the developing world and of its own national development.

Vanuatu's membership in the **Organisation of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States (OACPS)** gives it a range of strategic, economic, political, and developmental advantages. On the trade and economic front, the ACP's agreements with the European Union give members like Vanuatu better trade deals and funding. ACP membership boosts Vanuatu's influence in global debates on issues of importance to us, and gives us access to knowledge and skills that can benefit our national development.

After independence from British and French rule in 1980, Vanuatu joined both the **Commonwealth**, and the **Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)**. Both organizations provide Vanuatu with platforms to establish and deepen diplomatic ties with other member states. This is beneficial on issues such as trade negotiations, security concerns, and international cooperation and development assistance including scholarships and other educational opportunities. Membership of both organisations signals a commitment to shared values like democracy, human rights, and rule of law, values which Vanuatu upholds.

II. Global issues

i. Climate Change

Vanuatu stresses the urgency of global efforts to combat climate change. It advocates for immediate and ambitious climate actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and recognizes the critical role of international agreements like the Paris Agreement. Vanuatu is pushing for more rigorous emission reduction targets and encourages developed countries to lead by example.

Given its exposure to slow onset climate events and related threats, Vanuatu strongly calls for significant adaptation actions and building resilience. It actively advocates for international support and partnerships to implement adaptation measures targeting infrastructure, ecosystems, and community-based resilience.



Climate Change Minister (photo:SPREP)

The adoption of a UN General Assembly Resolution on 29 March 2023 seeking an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice regarding the legal consequences of climate change and the obligations of states to protect the rights of current and future generations from its harmful impacts demonstrates Vanuatu's strong leadership in using existing international mechanisms to address climate actions and signals the success of its climate diplomacy on the global stage. Vanuatu will continue to pursue initiatives to embed action on climate change into international law through regional and international platforms.

ii. Ocean Governance

Closely allied to our focus on climate change is a strong commitment to improving the way the world's oceans are managed and preserved. As an archipelagic maritime state, this issue is a vital one for us. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) provides the essential legal framework for the use and conservation of ocean resources, including territorial waters, exclusive economic zones, and the high seas. Vanuatu has in place a Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) which aims to integrate a management approach to help build resilience in its marine environment.

At the national level, our policy approach is encapsulated in Vanuatu's National Ocean Policy, which covers all aspects of ocean management under the following broad headings:

- i. Sustainable Fishing: Managing fishing in a way that does not harm the ocean.*
- ii. Protecting Nature: Keeping the ocean and its creatures safe, especially coral reefs and endangered animals.*
- iii. Dealing with Climate Change: Getting ready for problems like rising sea levels.*
- iv. Looking at Everything Together: Taking care of the ocean while thinking about tourism, shipping, and more.*
- v. Involving the Locals: Understanding the people who live near the ocean and respecting their knowledge.*
- vi. Following International Rules: Ensuring adherence to regional and international agreements.*
- vii. Staying Safe: Making sure the ocean is secure, with no illegal activities.*
- viii. MFAICET is designated as the lead agency responsible for the coordination and implementation of the National Ocean Policy.*

iii. International Peace and Security

As a small island developing state, Vanuatu has a strong national interest in supporting and promoting international peace and security through the relevant organisations and agreements. Vanuatu's commitment as a responsible member of the international community has been demonstrated in the ten UN peacekeeping operations (in Timor-Leste, Darfur, Haiti, and Bosnia) to which Vanuatu has contributed since 2000. This is in addition to Vanuatu's contribution to Bougainville peacekeeping operations in the 1990s, and to the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) from 2003-2017.

International terrorism and transnational crime, including cybercrime, remain persistent and place increasing threats to global peace and security. Moreover, as noted earlier, the global community is in a period of flux, with strategic competition increasingly evident between great powers. This places strains on global institutions, on established patterns of international relations and activity, and specifically on Vanuatu's own diplomacy.

