



Visite du vice-président du Conseil fédéral et chef  
du Département fédéral des affaires étrangères  
Didier Burkhalter à la République de Vanuatu, du  
26 au 27 octobre 2013.

Allocution prononcé à l'occasion du lancement du  
"Capacity Development Programme  
for Pacific Islands States"  
@ The University of the South Pacific (USP)

26 octobre 2013

**Seule la version orale fait foi**

**Embargo : 26.10.2013, 16h00  
(Local Time in Port Vila)**

Dear Minister,

Dear Dean of the Law Faculty,

Dear Representative of DiploFoundation,

Dear Students and alumni,

Ladies and gentlemen and all the people around the Pacific and beyond that are watching this speech over the Internet

I am delighted to be here with you at the University of the South Pacific. This is undoubtedly the biggest university of the world - stretching from the Solomon Islands to Vanuatu and Fiji!

Today represents a very special moment in the bilateral relations between Switzerland and the Pacific in general and Vanuatu in particular, since for the first time ever, a member of the Swiss Government is travelling to the other end of the world to visit this region and this beautiful country of Vanuatu.

This afternoon, I had a very constructive and friendly conversation with Prime Minister Kalosil. We agreed to intensify our bilateral relationship. Despite the 16'332 km that separate the capital of Switzerland, Berne, from Port Vila, we expressed our willingness to move closer to each other.

This makes perfect sense:

More and more important challenges, such as climate change, food and water security, global health are universal and threaten the well being of our peoples alike.

We need to pool our forces and tackle these issues jointly with much greater determination than in the past. Switzerland is willing and ready to play its part together with the governments and the people of the countries in the Pacific. To that end, we do have a number of instruments at our disposal, one of which of course is our international hub at Geneva.

Geneva, being the second center of the UN and home to many NGOs, think-tanks and other international actors has proven to be the place where solutions to many international problems are found and regulations are internationally adopted, be it on environmental issues, health, trade, migration, human rights or humanitarian action, just to name a few.

Every day issues are discussed in Geneva that may have an enormous impact on the population of your country as well as the whole south Pacific region.

Since it is obvious that such decisions should be taken in the presence of all nations, Switzerland stands willing and ready to support all those who do not have the means to maintain such a regular presence in Geneva, both by facilitating the establishment of a permanent mission and the building of the necessary capacity of their diplomats.

Concerning the establishment of the Mission, Switzerland offers

- A fully equipped office in the building of the permanent delegation of the Commonwealth close to the UN headquarters.
- Support in the search of a residence and in facilitating the settling-in of diplomats and their families.

The opening of a mission is an essential milestone in order to promote your interest on the world stage. But the cornerstone of international Geneva is the human factor that gives life and soul to multilateral diplomacy. It is therefore essential that the representative of your country and of other Pacific Island States have the right expertise, the right tools to insure that your voices are heard, that your priorities are respected and your interests promoted.

To achieve this crucial goal, I am very pleased to announce the launch of the Capacity Development Programme for Pacific Island States. This program supported by Switzerland and implemented by DiploFoundation aims to strengthen the participation of Pacific island states in multilateral diplomacy and especially in issues that are governed by Geneva-based institutions:

- Environment and climate change diplomacy
- Human rights diplomacy
- Trade diplomacy
- Health diplomacy
- Internet governance and telecommunication policy
- Humanitarian diplomacy

In June next year, a policy immersion phase will take place in Geneva for the 10 top participants from the online course – as a liberal, I consider that some competition is always useful to motivate people. This phase will include visits to international organizations in Geneva, meetings with officials working on small state issues, discussion of the diplomacy of small island states and an introduction to International Geneva.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, our relationship has entered a new phase. We are delighted that Vanuatu has decided to open a representation in Geneva which will be accredited to both International Geneva and Switzerland.

We can only encourage other pacific island countries to follow this path.

Thank you