

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Sub-Regional Workshop on the MSG Green Trade Project**

**16 October, 2023**

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***Mr. UNESCAP representative***

***MSG Trade, Agriculture and Biosecurity Officials***

***National Consultants from our Member States***

***Ladies and gentlemen***

Good morning and welcome to Port Vila! I hope you have rested well and ready for today and tomorrow's sessions.

Let me first of all convey the apologies of the Director General, Mr. Leonard Louma who is unable to join us this morning to deliver this statement due to other commitments.

As per usual protocol, let me begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on the grounds we meet.

Today marks an important milestone under this MSG Green Project as we are gathered here at the 3<sup>rd</sup> sub-regional workshop to update ourselves with the work undertaken in each Member state and most importantly to discuss the draft Sub-Regional Action Plan for the MSG Green Trade Project.

You all recall that our Leaders, in their wisdom, set out to enhance economic growth and integrated sustainable development in the region as required under the MSG 2038 Prosperity for All Plan. Developments taking place at the international, sub-regional and national level has also raised the importance for creating linkages and synergies between International Trade and sustainable development. And today, the Secretariat will try to unpack some of the policy issues to assist Members discussions on creating linkages between sustainable development, Melanesian Free Trade Agreement (MFTA) and the MSG 2038 Prosperity for All Plan.

As you are all aware, the MSG Green Trade Project started In November 2021 with the first virtual workshop held with Members with the objective of integrating green trade promotion into their sustainable development strategies in the MSG sub-region. The MSG Green Trade provides for planned joint initiatives, actions and activities to enhance the capacity of our members to integrate green trade promotion into their sustainable development strategies.

In 2022, Members selected their priority products with Fiji (ginger), PNG (Vanilla), Solomon Islands (kava) and Vanuatu (virgin coconut oil) and with the support of national consultants three

national reports namely, the Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs), Voluntarily Sustainable Standards (VSS) and Export Guides were prepared for each country.

Through these documents, UNCTAD will present the Sub-Regional Action Plan for the MSG Green Trade Project which identifies three (3) key actions namely: 1) Capacity Building 2) Trade Policy Data Transparency and 3) Policy Coordination. And to this end, it will be important for Members to provide your inputs on the draft Sub-Regional Action Plan in particular, begin conversations on international trade and sustainable development at the MSG sub-region.

I must add that inputs at this workshop will guide the MSG Trade and Economic Officials Meetings including other issues for exporting these priority products under the Melanesian Free Trade Agreement and to other markets under other regional or international trade frameworks.

As your Secretariat we look forward to your guidance on the proposed 3 key areas and accompanying recommendations contained in the draft MSG Sub-Regional Action Plan document.

Special thanks to the government and people of Vanuatu for the warm and excellent arrangements in hosting this workshop.

I wish you well in your deliberations.

*Tankiu tru*

*Tank tu tumas*

*Merci beaucoup*

*Vinaka Vakalevu.*

*MSG Secretariat*

*16 October, 2023*