

Peace Corps pledge better working relations with provincial govts

By Esther Tinning

THE PEACE CORPS COUNTRY Director, Edwin Stice, has pledged closer working relations with the provincial government.

During a presentation at a recent provincial planners; workshop, Stice admitted that in the past his office had not been working closely with the provincial heads although it dispatches most of its volunteers to the rural communities.

He apologised to local provincial heads for overlooking this sector and said he will

ensure that his office established a closer working relationship with the provincial heads. This would include informing them, as a matter of courtesy, before sending out volunteers to the rural area in each of the respective communities.

Meanwhile, planners shared the view that it is also important that they know which volunteer is working in which areas in their respective provinces so that they could assist volunteers in any way possible while they are in their communities.

Stice told participants that the American government may not be in a position right now to fund any projects financially, however, they are in the very positive position of being able to provide human resources that could assist in any development within the community.

Information revealed during this time revealed that amongst all Peace Corps Programs in the world, Peace Corps Vanuatu has had the highest percentage of Volunteers extending for third, fourth or fifth years. In 2007

and 2008, between 15 and 20 volunteers are "extending volunteers".

"Many come to Vanuatu and love the place and its people and decide to stay a little longer," said Stice.

He reminisced about a former volunteer who walked around carrying the Vanuatu flag during President Obama's inaugural ceremony as an example of what he told participants.

The presentation has also heard that the Peace Corps Programme in Vanuatu is committed to help "Ni-

Vanuatu increase opportunities for education and training and to improve the quality of education for young people".

"Communities and institutions develop and implement strategies for the wise and sustainable use of their natural resources.

"Identify and promote opportunities for income generation by Ni-Vanuatu through an on -hands approach to training, production and the marketing of products and services.

"Orientated health serv-

ices to a promotional and preventive model so that the individuals families and communities are capable of making changes that results in better health.

"Strengthen national and local institutions that provide development services to Ni Vanuatu particularly those in the rural areas.

"And facilitate the delivery of other important development programs and resources to rural communities and institutions including the reduction of risk from natural disaster."