



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 by the European Union through the Pacific Integration Technical Assistance Project.

NEW MSG TRADE AGREEMENT APPROVED

The 5th MSG Trade Ministers Meeting held in Port Vila, Vanuatu on 25 May 2016 endorsed the new Melanesian Free Trade Agreement (MFTA) following the conclusion of technical negotiations on the MSG Trade Agreement in the last three years by senior Trade, Investment and State Law officials.

Chaired by Hon. Milner Tozaka, Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade of Solomon Islands, the meeting was attended by Hon. Richard Maru, Minister for Trade, Commerce and Industry of PNG; Hon. Bruno Leingkone Tau, Minister for Foreign Affairs, External Trade and International Cooperation of Vanuatu; Ms. Seema Sharma, Director of Trade for Fiji and Mr. Yvon Fava of FLNKS.

"The ultimate milestone is for the MFTA to enable freer trading, thus enhancing economic integration as aspired to under the MSG 2038 Prosperity for All Plan," Hon. Tozaka said. The Ministers also endorsed the MSG Private Sector Development (PSD) Strategy.



Trade Ministers and delegates, Front L-R: Mr Fava (FLNKS), Hon. Maru (PNG), Hon. Tozaka (Solomon Islands & Chair), DG Yauvoli, Hon. Leingkone (Vanuatu) and Ms Sharma (Fiji)

Director General (DG), Mr. Ame-na Yauvoli, thanked Members for their part in shaping the MFTA and PSD Strategy. "The Strategy will go a long way in supporting the MFTA as cross-border investment flows are stimulated and facilitated," he said.

Besides goods, the Trade Agreement now covers trade in services, labour mobility and cross-border investments. State Law officials further reviewed the Agreement at a legal scrubbing workshop on 26-27 May. The

Agreement is to be signed by Leaders and subjected to national ratification processes before the MFTA enters into force by 01 January 2017.

"I particularly thank the European Union for its funding support under the Pacific Integration Technical Assistance Project through the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat," Hon. Tozaka said. For more details on the meeting, Deputy DG Mr. Molean Kilepak can be emailed, m.kilepak@msg.int.

COMMON ABBREVIATIONS

ACP - African, Caribbean and Pacific	CTA - Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation
DG - Director General	DPKO - Department of Peace Keeping Operations
EDF - European Development Fund	EU - European Union
FPU - Former Police Unit	FLNKS - Front de Liberation the Nationale Kanak et Solcialiste
IICA - Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture	IACT - Increasing Agricultural Commodity Trade
MFTA - Melanesian Free Trade Area	IPA - Investment Promotion Agency
MSGTA3 - Melanesian Spearhead Group Trade Agreement 3	MOU - Memorandum of Understanding
PHAMA - Pacific Horticultural & Agricultural Market Access Project	NCD - Non-Communicable Disease
PIANZEA - Pacific Islands , Australia, New Zealand Electoral Administrators	
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	SBDC - Small Business Development Centre
SPC - Pacific Community	SMS - Skills Movement Scheme
TEOM - Trade and Economic Officials Meeting	TMM - Trade Ministerial Meeting

What's Inside

<i>Other Trade Ministerial Considerations</i>	2
<i>New Caledonian President Supports Regional Integration</i>	2
<i>MSG Day Celebrated</i>	2
<i>EU Head of Delegation Visits</i>	3
<i>Aviation and Tourism Officials Dialogue</i>	3
<i>Institutional Documents Reviewed</i>	3
<i>The Business of "Letting Food Be Thy Medicine"</i>	4
<i>Supporting Agriculture with SPC</i>	4
<i>MSG Contributes to Oceania Customs Data Workshop</i>	5
<i>Pursuing Stronger Institutional Collaboration</i>	5
<i>New Vanuatu Agritourism Policy Backed</i>	5
<i>Fiji Police Chief in Vila</i>	6
<i>Police Commissioners Convene</i>	6
<i>Pacific Electoral Integrity Boosted</i>	6
<i>Facilitating and Stimulating Private Sector Interests</i>	7
<i>Secretariat Modernizes IT System</i>	7
<i>Help for New School Clinic</i>	7
<i>Consultancy Projects Underway</i>	8
<i>Upcoming Events for 2016</i>	8

OTHER TRADE MINISTERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

While the foremost decision of the 5th MSG Trade Ministers Meeting related to the revised MSG Trade Agreement (MSGTA) that will now be known as the Melanesian Free Trade Agreement or MFTA, the Ministers also discussed and endorsed other initiatives which are designed to further strengthen the Melanesian sub-region's trade, investment and overall economic performance.

