



**MSG Secretariat**  
**Secretariat du GFLM**

Melanesian Spearhead Group | Le Groupe Fer de Lance Mélanésien

**Papua New Guinea Melanesia Week - Opening Statement - Mr. Roch Wamytan**

**Theme: Celebrating Melanesian Solidarity and Growth**

**Sir John Guise Stadium**  
**30<sup>TH</sup> May 2013**  
**Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea**

Grand Chief, Sir. Michael Somare

H. E. the High Commissioner of Solomon Islands to PNG;

H. E. the High Commissioner of the Republic of Fiji to PNG;

Ambassador Tavola, MSG Eminent Persons Group Chair;

Hon. Joe Natuman; Hon. Sogavare and Mr. Louma - Eminent Members of the EPG;

Mr. Peni Sikivou, Acting Deputy Director General of the MSG Secretariat;

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me begin by thanking the government and people of Papua New Guinea (PNG) for inviting me as Special Guest for the PNG Melanesia Week, I am truly thankful and honored for this opportunity. It is a great privilege to open the MSG 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Silver Jubilee Celebrations Melanesia Week in Port Moresby, PNG. Beyond me, you are also honoring the combat of a Melanesian brotherhood, the Kanak people's struggle for Independence. On behalf of the Melanesian peoples colonized more than 150 years by France I would like to sincerely thank the Government of PNG, the Melanesian Spearhead Group, the Member States and their authorities to the fundamental role of 25 years in an active and continued support in the fight for independence of the Kanak people.

We must remember that the Melanesian Spearhead Group was created primarily for the support of the Kanak People, while the vast majority of Melanesian countries became independent one after the other from the 1970s. This commitment is embodied in particular during the informal meeting of Goroka (PNG) in 1986 focusing on a common solidarity to advance regional issues of common interest including the cause for FLNKS political independence in New Caledonia.

As the MSG annual report of 2010 notes, "MSG has its origin sustained by a strong political vision desire to fight for full decolonization and freedom of countries and territories in Melanesia still colonized developing a strong cultural identity, social and economic policies and a link between the communities of Melanesia. " Late Father Walter LINI added: "Vanuatu will not be fully free until all of Melanesia will be free".

In addition, we must not forget the struggle of our brothers and sisters in West Papua for the struggle towards Independence. We must not turn a blind eye to the human rights abuses they are confronted with daily and the many lives lost.

It is an undeniable fact that without this support, the report of unequal political forces against the French colonialism would not have allowed the Kanak people to express their nationalist claims at regional and international level, Kanaky discourse was stifled and rendered inaudible. With this important significant support advances have been made.

The MSG has consistently worked to combine the FLNKS in the best programs and activities approved for member countries, despite the lack of institutional capacity and financial resources to cope with the inherent load its status as a full member of the regional organization. But without ever abandoning its responsibility, MSG always assured with tenacity and regular monitoring of the implementation of political agreements while defending the interests of FLNKS within the UN, the Forum and the Non Aligned Movement (NAM)

The process of the Noumea Accord signed in 1998 opened a process that commits signatories in which the FLNKS over 15 years to lead to a referendum for the country's accession to independence. This consultation can be organized from May 2014 elections if a majority of three fifths of the congress decides. If the result does not lead to the attainment of full sovereignty, then the French government organized consultation in 2018, then in 2020 and 2022.

This means that the path to independence is long and difficult. The main obstacle is certainly the policy of the French state as large and medium power in this part of Oceania. The whole policy of the administrative authority in New Caledonia shows that the French State defends its own interests foremost in the concert of great powers present in the Asia / Pacific region. Through its overseas territories, France radiates into the world as a second maritime power – after China and US (90% of the power given to it by the overseas territories including the Pacific). It is now recognized that the Pacific has become the center of global growth, with a huge potential that can meet the challenges of the 21st century (energy, raw materials, food). The future is now turned to the farms of marine resources become strong employment vectors by biodiversity resources fisheries, the exploitation of rare earth (extracting rare metals used in the manufacture of computers, tablets, smartphones, lasers, solar panels, radar, missile).

The geo-strategic field in our region is changing, with increased interest from China and the US, thus France has redeployed its military assets from French Polynesia to New Caledonia by placing the center of Pacific Command in the Melanesian region. It considers the island states, particularly the Melanesian countries as a "threat" to the stability of the region according to the theory of "black hole" developed by a French researcher, Mr DOUMENGE who described the Melanesian arc as the "arc of instability". Because of this increased presence of France within the Pacific, the FLNKS will continue to plead the support of the MSG to continue in the accompaniment to fulfill its objectives of full emancipation.

Before I conclude, may I once again thank the government and people of PNG for the unfailing support attributed towards the FLNKS and the Kanaky cause through the donation of funds towards the MSG Secretariat for the establishment of an FLNKS Unit. The unit will allow for young Kanaks to do job attachments in PNG as well as scholarship offers to young Kanak students as a means of building our capacity to fulfill important tasks as a young independent nation in the near future.

We are celebrating the 25 years of our regional organization, it has reached its maturity, and we should thus fortify our pillars and foundation to give the vision for the next 25 years. The consultations of the MSG Eminent Persons Group (EPG) in member countries over the past 5 weeks confirms the huge hope of the people of Melanesia that Melanesia must take a leadership role in our region. We have the potential through our mineral and human capacity resources to take on this leadership role. Our youths, women, churches, NGOs, civil societies, trade unions, private business sectors and all stakeholders have confirmed that it is time to work to build a stronger, prosperous and peaceful Melanesia for tomorrow, with a common identity that comes from our historical heritage.

The big challenges are ahead; modernization, climate change, security challenges, sustainable development; our region is now becoming the hub of the Pacific and is attracting the attention of great powers. But we have the capacity to face these challenges through a collective approach based on our cultural heritage and common post-colonial history.

To keep our common interests, we need to assemble within a group of nations re-unites all Melanesia based on common ancestral heritage from East Timor, West Papua, Vanuatu and South to New Caledonia.

With this confidence in ourselves as Melanesians and with the help of the spirits of our land,

and with the blessings of Our LORD, that I declare the MSG PNG Melanesia Week Officially Open.

Thank-you,

Thank-yu tumas,

Merci Beaucoup,

Tankiu Tru,

Oleti