

Melanesian Week

25th Anniversary of the Melanesian Spearhead Group

Celebrating Melanesian Solidarity
and Growth

18-20 March, USP Laucala Campus



PROGRAMME



MSG Secretariat
Secretariat du GFLM
Melanesian Spearhead Group | Le Groupe Fer de Lance Mélanésien



USP
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE
SOUTH PACIFIC

PROGRAMME INTRODUCTION

The Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) marks its silver jubilee this year. To mark the 25 years of Melanesian Solidarity and Growth, the University of the South Pacific together with the MSG, will host a three-day event at the USP Laucala Campus in Suva.

The celebrations will commence with an opening programme which will include a Fijian traditional welcome ceremony followed by an official welcome address by the Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra.

The Chief Guest to this occasion will be Right Honourable Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare, the former Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea.

There will be performances by the cultural groups from the USP Students Association representing the MSG member countries as well as a debate, screening of films and painting displays.

The major highlights of the second day will be the Melanesian Market day, traditional sport competitions, and the Pacific International Relations Forum where issues like the importance of MSG and what it does will be discussed.

The final day of celebration will culminate in a Traditional and Modern Melanesian fashion show.



Message from

CHAIRMAN OF THE MELANESIAN SPEARHEAD GROUP AND THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

COMMODORE JOSAIYA VOREQE BAINIMARAMA
CF (Mii), OSTJ, MSD, jssc, psc



Ni Sa Bula Vinaka.

As your Prime Minister and current Chairperson of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, it is my honour to welcome you all to this auspicious occasion of the Melanesian Week celebrations. Fiji has agreed to undertake this celebration this week of 18-22 March to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the founding of the MSG.

It's an important milestone for all Melanesians and a time to reflect on the many achievements of the MSG since it was established in 1988.

The vision of our founders was to promote unity and solidarity among all Melanesians and to give voice to our aspirations in regional and global forums.

We pay special tribute to our Chief Guest, Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare, who is not only a pioneer in the region but more so a founding father of the Melanesian Spearhead Group. We welcome Sir Michael and Lady Somare to Fiji on this auspicious occasion.

Finally, may I convey my gratitude and appreciation to the Vice Chancellor, staff and students of the University of the South Pacific who in collaboration with the Government of Fiji have done a tremendous task in organizing this event and will also participate in activities throughout the week.

Vinaka vakalevu and a Happy Melanesian Week to you all.

Welcome Message from

THE VICE-CHANCELLOR & PRESIDENT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC PROFESSOR RAJESH CHANDRA



It is my pleasure to give a welcome message on this momentous occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG).

MSG has grown into an organization that advocates very effectively along a wide range of issues, from politics to trade and investment and social, economic and sustainable development as well as plays an important role in regional governance. It represents most of the population of our region, and its largest economies. MSG has given a stronger voice to the 90% of Pacific islanders that it represents. It embodies the spirit of Pacific pride and honour, and is a positive, complementary organization to the PIFS framework, and contributes to maintaining the balance between metropolitan powers and smaller Pacific island nations.

MSG represents a large portion of USP's constituency. Three out of five MSG members are USP member countries. I am very grateful for the support that MSG countries have extended to USP. With its headquarters here in Fiji, a large campus in Vanuatu, and plans to enlarge and modernize its campus to support growing student numbers in the Solomon Islands, in addition to numerous smaller centres, USP is present throughout Melanesia and anticipates further expansion in order to meet the demands of the region.

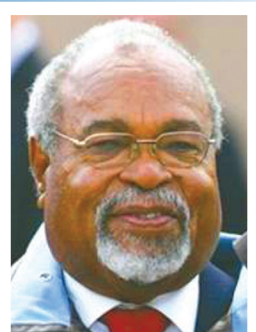
MSG countries have very youthful populations, resulting in rapidly growing demand for secondary and tertiary education places. We want those young people to choose USP for their studies, as we believe that a USP education is not only contextualized to the Pacific, it is high-quality and recognized internationally. Students from MSG countries accounted for 82% of USP's enrolment in 2012, making it extremely important that USP has an effective relationship with the MSG. Campuses and centres in MSG countries are amongst the largest at the University.

I am pleased that the University has a productive working relationship with its members, three of which are MSG countries. Many of our teaching and research staff work closely with representatives from MSG countries. In this way, USP is well-attuned to MSG needs and aspirations, and is working diligently to support development in areas such as teacher education, ICT, and Climate Change.

Once again, on behalf of the University, I would like to congratulate MSG on its silver jubilee and look forward to celebrating the 25 years of Melanesian Solidarity and Growth.

Bio-data of the Chief Guest

**RIGHT HONOURABLE GRAND CHIEF
SIR MICHAEL THOMAS SOMARE,**
GCL GCMG CH CF KStJ, MP



Sir Michael Thomas Somare (born 9 April 1936) was Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea from Independence in 1975 to 1980, from 1982 to 1985 and again from 2002 to 2012. He served his first two terms as a member of the Pangu Party then as leader of the National Alliance Party.

Born in Rabaul, Michael Somare grew up in his family village of Karau in the Murik Lakes district of East Sepik Province.

