

Students and public learn more of MSG on MSG Day

Secondary School students around Port Vila and members of the public were able to visit for the first time the Melanesian Spearhead Group Secretariat in Port Vila, Republic of Vanuatu at an open day organized by the Secretariat to mark the celebration of 26 years of existence of the grouping during inaugural MSG Day on Friday 14 March 2014.

The Melanesian Spearhead Group Secretariat in Port Vila in partnership with the Government of the Republic of Vanuatu presented a two part program in hosting an official ceremony in the morning to remember the founding fathers, leaders and senior officials who together were able to realize the Agreement of the Principles of Cooperation between Independent States of Melanesia that was historically signed in Vanuatu on 14th March 1988 and the second program was hosted by the Secretariat at MSG headquarters at Independence Garden. The Guest of Honor for the official ceremony was the Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu, Hon. Moana Carcasses Katokai Kalosil, and the distinguished guests to the special event included the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade, Hon. Edward Nipake Natapei, Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Ham Lini Vanuaroroa, Minister of Finance and Economic Management, Hon. Maki Simelum, Minister of Lands, Hon. Ralph Regenvanu and the Lord Mayor of Port Vila Municipality, Patrick Sumptoh. Members of the Diplomatic Corps in Vanuatu also attended the special occasion.

Among the different activities of the day, students who visited the Secretariat were able to learn about the different products traded among member countries under the MSG Trade Agreement and also get first hand tour of the work of the Secretariat.

Another highlight of the MSG Day was the grand performance by the USP students from the Law Internship Program in the debate topic: "MSG is the benchmark to achieve effective regional integration for a healthy and wealthy Pacific of tomorrow."

The Director General of the MSG Secretariat, Mr Peter Forau said the Secretariat was overwhelmed by the positive feedback by USP and secondary schools and the public in attending the open day activities. He reaffirmed that that MSG Day has been endorsed by Leaders' Summit in 2013 to be an official day to be observed by member countries in their respective capitals.

Mr Forau said the Secretariat extends its deepest gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Vanuatu who co-hosted this year's activities and looks forward to more interaction with young people and the public in next year's event on 14 March 2015.

The MSG Secretariat extends its well wishes for a prosperous working year 2014 to all respective Governments and citizens of the MSG family.