



Achieving *Economic Prosperity*, a core objective of the **MSG 2038: Prosperity for All Plan!**

A bi-monthly newsletter to inform readers about key work activities undertaken at the MSG Secretariat, including those supported through the EU-funded Pacific Integration Technical Assistance Project (PITAP) for improved intra-MSG trade and investment performance.

MSG CHAIR HOSTED IN PORT VILA

The Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, Hon. Manasseh Sogavare, visited Vanuatu on 19-22 August in his capacity as Chair of MSG. He paid a courtesy call to the Acting Prime Minister of Vanuatu, Hon. Moana Carcasses Kalosil on 20 August before visiting the Secretariat where he was received by the Director General, Mr Peter Forau. The Chair was accorded a traditional welcome ceremony by the Chiefs of Penama Province, who were led by former Prime Minister and current Leader of Opposition, Hon. Ham Lini. Members of the Diplomatic Corp and Senior Officials were also present at the ceremony.

In his statement following the welcome formalities, the Chair presented his vision of the MSG becoming “the EU of the Pacific” given that the Group is “the most resourceful in the Pacific” region. He also discussed issues relating to the Melanesian political sphere, infrastructure development, trade



MSG Chair, Hon. Sogavare, being greeted at the Secretariat by DG Forau (right), as Hon. Lini (left) looks on

and investment advisory services, the Pacific Islands Development Forum, security and policing, ocean and terrestrial resources, the mining industry and climate change. A copy of the Chair's statement is available from www.msgsec.info.

During the Chair's meeting with staff, he was provided with updates on the Secretariat's work programme, achievements so far during the year and key priorities

for the coming year in line with the Leaders' mandates from the 20th MSG Summit that he had chaired in Honiara last June. He also had the opportunity to meet with key Vanuatu stakeholders and members of the local Solomon Islands community. The Chair's two-year term ends in 2017 when he will hand over the MSG Chairmanship to the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea.

COMMON ABBREVIATIONS

ACP - African, Caribbean and the Pacific **CEO** - Chief Executive Officer
CTA - Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation **DG** - Director General
EDF - European Development Fund **EU** - European Union
FLNKS - Front de Libération Nationale Kanak et Socialiste **FMM** - Foreign Ministers Meeting
HIPA+IOM - Heads of IPA & Industry Officials Meeting
IPA - Investment Promotion Agency **MOU** - Memorandum of Understanding
MSGTA3 - Melanesian Spearhead Group Trade Agreement 3 **NZ** - New Zealand
PIFS - Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat **PIPSO** - Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation
PITAP - Pacific Integration and Technical Assistance Project **PNG** - Papua New Guinea
PSD - Private Sector Development
SOM - Senior Officials Meeting **SPC** - Secretariat of the Pacific Community
TEOM - Trade and Economic Officials Meeting **TMM** - Trade Ministerial Meeting
TWGN - Technical Working Group Negotiations

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TRADE MINISTERS MEET IN NADI

The 3rd MSG Trade Ministers Meeting (TMM) was held on 31 August in Nadi, Fiji to consider key decisions from the Trade and Economic Officials Meeting (TEOM), which were in turn based on Technical Working Group Negotiations by Senior Officials on Trade in Goods and in Services and the Heads of Investment Promotion Agencies and Industry Officials Meeting (HIPA+IOM) held during the week of 24 August.

The TMM was chaired by Hon. Milner Tozaka, Minister for Foreign Affairs & External Trade of Solomon Islands, and was attended by Hon. Faiyaz Koya, Minister for Industry, Trade & Tourism of Fiji; Mr. Yvon Fuaa, FLNKS representative; Ambassador Max Rai, Director General of Trade, representing the Minister for Trade, Commerce & Industry of PNG, Ambassador Joseph Ma'ahanua, Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs & External Trade of Solomon Islands, and Mr. Sumbue Antas, Director of External Trade representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation & External Trade of Vanuatu.

The Ministers were pleased with the progress achieved through the negotiations on the draft legal text for the Revised MSG Trade Agreement (MSGTA3) as it was critical for the finalization of the draft by November, as mandated in the 20th MSG Leaders Communiqué and the Port Moresby Declaration.



