

REPUBLIC OF VANUATU

EDUCATION MASTER PLAN

October 7, 1999

I. GOALS FOR EDUCATION IN VANUATU

1. This document sets forth the broad strategy for the development of our education system over the next ten to fifteen years and well beyond that. Background information and detailed strategies may be found in the annexes and in shorter strategy documents which will be developed over time, usually with technical assistance and as part of project preparation. It must be recognized that planning is a *process*, not an event: we intend to continue this planning process over time, as new data and information become available, and in order to meet the changing requirements of our developing economy and society.
2. This Education Master Plan has been prepared within the mandate of the Comprehensive Reform Program (CRP). The CRP, endorsed at a National Summit held in June 1997, envisages a redirection of resources “to the delivery of social services especially education, which is the key to personal, social, political, and economic development.” Education is seen as playing a critical role in the whole reform process, contributing directly to economic growth by providing a more literate and better skilled labor force and being “the single most important tool for building an equitable society.”
3. Our goals for the education system in Vanuatu include the following:

Access

We desire to provide **basic education** of eight years for all children by the Year 2010. Since basic education will be terminal for two thirds or more of our children, our greatest effort must be made at this level.

We wish to increase access at other levels and in other types of education, including **secondary education, vocational and technical education**, and **non-formal education**, but we recognize that expansion at these areas should be geared to likely employment possibilities in the developing economy. In vocational and technical education, in particular, we need to strike a balance between **technical education** needed for the formal sector and **vocational and life skills** for the bulk of school leavers who will not find paid employment.

We will continue to search for ways to ensure that the best of the young people completing secondary education will have access to **higher education**, regardless of the main language in which they have done their previous studies.

We wish to provide second chances for ni-Vanuatu who for whatever reason must interrupt their education, in particular through **distance education**.

We wish to cater adequately for those of our children and youth who are **disabled** in one way or another.

Relevance

We intend to use our education system to help us value and preserve our **linguistic and cultural heritage, identity and diversity**.

We intend to ensure that our education system provides the **skills** children need if they are to function in Vanuatu and in the wider world society and economy.

We intend to continue to improve our curriculum so that it corresponds ever more closely to Vanuatu's **economic and social development needs**.

Quality

We intend to provide education of higher quality than at present.

We intend to improve and expand **teacher education** (both pre-service and in-service).

We intend to strengthen the **supervision** of teachers and the **inspection** of schools, so that teachers' needs for technical support are met and so that we can be assured that our education system is functioning as it should.

We intend to provide appropriate education **infrastructure** which may be very simple but which allows the learning process to occur adequately.

Having made a very successful start in the development of the **curriculum**, we intend to continue the process, with constant improvements and changes as necessitated by our changing society and world. Based on the revised curriculum, we intend to provide the **textbooks and other teaching materials** needed to teach the curriculum.

We intend to improve the **examinations system** so that it will serve us not only to select children for higher levels of education but also to allow us to evaluate their progress and the strengths and weaknesses of the educational process.

Equity

We intend to strive to make our education system ever more equitable.

We will strive to ensure that the education provided in **rural** areas compares well with that provided in **urban** areas, and, in particular, that all our children have access to basic education.

Similarly, we will strive to ensure that the education provided in **poor** areas of the country compares well with that provided in **wealthier** areas, and, in particular, that children of poor families have access to basic education.

We recognize that in a democracy, **language** usage cannot be imposed, but we intend to ensure that there is an equitable distribution of resources to schools of the same level and type, whatever may be the medium of instruction.

Language Policy

We intend to follow the mandates stated in our **Constitution**, which provides that “The Republic of Vanuatu shall protect the different local languages which are part of the national heritage” and “The principal languages of education are English and French.”

We intend to use our education system to develop writing systems, over time, and as resources are available, for as many as possible of our **indigenous vernacular languages**. As materials become available, we intend to use them in the early years of basic education.

We wish to preserve **English and French** as the principal languages of our education system, which we intend should continue to be a dual system, although we hope that in the future it can become increasingly bilingual at the upper levels of the system.

We intend to strive to create a society in which all citizens feel at ease in at least one international language and in which our secondary-school graduates can function well in either.

Partnerships

Recognizing that the task is too vast to be achieved by the Government alone, we intend to enhance collaboration and partnerships among **Government** at all levels, **churches, non-governmental organizations, women’s groups, parents, communities, the private sector, and donors** in the achievement of education objectives.

Management of the Education System

We intend to improve the **management** of the education system, through the development of appropriate policies and accompanying legislation which are seen to be fair and transparent by all and which are enforced.

Sustainability

Our education system must be **cost-effective** such that available resources are used as effectively as possible.

We intend to rely on bilateral and multilateral **donors** for much of our technical assistance needs and for all of our investment budget for education for the foreseeable future.

The expansion and improvement of our education system will, however, need to be undertaken only as fast as **our own resources** permit us to operate and sustain the entire system.

II. SUSTAINABILITY

4. Although “sustainability” is mentioned last in the list of our objectives, we intend to focus on it first, since the availability of resources will determine what we are able to do. If our objectives are too ambitious, we will be unable to achieve them, expectations will have been raised and then frustrated, and social discontent is likely to be great. Therefore, we intend to proceed with caution, recognizing, however, that projections and plans can easily be modified either upwards or downwards as the economy develops and actual data become available.

5. Available Resources (Annex 1). Although GDP is believed to have risen by only 1% in real terms in 1998, the background economic and financial situation in Vanuatu is encouraging, especially in view of the endorsement and progressive implementation of the Comprehensive Reform Program. The CRP forecasts higher economic growth (about 3%) in 1999 and 4% in 2000 and thereafter. The historical growth rate since Independence has averaged about 3% per year. For the purposes of projecting available resources, we have used 3% a year; projections can be revised upwards if economic growth turns out to be more than that. The CRP forecasts that Government revenues as a percentage of GDP will rise from 23% to 27%. Within the Budget, expenditure on education was increased by 10% in monetary terms in 1998 and 1999 and 2000, reflecting the Government’s indication of increased priority for education. Education’s share in the Government’s recurrent budget has fluctuated over the years, falling as low as 19% but rising in 1998 to 22%. The Government’s intention is to raise the allocation to Education to 26% of the Government recurrent budget by the Year 2000 and then keep it at that level. Assuming 3% annual growth of GDP, and assuming that government expenditure rises to 27% of GDP (as specified in the CRP), and education expenditure equals 26% of government expenditure, the education budget in 2010 in real terms (at 1998 prices) would be Vt. 3.0 billion (which is 1.8 times the amount in the 1998 Budget). We calculate that this budget would not permit the achievement of universal education to Grade 10 by 2010. It should, however, permit the achievement of universal education to Grade 8, subject to certain assumptions relating to expenditures and cost-savings as set forth below.

