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MSG Secretariat
Secretariat du GFLM

Melanesian Spearhead Group | Le Groupe Fer de Lance Mélanésien

REMARKS BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE MSG SECRETARIAT AT THE MSG SECURITY STRATEGY WORKSHOP

Port Vila, 7 June 2024

(Acknowledgement of Officials present and the participants)

It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the presence with us today of two (2) representatives from the Office of the Chair of the MSG Security Strategy Working Group, Ms Alesi Dau and Mr Joeli Rokodaveta from the Fiji Home Affairs Ministry.

The Working Group, made up of MSG members countries and the Associate Member, was entrusted with the responsibility of drawing up the MSGSS. At this juncture, let me acknowledge with appreciation the leadership role of Fiji, as Chair of the Working Group, in the preparation of the text of the MSGSS that is before us today.

Last week, we started the series of consultations in our membership in Papua New Guinea. In accordance with the MSG Leaders decision last August, these series of consultations on the MSG Security Strategy are basically aimed at soliciting the views of the NGO's and CSO's, as well as sensitizing them on the salient features of the MSGSS. It is with a tinge of disappointment that I note the absence, in our midst, of many NGO's and CSO's.

While it is acknowledged that National Security matters are ultimately the responsibility of National Governments, it is equally important to recognize that the broader community in our MSG countries play a critical role in the security space. Security is everyone's business. It is not, and should never be regarded as the exclusive preserve of government officials.

Of interest to me as Head of the MSG Secretariat would be your views on the section on the Vanuatu National Security Environment narrative, and actions that you think are relevant to be undertaken to address challenges that fall within the six (6) strategic priorities identified in the MSG Security Strategy.

In a while, after a short Power Point presentation on the MSGSS, you will be asked to divide yourselves into small groups to discuss and propose actions to be undertaken in the six (6) strategic priorities.

I ask that you keep an open mind about the suggestions made by each member of your group. Everyone must contribute, there is no perfect solution or answer, provide as many proposals as you can, do not get caught up in things (you know) we have no control over, try to add or provide alternatives to each other's proposals, and resist the temptation of making quick judgements on each other's proposals.

The idea here is to spawn new and fresh ideas that, perhaps through the lens of Government Officials, they may have erroneously overlooked a useful and worthy action to be undertaken.

As has been already conveyed to you, after the consultations in Port Moresby and here in Port Vila, further consultations will be held in the Solomon Islands, Indonesia, Fiji and New Caledonia.

I look forward to the results of the interactions today. Together, I am confident, that we will enrich the MSG Security Strategy in ways that can only be to the benefit of the safety, welfare and security of our countries and peoples.

Thank you, Merci Beaucoup, Tangio tumas, Tenk yu tru, Vinaka Vakalevu, Oleti!

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