Seated L-R: DG Forau, Mr Antas, Hon. Koya, Hon. Tozaka, Amb. Rai, and Mr Fuaa, pictured here with Senior Trade Officials and Secretariat staff at the TMM in Nadi

The key feature of the MSGTA3, whose objective is to establish a Melanesian Free Trade Area, is its broadened scope from covering just goods to also include Trade in Services, Labour Mobility, Investment and Public Procurement. In recognition of long-standing impediments associated with transportation linkages between Members and given that greater connectivity will generate increased intra-regional trade and investment flows, the Ministers supported the proposed feasibility study on the Group having its own shipping and airline services as well as the pursuit of an MSG Business Travel Card.

Other major items considered by the TMM were the Draft MSG Private Sector Development opment (PSD) Strategy, preparations for the 3rd MSG Investment Roadshow and Trade Fair in November, as well as prospective capacity building opportunities with PNG's term as Chair of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 2018. The Draft PSD Strategy as well as the Investment Roadshow and Trade Fair are reported separately in latter sections of the newsletter. For more information on the TMM and TEOM, Mr John Licht, Programme Manager for Trade and Investment can be reached via email, j.licht@msg.int.

DRAFT PSD STRATEGY UNDER REVIEW

Following two months of extensive in-country and online consultations with stakeholders, Consultant Jesoni Vitusagavulu (Vitu) presented the Draft MSG PSD Strategy at the 3rd HIPA+IOM in Nadi on 27 August for its review by the Heads of IPAs who had initially mandated the preparation of the Strategy at their last meeting in Port Moresby, PNG on 26 November 2014. The HIPA+IOM was chaired by Mrs Lynette Dawheya, Deputy Director, Foreign Investment Division of Solomon Islands.

While Members commended the inclusive approach being undertaken in the work, they also raised issues that would further strengthen the effectiveness of the Strategy. Vitu has since been addressing comments on the Draft Strategy from the HIPA+IOM, after which the Draft Strategy is

to be re-submitted to the Heads of IPAs on 18 September for their further review in collaboration with national stakeholders. The return of this second round of comments on the Draft Strategy from the Heads of IPAs is being scheduled for 13 October, following which the Draft is to be further refined in preparation for its final review at the 4th HIPA+IOM in Noumea on 11 November.

As the new PSD Strategy is among commitments under the Port Moresby Declaration for completion by the end of the year, the document is scheduled for tabling at the TEOM on 13 November and finally with Ministers at the TMM on 16 November.

A key issue discussed as well by the Heads of IPAs was the proposed MOUs among themselves and with their Caribbean coun-



HIPA+IOM participants

terparts, which are to be pursued over the coming months by the Secretariat. For additional details on the Draft PSD Strategy and proposed MOUs, Private Sector Development Adviser (PSDA) Henry Sanday should be contacted by email, h.sanday@msg.int.



The late Hon. Natapei
(Source: wikimedia.org)

OBITUARY: HON. EDWARD NATAPEI

The Director General, Mr Peter Forau, has expressed deep regret over the passing on 28 July of Hon. Edward Nipake Natapei, former Prime Minister of Vanuatu, Leader of Opposition and Speaker of Parliament, who also served as MSG Chair from 2008 to 2011.

Hon. Natapei's exemplary leadership and stewardship contributed immensely to development in Vanuatu and the Pacific region. "While Hon. Natapei has been widely recognised as one of the country's most respected leaders, he also served as MSG

Chair during a critical phase of the Group's establishment when its Secretariat was officially opened in 2008," DG Forau said.

The contributions of Hon. Natapei have helped build MSG into an increasingly strong inter-governmental organisation that it is today. DG Forau also acknowledged the role that Hon. Natapei continued to play in support of the quest for sustainable development within Melanesia and the rest of the Pacific even after handing over the MSG Chairmanship to Fiji in 2011. "His wisdom, diplomacy,

humility and eloquence earned him the respect of colleagues and critics within and beyond Vanuatu," DG Forau added.

