

Achieving *Economic Prosperity*, a core objective of the **MSG 2038: Prosperity for All Plan!**

A bi-monthly newsletter to inform readers about key work activities undertaken at the MSG Secretariat, including those supported through the EU-funded Pacific Integration Technical Assistance Project (PITAP) for improved intra-MSG trade and investment performance.

FOREIGN MINISTERS DISCUSS POST-PAM HELP

A special MSG Foreign Ministers Meeting (FMM) convened in Port Vila on 25 March provided the opportunity for first-hand updates from the Vanuatu Government, including its National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), on the devastation caused by Category 5 Cyclone Pam on 13 March and related urgent relief assistance, rebuilding and rehabilitation. Chaired by Madam Caroline Machoro-Reignier of FLNKS, the meeting was attended by Hon. Rimbink Pato of PNG, Hon. Ratu Inoke Kubuabola of Fiji, Hon. Milner Tozaka of Solomon Islands, Hon. Sato Kilman Livtuvanu of Vanuatu and FLNKS representative, Mr M. Mickael Forrest. Members pledged contributions to support the recovery efforts in Vanuatu (*reported next page*).

Director General Peter Forau acknowledged the significance of the FMM in addressing the urgent needs of the MSG's Host Government and added that an



Mourning with Vanuatu, MSG flags flying at half mast in front of the badly damaged *Orange Shed* where Secretariat events were often held.

unprecedented aspect of the meeting was the presence of the Foreign Ministers from all Member countries for the first time. DG Forau also disclosed that the Secretariat has opened a dedicated bank account to accept cash deposits for supporting ongoing relief efforts in Vanuatu. The bank

details are: **Account Name** – MSG Cyclone Pam Relief and Rehabilitation; **Account Number** – 10107015; **Bank Name** – National Bank of Vanuatu; **Bank Address** – PO Box 249, Port Vila, Vanuatu, Ph. +678 22201; and **Swift Code** – NBOVVUVU.

COMMON ABBREVIATIONS

ACP - African, Caribbean and the Pacific **APEC** - Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
CEO - Chief Executive Officer **EDF** - European Development Fund **EU** - European Union
FLNKS - Front de Libération Nationale Kanak et Soljaliste **FMM** - Foreign Ministers Meeting
HIPA+IOM - Heads of Investment Promotion Agencies & Industry Officials Meeting
IPA - Investment Promotion Agency **MOU** - Memorandum of Understanding
MSGTA3 - Melanesian Spearhead Group Trade Agreement 3
NDMO - National Disaster Management Office
PIFS - Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat **PITAP** - Pacific Integration and Technical Assistance Project
PNG - Papua New Guinea **PSD** - Private Sector Development
SCLII - Sub-Committee on Legal and Institutional Issues
SICCI - Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry **SIDS** - Small Island Developing States
SPREP - Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
TEOM - Trade and Economic Officials Meeting

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MEMBERS AFFIRM POST-PAM SUPPORT

MSG Members demonstrated their support for Vanuatu following the devastation caused by Cyclone Pam, at the recent FMM in Port Vila. Beginning with PNG, Hon. Rimbink Pato, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration, revealed that their Government had contributed VT221million and would be assigning an assessment team to help determine further support for the country. PNG also noted its contribution of PGK1million to Tuvalu which was struck as well by Pam.

Hon. Ratu Inoke Kubuabola, Fiji's Minister for Foreign Affairs, disclosed the deployment of 40 Fijian military and health officials who were flown to Port Vila by the New Zealand Government. Eight officials supporting NDMO brought with them food and water rations donated by the country's private sector and other partners. Fiji has set aside

\$250,000 for personnel, \$122,000 for relief assistance and \$70,000 for relief assistance awaiting deployment, in addition to a commitment of FJ\$1million to facilitate ongoing relief and rehabilitation efforts.