These initiatives include the MSG PSD Strategy that is aimed at achieving higher, inclusive and sustainable growth through the development of the private sector. The hallmarks of the Strategy are the adoption of an inclusive approach to private sector development, unleashing rural entrepreneurship and heightening the resilience of the private sector to the impact of climate change.

The Ministers also discussed updates on the economic performance of Member countries

as well as progress with the implementation of the MSG 2038 Prosperity for All Plan. They were also updated on MSG's Sectoral Development Programmes covering forestry, mining and shipping, as well as the outcomes of the MSG Export Products Study and of the MSG Aviation and Tourism Sectoral Dialogue.

In recognition of the potential economic benefits from cross-sectoral linkages, the Ministers supported programmes that would strengthen sectoral linkages between Agriculture and Tourism.

Additional details on the PSD Strategy and Export Study are available from Mr John Licht, Program Manager Trade & Investment, j.licht@msg.int, while Mr David Hopa, Program Manager Economic Development, d.hopa@msg.int can be contacted for more on the remaining initiatives.



Vanuatu-made goods like those displayed by Mrs Lesieli Joseph at the 2015 MSG Trade Fair in Noumea are traded duty-free under the MSGTA



Rural entrepreneurs at work, L-R: Consultant Vitu, Mrs Chute and Mr Ian Chute, with chicken, soaps, oils and honey produced in Seaqaqa, Fiji

NEW CALEDONIAN PRESIDENT SUPPORTS REGIONAL INTEGRATION

The President of New Caledonia, Mr Philippe Germain, revealed his "will for regional integration" during a visit on 02 April 2016 to the Secretariat where he met with Acting DG, Mr Molean Kilepak, and MSG staff for discussions on mutual relations with Melanesia. President Germain was accompanied by the Minister for Health, Youth and Sports, Mrs Valentine Eurisouke; Chief of Staff for the Regional Cooperation and External Relations Unit, Mr François Bockel; Protocol Officer, Mr Bernard Cerneaux; Communications Officer, Mr Ludovic Lafon; and Interpreters, Mrs Karine Bachelier-Bourat and Mr Gilles Kaboha, as well as business representatives.

The President acknowledged the close historical links between Vanuatu, France and New Caledonia and highlighted his desire for stronger bonds between New Caledonia and Melanesia and the Pacific at large. "This could be done either bilaterally or with regional and sub-regional organisations such as MSG," he said.

Discussions, which also involved the private sector, focused on strengthening partnerships between the MSG Secretariat and New Caledonia as well as with FLNKS. For more information, Ms Cheyenne Bouchet, Translation & Interpretation Officer, can be emailed, c.bouchet@msg.int.



After their meeting, L-R: Mrs Eurisouke, Mr Kilepak and President Germain

Source: Caledonie Ensemble

MSG DAY CELEBRATED

Following the endorsement by Leaders at the 19th MSG Leaders Summit in Noumea on 14 March 2013, the 14th of March is being celebrated annually as MSG Day to commemorate the establishment of the Group, thus allowing Member countries to reflect on the objectives, progress and vision behind the inception of MSG in Goroka, PNG in 1986.

MSG Day marks the historical occasion when the six-point "Agreed Principles of Cooperation Among the Independent States in Melanesia" was signed on 14 March 1988 in Port Vila, Vanuatu. The document was signed by

former Prime Ministers Mr Paias Wingti of PNG, Mr Ezekiel Alebu of Solomon Islands, and the late Father Walter Lini of Vanuatu. This helped advance MSG interests, the most prominent of which were the signing of the MSG Trade Agreement in 1993 and the opening of the MSG Secretariat office in 2008.

MSG Day on 14 March 2016 was celebrated during afternoon tea at the Secretariat. Also in attendance were senior officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs for Vanuatu as well as representatives of the Pacific Community based in Port Vila and Noumea.



Happy MSG Day!



