



# National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons

2024-2028





# Foreward



I am delighted to introduce Vanuatu's inaugural National Action Plan (NAP), for the years 2024 to 2028, dedicated to the eradication of trafficking in persons and the safeguarding of vulnerable migrants. This plan, has been duly approved by our Senior Councils in November 2023, and symbolizes the collective commitment of our nation to addressing these critical issues.

The development of this NAP has been the result of a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA), in partnership with the members of the National Steering Committee (NSC) on Migrant Protection and Assistance, and with invaluable support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Vanuatu.

At its core, this NAP seeks to forge a society that is just, humane, and empowered, one that offers resolute protection against all forms of trafficking and exploitation. It envisions a future where our government, in synergy with various stakeholders, proactively prevents and combats trafficking and protect vulnerable migrants. It aims to mainstream and integrate considerations on migrant protection across relevant government departments and agencies and provide for systematize multi-stakeholder involvement including international and community-based organizations and local community representatives.

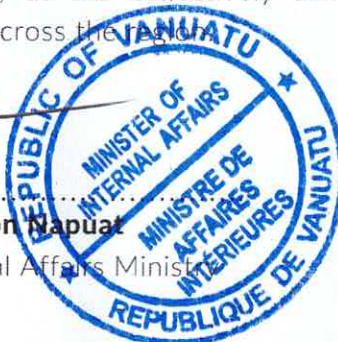
I would like to extend my gratitude to the dedicated members of the NSC on Migrant Protection and Assistance, their active participation in the consultations, workshops, and meeting sessions has been pivotal to ensuring the inclusivity and comprehensiveness of this NAP. I like to also extend special thanks to the IOM mission in Vanuatu, for their unwavering commitment in supporting, facilitating, and funding the development of this Action Plan. Without their generous support, this ambitious undertaking would not have materialized.

The launch of the NAP demonstrates the Vanuatu's Government's determination to combat and eliminate human trafficking. I anticipate that this initiative will not only garner positive commitments but also strengthen our diplomatic ties with the IOM and other international organizations, as we collectively achieve our goals to eliminate human trafficking in Vanuatu and across the region.

Respectfully,

**Honorable Andrew Solomon**

Minister, Ministry of Internal Affairs  
of Internal Affairs



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# Acknowledgements

The NAP encompasses a whole of Government and whole of society approach and responsibility. The development of the NAP represents the combined efforts of government departments and the advocacy and support of non-government agencies (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs), and regional and international agencies.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA) coordinated the development of the National Action Plan through the National Steering Committee on Migrant Protection and Assistance. The MoIA would like to thank the Government departments, NGOs, technical partners, bilateral partners and individuals who contributed tirelessly and comprehensively in development of the NAP, by participating in the National Security Council Secretariat, Senior Council's meetings, including in country consultations and National Steering Committee Meetings from 2021 to date. The outcomes from the various meetings held and the technical inputs from the National Steering Committee meetings have resulted in the development of Vanuatu's first ever NAP to combat Trafficking in Persons.

The MoIA would like to acknowledge the assistance from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to fund the NAP document. Furthermore, we would like to acknowledge the support that have been continuously offered by the IOM Offices here in Vanuatu and in Fiji, which has enabled the MoIA to consolidate all efforts that has been narrated in this NAP.

The MoIA further appreciates the contributions of international and regional partners and their continued support in the fight against human trafficking in Vanuatu and across the Pacific.

## List of Abbreviations

<b>ABF</b>	Australian Border Force
<b>BMIS</b>	Border Management Information Systems
<b>BV</b>	Biosecurity Vanuatu
<b>CID</b>	Criminal Investigation Department
<b>CIR</b>	Department of Customs and Inland Revenue
<b>COI</b>	Commission of Inquiry
<b>CBOs</b>	Community-Based Organizations
<b>CTTOC</b>	Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime Act
<b>DG</b>	Director General
<b>DLA</b>	Department of Local Authorities
<b>DOL</b>	Department of Labour and Employment Services
<b>DSPPAC</b>	Department of Strategic Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination
<b>DWA</b>	Department of Women's Affairs
<b>DUAP</b>	Department of Urban Affairs and Planning
<b>ESU</b>	Employment Services Unit
<b>FIU</b>	Financial Intelligence Unit
<b>GBV</b>	Gender Based Violence
<b>GoV</b>	Government of Vanuatu
<b>ICCU</b>	Integrity and Commercial Crime Unit
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>LDCs</b>	Least Developed Countries
<b>MALFFB</b>	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Forestry and Bio-Security
<b>MoFAICET</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation, & External Trade
<b>MFOMA</b>	Ministry of Fisheries, Oceans & Maritime Affairs
<b>MIDAS</b>	Migration Information Data Analysis System
<b>MLU</b>	Money Laundering Unit
<b>MoH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>MoIA</b>	Ministry of Internal Affairs
<b>MoJCS</b>	Ministry of Justice and Community Services
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MSG</b>	Melanesian Spearhead Group (Secretariat)

<b>MTTICNVB</b>	Ministry of Tourism, Trade, Industry, Commerce, and Ni-Vanuatu Business
<b>NDMO</b>	National Disaster Management Office
<b>NIU</b>	National Intelligence Unit
<b>NSC</b>	National Steering Committee (on Migrant Protection)
<b>NSCS</b>	National Security Council Secretariat
<b>NSDP</b>	National Sustainable Development Plan
<b>NSS</b>	National Security Strategy
<b>OPP</b>	Office of the Public Prosecutor
<b>PAA</b>	Priorities and Action Agenda
<b>PIDC</b>	Pacific Immigration Development Community
<b>PMO</b>	Prime Minister's Office
<b>POI</b>	Persons of Interest
<b>PTCCC</b>	Pacific Transnational Crime Coordination Centre
<b>PIC's</b>	Pacific Island Countries
<b>SIDS</b>	Small Island Developing States
<b>SLO</b>	State Law Office
<b>SoE</b>	State of Emergency
<b>SOPs</b>	Standard Operating Procedures
<b>TCU</b>	Transnational Crime Unit
<b>TIP</b>	Trafficking in Persons
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime
<b>VFD</b>	Vanuatu Fisheries Department
<b>VFIPA</b>	Vanuatu Foreign Investment Promotion Authority
<b>VFSC</b>	Vanuatu Financial Services Commission
<b>VIS</b>	Vanuatu Immigration Services
<b>VISR</b>	Vanuatu International Shipping Registry
<b>VMA</b>	Vanuatu Maritime Authority
<b>VMF</b>	Vanuatu Mobile Force
<b>VNSO</b>	Vanuatu National Statistics Office
<b>VOTs</b>	Victims of Trafficking
<b>VPF</b>	Vanuatu Police Force

# Executive Summary

The Government of Vanuatu (GoV) is committed to combat trafficking in persons (TIP) and safeguard vulnerable individuals at risk of exploitation. The establishment of the National Steering Committee on Migrant Protection (NSC) in 2021, in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), marks a pivotal step towards creating a comprehensive national mechanism to address TIP and related challenges.

Vanuatu's legal framework addresses TIP through various national statutes, including the Penal Code Act, Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime Act, the Employment Act, and Control of Marriage Act. However, a review of existing legislation is needed to effectively address this crime.