Amid this geostrategic uncertainty, Vanuatu remains committed to the following guiding principles:

- i. Vanuatu acknowledges the right of all countries to pursue their interests as they see fit, provided this takes place in the framework of regional and international agreements, international law and established norms of international behaviour*

- ii. *Vanuatu condemns the use of unilateral actions, threats, coercion or force in international relations*
- ii. *Vanuatu supports the resolution of international disputes through peaceful dialogue and diplomatic means. Conflict prevention is always preferable to conflict resolution*
- ii. *Vanuatu will remain non-aligned and asserts the right to develop relations with partners of its own choosing*
- ii. *Vanuatu will take the interests of our neighbours and partners into consideration in taking significant actions and decisions*
- ii. *Vanuatu will avoid actions and decisions that risk fostering unproductive and/or damaging contestation among our partners*
- ii. *Vanuatu will continue to encourage all its security and development partners to develop complementary partnerships.*

IV. Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament

Mindful of the legacy of nuclear weapons testing in the Pacific, and reflecting the thinking behind the adoption by PIF leaders of the concept of the Blue Pacific Continent, Vanuatu has established an enduring commitment to the principles of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Vanuatu is a party to a range of international instruments including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty; the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty; the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty; the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions; and, most recently, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

V. Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Democracy and Gender

Vanuatu strongly supports human rights and has ratified the following key international agreements: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Support for human rights and for democratic freedoms will remain an important pillar of Vanuatu's foreign policy, and Vanuatu will continue to keep under review its adherence to the range of international human rights instruments. Vanuatu will continue with the important work of implementing our international commitments in concrete actions at the domestic level.

VI. Decolonisation

Vanuatu has a rich and enduring history of championing decolonisation efforts globally. Consistently aligning with United Nations principles of "equal rights and self-determination of all people", Vanuatu maintains its advocacy for the right of territories to decide on their own destinies, particularly in the Pacific. Vanuatu's unwavering commitment to self-determination for all people reflects on its own proud achievement.





6. Trade and Economic Diplomacy

I. Trade and Economic Diplomacy

In the complex landscape of international trade, diplomacy plays a crucial role in fostering relationships, resolving conflicts, and facilitating cooperation through trade arrangements. As noted earlier, our trade and economic diplomacy are vital to our country's national development. Our approach is outlined in the Trade Policy Framework, a multi-sectoral policy closely aligned with the NSDP.

The key objectives of our trade policy are to reduce barriers to trade, increase access to markets for Vanuatu's exports, encourage productive inward investment, and ensure that all trade agreements bring tangible benefits to the people of Vanuatu while promoting economic diversification to spread the benefits of growth. Over the medium term, Vanuatu supports the economic integration initiatives expressed in the PIF's Pacific 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific, aiming to liberalize the flow of goods, investment, and people across the Pacific Islands region, including Australia and New Zealand.

Vanuatu benefits from and strongly supports the multilateral trade system. It makes sense for us to participate in trade arrangements that cover as many countries as possible, either on a global or regional scale. We are a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and have signed several subsidiary agreements such as the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and the Fisheries Subsidies Agreement (FSA). As noted earlier, Vanuatu is also a member of the ACP group, giving it access to the European market. Vanuatu is currently negotiating its market access offers with the EU to accede to the interim Economic Partnership Agreement (iEPA) to secure duty-free and quota-free market access to the EU market.

Within the Pacific Islands region, Vanuatu is a party to the MSG Trade Agreement (MSGTA), the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA), and the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER Plus), the last of these governing trade relations with Australia and New Zealand.

Apart from participating in trade agreements, Vanuatu pursues its trade policy objectives through engagement in international trade exhibitions and by engagement in selected markets.



Former DPM/MP attending WTO in 2012 (Vanuatu Digest)

Vanuatu is a member of the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE), an intergovernmental organization created to supervise international exhibitions. As a member, Vanuatu can participate in prestigious world expos held every five years, the last of which was in Dubai. Additionally, Vanuatu participates in bilateral or regional events such as the China International Import Expo (CIIE) and Pacific trade exhibitions.

