



SANTO SUNSET ENVIRONMENT NETWORK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Western Santo Launches 2030 Plan for Sustainable Development

11 June 2021 - Santo Island, Vanuatu

Today marks a historic occasion for one of the most remote and underserved parts of Vanuatu as the two Area Councils of North West and West Coast Santo officially launched the Western Santo Sustainable Development Plan.

Vanuatu's Decentralization Policy mandates that development planning and implementation should take place as close to people's daily lives as possible, and not always at the national-level where contexts do not often match grassroots needs and realities. For this reason, Government is investing millions in strengthening its 70+ Area Councils by hiring qualified Area Administrators and Area Secretaries, building governance infrastructure, and expanding the capacities of Area Councils and Technical Advisory Committees.

Today's launch is a model of decentralization: Western Santo representatives from chiefs, women, churches, people living with disabilities, youth, environment rangers, and local businesses have spent the last months collecting real development goals and aspirations from more than 5000 people across the over 42 villages in the two Area Councils. With the help of the Santo Sunset Environment Network, Western Santo's only locally-based NGO working in all villages, the Area Administrators of the two Area Councils joined efforts to produce a comprehensive area-wide development plan, that prioritizes sustainability.

At the launching, Mr. Samuel Kenneth, Area Administrator of West Coast Santo and one of the lead authors of the Plan, said "this is a joint story of the people of two Area Councils on Western Santo, it is a tool that connects us together, and keeps us focused on where we want to go. The plan is a tool that will help Government and NGOs from outside the area to direct their development support to the most relevant places as efficiently as possible. In this Plan Western Santo priorities have each been individually aligned to the SANMA Provincial Strategic Development Plan Goals and Objectives, the National Sustainable Development Goals of the People's Plan (NSDP) and the Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). When an activity or objective has been completed, we can see exactly which SANMA, National and Global objective has also been achieved."

The Santo Mountain Chain Biodiversity Hotspot has been internationally recognized as critical habitat for endangered and endemic flora and fauna. This locally developed plan aims to see development that does not undermine Western Santo's environment, or its custom and culture, social systems, or traditional economies.

Allan Taman, Chairman of the Santo Sunset Environment Network explained that "after past negative experiences with logging, the people of Western Santo are now firmly committed to

ending any and all current and future commercial logging and mining activities. This plan makes it clear that we only want to see green businesses and sustainable development that builds our climate resilience and brings back valuable environmental services like food and water security for our people. As the official Environment Arm of the two Area Councils, SSEN stands by to provide guidance on how we can better manage our natural resources.”

All external partners, including government line agencies, NGOs, donors, MPs, councillors and others and invited to work through the now well-established Area Council structures, in support of the Decentralization Policy, the new Sustainable Development Plan and to support Western Santo’s highest priority needs in a coordinated and strategic way.

The Western Santo Sustainable Plan 2030 is now publicly available, a copy of which can be downloaded from the website of the Santo Sunset Environment Network www.SantoSunset.org.

Mr. Charlie Vula, Area Administrator of the North West Area Council expressed his view that “the objectives of the Western Santo Sustainable Development Plan now need to be captured in every institution of the community and in the government institutions working in the area. I want every activity undertaken in Western Santo to be an activity that we have highlighted in this Plan so that by 2030 we see sustainable development.”

A major goal of the plan is to avoid past bad practice wherein an external groups would bypass local government, and directly approach a community, without informing or seeking guidance and approval from the Area Council or its technical advisory groups. To see real sustainable development in remote places like Western Santo, all partners now need to work together. The plan calls for an annual partners meeting, wherein each agency working in Western Santo will report on its activities and how it has achieved the objectives of the Plan. By reporting against the Western Santo plan, partners are automatically also able to report against SANMA, NSDP and SDG achievements.

In total, the plan has 156 specific development objectives supporting the achievement of 15 Social Goals, 9 Environmental Goals and 14 Economic Goals to be achieved by 2030. The Plan includes a village-level matrix which indicated which type of activity should be undertaken in which village with the highest need. This matrix helps external stakeholders immediately identify where they can best use limited resources. The plan also includes population and household statistics so that development agencies can appropriately plan investments and in the event of an emergency or disaster, early responders can quickly mobilize sufficient aid.

For more information, contact the SantoSunsetEnvironmentNetwork@gmail.com or visit www.SantoSunset.org.



Western Santo Sustainable Development Plan 2030

A Joint Initiative
of the North West and West Coast Area Councils

"Western Santo Yes! 2030 Plan! La'o Lao!"



Final Version 8 June 2021



3. Economy Pillar

Western Santo aims to ensure we have a stable economy based on equitable, sustainable growth that creates jobs and income earning opportunities accessible to our rural people.

ECONOMY GOALS & POLICY OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 Export Local Products
- 3.2 Generate Revenue for the Area Councils
- 3.3 Build Capacity of Local Businesses
- 3.4 Deliver Safe and Clean Water
- 3.5 Implement Sanitation Technologies
- 3.6 Upgrade Provincial Infrastructure
- 3.7 Improve Air and Road Infrastructure
- 3.8 Improve Mobile Network Coverage
- 3.9 Expand Cooperative Services
- 3.10 Promote Eco-tourism Development
- 3.11 Strengthen Producers Associations
- 3.12 Deliver Rural Community Development
- 3.13 Create Local Jobs and Opportunities
- 3.14 Standardize Pricing of Goods and Services



2. Environment Pillar

Western Santo aims to ensure a pristine natural environment on land and at sea that continues to serve our food, cultural, economic and ecological needs, and enhance resilience and adaptive capacity to climate change and natural disasters.

ENVIRONMENT GOALS & POLICY OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 Enhance Food Security
- 2.2 Ensure Blue-Green Development
- 2.3 Expand Renewable Energy
- 2.4 Improve Waste Management
- 2.5 Enhance Environmental Governance
- 2.6 Strengthen Disaster Preparation and Response
- 2.7 Enable Climate Adaptation and Mitigation
- 2.8 Improve Natural Resource Management
- 2.9 Establish Conservation Areas



Western Santo Development Objectives

1. Society Pillar

Western Santo aims to maintain a vibrant cultural identity underpinning a peaceful, just and inclusive society that is supported by responsive and capable institutions, delivering quality services to all citizens

SOCIETY GOALS & POLICY OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 Strengthen Customary Governance
- 1.2 Clarify Customary Land Boundaries
- 1.3 Promote Traditional Knowledge
- 1.4 Preserve Local Language
- 1.5 Deliver Quality Education
- 1.6 Deliver Effective Health Services
- 1.7 Ensure Healthy Livelihoods
- 1.8 Enhance Women's Engagement
- 1.9 Reduce Gender Based Violence
- 1.10 Enhance Disability Engagement
- 1.11 Enhance Church Engagement
- 1.12 Enhance Youth Engagement
- 1.13 Promote Peace in Communities
- 1.14 Expand Civil Registration
- 1.15 Improve Effectiveness of Area Council Operations

