

ENVIRONMENT, SOCIAL AND COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP OPENING ADDRESS

DISTINGUISHED PARTICIPANTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, GOOD MORNING!

IT IS A GREAT HONOUR AND PLEASURE FOR ME TO WELCOME ALL OF YOU TO THIS ENVIRONMENT, SOCIAL AND COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP ON BEHALF OF MCA VANUATU. I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK CHRIS COOKSON, MANDY FITCHET, GRAIG SMART AND CATHERINE MALOSU FOR THEIR TREMENDOUS EFFORT IN MAKING THIS WORKSHOP ARE REALITY. I ALSO WOULD LIKE TO THANK DOWNER EDI WORKS FOR ALLOWING US TO USE THEIR CONFERENCE FACILITY FOR THIS IMPORTANT WORKSHOP.

IN ANY PROJECT THE LIVES OF THOSE LIVING IN PROJECT AFFECTED AREAS ARE ALWAYS AFFECTED, SOMETIMES POSITIVELY AND SOMETIMES NEGATIVELY. IN RECOGNITION OF OUR GOAL OF REDUCING POVERTY THROUGH GROWTH IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY THAT THE LIVELIHOOD OF THOSE AFFECTED ARE NOT AFFECTED NEGATIVELY OR MADE WORSEOFF. THEREFORE IT IS IMPORTANT THAT ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL ISSUES ARE ADDRESSED ADEQUATELY BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER CONSTRUCTION.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS WORKSHOP IS FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS TO SHARE THEIR UNDERSTANDING ON THE UNDERLYING COMMUNICATION, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE COMPACT. IT IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE AWARENESS ON ASSOCIATE MONITORING AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROGRAM WHICH INVOLVE VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS AND UNDERSTAND THE BENEFITS OF COMPLIANCE AND THE RISK AND PENALTIES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE. THIS IS ALSO THE OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN OUR RELATIONSHIPS AND MAINTAIN AND OPEN COMMUNICATION APPROACH THAT TAKES INTO ACCOUNT OUR COMMON GOAL OF IMPLEMENTING THE MCA PROGRAM BY UNDERSTANDING OUR VARIOUS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

THIS WORKSHOP IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO UNDERSTAND OUR OBLIGATIONS UNDER VANUATU LAW REGARDING THE ENVIRONMENT AS WELL AS MCC ENVIRONMENTAL GUIDELINES, WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO WORLD BANK **OP 4.12**. THIS WORKSHOP WILL ENABLE US TO UNDERSTAND THE GREIVENCE PROCEDURES AS WELL AS UNDERSTANDING THE PUPOSE OF HAVING ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN AND RESETTLEMENT ACTION PLANS. THIS WORKSHOP WILL ALSO HELP US UNDERSTAND THE RISK AND PENALTIES OF NOT COMPLYING WITH THE VARIOUS ENVIRONMENT GUIDELINES. THEREFORE IT IS PARAMOUNT THAT WHEN DEALING WITH ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL ISSUES WE AS STAKEHOLDERS OF THE PROJECT WORK TOGETHER TO FULFIL THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE COMPACT AND ANY VANUATU LAWS TO AVOID ANY FINANCIAL COMITMENTS FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF VANUATU AND MCA. THIS WORKSHOP IS WERE STAKEHOLDERS UNDERSTAND EACH OTHERS ROLE AND KNOW WHAT THEY ARE REQUIRED TO DO WHENEVER THERE IS AN ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL ISSUE THAT CAN POTENTIALLY AFFECT THE PROGRAM.

IN CONCLUSION, I WISH YOU ALL WELL IN YOUR DISCUSSIONS OVER THE COURSE OF THE WORKSHOP. I HOPE YOU WILL ENJOY THE PRESENTATIONS AND BELIEVE THAT THE WORKSHOP WILL BE PRACTICAL AND GENERATE LOTS OF DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS. I ALSO HOPE THAT AT THE END OF THE WORKSHOP WE WILL APPRECIATE EACH OTHERS CONTRIBUTIONS AND STRIVE TO BUILD STRONGER NETWORKS TO EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS ANY ISSUE THAT ARISES DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT.

ONCE AGAIN LADIES AND GENTLEMEN THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING THIS IMPORTANT WORKSHOP.