



**ADDRESS BY  
HONOURABLE LT COL. SAMUAELA SAUMATUA  
ACTING MINISTER FOR DEFENCE, NATIONAL SECURITY AND  
IMMIGRATION**

**SPEECH ON THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE MSG  
SPECIAL POLICE COMMISSIONERS CONFERENCE**

---

Police Head Quarters  
Nabua Suva

8.30am  
15<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2012

---

Your Excellencies

Regional Police Commissioners

Members of the Diplomatic Corp

Senior Government Officials

Acknowledge the Director General for MSG

Secretariat Mr Forau

Ladies and Gentlemen

Ni sa Bula Vinaka.

It is indeed a great privilege and honour to be here and to officiate in the opening of the Special Police Commissioners Conference of MSG Countries.

I'm truly delighted to welcome you all my Wantoks and your delegations and as head of your respective Police Services, your attendance to this meeting renders significant value to our relationships despite the continued political challenges each country has to contend with over the years.

As Melanesians, I'm proud to state that we are all one family sharing the same values and traditions as we represent a unique culture indicating our identity.

In your role as Commissioners, you have a huge responsibility to your respective governments and citizens not only in maintaining law and order situation but to contribute immensely in promoting an environment that are conducive for growth and

national development and at the same time embracing sustainable socio economic prosperity.

This meeting entails imperative issues which requires us as MSG Countries to readjust our focus in determining concrete steps to nurture meaningful partnerships amongst our group members. I must stress the importance of promoting and maintaining mutual understanding in sharing strategies and policies for nation building in maintaining peace and stability on our respective sovereignties. We must be strong to construct a law enforcement MSG legion that is resolute to the demand of our people culminating in our determination to resolve issues the MSG way and without outside interference. Let me reassure you that we are capable enough, as Melanesians to resolving our problems despite the limitations and constraints we may face from time to time.

I do hope that in the two days meeting that you would critically discuss and find remedial solutions to the major uncertainties evolving within the region not to mention your respective internal security.

In the pursuit of good governance, transparency, peace and security, MSG countries imperatively need to adopt a matrix of an integrated approach that encourages collaboration and interoperability between island states and to allow accessibility to resource and information sharing.

The increased travel, trade, rapid money movements, advanced telecommunications and other modernisation programmes are “catalyst” to such intertwined illicit activities. Due to the international dimension of organized crime, which allows these networks to operate across sovereign borders, no country defending alone against them can be assured of its own security and safety from terrorist organizations.

By improving economic conditions and strengthening national governance and civil society systems, the attraction to engage in illegal activities is undermined.

Our strategic security landscape is evolving. Globalisation and increasing diversity of security problems have influenced and impacted on our Security Institutions. These new strategic realities dictate that co-operation and multi-dimensional responses are inevitable to ensure national and regional security.

Integrated Security and Defence Cooperation is envisaged to mitigate these threats. Definitely, working together in joint operations and combined efforts would greatly pave the way forward. Fiji stands ready to engage in exchange programmes, encourage a levelled playing field for everyone to voice their concerns in a more comfortable forum that is apolitical, unbiased and not easily influenced.

The Security Sectors in our respective countries obviously require leaders who are committed to change, with a clear perception to understand the complexities around us and are able to deal with multi dimensional threats.

As Police Commissioners and dignitaries from your respective countries we have the ability to manage our own affairs as Melanesian brothers. We shall continue to develop and nurture this forum totally independent as leverage to successful nation building. This strategic approach would obviously underpin networks and partnerships for better facilitation of available resources and enhances collaboration in managing crisis situations through well coordinated assistance.

As individual countries we have our own unique law and order situation and uncertainties that challenge our internal capacities to respond. On our own, we

have very limited resources to mitigate new and emerging threats; our only safety is the coordination and regrouping of our national and regional resources to enable us achieve our national, regional and international objectives and obligations.

The formation of the MSG and in particular the Police Commissioners Conference has drawn special interests and curiosity amongst our neighbouring countries. Issues for discussion had been closely securitised for the good or for the bad by your critics and it is a challenge that momentum and thrust be maintained whether Fiji seats as Chair or any other MSG country. The thrust and push for the realisation of your outcome should be your priority as a forum. Your Polynesian brothers and of course your Micronesian brothers admire your initiatives with great enthusiasm and with passion particularly the initiatives on the Police Cooperation, Formed Police Unit and the Regional Police Academy. These are considered relevant to the needs of policing in

the MSG and more so in the Pacific. You have set a pace and a standard for the Regional Police Forces that captures the real Melanesian and Pacific issues, perceptions and needs.

With the current pace and enthusiasm of member countries, I will challenge the Forum to work at maintaining the momentum, pace and tempo that has been built up; failure to do so would be a betrayal of the expectations of MSG leaders who bestowed the principles and hope to this noble forum for the advancement of policing in capturing regional and international issues.

I sincerely hope that this meeting will pave the way forward and we must reassure each other of our ability to handle challenges no matter what stands in our way.

With those words, I now declare this meeting open.

Tank you Tumas and

Vinaka Vakalevu.

\*\*\*\*\*