Hon. Milner Tozaka, Solomon Islands' Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade, indicated that although recovery efforts were also underway in their own Temotu Province which was also hit by Cyclone Pam, their Government had approved VT11million to assist Vanuatu and that the Royal Solomon Islands Police patrol boat had been assigned to assist as well.

FLNKS expressed sympathy for the losses suffered in Vanuatu and stated they had requested FLNKS officials and the Kanaky people to support the country.



L-R, Hon. Ratu Inoke Kubuabola, Hon. Sato Kilman, Madam Caroline Machoro-Reignier, Hon. Rimbink Pato and Hon. Milner Tozaka.

Hon. Sato Kilman, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and External Trade, expressed gratitude on behalf of the Government and people of Vanuatu for the various pledges they had received from MSG Members and other partners.

PAM'S IMPACT IN PICTURES



Debris on the Secretariat's front car park



Downed flower pots



Dislodged roof on Independence Park

SECRETARIAT SUPPORTS RELIEF EFFORTS

Director Operations (DO), Jean Pierre Nirua, led a Secretariat delegation that delivered 5 tons of rice, 100 cartons of canned fish, 100 cartons of noodles and 100 cartons of water to NDMO Director, Mr Shedrack Welegtabit in Port Vila on 19 March. During the hand-over ceremony, DO Nirua conveyed sympathies to the Government and people of Vanuatu, and explained that the Secretariat could not just remain indifferent to the urgent needs of thousands of homeless people affected by Cyclone Pam. "We are not a donor agency, but we are bound by our Melanesian culture never to turn a blind eye on those in despair and real need immediately around us," DO Nirua said. He also expressed the wish of

the Secretariat for this donation to be distributed directly to assist needy families, many of whom were still homeless and living in more than 40 evacuation centres around Port-Vila.

Director Welegtabit expressed the Government's appreciation for the assistance to the people of Vanuatu through NDMO during the most difficult time that the country was going through. He assured that the assistance provided by the Secretariat would be distributed fairly and equitably to all the centres where many people were in urgent need of basic necessities, especially food and water.



Receiving the truck load of food and water supplies, Director Welegtabit (centre), with DO Nirua to his right, and Secretariat staff

MSG CHAIR MEETS PM SOGAVARE

MSG Chair, Mr Victor Tutugoro, paid a courtesy call to the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, Hon. Manasseh Sogavare in Honiara on 04 March. The Chair first congratulated Hon. Sogavare for his appointment as Prime Minister following the general elections which were successfully conducted last November. The Chair was also grateful for the visit as it provided the two leaders with the opportunity to discuss key political, economic and social issues affecting the MSG region. The organisation of the 20th MSG Leaders Summit, scheduled as well for Honiara in June was also discussed, with em-

phasis placed on the transition of the two-year Chairmanship of the Group from the FLNKS to Solomon Islands at the upcoming Summit. The Prime Minister extended his profound gratitude to Mr Tutugoro and the FLNKS at large for their leadership since 2013. The Chair was accompanied by his Adviser, Mr Rodrigue Tiavouane; the Secretariat's Head of FLNKS Unit, Mr Jimmy Naouna; Director Governance & Sustainable Development (DGSD), Ms Barbara Age and PSDA Henry Sanday, who also met and discussed the proposed PSD Strategy with private sector stakeholders.



At the Prime Minister's Office, L-R: Rodrigue, Jimmy, Chair Tutugoro, Hon. Sogavare, Barbara and Henry.

EU UPDATED ON PITAP PROGRESS

The EU Ambassador to Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, H.E. Mr Leonidas Tezapsidis, welcomed DGSD Barbara Age and PSDA Henry Sanday to the office of the EU Delegation in Honiara on 06 March. Also present was Ms Marga Peeters, Attaché Cooperation Budget Support. The visit provided the opportunity to discuss progress with the Secretariat's implementation of EU-funded PITAP activities, with special attention paid to the pursuit of an MSG PSD Strategy. The Ambassa-

dor expressed his gratitude for the dialogue that took place and stressed the importance of having priorities in the Strategy that respond to the needs of the private sector and also address the aspirations of Governments for private sector-led sustainable economic growth. Visits to the EU Delegations in Port Moresby as well as in Suva are being planned for May as part of consultations on the proposed MSG PSD Strategy. More details on the Strategy are available from Henry on h.sanday@msg.int.