Former Fiji President, Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, while visiting in January 2016, reads the plaques marking the opening of the MSG Secretariat on 30 May 2008 that he also attended on behalf of the Fiji Government.

EU HEAD OF DELEGATION VISITS



H.E. Jacobs, third from left, with his team and MSG officials

The Suva-based Head of the European Union (EU) Delegation for the Pacific, H.E. Andrew Jacobs, paid a courtesy call to the MSG Secretariat on 16 March 2016 while en route to Suva from Noumea. He was accompanied by EU officials namely, Mr Jobst Von Kirchmann, Head of Development Coordination Unit for Central Asia, Middle East, Gulf & Pacific, and Mr Gerard Van Driessche, International Aid & Cooperation Officer for the Pacific.

H.E. Jacobs was thankful for the opportunity to discuss key issues currently affecting the region and also to explore options on further strengthening the existing EU-MSG partnership.

The then Officer-in-Charge of the Secretariat, Mr John Licht, expressed his appreciation for the EU's support for MSG under the Pacific Integration Trade Assistance Project (PITAP) which is being administered by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. MSG officials provided the visiting delegation updates on

the revision of the MSG Trade Agreement, and the completion of the Draft MSG Private Sector Development Strategy and Export Products Study, all of which are key PITAP activities. The visitors were also informed of progress with other initiatives including Climate Change and Economic Development, which relate directly to the long-term MSG 2038 Prosperity for All Plan.

Both sides agreed on the need to strengthen collaboration on issues of relevance to the EU and MSG.

AVIATION AND TOURISM OFFICIALS DIALOGUE



The Dialogue in session

The 2nd MSG Aviation & Tourism Sectoral Dialogue held on 10-11 March 2016 in Port Vila, Vanuatu provided a platform for Members to discuss issues relating to the tourism industry and connectivity via air transportation. In attendance were Directors and aviation and tourism officials from Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

The meeting was opened by Mr Marokon Alilee, Director General for Trade, Commerce, Industries, Tourism and Cooperatives of Vanuatu, who stressed the need for an MSG tourism marketing

brand given the Sub-region's growing aviation market share.

Mr Moses Virivolomo, Permanent Secretary for Communication and Aviation of Solomon Islands, who chaired the meeting emphasised inter-airline partnerships and information sharing as crucial to improving intra-MSG connectivity and the attractiveness of packages, which would in turn grow tourism and investor interests.

Among the key recommendations made were the need for: consultations on regulatory reforms and streamlined responsibilities to

facilitate sustained growth through aviation and tourism; the review of Members' respective Bilateral Air Services Agreement to accommodate a Fair Sky Policy; the pursuit of harmonized aviation regulations within the MSG; the development of an MSG Tourism Marketing Strategy; and, supporting tourism as a driving force for enhancing sub-regional economic integration under the MSG Trade Agreement. For further details on the meeting, Mr David Hopa, Program Manager Economic Development can be emailed, d.hopa@msg.int.



Gizo Airport, Solomon Islands

INSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

The 12th MSG Sub-Committee on Legal & Institutional Issues meeting in Honiara, Solomon Islands on 17-18 March 2016, discussed the national ratification and implementation plans for Treaties and Agreements that Leaders had endorsed. The meeting, attended by senior officials from Fiji, FLNKS, PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, was chaired by Mr. William Soaki, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & External Trade for Solomon Islands.

The instruments discussed at the meeting comprised the fol-

lowing: Treaty on Reciprocal Enforcement of Foreign Judgments; Treaty on Custody and Maintenance; Framework Treaty on the Protection of Traditional Knowledge & Expressions of Culture; Agreement Establishing the Regional Police Academy; and Framework Agreement on the Formed Police Unit.

The Treaties on Reciprocal Enforcement of Foreign Judgments and on Custody and Maintenance of Children were developed to respond to the likely spin-off effects of increased movements of people and goods be-

tween Member countries, while the Framework Treaty of the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture is to assist Members in protecting their cultures and traditions given the increased commercialization of Arts and Cultural Expressions.

In addition, the meeting reviewed the criteria for Observers and Associate Members of the MSG. Mr Ilan Kilo, Manager Legal Services can be contacted via email, i.kilo@msg.int, for more details on the meeting and on these instruments.



