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

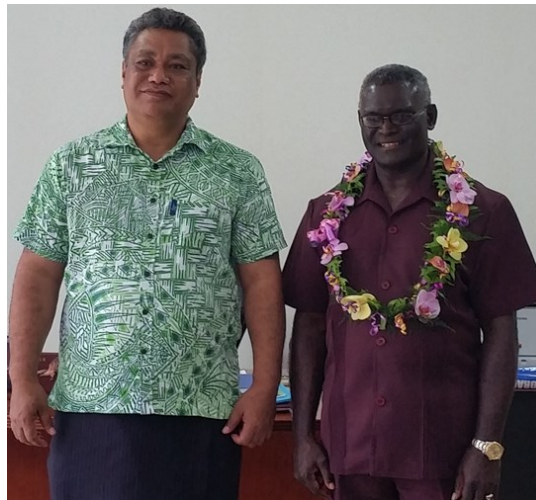
Achieving **Economic Prosperity**, a core objective of the **MSG 2038: Prosperity for All Plan!**

This Special Edition covers key work activities undertaken at the MSG Secretariat up to the end of 2015, including those funded by the EU through the Pacific Integration Technical Assistance Project. The Secretariat wishes all readers a prosperous new year, 2016.

DIRECTOR GENERAL FORAU MOVES ON

The Chair of MSG and Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, Hon. Mr Manasseh Sogavare, announced in mid-November the resignation of the Director General, Mr Peter Forau, from his position which he has held since joining the MSG Secretariat on 20 September 2011. In accepting his resignation, the Chair acknowledged the services of Mr Forau to the governments and people of Melanesia over the past four years.

Mr Forau is credited for leading the Secretariat from a relative small organisation with 14 staff to becoming a key Pacific Sub-regional organization with expanded mandates and annual work programmes staffed by 33 personnel in 2015. Besides the wide range of economic-, governance- and environment-related instruments of cooperation adopted by Leaders during his tenure, a major milestone of the Sub-region under Mr Forau's leadership was the



DG Forau (left) and Hon. Sogavare, during the Chair's visit to the Secretariat last August

completion, in 2013 by the MSG Eminent Persons Group, of the MSG 2038 Prosperity for All Plan which now serves as the guiding framework for the Secretariat's work activities.

Mr Forau's term as Director General ended on 31 December,

while the recruitment process for his replacement is underway. Meanwhile, the Deputy Director General, Mr Molean Kilepak, is the Acting Director General until a substantive appointment is made in due course.

COMMON ABBREVIATIONS

ACP - African, Caribbean and the Pacific ComSec - Commonwealth Secretariat **ADB** - Asian Development Bank **CTA** - Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation **DFAT** - Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade **DG** - Director General **EDF** - European Development Fund **EIB** - European Investment Bank **EU** - European Union **FLNKS** - Front de Liberationale the Nationale Kanak et Solcialiste **HIPA+IOM** - Heads of IIPA & Industry Officials Meeting **IFC** - International Finance Corporation **IMF** - International Monetary Fund **IPA** - Investment Promotion Agency **MFAT** - Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade **MOU** - Memorandum of Understanding **MSGTA3** - Melanesian Spearhead Group Trade Agreement 3 **PIDF** - Pacific Islands Development Forum **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 **SPC** - Pacific Community **SPREP** - Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme **TEOM** - Trade and Economic Officials Meeting **TMM** - Trade Ministerial Meeting **UNDP** - United Nations Development Programme **WTO** - World Trade Organisation

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KEY CONSULTANCY PROJECTS COMPLETED

Two PITAP-funded consultancy projects were completed upon the review of their reports in Noumea, New Caledonia. First was the MSG Private Sector Development (PSD) Strategy which Consultant Mr Jesoni Vitusagavulu (Vitu) tabled at the Heads of Investment Promotion Agencies & Industry Officials Meeting on 11 November and at the Trade & Economic Officials Meeting on 13 November. He then presented it at the MSG Investment Symposium on 18 November. While the Strategy is to be signed off by Trade Ministers in May 2016, the Secretariat has started exploring resources for its implementation which will also supplement Members' PSD policies. Mr Henry Sanday, Private Sector Development Adviser, h.sanday@msg.int, has more details on this.