Deep in discussion at the EU Delegation office, L-R: Barbara, Henry, Ambassador Tezapsidis and Marga.

TIGHT HONIARA SCHEDULE FOR SECRETARIAT

The mission to Solomon Islands to sensitize stakeholders of forthcoming consultations on the MSG PSD Strategy was well-received. Meetings were held with national and sub-national authorities, representatives of the private sector, NGOs and development partners. The Secretariat's team, with the help of the Ministry of Commerce and Industries, overcame the heavy traffic in Honiara to attend to seven appointments on the last day alone, Friday, 06 March. The support of the Ministry and all those who agreed to meet the team is much appreciated.



Busy but still smiling husband and wife team, Nanette Tutua and Harry of Timol Timbers Ltd



Presenting Local Government views on the private sector, Honiara City Council Clerk and CEO, Charles Kelly (right).

FORUM SECRETARY GENERAL HOSTED



PIFS Secretary General Taylor (front, second from right) with Anna to her left and MSG Secretariat staff

February 16, 2015 was a historical day as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General, Dame Meg Taylor, was received by the Acting DG, Molean Kilepak during her inaugural visit to the MSG Secretariat. Their dialogue began with a discussion on the Secretariat's work in response to the Leaders' mandates to spur sustained economic integration on the basis of the MSG 2038 Prosperity for All Plan. Support from PIFS was duly acknowledged, particularly through the 10th EDF funded PITAP, the Agreement for which was signed in February 2014. Collaboration on the 11th EDF was also discussed.

Acknowledging the work of MSG, Secretary General Taylor stressed the commitment of the Forum Secretariat to implement the recommendations of the recent Sir Mekere Pacific Plan Review. She also noted the contributions that sub-regional bodies such as MSG could make towards the broadening of Pacific-wide regionalism. Both organisations agreed to continue their collaboration and to also consider formalising their partnership through an MOU. The Secretary General was accompanied by her Regional and International Issues Advisor, Ms Anna Naupa.

CENTRAL BANK GOVERNORS SUPPORT MSG EMERGENCY FUND



Central Bank Governors and officials, together with Secretariat staff

The inaugural MSG Governors of Central Banks Consultation held in Port Vila, Vanuatu on 27 February was opened by the Vanuatu Minister for Finance and Economic Management, Hon. Maki Simelum, and chaired by Mr Simeon Athy, Governor of the Reserve Bank of Vanuatu. The meeting considered a report by Consultant and former Governor of the Reserve Bank of Fiji (RBF), Mr Savenaca Narube, on the proposed MSG Emergency Stabilization Fund (MESF) that Members encountering a Balance of Payment crisis could tap to

help restore confidence in external financial stability. The meeting was attended by Mr Loi Bakani, Governor of the Bank of Papua New Guinea, Mr Barry Whiteside, Governor of RBF, and Mr. Denton Rarawa, Governor of the Central Bank of Solomon Islands. After intense deliberations, Members agreed to recommend the MESF to MSG Finance Ministers. The project was funded by the Government of Timor Leste. For further details, contact Programme Manager Economic Development, David Hopa on d.hopa@msg.int.

