



# MELANESIAN *Tak*

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*A quarterly newsletter to inform our readers about key work activities undertaken at the MSG Secretariat*

Political Stability, Economic Prosperity, Social Equality and Inclusivity and Sustainable Development are the MSG's core objectives as endorsed by Leaders in the "MSG 2038 - Prosperity for All Plan"

## VANUATU SUCCESSFULLY HOSTS MSG PRIME MINISTER'S CUP



*Korman Stadium was filled to the brim during the final match on Friday, September 30th.  
Photo: NOK NOK*

The inaugural 2022 MSG Prime Minister's Cup held from 17th-30th September 2022 in Port Vila, Vanuatu was a huge success, says the Director General of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Secretariat, Leonard Louma.

DG Louma congratulated the Government of Vanuatu and her people as Chair of the MSG, for taking up the responsibility to organise the prestigious tournament and brave the challenges of hosting it, considering that the first is always the most difficult, particularly for an event of this magnitude.

"For this, we owe a debt of gratitude to the Vanuatu Prime Minister, the Vanuatu Government and its people," he said.

DG Louma also acknowledged the Australian Government for "stepping in to bail out what was proving around July to early August, to be an uncertain undertaking" adding that their assistance enabled the success of the Games.

"The Australian Government's support and generosity through the Australian High Commission here in Vanuatu made it possible for the just concluded MSG Prime Minister's Cup Tournament to be convened," DG Louma said.

He added that through this generous gesture, Australia has reinforced its membership of the Melanesian group within the Pacific Islands Forum set-up and

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Director General  
Leonard Louma



## FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL'S DESK

We have just finished the third quarter and I wish to begin by expressing my heartfelt gratitude to our Leaders for reaffirming my appointment as the new Director General of the MSG Secretariat at the recent Special Leader's Summit in Suva. I am further grateful for their assurance to supporting the Secretariat during my tenure in Office.

The Summit, held within the margins of the Forum Leaders meeting, was purposefully to hand over the MSG Chairmanship from Hon. James Marape, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea to Hon. Bob Loughman, Prime Minister of Vanuatu. This was successfully conducted in the presence of all our Leaders and the Membership's Senior Officials. Personally, for me, it was a special one in that it was my first Leader's Meeting, therefore something that I will always honour and cherish.

I have carefully noted the calls made by the Leaders to reform the Secretariat and recalibrate its activities so that it responds more effectively to the directives of the Leaders. Moreso, that the Secretariat delivers results that addresses the real needs of the membership. I am committed to undertaking reforms at the Secretariat that meets these calls.

While our Leaders have commended and offered assurances of continued support to Hon. Loughman as the new MSG

Chairman and acknowledged Hon. Marape for his able leadership in leading the Group during the most challenging of times, they underscored the decolonisation of the Kanaks as an unfinished business of the MSG, and called for a more concerted effort to assist the FLNKS and positively progress the decolonisation process of New Caledonia.

Amongst other issues, our Leaders emphasised that Climate Change continues to be a global existential threat to Melanesian people's livelihood, security and wellbeing and further called for concerted efforts in recognition of global commitments of the UN to achieving agreed ambition on finance, adaptation and mitigation. MSG Leaders also agreed to support the Vanuatu initiative to have an Advisory Opinion from the ICJ on Climate Change responsibility. Last month, along with PIFS and the EU, we organised Melanesia's first Hybrid Trade & Gender symposium in an effort to improve trade performance of Women-owned MSMEs and ensure that Policy Makers understand the impacts of trade and trade policy on gender equality. The 9th MSG Sports Committee meeting was also convened where I mentioned that the Secretariat is always ready to play a facilitative role in assisting our members with efforts to host any sporting activity sanctioned by our MSG Leaders. I wish to also congratulate three of our Members - Solomon Islands, Vanuatu & PNG for marking their independence this quarter. Finally, the MSG Prime Minister's Cup finished on a high note with Papua New Guinea walking away with the prestigious Cup and Vanuatu Development Team, Fiji and Solomon Islands finishing off in second, third and fourth places respectively. I must say that regardless of our placings, in the end it was Melanesia that won. I could not have thought of a better theme than "Ignite the Melanesian Spirit through Sports" as we witnessed Port Vila become a hive of activity and a beautiful melting pot of blended Melanesian culture and people, all sharing one passion - Sports. For this, I express my deep gratitude to the Government and people of Vanuatu in successfully organising the inaugural MSG Prime Minister's Cup.