His earliest education was in a Japanese-run primary school at Karau during World War II where he learned to read, write and count in Japanese. From 1947 he attended Boram Primary School, then Dregerhafen Education Center and Sogeri High School, graduating with a Victorian Equivalent Leaving Certificate.

He trained as a teacher in 1956 at the Administrative College (Port Moresby) and taught at several primary and secondary schools between 1957 and 1962.

Transferring within the Public Service, Somare became a radio broadcaster based in Wewak in the East Sepik Province.

Somare is married to Lady Veronica Somare, and together they have five children- Betha, Sana, Arthur, Michael junior and Dulciana. Somare is head of both his own family and that of his wife, who initiated him into their chieftaincy system and gave him the title onkau two days after his initiation as sana or peacemaker (a title inherited from his father and grandfather and later conferred on him by his uncle Saub).

In recognition of his interest in his culture and in the preservation of its values and customs, Somare was appointed Chairman of the Board of trustees of the Papua and New Guinea Museum in 1969.

Somare has also had conferred on him, several distinguished titles including honorary doctorates, the first being from the University of the Philippines in 1976 and upon appointment as a member of Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council in 1977, was made a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St Michael and St George (GCMG) by the Queen in the Birthday Honour List of 1990.

Somare has also been a strong supporter of the Melanesian Spearhead Group and its objectives, particularly in the area of trade and cultural relations between the Melanesian states.

TUESDAY 19 MARCH
25th ANNIVERSARY OF MSG
Celebrating 25 years of Melanesian Solidarity and Growth
PROGRAMME

9.00am	MSG Displays in USP Library Foyer on all day Traditional carvers at work till 4.00pm, OCACPS Display of paintings by Fred Butafa, Solomon Islands Artist, OCACPS Gallery Display of arts and crafts in Bure
10.00am	Melanesian Market day till 3.00pm Live Entertainment Organised by Campus Life, USP
1.00pm	Film Hour, Multipurpose Theatre Pacific Heritage Hub (PHH), USP Ministry of Information National Archives of Fiji Organised by PHH and ITS, USP
4.00pm	Panel discussion on the Topic: “Labour mobility will support development in the MSG countries”, Multipurpose Theatre, USP <i>Chair:</i> Dr Esther Batiri Williams <i>Panelists:</i> Hon Jone Usumate, Fiji Minister of Labour, Government of Fiji Professor Biman Chand Prasad, Professor of Economics, USP Ms Ofa Swann, Trainer/Consultant, Ms Mere Falamaka, MSG
6.00pm	Pacific International Relations Forum, Multipurpose Theatre, USP Organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with the USP’s School of Government, Development and International Affairs. <i>Topic:</i> What does MSG means to you? What can MSG do for you? <i>Chair:</i> Jope Volavola <i>Panelists:</i> Mr Peter Forau, MSG Director General; Adi Meretui Ratanabuabua Pacific Heritage Hub Manager, USP; Ms Rose Wete, MSG; Mr Shaheen Ali, Permanent Secretary, Ministry for Investment and Trade, Fiji; Mr Kaliopate Tavola, MSG Eminent Persons Group; Students Representatives. <i>Closing Remarks:</i> His Excellency Solomon Islands High Commissioner to Fiji: Mr Patteson Oti
8.30pm	Reception Performance by USPSA Sigidrigi

WEDNESDAY 20TH MARCH
25th ANNIVERSARY OF MSG
Celebrating 25 years of Melanesian Solidarity and Growth
PROGRAMME

9.00am MSG Displays in USP Library Foyer on all day
Traditional carvers at work in OCACPS till 4.00pm
Display of Paintings By Fred Butafa, Solomon Islands Artist. OCACPS Gallery
National Archives of Fiji
Traditional Melanesian Food in Bure organized by USPSA and OCACPS

10.00am Melanesian Market Day till 3.00pm
Live entertainment
Organised by Campus Life

1.00pm Film Hour, Multipurpose Theatre
Pacific Heritage Hub
Ministry of Information, Fiji
Secretariat of the Pacific Community
Organised by PHH and ITS

6.30pm Performance by USPSA Cultural Groups, OCACPS

7.00pm Traditional and Modern Melanesian Fashion
OCACPS
Led by Hupfeld Hoeder, School of Tourism and Hotel Management, Faculty of
Business and Economics and the USPSA
Performance by USPSA Cultural Groups
Sigidrigi

8.30pm Closing Reception, OCACPS
Kabunivanua
Performance by USPSA

BRIEF ON MELANESIAN SPEARHEAD GROUP (MSG)



Its Origin

The MSG originated from a vision that was driven by a strong political desire for the decolonization and freedom of all Melanesian countries and territories still under colonial rule in the South Pacific. This vision also nurtured the development of stronger cultural, political, social and economic (trade), identity and link between the countries and people of Melanesia.

One of the strong pioneers of the MSG inception was Vanuatu's founding Prime Minister, (late) Father Walter Hadye Lini whose 'Vanua'aku Pati' had just led Vanuatu to political independence from a joint Franco-British colonial administration of the New Hebrides on 30th July 1980.