Stakeholder requests have led us to revisit the Port Moresby Declaration. The objectives of the MSG 2038 Prosperity for All Plan are reaffirmed in the Declaration that Trade Ministers adopted on 26 November 2014. Premised on the overarching theme of *Securing Future MSG Prosperity Through Trade and Economic Integration*, the Declaration contains the following commitments towards attaining free intra-MSG trade:

- i) Achieving a Free Trade Area by 2017;
- ii) Concluding MSGTA3 negotiations on Goods and Services by 2015;
- iii) Concluding Double Tax Treaties and Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements by 2017;

PORT MORESBY DECLARATION REVISITED

- iv) Enhancing the mechanism for implementing the Skills Movements Scheme;
- v) Strengthening MSG's customs and biosecurity cooperation in the context of the MSGTA3;
- vi) Mapping out a clear private sector development strategy by 2015;
- vii) Enhancing MSG Connectivity through the MSG Travel Card by 2015;
- viii) Fund and conclude a MSG Shipping study by 2015;
- ix) Promoting investments in the MSG Roadmap on Inshore Fisheries and Management and Sustainable Development;
- x) Fostering Investment Roadshows as a means to enhancing business to business linkages;
- xi) Supporting the work of the Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors and CEOs of Pension and Provident Funds on the establishment of a Development and Investment Fund and Emergency Stabilization Fund.

For more details, contact Ms Tendai Chigwada, Trade Research Analyst, t.chigwada@msg.int.

MSG BUSINESS TRAVEL CARD EXPLORED

The commitment under the Port Moresby Declaration to enhance connectivity through an MSG Business Travel Card led to an exploratory visit by senior Secretariat officials to PNG and the APEC Secretariat in Singapore on 16-24 February. Delegation leader, DGSD Ms Barbara Age, was joined by PMTI John Licht in Singapore while PSDA Henry Sanday visited Port Moresby with her. Initiated by the APEC Business Advisory Council, the APEC Business Travel Card reduced travel costs by 38 per cent. This translated to a savings of US\$3.7m in 2010-11 alone, compared to the 5 per cent reduction targeted by APEC for 2007-10.

"The membership of PNG of both MSG and APEC presents a distinct advantage not only for MSG but also for the entire Pacific Islands, particularly during the present build-up to 2018 when PNG will assume the APEC Chair," DG Peter Forau said. Henry's participation, he added was a cost-effective measure as it also allowed consultations to inform stakeholders about work on the EU-funded MSG PSD Strategy. The findings from the mission were tabled at the TEOM on 17 April and are to be presented as well to a meeting of Senior MSG Immigration Officials later in the year. For more on the MSG Travel Card, contact John on j.licht@msg.int.

"The membership of PNG of both MSG and APEC presents a distinct advantage not only for MSG but also for the entire Pacific Islands....."



At APEC Headquarters, L-R: Barbara, Mr Pangeran Ibrani Situmorang (APEC Program Director, Business Mobility Group) and John.

VANUATU CHAIRS ACP AMBASSADORS

Vanuatu took up the chairmanship of the Committee of ACP Ambassadors for a period of six months, starting on 01 February. According to the ACP Secretariat, this Committee plays a key role in decision-making in Brussels on behalf of the 79 ACP States engaged in dialogue and partnerships with the EU. Several major developments are to take place during the tenure of the ACP Committee Chairman,

Ambassador of Vanuatu to the EU, H.E. Mr. Roy Mickey Joy. Notably, it coincides with the 40th anniversary of the creation of the ACP Group on 06 June 1975, and it includes the change in leadership at the ACP Secretariat with Dr Patrick I Gomes of Guyana beginning his five-year term as Secretary General on 01 March. The entry into force of the €30.5billion 11th EDF for the period 2014-2020 on 02 March

and the post-2015 development agenda are other key items. In addition, progress with the implementation of the *Samoan Pathway* on climate change from the 2014 SIDS Conference in Apia will be followed with utmost interest, especially after the destruction of Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu. At Pacific and MSG regional levels, support for the private sector, non-state actors, rural economies and public-private projects are



Ambassador Joy
(Source: ACP Secretariat)

major considerations as well. Addressing the ban and uncertainty of kava exports to Europe is to be also prioritized.

