

NEWS: EU-Pacific business forum proposed at ACP BizClim high level conference

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PORT VILA, Vanuatu, 31 January 2012/ *BizClim/ Vanuatu Daily Post* – The Government of Vanuatu has echoed a key recommendation to hold a special forum between EU and Pacific representatives to discuss how to foster business and investment between the two regions. The proposal was made at a regional conference organised by the [ACP Business Climate Facility Program](#) ^[1] (BizClim) in the Vanuatu capital of Port Vila last week.

High level officials and business leaders from around the Pacific discussed the business environment in their respective countries, ongoing reforms and actions that need to be taken to make the Pacific region business and investor friendlier.

Vanuatu's Deputy Prime Minister Ham Lini Vanuaroroa officially opened the meeting, the first of its kind in the region, highlighting the importance of active trade and foreign direct investment in Pacific countries.

"Trade and investment is one of the key pillars of the ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement. Recognizing the private sector as an integral partner in development, the agreement complements the integrated European Union (EU) strategy for private sector development (PSD) offering a unified approach to delivering policies and program to support the private sector. Vanuatu continues to cherish and appreciate the good cooperation and relations with the ACP-EU Cooperation provided under the Cotonou Agreement", the Deputy Prime Minister and Trade Minister said.

From the talks, delegations stressed that the time to create a **Pacific-EU Business Forum** is now. Participants agreed that such Forum would not only be a useful platform for promoting trade and investment between Europe and the Pacific but also a driver of change in the Pacific itself.

Pacific-EU climate business forum in June

The Vanuatu Government has requested support from BizClim for the organisation of the Pacific-EU Business Forum as a side-event of the Council of Ministers' meeting. Vanuatu will be hosting the annual [ACP-EU Joint Ministerial Conference this June](#) ^[2].

BizClim's support would make it possible for private sector representatives and business leaders to discuss ways and means for creating an enabling environment for joint-ventures, business cooperation and trade between the two continents.

The Pacific-EU Forum is expected to bring together more than 100 participants from across Europe and the Pacific, enabling them to conduct a structured dialogue on relevant business environment issues. Efforts will be made to enlist the interest of European private sector organizations to actively take part in the Forum and seize the opportunity to cement relations with counterparts in the Pacific.

Last week's two-day conference concluded January 24. Present at the meeting was the Vanuatu Ambassador to Brussels Roy Mickey Joy as well as other key figures including Chief Executive Officer of the Pacific islands Private sector organization Mr. Ashif Khan, Mr. M. Cherif who is the Director of the BizClim Facility in Brussels, Mr. Keith Atkinson, Pacific Representative of the IMANI International Consortium who has been instrumental in organizing this important event, High Level delegates from various Pacific ACP States, and representatives of the new CDE Regional Office in the Pacific, Mr. Smith Tebu, Chief Executive Officer of the Vanuatu Investment and Promotion Authority and Government officials and representatives from the Vanuatu private sector and the NGOs.

(Photo: Deputy Prime Minister of Vanuatu, Ham Lini Vanuaroroa/ ETB)

- VDP/ BizClim

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