6. Unit Costs. Per-pupil costs are high, averaging over Vt. 25,000 in primary schools, Vt. 78,000 in secondary schools, and Vt. 110,000 in senior secondary schools: relatively, these costs are significantly higher than in a recent survey of 14 Asian countries. The high costs of education in Vanuatu relate to (1) the low pupil-teacher ratios, which stem from the proliferation of small primary schools (with separate provision for Anglophone, Francophone, and church schools of various denominations, all essentially financed by the Government), (2) high teachers’ salaries (although teachers’ salaries have not been increased since 1994), and (3) boarding costs (although these are largely met by parents). Any attempts to reduce, over time, the relatively high per pupil costs should take into consideration all three of these factors. Financial contributions to schools by parents are already at high levels (up to Vt. 75,000 per year in senior secondary schools) and it is doubtful that these could be increased. Already, very high fee payments to schools must put the cost of secondary education beyond the reach of many of the poorer families.

7. A number of projections have been done, under varying assumptions about pass rates, repetition rates, drop-out rates, and enrollment rates. The projections demonstrate that Vanuatu will be *unable* to afford ten years of basic education for all, even if there are no improvements in education quality (as reflected in higher unit costs). They demonstrate further that eight years of basic education for all will be possible *only* if certain cost-savings measures are introduced and if the expansion of the system beyond basic education (i.e., Grade 9 and above) is severely restricted. In particular, as a cost-saving measure (but also for other reasons), we propose to offer Grades 1 and 2 at the community level using teachers chosen from the community who will not be paid as much as qualified primary-school teachers.

8. Rationalization of Primary Education. The Ministry of Education has recently completed an up-to-date inventory of all schools in the country. On the basis of the new school map, and with a view to achieving cost savings and efficiency gains, we intend to undertake, on a community-by-community basis, a study of the feasibility of merging small primary schools where these are to be found relatively close together. We will negotiate with the various church bodies, with a view to urge the desirability of merging small primary schools, and the community will be closely involved in the discussion. This will be a difficult process, both in terms of religion and in terms of language, yet the exercise *must* be done if Vanuatu expects to have adequate resources to undertake and sustain all the other initiatives envisaged in this Education Master Plan.

9. Rationalization of Higher-Level Training. There is inefficiency and duplication of effort in the current situation in which a large number of Government agencies operate many independent training centers. The possibility of further rationalization of Government-supported training will be studied, including the feasibility of establishing a single, multi-campus, multi-discipline national institute with responsibility for providing post-secondary technical and continuing education and training.

III. ACCESS

10. Basic Education. Since Independence, we have striven to provide basic education of six years to all our children, and access at that level is now virtually universal. We would now like to expand the basic education cycle to eight years. The National Education Commission has determined that an eight-year cycle of basic education is a reasonable goal for Vanuatu at this point in its development.

11. Initial Education. We intend to introduce vernacular-language education in the early years of the basic-education cycle. This proposal is discussed at length in Annex 2. We intend, over a period of ten years or more, to establish community-built and -maintained schools in virtually every village and hamlet, based on Vanuatu's hundreds of existing kindergartens wherever possible, in which a preparatory year and Grades 1 and 2 will be offered in the local vernacular language. Children will hear either English or French in the classroom from the

beginning, but will be taught in a vernacular language chosen by the school committee, in cooperation with the parents. In urban areas, the parents may choose Bislama, since almost all urban children are fluent in Bislama by school age, and it is the language they commonly use to interact with one another. Children will start studying English or French in the second half of Grade 2; instruction in Grade 3 and thereafter will continue to be in English or French.

12. As set forth in the Annex, this initiative is being undertaken on cultural, financial and pedagogical grounds and in the conviction that it is the single best measure Vanuatu can take to preserve its cultural heritage, expand access to education, and improve the quality of education. At present, some children in Vanuatu need to walk an hour or two to arrive at the nearest primary school. This measure will enable the smaller children (ages 5-7) to continue to live in their homes and be taught by a teacher living in the village, known to everyone, and speaking the vernacular language. Teachers will be mature individuals who are respected in the community (e.g., retired teachers, community leaders) and who have completed at least ten years of education.

13. This system is already being piloted; the pilot will continue in 2000. The new system will be introduced nationwide gradually, over a period of at least ten years; during this time, the existing system will continue wherever the new system has not yet been introduced. The major constraint on its introduction will be the ability to produce basic learning materials in vernacular languages for a preparatory year and for Grades 1 and 2. Obviously, given that Vanuatu has more than 100 vernacular languages, at least half of them not yet written, this will take several years. Some written materials exist in up to 50 of the country's vernacular languages. For the development of appropriate materials in vernacular languages for the preparatory year and for Grades 1 and 2, we intend to involve technical assistance from linguistic experts and from non-governmental agencies present in Vanuatu for some years, which have developed pragmatic methodologies for producing learning materials quickly and well, and which are eager to help.

14. Teachers will draw upon community knowledge for the content of their courses, based on the nationally established curriculum, and will undergo short-term training (in ten to twelve modules, over two years) in pedagogy. A salary scale providing for lower salaries than for primary teachers will be developed.