NEW STAFF RECRUITED

The Secretariat has recruited Mr Petros Shayanowako of Zimbabwe as Trade Economist/Legal (TEL) under PITAP to enhance progress with the MSGTA negotiations. Petros, who joined on 11 February, has had 26 years of experience with Customs management, international trade and regional economic integration, covering the Common Market for Eastern & Southern Africa (COMESA) Free Trade Area, Southern African

Development Community (SADC) Free Trade Area, East African Community-COMESA-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area that is currently under negotiation, ACP-EU Economic Partnership Agreement negotiations and implementation, WTO and World Customs Organisation. Petros has worked extensively on issues relating to the Harmonized System Convention, Rules of Origin, ASYCUDA++ and WTO

Customs Valuation. He also had a stint at PIFS, working with selected Pacific Island countries on the EPA negotiations process. DG Peter Forau welcomed Petros to the Secretariat and said that all "looked forward to his contributions to further boosting the capacity of the MSG not only at the regional level but more importantly at the national level." Petros can be reached via email on p.shayanowako@msg.int.



Petros

MSG SPORTS COMMITTEE MEETS



A briefing for Sports Committee members by International Sports Centre & Expertise staff in Noumea

Officials responsible for sports convened in Noumea, New Caledonia on 12-13 March for the 4th MSG Sports Committee Meeting, which was opened by Madame Valentine Eurisouke, Minister for Youth and Sports of New Caledonia and chaired by Mr Yvon Faua of FLNKS. Among the key agenda items were the reviews of the Draft Melanesia Games Charter that was initially formulated by PNG and of the Draft MOU on Sports Cooperation between MSG Members, as

well as the revival of the Melanesia Soccer Cup. The inaugural Melanesia Games is scheduled for Noumea in October 2016. The decisions of the Committee are to be tabled at the MSG Sports Ministers Meeting in Port Moresby, PNG during the margins of the Pacific Games that will be held on 04-18 July 215. DGSD Ms Barbara Age, head of the Secretariat's delegation, stressed the fundamental importance of sports in addressing social, cultural and economic

development challenges in Melanesia, particularly those posed by a rapidly growing youth population and an older population that is now experiencing non-communicable diseases and other health issues. Other Secretariat staff in attendance were Ms Laisiana Tugaga, Program Manager Governance and Sustainable Development and Ms Cheyenne Bouchet, Interpreter/ Translation Officer. For more information, contact Laisiana on l.tugaga@msg.int.

SPREP Intensifying Activities in MSG

SPREP plans to have a national presence in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu by the end of 2015

The Apia-based Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) is actively engaged in implementing projects in the Melanesian sub-region. This was revealed by Mr Sefanaia Nawadra, SPREP's Director Environmental Monitoring & Governance, during a seminar presentation at the Secretariat on 06 March. Consistent with the spirit of the MOU it signed with MSG in 2013, SPREP plans to have a national presence in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu by the end of 2015. Negotiations for a similar

presence in PNG are underway. Activities for 2015 relate to Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management, Climate Change, Waste Management and Pollution Control as well as Environmental Monitoring and Governance. The significance of these activities was underscored by Environment & Climate Change Adviser (ECCA), Stanley Wapot who described these initiatives as "fundamental considerations for sustainable development throughout the Pacific Islands, including Melanesia". For more information, contact Stanley on sj.wapot@msg.int.



Sefanaia
(Source: Rio+20)



Melanesian culture on display

The Secretariat has secured 17 Australian Award Fellowships for MSG officials from the Environment, Climate Change, National Planning, Culture and Agriculture Departments, that will allow them to attend a culture and natural resource management capacity building programme at Griffith University's Gold Coast Campus

Fellowships for Culture and Tradition

on 17 May-03 June. Its first week will focus on learning about tools to promote natural resource management using Melanesian traditional knowledge. Visits to sites of cultural significance in Canberra, Sydney and Cairns, as well as dialogues with stakeholders involved in partnerships on cultural and natural resource management

will be undertaken during the second week of the programme. The aim of the fellowship is to support MSG Government officials with incorporating culture and traditional knowledge into natural resource management policy making for their respective countries. For more information, contact ECCA Stanley Wapot on sj.wapot@msg.int.