Vinaka Vakalevu, Tank Yu, Tenkiu Tru & Tankyu Tumas, Merci Beaucoup, Oleti!

## MSG PRIME MINISTER'S CUP, A SUCCESS



The parade to officially mark the opening of the Inaugural 2022 MSG PM's Cup in Port Vila.



Spectators watching the final match between PNG & the Vanuatu Development Team.

*Continued from cover page....*

that the MSG Secretariat looks forward to welcoming our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island brothers in our MSG sanctioned sporting fixtures and cultural activities.

DG Louma said while at the helm of the Secretariat, it was an honour to see the culmination of a dream by our MSG Leaders to revive the Melanesian Cup under the banner of the MSG PM's Cup. He also acknowledged all the sponsors.

"This tournament comes at a crucial time when FIFA has approved one direct entry of a team from Oceania to the prestigious FIFA World Cup beginning in 2026. What better way to begin this crusade, to have one of our own teams, a Melanesian Team, have a direct passage through to the FIFA World Cup then through this MSG PM's Cup Tournament," he noted.

DG Louma observed that the exemplary technical level of the first game between New Caledonia and Solomons was second to none at the international level; the mental fortitude and 'never say die attitude' displayed by Fiji to come from two goals behind to draw the game against the Solomon Islands is what wins games in the international scene; and the tenacity of the Vanuatu Development Team to hold their nerves and force a draw with the Solomons Team, and

triumph eventually during the penalty shoot-out serves notice that we are there with the best."

While referring to the unveiling of the MSG PM's unique trophy, which constitutes a solid "volcanic rock", DG Louma said the symbolism is so profound and apt and the effort by the Government of Vanuatu is commendable.

"You began with a flame to ignite the spirit of Melanesia through this tournament then followed up with a solid "volcanic rock" formed by volcanic activity - the best manifestation of the strategic objectives of this tournament," DG Louma said.

He noted that 'Ignite the Melanesian Spirit Through Sports' was a fitting theme as through this tournament, Vanuatu has begun the process of consolidating the Melanesian bonds of solidarity, and unity of purpose, to be as rock solid as the Volcanic Rock that makes up our trophy.

DG Louma has noted that there are positive signs within the football fraternity and the community at large in the Solomon Islands to suggest that the Solomon Islands may very likely host the 2023 MSG Prime Minister's Cup in Honiara and that the next Tournament will also feature MSG Women Teams playing. PNG bagged the inaugural 2022 MSG Prime Minister's Cup while Vanuatu Development Team, Fiji and Solomon Islands finished off in second, third and fourth places respectively.

# MSG PRIME MINISTER'S CUP PICTORIAL HIGHLIGHTS



# PAPUA NEW GUINEA HANDS OVER MSG CHAIRMANSHIP TO VANUATU



Leaders at the Special MSG Leaders Summit in Suva, Fiji in July.

The Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Chairmanship was handed over from Papua New Guinea (PNG) to Vanuatu during the Special MSG Leaders Summit at Suva's Grand Pacific Hotel in Fiji on July 13.

The Summit was attended by Fiji's Prime Minister, Hon. Voreqe Bainimarama; Solomon Islands Prime Minister, Hon. Manasseh Sogavare; Vanuatu Prime Minister, Hon. Bob Loughman, Papua New Guinea Prime Minister, Hon. James Marape and Spokesman of the Kanak and Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) of New Caledonia, Victor Tutugoro.

