

Fes Toktok

Chief Paul Tahi (Presiden blong Malvatumauri)

Tangkiu tumas. Yumi stap long rum ia wetem yumi Second Political Advasesa blong Ministri blong Intenol Afea, Daarekta blong Nasonal Kaljoral Kaonsel mo Kaljoral Senta blong Vanuatu. Jif Murmur mo ol man riseja mo ol woman riseja mo ol filwokas, Dipiuti Daarekta blong Kaljoral Senta mo Jif Exekutiuv Ofisa blong Malvatumauri, mi glad tumas blong stanap long fored blong yufala from se fulap long yufala i bin apruv blong mekem risej long Vanuatu tru long kaonsel blong mi an mebi yufala ino save, mi tu mi no bin save long ol feses blong yufala be tede mi save lukim fulap long yufala. Hemi impoten tu blong yumi save sidaon tugeta insaed long rum ia, yumi save kam tugeta mo yumi wok tugeta. Hemi impoten blong yumi save wok tugeta from we long kalja blong Vanuatu yumi mas wok tugeta, long kalja blong Vanuatu yumi mas kam tugeta, yumi mas yunaet bifo yumi save mekem ol narafala wok. Hemia hemi fasin blong ol man Vanuatu.

Tangkiu tumas tu long evriwan we i save mekem se yumi gat konfrens se i save stap long Vanuatu from we yufala olsem, foma spika hemi bin talem oltaem mifala i stap diskasem Vanuatu long ol narafala ples we hemi no Vanuatu. Be tede yumi save sidaon tugeta long ples ia mo wok tugeta blong yumi save diskasem Vanuatu long graon blong Vanuatu. Hemia hemi tumas. Tede yumi kam tugeta long ples ia blong openem taem blong yumi blong yumi save wok tugeta, yumi save tok tugeta insaed long rum ia. Wae hemi kolem yumi bakegen blong yumi save sidaon tugeta long ples ia? Long twenti sikis yias blong indipendens blong Vanuatu, since we Foma Hed of Stet blong Vanuatu hemi bin talem, mebi from we bigfala nambangga we hemi stap long Vanuatu i gat tumas toti long rus blong hem. Ol riseja yufala i bin wok plante blong karem bak samfala samting we hemi nid blong yumi brum. Yumi klinim ol rus blong Vanuatu blong yumi save lukluk long defren daareksen we mi ting se hemi wan foma spika blong Malvatumauri hemi bin toktok long ples ia. Wantaem hemi talem long ol filwokas se, blong lukim olsem wanem wan nasiko hemi flae hemi go sidaon long branj hemi no save lukluk i go oltaem olsem, taem we hemi go sidaon hemi mas lukluk bak bifo hemi save tanem raon blong i lukluk rod blong hem, i tekem narafala daareksen blong hem i go. Tede Vanuatu, nesen blong Vanuatu ia, nesen ia Vanuatu hemi nid blong lukluk bak bifo hemi save tekem narafala daareksen i go. Hemia hemi bilif blong mifala plante we mifala i stap wok wetem Malvatumauri mo Kaljoral Senta blong yumi save gat taem naoia blong yumi lukluk bak and ten yumi save lukluk fowod blong save tekem narafala daareksen blong go.

Samtaem tu plante wok we yufala i mekem fulap taem hemi bin stap olsem ino propeti blong mifala long Vanuatu. Hemia blong mekem se mifala i save strengtenem mifala blong mifala i save stanap long hem ten blong lukluk bak blong tekem narafala daereksen blong yumi. Bambae yumi faenem se long manis ia bambae yu lukim gavman blong Vanuatu bambae hemi save kam blong mekem lonjing Yia blong Kastom Ekonomi we bambae hemi save sapotem laef long Vanuatu mo samtaem tu hemi save sapotem stret gavman ia blong hemi save lukluk long narafala rod, tekem niu daereksen ia blong olsem wanem nao hemi save lidim pipol blong Vanuatu mo nesen ia Vanuatu. So mi ting se ol wok we yufala i bin mekem o yufala i stap mekem oli mo oli veri veri impoten wok blong yumi save lukluk olsem wanem nao bae, bae yumi ridaarektem ol muvment blong yumi, ol lukluk blong yumi, ol tingting blong yumi mo ol, ol wei blong ol lisning. Samtaem tu yumi mekem ol aksens folem wanem nao yufala i stap blong faenem bak. Mebi i gat fulap tok wisdom oli stap insaed long ol samting ia, be nao mifala i stat blong lusum. Mifala i bin lisin long toktok blong jif Murmur we hemi bin talem se hemi bin stap long klasrum ten hemi fosem pikinini blong i tok long Inglis, i fosem pikinini blong i tok long Franis so yumi nid blong luk bak. Yumi luk bak an ten yumi luk fowod blong tekem narafala daereksen blong nasiko i save flae taem we hemi flae hemi save go sidaon long narafala daereksen hemi save tekem mo. So wetem sora blong yufala evriwan we yumi stap mebi toktok hemi no longfala i naf hemi sot be mi wantem se yumi stap traem blong yufala i helpem mifala long kalja. Mo tu long ol jifs long Vanuatu mo pipol blong Vanuatu yumi nid blong lukluk long wanem wei naoia blong yumi save lukim Vanuatu blong yumi tekem Vanuatu i go long narafala jeneresen i kam. So wetem sot toktok olsem, mi olsem jeaman blong Kaljoral Kaonsel blong Vanuatu mo semtaem Presiden blong Malvatumauri, Woking Tugeta konfrens blong yufala ol riseja blong Vanuatu hemi nao ofisoli open.