Expressions of culture in Mt Hagen, Western Highlands Province, PNG

THE BUSINESS OF “LETTING FOOD BE THY MEDICINE”



Repeka (far right) with her youthful team of employees



A selection of vegan dishes



Customers ponder over the menu



Lunch hour is the busiest time

Given the prevalence of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) that the World Bank says is accounting for 70-75% of deaths in the region and thus imposing “large health, financial and economic costs” on Pacific Island Countries, this Issue of *Melanesian Tok* profiles a healthy vegan food shop in Fiji. The Vanuatu Government’s revelation, as reported in the *Daily Post* on 08 April 2016, about the country’s ranking of “sixth in the world for the prevalence of diabetes” further justified a testimony on this company.

Highland Natural is a healthy vegan food shop and cafe that believes in “letting food be thy medicine...” with the goal of serving the people of Suva healthy, fresh, natural and sensually attractive plant-based meals through our juice, sandwich and salad bars.

Being vegetarians for the past 20 years, it had always been hard to find good tasting, healthy and nutritious meat-free meals downtown. There were also a lot of people who wanted to have these types of meals but did not know how to make them or how to enjoy them. So naturally, having a great passion for making wholesome plant-based meals, we decided to open a shop in Suva’s CBD area in August 2012 with products that cater to this growing need. We were convinced that eating healthy meals and observing simple laws of health would help people reclaim their health and enjoy life to the full. We did meet quite a few road bumps along the way to actually

setting up shop – one of these being regulations and licensing procedures. From our experience, processing times held us back and regulations were not clear – especially for newcomers. The need to comply with regulations for onsite cooking although food prepared and sold in the shop is raw was challenging. This all led to a lot of unplanned adjustments, frustrating delays, and unbudgeted expenses prior to opening shop. But once opened, it was amazing to see people coming in from far and wide to get something healthy to eat and drink. Within a short time we had people queuing out the door to eat this “new healthy food”. Over the next year or two, we continued to experiment until we arrived at a package that was popular and financially viable.

A good part of our current success has been due to the dynamic team of young people we have running the café. Young people have so much energy and are not inhibited like adults, so with empowerment and direction, they can do any task – from thrashing ideas to seeing off satisfied customers. We try to look for young people who are enthusiastic about the products we offer and whose lives reflect the lifestyle we promote.

We have a wide cross-section of customers ranging from those who are strictly vegan to those who enjoy the occasional dose of goodness. We’ve seen that we also serve as a health oasis to those

who are looking for that needed boost in their health or who want to do some form of detox. We also have a close link with some medical practitioners and hospitals where patients get food and natural supplements ordered from Highland Natural. This is an area that has seen an increase in customers as NCDs become a real crisis in Fiji and other Pacific island countries.

At least 90% of all that we use in the shop is sourced directly from the informal economy through both male and female farmers at the local market. Since 2012, Highland Natural has continued to build a network of trusted suppliers. We work on a mutual agreement basis for supply of the kind of quality ingredients we seek.

People have expressed their desire to start a similar business to ours - in Fiji and other Pacific islands. This is good news to us, seeing that there is a growing appreciation for plant-based foods amongst Pacific Island families. We see ourselves as transformers in the sense that we help to re-shape people’s thinking and appreciation for garden-based, wholesome and nutritious food that taste great!

As for the future, we hope to franchise our brand not only throughout Fiji but also to our Pacific island neighbours.

This article from Highland Natural’s owner, Mrs Repeka Ululakeba, who met as well with the MSG PSD Team last year, is much appreciated. Her email is highlandnatural@gmail.com.

SUPPORTING AGRICULTURE WITH SPC



The MSG PSD Team also met with Mr & Mrs Jamal (above), Directors of IACT-supported Maqere Exports Co Ltd in rural Tavua, Fiji

Upon the invitation of the Pacific Community (SPC) and as part of its support for agricultural development, the Secretariat was represented by Private Sector Development Adviser, Mr Henry Sanday, at the EU-funded Increasing Agricultural Commodity Trade (IACT) Project Steering Committee Meeting held in Nadi,

Fiji on 19 February 2016. As the 2012-15 IACT Project was closing, participants reviewed SPC’s evaluation of 42 beneficiary companies from 13 (of the 15) Pacific ACP States including MSG Members.

