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**PRESS STATEMENT**

**INTERNET BANKING FRAUD**

The Vanuatu Financial Intelligence Unit (VFIU) is in receipt of reports identifying an exponential increase of alleged fraudulent activity involving Internet Banking or Online Banking Customers and persons using social media namely the Facebook.

It is identified that scammers may have fraudulently obtained internet banking or online banking details from bank customers and have managed to transfer funds out of affected customers' accounts and into unsuspecting accomplices' bank accounts. The accomplices then withdrew the funds from their bank accounts and remitted the funds to the scammers in foreign countries.

It is suspected that the accomplices were recruited via the Facebook social media or by responding to fake emails. It is possible that the accomplices were proposed to enter certain business dealings with the scammers and these dealings would utilise the accomplices' bank accounts.

The VFIU wishes to inform the general public to take extra precaution and to be vigilant on their part about disclosing their Internet Banking or Online Banking details to other persons. It is possible that such disclosures may be made trust worthily to fake email notices depicting to be from their Banks.

Members of the Public must not respond to emails that they are unfamiliar with, must be vigilant with 'friend request' received via the Facebook social media and any request to use your bank accounts.

It is an offence under the Penal Code [CAP 135] for persons aiding, counselling or procuring the commission of obtaining money by deception.

The VFIU wishes to advise members of the Public who are victim of the fraudulent activities and those who have used their accounts to receive funds and remitted the funds to foreign beneficiaries to report their case to the VFIU or the Vanuatu Police Force.

Yours faithfully,

Floyd Ray Mera  
**Director**



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