Trafficking in persons poses a significant concern in Vanuatu, which is both a source, transit, and destination country for human trafficking. Although official statistics are lacking, evidence indicates that human traffickers exploit both domestic and foreign victims. Notably, ni-Vanuatu seasonal workers are particularly vulnerable to trafficking abroad. A landmark case in 2018 exposed 101 male victims of forced labor in Port Vila, leading to the successful conviction of four Bangladeshi nationals for human trafficking - the country's first such conviction.

Several areas of improvement in policy and practice have been identified in addressing trafficking in persons. These include the need to improve data collection and information sharing, strengthening the national coordination mechanism, providing comprehensive support services for victims, enhance capacity building for frontline workers, foster cooperation among stakeholders, and raise public awareness on trafficking in persons.

The National Action Plan outlines a comprehensive approach to address these challenges. These include improving policy and legislation on TIP and migrant protection, increasing public awareness, developing systematic procedures for proactively identifying persons at risk of trafficking, eliminate trafficking vulnerability factors, enhancing identification of human trafficking and smuggling networks, coordinating inter-agency action to support victims of trafficking through an established referral system, ensuring provision of comprehensive care to victims of trafficking, provide training to prosecutors and judges, improve data collection and information sharing, increase coordination for enhanced budgetary prioritization and monitoring, and increase cooperation amongst regional and international actors in the fight against cross-border trafficking.

# Key Definitions

**Exploitation:** The act of taking advantage of something or someone, in particular the act of taking unjust advantage of another for one's own benefit. Example "the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs"<sup>1</sup>.

**Forced Labour:** is defined in the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention on Forced Labour, 1930 (No. 29) as: all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily.

**Forced Marriage:** Marriage that is entered into without the free and full consent of one or both the intending spouses.

**Migrants in Vulnerable Situations:** Migrants who are unable to effectively enjoy their human rights, are at increased risk of violations and abuse and who, accordingly, are entitled to call on a duty bearer's heightened duty of care.

**Refugee:** according to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, a refugee is any person who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his or her former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

**Stateless Person:** according to Art 1(1) of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, a "stateless person" means a person who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law.

**Slavery:** is defined in the 1926 Slavery Convention as the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised. In a later treaty, States agreed that there are also certain "slavery-like practices": debt bondage, forced or servile marriage, sale or exploitation of children (including in armed conflict), and descent-based slavery.

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1 Trafficking in Persons Protocol

**Smuggling of Migrants:** The procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the irregular entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident.<sup>2</sup>

**The Worst Forms of Child Labour:** According to the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999, the term comprises:

- A)** all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict.
- B)** the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography, or for pornographic performances.
- C)** the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties.
- D)** work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

**Trafficking in Persons:** is defined in the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

**Vulnerable Group:** Depending on the context, any group or sector of society, such as children, elderly people, persons with disabilities, ethnic or religious minorities, migrants, or persons that are at higher risk of being subjected to discriminatory practices, violence, social disadvantage, or economic hardship than other groups within the State. These groups are also at higher risk in periods of conflict, crisis or disasters.



# Introduction

## What Is Trafficking In Persons?

The Vanuatu *Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime (CTTOC) Act* defines trafficking in persons as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a person for the purpose of exploitation”. Exploitation includes all forms of sexual exploitation (including sexual servitude and exploitation of another person’s prostitution, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude and the removal of organs.<sup>3</sup>

In the Asia-Pacific region, trafficking in persons is driven by factors such as poverty, lack of employment opportunities and climate change, intersecting with the growing criminal demand for cheap labour in households, agriculture, fishing, and construction sectors, as well as in the commercial sex of both adults and children.

Trafficking in persons is a complex crime often linked to other criminal activities. Identifying TIP victims can be challenging as traffickers keep them isolated from their communities and support networks. Trafficking in persons remains a largely under-reported crime and, with limited data available, it is hard to determine its true extent globally. Victims of trafficking are often reluctant to self-report to law enforcement authorities due to a range of reasons, such as:

- » Fear of reprisal or threat of violence from traffickers against themselves or family members;
- » Fear of removal or arrest due to lack of identity documents or a valid visa;
- » Victims may see their situations as their own fault, or they believe they have committed a crime;
- » Lack of trust of law enforcement officers in their own country;
- » Language barriers;

People of all genders, ages and backgrounds can become victims of trafficking, a crime that occurs in every region of the world.<sup>4</sup> Migrants can be particularly vulnerable to trafficking in persons, especially if they are undocumented. Migrant workers are also vulnerable in certain labour situations, for example when they are “out of sight” such as migrants working at sea, domestic workers providing services in private homes, or migrants confined to worksites by employers who have a high degree of control over their ability to retain a visa, their working and living conditions, and their mobility.<sup>5</sup>

3 Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime Act 2006 section 2.

4 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Human Trafficking FAQs

5 IOM (2019), Migrants and their Vulnerability to Human Trafficking, Modern Slavery and Forced Labour

Female and male migrants are vulnerable to abuse but in different ways – women and girls may experience exploitation in domestic work, within the sex industry and through forced marriage – while men and boys are more likely to be exploited through forced labour in the construction, agriculture, and fishing sectors.<sup>6</sup> Child and adolescent migrants are particularly vulnerable to trafficking, especially those who are travelling unaccompanied or without parental care or a legal guardian.

Refugees and asylum-seekers are also vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. When people are forced to flee their homes, they are away from their familiar surroundings, and often lose their community support networks. One consequence is that they end up being socially and culturally isolated, lacking access to basic resources and livelihood opportunities. These and other factors contribute to making refugees and other forcibly displaced people an easy target for traffickers, who prey on the precariousness of their situation to exploit them.<sup>7</sup>

Although Vanuatu is not yet a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the *Status of Refugees*, it is important to understand that persons who have been trafficked across an international border, in transit or at destination, may be in need of international protection. This is relevant in situations where: persons who have been trafficked abroad seek international protection in the State in which they are currently present; victims who have been trafficked inside their own country and then fled abroad seek international protection as a refugee; and persons who have never been trafficked, but that fear becoming a victim of trafficking in their country of origin and have fled abroad in search of international protection as refugees. Ensuring protection against their refoulement and access to procedures which can determine their refugee status is therefore critical.<sup>8</sup>



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6 Ibid.

7 IOM-UNHCR (2020), IOM-UNHCR Framework document on developing standard operating procedures to facilitate the identification and protection of victims of trafficking

8 Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (2017), Trafficking in persons and refugee status

## Difference Between Trafficking In Persons And People Smuggling

Due to their interlinkages, trafficking in persons is often confused with people smuggling. However, it is important to distinguish between these two crimes because they not only require different legal and policy responses, but because failing to make this distinction may lead authorities and other frontline workers to incorrectly identify victims of trafficking.

Trafficking in persons, as defined in the Vanuatu *Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime (CTTOC) Act*, involves the movement of individuals, domestically or across international borders, for the purpose of exploitation.

People smuggling, as outlined in the *CTTOC Act*, pertains to the irregular facilitation of the movement of people across borders. An agreement is entered into voluntarily by those wishing to migrate irregularly, usually on a payment-for-service basis. The relationship between the smuggler and those wishing to migrate is a commercial transaction which usually ends with arrival at destination.

