

# 05 Jul 2012 - MSG Ministers of Culture sign Memorandum of Understanding on Cultural Cooperation within MSG

WRITTEN BY ADMINISTRATOR | 05 JULY 2012



The MSG Ministers for Culture signed today in Honiara, the Capital of the 11th Festival of Pacific Arts for the next two weeks, the MOU on Cultural Cooperation that will provide the framework for cultural exchanges and technical assistance among the MSG members. In signing the Memorandum, Minister Filipe Bole, Fiji's Minister for Education, National Heritage, Arts and Culture, and Chair of the MSG Ministers of Arts and Culture Meeting (MCAM) stated that this MOU will now formalise the already long existing and ongoing cultural exchanges and cooperation among the Melanesian countries.

Cultural cooperation is an integral part of the solidarity networks in Melanesia, through centuries of travelling and exchanges of ceremonial gifts including assistance in community works such as house building and the preparation of major cultural and customary ceremonies that link the peoples of Melanesia and follow generations of bloodlines, family connections and/or traditional forms of trade among our peoples of Melanesia and other islands of the Pacific.

Minister Bole stated that the Memorandum recognises "the importance of cultural cooperation and capacity building within MSG countries and among Members to protect, promote and preserve Melanesian arts, customs, cultures and traditions to enhance cultural development in the region". The MOU will be guided by principles of collaboration such as country leadership where cooperation is based on the needs expressed individually by Members, genuine partnership and mutual recognition.

To help enhance cultural cooperation, Members will be implementing strategies of cooperation to integrate cultural cooperation into their National Cultural Policy, and to identify specific activities to sustain cultural cooperation within MSG. These areas of collaboration will include but not limited to:

- i. Cultural exchange programs in capacity building and training and research among MSG Members;
- ii. National Festivals exchange programs;
- iii. Youth Cultural Ambassadors programs;
- iv. **Volunteer scheme** or **Civil Service scheme**;
- v. Arts and Culture students exchange programs;
- vi. "Artists in Residence" Program (including musicians);

- vii. Museum and Cultural Centre with libraries and archives exchange programs (photo exhibitions, art and crafts, roving exhibition);
- viii. Live-in Cultural Programs (at community grass-roots level);
- ix. Cooperation and assistance in cultural infrastructure development; and
- x. Cooperation and promotion of cultural goods.

In his concluding remarks, the Chair of MCAM congratulated his fellow Ministers for the show of solidarity to the Government and People of the Solomon Islands by providing financial and technical assistance and in-kind contribution to ensure a successful hosting of the Pacific Arts Festival. Fiji provided four buses for delegates commuting between festival venues, Vanuatu provided in-cash financial contribution and the FLNKS of New Caledonia provided lighting and sound equipment and technicians.

Minister Bole highlighted that such generous contribution demonstrated that cultural cooperation is nothing new to Melanesia. The MOU will now provide a framework to these ongoing exchanges to enhance solidarity among MSG Members and reinforce cultural cooperation as one of the cornerstones and foundation for the development of culture in the MSG region.