

<p><b>GOVERNMENT DE LA REPUBLIQUE DU VANUATU</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>COMMISSION ET BUREAU DE LA CITOYENNETE</b></p> <hr/> <p><i>Sac Postal Privé 9004 – Port – Vila Rue Bougainville</i></p>		<p><b>GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VANUATU</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>CITIZENSHIP'S OFFICE AND COMMISSION</b></p> <hr/> <p><i>PMB 9004 - Bougainville street Tel : 00678 26716 Fax: 00678 26719</i></p>
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***"SPEAK UP! BE HEARD! SAY what you've got to say and BE READY for what other people have to say. GET ENGAGED! Because this is your country now!"***

## **PRESS STATEMENT**

In recent days there have been reports in the media regarding the status of Vanuatu's highly successful Citizenship by Investment (CBI) Program – The Vanuatu "Development Support Program" (DSP) and "Vanuatu Contribution Program" (VCP).

The reports and articles have led to challenges from certain quarters regarding the validity of Citizenship granted under the Program, and also generated discussion surrounding the current government's broadening of Vanuatu's CBI options.

All debate and constructive comment is welcomed by the Government of Vanuatu and the Citizenship Commission responsible for managing the programs. On the other hand, questionable opinion, speculation and bias presented as fact, with the aim of undermining the Programs or the Government is rejected out of hand. Such fabrications will not succeed in their attempts to discredit the firmly founded and secured rights and protections of our highly valued Citizens as granted under the Programs.

The Vanuatu Citizenship Commission would like to issue the following clarifications:

1. The DSP and VCP Programs were created under a previous government administration. It is only right and proper that the current government, under the leadership of the Prime Minister the incumbent Bob Loughman Weibur, reviews and adjusts the Programs to ensure that they are "fit for purpose" and in-line with the Prime Minister's objectives.
2. The only authorized channel to suggest, create and communicate program modifications is the Vanuatu Citizenship Commission. All other statements or comments regarding the Programs or citizenship program augmentations should be treated as unofficial or personal remarks and not government policy.
3. From time to time, program extension agreements may be reached, or new proposals floated with the aim of broadening the appeal and success of Vanuatu's CBI. However, even when agreements in principle are made, there is still a further process of consultation and validation to be conducted before such initiatives can be formally launched, with the Prime Minister's explicit approval as Minister responsible for Citizenship.

4. The government is currently conducting a thorough review of the DSP and VCP and is committed to ensuring that the Program evolves in a measured, regulated way. The Citizenship Commission is in active discussion with both domestic and internationally-based parties with the aim of improving and securing the framework of the DSP and VCP to both address domestic concerns and meet international obligations.
5. Finally, all Vanuatu Citizens who have achieved Citizenship under any of the existing or former versions of the Citizenship by Investment Program are equal in the eyes of the Vanuatu Government and are to be assured of their rights and privileges as Ni-Vanuatu, enshrined under the existing Citizenship Act Cap 112. Any omissions or ambiguities that may exist in the Citizenship Act Cap 112 which are cause for concern will be identified and rectified during an on-going review process conducted by the current government.

DATED AT PORT VILA THIS 24<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020