Secretariat staff led by the Deputy Director General (DDG), Mr Molean Kilepak, paid their respects to the late Hon. Natapei on 31 July when his body was lying in state at Parliament, draped in traditional mats and the national flag of Vanuatu. Following a state funeral service in the capital, Port Vila that afternoon, his body was flown south to his home island of Futuna in Tafea Province for burial.



DDG Kilepak (back to camera) and staff, paying their respects

FIJIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER VISITS

The newly appointed High Commissioner of Fiji to PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, H.E. Mr Esala Teleni, visited Port Vila on 18-19 August for the presentation of his credentials to the President of Vanuatu, H.E. Mr Lonsdale Baldwin. The High Commissioner also met with the Prime Minister, Hon. Sato Kilman and his Cabinet Ministers, the Dean of the Diplomatic Corp, H.E. Mr Xie Bohua, Ambassador of the People's Republic of Chi-

na, as well as members of the local Fijian community.

DG Peter Forau hosted a lunch for the High Commissioner after he met with staff for briefings on the work of the Secretariat. In response to the Secretariat's welcome, the High Commissioner revealed that although it was his first visit to the MSG Headquarters, he had been to Vanuatu on a couple of occasions. As a former naval officer who rose through the ranks to later be-

come Commander of the Fiji Navy, he recalled participating during the 1980s firstly, in a military parade marking Independence celebrations and secondly, a six-month stint out at sea as part of a team that charted Vanuatu's Exclusive Economic Zone. Although based in the PNG capital of Port Moresby, the High Commissioner pledged to pay special attention to the interests and concerns not only of Fiji but also of the MSG as a whole.



H.E. Mr Teleni, being welcomed at the Secretariat

MSG ATTENDS AGRITOURISM MEET

Upon the invitation of the Netherlands-based Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), the Secretariat was represented by Trade Research Analyst (TRA), Ms Tendai Chigwada and Private Sector Development Adviser (PSDA), Mr Henry Sanday, at the "Pacific Community Agritourism Week – Agribusiness Forum: Linking the Agrifood Sector to the Tourism-Related Markets" Conference in Nadi, Fiji on 01-03 July. Co-organised by CTA, PIPSO and

SPC, the event was aimed at strengthening linkages between the agricultural and tourism industries within the Pacific region. The Secretariat's presentation highlighted agritourism opportunities associated with sub-regional collaboration, business flows in the context of the MSGTA3 and MSG PSD Strategy, doing business with the dominant informal economy, trading between adjacent sovereign provinces and, upcoming major events such as the 2017

CHOGM in Vanuatu and 2018 APEC in PNG. Considerable intra-ACP information exchanges took place as resource persons were drawn from the Caribbean, Indian Ocean and the Pacific regions. The event was opened by Fiji's Agriculture Minister, Hon. Inia Seruiratu, who was joined by Vanuatu's Ambassador to the EU, H.E. Mr Roy Mickey Joy, as a keynote speakers during the opening session. For more details, contact Tendai on t.chigwada@msg.int.



Hotel chefs and staff talk business opportunities with farmers
Source: CTA

MSG OFFICIALS ENGAGE IN ACP-EU TALKS



After discussions at the ACP Secretariat, L-R: Peni, Dr Gomes and John

The Director of Programmes (DP), Mr Peni Sikivou, and Program Manager Trade & Investment (PMTI) Mr John Licht were in Brussels and Luxembourg on 07-10 July for discussions with ACP-EU officials on collaboration in the context of the Intra-ACP Facility and 11th EDF. Updates were presented on the recent MSG Leaders' Summit, work on the MSGTA3, Draft PSD Strategy, MSG Travel Card and aviation and shipping studies. Their linkages with the MSG 2038 Prosperity for All Plan and Green Growth Framework were also discussed.

The Embassy of Vanuatu facilitated their delegation's appointments beginning with their Ambassador, H.E. Mr Roy Mickey Joy, followed by meetings with the Ambassadors of Fiji, PNG and Solomon Islands. A courtesy call was also made to the Secretary General of the ACP Secretariat, Dr Patrick Gomes, who affirmed his commitment to strengthen MSG-ACP relations. The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) and the European Investment Bank were also visited.

