



MSG Security Experts consider Regional Security Issues

The Co-chair of the 11th Sub-Committee on Security Meeting, Permanent Secretary (PS) of the Ministry of Defence, National Security and Immigration of the Republic of Fiji, Mr Osea Cawaru called on member countries from the Melanesian Spearhead Group to work together in advocating the importance of preparedness at both the national and community level throughout Melanesia as a way of reducing the vulnerability of the people of Melanesia who have now become increasingly prone to natural disasters.

Mr Cawaru made the remarks in his opening statement while welcoming members from Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Fiji to the 11th Sub-Committee on Security meeting that was concluded today at the MSG Secretariat in Port Vila, Vanuatu.

Also speaking on behalf of his Co-Chair, Philip Ajapuhnya of the FLNKS, PS Cawaru took the opportunity to thank all members for the undivided support towards the MSG Humanitarian and Emergency Response Co-ordination Centre (HERCC) Concept that has been endorsed by the MSG Leaders and now in its' second phase of establishing the Center. He said members discussed some best practices to address preparedness that are been identified by the United Nations for the Office of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in other regions. Mr Cawaru said this is a very important task for the members of the Sub-Committee on Security as the discussions will provide more insight on some of the lessons from other regions to help members provide a way forward to developing a regional response strategy towards the establishment of the MSG HERCC. Mr Cawaru also mentioned that the initiative to set up this Center is very timely for the region especially in light of many challenges currently being faced by the region in particular the continuous natural disasters including the recent flood disaster in Honiara. The participants observed a minute's silence in remembrance of the lives lost during the Honiara flooding.

The Co-Chair of the SCS Meeting also took the time to acknowledge the work done under the former chairmanship of Mr Jale Fotofili of Fiji during 2011 and 2013 as under Mr Fotofili's chairmanship, the MSG was able to obtain the support of the Leaders in recognizing the work done to date by the Melanesian Volcano Network (MVN) especially in sharing vulcanological resources on a sub-regional basis. The Chair also acknowledged the administrative support extended to MVN by SOPAC.

Mr Cawaru also took the time to remind members of successful consultations over the Negotiations for Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). He announced that with the negotiations led by PNG and Fiji, the grouping was able to successfully obtain the support of relevant parties to include small arms and ammunition as part of the definition of conventional weapons in the Treaty. "This is a historic achievement for our region," said Mr Cawaru. Mr Cawaru was also grateful for full participation by members from members security sectors who reported on their monitoring and surveillance arrangements.

The Co-Chair of the SCS meeting also thanked members for considering to discuss during the meeting the issue of transshipment of Nuclear Waste in the region and also the proposal to establish an MSG Security and Defence Ministers Meeting.

The outcomes of the SCS will be presented to the next MSG Senior Officials Meeting (SOM).

Authorized by the Co-Chair of the SCS Meeting

**MSG Secretariat
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