However, human trafficking and people smuggling share some commonalities: they both involve organized crime and can occur along the same routes, however it should also be noted that often times not all TIP and SOM activities involve involvement of TOC groups. Additionally, like trafficked persons, smuggled migrants can become victims of violence, ill-treatment, or human rights violations.

Smuggling, particularly in crisis contexts such as during disasters or armed conflict, can escalate into a trafficking situation. Factors such as lack of identity documents, language barriers, and unawareness of their rights can heighten the vulnerability of smuggled migrants, increasing the risk of exploitation and human trafficking. For example, after arriving in the country of destination, smugglers may tell the individual that they have a debt they need to pay off for additional “smuggling fees” and that to pay off the debt the smuggled migrant must work, live and eat at a specific location designated by the smuggler. The individual is left in a state of debt bondage and thus becomes a victim of human trafficking.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The Inter-Agency Group against Trafficking in Persons (2016), What is the difference between trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants?

The table below describes the key differences between trafficking and smuggling:

TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS	PEOPLE SMUGGLING
A crime against individuals and their human rights	A crime against the state
Can involve border crossing or can occur within national borders (“domestic trafficking”)	Always involve cross border movement and entry into another state
A process of ongoing exploitation of a person to generate profits for the traffickers	The relationship between smuggler and migrant is a commercial transaction, which usually ends after border crossing
Consent of a victim is irrelevant to establishing trafficking in persons crime	Involves a voluntary agreement between individuals seeking to migrate and the smuggler

Source : The Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, Issue 01, 10/2016



## Trafficking Trends In Vanuatu

Various forms of trafficking in persons and slavery-like practices have been recorded across the Pacific region such as forced labor, sexual exploitation, commercial sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, and child labor. Trafficking for sexual exploitation predominantly occurs in tourist areas and urban centers, with foreign women and girls being particularly affected. Migrant workers, primarily from South Asia and Southeast Asia, are exploited in the fishing industry, and in the agriculture, forestry, and hospitality sectors. However, trafficking in persons does not solely affect foreign nationals; it also occurs domestically and affects Pacific Islanders. Reports indicate that children are recruited and exploited within their own countries in the Pacific. They are trafficked into domestic servitude, subjected to commercial sexual exploitation, and engaged in informal work as street vendors, garage workers, scavengers, and labor-intensive agricultural tasks.<sup>10</sup>

Vanuatu is both a transit and destination country for human trafficking, with criminal networks exploiting both domestic and foreign victims. The country's popularity as a tourist destination has increased the demand for workers, potentially heightening its vulnerability to this crime. People smuggling, however, is not a significant issue in the country, with little evidence to suggest its occurrence.<sup>11</sup>

Vanuatu, like most Pacific Island nations, has a history of labor mobility. The movement of people into, within and out of the country are increasing due to low wages and lack of employment opportunities.

Vanuatu is one of the most at-risk countries in the world to natural disasters. Displacement caused by disaster and climate-change, heightens the vulnerability of ni-Vanuatu to trafficking, especially among communities relying on small-scale agriculture. Thousands of ni-Vanuatu evacuated from Ambae and Ambrym islands due to volcanic eruptions face heightened trafficking risks due to economic hardships stemming from displacement. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to debt-based coercion for the purpose of sexual exploitation and domestic servitude. Child marriage, spurred by economic hardships following natural disasters, has led to increased reports of sexual exploitation of children. Reports also highlight forced labor and child sexual exploitation occurring on fishing vessels, as well as instances where foreign tourists exploit underage girls in remote communities by offering marriage in exchange for short-term sexual exploitation.<sup>12</sup>

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10 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2023), Regional Report on the Existing Capacities to Measure Trafficking in Persons in the Pacific

11 Global Organized Crime Index (2023), Vanuatu

12 U.S. Department of State (2023), 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report: Vanuatu.

Foreign nationals from China, Thailand, Bangladesh, and the Philippines are particularly vulnerable to trafficking in the country. Traffickers target migrant women employed in the hospitality and tourism sectors, as well as low-skilled migrant workers in high-risk industries such as agriculture, mining, fishing, logging, construction, and domestic services. Particularly vulnerable to trafficking are East and South Asian migrant women, who are employed in establishments such as bars, beauty salons, and massage parlors. Foreign fishermen working on Vanuatu-flagged vessels, have reported indicators of forced labor, including deceptive recruitment methods, excessive working hours, wage withholding, physical and sexual abuse, and substandard living and working conditions onboard.<sup>13</sup>

In 2018, Vanuatu police and immigration officials identified 101 Bangladeshi male trafficking for forced labour victims, the largest case of human trafficking ever recorded in the Pacific region. The Bangladeshi case is consistent with reports from elsewhere in the Pacific region, suggesting that traffickers exploit looser visa regimes designed to promote tourism and trade, to be used as human trafficking destinations.<sup>14</sup>

Victim-survivors were deceived with a promise of a well-paid job in Australia, only to find themselves enslaved, tortured, and forced to work in a construction site in Port Vila. In 2019, Vanuatu successfully prosecuted four Bangladeshi nationals with trafficking and slavery offences, a remarkable achievement that has significantly contributed to raise awareness on human trafficking and highlighted the need for action among other Pacific countries.

When the 101 victims were identified, Vanuatu had no established mechanism in place to provide appropriate assistance to victims. Some were compelled to remain in the country for an extended period of time in order to cooperate with law enforcement and judicial authorities with no avenues to change their legal status or access effective remedies.<sup>15</sup> The case highlighted substantial gaps in the country's legal framework, policies, and operational procedures, particularly in relation to the identification and support of victim-survivors. It reinforced the imperative for a coordinated approach to prevent trafficking, protect victim-survivors, and prosecute offenders. Adopting a well-managed trafficking and migration policy and governance has become crucial for the Government of Vanuatu.



13 Ibid.

14 Minderoo Foundation (2020), 'Murky Waters – A Qualitative Assessment of Modern Slavery in the Pacific Region'.

15 U.S Department of State, 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: Vanuatu

## Vanuatu's Legal Framework

The Government of Vanuatu is committed to the protection of human rights and to further strengthening internal mechanisms and institutions to meet its obligations under human rights treaties. Vanuatu has ratified some core international human rights instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT). The country has also ratified the 1930 Forced Labour Convention, the 1957 Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, and the 1999 Convention on Worst Forms of Child Labour, to step up the fight against child labour. Vanuatu is not yet a Party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and is not yet a signatory either of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons or the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. However, Vanuatu recognizes and respects the customary international law principle of non-refoulement.

Vanuatu acceded to the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, but not its supplementing Protocols - the 2000 *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, the first global legally binding instrument with an agreed definition on trafficking in persons, and the *Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air*.

Domestic laws relevant to slavery, slavery-like practices, and trafficking in persons, are primarily contained in five statutes:

- » the Constitution of Vanuatu<sup>16</sup>
- » Penal Code Act<sup>17</sup>
- » the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime Act (CTTOC Act)<sup>18</sup>
- » the Control of Marriage Act<sup>19</sup>
- » the Employment Act<sup>20</sup>

The CTTOC Act defines **trafficking in persons** as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a person for the purpose of exploitation”. Exploitation includes all forms of sexual exploitation (including sexual servitude and exploitation of another person’s prostitution), forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude and the removal of organs.<sup>21</sup>

16 Constitution of Vanuatu 1980, Art 5.

17 Penal Code Act 1981, Cap 135. Pt2 ss 101, 101B, 102.

18 Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime Act 2006, pt1 s 2.

