



International  
Labour  
Organization

# The ILO in Vanuatu



# Key Facts and Figures

Population (2012): 247,000

GDP per capita (2012): US\$ 3,969

Labour force (2012): 110,000

- 62,000 male
- 48,000 female

Labour participation rate (2012): 70.9%

- 80.3% male
- 61.5% female

Employment to population ratio (2009): 67.6%

- 77.1% male
- 58.3% female

Unemployment rate (2009): 4.6%

- 4.1% male
- 5.2% female

Vanuatu's economy is still primarily based on subsistence or small-scale agriculture, which provides a living for more than 70 per cent of the population. Since early 2000's, tourism, land sales, high commodity prices for copra and coffee, and donor-funded construction projects have driven the economy, which is growing at a moderate rate. However, the economy is hindered by an undiversified economic base and faces constraints from poor transport infrastructure and a small domestic market

## Ratified Conventions

Vanuatu has ratified eight ILO Conventions including seven Fundamental Conventions:

- C.29 - Forced Labour Convention, 1930
- C.87 - Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948
- C.98 - Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949
- C.100 - Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951
- C.105 - Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (Not in force)
- C.111 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958
- C.182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999



caused by its widely scattered and mountainous island geography, with the population scattered across 83 islands. Additionally, Vanuatu is also vulnerable to natural disasters.

Only 20 per cent of the workforce in Vanuatu is engaged in formal sector employment and the formal economy only offers some hundreds of jobs each year. The low level of formal employment has been attributed, among other things, to the insufficient development of human resources and a widespread lack of adequate and relevant skills. The school system fails to teach adequate technical and vocational skills to school leavers, making it difficult for young people to find jobs.

The social protection system in Vanuatu is limited to formal sector employees, including the Public Service. The safety and health law is inadequate to protect workers engaged in logging, agriculture, construction, and manufacturing.

Vanuatu's Priorities and Action Agenda (PAA) 2006-2015 identifies employment creation, education and human resource development as its priorities and calls for technical vocational education and training, particularly in the rural areas. Its National Population Policy 2011-2020 set the goal of reducing unemployment and under-employment among youth.

Sources: ILO KILM.

## The ILO - Who We Are

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the UN specialized agency dealing with work and workplace issues, and related rights and standards. Its overarching goal is to achieve decent work for all so everyone benefits from working conditions that offer freedom, equity, security and human dignity. In working towards this goal the ILO has four principal strategic objectives:

- To promote and realize standards, and fundamental principles and rights at work.
- To create greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment.
- To enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all.
- To strengthen the relationship between workers, employers and governments, and encourage social dialogue.

Founded in 1919, the ILO is the only surviving major creation of the Treaty of Versailles, which established the League of Nations. It became the first specialized agency of the United Nations in 1946.

# The ILO in Vanuatu

Vanuatu became a member of the ILO in 2003. The ILO Country Office for South Pacific Countries in Fiji manages the ILO work in Vanuatu.

## Current areas of work

In response to Vanuatu's social and economic needs and corresponding with the Priorities and Action Agenda, the ILO, in consultation with tripartite constituents, developed a Decent Work Country Programme (2009-12). The priorities of the programme are:

- Labour legislation reform and application of International Labour Standards.
- Promotion of decent employment opportunities, particularly for young women and men, and inclusive of persons with disabilities.
- Capacity building of tripartite partners and improvement of social dialogue.
- Increasing social protection.

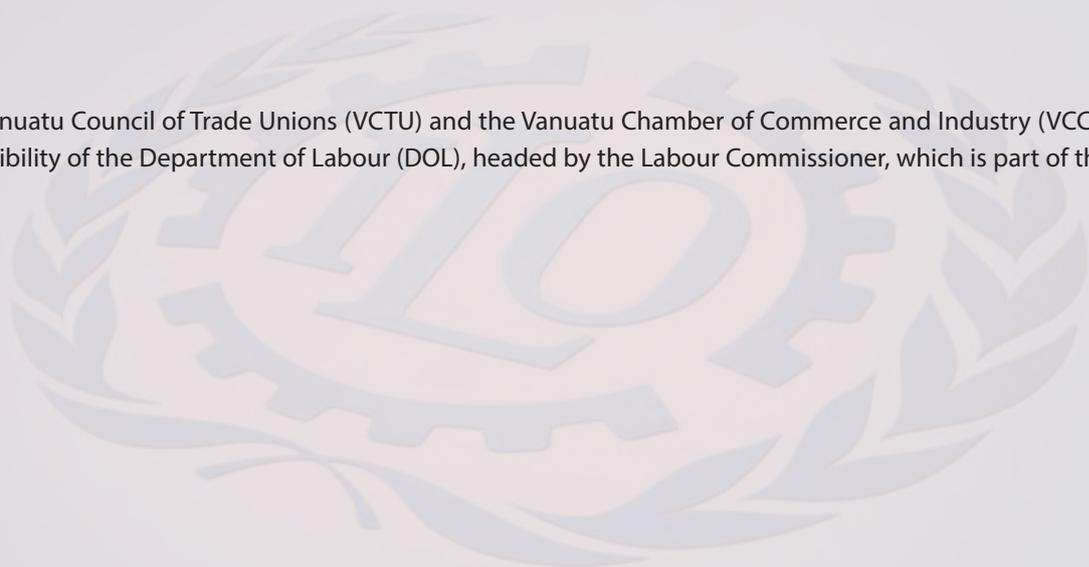


Within the framework of the DWCP the ILO has committed its expertise to the following areas:

- Providing assistance to revise the Employment Relations Bill to update and consolidate existing labour legislation and progressively improve compliance with International Labour Standards. This includes developing new provisions to prohibit discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace, and to eliminate child labour.
- Supporting the development of a national employment policy. Particular attention is given to developing robust data collection mechanisms in the labour market and a systematic information management system to build knowledge of employment disputes.
- Facilitating young men and women greater access to support services for wage and self-employment through new tools and methodologies adapted to national circumstances.
- Supporting better reintegration for seasonal workers including the design of pre-departure and reintegration services to improve their economic livelihoods, skills utilization and overall employment prospects.
- Strengthening the capacity of workers' and employers' organisations to deal with the issue of reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention.
- Assisting in preparing a draft Worker's Compensation Bill and a draft Occupational Safety and Health Bill.
- Supporting legislation to implement the Tripartite Consultation and building capacity for social partners.

## Social partners

The social partners are the Vanuatu Council of Trade Unions (VCTU) and the Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI). Labour issues are the responsibility of the Department of Labour (DOL), headed by the Labour Commissioner, which is part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.



## The International Labour Organization

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the UN agency for the world of work. It was founded in 1919 as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I, to reflect the principle that universal and lasting peace can only be achieved if it is built on social justice. The ILO is the only 'tripartite' United Nations agency that brings together representatives of governments, employers and workers to shape policies and programmes for social justice and decent working and living conditions for all women and men. For this it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969. The ILO is also responsible for drawing up and overseeing international labour standards (Conventions and Recommendations). This unique arrangement gives the organization an edge in incorporating 'real world' knowledge about employment and work into its activities.

**DECENT WORK**

A better world starts here.

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