Second was the Study on MSG Exports undertaken by Consultants Mr Jeff Blackburn and Mr Barry Hellberg. Their report was presented at the Export Study Validation Workshop on 12 November for scrutiny by Members, including Government officials and private sector representatives. Ms Sally-Ann Hughes, Export Marketing Officer from the Suva-based office of the Pacific Community (SPC) also provided SPC's perspective of the findings. Comments from Members and SPC would be helpful to the Consultants who are expected to submit their final report to the Secretariat by January 2016. Ms Tendai Chigwada, Trade Research Analyst, t.chigwada@msg.int is the contact person for the project.



Vitu, listening intently to Members



Presenting their report, L-R: Barry, Jeff and a French interpreter

TRADE MINISTERIAL IN NOUMEA

The Trade Ministers Meeting (TMM) held in Noumea on 13 November 2015 was opened by the President of New Caledonia, H.E. Mr Philippe Germain and chaired by Madame Caroline Machoro-Reignier of FLNKS. The TMM adopted a report from Trade and Economic Officials on the Draft MSG Trade Agreement (MSGTA3), Private Sector Development Strategy and Export Products Study. It also received updates on Melanesian Solutions Ltd and the 3rd MSG Investment Roadshow and Trade Fair.

The TMM agreed that a final round of negotiations on the MSGTA3 is to be convened in early 2016 to conclude the Trade in Services schedules. Given the progress achieved during 2015, it would be vital to maintain its momentum and thus bring the mandated issues to a closure. Upon their conclusion, these proposed meetings would pave the way for having a Melanesian Free Trade Area by 2017 as articulated in the Port Moresby Declaration.



TMM Chair, Madame Machoro-Reignier

MSG GOODS AND SERVICES SHOWCASED

Over 60 companies and entrepreneurs from Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Indonesia/West Papua exhibited their goods and services at the 3rd MSG Trade Fair held on 18-20 November in Noumea. On display were quality products from the handicraft, agricultural, fisheries and forestry sectors, from the manufacturing, cosmetics, food and beverages industries, as well as from the tourism, travel, information and communications technology (ICT), arts, environment and health sectors. Investment Promotion Agencies were also present to publicize investment opportunities and incentives to lure investors to their shores.

Vital contacts between visiting businesses with the lucrative New Caledonian market were made while brisk sales were recorded by exhibitors, most of whom had sold out by the end of the Fair. "The aim of the Trade

Fair was the promotion of business opportunities under the MSG Trade Agreement and we are glad that although a non-party to that Agreement, linkages with French businesses were also established," said the Director General, Mr Peter Forau.

The strong representation of women entrepreneurs and the diversity of their products, from technology-driven ICT to artistic drawings and health products were particularly significant.

Networks to facilitate the exchange of information relating to markets, quality standards and biosecurity requirements, among others, are known to have been established among the Trade Fair participants. It is expected that these developments will facilitate the further growth of intra-MSG trade. Ms Tendai Chigwada, Trade Research Analyst, t.chigwada@msg.int, can be contacted for more information on the Trade Fair.



Ms Juliette Pita (right) of Vanuatu, displays her artworks



Ms Jennifer Mesulama (left) of Ranjit Garments Fiji, explains her company's products, as Ms Geeta Raniga of Motiram Co Ltd, looks on

PUBLIC-PRIVATE DIALOGUE ON TRADE AND INVESTMENT



Cross-border trade in Port Vila... intra-regional transportation issues were also discussed at the Symposium

Some 150 representatives of MSG Governments, private sector, Investment Promotion Agencies diplomatic missions as well as from development partners and regional bodies were present at the dialogue on key trade and investment issues during the 3rd MSG Investment Symposium in Noumea, New Caledonia on 18 November. The speakers included H.E. Mr Roy Mickey Joy, Vanuatu's Ambassador to the EU; Mr Laurent Chatenay, Deputy Director General, Nord

Avenir from New Caledonia's private sector; Consultant Mr Alastair Sutton from Brussels and Dr Asif Chida of UNDP. Among speakers from the private sector were businesswomen including Ms Geeta Reddy of Organic Earth Fiji, Ms Winifred Amini of WIN-IT Consultancy from PNG and Ms Rona Garae of Oils of Paradise in Vanuatu.

