

### 19 Sept 2016

The historic Private Sector Development (PSD) Week for the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) will be held this week in Honiara, Solomon Islands. Events during the week include workshops and meetings which will be attended by Government officials responsible for Business Development as well as representatives of the private sector and civil society organisations.

The PSD Week starts with the Cooperatives Policy Workshop today (Monday, 19 September). It will be followed by the Small Business Development Policy Workshop on Tuesday, 20 September, the Heads of Investment Promotion Agencies and Industry Officials Meeting on Wednesday, 21 September, and the Private Sector Trade and Development Awareness Workshop on Thursday, 22 September. The PSD Week will also coincide with the annual Solomon Islands National Trade Fair which will run from Wednesday, 21 September to Friday, 23 September.

“The upcoming events are unparalleled as MSG officials responsible for small business development, including cooperatives, micro and informal enterprises will meet for the first time, to network and share not only their good and replicable practices but also stories and individual national experiences that we can all learn from,” said MSG Director General, Ambassador Amena Yauvoli.

Officials representing the Cooperatives and Small Business Development Centres, as well as small business representatives will also meet with the Heads of Investment Promotion Agencies which are usually mandated to attract foreign direct investment inflows. “Potential linkages between these industry players at various levels are critical to explore and facilitate,” the Director General said.

Best practices from the global Cooperatives movement to be shared by the International Cooperatives Alliance, whose membership includes Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu, are expected to benefit the participating MSG Cooperatives. “The presence of the Alliance is testament to the significance of the Secretariat’s efforts to rejuvenate Cooperatives as a tool for sustainable development as also articulated in the MSG PSD Strategy, which Leaders had endorsed during their Special Summit on 14 July 2016 in Honiara,” Ambassador Yauvoli indicated.

Additional highlights of the PSD Week include discussions on the needs of both the formal and informal sectors, much of which would be in line with the African Caribbean and Pacific PSD Strategy, to which the MSG Secretariat had also contributed. The relevance of the Sustainable Development Goals to the private sector is an additional feature of the discussions, in line with the approach to increase sustainable business opportunities under the MSG Green Growth

Framework.

“These exchanges should empower officials in improving their services to businesses which invest sustainably and generate employment, giving hope to the more than 100,000 students throughout the MSG sub-region who leave school each year and seek income-generating opportunities,” added the Director General. He further noted that these engagements would also enable the private sector to have a better appreciation of the regulatory requirements that they are expected to comply with, as well as of the challenges faced by Government Departments.

The PSD Week has been organised to raise awareness on the MSG PSD Strategy as well as on the concluded negotiations on revisions to the MSG Trade Agreement which Leaders are anticipated to sign later this year.

The forthcoming series of MSG meetings is supported by the European Union through the Pacific Integration Technical Assistance Project under the 10th European Development Fund as administered by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. All MSG Members are attending with the exception of Fiji.

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