

GOUVERNEMENT DE LA
RÉPUBLIQUE DE VANUATU

MINISTÈRE DES
AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES,
DE LA COOPÉRATION
INTERNATIONALE ET DU
COMMERCE EXTÉRIEUR



GOVERNMENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF VANUATU

MINISTRY OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
INTERNATIONAL
COOPERATION AND
EXTERNAL TRADE

Note no.037/MOFAICET/2021

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and External Trade of the Republic of Vanuatu presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and has the honour to refer to the letter signed by Livingstone Sewanyana the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable International order, dated 3rd May 2021 with regards to the Questionnaire on the examination of what extent the COVID-19 pandemic constitutes a serious test to multilateralism.

The Ministry acknowledges this request and would like to convey its apologies for the late submission. Please kindly find attached is the completed questionnaire.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and External Trade of the Republic of Vanuatu avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurance of its highest consideration.

1st July 2021



Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Geneva, Switzerland



1. What are the key obstacles to a more effective, inclusive and networked multilateralism to handle the COVID-19 pandemic, in terms of both health response and economic recovery?

The key obstacles that the Government of the Republic of Vanuatu has faced in handling the COVID 19 pandemic are the followings:

- a) Lack of practical assistance from multilateral organizations established in Vanuatu to address the COVID 19 related issues. The activities currently carried out on the ground seem to be reacting to the situation but there is no proper guidance or assistance provided to the Government to be able to address the matter on its own in the future;
- b) Multilateral organizations on the ground should develop better coordinated and effective response measures and plans to better guide the Government; and
- c) The Vanuatu Government lacks equipment and appropriate training for health workers to be able to manage future outbreaks in the islands of the country. It is therefore our hope that there is a step up in the multilateral arena to assist Governments to better address this issue.



2. What are the solutions to overcome such obstacles in a fair and sustainable manner (including targeted reforms)?

Because COVID 19 is a pandemic which countries like Vanuatu with lack of resources are not prepared to face, these would be some solutions to overcome the current obstacles:

- a) Rapid response from multilateral organizations in providing technical support and capacity to respective Governments;
- b) Practical advice provided in a timely manner, on ways in which countries can effectively maintain their economic activities;
- c) Facilitation of avenues in which governments can continue to trade in order to keep their economic balance.

3. What are your views on a new international treaty for pandemic preparedness and response?

Vanuatu is a country where COVID 19 has not seriously affected the lives of its citizens. However, if it had, the Government will be in difficult position to manage the human rights of its people and in particular its vulnerable groups.

Therefore, it is crucial that international instruments, such as Treaties and Conventions are adopted to better guide Governments of the World in such disastrous situation.