Ambassador Joy commended the timely visit, given the rele-

vance and synergy of the Secretariat's work with the Intra-ACP facility and COP 21 on Climate Change. He said, "The visit has helped us see how we can fit into the scope of activities as mandated by the MSG Leaders."

DP Sikivou thanked Ambassador Joy and his staff for their help. He said, "We were able to secure the MSG Ambassadors' support ahead of our deliberations on a number of key long-term activities to enhance our economic integration through the new MSGTA and PSD Strategy." For more details, please contact John by email, j.licht@msg.int.

11TH EDF PREPARATIONS GAIN MOMENTUM



John (left) receives his certificate from Shiu Raj of PIFS, as Jesus Lavina of the EU Delegation looks on

While the implementation of the 10th EDF-funded PITAP work programme continues, the Secretariat has also been engaged in preparations for implementing the €166million 11th EDF Regional Indicative Programme (RIP) for the period 2014-2020. In that regard, the Secretariat's Capacity Development Adviser (CDA), Mrs Eleni Tevi, and Senior Accountant, Mr John Palmer, participated in the regional training programme on EDF procedures which was held in Suva,

Fiji on 03-13 August. The four training modules offered by the EU were as follows: Introduction to the EDF, Procurement Procedures, Programme Estimates, and Grants.

A second regional EDF activity relates to the Draft Implementation Plan Framework (IPF), which proposes the key principles and procedures for the programming and implementation of the 11th EDF Pacific RIP. As a member of the five working

groups to address the Pacific RIP's five agreed objectives, MSG was represented by the Secretariat's DP Peni Sikivou at the groups' first set of meetings which was convened on 26-28 August also in Suva. Further guidance on the next steps for the IPF will be provided by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and for more information on these MSG EDF-related programmes, please email Eleni through e.tevi@msg.int.

VANUATU HANDS OVER CHAIR OF ACP COMMITTEE



Some outgoing and incoming Bureau members: Front, Amb. Joy (2nd from left) and to his left, L-R Amb. Mahase-Moiloa, ACP SG Dr Gomes and Amb. Luteru of Samoa. Source: ACP Secretariat

Upon the completion of his six-month term on 31 July as Chair of the Committee of ACP Ambassadors, Vanuatu Ambassador H.E. Mr Roy Mickey Joy has handed over the reins to the Ambassador of Lesotho, H.E. Mrs Mpeo Mahase-Moiloa. The new Bureau supporting the Committee comprises one representative from each of the six ACP regions and it includes H.E. Mr Moses Kouni Mose, Ambassador for Solomon Islands representing the Pacific region.

Ambassador Joy acknowledged the support received during his term as Chair, especially when the ACP appointed Dr Patrick Gomes as the new Secretary General together with a new management team, celebrated its 40th anniversary, finalised its position for the 3rd International Conference on Development Finance, and assigned a humanitarian mission led by Ambassador Moses to Vanuatu following the devastation by Cyclone Pam. During the term, proposals were

also made for hosting the 8th Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government in the Pacific, and for the set-up of a Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Forum within the ACP Group. Significantly, three ACP/EU Pacific regional events were also held during the term. They were the Fisheries Eco-Labeling and COLEACP Agrifood Development workshops in Port Vila and, the CTA Agrifood-Tourism Linkages conference in Nadi, all of which MSG was represented at.

MARINE BIOLOGIST AND RESEARCHER TURNED ENTREPRENEUR

Much of an economy's ability to innovate, diversify and generate income through jobs comes from small enterprises, including informal ones founded by those qualified in areas other than business. One such entrepreneur met by the MSG PSD Mission Team, is a marine biologist by training at the University of the South Pacific and James Cook University and also a prominent fisheries researcher, Mr Toata Molea, who started an informal fishing enterprise by first helping his brothers from Malaita Province, Solomon Islands start their own business in 1989. They needed a loan to buy a boat and outboard motor but they were unable to secure funds from commercial banks. This inspired Toata to borrow on their behalf because he had a job in Honiara. He also helped them sell the fish they caught in the capital.

