



MSG ATTENDS APEC MINISTERIAL MEETING (AMM) IN BALI, INDONESIA, 4-5 OCTOBER 2013

As the MSG Celebrates 25years of its existence, the administrative arm of the Organization, the MSG Secretariat based in Port Vila, Vanuatu was privileged to be invited as a Guest to the recent APEC Ministerial Meeting (AMM) in Bali, Indonesia from 4-5 October 2013.

The Secretariat was represented by Ms Barbara Age, Director of the Governance and

Sustainable Development Division.

On returning from the AMM, Ms Age who attended on behalf of the Director General, said that the MSG region accounting for 9 million people, has the largest land mass in the Pacific, is endowed with more than 90% of the natural resources and bio-diversity and is therefore poised to be the region of opportunity, prosperity, and sustained economic growth.

Ms Age stated that the MSG's vision for the next 25 years will focus on Political Stability, Economic Prosperity, Social Equality and Inclusivity and Developing sustainability. Economic co-operation and integration will remain at the forefront of these objectives. It is also envisaged that sound economic and structural reforms should shape the region to better integrate into the global economy. With improved economies of scale – greater productivity and increased demand, there is opportunity for economic expansion and development of supporting infrastructures to generate self-reliance.

In support of the Secretariat's attendance at the AMM, Director General Forau stated that the MSG Leaders at their 19th Summit in June in New Caledonia this year, considered and adopted a report by the MSG Eminent Persons Group (EPG) which includes a Strategy to achieve the broader objective of the organization for the next 25 years through Enhanced MSG Sub-Regionalism (EMSGSR).

He added that, in this respect, the most successful trade agreement in the Pacific, the MSG Trade Agreement which was originally signed in 1993 to spearhead economic integration in our region then revised in 2005 from a positive list to a negative list, and now being re-negotiated, represents a significant shift from the current goods-only agreement to incorporate services and labour mobility and investment. This will open the door for greater sub-regional integration which has already begun in other areas such as the Skills Movement Scheme (SMS) amongst members of the MSG. The SMS sets the framework for the movement of skilled MSG nationals to fill skills shortages in MSG member countries.

In this regard, progression towards greater economic integration by the MSG economies is consistent with regional initiatives spearheaded by APEC as it (APEC) deepens its efforts towards attaining the Bogor Goals, promoting connectivity, and achieving sustainable growth with equity.

The steps taken by the MSG to promote stronger and deeper regional economic integration and the work done in trade liberalization and advancing Free Trade, facilitation of trade in services and investment, promotion of Green Growth will naturally lead to customs union and common market and the MSG believes its participation at the APEC Ministerial Meeting is an acknowledgement of the developments taking place in our region, added Ms Age.

The Secretariat expressed its appreciation to the host, the Government of Indonesia for the kind invitation extended to the Secretariat to attend this important regional forum of the 21 largest economies in the region of which a member of the MSG, Papua New Guinea is a member and will host APEC in 2018.

Authorized by the Director General

MSG Secretariat
14 October 2013
Port Vila, Vanuatu