



MSG Secretariat **Secretariat du GFLM**

Melanesian Spearhead Group | Le Groupe Fer de Lance Mélanésien

OPENING STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL, MR MOLEAN KILEPAK

10th SUB-COMMITTEE ON LEGAL & INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES (SCLII)
20-21 APRIL, 2015
MSG secretariat
Port Vila, Vanuatu

Co-Chairs,
Heads of Delegations from Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Fiji and the FLNKS,
Distinguish members,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with honor and great pleasure that I welcome you to this 10th Sub-committee on Legal & Institutional Issues meeting here in Port Vila, Vanuatu. It is a Sub-Committee that I am all too familiar with, having participated as a Government representative some years back. And it is great to see some familiar faces as well. Thanks to those who stayed on for this meeting after last weeks meetings.

At the outset, I wish to express our appreciation to you members for your continuing support and commitment to the MSG Secretariat and for taking time out of your busy schedules to attend this meeting. This is truly appreciated.

Colleagues, you may recall that this meeting was earlier scheduled to be held on 19-20 March 2015 here at the Secretariat, however due to the catastrophic cyclone PAM that affected the Vanuatu group of Islands, including Sheifa Province, of which Port is located in, the meeting, was rescheduled for today.

As such colleague wantoks, I believe it is fitting for all of us to pay respect and observe 'a minute's silence' to think about the people of Vanuatu who have lost properties, gardens and other subsistence root crops, and even lost loved ones during cyclone PAM few weeks ago.

"Observe One Minute Silent"
"Say thank you"

Colleagues, we gather today and tomorrow to consider very important legal and institutions issues which are both relevant and crucial for the proper functioning of our organization. This includes the Agreement

Establishing the MSG, Guidelines for New Membership to the MSG, Police initiatives such the Agreement on Regional Police Academy and the MOU on the Humanitarian & Emergency Response Force (HERCC), to name a few.

Distinguished colleagues, let me also humbly inform you all that the Secretariat has received some general observations raised in relation to the need for this Sub-committee to progress outstanding matters that are on the agenda, in particular the Review of the Agreement Establishing the MSG, the Guidelines for New members to the MSG, and its alignment with recent Leaders' decisions and the general guidelines provided by the EPG in their report. This is particularly important when the work programme of the Secretariat is expanding and made more dynamic to respond to changing geo-political and economic circumstances of the MSG region and beyond. I trust this is equally noted when you are deliberating on the issues before you.

Finally, I would like to make particular emphasis on the MOU on HERCC; In light of catastrophic disasters happening in our region, it is imperative we need an overarching framework that can allow members to provide coordinated assistance to each other during natural disasters. The aspiration of the HERCC MOU has been tested during the recent cyclone in Vanuatu and it is now important for us to finalize this framework MOU and to have the Coordination Centre operational sooner.

The SCLII has a crucial role to play in the consideration of all these important issues and provide recommendation to the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) for further consideration and endorsement by our Foreign Ministers Meeting (FMM) and Leaders.

I therefore seek your cooperation in ensuring that we thoroughly address the issues under the agenda as our recommendations will help strengthen the foundations of MSG as an organization.

At this juncture, let me again thank you all members of the SCLII for support and likewise I also wish to commend those who have prepared documents for consideration by this meeting.

With these few remarks, I wish you all the very best and I look forward to your active participation in the deliberations ahead.

Tagio tumas,
Tenkiu tru,
Vinaka Vaka Levu
Merci Bourcoup