

OPENING REMARKS BY THE HONORABLE JOHNY KOANAPO RASOU, MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT, AT THE RESERVE BANK OF VANUATU 3RD ECONOMIC SYMPOSIUM, LUGANVILLE, SANTO, SANMA PROVINCE, JULY 2, 2025

A very good morning to you all.

I am deeply honored and delighted to join you all this morning at this important conference on the theme **"An Enabling Environment for Digital and Green Finance for Inclusive Growth and Resilience."** As Vanuatu's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister responsible for the Reserve Bank of Vanuatu, I extend a warm welcome to all participants, both local and international.

We have just witnessed a very important and historical occasion from the Reserve Bank of Vanuatu. I stand here today, on behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Vanuatu, to sincerely acknowledge and thank the **Reserve Bank** for its **dividend payment of VT700 million** to the Government.

This significant contribution reflects not only the RBV's sound financial performance, but also strong dedication and commitment to stronger governance practices that are necessary conditions to maintaining macroeconomic and financial sector stability that will support a sustainable economic development of Vanuatu.

This dividend will support the Government's efforts in improving essential social services, public infrastructure projects, climate resilient initiatives and ongoing fiscal operations.

As mentioned in Governor Letlet's earlier remarks, RBV's 2024 net profit was the highest ever achieved in the RBV's history. On behalf of the Vanuatu Government, I wish to commend the leadership of the Governor, the Board, and staff of the RBV for achieving such an exceptional financial outcome. This dividend is not just a financial transaction. It is a symbol of partnership and a sense of strong collaboration. A partnership that must continue to support a stronger, more inclusive, and resilient Vanuatu.

On the symposium: This symposium serves as a platform for innovative thinking, knowledge exchange, and collaboration. As we navigate the challenges of a rapidly changing world, it is crucial that we come together as today and tomorrow to explore how we can create an environment that supports inclusivity, resilience and sustainable development. I eagerly anticipate the insightful conversations and productive outcomes that will emerge from these discussions

Digital and green finance represent transformative tools. Digital finance like mobile money, mobile banking, online payments, or digital currencies can make financial services easier to access, especially for people in remote or underserved areas across the Vanuatu and the greater Pacific. Green finance (such as climate-friendly investments or loans for renewable energy) helps fund projects that protect the environment and reduce climate risks. For countries like Vanuatu, which are on the frontline of climate change and also face structural economic vulnerabilities, leveraging these tools is essential to support development, protect the environment, and strengthen the economy.

The Government of Vanuatu recognizes the urgent need to create a policy and regulatory environment that enables innovation while safeguarding the public good. We are committed to strengthening the digital infrastructure, advancing financial literacy, and supporting green investments that can improve livelihoods, particularly in our rural and outer island communities.

This symposium provides us with a timely platform to share experiences, learn from global best practices, and forge stronger regional and international collaborations. Let us ensure that our discussions here translate into tangible outcomes, outcomes that support our collective aspiration for a resilient, inclusive, and climate-smart economy.

Let this symposium be a milestone in our shared journey toward a more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient Vanuatu.

Thank you tumas.