II. Labour Mobility

Vanuatu has been engaged in labour mobility programs since 2007. The rapid expansion of Vanuatu's overseas workforce since that time, especially in Australia and New Zealand, has meant that labour mobility issues have loomed increasingly large in our foreign policy, and in the work of our diplomats.

The National Labour Mobility Policy, launched in 2019, aims to govern and facilitate labour mobility for ni-Vanuatu workers in a way that increases sustainable livelihoods, communities and economic development, and mitigates the negative impacts of Vanuatu's participation in labour mobility schemes, both current and future, and to contribute to the economic and social objectives of the NSDP.

The Policy is shared between MFAICET and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The policy was reviewed in 2023 with a vision to achieve the realisation of the Policy goals, specifically:

- i. *Refocusing Vanuatu's engagement in labour mobility as a programme for sustainable development that reflects our national priorities and pursues strategic data-driven, evidence-based programme options*
- ii. *Enabling ni-Vanuatu workers, their families and communities to set and achieve their development goals through increased opportunities to access support within each step in the circular mobility process and improve reintegration success*
- iii. *Strategically approach labour mobility supply and management, to better connect quality labour supply from Vanuatu with quality work opportunities from employers*
- iv. *Strengthening domestic, bilateral and regional cooperation to achieve the above goals, and improve worker welfare and benefits*
- v. *Ensuring child-centred family and community social protections are in place, particularly in relation to child welfare and protection, gender and disability inclusions, community safety, disaster management, and adequate support is provided to safeguard family and community structures*



Vanuatu seasonal Workers Victoria Australia

Labour mobility issues will remain an important aspect of our foreign policy into the foreseeable future.

7. Our Consular Responsibility

Many thousands of ni-Vanuatu are living, working, and visiting overseas. Many of these are in Australia and New Zealand on temporary work visas, with another sizeable group residing in New Caledonia. However, small numbers of our citizens can be found in many parts of the world at any given time.

Our citizens abroad can be affected by unexpected personal setbacks or events beyond their control, such as natural disasters, pandemics, or political crises, as was the case during the outbreak of hostilities in the Middle East in October 2023. Our resident diplomatic missions overseas provide a point of contact for all ni-Vanuatu in those respective countries. Staff in our missions will make every reasonable effort to assist our citizens abroad when requested. However, our diplomats may not always have the capacity to attend to every matter in person, nor are they able to interfere in foreign legal processes on behalf of our citizens.

In major events affecting our citizens abroad, Vanuatu has been able to work with diplomatic partners to leverage their greater resources in support of our citizens. The government is exploring the possibility of entering into formal consular support arrangements with relevant partners to help respond to such situations in the future.



World Expo 2020- Vanuatu Pavillion



8. Who is involved in our Foreign Policy ?

A number of government Ministries have roles in Vanuatu's international engagement, but MFAICET is the Ministry which has the core responsibility for advising government on Vanuatu's foreign policy, for coordinating the activity of other parts of government that engage internationally, and for implementing foreign policy.

The core responsibilities of the Ministry are:

- i. To provide diplomatic and consular services*
- ii. To manage Vanuatu's foreign relations*
- iii. To manage unresolved maritime boundaries, territorial disputes, and the National Oceans*
- iv. Governance Framework*
- v. To negotiate trade agreements*
- vi. To manage Vanuatu's overseas network through the Foreign Service Act*
- vii. To manage Vanuatu's compliance with its international legal obligations.*

The distribution of our international network (see Annex) reflects our policy priorities. Future decisions on the expansion of our international network will be taken on a case-by-case basis, balancing a range of considerations and interests such as development cooperation, security, trade, consular and so forth.