Opening Speech

Paul Tahī (President of the Malvatumauri)

Thank you very much. We share this room with the Second Political Advisor to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Director of the National Cultural Council and Cultural Centre of Vanuatu. Chief Murrur and all the male researchers and the female researchers and *filwoka*, Deputy Director of the Cultural Centre, and the Chief Executive Officer of the Malvatumauri, I am very glad to be standing here before you all, especially since so many of you have been approved to undertake research in Vanuatu through my council, and yet perhaps you don't know me. I, too, have not known all of your faces, but today I can see many of you. It is also important that we can sit together in this room; that we can come together, and we can work together. It is important that we can work together because in the culture of Vanuatu we must work together in the culture of Vanuatu we must come together, and we must unite before we can go ahead and make any other work. This is the way of all people from Vanuatu.

Thank you to everyone who has made it possible for this conference to take place in Vanuatu because, it is like the former speaker said, that we discuss Vanuatu in many other places, but not in Vanuatu itself. But today we can sit in this place, and we can work together to discuss Vanuatu on the soil of Vanuatu. This is a big thing. Today we have come together in this place to open the time during which we can work together, and we can talk together in this room. But why have we been called to sit together in this room? In the twenty-six years of Vanuatu's independence, since the former Head of State of Vanuatu declared, maybe because the big banyan tree of Vanuatu has too much dirt in its roots. All you researchers have worked hard to return some things that need to be swept. We clean the roots of Vanuatu so that we can look for a different direction, just as a former speaker of the Malvatumauri once told us at this place. Once he told the fieldworkers that, to see how a *nasiko* flies, he goes and sits on a branch, but he can't look forward all of the time. When he sits he must look behind him before he can once again turn his head around to see his road, or to choose another direction. Today Vanuatu, this nation of Vanuatu, this nation must look back before it can take another direction and move on. This is the belief of many of us who work in the Malvatumauri and Cultural Centre, that we can have this time to look back, and then we can look forward and move on in a different direction.

It is sometimes also the case that much of the work that you have done has not remained the property of us in Vanuatu. But this is how we can strengthen ourselves so that we can stand up with it, and then look back to take another

direction. This month we will see the government of Vanuatu launch the Year of Kastom Economy, this can support life in Vanuatu, and at the same time it can support the proper government so that it can find another road, and take a new direction in how it leads the people of Vanuatu and nation of Vanuatu. So I think that all the work that you have made, or are making, is very, very important work for us to see how we can redirect all of our movements, all of our visions, all of our thoughts, and all of what we hear. Sometimes we act according to what you recover. Maybe there is a lot of wise talk contained in all of these things, but now we are starting to loose them. We've listened to Chief Murmur's speech, who told us how he was taught in a classroom in which they forced all the children to speak English, or forced the children to speak in French, and so now we need to look back. We can look back, and then we can look forward to take another direction so that the *nasiko* can fly, and can then sit down and take yet another direction still. Perhaps to your ears this speech is not long enough, but I want to say that we continue to try to help you to help us in our culture. And the Chiefs of Vanuatu, and the people of Vanuatu, we need to find a way to see Vanuatu, and take Vanuatu through to the coming generation. And so with this short speech, I as the Chairman of the Cultural Council of Vanuatu and also the President of the Malvatumauri, the Working Together conference of the researchers of Vanuatu is now officially open.