Among other issues, the Leaders reiterated for a more concerted effort to assist the FLNKS in progressing the decolonisation process of New Caledonia. The continued strong objections and non-recognition of the 3rd Referendum results expressed by FLNKS and their wishes to express them at the regional and international levels, including their intention to seek an advisory opinion at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in Hague on its legitimacy, was noted.

The Leaders directed the reform of the Secretariat based on relevance and returns to Member's investments and encouraged it to recalibrate its activities and priorities.

This will allow the Secretariat to respond more effectively to Leader's directives and to ensure that it delivers results that addresses the real needs of the membership.

On Vanuatu's initiative to the ICJ in seeking an advisory opinion on the obligations of states under international law to protect the rights of present and future generations against the adverse impacts of climate change, the Leaders strongly committed to supporting it.

Additionally, they agreed to support Vanuatu's request to seek the support of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) membership on this ICJ Advisory Opinion initiative.

Furthermore, the Leaders reflected on the importance of the Melanesian Free Trade Agreement (MFTA) and recommended to expedite its signing and implementation.

The important role that the PIF plays in the wider Pacific family under the ambit of the Blue Pacific Continent was also reflected on and the geographical and economic advantage that the MSG Group has in the PIF was further acknowledged. Leaders also emphasised the importance of the Melanesian tradition of dialogue, tok stori, storian and talanoa as a fundamental tool to promoting consensus.

# SPECIAL LEADER'S SUMMIT PICTORIAL HIGHLIGHTS



# 1ST MELANESIAN HYBRID TRADE & GENDER SYMPOSIUM BOOSTS FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS CONFIDENCE IN MSMES



Participants of the two-day inaugural Melanesia Trade & Gender symposium.

The Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Secretariat in conjunction with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) organised the region's first Trade & Gender Symposium in Port Vila, Vanuatu.

The two-day panel discussions and presentations brought to the fore a whole range of Trade and Gender-related issues like Labour Mobility and the impacts of Trade and Gender Equality, among many others.

The event was also an opportune moment for the MSG to encourage conversations with respect to implementing Trade Agreements and identifying practical areas of improvement for greater inclusion of gender in particular, women, youth and even people with disabilities. In opening the symposium, the Acting Director General of Vanuatu's Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Ni-Vanuatu Business, Jimmy Rantes, welcomed participants and thanked the organisers for the timely opportunity to engage in the topical issue of 'Trade and Gender'.

He acknowledged that while there is growing dialogue and discussions taking place at international level on emerging issues on trade, gender and sustainable development, there have also been talks at national level and this initiative is timely since "for the first time, it

aims to bring together trade officials, practitioners and women entrepreneurs at the regional level".

ADG Rantes said the world has changed so much as a result of COVID19 and despite these challenges, Vanuatu implemented economic strategies to assist with economic recovery to sustain our communities.

Director General of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Secretariat, Leonard Louma, said it was pleasing to note that in keeping with the true Pacific spirit of family, goodwill and inclusiveness, invitations were extended to our brothers and sisters in Polynesia and Micronesia, and across our Blue Pacific Continent, to join us for a constructive dialogue, 'talanoa' or 'storian' on this important topic on 'Trade and Gender'.

He stressed the importance of the support for women entrepreneurship in MSG economies in taking maximum advantage by developing and growing industries and appropriate sectors such as agriculture, fisheries and the forestry sector.

DG Louma noted that the MSG and the wider Pacific region face daunting development challenges occasioned largely by our 'smallness' - in relation to the size of our economies and size of our markets. The symposium ended with the awarding of certificates.

# MSG MEMBERS MARK INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARIES

Three states within our Membership celebrated their Independence anniversaries in the third quarter and as usual, the Secretariat family joined in the celebrations signifying national pride and patriotism. Solomon Islands marked her 44th Independence on July 7; Vanuatu her 42nd Independence on July 30; and Papua New Guinea, her 47th Independence on September 16.

Independence anniversaries usually commemorate the declaration of independence and is also a day to celebrate nation-building. All three anniversaries were celebrated by the respective Melanesian communities in Port Vila, Vanuatu by parades, speeches, cake-cutting, flag-raising ceremonies and entertainment.