Other parts of government and society that play a role in foreign policy are:

1. Prime Minister/Office of the Prime Minister: Under legislation (Government Act), the Prime Minister has principal responsibility for "determining the fundamental direction of foreign policy". The Prime Minister is assisted by the Foreign Minister.
2. The Council of Ministers (COM): The Council is the highest decision making body in Government that makes decisions and provided oversight.
3. Ministries with international portfolios: A number of ministries have international responsibilities related to their specific areas, such as the Ministry of Tourism, Trade, Industry, Commerce and Ni-Vanuatu Business; the Ministry of Climate Change Adaptation, Meteorology & Geo-Hazards, Energy, Environment and Disaster Management; the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity; and the Ministry of Justice and Community Services. They contribute to foreign policy in their respective sectors.
4. National Council of Chiefs (Malvatumauri): The council plays a role in cultural and diplomatic exchanges with other Pacific nations and in promoting Vanuatu's cultural heritage both at home and abroad.

5. Parliament: The Parliament's Committee on Economic and Foreign Policies has responsibility for oversight and review of foreign policy (among other matters). The Parliament as a whole has a role in the ratification of international treaties, as set out in Section 26 of the Constitution.
6. Vanuatu Investment Promotion Authority: The VIPA is responsible for attracting foreign investments; this authority influences economic aspects of foreign policy.
7. Vanuatu Financial Services Commission: The VFSC is responsible for financial services regulations; it engages with international organizations related to financial matters.

While this Paper has an emphasis on the formal role of government in the development and execution of foreign policy, it is important to recognise that civil society can play an important role in foreign policy, in its broadest sense. Vanuatu's successful hosting of the 7th Melanesian Arts and Cultural Festival in July 2023 underlined the role that our 'cultural ambassadors' can play in promoting people-to-people relations beyond our borders, and in promoting Vanuatu's international reputation. Other parts of our society, for instance our Churches and our sporting teams and representatives, also undertake diplomacy in their own way, contributing to Vanuatu's international reputation and shaping the way that others think about us.



Melanesian Art Festival 2023. (The Islander)



9. Next Steps

I. Consultative Council on Foreign Relations

A key initiative to emerge from this Foreign Policy Paper is the establishment of the **Consultative Council on Foreign Relations**. The purpose of the CCFR is to serve as an advisory body, providing insights, recommendations, and expertise to inform and shape the foreign policy of the Republic of Vanuatu.

The Consultative Council on Foreign Relations (**CCFR**) provides a platform for exchanges of view and information between government (represented by MFAICET) and civil society, on matters relating to Vanuatu's foreign policy and foreign relations. The objective of the CCFR is to strengthen public awareness of Vanuatu's foreign policy, and provide a stronger foundation for the development of policy advice by officials to the elected government.

The CCFR is a consultative and an advisory body, not a decision-making body.

1. For MFAICET, it provides an opportunity to brief civil society representatives on current issues of relevance, and to sound out the views of civil society on specific questions relating to Vanuatu's foreign relations.
2. For civil society, it provides an opportunity to convey views and recommendations on issues of concern relating to Vanuatu's foreign relations, and to question relevant officials in relation to those issues.

The membership of the CCFR will be:

- i. *Director General of MFAICET (Chair)*
- ii. *Secretary General of each of Vanuatu's six provinces*
- iii. *Representative of each of Vanuatu's three municipalities*
- iv. *Representative of the Vanuatu Christian Council (VCC)*
- v. *Representative of the Vanuatu National Council of Chiefs (Malvatumauri)*
- vi. *Representative of the Vanuatu National Council of Women (VNCW)*
- vii. *Representative of the Vanuatu Youth Council*
- viii. *Representative of the Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce*
- ix. *Representative of the Vanuatu Society for the Disabled*
- x. *Representative of the Vanuatu Association of Non-Government Organisations*
- xi. *Representative of Vanuatu academia*
- xii. *Director of the Department of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation*
- xiii. *Director of the Department of External Trade*

II. Monitoring and Evaluation

For any plan to work, there must be an efficient and effective tracking system to ensure that the goals and objectives of the policy are monitored and evaluated against national development priorities and its deliverables as presented in the Foreign Ministry's Corporate Plan and the two departments' annual business plans. Another important tool for assessing the policy is the Strategic Representation Guideline, which provides directions for the establishment of Vanuatu's diplomatic and consular representation.

