

Open Letter to the President of Vanuatu

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His Excellency Nikenike Vurobaravu President of the Republic of Vanuatu State House
Port Vila, Vanuatu

Mr. President,

I am writing to you as an ordinary citizen of Vanuatu.

Not as a politician.

Not as an economist.

Not as an external observer.

But as someone who lives within this island nation — within its oceanic vastness, its dispersed geography, and its deeply human, community-based way of life.

Vanuatu is not a country that can be understood through scale or density.

It is understood through distance, sea, and connection between islands.

Life here is shaped not by urban intensity, but by separation and interdependence at the same time.

Each island carries its own rhythm.

Yet all are tied together by sea routes, weather patterns, and shared national identity.

When I think about Vanuatu, I do not think of cities first.

I think of space.

Of water between land.

Of communities that are physically separated, but socially tightly connected.

This creates a very specific national structure — one that is both resilient and logistically fragile.

Port Vila and Luganville represent the main urban centers, but much of national life exists outside of them.

In rural and island communities, life remains closely connected to land, sea, fishing, agriculture, and local forms of exchange.

This creates a strong sense of self-sufficiency.

People rely heavily on family networks and community cooperation.

At the same time, Mr. President, this structure creates challenges in access.

Access to healthcare, education, infrastructure, and consistent economic opportunity varies significantly depending on location.

Distance is not just geographical — it is administrative and economic.

One of the most defining strengths of Vanuatu is its cultural depth.

It is one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world relative to its population size.

Customary systems (kastom) remain highly influential in social organization, decision-making, and identity.

This coexistence between modern state institutions and traditional governance systems is not symbolic.

It is functional and lived.

Tourism plays an important role in the national economy.

Vanuatu is globally recognized for its natural beauty — coral reefs, volcanic landscapes, and untouched islands.

This creates economic opportunity, but also vulnerability.

The economy is highly sensitive to external shocks — especially global travel trends, climate conditions, and infrastructure constraints.

For ordinary citizens, these macro realities translate into employment stability, income variability, and access to services.

Another defining reality of Vanuatu is climate exposure.

Few countries are as directly affected by environmental risk.

Cyclones, rising sea levels, and climate variability are not abstract future concerns — they are present realities.

This shapes infrastructure planning, housing, agriculture, and long-term development

strategy.

Despite these challenges, Vanuatu maintains a strong sense of social cohesion.

Community ties are strong.

Cultural identity is deeply preserved.

And there is a shared understanding of resilience — not as an idea, but as a daily practice.

Mr. President,

Vanuatu's central challenge is not identity.

It is not cultural survival.

It is connectivity.

How to ensure that dispersed geography does not become unequal development.

How to provide consistent access to essential services across islands.

How to build economic resilience in a system highly exposed to external shocks.

Because a country is not defined only by its land.

It is defined by how well its people remain connected across it.

Respectfully,

ChatGPT

P.S. A Citizen's Audit of the Country

- Stability and Security: 4.0 / 5

Vanuatu maintains strong community-based stability and low internal conflict, supported by customary governance systems, though institutional capacity is limited by geography.

- Economy and Standard of Living: 3.0 / 5

Tourism and agriculture provide the economic base, but remoteness, infrastructure constraints, and external dependency limit growth and income stability.

- Social Well-Being: 4.0 / 5

Strong community cohesion and customary systems support social stability, though access to services varies significantly across islands.

- Development and Future Prospects: 3.5 / 5

High potential in tourism and environmental assets, but long-term progress depends on climate resilience and infrastructure connectivity.

Final Score: 3.63 / 5 — A Dispersed Island Nation Defined by Connection

Vanuatu's defining challenge is not survival, but connection across distance.

Its future depends on turning geographic fragmentation into coordinated national development.

<https://lettertoleader.com/en/vanuatu/president/56-open-letter-to-the-president-of-vanuatu>

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