As business expanded, Toata decided to formalize their fishing enterprise by registering Didao

Development Corporation in 1995. He and his brothers became shareholders of Didao. As premix fuel was a major cost item and there was big demand for it, Toata decided in 1996 that they also venture into selling premix. This business also did well and after just six months, Didao acquired a service station in Honiara.

Cash flow from the service station was used to further develop their fishing enterprise. They then bought an adjacent land lot to build a processing plant, with the intention to export fish. Their enterprise then got a significant boost in 2007 when Didao received a matching grant of AU\$680,000 from the Enterprise Challenge Fund (ECF), an Australian Government-funded private sector programme for poverty alleviation by creating income generating opportunities. Didao used the ECF grant to develop its fish processing and export project.



The tested entrepreneur, Toata (centre), flanked by PSD Mission team members, Trade Economist/Legal Petros Shayanowako (left) and Consultant Jesoni Vitusagavulu at Didao's Honiara premises

Didao is a ready buyer of fish from rural fishermen in Lau Lagoon who have been supplied with fishing boats and gear under a government program. On average, they catch 1,000-1,500 kg fish, and make about SB\$500-\$1,000 each week. Fish is brought into Honiara where they are weighed and graded, with their suppliers paid through mobile banking. Given the success

of the project, the government is committed to provide an additional SB\$1.4m for the purchase of 25 more boats and fishing gear to allow more fishermen to join the project. Toata highlighted, "This is in line with our Prime Minister's pledge to strengthen the rural fisheries sector." For further details, he can be contacted via email, toata.molea@didao.com.sb.

GIZO WOMEN IN BUSINESS ON THE MOVE

Women informal and formal sector operators in Gizo, Western Province, Solomon Islands were also met by the Secretariat's PSD team. Under the leadership of renowned businesswoman and social worker, Mrs Esther Tali Suti, and with strong support from her husband, Stephen, a savings club was established in 2007 to allow women to save money. Accumulated savings of SBD607,000 enabled members to receive much needed capital for their businesses such as beehives to make honey, virgin coconut oil (VCO), handicrafts, fishing, sewing and retailing. Esther encourages self-reliance by organizing the community's full use of their land, sea resources and skills. She proudly describes pandanus leaves grow-

ing on the island of Simbo as the "Simbo ATM" (see photo on p.7). The savings club has over 350 members and has extended its services from Gizo to Simbo, Noro, Kolombangara and Ranoga Islands. A further milestone was achieved on 19 August when the Gizo Women in Business Development Trust Board Incorporated (GWIBDI) was launched by Hon. Jimson Tanagada, Minister for Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs. GWIBDI is to boost economic opportunities for women, thus the launch theme of "Progressing Women in Business, Economic Empowerment for Nation Building". Over 300 women attended the event, plus

many men and children. There were exhibitions and sales of VCO, cocoa drinks, soaps, agricultural and fishery products, handicrafts and traditional outfits. BSB Bank was also on hand to open new bank accounts. Esther acknowledged the support of provincial and national authorities, corporates, community members and overseas partners including Samoa Women in Business Development, the Pacific Leadership Programme and US Embassy based in PNG. She advocates a "save, save, save and invest or buy without a bank loan" approach, in addition to the "no single cent missing" principle. On their success, Esther exclaimed "even men are



Awesome twosome, Stephen and Esther Suti of Gizo



The crowded stalls say it all
Source: GWIBDI

wanting to join us too!" She also thanked the MSG Secretariat for the encouragement and advisory support provided in the build-up to the launch. Her contact is esthertalisuti@gmail.com.

MSG CORRECTIONS SERVICES COLLABORATE



Inmate farmers harvesting watermelons at Naboro Prison



Tailors at work, also in Naboro

Sources: FCS & www.prisonstudies.org

Following the global wave of prison entrepreneurship training over the last decade, a major mission of MSG Corrections Services is the rehabilitation of inmates for their successful reintegration into society. This is done through Yellow Ribbon activities which include inculcating small business skills into inmates, and given the 2014 MSG prison population of nearly 7,000 – PNG 4,580 (5.0% are women), Fiji 1,520 (3.1% women), Solomon Islands 323 (0.6% women) and Vanuatu 194 (0.5% women) – this special group could help generate prosperity through their new enterprises.