The annual business plans of Vanuatu's diplomatic and consular services will be monitored through the annual programs and activities of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Department of External Trade. Overall implementation of the foreign policy will be monitored in-house by a mechanism that includes the Director General, the two Directors, and the Dean of Vanuatu's Diplomatic and Consular Corps.

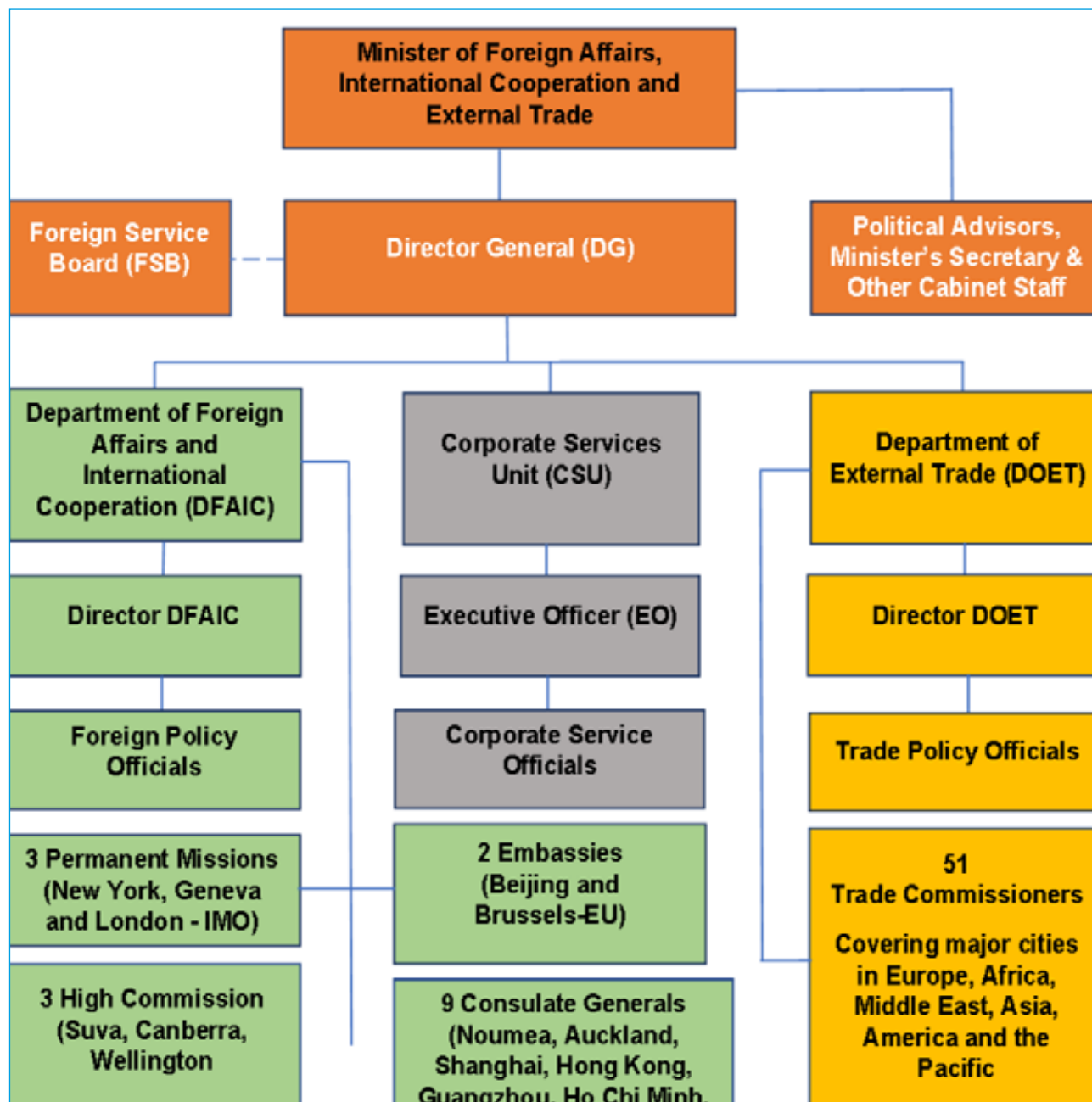
In addition to this internal monitoring mechanism, the policy will also be evaluated through the central agencies to strengthen coordination with other key national policies for sound and practical implementation and external advocacy of Vanuatu's national priorities.