19 Control of Marriage Act 1966, Chapter 45.

20 Employment Act 1983, ss 7, 78.

21 Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime Act 2006 section 2.

Under the CTTOC Act “a person must not engage in trafficking in a person or be involved in the arranging of trafficking in a persons, knowing that the person’s entry into Vanuatu or any other state is or was arranged by specified means”.<sup>22</sup> “Specified means” means threat, use of forced or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or a position of vulnerability, or giving or receiving payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person.”<sup>23</sup> Contravention carries penalty of imprisonment of not more than 10 years, a fine not more than VUV 50 million, or both.<sup>24</sup>

The CTTOC Act offers some protection for trafficked persons: a trafficked person is not liable to criminal prosecution for:

- A.** the act of trafficking in persons or being a party to an offence of trafficking in persons; or
- B.** the person’s illegal entry into Vanuatu in connection with the act of trafficking in persons if Vanuatu is the receiving country; or
- C.** the person’s period of unlawful residence in Vanuatu after being trafficked if Vanuatu is the receiving country; or
- D.** the person’s procurement or possession of any fraudulent travel or identity documents that the person obtained, or with which the person was supplied, for the purpose of entering the receiving country in connection with the act of trafficking in persons.<sup>25</sup> However, this does not prevent the removal of a trafficked person in accordance with the Immigration Act.<sup>26</sup>

The CTTOC Act prohibits **trafficking in children:**<sup>27</sup> “A person must not intentionally engage in trafficking in a person who is a child, or be involved in the arranging of trafficking in a person who is a child, regardless of whether the child’s entry into Vanuatu or any other state is or was arranged by specified means.”<sup>28</sup> Contravention carries a penalty of imprisonment of up to 15 years, a fine of up to VUV 75 million, or both.<sup>29</sup> It is not a defense that the child “consented to the intended exploitation” or that the “intended exploitation did not occur.” “Exploitation” includes “all forms of **sexual exploitation** (including sexual servitude and exploitation of another person’s prostitution), **forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude and the removal of organs.**”<sup>30</sup>

The Penal Code includes offences prohibiting the **exploitation of children:**<sup>31</sup> “A person must not use a child for pornographic purposes, cause or procure a child to be so used, or where caring for a

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22 Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime Act 2006 section 34(1).  
23 Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime Act 2006 section 2.  
24 Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime Act 2006 section 34(2).  
25 Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime Act 2006 section 38 (1).  
26 Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime Act 2006 section 38 (2).  
27 Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime Act 2006 section 35 (1).  
28 Refer to Section 3.4.1. of the CTTOC Act for the definition of “specified means.”  
29 Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime Act 2006 section 35 (2).  
30 Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime Act 2006 section 2(1), definition of “exploitation”.  
31 Penal Code section 101D (1).

child, consent to the child being so used or allow the child to be so used. A child is used by a person for pornographic purposes if they are engaged in, or are in the presence of another person engaged in, activity of a sexual nature for the purpose of the production of pornography”.<sup>32</sup> Contravention carries a penalty of imprisonment for up to five years or, if the child is under the age of 14 years, imprisonment for up to seven years.

The Penal Code also makes it a crime to possess **child sexual abuse materials** and publish an indecent article that is child sexual abuse materials. These offences carry penalties of up to two years of imprisonment and five years of imprisonment, respectively, or for a corporation convicted of publication, a fine of VUV 20,000,000.<sup>33</sup> Child sexual abuse materials” means a film, publication, or computer game that would on the basis that it describes or depicts, in a way that is likely to cause offence to a reasonable adult, a person (whether or not engaged in sexual activity) who is a child under 16 or who looks like a child under 16.”<sup>34</sup>

The Penal Code has criminal offences for **prostitution** of both adults and children, providing that no person shall procure, aid, or facilitate the prostitution of another person or share in the proceeds of such prostitution, whether habitual or otherwise, or be subsidized by any person engaging in prostitution. Contravention of this section carries a penalty of imprisonment for five years.<sup>35</sup>

Under the Penal Code, it a crime to promote or engage in acts of **child prostitution**. A person must not, “by any means, cause or induce a child to participate in an act of child prostitution”<sup>36</sup> or “participate as a client with a child in an act of child prostitution.” The child’s consent is not a defense.<sup>37</sup> This offence carries a penalty of imprisonment for up to 10 years or, if the child is under the age of 14 years, imprisonment for up to 14 years.<sup>38</sup>

The Penal Code also prohibits “**abduction of a person under 18 years of age.**” A person must not take or cause to be taken unmarried persons under the age of 18 years out of the possession and against the will of their father, mother, guardian, or any other person having the lawful care or charge of them with the intention: of having sexual intercourse with the person; or to cause the person to have sexual intercourse with any other person. Contravention carries a penalty of imprisonment for up to seven years.<sup>39</sup>

The Control of Marriage Act makes **forced marriage** a criminal offence: “No person shall compel another person of any age to marry against [their] will.”<sup>40</sup> Contravention carries a penalty

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32 Penal Code section 101D (2).

33 Penal Code sections 147A (2) and 147B (2).

34 Penal Code section 147A (1).

35 Penal Code section 101.

36 Penal Code section 101B (1).

37 Penal Code section 101B (2).

38 Penal Code section 101B (1).

39 Penal Code section 92A.

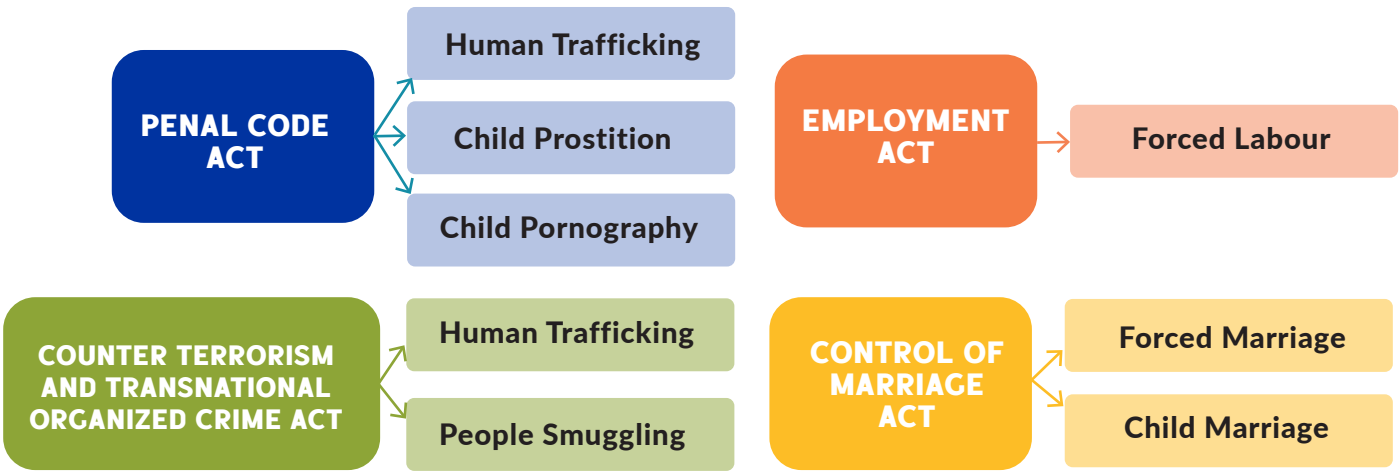
40 Control of Marriage Act section 5.