The impacts of IACT on enterprise performance, farmers and rural communities, included increased revenues and profits, product di-

versity, export revenues, and direct and indirect employment throughout the supply chain. The end net gain was the contribution of IACT Project to the improvement of livelihoods and poverty reduction in Pacific ACP States. Notably, beneficiary enterprises were among those visited during last year’s MSG PSD Strategy consultations.

MSG CONTRIBUTES TO OCEANIA CUSTOMS DATA WORKSHOP



Container shipping at Lae, PNG's largest cargo port

Source: Malum Nalu

Experiences with the administration and reviews of the MSG Trade Agreement were shared with the 24 Members of the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) during its Regional Customs Data and Trade Statistics Workshop in Suva, Fiji on 11-15 April 2016. The workshop was aimed at building the capacity of OCO's Member administrations to align their operations to international standards and best practices. The specific key areas covered in the workshop related to Customs Data Management, National Trade Statistics and Customs Research.

Trade Economist/Legal, Mr Petros Shayanowako, participated as a co-facilitator at the workshop, where MSG Members were represented by their Customs and Statistics officials. Petros, together with other co-facilitators, led discussions on different topics relating to key regional developments, particularly on how Customs and trade data collection, management and sharing could be enhanced.

The Secretariat has a role to play in assisting Members by working with their Customs and Statistics authorities, harmonising the sub-region's trade data

elements by adopting an MSG common data model and, developing an MSG Common Tariff Nomenclature. The Data Harmonisation process would be a step towards the workshop-proposed wider Pacific ACP regional data model, while the Tariff Nomenclature is also a step towards the workshop-proposed Regional Harmonised System (HS) Classification Guideline. Notably, the revised MSG Trade Agreement has provisions for both Data Harmonisation and HS Classification. For more on these initiatives, Petros can be emailed via p.shayanowako@msg.int.



In Vila, Lynette and George

PURSuing STRONGER INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION

Two strategic meetings held at the Secretariat during April were aimed at further strengthening mutually beneficial collaboration between the visiting institutions and the Secretariat. The first visit, on 21 April 2016, involved Solomon Islands Government officials namely, Mr George Tuti of the Department of External Trade and Ms Lynette Dawheya of the Foreign Investment Department, who were in Port Vila for the MSGTA3 Technical Working Group Negotiations on 19-20 April. Discussions focused on

PITAP's work programme covering activities planned for Honiara during the week of 12 September, including the 5th Heads of Investment Promotion Agencies & Industry Officials Meeting and national trade initiatives of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

The second visit, on 26 April, was by Mr Sidney Suma, PNG Country Manager for the Pacific Horticultural & Agricultural Market Access Program (PHAMA) and Port Vila-based PHAMA Trade Facilitation Adviser, Mr Semy

Siakimotu. This provided the opportunity for them to explore opportunities for collaboration on intra-MSG trade matters. PHAMA was particularly keen to work on bilateral and MSG-wide market access issues – existing, pending or new – related to agriculture, horticultural, forestry and fisheries products, in addition to interest in the work of the MSG Customs and Quarantine Sub-Committee. More details on this can be obtained from Ms Tendai Chigwada, Trade Research Analyst, t.chigwada@msg.int.



Discussing MSG-PHAMA relations, Semy (left) and Sidney

NEW VANUATU AGRITOURISM POLICY BACKED

The Secretariat, upon the invitation of the Vanuatu Government, participated at their Agritourism Policy Setting Workshop in Port Vila on 25-27 May 2016. Deliberations focused on linkages between Agriculture, Trade, Tourism and Health. They collaborated with the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation (PIPISO) and the Barbados Delegation of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). Other partners including the In-

ternational Fund for Agricultural Development, Pacific Community and South Pacific Tourism Organisation, engaged in dialogue with national stakeholders. Ms Isolina Boto of CTA, Ms Ena Harvey of IICA and Mrs Mereia Volavola of PIPISO were the key resource persons for the workshop.

The presentation by Private Sector Development Advisor, Mr Henry Sanday, on "Vanuatu Trade, Tourism, Agriculture and Health National Policy: MSG Perspectives" focused largely on cross-sectoral

policy issues and experiences gathered from Member countries during the 2015 PSD Strategy consultations. Key policy decisions from the workshop related to, among others, the organisation of the Vanuatu Week of Agriculture later this year and the 2017 Pacific Week of Agriculture.