The Parliamentary Committee on Economic and Foreign Policies will also provide the people's scrutiny to the policy's implementation.



ANNEX

1. Structure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and External Trade



2. Vanuatu maintains overseas missions in the following locations

Diplomatic Missions

- New York (Permanent Mission to the United Nations; also accredited to the United States)
- Beijing (Embassy to China)
- Brussels (Embassy to the EU Belgium, also accredited to France and the United Kingdom)
- Canberra (High Commission to Australia)
- Suva (High Commission to Fiji)
- Wellington (High Commission to New Zealand)
- Geneva (Permanent Mission to the United Nations; also accredited to Switzerland)

Consulates

- Shanghai (Consulate General)
- Guangzhou (Consulate General)
- Hong Kong (Consulate General)
- Manila (Consulate General)
- Ho Chi Minh City (Consulate General)
- Auckland (Consulate General)
- Noumea (Consulate General)

3. Vanuatu Diplomatic Relations

	COUNTRY	DATE
1	FRANCE	30 JULY 1980
2	GREAT BRITAIN	30 JULY 1980
3	AUSTRALIA	30 JULY 1980
4	NEW ZEALAND	30 JULY 1980
5	CANADA	30 JULY 1980
6	FIJI	30 JULY 1980
7	SOLOMON ISLANDS	30 JULY 1980
8	PAPUA NEW GUINEA	30 JULY 1980
9	TUVALU	30 JULY 1980
10	KIRIBATI	30 JULY 1980
11	NAURU	30 JULY 1980
12	TONGA	30 JULY 1980
13	SAMOA	30 JULY 1980
14	COOK ISLANDS	30 JULY 1980
15	REPUBLIC OF KOREA	02 AUGUST 1980
16	JAPAN	8 JANUARY 1980
17	FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY	22 APRIL 1981
18	SPAIN	30 APRIL 1981
19	BELGIUM	10 JUNE 1981
20	SWEDEN	27 SEPTEMBER 1981
21	DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA	1 OCTOBER 1981
22	CAMEROON	1 NOVEMBER 1981
23	SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM	3 MARCH 1982
24	NETHERLANDS	9 MARCH 1982
25	NIGERIA	16 MARCH 1982
26	ITALY	23 MARCH 1982
27	CHINA	26 MARCH 1982
28	INDIA	13 APRIL 1982
29	SWITZERLAND	5 MAY 1982
30	THAILAND	2 NOVEMBER 1982
31	SINGAPORE	10 DECEMBER 1982
32	CUBA	11 MARCH 1983
33	ARGENTINA	13 MARCH 1983
34	MALAYSIA	5 APRIL 1983
35	BANGLADESH	10 MAY 1983
36	SRI LANKA	28 SEPTEMBER 1983
37	PORTUGAL	30 SEPTEMBER 1983
38	GREECE	1 JUNE 1984
39	PERU	30 MAY 1986
40	LIBYA	30 MAY 1986