15. Later Basic Education. If Grades 1 and 2 are progressively offered in village- and hamlet-based community schools, then the classrooms in existing primary schools used heretofore for these two Grades will become vacant and can, with suitable modifications, be used for Grades 7 and 8. Similarly, teachers in existing primary schools will no longer need to teach Grades 1 and 2, such that through teacher redeployment and upgrading within the school, the existing teaching staff can, with appropriate in-service training, be used to teach Grades 3-8. It will be necessary to provide each school with science and technology equipment for Grades 7 and 8 as well as a multi-purpose facility with a bush kitchen and an area for science and technology activities. Children completing Grade 6 in areas where the vernacular-language schools have been introduced will be able to continue on to Grades 7 and 8 in the same school, without having to undergo the present Grade 6 selection examination. Although some children live an hour or two from the nearest primary school (most of which in rural areas at present serve several villages),

they will now not need to walk to it until Grade 3 (at roughly age 9 or 10). Primary schools offering Grades 3 through 8 will continue to be built and maintained by communities with the help of the government (teachers' salaries and teaching materials) and, in some cases, the churches or other non-governmental organizations. This proposal has support among parents, who see two great advantages: (i) under the new proposal, their children will be guaranteed a place in Grades 7 and 8 and (ii) their children aged 12 and 13 can stay at home and attend Grades 7 and 8 nearby, without the parents' having to send the children away to boarding school (with the related high transportation costs and boarding fees).

16. Vocational Training for Children Leaving School after Basic Education. The large majority of children who will leave school after 8 years of basic general education will have little opportunity to obtain vocational skills which will equip them for work in either paid or subsistence employment. We intend to provide more and better quality vocational training (Annex 3) for those children by supporting the expansion and development of the system of Rural Development Training Centers (RTCs). These centers are private, independent, established and funded by communities and through student fees in response to felt community needs, and do not require Government funding to support their operations. At present, technical assistance is provided to RTCs through an umbrella agency named the Vanuatu Rural Development Training Centers Association (VRTCA). VRTCA will be strengthened to enable it to (i) appraise the capacity and willingness of a community to support a new RTC and (ii) make small grants of "seed money" to newly established RTCs to enable them to start up operations. In order to preserve the independence and quick, pragmatic, demand-driven nature of the RTCs, funding be passed to them through VRTDCA.

17. Secondary Education. If Grades 7 and 8 are progressively offered in primary schools having Grades 3 through 8, then the existing schools which offer Grades 7 through 10 will have excess capacity (both classrooms and teachers) and can be progressively converted into schools offering Grades 9 through 12. Schools which at present offer Grades 7 through 10 exist in every province; it will therefore be possible to have secondary schools offering Grades 9 through 12 in each province. Obviously, some upgrading of both teachers and facilities will be needed. It is our intention, over time, to establish at least two such schools in each province, one English medium and one French medium. This proposal has received considerable support from provincial education authorities and from parents, who will be able to send their children to secondary schools through Grade 12 in their own province, thus avoiding expensive transportation costs as well as physical and emotional separation.

18. Technical Education (Annex 3). We propose to strengthen the role of the National Institute of Technology of Vanuatu (INTV) in further and continuing education by introducing regulatory changes which will give INTV more flexibility to offer formal, informal and continuing education and training programs in response to community and industry demand. We will strengthen INTV's national role in the development and improvement of the various forms of technical and vocational education and training. INTV will become a technical and vocational education and training center of excellence with involvement in technical and vocational education, dissemination of training resources, development of technical/vocational curricula, and the technical component of teacher training.

19. Centers of Excellence. In the Anglophone system, Malapoa and Matevulu Colleges offer, in addition to Grades 11 and 12, the bursary program (Grade 13); in the Francophone system, the Lycée in Port Vila offers Grades 13 and 14 in addition to Grades 11 and 12. These three institutions will be strengthened so that many or most of their graduates will be able to proceed on to university education. This proposal is based on the experience of other countries including Tonga, where the best secondary-school students are brought together in a single boarding school during their last year, and where 95% of these students then obtain admission to the university. At present, Grades 13 and 14 are offered because Grade 12 graduates do not have sufficient preparation to proceed directly on to the university. Over time, with improvements in quality throughout the system and particularly in these centers of excellence, Grade 14 at the Lycée may become unnecessary. Any changes, however, will be made only after exhaustive evaluation and established a case for dropping them.

20. Higher Education. Beginning with the proposal to introduce literacy education in vernacular languages, all of the above proposals should result in improved learning results. In addition, a number of quality inputs discussed below, including efforts to improve the learning of the second international language, should result in a higher percentage of young people able to obtain acceptance at institutions of higher education and pursue university courses successfully. In particular, if the teaching of the second international language is improved dramatically, students will be able to seek admission to both Anglophone and Francophone universities. Thus young people who have been taught in the Francophone system but who have also mastered English can seek admittance to the University of the South Pacific and other Anglophone universities. Other proposals to expand opportunities for higher education will be considered on their merits.

21. Distance Education (Annex 4). Until now, distance education in Vanuatu has been provided mainly through the University of the South Pacific for students seeking to qualify for USP Foundation (pre-tertiary) Programs and for some of the tertiary programs of that institution. The recent establishment of a branch of the Association of Universities Teaching Entirely or Partially in French and the Group of Universities Expressing Themselves in French (AUPELF/UREF) promises similar access to French-medium higher education. We propose, when funding becomes available, to establish a distance-education system throughout the country which will offer a second chance for secondary education, particularly for those young people pushed out of formal education after Grade 6 (under the old system) or Grade 8 (under the new system). We intend to explore whether the successful junior-secondary Distance Education Program of Papua New Guinea (Grades 7-10, and to be expanded to include Grades 11-12) offers a model for possible adoption in Vanuatu. Over time, all courses currently offered in the classroom in secondary education will also be offered by correspondence, supplemented by radio and other media as resources permit.

22. Education for the Disabled (Annex 5). Within Vanuatu the major vehicle for the education of the disabled has been the Vanuatu Society for Disabled People (VSDP). VSDP has a central unit in Port Vila and a field worker in each of the six provinces. The role of the field workers is to identify the disabled in all categories, physical and intellectual, to design and

implement programs for each disabled person, and to secure locally the cooperation and particular resources which will make possible the development and education of the individual in question. Local cooperation has often been freely given and has resulted in positive and important results through the efforts and class and head teachers. It is clear, however, that the number of disabled in school is only a small portion of the total number of school-aged children with disabilities. We propose to appoint an officer in the Ministry of Education with a specific responsibility for the development of policies and programs for the education of the disabled at all levels of the education system, and to be the official representative of the Government to VSDP. We also intend to incorporate components about the needs and education of the disabled officially into the curricula of all programs of Vanuatu Teachers College. Finally, we will designate one primary school in Port Vila and one in Luganville as the national centers for education of the disabled, and we will assign resources (obtained from donors, if possible) to enable these schools to provide effective education for disabled children and youth.

