

**THE PRIME MINISTER OF  
SOLOMON ISLANDS**



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STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER,  
HONOURABLE GORDON DARCY LILO  
FOR THE 19TH MSG LEADER'S SUMMIT, 21<sup>st</sup> JUNE, 2013,  
PLENARY SESSION, LEADERS RETREAT, SPC, NOUMEA

**"MSG: Our Place in the Sun in Oceania"**

The Chairman, Mr. Victor Tutugoro, Leader of the FLNKS Group,  
Hon. Moana Carcasses, Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu,  
Mr. Frank Bainimarama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji,  
Hon. Leon Dion, Deputy Prime Minister of the Independent State of  
Papua New Guinea,  
Deputy Prime Minister of Vanuatu, Mr Edward Natapei  
Foreign Ministers,  
The Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia,  
Director General of the MSG Secretariat, Mr. Peter Forau  
Observers,  
Special Guests of FLNKS to the 19th MSG Summit,  
Senior Government Officials,  
Government Representatives,

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## **1. Greetings and acknowledgements**

First of all, let me recognize and acknowledge the Kanaky as the indigenous people of this land. I would also like to acknowledge the FLNKS and the Government of New Caledonia for allowing us to be part of this beautiful country of yours. You have been remarkable to all of us during the past week. I sincerely thank you for being such wonderful hosts to all of the MSG delegations.

## **2. Congratulation to the new MSG Chair and acknowledge the outgoing Chair**

Mr Chairman, let me also congratulate you and the FLNKS as the new Chair of the MSG. The high level of organization that I have witnessed in the last few days gives me confidence that you will discharge the obligations of the Chair with competence and passion. We will look to you for a distinct FLNKS brand of leadership, but at the same time embrace you with our brotherly Melanesian spirit.

On the same note, I would to thank Fiji, the previous Chair of the MSG for its outstanding leadership of the Group in the last two years. The marked progress made on the various fronts and the consolidation of the Group into what it is today is a direct result of your decisive leadership and commitment. Congratulations on a job well done and we look forward to your usual leadership.

### **3. Significance of 2013 for MSG**

Mr Chairman, this year is a very significant year for the MSG. Not only do we mark 25 years of existence, we also begin the next 25 years which will witness very rapid changes. With the increase in technology and globalization, we can only imagine what it will be like in 25 years' time. This is important because the experience over the last 25 years gives us the opportunity to assess our direction, the form and emphasis of our collaboration. This year is significant for another reason. Self-determination was a key purpose of the MSG 25 years ago. Today, although the shape might have changed, the fundamental issue of self-determination remains relevant for the region.

### **4. Theme of this statement**

Mr Chairman, in considering the many issues facing the MSG today, I searched for an appropriate theme for my statement today. The one I chose is **"MSG: Our Place in the Sun in Oceania."** In fact, that is a phrase used by the Eminent Persons in their Report presented to the Leaders yesterday. I simply borrowed it. Inherent in the theme "Our Place in the Sun in Oceania" is a call for Melanesians to rise up to the challenges facing their region and find their place amongst the nations of the world. I think that is appropriate and the time is right just about right to do that.

## 5. **The Eminent Persons Group's (EPG) Report?**

Mr Chairman, Solomon Islands applauds the Eminent Persons Group for successfully undertaking consultations with Members and producing its fine report with some thought provoking proposals on charting the future of MSG on many fronts.

Its findings are persuasive and should provide a tool for reviewing the Agreement Establishing the MSG, addressing old problems as well as emerging priorities.

## 6. **Some structural realities MSG will continue to grapple with**

Mr Chairman, in finding "Our Place in the Sun in Oceania," we realize that there are certain structural, economic and cultural realities which are part of the MSG region. The region is the most culturally and linguistically diverse in the world. It is also situated in the biggest ocean. Many of the countries and islands are dispersed. Transport and communication linkages are limited and economies of scale are challenging to achieve. These are some of the realities. They are neither good nor bad. They are simply our inheritance. How we use these inheritances will determine where we are in the next twenty five years. This calls for excellence as well as pragmatism.

## **7. MSG's commitment to self-determination for Kanaky**

Mr Chairman, I acknowledge the path for self-determination desired by Kanaky people. This has been a long and challenging one. MSG's consistent support and political lobbying both in the region and international arena has not only elevated the cause of FLNKS but also displays the deep commitment of the governments to the original purpose of establishing the Group. To reinforce this commitment, it is fitting that while we the MSG Leaders are in Kanaky land, we re-state our support to the cause for self-determination and full emancipation of our Kanaky brothers and sisters. On this premise I fully support the Declaration for MSG's re-commitment to the FLNKS.

