

**Title : The Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) continues its involvement in higher studies in Vanuatu.**

The first stone of the Pacific Antenna in Port-Vila was laid on November 27th 1999 in the presence of Mr. Michel Guilloux, then Rector of the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF). Since twenty years, no Rector of the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie visited Vanuatu.

On April 4th 2019, after a visit in New-Caledonia, Mr. Jean-Paul de Gaudemar, Rector of the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie landed in Vanuatu for a two days official visit, accompanied by Mrs. Ouidad Tebbaa, Asia-Pacific Regional Director. His purpose : remind the interest of the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie to promote and develop the higher education in Vanuatu.

The Rector and Regional Director had a meeting with the Prime Minister, His Excellency Charlot Salwai Tabimasma, with whom they discussed the importance of education in Vanuatu for which the government dedicates a quarter of its budget. The Agence universitaire de la Francophonie would like to keep being part of this effort, particularly for the promotion of higher education in Vanuatu.

Following this meeting, the Rector of the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie visited the Ministry of Education and Training where he could meet with the Minister of Education and Training, His Excellency Jean-Pierre Nirua, and his team. The project of the future National University of Vanuatu was at the heart of these fruitful exchanges which focused on bilingualism as a vector of national cohesion within the country.

On this occasion, a convention for hosting the Pacific Antenna of the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie in the premises of the future Université Nationale du Vanuatu was signed, emphasizing the relations between this Agency and the development of higher education in Vanuatu.

The Rector of the AUF and the Regional Director Asia-Pacific visited the premises of the future University of Vanuatu and met students presenting their courses and explaining their desire to study in the context of the creation of this future university. The Rector expressed a deep interest in the students' paths and their career opportunities. According to him, the current generation of Vanuatu has a dual responsibility, to succeed in their studies and also to bring loud and clear the values of their country and the promotion of its development.

Through its Rector, the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie is committed to fully participate in the development of the future University of Vanuatu with the strength of the network it represents. This commitment will be an occasion for the future university community of Vanuatu to forge links with francophone universities located in all parts of the world.