



MSG Secretariat **Secretariat du GFLM**

Melanesian Spearhead Group | Le Groupe Fer de Lance Mélanésien

REMARKS TO THE AMBON 2022 FISHERIES TRAINING PROGRAM FOR MSG

By

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(Pleasantries)

Selamat pagi. Aba kabar. Tabiar!

Introduction

Let me first of all thank, with great respect and appreciation, the Government of the Republic of Indonesia, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Development Agency of Indonesia, the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, the Maluku Provincial Authorities and the Ambon Local Authorities for the generous offer to host this Fisheries Training Programme in Ambon and for the warm reception and hospitality accorded to us.

In thanking these Ministries and Organisations, let me acknowledge the presence, in our midst, of the Director for Pacific and Oceania Affairs in MOFA/Indonesia, Mr Adi Dzulfuat, Representative from the Governor of Maluku's Office, Abu pak Denny, Head of Training and Counselling Centre from the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Ibu Lilly, the Head of Fisheries Training in Ambon, Abu Baka, and Training Participants from the MSG countries.

I find it necessary to apologise to those Indonesian Authorities responsible for organising this training programme, for the rather long delays experienced in conveying the names of nominees, and in some cases, last minute nominations and withdrawals, from our MSG membership. This, I know, had made the logistics arrangements more challenging than usual.

But that we are all here in Ambon now - is credit to the diligence of the organisers of this event from the Indonesian Government and their ability to work around the clock to ensure that all our travels were organised accordingly.

The course itself

I will leave explanation on the details of the training course itself and the specific outcomes it intends to achieve to the fisheries experts that developed the training material and areas to be covered in this particular Training Programme.

For me, as Head of the MSG Secretariat, I want to say that this training programme is part of my bigger plans to have the MSG Roadmap for Inshore Fisheries Management and Sustainable Development 2015 – 2024, dusted off the shelves of the Secretariat, and implemented in a steady and practical way.

I also wanted to take the opportunity to speak to certain aspects of the MSG Inshore Fisheries Roadmap, its importance, the need for its implementation and the necessity for greater cooperation between MSG countries and Indonesia.

I will, from a layman's point of view, share with you my own thoughts and observations of developments in the inshore fisheries sector.

Importance of Inshore Fisheries in MSG

The importance of Inshore Fisheries to the MSG Membership cannot be underestimated. Most of our people in MSG live in the rural areas, and many live in coastal communities along the extensive coastlines, and the many many small island communities of our archipelagic States.

It is no exaggeration that the majority of our people in Melanesia are very much dependent on the inshore fisheries for their sustenance and economic needs.

For the MSG Membership in particular, I note from briefs provided to me, that in terms of the contribution of inshore fisheries to the respective national GDP's, subsistence inshore fisheries contribute no less than 70% of the GDP's in Fiji (82%), FLNKS/New Caledonia (70%), and Vanuatu (96%). For the other two members, namely PNG and Solomon Islands, the figures are still significant at around 28% and 38% respectively.

In other words, inshore fisheries is not inconsequential and constitutes a very important sector in the MSG sub-region.

But, regrettably, the health of this inshore fisheries in Melanesia is not in a very good condition. In some cases, this fishery has been over-exploited in ways that threatens its sustainability. And in many cases, the anthropogenic effects of development have been devastating on the inshore fisheries.

MSG Roadmap for Inshore Fisheries Management and Sustainable Development 2015-2024.

I mentioned earlier of my strong intention to see the gradual implementation of this important MSG Roadmap for Inshore Fisheries Management and Sustainable Development.

It has not been lost on me that the efforts to develop a Roadmap that could provide an overarching guide for MSG Members to use in their efforts to address the sustainable management and use of the inshore fisheries in the MSG region started way back in 2012.

In June 2015, in the Solomon Islands, MSG Leaders adopted and signed the Roadmap which was prepared by the MSG Inshore Fisheries Working Group (IFWP) and cleared by MSG Fisheries Technical Advisory Committee (FTAC).

