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**FOURTH INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM**

**Pacific regional seminar on the implementation of the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: pathways to a sustainable future – advancing socioeconomic and cultural development of the Non-Self-Governing Territories**

**Dili, Timor-Leste  
21 to 23 May 2025**

**STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF**

**Melanesian Spearhead Group**



**MSG Secretariat**  
**Secretariat du GFLM**  
Melanesian Spearhead Group | Le Groupe Fer de Lance Mélanésien

## OFFICIAL STATEMENT

**Presented by Richard Balkonan, on behalf of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG)**  
**Secretariat**

**During the UN Pacific Regional Seminar on the Implementation of the Fourth  
International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism – Dili, Timor-Leste**

*21-23 May, 2025*

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### **STATEMENT**

- **Distinguished Chairperson, Permanent Representative of Saint Lucia to the United Nations, H.E. Ms. Menissa Rambally;**
  - **Members of the Special Committee of 24;**
  - **Senior Representatives of NSGT's and the Government of Timor-Leste,**
  - **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen – all protocols observed.**
- Let me begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet here today, as indeed the Organisers, the Government and People of Dili and Timor-Leste, for the gracious hospitality and courtesies extended since our arrival. I also wish to acknowledge the esteemed Chairperson, Committee Members and all participants for making time to attend this landmark event in Dili.
- At the outset, I wish to bring you warmest greetings from an earthquake-ravaged yet beautiful and warm Port Vila-Vanuatu 😊, on behalf of the Secretariat of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) and to convey the apologies of the Acting Director General, Mr. Ilan Kiloe, who is unable to attend at this time. I wish to acknowledge your invitation which we received in March, to attend this landmark regional seminar.

- **The MSG is an intergovernmental organisation serving five (5) members within the Melanesian subregion of Oceania, with a Secretariat that was established in 2008. Formally registered with the United Nations (UN) in 2010, MSG membership comprises the Independent States of Fiji, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and the Kanak and Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) of New Caledonia.**
- Two Members of the MSG, namely, Fiji and PNG are members of the Special Committee on Implementation of the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: 2021-2030, better known as the Committee of 24 or C-24. Otherwise, the MSG Secretariat continues to be a major proponent of the Implementation of the Fourth International Decade, and looks forward to working closely with the C-24 going forward.
- **Let me also take this opportunity to express the MSG's solidarity with colonised people globally, particularly in the Caribbean and elsewhere, especially where they continue to be marginalised in their own lands. Furthermore, to call for best practice mounted in these regions by the UN and C-24 be considered for the Pacific. This could conceivably include the mounting of joint Missions.**
- Albeit our participation here today is guided by the progressive theme; "Pathways to a sustainable future: advancing socio-economic and cultural development of the Non-Self-Governing Territories". Of particular interest at this time the matter of Kanaky-New Caledonia, which has attracted vast regional attention, since the upheavals of 13 May 2024, and remains very much an unfinished business of the UN. Moreover, to assert the role of subregional organisations such as the MSG and the Pacific Islands Forum can also add value to related processes.
- **Incidentally, the high-level Pacific Islands Forum Troika Plus Mission to New Caledonia from 27 to 29 October 2024 identified the need to settle on a new political agreement to succeed the Noumea Accord in 2025. That this was due to the great political divide and deep-seated distrust that has developed and persisted in New Caledonia for the past five years.**

- The MSG continues to provide a platform for the promotion of the interests of all Melanesians, including our brothers and sisters in the Kanaky-New Caledonia.
- Our mandates as the MSG are therefore derived from the MSG Tokyo Statement of 2024, the 2023 Leaders' Summit Outcomes and the 2018 Action Plan among others. These all speak to the need for support of Kanaky-New Caledonia's self-determination aspirations, be it bilaterally, regionally or collectively and through various platforms. The latter includes strengthening the MSG's engagement with the C-24 and related UN processes.
- Consequently, and owing to our collective disposition and experience as the MSG, we also offer our hand in supporting 'peace and reconciliation' efforts, 'peer to peer learning' and 'enhanced cooperation' with New Caledonia in political exchanges, trade and socio-economic development. And we encourage the UN, and France as the Administering Power, to earnestly consider supporting the implementation of these initiatives through regional and subregional approaches, and action plans previously agreed upon.
- In closing, and while political solutions are very much needed, we at the MSG continue to promote our flagship programs of Sports, Arts, Culture and Trade as means by which we can continue to invoke participation by Melanesian communities, colonised or otherwise, within Oceania. It is our hope therefore that we can continue to promote a cohesive Melanesian community and identity through such programs.
- This is something that is inherent in our culture, is part of our DNA and not only due to our geographic proximity. While we only have one humanity, us in Melanesia and to an extend Oceania are bonded by common cultures and familial bonds.

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