



SOM Chair opens Special Senior Officials Meeting on key MSG issues before Leaders' Summit

The Chairman of the Senior Officials Meeting and Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Fiji, Mr. Amena Yauvoli officially opened the Special Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) at the MSG Secretariat in Port Vila, Vanuatu.

Mr. Yauvoli officially welcomed senior officials from the FLNKS, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Fiji to the two-day meeting from 16 to 17 May 2013.

In his opening remarks Mr Yauvoli acknowledged the presence of the representative of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, H.E Peter Eafere, the Director General of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade of the Republic of Vanuatu, Mr Johnny Koanapo, the Solomon Islands Government, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade, Mrs Joy Kere Kiriau, the representatives of the FLNKS, Mr Michael Forrest and Mr Charles Wea to the Special SOM meeting.

The SOM Chair said this special SOM is very important in that it is held on the eve of the Pre-Summit Senior Officials meeting that is being scheduled to be held in New Caledonia from 13 to 14 June 2013. "This Special SOM is to initiate discussion on a number of key issues for formal consideration in June," said Mr. Yauvoli. He added that this includes the Agreement Establishing the MSG as contained in the Subcommittee on Legal and Institutional Issues (SCLII) Report, the Chairing Arrangements for Trade-related meetings, the application by West Papua for Membership, the participation of observers, and MoUs with non-state organizations are among other issues included in the agenda. Mr Yauvoli emphasized that having a prior discussion ahead of the Summit will allow members to have sufficient time to consult on clear positions with Ministers and Leaders before the Noumea Leaders' Summit.

The Senior Officials Meeting Chair also in his remarks pointed out to senior officials that recently the MSG Chair appointed an MSG EPG led by Mr Kaliopate Tavola from Fiji to consult and develop a vision for the MSG. Mr Yauvoli reported that the EPG had commenced their work and had completed consultations in Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Fiji. He confirmed that the EPG will be travelling to Honiara and Port Moresby for consultations from 20 May 2013. He further reported that the consultations have been successful and the Special Senior Officials Meeting will receive a progressive report on the main issues that have emanated from their consultations so far. He confirmed that the EPG will present a complete report the SOM in June in Noumea.

Mr Yauvoli during the official opening also took the opportunity to thank his predecessor, Ms Saipora Mataikabara for her leadership in ensuring engaged discussions and good outcomes in her capacity as SOM Chair since 2011.

The Special Senior Officials Meeting held this week will be presented to the Senior Officials

Meeting in New Caledonia in June.

Authorized by SOM Chair

MSG Secretariat
16 May 2013
Port Vila, Vanuatu