of a fine not exceeding VUV 100,000, imprisonment not exceeding two years, or both.<sup>41</sup> Section 4 requires the principal celebrant of any marriage to be satisfied that the parties to the marriage have freely expressed their consent before at least two witnesses or before the District Commissioner of the District in which they reside. Section 6 then declares a marriage without the required consent to be invalid. **The legal age for marriage is 21 years**, though males between 18 and 21 years old and females between 16 and 21 years old may marry with parental or guardian consent pursuant to section 3 (the magistrate’s court in the relevant territorial jurisdiction may also authorize the marriage in the absence of such consent).<sup>42</sup> Contravention of sections 2 or 3 is an offence penalized by a fine not exceeding VUV 20,000.<sup>43</sup>

The Employment Act provides that no person shall exact, procure, or employ forced or compulsory labour.<sup>44</sup> **“Forced or compulsory labour”** is defined as “all work or service which is exacted from any person under the threat of any penalty and for which that person has not offered himself voluntarily” with the exception of a number of listed examples, including military service for work of purely military character, normal civic obligations of citizens, any work or service exacted from any person as a consequence of a conviction by a court, and any work or service exacted in cases of emergency.<sup>45</sup>

Vanuatu’s trafficking laws will require some amendments in the future to align domestic legislation with international standards, including reviewing the Penal Code to specify/define the definition of slavery, trafficking in persons, remove sentencing provisions that allow fines in lieu of imprisonment for sex trafficking crimes, and implementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime’s Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

Figure 1. Summary of domestic laws relevant to slavery, slavery-like practices, and trafficking in persons.



41 Penal Code section 7(2).  
 42 Control of Marriage Act section 2.  
 43 Penal Code section 7(1).  
 44 Employment Act section 7(1).  
 45 Employment Act section 7(2)(a)-(d).

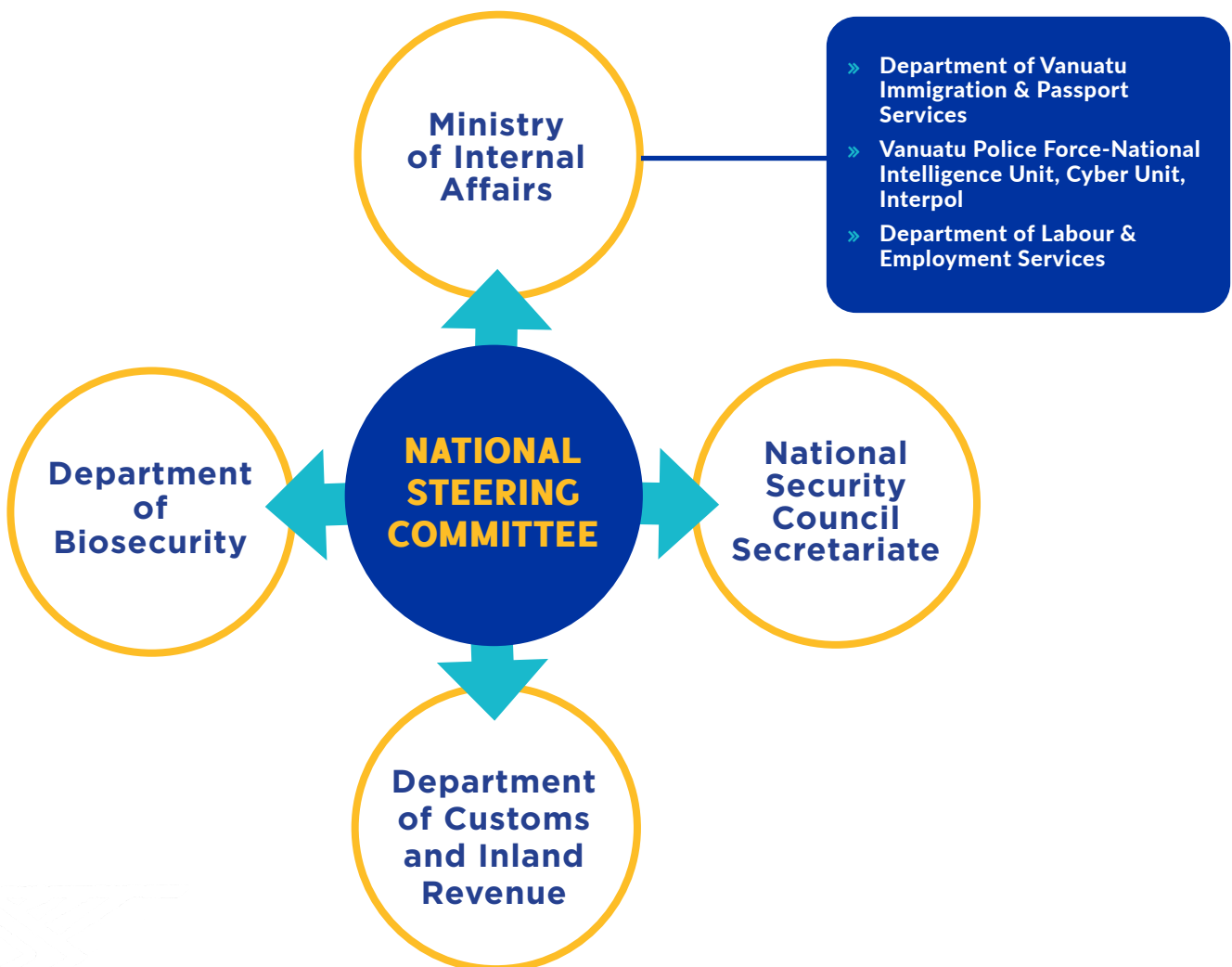


# Vanuatu's National Response

## Development Of The National Action Plan

In November 2021, the Government of Vanuatu, in collaboration with IOM, established a National Steering Committee on Migrant Protection (the Steering Committee) with the aim of adopting a national migrant protection and counter-trafficking coordination mechanism. The NSC is chaired by the Director General of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA) and it includes senior officials from the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS), Department of Vanuatu Immigration & Passport Services (VIS), the Department of Customs and Inland Revenues (DCIR), Vanuatu Police Force – National Intelligence Unit, Interpol Unit, Cyber Unit (VPF), Department of Biosecurity Vanuatu (BV), and the Department of Labour and Employment Services (DoL). Observer members are Ministry of Justice and Social Welfare (MJSW) – Human Rights Commission and Department of Woman's Affairs (DWA).