As revealed to the visiting MSG PSD team at their Suva Headquarters, the Fiji Corrections Service (FCS) involves inmates in commercial enterprises including baking, bee keeping, cattle and pig raising, horticulture, joinery, poultry, tailoring and vegetable farming. Markets include hotels, supermarkets, corporates and the general public through roadside outlets. MSG Corrections Services, via bilateral MOUs, are already collaborating and exchanging experiences, including enterprise development programmes. For instance, Fiji successfully hosted 120 participants at the Pacific

Women Corrections Services Conference in July. The 54 Pacific representatives included 30 from PNG alone (5 sponsored and 25 self-funded). Fiji is also hosting four officers from Solomon Islands for two weeks in September, to learn about key aspects of Corrections operations. One of these officers will be attached to the joinery business section. "We are committed to working with our MSG counterparts and will strive to strengthen that further," Commissioner Lt Col Ifereimi Vasu said. Their Director of Corporate Services, Mr Peniasi Kumatuba, pkumatuba@gmail.com can be reached for more details.

BUSINESSES SUPPORT DISASTER RELIEF

Support for natural disaster rehabilitation usually received from traditional donors like governments and development partners is also being provided by the private sector. At the 9th PIPSO AGM held in Nadi, Fiji on 03 July, Tuala Pat Leota, President of the Samoa Chamber of Commerce and Industry presented a USD\$2,000 cheque to Mr Thomas Bayer, President of the Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industry to support business

rehabilitation for micro, small and medium enterprises following the devastation caused by Cyclone Pam last March. The funds were raised through the showcasing of Samoan and American Samoan fashion houses during the 2nd Samoan Trade Fair that was jointly organised in Pagopago, American Samoa last April by the Samoa Chamber of Commerce, American Samoa Chamber of Commerce and the Samoa Small Business Enterprise Centre.

Other examples of private sector support for Pam relief efforts in Vanuatu include donations from Fiji-based Ba Industries Ltd and Fiji Water as well as Soltuna Ltd of Western Province, Solomon Islands, while Nestle PNG also helped after the devastating floods in Solomon Islands in April last year. Private Sector Development Adviser Henry Sanday attended the PIPSO AGM following the signing of the MSG-PIPISO MOU in Suva last May.



Thomas (left), thanking his Samoan counterpart, Tuala.

Source: PIPSO Secretariat

STOCK EXCHANGE EXECUTIVES IN VILA

The Chair of the Suva-based South Pacific Stock Exchange (SPSE), Dr Nur Bano Ali, and CEO Ms Latileta Qoro visited Port Vila, Vanuatu on 23-24 June. SPSE is one of the two existing stock exchanges in the Pacific region; the other being the Port Moresby Stock Exchange (POMSoX). The trends and challenges for both SPSE and POMSoX were examined in the MSG Regional Stock Exchange (MRSE) study by Consultant Savenaca Narube in

2013. Upon their review of that study, Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors noted fundamental macro-economic conditions as critical enablers for an effective and sustainable MRSE, the technical aspects of which are to be considered by a technical group before further recommendations are made to the Ministers and Governors.

The visit by the SPSE Executives helped them explore opportunities for business relations

with MSG countries, with emphasis on the private sector's appetite for having a trading board. Dr Ali and Latileta met with representatives of the Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Vanuatu Investment Promotion Authority, Reserve Bank of Vanuatu and the Vanuatu Financial Services Commission. They also visited the Secretariat. Mr David Hopa, Program Manager Economic Development, d.hopa@msg.int, is the contact person for the MRSE.



Dr Ali (left) and Latileta, after their meeting at the Secretariat

DIRECTOR BARBARA RETURNS TO PNG

Tuesday, 28 July, was a memorable day for Secretariat staff as they farewelled one of their founding colleagues, Ms Barbara Age, who had served the organisation for over six years and officially as a staff member between 2009 and 2015 on secondment from the PNG Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). Before the appointment of the first Director General, an Interim Management of the Secretariat Affairs was in place under the directorship of Mr Johnny Komanapo, current DG Foreign Affairs for Vanuatu, who was ably supported by other Senior Vanuatu Government Officials, as well as Barbara, then Director of the Pacific, Australia and New Zealand Branch in DFA.

