



MSG Secretariat **Secretariat du GFLM**

Melanesian Spearhead Group | Le Groupe Fer de Lance Mélanésien

Melanesian Spearhead Group Helps Micronesian States on Endeavour towards Closer Economic Integration

At the request of the Secretariat of the Micronesian Leaders' Summit, the MSG Secretariat had the pleasure to assist the Micronesian Trade Committee (MTC) Interim Secretariat on the establishment of the Micronesian Trade Center. The working group meeting of the MTC was held from 30 June to 1 July in Koror, Republic of Palau. The meeting was attended by the Micronesian States of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI). At that meeting, the MTC working group discussed and considered options on how they can move forward with their common desire to establish a Micronesian Community to further strengthen their trade and economic relationship similar to what the MSG has built as a group. With the assistance of the MSG Secretariat, the working group was able to review the draft MTC treaty for the MTC Ministers consideration.

The media had already reported that the Micronesian Leaders have already taken a decision on this and work is currently underway to prepare the Micronesian States for this. In a letter of acknowledgement dated 12 September 2014, the MTC Interim Secretariat, Mr. Marion Henry from the FSM Department of Resources and Development conveyed their appreciation for the MSG Secretariat's contribution to the development of the Treaty establishing the Micronesian Trade and Economic Community.

The Treaty as reported by the media was successfully concluded and signed on September 3, 2014 in Apia, Samoa at the margins of the 3rd International Conference on Small Island Developing States. The MTC Interim Secretariat stressed in its letter: "We value the partnership and collaboration with the MSG Secretariat and look forward to strengthening this partnership as we move towards the implementation of this landmark Treaty, which together with MSG

initiatives will contribute towards enhancing integration of the Pacific region as envisaged under the New Framework for Pacific Regionalism”

The MSG Secretariat was pleased and humbled to have been invited to be part of the MTC at their June meeting. The MSG Secretariat’s Program Manager for Trade and Investment, Mr John Licht provided technical support and advised on the discussions that were held at the Senior Officials before the Leaders met. “I was fortunate to share the MSG experience with our MSG Trade Agreement and the Agreement Establishing the MSG with our colleagues from Micronesia at their Micronesian Trade Committee (MTC) meeting which was held in Palau which further clarified some of the key pillars of establishing a sub-regional Trade Agreement and further enabled them with a clear picture on what exactly would be most suitable for them.”

Mr Peter Forau, the Director General, said the MSG is proud to have provided the assistance saying that this is how we in the Pacific should be working, helping out where we can in a practical manner and sharing lessons learnt so that others can be able to move forward gainfully without making avoidable errors that can be costly and regressive. “I would like to thank all the members of the Micronesian Summit for giving us an opportunity to help and we at the MSG wish to reaffirm the Micronesian Trade Committee and its Leaders of MSG’s full support to continue assist and collaborate in areas of common interest for the benefit of all its people” – this was reiterated by a humbled DG Forau.

The MSG members are also negotiating a third version of their long serving Trade Agreement which is expected to be concluded and considered by their Trade Ministers by end of 2015.