Figure 2. Members of the National Steering Committee on Migrant Protection



The establishment of the National Steering Committee was followed by an in-depth assessment of Vanuatu's legislation, policies, and procedures related to trafficking in persons, and the protection of both trafficked victims and vulnerable migrants. Soon after, IOM Vanuatu conducted an organisational capacity assessment as part of the IOM's project on *Migrant Protection and Assistance in the Pacific*<sup>46</sup> which formed the basis of this National Action Plan. The review and the organisational capacity assessment involved the engagement of various government institutions including the National Steering Committee on Migrant Protection, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Department of Vanuatu Immigration and Passport Services, Vanuatu Police Force, the National Intelligence Unit, Interpol Unit and Cyber Unit, the Department of Labour and Employment Services, the Department of Customs and Inland Revenue, Department of Biosecurity Vanuatu, the Vanuatu Human Rights Coalition, the Department of Correctional Services, the Department of Women's Affairs, the National Security Council Secretariat, the Financial Intelligence Unit, the Public Prosecutor's Office, as well as numerous civil society organizations. The consultative process was facilitated by IOM technical team. Inputs and recommendations gathered from stakeholders were incorporated to produce this final draft.



46 Through the Migrant Protection and Assistance project, IOM is supporting Pacific Island countries build capacities to protect vulnerable migrants at risk of exploitation and prevent human trafficking.

## Alignment With Vanuatu Policies And Frameworks

This National Action Plan does not exist in isolation; it is interconnected with other policy initiatives within the broader framework of the Government of Vanuatu's commitment to promoting human rights and protect vulnerable individuals at risk of exploitation and abuse.

These include:

- » the National Sustainable Development Plan 2016-2023 (People's Plan),
- » the National Security Strategy (NSS),
- » the Ministry of Internal Affairs' Nasara Sector Strategy 2022-2026,
- » the Strategy for the Justice and Community Services Sector,
- » the National Gender Equality Policy 2020-2030,
- » the National Child Protection Policy (2016-2026),
- » the Vanuatu Education and Training Sector Strategy Plan 2020-2030, and
- » the Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2016-2030.

Vanuatu is also committed to other regional plans and frameworks such as the 2023 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration, the United Nations Pacific Strategy 2018-2022, and the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent Implementation Plan.

The Government of Vanuatu is also actively involved in a variety of regional mechanisms, including the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons, and Related Transnational Crime<sup>47</sup>, the Pacific Transnational Crime Network<sup>48</sup>, the Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC)<sup>49</sup>, and the Pacific Islands Forum.<sup>50</sup>

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47 The Bali Process is a forum for policy dialogue, information sharing and practical cooperation to help the Asia-Pacific region addressing these challenges, <https://www.baliprocess.net>

48 Pacific Transnational Crime Network, <https://www.picp.co.nz>

49 PIDC Members are represented by Heads of Immigration or Senior Executive Staff hold who meet annually to discuss challenges and threats faced by immigration agencies, develop collaborative responses, enhance understanding of global migration issues, and develop agreed priorities for the organization, <https://www.pidcsec.org/about-us/governance/>

50 The Pacific Islands Forum fosters cooperation between government on a range of challenges such as peace and security, climate change and disasters and other issues, <https://www.forumsec.org/who-we-arepacific-islands-forum/>



# National Action Plan

The Government of Vanuatu acknowledges that trafficking in persons cannot be eradicated without a comprehensive strategy, with timelines and defined areas of responsibility. This National Action Plan sets out strategic outcomes and implementation plans to prevent and counter trafficking, in accordance with Vanuatu legislation, over the course of five years.

## VISION

The vision of this National Action Plan is to build a just, equal, and empowered society that protects people from trafficking in persons and other forms of exploitation.

## MISSION

The mission of this National Action Plan is for the Government of Vanuatu, working in partnership with other stakeholders, to proactively prevent and combat all forms of trafficking, and provide adequate support and assistance to victim-survivors.

The goal of the National Action Plan is to provide government agencies with comprehensive framework and measures aimed at preventing trafficking in persons in Vanuatu. The National Action Plan aims to integrate considerations relating to both trafficking and migrant protection across relevant government agencies while facilitating the systematic involvement of a range of stakeholders including community-based organizations and international organizations.

In line with internationally accepted best practices, this National Action Plan will focus on four core areas, known as the 4 pillars:

1. The **PREVENTION** of trafficking in persons.
2. The **PROTECTION** of trafficking victims.
3. The **PROSECUTION** of offenders.
4. Working in **PARTNERSHIP** with others both domestically and internationally.

The following pages highlight the key elements and priority actions that will be pursued under the National Action Plan.



## PREVENTION

The Government of Vanuatu will support a broad-based prevention strategy focusing on awareness raising, as well as improving TIP identification procedures. Specifically, the Department of Immigration and Passport Services (VIS) will establish a dedicated Human-Trafficking Unit. This unit will coordinate efforts to prevent TIP, handle screening responsibilities for all VOT, and facilitate inter-agency cooperation during TIP investigations. The decision to create this specialized unit stems from the valuable lessons learned since 2018, particularly from a prominent TIP case in the country. By prioritizing these measures, Vanuatu aims to protect vulnerable individuals and address the challenges posed by trafficking in persons within its borders.

### Objectives:

- 1.** Strengthen legislation on trafficking in persons;
- 2.** Increase public awareness on TIP; and
- 3.** Improve TIP identification procedures.

## PREVENTION

Prevention Targets in the National Action Plan

PREVENTION						
OBJECTIVE 1: STRENGTHEN LEGISLATION ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS						
OUTCOME	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUT	INDICATOR(S)	LEAD AGENCY	PARTNERS	TIME-FRAME
<b>1.1 Ratification of relevant international conventions and protocols</b>	Consultation with stakeholders on relevant international conventions and/or protocols. Consultation with the National Steering Committee's respective Ministries for endorsement prior to Cabinet submission.	Accession to relevant international conventions and protocols relevant to TIP.	# consultation with relevant ministries and Cabinet # consultations with international organizations (i.e., IOM, UNODC) to seek guidance to ratify and implement protocols (i.e., trafficking protocol) # of international treaties ratified	MoIA,  National Steering Committee	National Security Council  Vanuatu Law Reform Commission  Ministry of Justice and Community Services	By 2025
<b>1.2 Review Vanuatu TIP legislation to meet international standards</b>	Review TIP related laws.	Amended key existing national legislations related to TIP.	# consultation with relevant stakeholders # domestic laws reviewed		International Organizations  Civil Society Organizations	By 2025

<b>OBJECTIVE 2: INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS ON TIP</b>						
<b>2.1 Raise awareness on TIP and related issues across Vanuatu (including all 6 Provinces)</b>	Support the development of an effective national communication strategy and engagement plan to raise awareness on trafficking.	Establish an inclusive national communication strategy/campaign on TIP including targeted initiatives in outer islands.	#communication strategy and engagement plan established	National Steering Committee	Media outlets IOM and other international organizations Civil Society Organizations	By 2024 Subject to funding
	Develop and disseminate awareness raising material that is tailored to different audiences in various languages (Bislama, English, French, Chinese and other identified languages)	Targeted individuals in high-risk communities reached.	#awareness material developed #communities reached with increased awareness on TIP	# of initiatives organized		
<b>2.2 Strengthen capacity of law enforcement authorities on TIP</b>	Organize initiatives on United Nations World Day Against Trafficking in Persons on 30 July to raise awareness on TIP.	Training material developed. Roll out of training activities.	# training tools developed #capacity building activities delivered to law enforcement agencies #law enforcement officers with increased knowledge on TIP #of new TIP cases investigated	National Steering Committee	MoIA Ministry of Justice and Community Services Vanuatu Police Force Vanuatu Immigration Services	Ongoing
	Mainstream TIP issues and migrant protection issues within law enforcement recruit curricula	Training material developed and integrated into recruitment curricula.	#law enforcement agencies integrating TIP and relevant issues into recruitment curricula			IOM NGOs and International Organizations

