

9th SUB-COMMITTEE ON LEGAL & INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES (SCLII)

The Chair of the 9th Sub-Committee on Legal and Institutional Issues (SCLII) Mr Jean Greugnet of the Front De Liberation Nationale Kanak et Socialiste (FLNKS) of New Caledonia and Co-Chair of the SCLII, Director Legal and Treaties of the Department of Foreign Affairs of Papua New Guinea, Mr Stanley Sam together officially opened the SCLII meeting in Honiara, Solomon Islands 19 February 2014.

Mr Greugnet welcomed delegates from Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and the MSG Secretariat to the two-day meeting.

In his opening remarks, Mr Greugnet on behalf of his co-chair took the opportunity to acknowledge the work done by their predecessor, the former Chair of the SCLII, Mr Esala Nayasi, Director Political and Treaties Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Fiji.

The SCLII Chairs reminded participants that the Sub-Committee on Legal and Institutional Issues (SCLII) is one of the important constituent bodies of the Melanesian Spearhead Group that plays a pivotal role in strengthening cooperation within the MSG membership.

He said in the past two years the sub-committee on legal and institutional issues (SCLII) gained much recognition for initiatives that were endorsed by MSG Leaders during the 19th Leaders' Summit held in Noumea New Caledonia in 2013. He congratulated the former SCLII Chair and members for their hard work in ensuring that the SCLII remained vibrant and effective.

Mr Greugnet said the 9th SCLII currently being conducted in Honiara this week is an important meeting as members meet to discuss a number of draft legal texts that will provide the mechanisms for closer cooperation between members of the MSG. He said participants will also be given the opportunity to discuss institutional issues such as the process for the recruitment of the Director General and the review of the MSG Secretariat Staff Regulations as agreed by the Foreign Ministers' Meeting at the Governing Body Meeting recently held at the MSG Secretariat in December 2013 in Port Vila, Republic of Vanuatu.

The SCLII Chairs said they were also pleased to inform members of the significant progress been made in promoting legal cooperation between the MSG members with the signing of the Treaty on Reciprocal Enforcement of Foreign Judgments and Treaty on Custody and Maintenance of Children by our Leaders in June 2013 in Noumea, Caledonia. “These are milestone achievements for us and we urge everyone to combine our efforts in finalizing the other outstanding Agreements and Treaties for consideration by our Governing Bodies at their next meeting”, said Mr Greugnet.

Mr Greugnet also took this opportunity to inform members that MSG leaders have signed the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on areas of cooperation between the MSG Police Forces to ensure the capacity and ability to effectively respond to law and order situations in the MSG region.

The SCLII Chairs thanked the participants for demonstrating regional unity and solidarity in their attendance to this very important meeting and thanked the Government of Solomon Islands for hosting the 9th SCLII meeting in Honiara.