IV. RELEVANCE

23. Vernacular-Language Education. As described in Annex 2, a major innovation in our education system will be the adoption of vernacular-language education in the early years of basic education. In addition to its pedagogical and financial merits, this proposal has received widespread support because it would greatly increase the relevance of education to Vanuatu's culture, history, identity, and reality. Vanuatu is fortunate in that there are a number of valuable resources on which to begin programs in local languages. They include the Pacific Languages Unit of the University of the South Pacific, the National Community Development Trust, the Summer Institute of Linguistics, the Vanuatu Cultural Center and World Vision Vanuatu. In addition, there are hundreds of preschool classes supported in part by the Vanuatu Preschool Association. In addition to use of the local language as the medium of instruction, vernacular-language education in the early years of basic education would be more relevant because each local teacher, using materials produced by the Curriculum Development Center, would draw examples for the teaching of all subjects from the local community. In addition, teachers would draw on community knowledge (parents, chiefs, village elders) for assistance in developing specific content and in classroom teaching. Thus children will be well-grounded in their local language, culture, history, and heritage before they proceed on to knowledge of foreign languages and the wider world.

24. Curriculum. There is general recognition that the present curriculum for both primary and junior secondary education, as reflected in the new textbooks which have recently arrived in the schools, is far more relevant to Vanuatu's needs and reality than anything available in the past. Since the books have only recently arrived and are only beginning to be used, they are not yet well known by the public, in general, and by parents, in particular; the perception that "education is largely irrelevant to life" may therefore change rapidly, once the new curricular materials are in wider use, and once they have been supplied in all subjects at all grades in adequate numbers. The completion of the present unified primary curriculum materials is the single most important task in the short term. New subjects which need to be developed for Grades 1-6 include physical education (play, games, fitness) and arts (drawing, dance, singing,

drama). An increase in the number of hours of teaching of language and mathematics is needed in Grades 7 and 8.

25. In addition, some changes will be needed in both primary and secondary curricula and materials, to adapt them as necessary for use in the proposed new system. The curricula for the Preparatory Year and Grades 1 and 2 will have as their basis the existing pre-school and Grades 1 and 2 materials and will be developed by the Curriculum Development Center with the help of technical assistance from NGOs and constant consultation with the Vanuatu Teachers College and the language community in question, using written materials in the local language, wherever available. Materials for Grade 2 will also need to be developed for the transition to English or French. Since Grade 8 will be the final year of education for most children, only one international language (English or French), the one used previously in Grades 3-6, will be taught in Grades 7 and 8, so that upon termination of Grade 8, each student should have mastered one or the other of the international languages. Changes will also be needed to basic technology (manual arts and home economics) to give a local emphasis and use only local materials. Other subjects (social science, agriculture, and religious education) will remain the same. In Grades 9-12, it will be possible to blend the existing syllabus and materials for Grades 9-10 and for Grades 11-12 to make a four-year secondary-school curriculum. The main change would be: (i) the need for materials for the introduction of the second European language in Grade 9 and (ii) the development of a new technology subject to replace manual arts and home economics (para. 28). Note that the **existing** system will continue in place for many years in those communities in which the reform has not yet been introduced, such that the **existing** curriculum materials can be used without modification.

26. Education and the Labor Market (Annex 6). Data relating to the labor market are limited, with the latest comprehensive data stemming from the 1989 National Census. The new National Census of 1999 should help remedy this situation. Vanuatu has a very segmented economy and segmented labor market, with a relatively small modern sector (in employment terms), whereas the great majority (around 80%) of the economically active population work in or are connected with agriculture, including a substantial subsistence agriculture sector. The Government estimates that of the total of some 3,500 young people who leave school each year, only some 500 are able to secure paid employment. The remaining 3,000 either have to return to their villages and work with their families in agriculture, or else drift into the urban areas in search of work. We therefore intend to limit our intake of students into formal secondary and technical education in accordance with likely employment prospects for graduates at these levels.

27. The employment situation is particularly difficult for those young people who leave school after Grade 6: their levels of educational achievements are low and they are too young to be attractive employment prospects for any employers. As, over time, more and more young people continue into secondary schools, the situation of the Grade 6 leavers becomes progressively worse. Employers interviewed feel that it is essential for such young people to remain longer in the school system, partly in order to achieve higher educational levels, and partly because they would then emerge from schools more mature, at older ages. At the same time, employers attest that there is a serious shortage of young people with good educational levels and employment experience: to increase the future supply of such staff will be essential

for the country's future economic development. The objective of aiming towards universal basic education of eight years, as well as all of the objectives of improving the quality of education, therefore are appropriate in terms of their relevance to needs of the labor market.

28. Integration of Technology Education with General Secondary Education (Annex 3). Children undertaking general secondary education will be poorly equipped to contribute to economic development of the nation unless their understanding of technology and its relationship to the developing society is improved. It is proposed to discontinue the industrial arts and home economics subjects currently taught in some junior secondary schools and introduce in their place a comprehensive technology education program as a core subject in Grades 9-12 in all schools for both boys and girls.

V. QUALITY

29. Pre-Service Teacher Training for the Preparatory Year and Grades 1 and 2 (Annex 7). The provision of more and better qualified teachers is a crucial input to a higher-quality education system. We intend to entrust the training of teachers for the preparatory year largely to the Vanuatu Preschool Association, with inputs from the Ministry of Education, the Vanuatu Teachers College, and other NGOs. Teachers chosen by the community have an enormous advantage over most qualified primary-school teachers which at present teach at this level in that they will be known to the community and able to speak to the children and their parents in their native language. High-quality training is nevertheless essential to ensure that these teachers will provide a high-quality education to the children at this crucial stage in their lives.