<b>OBJECTIVE 3: IMPROVE TIP IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES</b>						
<b>3.1 Establish specific mechanisms to screen individuals entering Vanuatu and monitor visa requests</b>	Develop a database shared by key agencies registering entry into Vanuatu. Develop screening tools such as TIP indicators	Database established and operational. Screening tools developed	# databased is operational #screening tools developed	Mol/A National Steering Committee	IOM (MAIDA Project) Civil Society Organizations	Ongoing
<b>3.2 Enhance mechanisms for identifying and assisting victims of TIP</b>	Establish a national hotline as a first point of contact for victims of trafficking and vulnerable individuals at risk of TIP	National trafficking hotline established	# hotline is operational	Mol/A	IOM and donors	By 2025 Subject to funding
<b>3.3 Establish a specialized Human-Trafficking unit within Vanuatu Immigration &amp; Passport Services</b>	Recruit and train officers to be employed within the Vanuatu Immigration & Passport Services' Human-Trafficking Unit Establish a roster of interpreters covering relevant languages to be deployed as needed	Counter-Trafficking Unit established and operational. Interpreters available to support the counter-trafficking unit, as well as other relevant stakeholders	# counter-trafficking unit is operational # roster of interpreters established #interpreters available	Mol/A (VIS)		By 2024 Subject to funding



## PROTECTION

Tailoring assistance and protection services to meet the specific needs of trafficking victims is essential for their physical, psychological, and social recovery. The 2018 trafficking case in Vanuatu brought to light critical gaps, notably the absence of a comprehensive support and assistance mechanism for victims. Despite the government's reactive efforts, the lack of established mechanisms persisted as a significant challenge. As part of its commitment, the Government of Vanuatu will establish an inter-agency coordination mechanism to adequately support victims of trafficking.

Objective:

1. Establish an inter-agency coordination mechanism to adequately support victims of trafficking.

## PROTECTION

Protection Targets in the National Action Plan

### PROTECTION

#### OBJECTIVE 1: ESTABLISH AN INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION MECHANISM TO SUPPORT VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING AND INDIVIDUALS/GROUPS VULNERABLE TO TIP

OUTCOME	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUT	INDICATOR(S)	LEAD AGENCY	PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
<b>1.1 The Government of Vanuatu is equipped to effectively respond to the needs of victims of trafficking and vulnerable individuals</b>	Mapping services available for victims of trafficking, vulnerable migrants and other vulnerable individuals	Available services have been mapped and shared with relevant agencies.	# consultations with service providers # service mapping developed	National Steering Committee Mola- VIS	Civil Society Organizations IOM, UNHCR and other international organizations	By end of 2025 Subject to funding
	Provide VoTs with opportunities to apply for long-term of permanent visas that allow to remain in country	Long-term or permanent visas are available for VoTs to offer adequate support and assistance and allow to lawfully remain in country during court proceedings.	# accessible avenues for VoTs to legalize their status temporarily or permanently			
	Conduct a gap analysis of identified reintegration and rehabilitation services. Provide technical support and resources to address identified gaps		# organizations providing tailored support services for VoTs # organizations provided with technical support and resources			
	Develop SOPs defining roles and responsibilities of relevant stakeholders in responding to victims or people at risk of TIP	SOPs have been developed and validated.	# SOPs developed # consultations with relevant stakeholders # SOPs is operational			
	Establish a referral mechanism for victims of trafficking.	A referral mechanism has been established	# VoTs referred to support services.			
	Identify safe houses available for VoT	Safe house has been identified	# safe houses are operational	National Steering Committee	Civil Society Organizations IOM, UNHCR, and other international organizations	By end of 2025 Subject to funding



## PROSECUTION

The Government of Vanuatu is resolute in its efforts to combat and dismantle the activity of criminal organizations involved in the trafficking people to and within Vanuatu. Government responses aim at bringing traffickers to justice and enhance the criminal justice system's response to this crime. The National Action Plan prioritizes capacity building for judges, prosecutors, and victim support services. This focus ensures effective case prosecution and comprehensive support for victims throughout legal proceedings.

Objective:

1. Strengthen access to justice for victims of trafficking and effectively prosecute traffickers.

## PROSECUTION

Prosecution Targets in the National Action Plan

<b>PROSECUTION</b>						
<b>OBJECTIVE 1: STRENGTHEN ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING AND EFFECTIVELY PROSECUTE TRAFFICKERS</b>						
<b>OUTCOME</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>	<b>INDICATOR(S)</b>	<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	<b>PARTNERS</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<b>1.1 Strengthen capacity of judicial authorities to protect victims of trafficking and prosecute TIP offenders</b>	Deliver training for judges, prosecutors and lawyers on TIP related matters.	Prosecutors and judges adequately trained on TIP	#prosecutors, judges, and lawyers trained on TIP related matters	MoJCS  Office of the Public Prosecutor National Steering Committee	Civil Society Organizations  IOM and other international organizations	By end of 2025 Subject to funding
	Provide training on TIP and victims protection to Victim Support Services officers	Victim Support Services officers are adequately trained on how to support VoTs in the prosecution process	#trained officers	National Steering Committee		



## PARTNERSHIP

A coordinated multi-agency approach is essential, and the 2018 trafficking case in Vanuatu underscored the need for systematic collaboration among key government departments and agencies, civil society, community-based and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), foreign governments, and UN agencies. The Government of Vanuatu will strengthen its relationship with relevant stakeholders to facilitate the ongoing development of policies and tools, to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated approach to counter-trafficking. The National Action Plan focuses on strengthening partnership, cooperation, and information sharing.

Objectives:

- 1.** Strengthen partnership across stakeholders to improve information management on TIP-related matters, and budgetary allocation and monitoring of the National Action Plan;
- 2.** Strengthen coordination of relevant stakeholders on implementation and monitoring of the National Action Plan; and
- 3.** Strengthen cooperation among other stakeholders in the region.

By committing to the strategies outlined in this plan, by 2028, there will have been significant gains made in reducing the incidence of human trafficking whilst also providing adequate protection and support to victims and enhanced the accountability of perpetrators.