As part of the Secretariat's efforts to develop a concerted approach towards implementing the MSG Inshore Fisheries Roadmap, I will be re-activating both the IFWG and FTAC.

Since the adoption of the Roadmap in 2015, it is fair to say that MSG member countries have individually undertaken a number of actions, consistent with the priorities and actions enunciated in the MSG Inshore Fisheries Roadmap 2015-2024.

All, I am pleased to note, have the basic objective of providing long term economic, social, ecological and food security benefits to the communities. Efforts towards aquaculture, to reduce pressure on wild fisheries stocks, and alternative income generation projects, through development of multi-products for communities can only be commended. Experiences have been different in the MSG countries.

More importantly, for me, and very encouraging to note, is that the idea and approach of Community Based Resource Management (CBRM) has been embraced in your various actions and gaining good traction in the MSG countries.

I note that these encouraging actions were not undertaken in any deliberately coordinated MSG multi-country manner, but were more a result of your own Governments independent policy decisions based on your assessed needs in the inshore fisheries sector.

Many of you present for this Fisheries Training Programme in Ambon have been involved in the development of these actions in your respective countries - with differing results and varying degrees of success. It is my hope that you would use this opportunity to share experiences and establish a strong professional network amongst yourselves to help each other with the development of appropriate sustainable management schemes for the inshore fisheries.

Melanesian Partnership Approach

One of the guiding principles of the MSG Inshore Fisheries 2015-2024 Roadmap is – “A Melanesian partnership approach, which builds on and shares the diversity of experiences, while recognising the differences between MSG members, socio-cultural settings, species and stock status.”

I urge you to help each other understand what needs to be done.

Help each other understand and avoid the mistakes and failures in the approaches and actions that you may have attempted and build the profile and promote the success stories in sustainable management of inshore fisheries.

Indonesia and MSG countries are Archipelagic States and share many similar challenges in inshore fisheries. As an important partner, and as a country that is home to over 11 million Melanesians, members of the MSG and their peoples need to explore seriously opportunities for cooperation in the development of the inshore fisheries sector. The MSG Secretariat will do all it can to facilitate this.

I am advised that Ambon has previously trained fisheries students from amongst our MSG membership. Let us build on that cooperative relationship and add value to it.

Through this 2022 training programme and the previous training programmes, Indonesia has declared its readiness to assist MSG implement the MSG 2015-2024 Inshore Fisheries Roadmap. I am convinced that there is much to learn from Indonesia.

It is my fervent hope, that this would be but the beginning of many more cooperative initiatives that can be organised between the MSG countries and Indonesia.

Perhaps, you could all agree to regularise this type of Training Programme amongst MSG members, and with Indonesia, to exchange best practices, share policy initiatives, inform each other of challenges (current and emerging) and replicate success stories.

Informed by the experience of this first Training Programme, you all can help develop and refine the contents of a fisheries training programme that best suits the needs of MSG.

In addition, assisted by the discussions at this inaugural training programme, we may be able to finetune the MSG Inshore Fisheries Roadmap and update it in ways that takes into account changes that have occurred in our MSG region.

As part of this updating process for the MSG Inshore Fisheries Roadmap, and to give impetus to the implementation of the actions prescribed in the Roadmap, I will be reactivating the FTAC. The Secretariat will also be seeking to secure funding to assist Members with implementation.

Conclusion

As a concluding remark, let me encourage all of you to take advantage of the opportunity presented by this training programme to share experiences and learn from each other the most appropriate approaches to developing and managing the fisheries resources and sectors in our Melanesian communities.

Best of luck and may you have robust and constructive exchanges for the betterment of our people in Melanesia in the next few days.

Tenk yu tru, Tang yu tumas, Vinaka vaka levu, Thank you, Terima kasih.

Beta sayang ale semua!