TRADE NEGOTIATIONS NEAR CONCLUSION

Trade officials converged on Port Vila, Vanuatu for PITAP-funded consultations on issues to facilitate the conclusion of the MSGTA3 negotiations on Goods and Services by the end of 2015 as mandated under the Port Moresby Declaration. The Rules of Origin workshop on 14 April was unique as its technical resource requirements were met in-house by TEL Petros Shayanowako. It was followed by the Technical Working Group meeting on Trade in Goods on 15 April and on Trade in Services on 16 April.

The further review of the MSGTA3, as noted by DTIED Peni Sikivou,

resulted from the incorporation of new chapters on Services, Investment, Labour Mobility and Government Procurement into the Agreement. Hence, delegations to the Trade in Services negotiations also comprised senior officials from Labour, Immigration, Telecommunications Regulatory Authorities and Investment Promotion Agencies. The meetings enhanced Members' understanding of the draft legal text for each specific chapter and its implications.

Another key issue that was discussed during the week related to the MSG PSD Strategy, con-

sultations for which are to take place from April to July. Mr Sikivou highlighted the importance of these meetings given the recognition by MSG Leaders of the strategic role of the private sector in the context of the expanding MSGTA3.

Reports from these engagements were presented on 17 April to the TEOM which agreed to summarise them further for tabling with MSG Leaders in June before a further round of MSGTA3 negotiations is conducted in July. For more details, contact PMTI John Licht on j.licht@msg.int.



Trading in Melanesia

INVESTMENT FIJI APPOINTS CEO

Investment Fiji has appointed Mr Godo Muller-Teut as its CEO. German born and British trained, Godo worked at the New Zealand Trade and Enterprise prior to joining Investment Fiji on a three-year contract. Fiji's Minister for Industry & Trade, Hon. Faiyaz Koya, welcomed Godo and said "He brings in a fresh perspective to Invest-

ment Fiji and the focus is on a high performance team and enhancing exporter capabilities." His prime focus is to attract foreign direct investment, the Minister added. Godo has a BSc in Business Studies and an MSc in Service Management from the University of Buckingham. Previously known as the Fiji Islands

Trade and Investment Bureau (FTIB), Investment Fiji was created in 1980 to stimulate economic growth through the promotion and facilitation of investments and exports. As Fiji's IPA, it also participates in the MSG HIPA+IOM. For more information on Investment Fiji, visit www.investmentfiji.org.fj.



Minister Koya (left), congratulates Godo on his appointment

(Source: Fiji Department of Information)

LEGAL ISSUES FINALISED FOR LEADERS

The 10th meeting of the MSG Subcommittee on Legal and Institutional Issues (SCLII), co-chaired by Mr Jean Creugnet of FLNKS and Mr William Soaki, Deputy Secretary for Solomon Islands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade, was held in Port Vila, Vanuatu on 20-21 April. The SCLII discussed key initiatives that needed to be finalised before the upcoming 20th Leaders Summit in Honiara, Solomon Islands. These initiatives included the Memorandum of Understanding for the Hu-

manitarian & Emergency Response Coordinating Centre which was first developed in 2008 and has been made all the more relevant following the devastation caused by Cyclone Pam. Another initiative was the Agreement on Establishing the Regional Police Academy as well as the recruitment process for the Director General of the MSG Secretariat. Progress was also noted on the promotion of legal co-operation between MSG Members through the Treaty of

Reciprocal Enforcement of Foreign Judgments and the Treaty on Custody and Maintenance of Children. The Deputy Director General, Mr Molean Kilepak, expressed gratitude to all Members for their continued support to the work of the SCLII which plays a vital role in addressing legal and institutional issues pertaining to MSG interests. Further information can be obtained from Mr Ilan Kilo, Manager Legal Services on i.kiloe@msg.int.



