



Climate change tops MSG agenda

By Online Editor

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Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) foreign ministers meet in Suva today with climate change and the environment to be one of the key issues on the agenda.

Fiji's Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Ratu Inoke Kubuabola said this meeting was convened following concerns expressed that the MSG region's environmental issues and climate change interests were not being given prominence at regional and international meetings.

Opening the meeting, Ratu Inoke said they will be discussing a report of the inaugural MSG Environment and Climate Change Ministers Meeting in Nadi earlier this year.

He said the MSG Environment and Climate Change Ministers' request for an MSG position on the zero draft document, 'The Future We Want', is also on the agenda.

The document will be discussed at the Rio Plus 20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio, Brazil in June this year. Another key issue to be considered for adoption is the Skills Movement Scheme which aims to source skilled labour from within the MSG.

The scheme is expected to allow up to 400 people from each country to work in other MSG nations. The meeting will also review a report on cultural cooperation amongst MSG countries after a meeting of MSG Ministers of Culture and Arts in Solomon Islands last year.

The Solomon Islands will be hosting the next Festival of Pacific Arts in Honiara in June this year. Other issues to be discussed include the Front de Liberation National Kanak et Socialiste' aspirations for de-colonisation, security, the report from the Police Commissioners Conference, and the Trade and Economic Officials Meeting.

Ratu Inoke said the purpose of the MSG is to promote and strengthen inter-membership trade, exchange of Melanesian cultures, traditions and values, sovereign equality, economic and technical cooperation between members.

“We have demonstrated a strong resolve and unity as a region bound by a common cause - a cause that is clearly articulated in our Agreement Establishing the MSG,” he said. “In the true spirit of Melanesian tradition, custom and values, we have managed to resolve contentious issues amongst ourselves and also managed to reach consensus through dialogue and solidarity.”

He said as the MSG turns 25 next year, it is a good time to look ahead to the next 25 years and ask where else the MSG could be effective.

Foreign Ministers present at the meeting include Vanuatu's Alfred Carlot, Papua New Guinea's Ano Pala, Solomon Islands' Clay Forau, and the head of the FLNKS Group at the New Caledonia Congress Caroline Machoro.

SOURCE: FIJI LIVE/PACNEWS