



NEW US AMBASSADOR TO PNG, SOLOMON ISLANDS AND VANUATU PAYS COURTESY VISIT TO MSG HEADQUARTERS IN VANUATU

On behalf of the Director General of the MSG Secretariat, the Acting Director General, Mr Peni Sikivou and the staff of the Melanesian Spearhead Group Secretariat in Port Vila, Republic of Vanuatu, congratulated the new Ambassador of the US Embassy for Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, His Excellency Ambassador Walter E North during his first courtesy visit to the MSG headquarters in Port Vila Thursday.

Acting DG, Mr Sikivou and staff of the Secretariat welcomed Ambassador North who was accompanied by his Political Officer, Mr Regis Prevot.

During the visit, the Acting Director General, a Mr Sikivou thanked the Ambassador for taking the time to visit the Secretariat during his first Official visit to Vanuatu and extended the Secretariat's appreciation in also providing the Management the opportunity to present some of its core work programs concerning key development issues being carried out by the Trade &

Economic Development, Governance, and Sustainable Development and Corporate Services Divisions of the Secretariat.

Mr Sikivou also informed Ambassador North on some of the key decisions from the recent MSG Leader' Summit held in New Caledonia in June 2013 including the adoption of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) Report and the Noumea Declaration and endorsement of the MSG Observer Mission to the Fiji elections in 2014; the review of the MSG Trade Agreement; the Department for Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO) and Humanitarian and Emergency Response Coordination Centre (HERCC) and some new programmes for the organization including Women in Leadership and Transshipment of Nuclear Waste in the Region. The Management of the Secretariat also spoke on the Declaration on Environment and Climate Change and moves by the MSG towards deepening economic integration amongst the membership.

The Acting DG also thanked the US Embassy for recent meetings held between the US Embassy and the Secretariat in Port Moresby in July this year and also for facilitating the participation of the Secretariat at the Asia Pacific Centre for Security Studies (APCSS) in Honolulu. The Acting Director General said the Secretariat looks forward to continued support for future programmes offered by APCSS and the US Government towards capacity building of staff at the Secretariat.

Ambassador North explained to Mr Sikivou and the staff that his visit to the Secretariat is a first step to learning more about the MSG organization and the work that the Secretariat is carrying out on behalf of its membership.

His Excellency Ambassador North informed staff that the US Government under the Barak Obama administration is aware of the huge development challenges evident in the Pacific and informed that the US Government is committed to strengthening its relations with countries of this region in particularly focusing on issues of common concern such as climate change, integrated trade relations, dealing with infectious diseases and women's empowerment to name a few. Mr Sikivou thanked the Ambassador for visiting the Secretariat and wished him well during his visit as well as during his term as Ambassador to Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

Authorized by Acting Director General

MSG Secretariat
Port Vila
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