

# Air Vanuatu receives its first ATR 72-600

By Harrison Selmen

**THE NATIONAL FLAG CARRIER,** Air Vanuatu, has received the first ATR 72-600 of its fleet yesterday midday, in the capital Port Vila.

The aircraft is configured with 70 seats and is equipped with the most modern cabin interior and navigation aid tools.

Thanks to the ETOPS 120 minutes capabilities (Extended Range Twin-engine Operations) of the ATR aircraft family, the new ATR 72-600 will be able to operate not only within the domestic network of the airline but to the surrounding territories of Fiji, New Caledonia and the Solomon Islands.

ATR is the only turboprop manufacturer proposing ETOPS-120 certification on its aircraft, thus substantially increasing the operational versatility of the aircraft on inter-island operations.

Air Vanuatu Chief executive Officer (CEO), Joseph Laloyer, says the aircraft is a brand new ATR 72-600.

"We are very pleased to offer our passengers the newest standards of comfort of the ATR -600, for both our domestic network and within the region. As an airline, we will benefit from the ATR-600's enhanced performance, recognized fuel efficiency and lowest environmental impact in its category."

He said the new aircraft will help in facilitating the development and growth of the tourism industry in the country.

Chairman for the Air Vanuatu Board, John Lum, challenged the Vanuatu Government to look at improving the airports in the islands to cater for bigger aircrafts.

He said improving the standards of Airports will help Air Vanuatu to provide service delivery to the grassroots people.

Mr. Lum called on the Government to work with Air Vanuatu on the high cost of domestic airfares and cargo freight charges.

Prime Minister, Charlot Salwai, congratulated the Air

Vanuatu Management for the achievement of yet another milestone.

Mr. Salwai stands firm on his plan and wishes to see that ni-Vanuatu pilots and engineers are given the chance to fly and work in the country.

He said the government has invested so much into providing scholarships for aviation students to undertake studies overseas to become aviation pilots and thus they should be given all the opportunity to work to serve the nation.

Mr. Salwai urged the Air Vanuatu to always report to the government on any flight incident.

The new ATR72-600 began route from Toulouse (France) to Alexandria (Egypt), then Alain (UAE), India, Penang (Malaysia), Indonesia, Cairns (Australia) then to Port Vila.

Thanks to Captain Leszek Tedrzejak, Toba Hennirgsen, David Keys and ni-Vanuatu Engineer Glen Gibson Liunakwalao for taking the new ATR72- 600 home.