The Vanuatu Minister for Agriculture, Hon. Matai Seremiah Nawa-lu was Chief Guest at both the opening and closing of the workshop. Henry, h.sanday@msg.int, can be emailed for more details.



Fresh produce market stalls in Luganville, Santo

FIJI POLICE CHIEF IN VILA

The Fiji Police Commissioner, Brigadier-General Sitiveni Qiliho, met the Acting DG, Mr Molean Kilepak, on 18 April 2016 during his visits to MSG capitals. He was accompanied by Mr Ulaiai Ravula, Director of International Relations, Fiji Police; Mr Jioji Dumukoro, Senior Defence Advisor, Ministry of Defence; and Mr Vilikesa Naivalucava of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The purposes of the visit were firstly, to reiterate the call for all Members to support the Formed Police Unit (FPU) that Leaders endorsed

in 2013 for strengthening security and police cooperation to address threats to law and order, and secondly, to consult with Members on preparations for the exit of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) in 2017.

The Commissioner discussed with ADG Kilepak the intention to establish a 30-member team under the FPU to undertake policing duties when RAMSI ends. Given Fiji's vast experience in international peacekeep-

ing and community policing, the country was ready to lead the FPU during the post-RAMSI era. Discussions also focused on work relating to the Department of Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO) and the recruitment of a Police Liaison Officer.

ADG Kilepak thanked the Government of Fiji for their continued support to MSG via the FPU, DPKO, Police Commissioners Conference and inaugural MSG Police Games to be held in Fiji. For more on these initiatives, Mr



Brigadier-General Qiliho, while addressing MSG staff

Stanley Wapot, Program Manager Governance and Sustainable Development, can be emailed, sj.wapot@msgq.int.

POLICE COMMISSIONERS CONVENE

The 6th MSG Police Commissioners Conference held in Suva, Fiji on 28 April 2016 was opened by H.E. Patterson Oti, Solomon Islands High Commissioner to Fiji and chaired by Fiji's Commissioner of Police, Brigadier-General Sitiveni Qiliho. In attendance were the Deputy Commissioner of Police for Solomon Islands, Ms Juanita Matanga; Acting Police Commissioner for Vanuatu, Colonel Robson Iavro; H.E. Esala Teleni, Fiji High Commissioner to PNG; Mr Ilan Kiloe, Manager Legal Services and Mr Stanley Wapot, Program Manager Governance & Sustainable Development of the MSG Secretariat and, other officials.

The meeting focused on enhancing Police cooperation between Members to facilitate particularly the implementation of Leaders-endorsed policing initiatives including the Regional Police Academy, Formed Police Unit (FPU) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Among the key decisions reached at the meeting which are to be recommended to MSG Leaders through the Senior Officials Meeting are: training a 30-member FPU for approved deployments; convening Police Ministerial Meetings for high-level security-related advice to

Leaders; establishing a Police Women's Network; facilitating information sharing; arranging the secondment of officers to the MSG Secretariat; and, organising Police Games and cultural exchanges on a regular basis.

The meeting was closed by H.E. Teleni who emphasised the value of unity and collective responsibility in addressing security issues as well as the challenges facing the Melanesian sub-region. Further information on the Conference and its outcomes can be obtained from Stanley through email, sj.wapot@msgq.int.



H.E. Oti (seated, centre) with Police Commissioners and officials

Source: Police Media/Fiji Sun

PACIFIC ELECTORAL INTEGRITY BOOSTED

The recommendation of the MSG Elections Observers Group's report on the Vanuatu Snap Election last January that election observations be "formally incorporated into the MSG structure to support Members' national elections" is being progressed. This follows the Commonwealth Secretariat's invitation for MSG's participation at the Pacific Electoral Networks Meeting in Nadi, Fiji on 08-11 May 2016, which enabled Mr Ilan Kiloe, Manager Legal Services, to join Pacific elections officials and international experts at the meeting. Representatives of women and

youth groups and people with disabilities were also present.

Jointly hosted by the Commonwealth Electoral Network, the Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand Electoral Administrators (PIANZEA) and Fijian Elections Office, the meeting covered ways to strengthen electoral integrity. Issues relating to electoral risk management, improved inclusion and access for all, women's participation, the independence and resourcing of micro and non-permanent Election Management Bodies, and capacity constraints. These were discussed with the

democratic principles of universal suffrage and political equality, and the need for professional, impartial and transparent preparations for, and administration of, electoral cycles. Ilan presented insights on MSG's methodology, approaches and outcomes with elections in Fiji and Vanuatu.

