

## Salutations & Acknowledgements

- His Excellency, Fr. Baldwin Lansdale, President of the Republic of Vanuatu
- Hon. Christopher Emele, Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery
- Hon. Danstan Hilton, Minister for Justice
- Honorable President of the TORBA Provincial Government
- Secretary General of the TORBA Provincial Government & Provincial Staff and line Ministry Representatives
- Mr. William Nasak, Director General, Ministry of Youth & Sports Development
- Mr. Joe Iautim, Director, Department of Youth & Sports Development
- Representative of the Chiefs Council
- Representative of the Church Council
- Mr. Vira Taivakalo, President of the Vanuatu National Youth Council & the Presidents of the Provincial and Municipal Youth Councils
- The Youth and Sports Development of Officers of all the Provinces that are present.
- Community of TORBA Provinces
- Youths of TORBA Province
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Your Excellency, the Head of State and colleague Ministers It brings me great honor and privilege to provide key remarks from the Ministry responsible for Youth Development on this important occasion of celebrating the UN Declared Internal Youth Day in Sola, TORBA Province.

I am honored to be part of this Celebration and I applaud and congratulates the TORBA Provincial Government, the IYD Chairman Clifton Lonsdale and his team including relevant Stakeholders for the preparations of the IYD 2015 Celebration in TORBA.

Since 2012, the Ministry of Youth & Sports Development decided to bring the Celebrations of the International Youth Day to the Provinces and Municipalities. The Ministry saw the need to be closer to the Youth People of Vanuatu to raise awareness on the key policies of the Government on Youth Development and to engaged in dialogue with young people and key stakeholders

The theme of International Youth Day 2015 is **“Youth Civic Engagement.”** The engagement and participation of youth is essential to achieve sustainable human development. Yet often the opportunities for youth to engage politically, economically and socially are low or non-existent.

More efforts are needed to raise awareness about the importance of youth civic engagement and its benefits to the individual and to society, including for sustainable development as well as resilience and wellbeing. The International Youth Day 2015 campaign aims at promoting civic engagement and participation of youth in politics and public life, so that young people can be empowered and bring a full contribution to society, development and peace.

The Ministry of Youth Development and Sports is fully committed to ensuring that Government of Vanuatu address and respond to the key Social and Economic Development issues of the Youths of Vanuatu.

The Vanuatu Government through the Ministry of Youth is proud to be able to provide for a space for “Youth in Civic Engagement” in creating a platform whereby you people can be engaged in voicing their concerns and development needs through the establishment of the Vanuatu National Youth Council in all 6 Provincial and 2 Municipal Youth Councils. It is the commitment of the Ministry of Youth and Sport Development to provide Annual Grants to assist in strengthen the work of the Youth Council in reaching out to all the youths through the establishment of the VNYC Secretariat.

The next step in this direction for Youth in Civic Engagement is the tabling of VNYC Bill in Parliament. As Minister responsible for Youth Development I will make sure that the VNYC Bill be tabled in Parliament before my term ends. The Act will enable the Youths to be effectively involved and engagement in the implementing the Government’s Policy on Youth Development.

We may see an understandably frustrated youth population (68% of our Population Under the age of 30) and social issues in our communities– but that picture is incomplete. With the right skills, these young people are exactly the force we need to drive progress across the global agenda and build more inclusive and vibrant societies. The Ministry in that aspect is committed to work with Development Partners and relevant Stakeholders in working towards that goal in creating pathways through the strengthening of institutions and building the capacity of young people and youth groups through the Vanuatu National Youth Council.

On this Day, I call on everyone from the Government Sectors, Development Partners, NGO Partners, Provincial Governments, Communities and Families for investing politically and financially in developing the skills and capacities of young people so that they can help build a more just and sustainable future for all. In working together we will trigger a process of empowerment and self-esteem for our young people that will benefit everyone. Strengthening the capacity of Youth in Vanuatu will help address the many challenges facing society like unemployment, teenage pregnancies, justice and climate change in moving us closer to an educated healthy, wealthy nation.