



MSG Secretariat **Secretariat du GFLM**

Melanesian Spearhead Group | Le Groupe Fer de Lance Mélanésien

WELCOME REMARKS BY THE MSG SECRETARIAT BY MS. BARBARA AGE, DIRECTOR
GOVERNANCE & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION (GSDD)
2ND 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,
Chair of the MSG Sports Committee, Mr Yvon Faua,
Senior Government Officials from member countries,
National Olympic Representatives,
Staff of the MSG Secretariat,
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning and welcome,

On behalf of the MSG Secretariat, I wish to also take this opportunity to humbly extend our most profound gratitude to you Sir, Hon. Bob Loughman, the Acting Minister of Youth and Sports and Minister of Health of the Republic of Vanuatu for taking the time to visit the MSG Secretariat this morning to officially Open the 2nd MSG Sports Committee Meeting and welcome participants, on behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Vanuatu,

It is a great honour indeed Honourable Minister, for you to grace us with your presence, at such short notice whilst the incumbent Minister of Youth and Sports is away on an official overseas engagement. We are most grateful.

This morning, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge 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. Through the head of delegation for the Republic of Fiji, Mr. Saiasi Fuli, I would like to convey our deepest gratitude to Ms. Sauturaga and the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Fiji for the able leadership you have provided to this newly established and young Sports Committee. Vinaka vakalevu.

In addition, I wish to also congratulate the incoming Chair, Mr. Yvon Faua, FLNKS Representative and Advisor to the Vice President of the Government of New Caledonia for assuming this new role as Chair of the SCM. Although, Sports is very much an everyday activity for many people in our region and keenly followed by most of us – whether it be football, rugby, cricket, volleyball, athletics, canoeing and the list goes on, it was only in 2012 that we began meeting through this forum, to discuss common sporting issues of interest. I wish to therefore assure you Mr Chairman, of the Secretariat's support and commitment to you and members of this Committee in advancing sporting issues in our region.

Distinguished Delegates, you are tasked to deliberate on a very important agenda before you, for the next 2-3 days.

You are expected to discuss a number of important sports matters mentioned by the Chairman few minutes ago and I will come to this in a moment as I understand that having not met in more than a year, you will also revisit the Outcomes of your inaugural Meeting held in March last year and the recommendations that were subsequently approved by the MSG Governing Body and the Leaders' during their Special Meetings immediately thereafter in Suva, Fiji.

I note further that the Pacific Games Council (PGC) could not make it to this meeting to share their experiences but I know that most of you here today are veterans of Sports in our region, having participated in numerous events organized by the PGC so will be able to provide us with some insights into the work of the PGC.

I note the work you have done in developing the draft Melanesia Games Charter which is of eminent importance to our region. Our officials from Papua New Guinea have kindly prepared this paper which you are expected to discuss and hopefully finalise before it is presented to our Leaders through the Governing Body for their consideration.

Equally important, you will also consider and discuss an update on the preparations for the inaugural Melanesia Games 2014 which will be held in New Caledonia. The host FLNKS in collaboration with the Government of New Caledonia will provide us an update on the preparatory arrangements for this important event and I understand you may also discuss any offers of assistance you as individual members, can provide to the FLNKS.

Mr Chairman, I know you have a very busy few days ahead of you and I would like to wish you all the very best for the meeting but more so, in taking this Committee forward over the next two years.

With these few remarks Distinguished Delegates, I thank you for taking the time to travel to Vanuatu to attend this 2nd SCM and wish you well in your deliberations.

May I also reiterate 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 Officially opening this meeting.

Tankiu tumas, Merci Beaucoup and Oleti!