The Symposium's sessions focused on the themes: *Readying the Region for the Melanesian Free Trade Area in 2017, Taking*

Advantage of Business Opportunities in MSG Countries, Growing Private Enterprises in Rural and Maritime Areas, and Addressing the Challenges of Climate Change to the Private Sector, which were based on the goals of the MSG PSD Strategy that was also presented at the Symposium by Consultant Mr Jesoni Vitusagavulu. The Symposium outcomes are to support the PSD Strategy and the contact person here is Mr Henry Sanday, PSD Adviser, h.sanday@msg.int.

PNG GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS MSG SECRETARIAT



PM O'Neill (right) with DG Forau at the handover ceremony

Source: Post Courier/PACNEWS

MSG Director General (DG), Mr Peter Forau, was among special guests at the 46th Pacific Islands Leaders Forum Leaders Meeting hosted by the Prime Minister (PM), Hon. Peter O'Neill in Port Moresby, PNG on 13-14 September. The occasion provided the opportunity for PM O'Neill to hand over to DG Forau the PNG Government's financial contribution of K1m (US\$355,000) towards the operational costs of the MSG Secretariat. Other beneficiaries of PNG's financial assistance were the Government of Kiribati, which received K5m (US\$1.7m) for the country's cli-

mate change and development programmes, and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) which was allocated K4m (US\$1.4m) to also help cover the costs of running its head office in Suva, Fiji. The assistance extended to MSG, Kiribati and PIFS followed pledges that the PM had made at the 2014 Forum Leaders Meeting in Palau.

DG Forau expressed his profound gratitude to PM O'Neill for inviting him to the Forum Leaders Meeting and for the financial assistance provided by the Government of PNG. "The funding support from PNG is indicative of

the commitment of the Government and her people to the MSG cause and importantly, it is timely since it would assist the MSG Secretariat in implementing its expanding work programme as mandated by the 20th MSG Leaders Summit that the Prime Minister himself attended with his fellow MSG Leaders in Honiara, Solomon Islands last June," DG Forau said. The DG added that the Secretariat would ensure that financial contributions from Members such as the assistance just received from PNG would be expended for the direct and maximal benefit of Members themselves through the services of the Secretariat.

MOUS SIGNED WITH ACP AND CTA



ACP-MSG MOU signed, L-R: Hon Pundari, Hon Manetoali, Stanley and Dr Gomes

As part of its ongoing pursuit of stronger relations with strategic institutions, the MSG Secretariat signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the ACP Secretariat on 08 December in Paris on the margins of the recent COP 21 Conference. The MOU was signed by Dr Patrick Gomes, Secretary General of the ACP Secretariat while the MSG Secretariat was represented by Mr Stanley Wapot, Program Manager, Governance and Sustainable Development. The

ceremony was witnessed by PNG's Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Hon. John Pundari and his counterpart from Solomon Islands, Hon. Samuel Manetoali. The MOU resulted from consultations held in Brussels last July between Dr Gomes and MSG officials including Mr Peni Sikivou, Director Programs and Mr John Licht, Program Manager Trade & Investment.

A day before, also in Paris, the Secretariat signed an MOU with

the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) to formalize the two organizations' partnership which has already seen the joint implementation of numerous projects in the Pacific. CTA focuses its work on enhancing ACP capacities for agricultural and rural development in order to contribute to its mission of food security, prosperity and sound natural resources management. Stanley, sj.wapot@msg.int can be contacted for more details.

DELIGHTING CUSTOMERS AND CUSTOMERS' CUSTOMERS



A delighted Semi



Developers at work



Staff team building activity

“**delight them**”, the motto of Fijian-owned Software Factory, speaks volumes about the company’s corporate culture in ensuring the satisfaction not only of its customers, but also of its customers’ customers. The 14-year old Suva-based company has continued to advance its core competencies on software design for Financial Systems, focusing mainly on Loans, Savings and Superannuation.