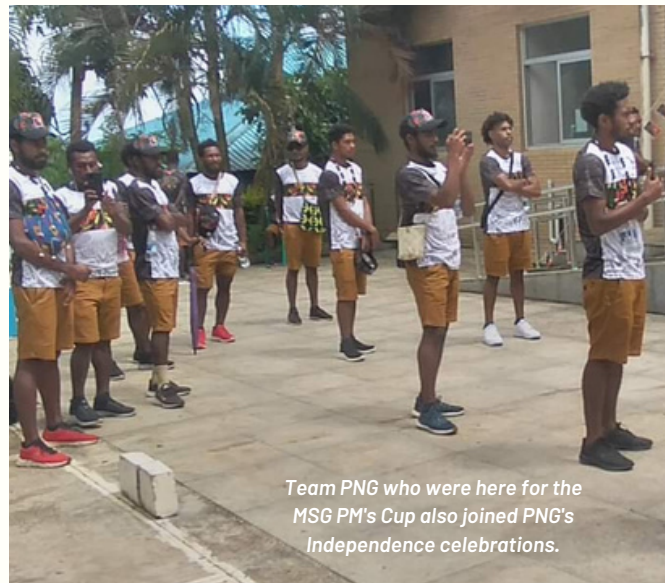
People of Vanuatu enjoying the 42nd Independence celebrations.



PM Bob Loughman at Vanuatu's 42nd Independence celebrations in Port Vila.



The flag-raising ceremony during PNG's 47th Independence celebrations on September 16th.



Team PNG who were here for the MSG PM's Cup also joined PNG's Independence celebrations.



Some members of the Solomon Islands community at the 44th Independence celebrations on July 7th.



Members of the Solomon Islands community during the 44th Independence celebrations at the MSG Secretariat.

# 9TH MSG SPORTS COMMITTEE MEETING CONVENED IN PORT VILA

Members of the 9th SCM met at the MSG Secretariat in Port Vila, Vanuatu.



The Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) 9th Sports Committee Meeting (SCM) was held at the MSG Secretariat Conference Room from 13-14th September 2022.

Mr Paul Nalau, Vanuatu's Director General for Youth & Sports, chaired the meeting after being officially handed the role of Chairmanship by Outgoing Chair, John Susuve.

In opening the meeting, Director General of the MSG Secretariat, Leonard Louma, thanked the Vanuatu Government for all the arrangements and hospitality provided in relation to the hosting of the Inaugural MSG Prime Minister's Cup and acknowledged the Ni-Vanuatu Landowners on whose land the meeting was held.

DG Louma expressed the sentiments by the MSG Leaders during the 8th SCM, that in the pursuit of MSG interests, we must ensure that they are done within the context that is beneficial to the wider Pacific Community.

During the meeting, the officials agreed for the MSG Secretariat to establish a Technical Working Team to work on the MSG Sporting Charter; develop a separate document to take into consideration the inclusion of Culture in Sports; and to prioritise the MOU on Sports Cooperation.

On the draft MOU on Sports Cooperation, it was agreed that the MSG Secretariat will circulate the final version of the MOU; replace the use of the term "MSG" with "Melanesia" to be called the "Melanesian MOU on Sports Cooperation"; recommend its endorsement to the SMM after all requisite approvals have been obtained; and urged the Secretariat to have it concluded out-of-session.

On the next hosting of the MSG PM's Cup, it was noted that while Members are still considering the issue of its hosting in 2023, FLNKS will host the tournament in 2024, PNG in 2025 and that it will be an annual event.

The SCM also noted the proposal for the Oceania Sports Academy and agreed for Fiji to develop a policy paper on the Oceania Sports Academy and circulate to Members.

Also, among other issues, the SCM noted the upcoming Melanesian Rugby proposal and the MSG Boxing Tournament; reaffirmed the inclusion and participation of women in the next MSG Prime Minister's Cup; and agreed to have Papua New Guinea submit the Concept Paper on Boxing and Rugby to the MSG Secretariat as soon as practicable.

