

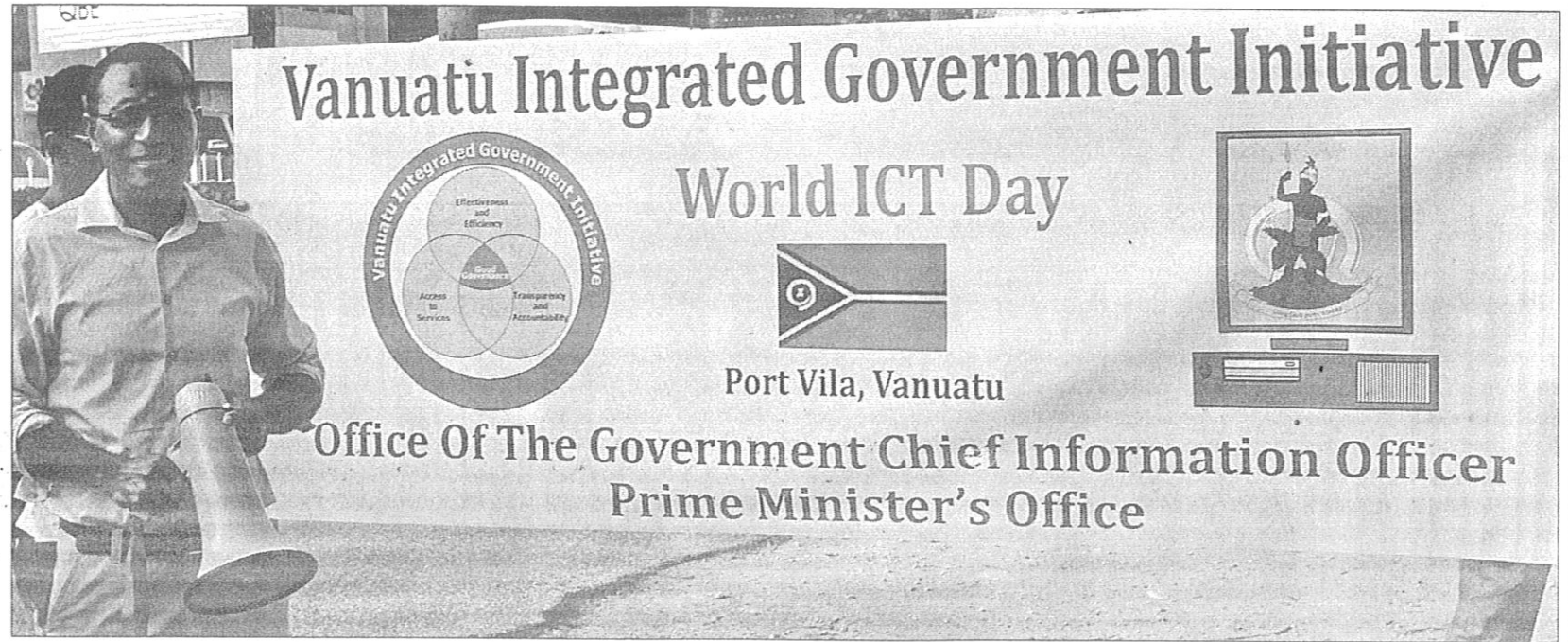
ICT Secretary General warns ni-Vanuatu against text and drive

Compiled by Glenda Shing
THE SECRETARY GENERAL of International Telecommunication Union, Dr Hamadoun Touré, has sent his message loud and clear to the people of Vanuatu to avoid texting while driving.

While the world celebrated Telecommunication and Information Society Day along with the theme "ICTs and improving road safety", Dr Touré's message was very precise when he noted that driver distraction and road-user behavior, such as "text messaging" and interfacing with in-vehicle navigation or communication systems while driving, are among the leading contributors to road traffic fatalities and injuries.

"My message is clear: Don't be distracted by technology when driving, whether calling from your mobile phone, or setting the navigation system. Sending a text message or tweeting while driving is extremely dangerous and should be avoided at all cost.

"While these technologies are becoming increasingly ubiquitous, we must ensure that we use them responsibly and with caution, especially while driving, piloting an aircraft or steering a ship



Fred Samuel, the Government Chief Information Officer, gets ready to start the National ICT Day Parade.

in order to avoid accidents and injury.

"Road traffic safety is a global concern for public health and injury prevention. Every year, 1.3 million people die in traffic related accidents and another 20-50 million people are injured mainly in developing countries around the world. As a result, Governments and individuals suffer an estimated USD 518 billion in global economic loss."

He specifically called upon the Government of Vanuatu

and industry partners to promote the use of safe interfaces and hands-free devices in vehicles and take action to eliminate technology-related distractions while driving.

"Vanuatu has over 5000 registered vehicles, including 4000 cars, and these numbers are steadily increasing. A lead agency may be established to coordinate road safety measures on roads, and legislation enacted to ensure safety devices such as anti-lock brakes, electronic stability control and hands-

free communications are installed in all new imports of vehicles."

Dr Touré emphasised on promoting national policies to encourage the use of ICT in enhancing road safety, we must also promote the development and use of intelligent transport systems.

"These measures will not only help prevent traffic accidents but also improve efficiencies in traffic management as a means of combating the effects of climate change," he said.

