



MELANESIAN SPEARHEAD GROUP

LE GROUPE FER DE LANCE MELANESIEN

**SPECIAL MELANESIA SPEARHEAD GROUP (MSG) LEADERS RETREAT
PORT VILA, VANUATU
10 JULY 2009**

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

Pursuant to Article 9 (4) of the MSG constitution, the Chair of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), in consultation with other MSG Leaders, agreed to convene a Special Retreat of the MSG Leaders at the Crystal Blue Lagoon Resort, Efate, Vanuatu on 10th July 2009.

The Special Retreat was chaired by the Prime Minister of Vanuatu, Hon. Edward Nipake Natapei. MSG Leaders in attendance included the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, the Right Honorable Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare; the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, Hon. Dr. Derek Sikua; the Prime Minister of Fiji, Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama; and Hon. Victor Tutugoro, Spokesperson of the Front de Libération Nationale Kanak Socialiste (FLNKS).

Also attending were the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Solomon Islands, Hon. William Haomae, Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Trade of Vanuatu, Hon. Joe Natuman, Fiji's Ambassador to Japan, Ratu Inoke Kubuabola, Papua New Guinea's High Commissioner to Fiji Mr Peter Eafeare, Hon Charles Wea, member of the Assembly of the Loyalty Islands Province and the Director General of the MSG Secretariat Mr Rima Ravusiro.

The MSG Leaders thanked the government and people of Vanuatu for hosting this special retreat which they considered very important not only for Fiji but to member countries for solidarity on issues affecting the members.

Political Situation in Fiji

- ***Fiji Strategic Framework for Change***

MSG leaders noted the government of Fiji's "Strategic Framework for Change" which was announced on 1 July 2009. The Framework sets out key milestones and timelines on major political and structural reforms which are necessary for sustainable democracy. A major component of this reform

agenda is the formulation of a new constitution that will ensure equal suffrage for all people of Fiji including electoral reforms.

Leaders noted that the Framework reflected a clear vision and strategic direction for far reaching changes that the people of Fiji would need in order to achieve sustainable democracy.

- ***Fiji and the Pacific Islands Forum***

Leaders acknowledged the central role Fiji plays in the Pacific region, particularly within the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and its associated agencies, and called on members of the Pacific Islands Forum and development partners to engage in open and constructive dialogue with Fiji.

Leaders noted the importance of Fiji being continuously engaged in the PIF and the MSG. Leaders further recognize the importance of collective and inclusive group engagement in pursuing their common interests in the region, including economic co-operation arrangements.

Leaders recognized Fiji's right to participate in regional trade and economic co-operation agreements such as PICTA, PACER-plus and the interim EPA. The exclusion of Fiji from discussions of these agreements would be invalid and therefore the decisions pertaining to those agreements would be null and void.

Leaders directed the MSG Secretariat to assess the possible legal and other practical consequences to the Pacific ACP states and MSG of Fiji's non-participation in respect to PICTA, PACER-plus, interim EPA and report back to Leaders before the Forum Meeting in Cairns, Australia.

- ***Reconciliation and Dialogue: Way to Democracy***

MSG Leaders urged the Government of Fiji to engage all leaders of Fiji in its implementation process through a nation-wide reconciliation and dialogue. MSG leaders called for a reconciliation process which would pave the way for open and genuine dialogue amongst Leaders at all levels of Fiji society, towards promoting the principles and practices of democracy.

MSG Leaders offered support to assist the government of Fiji towards building commitment and capacity for genuine dialogue and reconciliation consistent with Melanesian values and traditional practices.

Date and Venue of next MSG Leaders' Summit Meeting

Leaders reaffirmed Fiji's offer to host the next MSG Leaders' Summit in 2010.

Signed at the Crystal Blue Lagoon Resort, Efate, Vanuatu on 10th July 2009.

Rt. Hon. Sir Michael T. Somare, GCMG, CH, KStJ, MP
Prime Minister
Papua New Guinea

Hon. Dr Derek Sikua, MP
Prime Minister
Solomon Islands

Hon. Edward Natapei, MP
Prime Minister
Republic of Vanuatu

Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama
Prime Minister
Republic of the Fiji Islands

Hon. Victor Tutugoro
Spokesperson of Front de Libération Nationale Kanak Socialiste (FLNKS)