



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

Melanesian Spearhead Group | Le Groupe Fer de Lance Mélanésien

**OPENING STATEMENT BY MR. YVON FAUA, FLNKS REPRESENTATIVE  
&  
CHAIR OF THE 2ND MSG  
SPORTS COMMITTEE MEETING (SCM)**

MSG Secretariat, Port Vila, Vanuatu, 28 October, 2013

The Acting Minister of Youth and Sports and Minister of Education of the  
Republic of Vanuatu, Hon. Bob Loughman,  
Senior Government Officials from member countries,  
National Olympic Representatives,  
Director General, Mr Peter Forau and staff of the MSG Secretariat,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Bonjour!

Firstly, I am honoured as the Chair of the MSG Sports Committee (SCM) to humbly extend on behalf of the members of the Sports Committee, our most profound gratitude to Hon. Bob Loughman, the Acting Minister of Youth and Sports and Minister of Health of the Republic of Vanuatu for the warm welcome to all of us attending the 2nd SCM here in Port Vila, Vanuatu, the home of the Melanesia Spearhead Group (MSG).

It is an honour Sir to have you here with us this morning to Officially Open the Meeting. I know you have a very busy schedule but took the time to be with us. Sir, we are deeply honoured.

May I also extend my most profound gratitude to the Government and people of Vanuatu and to the MSG Secretariat for hosting this 2nd SCM in this beautiful city of Port Vila at the MSG Secretariat headquarters. The hospitalities you have accorded since our arrival is deeply appreciated and may I on behalf of all delegates, express how delighted we are to be in Vanuatu.

I wish to also acknowledge the word done by the outgoing Chair of this Committee, Ms. Makereta Sauturaga, Acting Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Fiji, for her leadership and dedication in managing and guiding the last Sports Committee Meeting. In so doing, I wish to also express my gratitude to the Government of Fiji for their overall contribution to the work of this Committee during their term as Chair. Vinaka.

On behalf of the Front de Liberation Nationale Kanak et Socialiste (FLNKS), I am also honoured to Chair this esteemed meeting for the first time since the FLNKS took over the Chairmanship of the MSG in June 2013, during the 19th MSG Leaders Summit. Sports is an area we have yet to explore ways we can collaborate and promote the interests of our region and therefore, for those of us from Kanaky who will be the first hosts of the Melanesia Games, this is an exciting opportunity for our people and our communities, to expose our young people to the broader Melanesia region.

As you all know, 2013 is the Silver Jubilee year of the MSG and an exciting time for the organization as it is also a time for members to reflect on our achievements and to also focus on our aspirations for the next 25years. For the people of Kanaky, it is also 25 years since we signed the Noumea Accord to gradually prepare for self-emancipation. And this process will include a referendum to be conducted next year in New Caledonia, the year we will also be hosting the inaugural Melanesia Games. In this respect, may I take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support to the people of Kanaky including agreeing to hold the Games in Kanaky in 2014.

It is an honour for the FLNKS to Chair this organ of our organization that focuses on Sport in our region. We are an unique group that constitutes 90% of the Pacific region's population, land mass and natural resources but overall, we possess almost 1000 languages and have such an exciting and rich culture. And as the Minister has correctly stated, almost 50% of our population constitutes of young people, our future.

In 2011, the Government of New Caledonia successfully hosted the South Pacific Games where many of you sent athletes to not only participate in the Games but also to visit Kanaky/New Caledonia. It was an exciting time for us as it allowed us the opportunity not only to compete on our 'home soil' but to meet and get to know our brothers and sisters from the Pacific Islands.

Many of our brothers and sisters are long time competitors and experts in the field of sports, including you, my colleague brothers and sisters from the MSG. You have attended many regional and international events as competitors and administrators and those of us from the

FLNKS, have a lot to learn from you over the next two years, while chairing this esteemed body. Your support and expert guidance is therefore crucial to allow us to Chair this constituent body of the MSG, successfully.

The 2014 Melanesia Games will be an opportunity for the youth of Kanaky to also get to know their brothers and sisters from Melanesia and we hope this will also provide an avenue for the beginning of this relationship between our young people.

Despite the language barrier that often separates us, I know through Sports and Cultural events, we will be able to overcome such barriers. As such, it is pleasing to know that during the Games in 2014, our youth will also present culture items from our respective Melanesian countries as part of the programme. We in New Kanaky/New Caledonia are looking forward to the event with much anticipation as aspire for our young people to excel in not only in sports, but also to demonstrate, how much knowledge they possess about our rich cultural heritage.

Honourable Minister, ladies and gentlemen, apart from discussing the preparations for the Inaugural Melanesia Games, the Sports Committee Meeting will also be discussing the Melanesia Games Charter, Guidelines and criteria for participating in the Melanesia Games, the Sporting Disciplines, the Terms of Reference (ToR) on the feasibility study on viability of Sports Institutes in MSG countries as well as the preparations for the South Pacific Games in Papua New Guinea in 2015. These issues will generate a lot of interest not only amongst our young people but older generation who have probably been looking forward to these types of discussions amongst our grouping, for some time.

As such, I wish to acknowledge the work done by my colleagues from the member countries since the Inaugural MSG Sports Committee Meeting held in March 2012. You have done your best over the past year in attending to some of the tasks we had agreed to since we last met and for this, I wish to express my gratitude for what you have done. Despite your busy regional and international schedules, I know you have made it your business to attend this meeting and I note that there is much eagerness to progress some of the issues we have been mandated to attend to. I therefore look forward to your contribution and cooperation during the next few days as we discuss the various issues.

I also understand that Vanuatu as host of the 2017 Mini-South Pacific Games will also be seeking expert advice from some of us in this room who have or who will be hosting similar regional events, in particular the larger South Pacific Games so I hope we will all be able to provide the required assistance and perhaps, find time to visit some of their sporting infrastructure.

Honourable Minister, on behalf of my colleagues of the SCM, I wish to again, express my humble gratitude for your presence and for your words of encouragement and the challenges you have posed to us in addressing the needs of our youth. I hope through Sports, we will meet some of your expectations.

We have a huge responsibility ahead of us but I know, together we can accomplish our Leaders' vision in the promotion of our peoples and their aspirations, through sports.

With these few remarks, I wish my colleagues fruitful discussions and a successful outcome.

Tank u tumas, Merci Beaucoup, Oleti!