The concepts of **Melanesian Socialism** and **Melanesian Solidarity** were often used by late Prime Minister Walter Hadye Lini as a campaign to rally collective support from his Melanesian counterparts to the cause of the Kanaks of New Caledonia, the peoples of both East Timor and West-Papua in their continuous struggle for self-determination and independence.

"Vanuatu will not be free until the whole of Melanesia is free" was one of late Father Walter Lini's popular declarations in his campaigns to build Melanesian solidarity.

Historical Background

Initially, the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) came into being as a result of an informal meeting of Heads of Government of Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and a Representative of the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) held in Goroka, Papua New Guinea (PNG) on 17 July 1986. ***The leaders agreed at their inaugural meeting that it was important to have common positions and solidarity in spearheading regional issues that are of common interest, including the FLNKS cause for political independence in New Caledonia.***

From humble beginnings with the signing of a six (6) point "Agreed Principles of Cooperation Among the Independent States in Melanesian" on 14 March 1988 which was signed in Port Vila, Vanuatu by the former Prime Ministers; namely Paias Wingti - PNG, Ezekiel Alebua - Solomon Islands, and Walter Lini - Vanuatu, the MSG has developed into a regional block with its own Trade Agreement and Constitution or Agreement Establishing the MSG (signed on 23 March 2007) and its own headquarter building opened at the 17th Leaders Summit on 30 May, 2008.

The MSG currently consists of five members namely, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and the Front de Liberation Nationale Kanak Socialiste (FLNKS), the pro-independence movement in New Caledonia.

SIGNIFICANT DATES/EVENTS

- 1986 Decision of MSG leaders in Goroka - “agreed ***that it was important to have common positions and solidarity in spearheading regional issues that are of common interest, including the FLNKS cause for political independence in New Caledonia.***”
- 1988 – formal establishment of MSG with the signing in Port Vila on 14 March 1988 of the six “Agreed Principles of Co-operation” amongst MSG countries. The six principles were:
 - a) Promotion of Melanesian Heritage with its Unique Cultures, Traditions, Customs and Values;
 - b) Friendly relations with each other and other international organizations like the South Pacific Forum (now the Pacific Islands Forum) and the United Nations;
 - c) Need for “networking” and Free Interaction amongst Melanesian States;
 - d) Respect for each other’s Sovereignty;
 - e) Promotion of Economic and Technical Cooperation; and
 - f) Maintain Peace and Harmony in the Region
- 1993 – MSG Trade Agreement (MSGTA) was established based on trade in a few products (beef, coffee, tuna, tea) – positive list.
- 1996 – Fiji joined the MSG as a member
- 2005 – MSGTA was revised and adopted a negative list approach. Members committed to reduce tariffs over 8 years to 2013. In 2013 three members have achieved this and are trading duty free – Fiji, PNG and Vanuatu. Solomon Islands will phase out MSG tariffs by 2017.
- 2007 – Signing of the MSG Constitution or the Agreement Establishing the MSG on 23 March 2007 in Port Vila
- 2008 – opening of the permanent Secretariat headquarters of the MSG in Port Vila on 30 May 2008. It is an inter-governmental organization registered with the United Nations.
- 2010 – MSG Festival of Arts and Culture in New Caledonia
- 2011 – MSG Leaders endorsed:
 - * A vision for closer economic relations to deepen MSG integration in the long term based on either a common market or customs union but with more detailed work to be undertaken on the two concepts

- * MSG Treaty on Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture
- 2012 – MSG Leaders’ Summit in March 2012 endorsed:
 - * the redrafting of the MSGTA legal text and architecture to provide for a broader agreement towards deepening future MSG integration
 - * MSG Skills Movement Scheme for the movement of skilled MSG nationals to fill skills shortages in MSG countries;
 - * MSG Declaration on Environment and Climate Change
- 2013 - 25th anniversary of MSG celebrations – launched in Port Vila in January and celebrated in MSG capitals culminating in main celebrations at the Leaders’ Summit in June in New Caledonia

MSG SECRETARIAT

- The Secretariat now has 21 staff including 11 professional staff and 10 support and locally engaged staff. Secretariat work programme is based on mandates given by Members at the Leaders’ Summit.
- Work of the Secretariat has expanded over time and currently covers political, trade, private sector development, economic, sustainable development, social and governance issues. On the political front, the cause for independence of the Kanaks in New Caledonia is the major pursuit.
- The Secretariat is funded primarily from members’ financial contributions.

MSG INSTITUTIONS AND DECISION-MAKING

- MSG is headed by MSG Leaders who meet every two years at the Leaders’ Summit. Special Summits can be called at any time.
- MSG Foreign Ministers (FMM) provide advice to Leaders
- Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) provide advice to FMM
- Trade and Economic Officials Meeting provide advice to (SOM)
- Ministerial and Technical Officials committees can be established when required eg the Environment and Climate Change Ministers’ Meeting was established in 2012 to address environment and climate change issues affecting members. Other technical committees and subcommittees include the Fisheries Technical Advisory Committee, and Subcommittees on Legal and Institutional Issues, Customs and Quarantine ,and Trade in Services.

(MSG Secretariat)



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