30. In-Service Teacher Education (Annex 7). The new structure proposed above in the section on Access will require substantial retraining of teachers to ensure that teaching standards are not compromised. Primary teachers formerly teaching up to Grade 6 (especially those now teaching in Grades 5 and 6) will require retraining to teach in Grades 7-8. Similarly, teachers formerly teaching Grades 7-10 (especially those now teaching in Grades 9 and 10) will require retraining to teach Grades 9-12. The exact scope and nature of the training will be determined by the Vanuatu Teachers College and the Curriculum Development Center with the help of technical assistance.

31. Teacher Support and Supervision - Primary Education (Annex 8). Headmasters, headmistresses and principals will continue to provide, in the first instance, support to teachers in both primary and secondary schools. Another existing system can also be strengthened to provide more and better teacher support: each province is at present divided into zones, with a head teacher in each zone who is supposed to visit all the schools in the zone on a regular basis. This system is not functioning well because it is very difficult for zone head teachers to travel around to other schools. Similarly, it is difficult for the three primary-school supervisors (two Anglophone and one Francophone) in each of the six provinces to visit all primary schools on a regular basis because of an inadequate traveling budget. We intend to examine the actual costs of such supervision, so that adequate provision is made in the budget for this work-related travel.

32. Teacher Support and Supervision - Secondary Education (Annex 8). At present, only one person has the responsibility of providing teacher support and supervision to secondary schools. At least four pedagogical advisors (two Anglophones and two Francophones, one each in arts and sciences) will be recruited as soon as possible, and that this number gradually be increased to ten (five Anglophones and five Francophones, one of each in each of five different subject areas). These pedagogical advisors need an adequate budget to enable them to visit each of the country's secondary schools regularly.

33. Teachers' Conditions of Service. An improvement in the quality of teaching is of critical importance to an improvement in student achievement. Many teachers display impressive skill and dedication, despite the operation of a salary system that provides little reward for high-quality teaching. The salary increments are small and few, and the mechanism required to provide them operates randomly, and only on occasion. The salary structure should be revised to offer greater incentive, and administrative processes and capacity improved, so that teachers working hard and offering good service receive financial reward. Another important factor in teachers' conditions of service, teachers' housing, is discussed in para. 41.

34. Teacher Inspection and Assessment. A ranking system for secondary teachers based on an Annual Confidential Report is already in place; a similar system is required for primary teachers. The system evaluates teachers' overall performance and can be used to recommend to the Director General and the Teaching Services Commission those teachers who should be promoted, disciplined, or demoted, to ensure that only competent, cooperative teachers who meet the minimum requirements of the teaching profession are in post. Standardized teacher and school evaluation forms should be completed on each teacher and school at least once a year by advisors and assessors and discussed with each teacher and principal before a report is written. This should ensure that the recommendations are valid and reliable. The present expertise and experience available for supervising primary schools should be used to begin the process of starting up the ranking system for primary education. Teacher inspection for other levels of education, i.e., pre-school, vocational, technical, and teacher education, will be phased in over four years. Advanced supervision and assessment courses will be introduced at the Vanuatu Teachers' College for selected school principals and head teachers, who will be the future advisors and assessors.

35. Training of Headmasters and Principals. An improvement in the quality of the work of headmasters and principals would have immediate and beneficial effects upon all parts of the education system. A key factor in a good school is the quality of the headmaster or principal. At the present time, little training is provided for secondary principals and primary principals and head teachers. We intend to establish an in-service unit with a special focus on the training of principals and head teachers. The unit should be based at Vanuatu Teachers College and should work throughout the country with and through the Provincial Education Offices. Donor support and technical assistance should be sought for this. The content of the training should include, inter alia, techniques for providing support and feedback to teachers; basic accounting and budgeting; internal assessment of students; management of boarding facilities; income-generating projects; guidance and counseling; etc.

36. Curriculum Development and Materials (Annex 9). Improvements in the curriculum are obviously a key factor in attempting to improve the *quality* as well as the relevance of education. Thanks to the efforts of the Curriculum Development Center and to the Primary and Secondary Education Project, primary and junior secondary schools in Vanuatu have received textbooks and other teaching and learning materials, including curricula, syllabi, teachers' guides, reading books, and references in the core subjects of language, mathematics, science, and social studies in sufficient quantities in English and in French. The current supply can be expected to last about five years, to 2003. Materials in several subjects at several levels still need to be developed. The program will require a recurrent budgetary appropriation of about VT 5 million per year. In the light of the variety of curricular needs that will emerge as community-based education begins to be implemented in phases throughout the country, we intend to do the following: (i) reactivate the National Curriculum Commission, the regulatory body for the selection and approval of textbooks and other instructional materials; and (ii) reorganize the Curriculum Development Center into a small and flexible unit capable of managing contracts with individuals and firms in the private sector for the writing, designing, production, and distribution of textbooks and other instructional materials. The in-house printshop will be reorganized to service the Examinations Unit, retaining the services of key technical staff. Some 90% of our recurrent budget for primary education is consumed by teachers' salaries, leaving rather little for all other purposes, including the purchase of teaching materials for use in classrooms. We will need to obtain additional funds from donors to provide new textbooks and other essential teaching materials.

37. Internal (School-Based) Assessment (Annex 10). Training in school-based assessment methodologies (internal assessment) will be added to the programs offered at the Vanuatu Teachers College for both Anglophone and Francophone programs at both primary and secondary levels. Emphasis will be placed in such programs on the diagnostic and formative functions of assessment as well as on its summative function. Common programs in assessment methodology will be offered to both Anglophone and Francophone trainees, based on the unified curriculum. Training will also be provided for Provincial Education Officers, pedagogical advisers, and headmasters and principals in the effective use of assessment in classrooms, so that this can form an important part of their in-service training programs.

