

PRESS RELEASE

22 MARCH 2012

Senior Officials from the five members of the Melanesian Spearhead Group met this morning 22 March to discuss key issues of concern that will be presented to the Foreign Ministers Meeting next week.

Chair of the MSG Senior Officials Meeting (SOM), Mrs Saipora W. Mataikabara welcomed delegates from Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, FLNKS and Fiji for the two-day meeting.

SOM was able to hear progress reports from the respective Chairs of the Subcommittee on MSG Legal and Institutional Issues (SCLII), the Sub-Committee on Security (SCS), the Police Commissioners' Conference (PCC), the MSG Sports Sub-Committee, and the Trade and Economic Officials Meeting (TEOM). Also to be discussed by SOM is the Secretariat's progress report on the FLNKS issues following the decisions of SOM and FMM in their meetings of 31 October to 4 November 2011 and based on the findings of the MSG Technical Mission undertaken in November 2011.

Mrs Mataikabara said it is very important for the Senior Officials to best advise the Leaders through the Foreign Ministers Meeting (FMM) on how the MSG can prioritize and focus its attention and resources to deliver tangible outcomes for the benefit of around the 9 million people that the MSG region represents.

She also noted that the two-day meeting will also cover the political and security issues, trade and economic issues, economic and social development issues and organization issues of the Melanesian Spearhead Group. Some of these issues relate to:

- Revised Agreement of the Melanesian Spearhead Group
- Cultural Cooperation;
- MSG Regional Visa Arrangements;
- Environment and Climate Change;
- Police Cooperation;
- MSG Institutional Issues; and
- MSG Secretariat Soft Reforms

SOM Chair thanked all delegates for their participation in the pre-Summit SOM and urged all to address pertinent issues presented to the SOM through frank and open discussions before SOM presents to the Foreign Ministers Meeting for their consideration next week.

Authorized by SOM Chair

SOM Meeting

MSG Secretariat

Fiji Police Academy

22-23 March 2012