

Melanesian Spearhead Group Secretariat participation at the UN 3rd International SIDS Conference, Apia, Samoa

The Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Secretariat supporting the Vanuatu government delegation recently participated at the UN 3rd International Conference on SIDS in Samoa that was held from 1-4 September 2014. In supporting the Secretariat's participation at this important event, the Director General of the MSG Secretariat Mr. Peter Forau said that the MSG sub-region is a good example in the Pacific SIDS region of "*genuine and enduring partnership*" for sustainable development, as was the theme of the conference.

He added that the MSG's Environment and Climate Change (ECC) Declaration endorsed by Leaders in January 2012 provides a comprehensive approach to addressing fundamental issues in the region, including terrestrial and marine biodiversity, blue carbon, and green growth which are issues that the SIDS discussions covered on Environment, Climate Change, Sustainable Energy and Green Growth closely linked to the MSG ECC Declaration.

The MSG Secretariat's programs of work embrace sub-regional cooperation in trade, economics, culture, security and sports and in addressing the challenges of climate change and environmental degradation including sustainable energy development. These are some of the key focal areas of the SIDS priorities which include climate change, sustainable energy, biodiversity, and social development

The Alternative Indicators of Wellbeing for Melanesia project, also endorsed by Leaders and now hosted at the MSG Secretariat, was selected by the UN SIDS committee and published for discussion at the Conference as an existing and promising partnership among SIDS. The project seeks to establish agreed-upon measures of wellbeing that reflect Melanesian values in order to more accurately capture that which matters to the livelihoods of the people of this region and to improve the quality of information used in decision making at the national and regional levels.

Mr Forau added, the Secretariat was privileged to be part of this important Conference and expressed his most profound gratitude for the kind support of the Vanuatu Government for including the Secretariat staff on the official Vanuatu delegation to the UN SIDS Conference in Samoa.

Representing the MSG Secretariat were Environment & Climate Change Adviser, Mr Stanley Wapot, and Project Coordinator of the Alternative Indicators of Well-Being Project, Mr Jamie Tanguay.

The MSG Secretariat also congratulated the Government and people of Samoa on behalf of the members of the MSG for the exceptional organization and conduct of the 3rd UN SIDS Conference.

The Secretariat looks forward to the follow up conference for the Pacific SIDS to build on the discussions of the bigger SIDS and Outcomes in the Accelerated Modalities of Action [SAMOA] Pathway.

***Authorized for release by the Director General
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