38. External Assessment (Annex 10). During the transition period when Vanuatu is moving from six years of universal basic education to eight years, the national assessment system will need to be flexible. The Pacific Islands Literacy Levels (PILL) 1 and 2 tests will continue at the end of Grade 4 and Grade 6. The Grade 6 national examinations should continue to be offered where required until access for all is assured to Grade 8. As community schools are progressively able to offer places to all their Grade 6 students in Grade 7, the Grade 6 examinations will no longer be offered in those schools. As a matter of urgency, we intend to produce common examination papers in Mathematics and General Knowledge in Grade 6, using procedures similar to those already in place in Grade 10. As soon as schools begin to offer places to all students in their school in Grades 7 and 8, we will establish a selection examination at the end of Grade 8. Eventually all Grade 8 students will sit this examination. The selection examination at the end of Grade 10 will continue to be needed regardless of what type of school

students are attending at the end of Grade 10. Grade 12 and Grade 13/14 examinations should continue to evolve to meet the needs of students in the respective Anglophone and Francophone systems.

39. The Examinations Office (Annex 10). Staffing of the Examinations Office will be increased by the appointment (after training, if required) of a professional officer who can, among other tasks, carry out analyses of data from the national examinations (including the PILL tests) and report on them to the Ministry of Education officers and schools. In addition, the Examinations Office will need a somewhat larger budget for (a) storage, transport, printing, and office equipment (including computers) and (b) examiners and markers for the Grades 6 and 10 examinations, who will be hired on performance-based contracts.

40. School Infrastructure (Annex 11). *Infrastructure* can make a substantial difference in educational quality. Most rural kindergartens could benefit from better facilities, and there will also be a need for new vernacular-language community schools in many small villages. Both these needs can be best met by providing guidelines so that communities can build improved traditional buildings that will offer larger, better-ventilated and -lit playrooms and classrooms. The main infrastructure-related problems affecting existing primary schools are the lack of facilities in some and the waste of resources in others due to excess numbers of classrooms, small class sizes and the unplanned development of schools. The immediate priority for the Ministry of Education should be to prepare plans for the amalgamation of primary schools and the transformation of schools offering Grades 1-6 to schools offering Grades 3-8. The Ministry of Education will set standards for the location, design, and construction of new classrooms and schools by churches and community groups. The recently completed school-mapping exercise should provide information on what facilities are needed at existing junior-secondary schools.

41. Lack of good teachers' housing is seen as a major deterrent to the recruitment of teachers in the rural areas. The majority of existing houses are inappropriate in their design and expensive to build and maintain. Teachers' housing will not be required for vernacular-language schools but will be needed for provincial secondary schools and possibly for some primary schools. The school-mapping exercise will help establish where housing is required, and the Ministry of Education will establish appropriate standards for rural housing.

42. School Maintenance. School maintenance is another important factor in education quality. Very few schools receive adequate regular funding for maintenance with the result that many school buildings are in poor condition. The communities themselves will maintain their vernacular-language schools, but ways will be developed to make maintenance of primary and secondary schools a partnership between government and communities. For this purpose, we intend to commit regular funding for and provide training to teachers and headmasters in maintenance.

43. School Furniture. Very few schools at present have sufficient furniture or furniture that fits and is comfortable for the majority of pupils. We intend to design a range of sizes of furniture to suit children at all levels of education which can be made and repaired by village carpenters or Rural Development Training Centers.

44. School Water Supply and Toilets. Many rural schools at present have no clean water supplies and inadequate, inappropriate or no toilets. We intend to ensure that no school at pre-school, primary or secondary level is built or renovated without a dependable water supply and appropriate, working toilets.

VI. EQUITY

45. Urban/Rural Equity. Our strategy for trying to overcome the urban-rural inequity is to focus efforts to expand access and to improve education quality in rural areas. The introduction of vernacular-language education should give rural children an advantage, since most rural children will be learning in their mother tongue, whereas urban children, because of the mix of languages, may have to learn in a second (Bislama) or third (English, French) language, if the school committee so decides. Programs to provide more education facilities, more educational materials, and more teacher in-service training will also be focused on rural areas, since urban areas will take care of themselves. The first step is to undertake the rationalization of the provision of education in rural areas (para. 8), which is expected to make the use of the resources available for education much more efficient.

46. Gender Equity. Current enrollment statistics indicate that the gender breakdown of enrollments in primary education match almost exactly the ratio of boys to girls in the general population at that age; therefore, there appears to be little gender discrimination in primary education in general, although local variations exist. A smaller percentage of girls proceeds on to each higher level of education, however, with the drop-off particularly great for those who continue on to the highest levels of secondary education and to tertiary education. One of the key reasons appears to be that girls are more likely to be kept home to help with housework than are boys. Another reason is apparently that families consider that girls will be “lost” to them by marrying out of the family. Many parents are therefore more willing to pay school fees for sons’ further education than they are for daughters’ further education. These factors are social and cultural in nature and are difficult to address through the education system alone. The single best strategy open to educators for increasing the proportion of girls attending school is to expand access in general; if virtually all boys are already currently out of school, then an expansion in capacity will enable more girls to attend. A second strategy is to make the environment in the school so attractive (through vernacular language education in the early years and through general improvements in education quality throughout the system) that parents are more willing to send all their children to school, even in spite of the higher opportunity cost (help with housework) of girls. A third strategy is to mount an awareness campaign to publicize the fact that better educated girls are more likely to raise healthy, well-nourished children: evidence world-wide is that girls’ education has a far greater impact on children’s health and nutrition than does boys’ education. If parents wish for healthy, well-nourished grandchildren, they should therefore be persuaded to send their daughters to school.

47. Social Equity. The strategy to achieve social equity is similar to that for achieving geographical equity: efforts to expand access or improve education quality should be focused on the poor, since the rich will look out for themselves.

48. Linguistic Equity. In the long run, in a free society, it is very difficult to achieve specific numerical targets for the use of languages. In the past, many countries have tried to mandate the use of the major national language by forbidding the use of vernaculars in schools and public discourse. Some countries (e.g., Switzerland, Malaysia, Tanzania, Ethiopia) have officially used local vernaculars at the lower levels of public education for years, and, more recently, many other developing countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Pacific have introduced or are planning to introduce vernacular-language education. The trend in more developed countries has also been to encourage the revival of regional languages (e.g., in Europe: Welsh, Breton, Catalanian, Swiss German dialects, etc.). Communist societies such as Vietnam told children which foreign language they would study, in order to achieve a predetermined number of speakers of Russian, English, and French; this practice has since been abandoned.