Managing Director, Mr Semi Tukana, who also met with the MSG PSD mission team during their in-country consultations, proudly attributes the company’s progress to its staff. “We refute the belief that major software systems can only be developed in the US and Australia or that any IT personnel coming from India must be good, as all of our Software Developers are graduates of USP’s School of Computer Sciences and Information systems.” Semi describes himself as “a champion for Pacific Islander IT graduates,” adding “We produce good IT graduates and have proven that we can

produce top IT solutions.” Fresh graduates are hired as “Graduate Developers” and trained for one year before they can be called “Developers”.

Principal clients for their **Banksoft™** and **Supersoft™** systems are the Development Banks and Superannuation Funds of Fiji, Kiribati, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, while non-financial clients include the Fijian Teachers Association, Ministry of Health, Fiji Public Trustee Corporation Ltd, USP and **Landsoft™** for the then Native Land Trust Board. Others are the Housing and Land Corporations of Samoa and the Housing Authority of Kiribati. The company’s most “out-of-the-way” experience was to develop a Hospital Information System project for Fiji. “We had no experience in the medical industry and it took us two months to really try and come up with an understanding of what happens in a hospital,” Semi said. “Besides conventional information sources, we searched Wikipedia and other

medical blog sites to understand the life-cycle of patients when they entered a hospital,” he added. Completed in 11 months, the **Medisoft™** software has been implemented at all major hospitals throughout Fiji.

Recently completed software systems include **Unitsoft™** for the Fiji Holdings Limited Unit Trust and **Sharesoft™** for the South Pacific Stock Exchange, while **Researchsoft™** is currently being developed for USP. Systems are developed mainly on the latest Microsoft platform and following ongoing industry advances, all new systems are “Cloud-ready and responsive” meaning they can be viewed and accessed on smartphones, tablets and notebooks. The company’s successful replacement of software systems designed and implemented by other developers including those from developed countries, has given Semi and his team a lot of confidence to pursue even higher markets. For any business enquiries, Semi can be contacted via stukana@soffactory.com.fj.

PNG APPOINTS APEC AMBASSADOR



Ambassador Pomaleu

The Secretariat congratulates Mr Ivan Pomaleu, Managing Director of the PNG Investment Promotion Authority (IPA) as their Ambassador to the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). PNG is the only Pacific Island Country represented in APEC, whose 21 member economies account for 46% of global trade and are aiming for free trade and investment flows by 2020. While Singapore hosts the APEC Secretariat, the APEC Chair rotates among its member economies each year, with Peru and Vietnam chairing in 2016 and 2017, respectively before PNG takes over in 2018.

Ambassador Pomaleu, appointed PNG’s APEC Senior Official in 2012, led the negotiations that secured support for PNG’s undertaking to host APEC in 2018. Since then, PNG’s status as an equal participant of the APEC process has improved significantly. “The work is quite high profile in terms of presiding over a collective PNG policy position on trade and investment, as well as on health, education, tourism, economic and small to medium enterprise development,” Ambassador Pomaleu said. He will be supporting the Prime Minister, who is the Minister Responsible for APEC, in the drafting and

formulation of PNG’s policy deliverables and priorities for 2018. Administrative support will be provided by the PNG APEC Secretariat.

As Head of IPA, Ambassador Pomaleu has been actively engaged in the MSG Trade and Investment Work Programme, particularly through the Heads of Investment Promotion Agencies and Industry Officials Meeting. Opportunities for information sharing on relevant policy issues are being explored in partnership with PNG for the benefit of MSG Members, who may also access APEC via the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, which is an Observer of APEC.

COMMONWEALTH DSG VISITS



A token of appreciation from Deputy DG Mr Molean Kilepak to Mr Maharaj (left)

The Deputy Secretary General (DSG, Economic and Social Development) of the Commonwealth Secretariat (ComSec), Mr Deodat Maharaj, visited the MSG Secretariat on 17 September on the margins of discussions with the Government of Vanuatu. The visit was part of a tour of Commonwealth-member small island states in the Pacific.