## DIALOGUE WITH VANUATU CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY ON SPIRIT PROJECT



*Participants of the SPIRIT Dialogue with the Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce.*

A breakfast meeting initiative which provided a platform for awareness on the EU-funded Strengthening Pacific Intra-Regional and International Trade (SPIRIT) project and the Melanesian Free Trade Agreement (MFTA) saw meaningful consultations with members of Vanuatu's Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The dialogue enabled participants to discuss and identify Vanuatu's private sector needs to enable them to benefit from the Interim

Economic Partnership Agreement (IEPA) and the MFTA. The sessions centered on IEPA Awareness Outreach and Private Sector Mapping; highlighting the state of play on the MSG Free Trade Agreements (MSGFTA) and an update on the Pacific Aid for Trade Strategy.

The event was jointly organised by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) SPIRIT project, MSG Secretariat and the Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

## MSG & UQ ON POSSIBLE AREAS OF COOPERATION



A Letter of intent (LOI) to facilitate dialogue on potential areas of cooperation between the MSG Secretariat and the University of Queensland was signed at the Grand Pacific Hotel in Suva, Fiji on July 12.

The parties were represented by the Secretariat's DG Louma (2nd from right) and UQ's @Asia-Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (AP2RP) Pacific Director, Romulo Nayacalevu.

## MSG SECRETARIAT & PACIFIC COMMUNITY (SPC) TO INCLUDE GENDER IN MOU REVIEW



*SPC's Principal Strategic Lead Gender on Pacific Women, Mereseini Rakuita, and the Secretariat's Manager, Political & Security Affairs, Ilan Kiloe.*

The Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Secretariat is looking at reviewing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Pacific Community (SPC) to include Gender-based activities as a specific area of cooperation.

This, following discussions on gender initiatives of the MSG as per the MSG Ministers Meeting Outcomes between SPC's Principal Strategic Lead Gender on Pacific Women, Mereseini Rakuita, and the Secretariat's Manager, Political & Security Affairs, Ilan Kiloe.

Mr Kiloe highlighted key actions approved by Ministers to chart a sub-regional approach to preventing domestic violence and Gender

based violence (GBV). He also provided an update on the MSG Gender framework that needs to be finalised and implemented, among other related issues.

Ms Rakuita made mention of the immediate key priorities for SPC that they considered opportunities for closer collaboration with MSG, particularly in areas like Women in Leadership & Economic Empowerment and Regional Coordination on Gender.

Initial steps to be taken as part of the MOU review include considering the MSG Gender Framework technical assistance in follow-up meetings and streamlining gender into the Secretariat's work program and planning.

# MSG SECRETARIAT MEETS WITH PRESIDENT OF NEW CALEDONIA CONGRESS HON. ROCH WAMYTAN



*DG Louma leads the MSG Secretariat team in talks with the President of the New Caledonia Congress, Honourable Roch Wamytan.*

A team from the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Secretariat led by the Director General, Leonard Louma, met virtually with the President of the New Caledonia Congress, Honourable Roch Wamytan on 28 September 2022. The meeting was aimed at strengthening collaborative efforts between the Kanak and Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) and

quest for decolonisation. Other issues discussed included cooperation with the United Nations to ensure that New Caledonia remains on the decolonisation list of Non-Self Governing territories, and that the Administrative Power is responsible for discharging their obligations and responsibilities.

## MSG & PACIFIC AVIATION SAFETY OFFICE DISCUSS AREAS OF COLLABORATION



*Senior officials of the MSG Secretariat and PASO after their meeting.*

A meeting on 25 August 2022 between senior officials of the MSG Secretariat and the Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO) in Port Vila discussed possible areas of collaboration. It was the start of a series of meetings between the two organisations and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is being

drafted. Since taking up office, MSG Secretariat Director General, Leonard Louma, is prioritising strengthening the MSG Secretariat's partnerships with important regional stakeholders.

