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TEL.: 1 (212) 963.1234 • FAX: 1 (212) 963.4879

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

**Pacific regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International  
Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: commitments and actions for  
decolonization in the Non-Self-Governing Territories**

**Managua, Nicaragua  
31 May to 2 June 2016**

**DISCUSSION PAPER**

**PRESENTATION**

**BY**

**MR. JIMMY NAOUNA**

**UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON DECOLONISATION  
PACIFIC REGIONAL SEMINAR OF**

**Managua, Nicaragua  
31 May to 2 June 2016**

**Discussion Paper  
Presented by Mr Jimmy Naouna  
(Expert)  
Melanesian Spearhead Group**

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*Mr Chairman;*

*Excellencies;*

*Distinguished Delegates and Guests;*

*Ladies and Gentlemen.*

*First, please allow me to thank the UN Decolonization Committee for extending an invitation to the Melanesian Spearhead Group Secretariat to speak at this very important regional seminar. Let me also take this opportunity to extend the MSG Secretariat gratitude and appreciation to the Government and peoples of Nicaragua for the warm hospitality.*

*Mr Chairman,*

*I wish to indicate here that I will be speaking on behalf of the MSG Secretariat, Headquarter of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, with support from the Office of the MSG Chair.*

*Thank you!*

My presentation will primarily focus on the role of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) as a Pacific regional political organization addressing the issue of decolonization in the remaining Non Self Governing Territories (NSGTs) in the Pacific. The paper will make specific reference to the MSG historical support to the Kanak people's aspirations for self-determination and independence and the MSG's continued pro-active role in advancing the decolonization process in New Caledonia, in close collaboration with all parties to the Noumea Accord. Furthermore, the paper will attempt some evaluation and analysis of the implementation of the Noumea Accord and provide some perspectives on the way forward to ensure that the decolonization process in New Caledonia is successfully achieved within the spirit and the framework of the Noumea Accord and in accordance with international laws.

Secondly, and in line with the theme of this year's seminar, as we reach halfway through the *Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism*, it is now more than fitting to revisit the commitments made in the past by this very august Committee – in agreement with all concerned parties including Administering Powers and their respective NSGTs - such commitments being upheld in numerous recommendations and resolutions endorsed through this same Committee and approved annually by the UN General Assembly.

It is therefore timely for us here today, to review those past commitments and to, first, identify realistic actions, and to prioritize those actions so that altogether we make genuine efforts to make this third decade the very last decade for the true and total eradication of colonialism in all its forms, in the Pacific and in other parts of the world.

- **The very *raison d'être* of the Melanesian Spearhead Group**

***Mr Chairman,***

Many a times we remind ourselves in the MSG, and others, of the very reasons behind the formal establishing of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) in 2008, at the initiatives of former great Leaders of our nations that culminated in the signing of the *Agreed Principles of Co-operation Among the Independent States of Melanesia* in Port Vila, Vanuatu in 1988 which formally brought under the one umbrella of a newly formed regional political organization, the four (4) independent countries of Melanesia – *the Republic of Vanuatu, the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Fiji, the Solomon Islands* - and the indigenous Kanak pro-independence movement of New Caledonia, *the Front de Liberation Nationale Kanak et Socialiste (FLNKS)*.

The Agreement Establishing the Melanesian Spearhead Group and deposited with the United Nations Treaties Section states: *“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 states and the alignment of policies in order to further MSG members’ shared goals of economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security.”*

At the MSG Leaders 20<sup>th</sup> Summit held in the Solomon Islands in June 2015, the MSG Leaders signed the Honiara Declaration to renew their commitment to the principles of cooperation and to *“uphold independence as the inalienable right of colonial countries and peoples”* as contained in the UN Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples [Resolution 1514 (XV)] adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1960.

In the wake of the decolonization wave sweeping the former colonies of Africa and the Pacific in the late 1960’s, and closer to home when Vanuatu – *then known as the New Hebrides* - gained its political independence from France and Britain after 75 years of joint administration under the Condominium period, the call for self-determination and independence in the neighboring French

Territory of New Caledonia grew louder and was strongly echoed in the Pacific Region and internationally.

Following several meetings initiated by former Leaders of Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands, and with the support of Fiji through the then South Pacific Forum (*now the Pacific Islands Forum*), New Caledonia was re-listed on the United Nations list of countries to be decolonized in 1986 thus joining other Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Pacific and Caribbean regions.

***Mr Chairman,***

*I wish not dwell further on the history of New Caledonia's decolonization process as I trust this Committee is the most knowledgeable and informed institution on the issue. I will however highlight MSG pro-active role in support of the FLNKS and the people of New Caledonia aspirations for self-determination and provide some perspectives on the way forward to ensure the full and effective implementation of the final term of the Noumea Accord that shall lead to the first referendum on self-determination in 2018.*

In 2013, the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) celebrated its Silver Jubilee – 25 years of Melanesian Solidarity and Growth – of inter-membership trade exchanges, the sharing of Melanesian cultural traditions and values and the alignment of policies to ensure economic growth, prosperity and stability in the region. As a way forward into the next 25 years, and to renew the MSG commitment to the initial agreed principles of cooperation, the MSG Leaders appointed a Group of Eminent Persons (EPG) from the 5 member countries to conduct wide consultations with all stakeholders in Melanesia and to develop a new roadmap for the MSG for the future.

In June of the same year, the MSG Leaders' Summit in New Caledonia endorsed the *MSG 2038 Prosperity Plan for All in Melanesia* thus giving the MSG a new roadmap for the next 25 years. The Plan lists out the four (4) main objectives as follow:

- (i) ***Political objectives*** include: The MSG is to be the 'arc of stability'; good governance; political stability; lasting peace and unity; [...] shunning corruption; respect law and order; [...] and courage to shape

the continued support by MSG Permanent Missions at the United Nations has greatly helped the FLNKS advance its cause at the regional and international level.