Barbara formally joined the Secretariat in 2009 as Director, Political Affairs then subsequently, Director, Governance and Sustainable Development where she was responsible for a broad range of programmes including Political and Security issues, Elections, Decolonization, Environment and Climate Change, Sustainable Management of Fisheries, Gender and Youth, Arts and Culture, Sports, Education, the Millennium Development Goals and Water and Sanitation. Acknowledging Barbara's contributions, DG Peter Forau said "While she will no longer be with us at the Secretariat, Barbara's next assignment with the Department of Foreign Affairs in PNG means that we will main-

tain contact with her, which will be very helpful for our work."

Upon returning home to Port Moresby, Barbara will be working for the DFA as Director General, Bilateral Division which apart from PNG's bilateral relations with countries around the world, is also responsible for programmes relating to the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), MSG and the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific (CROP). She is looking forward to major upcoming events to be hosted in PNG including the PIF Leaders Forum in September, various African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) bilateral engagements leading up to the ACP Leaders



Barbara, at her farewell

Summit which PNG will host in 2016, as well as Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) bilateral engagements in the lead up to 2018 when PNG will assume the APEC Chair. "I will miss work colleagues and friends in Fiji, FLNKS, Solomon Islands and here in Vanuatu but gladly, the work programme of the Secretariat will surely keep us connected to each other and further strengthen our relations," Barbara noted.

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE WORKSHOP IN HONIARA

Around 50 stakeholders from the Government, private sector, NGOs and individuals including indigenous resource owners attended the National Workshop on Traditional Knowledge (TK) held in Honiara, Solomon Islands on 03-07 August. Participants scrutinized the Solomon Islands Traditional Knowledge Bill, which is crucial for safe-

guarding cultural heritage and values from exploitation and misappropriation, so as to maximise tangible benefits acquired by the original owners from their use. The need to enact this Bill emanates from the National Government's commitment to implement the MSG Treaty on Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture. The work-

shop was part of a series of national capacity building activities that the Secretariat is engaged in. Mr Ilan Kilo, Manager Legal Services, helped facilitate the workshop following a similar exercise in Fiji last year. Other upcoming activities Ilan is involved in, which will be reported in the next issue, relate to the Pacific Small Arms Action Group



Basket samples from Simbo

Source: GWIBDI

and the Sub-Committee on Legal and Institutional Issues. For more on them, contact Ilan, i.kiloe@msg.int.

MSG-SPC PARTNERSHIP TO EXPAND

Interest on the part of Pacific regional organisations to engage with the MSG Secretariat continues to grow. As reported in Issue 2 of *Melanesian Tok*, the Apia-based Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) which has an MOU with MSG, has been consulting with the Secretariat particularly through the visit to Port Vila, Vanuatu on 06 March by their Director Environmental Monitoring & Governance, Mr Sefanaia Nawadra.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), which like SPREP also has an MOU with MSG, was represented by Ms Mia Rimon, Manager, Solomon Islands Country Office and Mr Moses Amos, Director Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems Divisions, during their visit to the Secretariat on 10 August. The main item discussed related to the pursuit of opportunities for the two organisations to work in partnership on common regional priorities, in the areas of the

Environment, Climate Change, Sustainable Development, Youth, Women, Sports, Culture and Trade. Given the cross-cutting nature of private sector issues and the role that businesses play, the Draft MSG PSD Strategy was also discussed. Such collaboration is in line with the Leaders' call for the Group's cooperation with regional bodies. Deputy Director General Molean Kilepak, m.kilepak@msg.int, is the contact person for the MOUs signed by the Secretariat.



After talks last year on growing the MSG-SPC partnership, SPC Director-General, Dr Colin Tukuitonga (left) with DG Peter Forau

**THE SECRETARIAT
MELANESIAN SPEARHEAD GROUP (MSG)**



**SECRETARIAT
GROUPE DE FER DE LANCE MÉLANÉSIEN (GFLM)**

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STUDY ON MSG EXPORT PRODUCTS COMMENCES

The joint services of NZ-based Mr Jeff Blackburn of Blackburn Croft & Co. and Mr Barry Hellberg of Barry Hellberg Associates have been engaged by the Secretariat to undertake the Study on MSG Export Products. This PITAP-funded study is aimed at developing a strategy for improving the capabilities of export-oriented sectors and enterprises to export their locally made products to markets within and beyond MSG.