Accompanied by his Economic Adviser, Mr Harshen Nyambe, DSG Maharaj met with the Director General (DG), Mr Peter Forau, and MSG staff. Discussions centred on common issues of concern such as the vulnera-

bility of small island states, trade policy and other key global issues. "The Commonwealth Secretariat's technical capacity could support the work programme of the MSG Secretariat, especially in the related areas of policy analysis and capacity building," DSG Maharaj said.

One particular area that ComSec has done a lot of work in relates to building the resilience of its member countries by addressing socio-economic issues and identifying gaps to address external and internal shocks. Both Secretariats also underscored the importance of trade as a vehicle

for advancing the developmental aspirations of the member countries of MSG.

"We both agreed to follow-up on a number of key areas of interest by way of technical assistance to further strengthen our services to Members such as on climate change, trade policy and facilitation," DG Forau said. He also expressed his appreciation for "this first visit by a dignitary of the Commonwealth from London to the MSG here in Port Vila." Opportunities for future collaboration are to be further explored by the two organizations in the foreseeable future.

ENGAGEMENTS WITH WTO



Ambassador Falemaka, PIFS' Representative to the WTO

The Secretariat attended the 10th World Trade Organisation (WTO) Ministerial Conference (MC10) Pacific ACP Preparatory Meeting held on 07-8 October in Port Vila, Vanuatu. The meeting was co-organized by the Government of Vanuatu, through its Embassy in Brussels and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) Geneva Office.

The meeting considered proposals by Pacific ACP States on bridging the gaps on outstanding Doha Development Agenda

issues and development outcomes for tabling at the WTO MC10 Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya on 15-18 December. Presenters in Port Vila included PIFS' Permanent Representative to Geneva, Ambassador Mrs Mere Falemaka and Counselor Mr Noah Kouback of the Vanuatu Embassy in Brussels. Also in attendance were representatives from PNG, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu and the Office of the Chief Trade Advisor (OCTA). The Secretariat was represented by Trade Econo-

mist/Legal, Mr Petros Shayanowako. Key decisions from Port Vila were tabled at the Pacific Ministerial meeting held in Brussels on 19-21 October in preparation for the ACP Ministerial Meeting on 14 December ahead of the WTO MC10 Conference.

The Pacific priorities identified for the Draft ACP Declaration on the MC10 Conference were supported by MSG. Petros joined the Vanuatu delegation at the MC10 in Nairobi and he can be emailed for details, p.shayanowako@msg.int.

EU CONSULTANTS CALL IN



Following their ROM meeting: L-R: John, Karen, and MSG staff members, Petros Shayanowako and Eleni Tevi

Consultant Ms Karen McHugh visited the Secretariat on 12-13 October to undertake an independent review of PITAP activities in accordance with the EU's Results-Oriented-Monitoring (ROM) process that is undertaken on-site every two years for a brief snapshot of the implementation of EU-funded programmes. Ms McHugh met with Mr Peni Sikivou, Director of Programmes, Mr John Licht, Programme Manager Trade & Investment and had frank discus-

sions with PITAP staff so as to assess the performance of interventions and to improve work effectiveness. The Secretariat also assisted her in securing appointments with other PITAP stakeholders, namely, the Vanuatu Ministry of Trade, Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Investment Promotion Authority. Besides being a tool for project management, ROM also contributes lessons learnt for further programming, design and implementation of future interventions.

Another consultant who met with Secretariat staff was Ms Kerry Burrigge, who was in Port Vila on 03-05 November while doing work for the European Investment Bank on access to finance for Vanuatu's small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The MSG PSD Strategy was discussed with her since access to finance is identified in it as an impediment to SME growth. Ms Burrigge moved on to Fiji after Vanuatu as her team was covering selected island countries.

MSG FISHERIES ROADMAP PROGRESSES STEADILY

The implementation of the **MSG Roadmap for Inshore Fisheries Management and Sustainable Development** has progressed steadily following its endorsement by MSG Leaders at their 20th Summit that was held in Honiara, Solomon Islands on 26 June 2015.

