



MSG Secretariat
Secretariat du GFLM
Melanesian Spearhead Group | Le Groupe Fer de Lance Mélanésien

**Opening Statement by Mr Rodrique Taivouane Chairman of the
Environment and Climate Change Technical Officials Meeting (ECCTAC) &
representative of the FLNKS External Relations Unit**

3rd Environment & Climate Change Technical Advisory Committee (ECCTAC) (Validation
Workshop) Meeting
Tanoa International Hotel, Nadi, Republic of Fiji
23-25 September 2013

Senior Officials and members of the ECCTAC
Representatives of Partners and Regional Organizations
Invited Guests,
Staff of the MSG Secretariat
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bonjour and Bula, welcome to the friendly isles,

I am honored as Chair of the MSG Environment and Climate Change Technical Advisory
Committee (ECCTAC) to extend a warm welcome to you all to this 3rd MSG ECCTAC Meeting
(Validation Workshop) in Nadi, Fiji.

This year as MSG celebrates its 25th anniversary, the Leaders also held their 19th Summit in June in New Caledonia which saw the Chairmanship of the group transferred to the FLNKS of New Caledonia. This is an important time in the lives of our Kanaky people as we prepare for the referendum in 2014-2018.

It is also an honour for me to Chair this esteemed body of the Environment and Climate Change Technical Advisory Committee (ECCTAC) meeting for the first time. I have attended previous ECCTAC and ECCMM as a member of the FLNKS delegation so it is indeed an important and exciting occasion as I take on this new responsibility.

Before I proceed with my statement, I wish to acknowledge the work done by my predecessor, Mr Saverio Baleikanacea, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government, Urban Development, Housing and Environment of the Republic of Fiji as it was under the Leadership of the Government of Fiji that the Declaration on Environment and Climate Change was adopted by our Leaders. This Declaration is the very document which allows us sit around this table today to discuss the Environment and Climate Change affecting our region. May I on behalf of all the members of the ECCTAC thank Mr Baleikanacea for his outstanding leadership of the ECCTAC since its formation in 2012, vinaka Mr Baleikanacea.

The MSG Environment & Climate Change Technical Advisory Committee is the key technical meeting to discuss the pillars of the MSG Environment & Climate Change Declaration and to develop strategies and action plans to address the critical environmental and climate change challenges we face; such as ecosystems management and biodiversity, waste management and pollution control, climate change adaptation and mitigation in our countries in Melanesia and the Pacific region as a whole.

Making progress on the Strategies and Action Plans for the Melanesia Green Growth Framework, Melanesia Terrestrial Commitment, Blue Carbon Initiative and Green Climate Fund requires careful consideration of the national institutional arrangements, and enabling environment (environmental and climate change policy and legislation and development priorities and plans) of Members.

I wish to encourage this meeting to be analytical and to consider practical actions on each of the Environment & Climate Change Agenda of the Meeting. In addition, I encourage a stronger link and communication between the MSG Secretariat and the Members and also with our valued Partners present in this Meeting to advance the work of the MSG ECCTAC.

When Leaders signed the Declaration on Environment & Climate Change in 2012, it demonstrated the political commitment to address environmental and climate change challenges faced by MSG members.

I wish to encourage the Members and Partners to have open and focused discussions about the possible measures to be undertaken in the Environment & Climate Change Strategies and to do so in respect of others in the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities”.

In this regard, allow me to take this time to acknowledge the support to the MSG by our partners – GIZ, IUCN, SPREP, SPC, UNESCAP, Griffith University, USP and UPNG for their steadfast commitment to the MSG and for their efforts in also working with member countries that has resulted in the Leaders conducting Round Table discussions as well as progressing environmental and climate change matters in capitals. May I also thank them for their continued support to the Secretariat at regional and international meetings.

I wish to also thank GIZ for their assistance to the Secretariat which has seen the recruitment of an Environment & Climate Change Analyst from which we have seeing some advancement on the Environment and Climate Change agenda.

Furthermore, may I acknowledge the funding assistance to this Meeting by the Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA). For most of this year, the CTA has been assisting the Secretariat develop the Green Growth Knowledge Management ePlatform. Tremendous work has been done by the Secretariat since the CTA came on board and offered to assist with this initiative and I am looking forward to the Report by the Secretariat two Workshops conducted since June on the eplatform as well as to learn more about the eplatform itself.

Finally colleague and partners, other regional and international events have taken place which involved your participation and have kept us busy all throughout this year, but for the next three days, I seek your support in making sure the Meeting is conducted in an efficient and flexible manner and for the Outcome Document to be finalized and delivered to Participants before they depart for their home countries.

It is my wish that this meeting will be consultative and productive towards an effective outcome.

With these few remarks, I wish to once again thank you for attending the 3rd ECCTAC meeting and look forward to the deliberations.

I now officially declare the meeting open.

Vinaka Vakalevu and merci beaucoup!

Thank you!