In preparation for the study, Members were requested to identify three products that have established a brand name, which enterprises have attempted to export but may have failed, and are struggling with market access requirements as well as with supply-side constraints. Solomon Islands and Vanuatu were allowed four products in light of their LDC status. The "existing, established or exportable" products listed by Members are as follows: Fiji – virgin coconut oil, sweet biscuits and yoghurt; PNG – biscuits and snacks, corned beef and hand-made bilums (string bags); Solomon Islands – canned tuna, coconut oil, coffee and processed timber; Vanuatu – cocoa, sandalwood, beef and kava; and FLNKS – tunnels and soil-less crop systems, cinder ash and solar water heaters.

For the in-country consultations, Jeff with the support of Ms Tendai Chigwada, Trade Research Analyst, will visit Vanuatu on 23-29 September, Solomon Islands on 29 September-07 October and PNG on 07-14 October. Barry will cover New Caledonia on 28 September-05 October. He will be accompanied by Ms Cheyenne Bouchet, Translation and Interpretation Officer, before travelling with Private Sector Development Adviser Henry Sanday to Fiji on 05-11 October. The Secretariat is seeking stakeholder support from Members and for more on this, please contact Tendai, t.chigwada@msg.int.



PNG's traditional hand-made string bag, the *bilum*, is among products to be studied

Source: <https://lorraineaspbae.wordpress.com>

INVESTMENT ROADSHOW AND TRADE FAIR ON SCHEDULE

As reported in the last issue of Melanesian Tok, the year's final series of Trade Officials and Ministerial Meetings to be held in Noumea, New Caledonia during November will culminate with the 3rd Investment Roadshow and Trade Fair. Following the Secretariat's consultations with the Hosts, the FLNKS, the schedule of events has been finalised, as

listed in the 'Upcoming Activities' section below. Negotiations on the MSGTA3 Trade in Goods and in Services are to be concluded while the Draft MSG PSD Strategy is also to be finalised by the IPA Heads for Ministerial approval. A validation workshop for the above-mentioned Study on MSG Export Products is to precede the

TEOM, which will then report the various meetings' outcomes to Ministers through the TMM. To further facilitate intra-MSG trade and investment flows, IPA officials and private sector representatives will participate in the Investment Roadshow before exporters exhibit their goods and services at the Trade Fair. Details for these upcoming events

are contained in an Administrative Circular that the Secretariat has issued to Members and their peak private sector bodies. The contact persons for the entire programme are Mr John Licht, Program Manager Trade & Investment, j.licht@msg.int and PSDA Henry Sanday, h.sanday@msg.int while logistics are being handled by CDA Eleni Tevi, e.tevi@msg.int.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Study on MSG Export Products

- Vanuatu 23-29 Sep
- Solomon Islands 29 Sep-07 Oct
- New Caledonia 28 Sep-05 Oct
- Fiji 05-11 Oct

MSG Governing Body, Port Vila

- SOM 13-14 Oct
- FMM 16 Oct

Environment & Climate Change, Honiara

- ECCTAC 15-16 Oct

MSGTA3 Technical Working Group Negotiations, Port Vila

- Trade in Goods TWGN 15 Oct
- Trade in Services TWGN 16 Oct

Trade Meetings, Noumea

- Trade in Goods TWGN, Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre, 09 Nov
- Trade in Services TWGN, Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre, 10 Nov
- HIPA+IOM, Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre, 11 Nov
- Export Study Validation Workshop, Nouvata Parc Hotel, 12 Nov

- TEOM, Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre, 13 Nov
- TMM, Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre, 16 Nov
- Industry Site Visits, Noumea precincts, 17 Nov
- Investment Roadshow, Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre, 18 Nov
- Trade Fair, Chambres du Metiers, 19-20 Nov