41	NICARAGUA	6 JUNE 1986
42	RUSSIA	30 JUN 1986
43	IVORY COAST	11 JULY 1986
44	SEYCHELLES	15 JULY 1986
45	ALGERIA	15 JULY 1986
46	ANGOLA	17 JULY 1986
47	TANZANIA	31 JULY 1986
48	ZIMBABWE	15 AUGUST 1986
49	PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANISATION (PLO)	6 SEPTEMBER 1986
50	MOZAMBIQUE	6 SEPTEMBER 1986
51	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (USA)	30 SEPTEMBER 1986
52	PHILIPPINES	8 OCTOBER 1986
53	MEXICO	30 OCTOBER 1986
54	POLAND	15 NOVEMBER 1986
55	BRAZIL	22 DECEMBER 1986
56	AUSTRIA	29 DECEMBER 1986
57	TOGO	21 JANUARY 1987
58	MYANMAR	28 JANUARY 1987
59	KUWAIT	4 FEBRUARY 1987
60	LAOS	27 MARCH 1987
61	FINLAND	1 APRIL 1987
62	JAMAICA	23 JULY 1987
63	MALDIVES	27 JANUARY 1988
64	THE BAHAMAS	27 JANUARY 1988
65	BOTSWANA	1 NOVEMBER 1988
66	TUNISIA	1 NOVEMBER 1988
67	NAMIBIA	23 MARCH 1990
68	FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA (FSM)	19 APRIL 1990
69	MARSHALL ISLANDS	1 AUGUST 1990
70	CHILE	10 SEPTEMBER 1990
71	ISRAEL	16 DECEMBER 1993
72	VATICAN CITY	20 JULY 1994
73	TURKEY	1 JUNE 1995
74	INDONESIA	3 JULY 1995
75	SOUTH AFRICA	6 JULY 1999
76	UKRAINE	29 SEPTEMBER 1999
77	CROATIA	18 APRIL 2000
78	IRELAND	7 SEPTEMBER 2000
79	MOROCCO	14 DECEMBER 2000
80	MAURITIUS	13 AUGUST 2001
81	NORTH MACEDONIA	16 NOVEMBER 2001

82	TIMOR LESTE	21 AUGUST 2002
83	QATAR	16 SEPTEMBER 2002
84	CZECH REPUBLIC	12 DECEMBER 2002
85	ICELAND	27 SEPTEMBER 2004
86	MALTA	29 SEPTEMBER 2004
87	NEPAL	19 SEPTEMBER 2006
88	SAHARAWI REPUBLIC	31 JULY 2008
89	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	23 JUNE 2009
90	URUGUAY	6 AUGUST 2009
91	TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	24 NOVEMBER 2009
92	KOSOVO	22 SEPTEMBER 2010
93	LUXEMBOURG	24 SEPTEMBER 2010
94	HUNGARY	6 JUNE 2011
95	EGYPT	22 SEPTEMBER 2011
96	GEORGIA	12 JULY 2013
97	MONGOLIA	23 SEPTEMBER 2013
98	MONTENEGRO	25 SEPTEMBER 2013
99	ARMENIA	26 SEPTEMBER 2013
100	ESTONIA	26 SEPTEMBER 2013
101	KAZAKHSTAN	19 FEBRUARY 2014
102	LITHUANIA	28 SEPTEMBER 2015
102	PAKISTAN	8 AUGUST 2016
103	URUGUAY	6 AUGUST 2009
104	VENEZUELA	18 SEPTEMBER 2016
105	AZERBAIJAN	22 SEPTEMBER 2017
106	NORWAY	28 MAY 2018
107	ROMANIA	31 MAY 2018
108	BULGARIA	3 JUNE 2018
109	TAJIKISTAN	16 AUGUST 2018
110	SERBIA	28 AUGUST 2018
111	MONACO	10 SEPTEMBER 2018
112	SAN MARINO	25 SEPTEMBER 2018
113	BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	26 SEPTEMBER 2018
114	ECUADOR	26 SEPTEMBER 2018
115	COSTA RICA	28 SEPTEMBER 2018
116	RWANDA	3 OCTOBER 2018
117	DENMARK	23 OCTOBER 2018
118	BURUNDI	7 DECEMBER 2019
119	DOMINICA	20 SEPTEMBER 2021
120	SAUDI ARABIA	8 AUGUST 2022
121	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	14 NOVEMBER 2023
122	OMAN	22 NOVEMBER 2023
123	PANAMA	22 NOVEMBER 2023
124	ANDORRA	30 NOVEMBER 2023
125	BAHRAIN	9 FEBRUARU 2024



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