## **9. MSG's commitment to self-determination and its impacts in the region**

Mr Chairman, MSG's advocacy role in promoting FLNKS independence has earned itself a rapport – and will attract groups seeking consolidated support for a similar cause. The application by West Papua National Coalition for Liberation is a case in point. The application for membership by the West Papua National Coalition for Liberation has been deliberated on by Senior Officials Meeting on two occasions.

Regarding West Papua, Solomon Islands joins the international community in condemning the atrocities and human rights violations on the Melanesian people of West Papua, and in this light recognizes West Papuan desire for self-determination.

At the same time, we recognize Indonesian Government's legitimacy over West Papua, and in this context, view that any support rendered for WPNCL Membership for engagement with MSG is premised on the firm belief that the MSG can provide a platform or forum for dialogue between West Papua and Indonesia. Therefore, Solomon Islands would support an approach that considers consultations and dialogue with both the Indonesian Government and West Papuan. This will allow for responsible and managed progress towards self-determination.

#### **10. Some challenges that the MSG Secretariat will continue face**

Mr Chairman, it has been pleasing to note the growing prominence of MSG through the engagement of the MSG Secretariat with regional and international partners over the past years. However, while MSG continues to flourish, it is susceptible to challenges and difficulties, just like any institution and organization. It is crucial that Members provide resources to the Secretariat in order to accomplish what it envisages to achieve both in the short and longer terms. It is clear that as the MSG becomes more relevant, increased resources will be required to implement the commitments. The EPG Report recommendations on funding mechanism for the MSG must be explored further to address the need for a steady flow of resources.

## **11. Major agreements signed at this Leaders Meeting**

Mr Chairman, it is pleasing to note that five legal instruments signed by the leaders this week. These include the:

- Treaty on Reciprocal Enforcement of Foreign Judgments
- Treaty on Custody and Maintenance of Children
- MOU on Fisheries Cooperation on Aquaculture and Inshore Fisheries Development
- MoA on Police Cooperation
- MOU on Agricultural Quarantine Bio-Security Cooperation between MSG Members

These, when applied in MSG countries will harmonize approaches to the issues in question and develop common standards.

## **12. Some new initiatives**

Mr Chairman, in light of the continuing binding nature of Leaders Decision and the need to further boost the profile of the MSG, the Leaders had also agreed on the notion of the Melanesian Parliament. The Secretariat will need to further consult and study this concept to ensure that synergies for effective implementation are covered and not lost.

I should also register my thank you to all the countries who have contributed resources and personnel to RAMSI. Next month the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of RAMSI was celebrated and I look forward to seeing all of you in Honiara.

On this note I wish to inform this august gathering that I have invited Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama as my Special Guest for next month's 35th Anniversary of Independence celebrations of Solomon Islands next month.

Mr Chairman, building of national institutions and processes and transparency are relevant to MSG countries in order form them to take their place in the region. Before I close, please allow me to share some initiatives which my country has taken to build platforms for the next generation. With the resource boom in Melanesia, especially mining, we have decided to join the Extractive Initiative Transparency International (EITI). This we believe will demand transparency in the minerals sector by all the stakeholders. We are working hard to discharge our obligations for compliance with the EITI. In the July sitting of Parliament, we will also introduce a bill for registration of political parties. This will allow for the evolution of political parties in an orderly and management manner. We have also continued with the voter registration which we hope will be ready for the general elections in 2014. This process will ensure one person gets one vote at the polls.

Mr Chairman, I am very encouraged to hear about the other good developments that are occurring in the other MSG countries. Let us harness our collective strengths to create synergies to take the region forward. Let us ask ourselves, what can I give to strengthen our collective progress? What can we collectively do to further strengthen the MSG and its ideals?



### **13. Solomon Islands the next chair of MSG**

Mr Chairman, I welcome the opportunity for Solomon Islands to be the next chair of the MSG. Solomon Islands looks forward to welcoming you on our shores in two years' time.

### **14. Conclusion**

Mr Chairman, MSG is a moderately young, blossoming institution that will continue to grow. I stand with the Leaders of the MSG to salute the founding fathers of the MSG. Let me on behalf of the Government and People of Solomon Islands wish the Leaders and Governments of the MSG Countries God's blessing and direction as you charter the course of the next 25 years. Our inheritance is ours but what we do with the inheritance belongs to our children. Let us all rise to take "Our Place in the Sun in Oceania"

Mr Chairman, with those remarks, I thank you for listening.

Tagio tumas,  
Vinaka levu,  
Tenkiu tru,  
and Merci