



**MSG Secretariat**  
**Secretariat du GFLM**

Melanesian Spearhead Group | Le Groupe Fer de Lance Mélanésien

**SPEECH BY THE MSG DIRECTOR GENERAL**

**MR. LEONARD LOUMA**

**AT VANUATU'S SECOND NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON THE**

**MSG GREEN TRADE PROJECT AND JOINT IMPACT-SAFE WORKSHOP ON NON-TARIFF MEASURES  
(NTMSs) AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE PROMOTION**

*Melanesian Hotel, Port Vila*

*8 9 JUNE, 2023*

*Vanuatu's Director External Trade, Mr. Joe Pakoa Lui*

*United Nations Conference on Trade & Development (UNCTAD) representative, Mr. Ralf Peters*

*Pacific Community representatives*

*Distinguished participants*

*Representatives of the business communities*

*Invited guests*

*Ladies and gentlemen*

Good morning.

I am delighted to extend to you all a very warm welcome to Vanuatu's second national workshop on the MSG Green Trade Project.

Today event marks a series of national workshops convened in Member countries in the MSG, beginning with Vanuatu.

As some of you would recall, the first national workshop was convened by UNCTAD and the MSG Secretariat approximately nine months ago with the purpose of introducing the MSG Green Trade Project. Stakeholders from government, private sector representatives particularly in the coconut industry attended the first national workshop to discuss and identify the challenges, opportunities, policies, laws and regulations governing exports of virgin coconut oil, Vanuatu's priority product under the MSG Green Trade Project.

Vanuatu annual exports around 45 percent of its coconut oil and other copra by-products to Malaysia including other major markets. Although virgin coconut oil is a new addition to the coconut industry, it has potential for value addition due to its increasing value as a health product. Virgin coconut oil also support income generating opportunities for rural based households and communities and strengthen economic growth.

With this in mind, the MSG Green Trade Project in accordance with *MSG Leaders 2038 Prosperity for All Plan* assists Vanuatu through value addition of coconut oil to widen and diversify it's narrow economic and export base, promote sustainable business opportunities and encourage intra-regional and international trade. The collection and classification of Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) improves transparencies on regulatory laws, policies and measures to guide existing and potential exporters.

Since the first national workshop, two national documents namely the draft Voluntary Sustainable Standard (VSS) Report and a draft Export Guide for Vanuatu have been collated and identified some important strategies and actions to address vulnerabilities or challenges, encourage diversification of the coconut industry and strengthen market access opportunities and resilience of virgin coconut oil. Presentations on the MSG Trade Agreement and the Melanesian Free Trade Agreement (MFTA) will identify market access opportunities for MSG made products to achieve the objectives of strengthening intra-regional and international trade.

Day 2 of the national workshop focus on setting the scene for Vanuatu's bilateral trade and investment relationships with the EU, introductions to the Pacific Community, presentations on the Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) and export challenges with respect to exporting to the EU market.

I trust that sharing of national experiences and expertise in today's national workshop will help identify practical and pragmatic recommendations towards validating Vanuatu's VSS Report and Export Guide for Virgin Coconut Oil.

I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Vanuatu for assistance and excellent arrangements for this workshop.

I also acknowledge the valuable contributions and assistance by our key partners namely, UNCTAD, the Pacific Community and the European Union (EU) towards this MSG Green Trade Project.

I wish everyone a successful workshop.

*Tankiu tru, Tank tu tumas, Merci beaucoup. Vinaka Vakalevu.*