49. If Vanuatu wishes to become a bilingual society, the best way will be to improve the teaching of French in the Anglophone system and to improve the teaching of English in the Francophone system. This will result in more widespread use of *both* languages and will also decrease the need for translation, both oral and written. We intend to use the results of the recent *Study of Comparison of Performance of Students in Anglophone and Francophone Schools* to develop solutions and remedies to the inequities identified therein. Other measures which should reduce concerns about linguistic equity include (a) an effort to ensure that the allocation of resources to schools of each medium is scrupulously equitable; (b) improved translation and development of materials used to teach the common curriculum; (c) tolerance for varying pedagogical methods as long as learning outcomes are achieved; (d) improvements in the teaching of the second international language in Grades 9-12, in particular by arranging language teacher swaps between Anglophone and Francophone schools whenever possible; (e) a continuing review of the appropriate pass rate from basic education to secondary education for graduates from Anglophone and Francophone school; (f) an effort to ensure that both Anglophones and Francophones are adequately represented in the Ministry of Education and the Curriculum Development Center; and (g) a continuing effort to ensure that materials used in the schools are appropriate for use in Vanuatu.

VII. LANGUAGE POLICY

50. The use of various languages as media of instruction has implications for Access, Relevance, Quality, and Equity. Since it is such an important issue in Vanuatu, we treat it separately here, although it has already been mentioned above.

51. Vernacular Languages. There is virtually unanimous support among ni-Vanuatu to preserve the country's many vernacular languages. The concern goes well beyond the provision in the Constitution that the country's local languages are to be protected. Politicians of varying

political parties and Anglophone and Francophone ni-Vanuatu alike support the proposal to use vernacular languages as the media of instruction in the early years of basic education. Most concerns about the desirability of the proposal have been expressed by expatriates, with the main concerns being (i) fear that the proposal would be impossible to implement and (ii) fear that its implementation would weaken further the quality of teaching and acquisition of the two international languages.

52. We believe that the implementation of this proposal in Vanuatu will be possible, if the proposal is implemented *gradually* and only as fast as planning has been done, materials have been produced, and teachers have been trained. Our belief that the proposal can work in Vanuatu is based on experience from other countries, the many experiments already taking place in Vanuatu, the experience of many of Vanuatu's present leaders (who first became literate in their vernacular languages and only then learned English or French), and the ground swell of popular support the measure is likely to engender. Experience from other countries also indicates that becoming literate in one's mother tongue leads to better, faster, and deeper acquisition of a foreign language.

53. Bilingualism in Use of International Languages. There is also virtually unanimous support among ni-Vanuatu for continuing to use both English and French as international languages and media of instruction. This support goes well beyond the wish to preserve the letter of the law as set forth in the Constitution. We believe that our bilingual society in two international languages makes us unique in the Pacific, and almost all of us, from parents in the village to Parliamentarians, perceive cultural and economic reasons for keeping both languages. We share a vision of a bilingual society where all secondary-school graduates will be bilingual and where the need for translation would have decreased dramatically because virtually everyone will be able to understand everyone else, whichever language is being used. As parents, we hope that our children would be fluent in both. For financial and logistical reasons, we intend to continue with the dual system for the time being, with efforts being made to improve the teaching of French at the upper levels of the Anglophone system, and vice versa. In the long run, however, as ever-larger numbers of people become fluent in both languages and bilingual teachers become available, we intend to move towards a bilingual system.

VIII. PARTNERSHIPS

54. Partnerships with Communities. Communities are already responsible, in most cases, for building and maintaining schools at the primary level. The proposal to introduce vernacular-language education will continue to rely on the communities to build and maintain facilities for this level of education.

55. Partnerships with Non-Governmental Organizations. A number of non-governmental organizations are already active in educational activities in Vanuatu. Chief among these are the churches, which are discussed in the following paragraph. Others include the Vanuatu Cultural Center, the Summer Institute of Linguistics, World Vision, the Vanuatu Community

Development Trust, the Vanuatu Preschool Association, and One Small Bag. The Ministry of Education will ensure that these organizations are included and are actively involved in the development of vernacular-language education, since they already have an enormous amount of knowledge, materials, experience, and good will which can and should be mobilized for the common good of all.

56. Partnerships with Churches. Over time, the Government has developed various arrangements for working together with the churches to provide education. The churches' contribution to education is very important; indeed, we recognize that it would be impossible to provide widespread education coverage without the help of the churches. Church-related schools also tend to be well managed, and great efforts are made to obtain the best results with limited funds. Since each of the established churches has a somewhat different arrangement, however, there is a general feeling that some churches benefit more than others. We intend to initiate negotiations with the various church bodies, with a view to reviewing the present financial arrangements for church schools. We also intend to reconsider the draft *Agreement with Church Schools* developed in 1994, with a view towards developing a common agreement under which the government will provide assistance to all churches and other non-governmental organizations, which will be transparent and seen to be fair to all concerned.

57. Partnerships with the Private Sector. An important partnership is being developed with the private sector. A first step has been the establishment of the National Training Council. This group should enable us, over time, to develop greater coherence within the technical and vocational education and training system, in which various Government and non-Government training providers offer a wide range of programs. We intend to clarify the roles of the various training agencies and to establish performance and skill standards and certification levels which are recognized nationally. The participation of private-sector employers in the National Training Council will help ensure that training providers are responsive to the needs of industry, employers, and the growing economy.

58. Partnerships with Donors. We recognize that almost all the available public finance is used for the recurrent budget, and that most or all of the development-budget funding for education will continue to come from external donors. Their contributions will continue to be vital for the development of the country's education system for some years to come. Donors have given high priority to education in the past, and we hope that they will continue to do so in the future. Indeed, many donors have already displayed a willingness to be flexible in their assistance in order to meet Vanuatu's greatest educational needs.