## PARTNERSHIP

Partnership Targets in the National Action Plan

PARTNERSHIP						
OBJECTIVE 1: STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIP ACROSS STAKEHOLDERS TO IMPROVE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT ON TIP-RELATED MATTERS, AND BUDGETARY ALLOCATION AND MONITORING OF THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN						
OUTCOME	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUT	INDICATOR(S)	LEAD AGENCY	PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME
1. Increase coordination of relevant stakeholders on implementation of the National Action Plan through improved data collection and information sharing	Establish an information sharing procedure on TIP-related matters information sharing on investigations, prosecutions, victims identified, and assistance provided.	Key stakeholders are adequately informed about counter-trafficking efforts, progress and challenges on the implementation of National Action Plan through an integrated information system	#MoU established and implemented with relevant stakeholders	National Steering Committee	Relevant government agencies	By 2025 Subject to funding
			#database established			
	Establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with CSOs/NGOs involved in the provision of services to victims of trafficking.		#MoU signed with relevant stakeholders	MoIA all government agencies	Vanuatu Statistics Office	VIS
Use the Police Information Management System to record data on trafficking in persons as an initial intelligence database and develop analytical capabilities to enable data base assessments			#MoUs established and implemented		Department of Labor	
			# the Vanuatu Police Information Management System captures data on TIP		Vanuatu Police Force	
			# police officers trained on data collection		Department of Civil Registry	
			# annual forum held		Civil Society Organizations	
Hold a high-level national annual forum on TIP and related issues, providing a platform for information sharing, updates on partnership implementation, and monitoring of the National Action Plan					IOM and other international organizations	

<b>OBJECTIVE 2: STRENGTHEN COORDINATION OF RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS ON IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN</b>					
<p><b>Prioritize counter-trafficking in budget processes and annually increase support for counter-trafficking activities.</b></p>	<p>Government to make specific budget allocations to relevant government agencies for human trafficking activities</p>	<p>Budget lines existent and expenditure reported on as required, including how much is being spent on human trafficking.</p>	<p>NSC and all government agencies</p>	<p>Donors</p>	<p>By 2024</p>
	<p>Government to commit to providing its full support and financial commitment for relevant government agencies to the anti-human trafficking initiatives outlined in this NPA</p>	<p>Increased budgetary allocation to anti human trafficking NPA initiatives.</p>			
<p><b>2. TIP to be mainstreamed throughout national development planning and monitoring processes.</b></p>	<p>Human trafficking to be included in Vanuatu's development plans, with targets, indicators, budgetary allocations, timeframes, and monitoring mechanisms.</p>	<p>Human trafficking given priority in the national development planning agenda with all institutions charged to eliminate human trafficking.</p>	<p>All government agencies</p>		<p>By 2024</p>
	<p>Human trafficking to be mainstreamed in relevant ministries business plans</p>	<p>Human trafficking mainstreamed in relevant ministries business plans</p>			
<p><b>3. National Steering Committee (NSC) Technical Working Group to monitor progress in implementing the NPA and address bottlenecks.</b></p>	<p>NSC to provide regular updates on the implementation of the NPA to government agencies and partners and how to leveraged bottlenecks have been remediated.</p>	<p>Number and quality of regular updates provided by the NSC to government agencies and partners increased and improved.</p>	<p>NSC and all government agencies</p>		<p>Biannually</p>

<p><b>4. Develop partnerships with civil society organizations (CSOs), technical and financial partners in the field of human trafficking.</b></p>	<p>Pro-actively seek to associate with like-minded organisations by joining programmes that seek to enhance cooperation in combating human trafficking.</p> <p>Partner with identified CSOs to provide technical support and inputs to the National Steering Committee on methods to improve government and agency coordination to prevent trafficking, provide care to victims, and increase the arrest and prosecution of traffickers.</p>	<p>Greater number of partnerships established to combat trafficking.</p> <p>Enhanced partnership and technical inputs between government and CSOs.</p>		NSC		Ongoing
<p><b>5. Enhance information sharing and joined activities amongst security agencies.</b></p>	<p>Establish protocols and mechanisms to regularly share information on cross-border activity amongst security agencies.</p> <p>Anti- Trafficking and Intelligence Units to share information and coordinate more joint activities.</p>	<p>Joined up activity and reporting structures operationalized for enhanced coordination amongst agencies in the fight against related criminal activity.</p> <p>Greater coordination and information sharing between the two units.</p>		MoiA  VIS and Transitional Crime Unit		Ongoing
<b>OBJECTIVE 3: STRENGTHEN COOPERATION AMONG OTHER STAKEHOLDERS IN THE REGION</b>						
<p><b>1. Increase level of commitment from countries of origin and destination in their international obligations to protect and facilitate the safe return of trafficking victim-survivors.</b></p>	<p>Design mechanisms to facilitate and ease the protection and return of victims where it is in the best interest of the victim to do so, in the best possible condition and within appropriate timeframes.</p>	<p>Increased number of returns successfully and safely facilitated.</p>	<p>#MoUs established</p>	<p>MoiA and relevant government agencies</p>	<p>IOM</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

# Monitoring And Evaluation Of The NAP

This section is designed to serve as a guide, in the formulation, execution and monitoring and evaluation framework that will support the implementation of this five-year National Action Plan.

Monitoring and evaluation shall be carried out by the National Steering Committee, in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders, under the following principles:

- » **Inclusive Strategic Planning:** the NAP Framework will serve as a guiding model for stakeholders to formulate their institutional or organizational work plans. Under the guidance of the National Steering Committee, a comprehensive stakeholder mapping analysis will be conducted to identify key actors and establish efficient communication channels. This approach ensures that NAP activities and structures are integrated into existing coordination systems, fostering inclusivity and collaboration among stakeholders.
- » **Timelines, Roles, and Responsibilities:** the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders will be executed in accordance with their functions and mandates. Stakeholders will be mobilized to fully understand and appreciate their respective roles and functions concerning the implementation of the NAP. This approach ensures alignment with established protocols and promotes effective collaboration among stakeholders towards achieving the objectives outlined in the NAP.
- » **Accountability:** the process of implementation of the NAP shall be transparent, referring to the objectives of the NAP while tracking the progress, results, impact and achievements made.
- » **Resources for NAP Implementation:** a robust political commitment to the objectives of the NAP is crucial for its success. Advocacy efforts will be undertaken to mobilize resources for the implementation of the NAP.

Some of the monitoring activities will include:

- » **Monitoring Visits:** regular visits to relevant locations will be conducted to support activity implementation, address challenges, and gather data on registered incidents.
- » **Stakeholder Consultation/Monitoring Meetings:** monthly meetings will be held to review progress, discuss implementation actions, and address potential challenges.
- » **Bi-annual Meetings:** involving the National Security Council Secretariat, key Ministries, and other relevant stakeholders including community-based organizations, international organizations and relevant partners. These meetings will review NAP implementation progress and provide strategic policy direction.
- » **Annual Progress Review Reports:** The National Steering Committee, in collaboration with

relevant stakeholders, will prepare annual reports assessing progress against NAP outputs and the annual work plan. These reports will serve as the basis for generating annual TIP trend reports.

- » **Mid-term Review:** Conducted midway through NAP implementation this review will assess the overall NAP and adapt goals and activities to emerging trends. An external evaluation team may be involved to ensure objective analysis.
- » **National Action Plan Evaluation:** This evaluation will determine the overall success of NAP implementation in combating TIP in Vanuatu. Findings, recommendations, and lessons learned will inform the development of future NAPs or other counter-trafficking efforts. Regional participatory workshops will facilitate discussion of evaluation findings, and an external evaluating team may be involved to conduct the end-line evaluation.

# Funding

Funding of the National Action Plan should be sourced through several means including the following:

- » Government budget allocation to the National Steering Committee
- » Government budget allocation to respective Ministries
- » Financial assistance from development partners including foreign countries and international organisation.