Solomon Islands has used this Roadmap as the basis for drafting its new Coastal Fisheries Policy which is to be tabled with Cabinet. Consultant Dr Hugh Govan, who assisted the country's Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources in developing this new Policy, conducted extensive stakeholder consultations in 2014 for the preparation of an inshore and provincial fisheries sector planning framework. He also took into account relevant work undertaken previously by Government Ministries, regional bodies, academia and development partners.

In line as well with the MSG Roadmap, Dr Govan was in Port Moresby, PNG in December

2015 to help the National Fisheries Authority (NFA) develop a national Roadmap for Coastal Fisheries and Marine Aquaculture Management, which is being programmed for the decade 2016-2026. PNG's Roadmap would also be linked with the various development strategies of the National Government, NFA, Provincial Fisheries Management and Development Plans and Policies, as well as being aligned with the work of the Pacific Community (SPC), Food and Agriculture Organisation and the United Nations.

Referring to the MSG Inshore Fisheries Roadmap, Dr Govan acknowledged its value and relevance to the needs of the Melanesian Sub-region, even at the community level. "Coastal fisheries development can only be achieved and sustained if built on the foundation of sustainable resource management which fisheries agencies have placed at the core of the MSG Roadmap, and the progress that

Solomon Islands and PNG have made in translating the Roadmap into national policy is commendable," Dr Govan said. "I am optimistic that this momentum will be maintained including in Vanuatu and in Fiji which is developing its own national policy framework," he added.

These measures are also cognizant of the MSG approach to address environment and climate change challenges by integrating environment and climate change measures into livelihoods development to continue to sustain people's livelihoods at local and community levels in Melanesia, in line with the recommendations of the MSG Environment and Climate Change Technical Advisory Committee Meeting held in Honiara on 15-16 October.

Details of these initiatives can be secured from Dr Govan, hgovan@gmail.com, or Mr Stanley Wapot, Program Manager Governance & Sustainable Development, sj.wapot@msg.int.



Market sales in Suva, Fiji



Roadside fish sales in West Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands

Source: Tahi Govan

SPREP COUNTRY OFFICES OPEN

The plans of the Apia-based Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), as reported early last year in Issue 2 of *Melanesian Tok*, for establishing a national presence in the MSG Sub-region have been realised.

SPREP's Country Managers, namely, Mr Herman Timmermans (Fiji), Mr Fred Paterson (Solomon Islands) and Mr David Loubser (Vanuatu) are contracted under the Pacific Ecosystem-based Adaptation to Climate Change (PEBACC) project which is funded by the German Federal Government and implemented by SPREP.

Having a budget of €4.95million and to run for five years from 2014-2019, PEBACC is to explore and

promote ecosystem-based options for adapting to climate change, the impacts of which affect all sectors of the economy.

Mr Loubser, a New Zealander who served previously as Director of Climate Change for the African Wildlife Foundation based in Nairobi, Kenya, heads SPREP's Vanuatu Country Office which is currently housed at the MSG Secretariat.

The principal functions of the Vanuatu Country Office relate to ecosystem-based adaptation firstly in the Port Vila catchment area and secondly, for the whole of Tanna given that island's large population, primary dependence on agriculture and increasing level of deforestation.

"We are fully aware of the country's vulnerability to the adverse impacts of climate change as experienced last March with Cyclone Pam, and we look forward to implementing remedial strategies under PEBACC in harmony with Vanuatu's Climate Change policy," Mr Loubser said. He added, "It is also significant to note that our work would be consistent as well with MSG's Sustainable Development policy frameworks."

For more on this new undertaking, Mr Loubser can be reached via davidl@sprep.org or alternatively, Mr Stanley Wapot, Program Manager Governance & Sustainable Development, sj.wapot@msg.int.



Vanuatu Country Manager, Mr Loubser



Parts of the ecosystem

OBITUARY: MR JACK O'OI

MSG has lost one of its dedicated servants, Mr Jack O'oi, Acting Director of Trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & External Trade, Solomon Islands, who passed away on 10 December. As Chair of the Trade Technical Working Group (TWG) and also of the Trade and Economic Officials Meeting (TEOM), he was at the forefront of high-level MSG trade policy negotiations.