IX. MANAGEMENT OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

59. Education Policy and Legislation. This Education Master Plan will be promulgated through appropriate legislation. The *Education Act* of 1986 and the proposed *Education Law* of 1994 will be revisited and modified as appropriate to reflect the policies set forth in this Education Master Plan. Donor assistance will be sought to provide technical expertise in

reviewing existing laws and drafting new legislation, as appropriate. We also intend to put into place appropriate legislation to retain properly trained technical staff within the Ministry of Education, to ensure continuity and institutional memory in the implementation of national education policies irrespective of the changes in Government. The Comprehensive Reform Program envisages the passing of proper legislation to discontinue the practice of changing personnel after new elections: therefore, technical staff of the Ministry will be dismissed only if there is clear evidence that they are not performing their mandated tasks satisfactorily. We will also strive to ensure that the Ministry staff includes speakers of both of the principal languages of education.

60. Decentralization. Over time, we intend to decentralize greater administrative and financial control to the Provincial Education Offices. This process will include a gradual decentralization to the Provincial Education Offices of certain functions at the regional level (e.g., the posting and reassignment of teachers, the planning of the education development and of the inputs needed for the province, the updating of the school map, the monitoring of the distribution and use of the various educational inputs, the evaluation of the process used in distributing these inputs, and gradual, increased responsibility in the use of the financial resources allocated by the Ministry of Education to the province). This decentralization will occur only as fast as capacity is built (through hiring and training of staff) at the Provincial Education Offices. It is envisaged that, gradually, the responsibilities of these offices will also be expanded to cover secondary education as well, as each province acquires at least one secondary school offering the full cycle from Grade 9 through Grade 12.

61. Structure of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education has already been restructured, in order better to carry out its mandate under the Comprehensive Reform Program. We intend to prepare and carry out a training plan for the Ministry staff, at both the central and provincial levels, in view of the new proposed responsibilities and functions, and to seek donor funding for such training and accompanying technical assistance.

62. Education Planning. The new structure of the Ministry of Education entrusts the Policy Planning and Research Directorate with corporate planning responsibilities, so as to allow a comprehensive view of what education planning entails, and to facilitate the creation of a corporate culture. Once the culture is established, and the proper staff in position, this function will be transferred to the Administrative Services Directorate. This Directorate will have a pivotal function, driving the future development of education in the country. It will receive continuous inputs from all the other Directorates. In particular, those in charge of the implementation of the Education Master Plan will participate fully in the education planning activity, in all its qualitative and quantitative aspects. The planning function will not be a mere academic exercise, but will benefit from, and be revised as a function of, the feedback provided by those who are in charge of the daily execution of the plan, at the central and decentralized levels.

63. Education Management Information System. The present system for collecting and elaborating data on the education system will be revised and strengthened so as to (i) ensure reliability at the point of origin of the data (the schools), (ii) facilitate the collation of data at the provincial level, (iii) allow a modern computerized data collation at the Ministry level, and the

presentation of the data in such a form as to allow the rapid extraction of the information needed by the planners, and (iv) carry out continuous updating of the school map. To achieve these goals, two of the present three staff will be trained in statistics (one at the higher degree level), and the third one will be trained in school mapping. The unit also will be equipped with some additional, or upgraded, computing capacity. Consultancy services to set up the appropriate software is being provided by the European Union.

64. Research. Research should concentrate on *ad hoc* studies, to be commissioned to relevant institutions (e.g., the Curriculum Development Center, the Teacher Training College, the University of the South Pacific, school supervisors) or to private consultants. The research unit will identify the needs for specific research activities to be carried out, identify the proper mechanisms for organizing the activity, manage the process, and disseminate the results. This unit will be headed by an educator with university level qualifications, and with hands-on experience in the organization and execution of research studies.

65. Project Management Unit. The Project Management Unit, in charge of the execution of projects financed by both the government and external donors, will draw from the experience and capacity of the other departments and units of the Ministry and will associate them as much as possible in the management of the projects. In fact, these other units are responsible for the management of the beneficiaries having received the inputs (e.g., the schools, the teachers, the provincial offices), once a project is completed. Thus, they can provide a valuable feed-back to the Project Management Unit on all aspects of project execution, from the initial planning to the provision of inputs, to the assessment of the outputs, to the evaluation of project impact. This unit will be headed by a senior educator, having had previous experience in project management; this person will also liaise constantly with the donors and provide them with feed-back on project execution and evaluation. The unit will also employ a procurement officer who will be in charge of all procurement.

66. Evaluation Function. We intend to seek donor assistance to create an evaluation function of the education process. The outputs from the education system will be evaluated so as to assess whether they correspond to the objectives defined by the government. The evaluation function should be able to answer questions such as whether the policies adopted address the constraints of the system, whether equity in access and quality among genders, languages, social origin, and geographical distribution have been ensured, whether students learn what they are supposed to learn, whether the most cost-effective solutions have been adopted. This kind of evaluation will be located outside the Policy Planning and Research Directorate and will be at the level of an advisory unit responding directly to the Minister. This evaluation will be done periodically (e.g., every three years) so as not to require a permanent structure (supplementary staff), which would increase the financial burden of the Ministry. The evaluation will be the equivalent of an *ad hoc* study, which should benefit from some external consultancy (to be financed by a donor). The evaluation of the inputs/outputs of projects will remain within the Policy Planning and Research Department.

67. Training for Ministry of Education Staff. We intend to seek donor assistance to help the Ministry of Education's Training and Development Unit design a training plan for Ministry staff, in accordance with the new functions defined.

X. Implementation

68. Government Support. We consider it very important that the Government as a whole and all sectors of the society fully support this Education Master Plan. Education is too important to be treated as a partisan issue. For that reason, we have, during 1999, carried out an intensive process of consultation throughout the country with various stakeholders, including provincial and local government authorities, headmasters, teachers, students, parents, communities, NGOs, churches, the media, and the private sector. These discussions have contributed to the content of this Education Master Plan. We intend to mobilize all partners, national and international, in the implementation of this Master Plan.

69. The National Education Commission will have the overall responsibility for this Education Master Plan. For that purpose, it will engage technical assistants, both local and international, to develop specific implementation plans for various subsectors and strategies. Donor coordination meetings, chaired by the Minister of Education, will be held regularly to obtain their views and to enlist their support in financing the Plan. The Minister of Education will submit key policy proposals regularly to Cabinet for its approval.