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**PERMANENT MISSION
OF
THE REPUBLIC OF VANUATU
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**



**MISSION PERMANENTE
DE
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE VANUATU
AUPRÈS DES NATIONS UNIES**

VANUATU

STATEMENT BY

HONOURABLE MINISTER KEIASIPAI SONG SHEM,

MINISTER OF HEALTH AT THE 21ST SPECIAL

SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL

ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, 2 JULY 1999

Mr. President

Distinguish Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with great honor and privilege that I can represent the Republic of Vanuatu and my Government at this Special Assembly on the International Conference on Population and Development (**ICPD+5**) and at the same time be given an opportunity to deliver my country's statement surrounding the issues of Population and Development following the 1994, Cairo Meeting, and the subsequent Hague Forum.

First of all, I wish to commend the excellent work prepared and carried out by UNFPA at country levels, regional levels and also at the global level to advocate on population and development issues. In conducting regional Ministers Meeting to address regional response to ICDP POA or Pacific Island countries, the Hague Forum and the Preparatory committee meeting held from March **24-30, 1999** here in New York.

I wish to reassure this Assembly and the Special Session that my Government will be committed to carry out the resolutions and the plan of action approved and agreed on.

In population and development concerns, following structural changes adopted by my Government to carry out a Comprehensive Reform Program for an improved service delivery within the Public Service, the Government of Vanuatu has also given the priority in the economic sector addressing private sector lead growth and employment generation.

To improve the quality of life for the average and low income earners and to encourage an equitable resource distribution of goods and services in the economic and social sector, and not excluding the customary and traditional values observed by communities. To integrate programs and activities in a manageable manner to ensure that strong community participation, commitments and ownership in various developments can and will continue to be sustained.

Development and redesign of advocacy tools to improve awareness and communication skill in the basic languages that are simple and clear to be

understood by our communities. This can also contribute to bring about major changes in human behavior and habit in the context of Population and Development through inter-sectoral approach.

In whatever ways we address the issues, emphasizing on Economic, Social and Cultural aspect of Population and Development integrated into different sectors, my Government believe strongly that the plan of actions can be achieved if only we can accept in principle, the standard rules and procedures but when it comes to implementation of programs and activities there flexibility to allow for adjustments based on country's specific needs.

This is because our countries have been and continue to go through different development changes. We must also take into account our cultures, values and beliefs to ensure ownership is developed in the name of change and growth. Therefore if we are to achieve the resolutions of the Special Session, it is equally important to always think Globally but at our national endeavors to act Locally by engaging major stakeholders to work collaboratively and not competitively.

We have a lot to learn and share from our experiences through transfer of skills and be united in our common goals, if we, as heads of governments and representatives are to achieve that targeted plan of action and to guide this generation into then new millennium. By continuing to educate and reeducate our countrymen and all levels of age groups the impact of population and development to avoid the unexpected resources depletion because of our ignorance or deliberate acts.

Mr. President, I wish to concur my Government and country's commitment and endorsement to the resolution of this Special Session and to participate fully in the implementation of the action plans.

Mr. President, I thank you for your attention. **Merci** Beaucoup.