The loss of Mr O'oi affects not only Solomon Islands but also the MSG. The Director General, Mr Peter Forau, expressed his deepest sympathies on behalf of Trade Officials and Secretariat staff. "The passing away of Mr

O'oi is very untimely as he was chairing both the TWG and TEOM during 2015, when negotiations on the review of the Draft Legal Text of the revised MSG Trade Agreement were being concluded," DG Forau said. He added that Mr O'oi played the key leadership role in facilitating high-level policy advice to Trade Ministers who would ultimately sign off the revised Trade Agreement in early 2016.

Mr O'oi worked in the Department of Trade from 1981 to 2002 within the Ministry of Commerce, Industries, Labour and Immigration. He continued with the Department following its transfer to

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade till his death.

Besides his commitment to improving trade policy regimes in his country and the Melanesian Sub-region, Mr O'oi was steadfast with his desire for the formulation of a Private Sector Development Strategy that would have a strong focus on supporting rural development. DG Forau said, "Mr O'oi was known for his persistent passion for the PSD Strategy to support rural-based entrepreneurs and now that he has left us, we will all miss him but would continue to pursue the trade and investment cause that he championed."



Mr O'oi (right) with Mr Joseph Ma'ahanua, Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs & External Trade

SECRETARIAT FAREWELLS STAFF MEMBERS

The Secretariat farewelled, in addition to DG Mr Peter Forau as reported on Page 2, three other senior staff members, namely, Mr Peni Sikivou, Mr Jean-Pierre Nirua and Mr Jimmy Naoua.

Peni joined the Secretariat from Fiji's Ministry of Finance on 06 July 2009 as Director, Economic and Social Development Division. He then became Director of the Trade, Investment and Economic Development Division, and later as Director, Programs where he

led work on policy frameworks for Trade, Investment, Economic Development, Governance and Sustainable Development.

Jean-Pierre worked for the Vanuatu Government before joining on 30 November 2009 as Director, Corporate Services in charge of the Secretariat's financial and administrative functions. He then became Interim Managing Director of Melanesian Solutions Ltd.

Jimmy started on 17 September 2012 as Social Policy Officer and

then appointed Head, Front de Liberation the Nationale Kanak et Solcialiste (FLNKS) Unit. He thus coordinated the implementation of the Noumea Declaration signed by MSG Leaders on 20 June 2013, as part of their renewed commitment to the FLNKS' cause for self-determination.

The Secretariat acknowledges the services of the outgoing staff to MSG and wishes them well with their future endeavours.



At their farewell, Jean-Pierre (left) and Peni



Jimmy

PURSUIT OF PARTNERSHIPS ONGOING

Even into the final weeks of the year, the Secretariat was pursuing collaboration with development partners for support towards the implementation of initiatives developed by MSG stakeholders themselves. Upon the completion of the MSG PSD Strategy and in response to an invitation from the EU Delegation for the Pacific, Mr Henry Sanday, Private Sector Development Adviser, presented the Strategy to the Pacific PSD Donors Group Meeting hosted by the EU in Suva, Fiji on 26-27 November.

Present then were ADB, DFAT (Australia), EIB, IFC, IMF, MFAT (NZ), UNDP, PIFS, PIDF, PIPSO and SPC. This was to strengthen coordination between partners of PSD and Financial Inclusion.

An invitation from PIFS also enabled the Secretariat to contribute to the identification and prioritization of project proposals for the 11th European Development Fund (EDF). The event, held on 09-10 December also in Suva, was attended by Mr John

Licht, Program Manager Trade & Investment, and Henry. It reviewed proposals for the €50m Regional Economic Integration component of the 2014-2020 Pacific Regional Indicative Programme. The Secretariat advocated the implementation of both the Revised MSGTA3 and PSD Strategy as key initiatives to be supported under the new EDF envelope. The outcomes of these interventions are expected in late 2016. John, j.licht@msg.int, is the contact person here.