Mr Mohammed Saneem, Supervisor of Elections for Fiji was appointed as an Advisory Group Member representing the Melanesian region to PIANZEA) following a nomination by MSG Members. The outcomes of this pioneering meeting are to be



Mr Saneem (far left) at Beverly Hills Polling Station, Port Vila during the Vanuatu Snap Election

tabled at the Commonwealth Electoral Network Biennial Conference scheduled for 22-24 June 2016 in Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago. Ilan is reachable via email, i.kiloe@msgq.int for more details.

FACILITATING AND STIMULATING PRIVATE SECTOR INTERESTS

While advocacy for structural reforms to stimulate private sector-led sustainable growth is ongoing at all levels and as the MSG PSD Strategy was being submitted for Trade Ministerial endorsement, the Secretariat continued to attend to requests for assistance that would help grow intra-MSG business transactions. Selected examples of recent requests are:

1. Advice on documentation for exporting locally-made fiberglass boats from PNG to Vanuatu;
2. Support for recruiting skilled staff from Solomon Islands to Fiji and from Fiji to Vanuatu under the

MSG Skills Movement Scheme;

3. Linking up a Fiji manufacturer with a supplier of virgin coconut oil in Solomon Islands due to oil shortages in Fiji following Cyclone Winston;

4. Facilitating appointments for an FLNKS business delegation from the Loyalty Islands Province of New Caledonia that visited Fiji for one week;

5. Attending to marketing enquiries especially from Fiji and linking up with IPAs, Chambers of Commerce and other peak industry bodies in PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu;

6. Connecting Small Business Development Centres, Cooperatives and Youth Groups for information sharing, capacity building and marketing purposes;

7. Collaborating with CTA in Brussels to connect coffee growers in MSG and the Caribbean for networking purposes.

Such interests are anticipated to intensify as the Melanesian Free Trade Area comes into force in 2017 and as the MSG PSD Strategy, Export Products and Marketing Strategies are being implemented, not to mention the Secretariat's ongoing collabora-



Ready for shipment, soft drinks produced by Paradise Industries in Rabaul, East New Britain, PNG

tion with global, regional and national entities. For more on this, Henry Sanday, Private Sector Development Advisor, can be emailed via h.sanday@msg.int.

SECRETARIAT MODERNIZES IT SYSTEM

The Secretariat, in an effort to provide reliable and effective information and communications support that would benefit Members and the public, has been undertaking major information technology (IT) upgrading projects. In 2014, the networking infrastructure was re-wired with the factory-made Category 6 cables replacing the hand-made Category 5 cables. This improved data transfer speeds and network connectivity between Clients and the Server. The Conference Room was also modernised with a ceiling-mounted overhead projector and wireless sound and conferencing equipment.

Last year, there was an overhaul of the Server Infrastructure, involving both hardware and software. The HP Prolaint Tower Server was replaced with a rack mountable IBM X Series server. The Server Operating System was also upgraded from the SBS 2011 Standard hosted on a Windows Server 2012 R2, while the Email Server was upgraded from Exchange 2010 to Exchange 2013 enabling the use of Outlook.

Recently, the client operating environment was standardised based on Windows 7 Pro and MS Office 2013. The Client desktops

and laptops were also standardised to Dell machines with a few MacBooks. All user printers are standardised to Brother Machines with one heavy duty Ricoh printer for printing bulk and public relation materials. There was also migration from the Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line internet, a high speed service delivered over copper wires, to Broadband Internet over Optic Fibre cables. WiFi internet is also available as standby and for use by visitors.

Plans are in place too for having a Video Conferencing facility to enable remote and online meetings using, aimed at cutting down



The new IBM Server

on face-to-face meeting costs. For more details, contact Ms Monica Abau-Sapulai, Information Technology & Website Officer, via it@msg.int.

HELP FOR NEW SCHOOL CLINIC

Besides the policy and technical advisory support that the Secretariat delivers as part of its mandatory functions, the organisation has also been responsive to the needs of Members in other areas. Staff, through their Social Club, have likewise been proactive in supporting worthy causes which are beneficial to recipients and also enhance the visibility of MSG.

