

**Signature ceremony of the services contract  
on the Joint-Bachelor degree on Environment science in Vanuatu  
5 June 2021**

M. Vice-Chancellor and President of the National University of Vanuatu, cher Jean-Pierre,  
M. Dear Director General of the Ministry of Education and Training in Vanuatu, dear M. Iati,  
M. Dean of JCU college of Science and Engineering, dear Prof White,  
Dear students of the joint-bachelor degree in environment in Vanuatu,  
Dear all, chers tous,

- Laissez-moi vous dire avant toute chose combien je suis heureux de l'ouverture de cette nouvelle licence en environnement à l'Université nationale du Vanuatu et ravi d'être avec vous tous aujourd'hui pour célébrer officiellement le lancement de ce nouveau partenariat.
- Indeed, this contract marks a new step illustrating the strong academic ties we at the UNC have been building over time with Vanuatu, and have consolidated further since the inception of the National University of Vanuatu. I can think here of the Bachelor degree in hospitality and tourism that we are already running together with the UNV, as well as our previous collaboration on the Masters degree on management of Oceanian territories.
- I can tell you I am very proud, Vanuatu friends, of what we are achieving again together here.
- I am also specially delighted of the innovative type of partnership we are installing all together with this new joint degree, and I want to warmly thank our colleagues of James Cook University for the productive training offer we successfully managed to design together to match the expectations of the Government of Vanuatu.

Let me also pay here a special tribute to our colleague Dr Valerie BURTET-SARRAMEGNA for her engagement in this project, as she unfortunately can't be here with us today.

- I am happy to e-meet the first cohort of Vanuatu students for this new degree, and I want to wish them all success and personal accomplishment during the next three years of training. The number of enrolled students obviously shows the high interest of the youth in Vanuatu for embarking in professional careers related to environment.
- This is a trend we can observe throughout the South Pacific region, and a chance for our states and territories, which are standing at the forefront of the impact of environment and climate global challenges.

- It shows with no doubt the commitment and readiness of our youth, in Vanuatu and in the whole Pacific region, for actively take part in the design of our sustainable future.
- I very much value the contract we are signing today, and for many reasons.
- Just to mention a few, let me underline the two followings:
  - **First reason is the bilingual dimension of this new Bachelor degree:** by responding to a major linguistic feature of Vanuatu's identity, both JCU and UNC are challenging themselves. This is to me extremely important and promising, as multilinguism is truly a key vehicle for connecting people in the Pacific Region.
  - **Second reason is of course the thematic focus of this degree.** Environment, as I already mentioned, is central to our regional challenges. I am convinced we can all join forces to build regional critical mass and address these challenges.

This is why I feel it is the utmost responsibility of regional universities to work closely together to equip our youth with the appropriate skills, know-how and creativity.

This is in a way what we are initiating all together, NUV, JCU and UNC through this new degree.

This is also the meaning of what we - at the UNC - are currently putting together with the University of the South Pacific in Fiji, through the forthcoming opening of our first regional Master degree on sustainability science.

- I won't keep the floor any longer. Once again, I want to warmly thank you all and share my pride for this fantastic project that we are running together. All my best to our students!