Solomon Islands' delegation at the SCLII meeting

**THE SECRETARIAT
MELANESIAN SPEARHEAD GROUP (MSG)**



**SECRETARIAT
GROUPE DE FER DE LANCE MÉLANÉSIEN (GFLM)**

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MELANESIA, ONE PEOPLE, ONE SOLWORA,
ONE REGION, WORKING TOGETHER TO
ACHIEVE PROSPERITY FOR ALL

Contact *Melanesian Tok* by email
melanesian.tok@msg.int

EUROPE DAY TO BE CELEBRATED

The Secretariat will be represented by its Capacity Development Adviser, Mrs Eleni Tevi, at the celebration of Europe Day on 09 May in Suva, Fiji. While the Day provides the opportunity to reflect on the establishment of the EU and the progress it has made in supporting developing countries within and beyond the ACP Group of States, the event will also be used by the Secretariat to showcase its achievements so far in the closely related areas of trade and investment policy work that is funded through PITAP. EU support in this regard is helping Member countries to advance towards freer intra-MSG trade and investment as agreed to by Trade Ministers under the Port Moresby Declaration.

EU financial and technical support to the Melanesian region is not limited to just PITAP-funded initiatives, as that support also benefits MSG countries through their membership of other regional organisations such as the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the South Pacific Tourism Organisation, among others. Bilateral programmes between the EU and MSG Members have been and will continue to be beneficial. An illustrative example in this regard, as shown below, is the EU support towards the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI), to strengthen that Chamber's institutional capacity as the country's peak private sector representative body and dialogue partner of the Government.



SICCI CEO, Ms Rose Abana, and
Member Service Officer, James Loraii



Affirming their partnership, the EU and Solomon
Islands flags at the SICCI Office

PSD STRATEGY CONSULTATIONS BEGIN

The Secretariat has engaged the services of Fijian Consultant and former FTIB CEO and Diplomat, Mr Jelsoni Vitusagavulu, to conduct PITAP-funded in-country consultations for the design of an inclusive MSG PSD Strategy that is to be completed this year, as stipulated under the Port Moresby Declaration. Mr Vitusagavulu, who prefers to be called Vitu, has undertaken numerous projects in the Pacific, the most recent being in the Republic of Marshall Islands on the establishment of their IPA and strategic reviews of their National Development Bank and airline, Air Marshalls.

DG Peter Forau acknowledged Vitu's determination and commitment to preparing and delivering the PSD Strategy which is to be a major policy document for Member countries and the Secretariat.

"The MSG region is privileged to have secured the services of Vitu, given his vast experiences with economic development through trade and investment with the government, statutory bodies and the private sector at both the national and regional levels," DG Forau said. Vitu affirmed his excitement to be involved with the project. "I am very pleased with this opportunity to be back in the region and to help our MSG countries with the design of a policy document that will contribute to improving our economies through sustained private sector development at the local, national and regional levels," Vitu said.

Following meetings with the Secretariat's Executive and staff on 27 April, Vitu left Port Vila for Port Moresby on 28 April to

commence consultations in PNG on 29 April. He is being accompanied by PSDA Henry Sanday and TEL Petros Shayanowako, who will be discussing MSGTA3 Rules of Origin (ROO) issues with relevant stakeholders. The intensity of their programme is evident from their following travel schedule: **PNG** - Port Moresby (29 April-03 May), Kokopo and Rabaul (03-04 May), Lae (05-06 May), Mt Hagen (06-07 May); **Solomon Islands** - Honiara (08-10 & 16-19 May), Gizo (10-11 May), Munda and Noro (12-13 May), Auki (14-15 May); **Fiji** - Suva (21-25 May), Nadi, Lautoka and Ba (26-27 May), Labasa (28 May) and Savusavu (29-30 May); **Vanuatu**: Port Vila (01-03 June), Santo (03-04 June), and Tanna (05-06 June). Stakeholders from national and sub-national govern-



Vitu

ment authorities, the private sector and civil society groups, development partners, academia and individuals are invited to share their thoughts on the proposed Strategy by contacting Vitu on vitu70@gmail.com or, Henry on h.sanday@msg.int. Petros can be contacted on p.shayanowako@msg.int with regards to ROO issues.