Recent examples of support for Members involved the provision of funds and other humanitarian help

including food, water and clothing to affected communities in Vanuatu after Cyclone Pam in March 2015. Barely a year later, the Secretariat again raised funds and mobilised humanitarian support for those affected in Fiji following Cyclone Winston.

The latest community undertaking by the Secretariat has been at the local level. This followed an invitation from neighbouring Central School in Port Vila, for support towards the construction

of a new health clinic that will benefit its Kindergarten, Primary and Secondary students. In response, a cheque for VUV50,000 was presented to the School Headmaster, Mr Paul Alexander Heteyey, on 08 April 2016 by the Deputy Director General, Mr Molean Kilepak. "This is significant as it will help contribute to the welfare of children, who are our future community and national leaders and heads of families," Mr Kilepak said.



New clinic to be built for Central School in Port Vila

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



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

PMB 9105
Independence Garden
Port Vila
REPUBLIC OF VANUATU

SPR 9105
Jardin de l'Indépendance
Port Vila
RÉPUBLIQUE DE VANUATU

Tel: + 678 27791
Fax: + 678 27691
Email: MSG.Secretariat@msg.int
Website: www.msgsec.info

Tel: + 678 27791
Fax: + 678 27691
Email: MSG.Secretariat@msg.int
Website: www.msgsec.info

FOLLOW US ON THE WEB;

[HTTP://WWW.MSGSEC.INFO/](http://www.msgsec.info/)

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

Contact Melanesian Tok by email

melanesian.tok@msg.int

CONSULTANCY PROJECTS UNDERWAY

Following recommendations from the Trade and Economic Officials Meetings held last year and on 24 May 2016 in Port Vila, Vanuatu, which were subsequently endorsed by the Trade Ministers, the Secretariat has commissioned a series of consultancy projects to be funded under the 10th EDF through PITAP. These projects are scheduled for completion by September 2016 and they are listed below together with their respective consultants and contact officers:

1. Forestry Study: Consultant – Mr Johannes Bauer; Contact – Mr David Hopa, d.hopa@msg.int;
2. Development of Website on Labour Mobility and Investment Opportunities: Consultant – Mr Cainton Milroy; Contact – Mr John Licht, j.licht@msg.int;
3. Market Intelligence and Marketing Promotion Study: Consultant – Ms Sally-Ann Hughes; Contact: Mr John Licht, j.licht@msg.int;

The consultant for the MSG Shipping Study is to be confirmed by June 2016.

In addition to the above consultancies, the Secretariat is also collaborating with the Vanuatu office of the International Organisation for Migration, which has engaged Mr David Stewart to conduct a Baseline Assessment for the MSG as part of the ACP EU Migration Action.

The Secretariat wishes to request Members, through the government, private sector and other non-state entities, for their support towards the work of the consultants, especially during in-country consultations. The assistance of other national, regional and multilateral partners would also be appreciated.



Mr Bauer



Mr Milroy



Ms Hughes

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR 2016

June

- 30 May–01 Jun: 8th ACP Leaders Summit, Port Moresby
- 01-03 Jun: Alliance for Financial Inclusion (AFI) Pacific Islands Regional Initiative 2nd Annual Forum, Port Vila
- 13 Jun: Launch of Development of Website for Labour Mobility & Investment
- 14-15 Jun: MSG Senior Officials Meeting, Lautoka
- 20 Jun: Launch of MSG Forestry Study
- 20 Jun: Launch of MSG Market Intelligence & Promotion
- 28-29 Jun: Sub-Committee on Legal & Institutional Issues Meeting, Port Vila
- 30 Jun: Launch of MSG Shipping Study

July

- 14 Jul: MSG Special Leaders Summit, Honiara
- 20-27 Jul: MSG Emerging Leaders Programme for Melanesian Youth Leaders, Port Vila

August

- 01-19 Aug: MSGTA/MFTA and PSD Strategy In-country Consultations in Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu

September

- 07-09 Sep: 8th AFI Global Policy Forum, Nadi
- 12-15 Sep: Heads of IPA & PSD Meetings, Honiara

October

- 16-20 Oct: Melanesian Games, Noumea