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PRESS STATEMENT

New classrooms in three schools in Santo thanks to a partnership between the Governments of Australia, Japan, New Zealand and Vanuatu

Port Vila, Vanuatu – 23 June 2022: Even more children in Santo will have access to schooling now with the opening of fourteen new classrooms. The Ministry of Education and Training with the support of the Governments of Australia, Japan and New Zealand, delivered new classrooms that will benefit up to 643 students in Balon, Mwast and Tovotovo schools.

The Minister of Education and Training, the Honourable Samson Samsen, said the construction of the classrooms demonstrates the commitment of the Government of Vanuatu and partners to improving the accessibility, quality and management of education in Vanuatu.

“The Ministry of Education and Training is working closely with communities to ensure our children have access to a quality education in well-managed schools. I am delighted to open the new classrooms today as evidence of the government’s commitment to students, teachers, school-staff, parents and community members across the country. The Ministry of Education and Training would like to thank the Governments of Australia, Japan and New Zealand for their financial support, which will enhance the learning of so many students,” the Minister said, after opening the new classrooms.

The Vanuatu Ministry of Education and Training partnered with the Governments of Australia, Japan and New Zealand to build these new classrooms.

The Government of Japan’s Ambassador to Vanuatu, His Excellency Chiba Hirohisa, noted the importance of education in nation building. “Japan believes that education or human resources development has vital importance for countries, including Vanuatu, in their nation’s building. We hope that those classrooms and equipment will continue to serve students and coming generation for many years to come,” said the Ambassador of Japan in Vanuatu, His Excellency Chiba Hirohisa.

First Secretary at the Australian High Commission in Vanuatu, Mr. Peter Wilson, also spoke at the openings. “After the Manaro volcano eruption, the entire population of Ambae was evacuated and many families were resettled in Santo. These new classrooms are allowing children of these families to continue their education alongside their new friends and neighbours in Santo. This outcome is the

result of excellent cooperation between Government of Vanuatu, partners and the communities of Ambae and Santo.”

Studies around the world demonstrate that providing access to learning spaces that are safe and healthy can improve the quality of learning. The new classrooms will offer a safe and secure learning environment to the students and a safe haven for communities during disasters.

The principals of all the schools thanked the Government of Vanuatu and its partners. The Principal of Mwast School in Santo, Mr. Diallo Wabak said the local community was grateful for the assistance from the Governments of Japan, Australia and Vanuatu.

“It is a milestone for Mwast school and most importantly our students. On the behalf of the students, the parents and the school, I would like to express our gratitude to the Governments of Australia, Japan and Vanuatu for their support,” said Mwast School Principal, Mr. Diallo Wabak.

The Governments of Vanuatu, Australia, Japan and New Zealand still remain committed to ensuring Vanuatu school children have access to high quality and accessible education for all.

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