John (extreme right) at the 11th EDF consultations, and next to him is Dr Hugh Govan (see Fisheries story on Page 6)

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



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

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MELANESIA, ONE PEOPLE, ONE SOLWORA,
ONE REGION, WORKING TOGETHER TO
ACHIEVE PROSPERITY FOR ALL

Contact *Melanesian Tok* by email
melanesian.tok@msg.int

CAPACITY BUILDING BENEFITS OFFICIALS

A key result area of PITAP work is “strengthening institutional capacity” for MSG Members, including government officials, the private sector and other non-state actors. Officials thus joined the Secretariat’s teams during in-country consultations that allowed them to meet with stakeholders, especially in rural areas. This exposed them to on-the-ground issues which require the attention of policy makers. The support of officials in facilitating access to data and information, arranging appointments and transportation was helpful indeed.

During the PSD Strategy mission over April-June 2015, Mr Anthony Korau of PNG’s Department of Trade, Commerce & Industry attended consultations in Port Moresby. In Solomon Islands, Mr Lonsdale Lungana and Mr Jack Gulauma from the Ministry of Commerce & Industries as well as Ms Tracey Choko from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & External Trade joined the PSD team. Jack, who also travelled with Tracey and the team to Gizo, Munda and Noro, admitted that the time spent with the team was enriching. “During 30 years of my work experience, I have not come across this, listening and learning from the discussions and I was happy with the opportunity to speak too,” Jack said. “It was all beneficial to me, on how to interact with clients and also my role as leader in the work place, home and village,” he added. Jack also acknowledged that “having Tracey eased my worries about protocol and helped me learn more about my own country’s trade policy.”

Ms Melania Talau of Fiji’s Ministry of Industry & Trade accompanied the PSD team during their travels on the islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. In Vanuatu, Mr Reuben Tafau from the Department of Industry and Mr Adolphe Bank from the Department of External Trade joined the team in Port Vila, Santo and Tanna. Adolphe said “I was delighted with the time spent during the consultations as I learnt and explored new dimensions in trade, mainly for developing our private sector for more economic benefits.”

For the Export Products Study during September-October 2015, Ms Martinez Wasuak-MB and Mr Morea Onno of PNG’s Department of Foreign Affairs accompanied Consultant Jeff Blackburn and MSG Trade Research Analyst, Ms Tendai Chigwada during stakeholder consultations in Port Moresby. For the same study in Fiji, the country’s Trade Commissioner-designate to PNG, Mr Navitalai Tuivuniwai and Mr Kamlesh Prasad from the Ministry of Industry & Trade, were also present with Consultant Mr Barry Hellberg and MSG Private Sector Development Adviser, Mr Henry Sanday throughout the consultations in Suva.

“We thank Members for their support and we will continue working with them, especially in terms of strengthening their capacity,” said Mr Molean Kilepak, Deputy Director General.



At Noro Fishing Port, L-R: Tracey, Henry, Vitu, Jim Alexander (General Manager, Softuna Ltd), Petros and Jack



In Wailevu Village, Vanua Levu
L-R: Vitu, Petros and Melania



Boating off Santo, Adolphe (front left) and Reuben (front right)



L-R: Tendai, Sharlene Gawi of PNG Bilum Promotion Export Association, and Martinez in Port Moresby

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR 2016

January

- 01 Jan: New Years Day
- 04 Jan: Secretariat reopens
- 17-29 Jan: MSG Observer Mission for Vanuatu Snap Election
- 22 Jan: Vanuatu Snap Election

February

- 08-12 Feb: PSD Strategy Awareness, Port Vila
- 09-10 Feb: MSG Sports Committee Meeting, Port Vila
- 15-19 Feb: PSD Strategy Awareness, Honiara

February (con't)

- 21 Feb: Lini Memorial Day, Vanuatu
- 25-26 Feb: Aviation & Tourism Sectoral Dialogue, Port Vila
- 28 Feb: MSG Council of Arts & Culture, Honiara

- 29 Feb-05 Mar: PSD Strategy Awareness, Port Moresby

March

- 05 Mar: Chiefs Day, Vanuatu
- 14 Mar onwards: In-country consultations for MSG Mining and Forestry studies