## DG LOUMA CONVENES 1ST SENIOR STAFF MEETING



*Director General of the MSG Secretariat, Leonard Louma chairs his first meeting with senior staff.*

The Director General of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Secretariat, Leonard Louma, convened his first meeting with senior staff since taking up office in Port Vila, Vanuatu.

The meeting provided an opportunity for senior staff to provide brief updates on their respective programmes, which included updates on the

Secretariat's finances, preparation on the Inaugural MSG Prime Ministers Cup and the 9th MSG Sports Ministers Meeting.

Staff also discussed the development of a Tracking System specifically on actions relating to decisions by MSG Leaders.

## MSG SECRETARIAT & VANUATU KALJORAL SENTA (VKS) CONTINUE TALKS ON MACFEST 2023 PREPARATIONS

A storian was held on the morning of September 8 between the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Secretariat and the Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta (VKS).

Led by the Secretariat's Deputy Director General, George Hoa'au, and VKS Director Richard Shing, the two organisations have started discussing several capacity building training and assistance options for the 7th Melanesian Arts & Culture Festival (MACFEST) scheduled for 2023 in Vanuatu.



*Director VKS, Richard Shing, during his presentation to the MSG Secretariat team.*

## MSGOG DEPLOYED TO 2022 PNG GENERAL ELECTIONS



The MSGOG before their first mission in Port Moresby.

An MSG Observer Group was deployed to Port Moresby to observe the 2022 Papua New Guinea (PNG) National General Elections (NGE), led by the former President of Vanuatu, His Excellency Kalkot Mataskelekele.

Comprising individuals from each of the MSG membership, the mission was facilitated by the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Secretariat, headed by DG Leonard Louma and assisted by senior management staff, and the Vanuatu Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

H.E. William Soaki, High Commissioner of Solomon Islands to Papua New Guinea, based in Port Moresby was invited to be part of the MSG Observer Mission and participated in the observation visits.

In a statement released following completion of the mission, H.E Mataskelekele expressed his sincere appreciation to the Government of PNG for the invitation extended to the MSG to observe the 2022 PNG NGE.

"I also thank the Governments of Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and the FLNKS of New Caledonia (the Kanak National Socialist Liberation Front) for their confidence in appointing us the respective country representatives of each of this esteemed observer mission," he said.

"We have carried out the observer mission, I believe, with integrity in line with the MSG 2038

Prosperity for All Plan for strengthening electoral processes and good governance in Member Countries, as well as in accordance with the Code of Conduct provided by the Papua New Guinea Electoral Commission," H.E Mataskelekele stated.

"We have completed our mission as neutral international observers, without interference in the internal matters of PNG or in the internal electoral processes, respecting always the authority and directives of the local electoral and polling officials," he added.

This is the second time that the MSG has deployed an Observer Mission to observe the PNG NGE as the first such mission to Papua New Guinea was during the 2017 General Elections. H.E Mataskelekele noted that due to the smallness in number of the observer group and the vastness of PNG, the group managed to observe polling and counting in only four out of the many electorates, namely Central Province, National Capital District (NCD), Alotau in the Milne Bay Province, and Lae in Morobe Province. During the course of the observation, the MSGOG were able to interact freely with polling officials, voters, scrutineers, other observers, and security personal.

This free and open movement he said, enabled the team to obtain a broad view of the election process.

# 1ST VANUATU NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON THE MSG GREEN TRADE PROJECT



Participants of the 1st Vanuatu National Workshop on the MSG Green Trade Project.

As small island states, the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) face economic vulnerabilities due to smallness in size, distance to markets, narrow export base, susceptible to natural disasters and global challenges, among other issues. Hence the importance of the United Nations Conference on Trade & Development (UNCTAD) – MSG Green Trade Project, which aims to address narrow resource and export base for Members, and encourage sub-regional and international trade.

The comments were made by Mrs Sovaia Marawa, MSG Secretariat's Manager, Trade & Economic Development Programme, on behalf of Director General, Leonard Louma, during Vanuatu's 1st National Workshop on the MSG Green Trade Project at the Grand Hotel in Port Vila earlier on 3rd August 2022.

