

MSG Leaders endorse the establishment of the MSG Humanitarian and Emergency Response Co-ordination Centre (HERCC)

The Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) has achieved another milestone when the Leaders of the MSG endorsed on 20th June 2013 the establishment of the Humanitarian and Emergency Response Co-ordination Centre (HERCC) within the Department of Peacekeeping Operation (DPKO) at the MSG Secretariat based in Port Vila, Vanuatu.

The HERCC concept initially proposed as the Rapid Response Force in 2003 at the Gizo Summit then as the Humanitarian and Emergency Rapid Response Force at the Port Vila Summit in 2008 by the membership, was further revised in the ensuing years and presented to Leaders at this Summit as the HERCC.

The concept will focus on natural disasters, man-made disasters like oil spills, civil aviation or maritime accidents and complex emergencies. At a later stage a Regional Response Strategy will be developed that will create the required policy framework for the HERCC.

Leaders also agreed that an Action Plan with quantifiable deliverables be developed as to how HERCC will be progressed including the development of an MOU by the MSG Sub-Committee on Legal & Institutional Issues (SCLII) specifying amongst other standby arrangement between MSG members.

After a long time of discussing the concept, the Leaders were grateful to the Senior Officials for finalizing the concept. The establishment of the HERCC will now serve as the central co-ordination centre for all humanitarian and emergency responses to natural and man-made disasters in the region.

Authorised by the Chairman

*Noumea, New Caledonia
19 June 2013*