Mrs Marawa noted that in 2015, MSG Leaders embraced the formulation of Sustainable Development Plans as captured in the MSG 2038 Prosperity for All Plan.

"At the heart of MSG Leaders Declaration on Environment, Climate Change and Green Growth Goals lies the endorsement of 4 strategic goals. Goal 4 is aimed at "promoting sustainable business opportunities" through the adoption of MSG Green Growth strategy for MSG businesses,"

she stated.

The MSG Secretariat acknowledged the support of UNCTAD's assistance towards the MSG Green Trade Project, with the assistance of Vanuatu's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and External Trade and Department of Industry within the Ministry of Tourism, Trade, Commerce & Ni-Vanuatu Business.

Vanuatu Director of External Trade, Joe Pakoa Lui, said while coconut oil is one of Vanuatu's main exports, it is important for participants to consider the diversification of the product to benefit farmers in rural economies as well as to take ownership of the UNCTAD- MSG Green Trade Project.

UNCTAD representative, Mr. Ralf Peters, emphasised that transparency is an important element to ensure that trade regulations are met by exporters and that trade runs smoothly, noting that it can reduce trade costs by 25 per cent, particularly for exporters.

UNCTAD implements the MSG Green Trade Project, which is expected to strengthen MSG sub-regional integration by supporting the Secretariat's Trade and Economic Development programme.

# DIRECTOR GENERAL LOUMA RECEIVES COURTESY CALL FROM UNDP



Director General of the MSG Secretariat, Leonard Louma, during the courtesy call from UNDP.

A team from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) based in Port Vila, Vanuatu, paid a courtesy call to the Director General of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Secretariat, Leonard Louma on September 8, 2022. The UNDP team comprised Revai Makanje, Team

Leader, Effective Governance and Agus Wandu, Senior Peace & Development Advisor. Among issues discussed was how the MSG and the UN can work together to address some of the pressing challenges affecting the region, one of which is climate change.

# TALANOA TO RECOGNISE DISABILITIES IN MELANESIA



DDG, George Hoa'au, (left) talks with PDF Director Operations, Laisa Vereti (top right)

The Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Secretariat and Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) met yesterday to initiate efforts to recognise persons with disabilities in the Melanesian region. During a courtesy visit to the MSG Secretariat, PDF Director Operations, Laisa Vereti, said the MSG has an important role to play in progressing a sub-regional approach to realise social inclusion at the national level. Deputy Director General of the MSG Secretariat, George Hoa'au, welcomed the comments by Mrs Vereti saying that, these plans

are aligned to the MSG 2038 Prosperity for All Plan. "There is this chapter 3, which is dedicated to "Social Equality & Inclusivity" in the MSG Prosperity for All Plan 2038. It outlines "Promoting Legislation and Programmes for People with Special Needs as a strategy," he stated. The MSG Plan also clearly spells out that exploring "an MOU between MSG to measure members performances against the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" serves as a key important performance goal, DDG Hoa'au added.

# MSG SECRETARIAT & JICA TO PURSUE WORK ON COMMUNITY-BASED COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT



*Dr Akiya Seoko, Senior Consultant with Japan's IC Net Limited (2nd from left) and fellow Consultant Saori Imamura with DDG George Ho'a'u (far right)*

The Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Secretariat and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) will resume efforts to verify effective approaches of Community-Based Coastal Resource Management (CB-CRM) in selected areas in the Melanesian region, under the project for Promotion of Grace of the Sea in Coastal villages.

In line with the MSG Roadmap for Inshore Fisheries, the Grace of the Sea project, is a community-based coastal resources management approach that seeks to improve the livelihood of coastal

communities, through sustainable and conservation means, as well as promoting livelihood economic activities.

Both parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on September 2, 2020, which paved the way for collaboration on CB-CRM activities that support the implementation of the objectives of the MSG Roadmap for Inshore Fisheries Management and Sustainable Development 2015 – 2024, which is a standing mandate of the MSG Leaders.

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