Needless to remind ourselves that the MSG was initially established to spearhead, among other regional issues, the question of decolonization of the remaining “colonial countries and territories” in Melanesia, and to a certain extent in the Pacific in an effort to ensure a politically stable and safe environment for economic growth and prosperity.

*The re-listing of French Polynesia at the UN as a NSGT in 2013 and sponsored by the Solomon Islands is testimony to the greater role that the MSG can play in the region. This milestone achievement for our brothers from Te Ao Maohi must be pursued and provided genuine support at regional and international level.*

*Recently also, the Office of the MSG Chair and Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands has issued a Press Statement to reaffirm the MSG longstanding principle of decolonization of Melanesia.]*

Such was the Leaders renewed commitment to the Principles of Cooperation among Member States signed in 1988 and reiterated in the 2015 Honiara Declaration for “the] *Re-enforcement of the covenant the MSG founding fathers made with the people that Melanesia is not free until all is free; that the decolonization and denuclearization processes are to be pursued with added vigor*”.

**Mr Chairman,**

*I wish to now focus my presentation on the decolonization process in New Caledonia and provide some perspectives and proposals on the way forward for this Committee and all parties concerned to also renew their commitments to eradicate colonialism and to prioritize their actions accordingly to better assist the people of New Caledonia in this final and critical term of the Noumea Accord.*

our own future that we aspire to achieve peace, security and enduring prosperity.

- (ii) ***Economic objectives*** include: the MSG is to be the region of opportunity; prosperity; sustained economic growth; [...] economic and structural reforms to ensure better integration into the global economy; [...] opportunity for economic expansion; [...]
- (iii) ***Social objectives*** include: improved social development indicators; achievement of higher living standards; [...] enlightened community (educated); [...]
- (iv) ***Sustainable development*** include: climate change mitigation and adaptation; sustainable resource-based economy; Green Growth policies; and perpetual opportunity for sustained development for many generations to come.

In an effort to consolidate the MSG role in regional and international affairs and to provide a politically stable and safe environment for economic growth and prosperity in the Melanesian region - and in the Pacific at large - the MSG members agreed to:

- (i) *Approve and commit to the “MSG Prosperity for All Plan” to be policy framework to achieve MSG’s Vision and Mission of enhanced sub-regionalism and integration;*
- (ii) *Advocate the Plan and Implementation Framework as MSG’s policy instrument for cooperation and integration within the Pacific, other regions of the world and international organizations and countries.*

Similarly, the MSG political support to the FLNKS and the Kanak people in their call for self-determination and independence has remained intact over the past 25 years. The relisting of New Caledonia as a Non Self Governing Territory and

- **The MSG and the decolonisation process in New Caledonia**

In highlighting the status of the FLNKS as a non-sovereign state member of the MSG, the MSG Eminent Persons Group Report considered the FLNKS as *“essentially a government-in-waiting should the Nouméa Accord processes result in an independent status for Kanaky-New Caledonia. If this happens then there will be suitably-orchestrated transformation of the FLNKS in the context of the new state, and the new state as such will take its rightful place in the organization.”* The report further states that *“MSG’s commitment to full independence for the FLNKS [and the people of Kanaky] remains the driving force and it determines its strategies leading up to the [...] referendum on self-determination and beyond.”*

Since 2010, the MSG has conducted regular ministerial missions to New Caledonia to monitor and evaluate the decolonisation process being implemented under the Noumea Accord signed in May 1998 by representatives of the FLNKS, the French State and the anti-independence coalition. The most recent MSG ministerial mission scheduled in 2014 was deferred so as to allow for the UN Visiting Mission to New Caledonia to take place in March 2014 led by your esteemed colleague, the former Chair of this very Special Committee, with the aim of gathering first-hand information on the implementation of the Nouméa Accord. The preliminary report of the UN mission was later presented to the Pacific Regional Seminar in Nadi, Fiji in May of the same year.

Recommendations from previous MSG ministerial missions were endorsed by the MSG Leaders’ Summit and also reflected in the EPG Report to be implemented through the MSG Secretariat with the support of members and especially the MSG Permanent Missions at the UN. These include among other actions:



- i. MSG Leaders and other MSG representatives to include in all their statements at the UN and elsewhere their support for the FLNKS case and for the proper implementation of the provisions of the Noumea Accord, and to be alert to any move to delisting New Caledonia from the UN decolonization list;
- ii. MSG Leaders to consider the appropriate forms of assistance to the FLNKS leading up to the elections and can include: financial assistance, attachment of personnel to the FLNKS Bureau for capacity building, provision of observers during the elections, and other technical assistance.
- iii. **In addition MSG Leaders approved various forms of assistance which can include: attachments for training in any of the appropriate ministries or institutions in MSG countries, MSG Secretariat, UN agencies or any of the MSG UN Representative offices in New York;**
- iv. **The Secretariat, in consultations with the FLNKS Political Bureau, to identify ways and means of assisting the New Caledonian government benefit from the Melanesian Spearhead Group Trade Agreement (MSGTA) and encourage cooperation agreements at government level and between provinces and between people directly.**

***Mr Chairman,***

*On these specific recommendations, the MSG will continue to encourage the FLNKS and the Government of New Caledonia to work together in securing the technical and financial assistance of UN Regional Agencies in the Pacific with the support of the MSG Secretariat and MSG Permanent Missions in New York.*

In terms of sub-regional cooperation within the MSG, the EPG considered that various mechanisms for information sharing, coordination, monitoring in the forms of committees, conferences, working groups, declarations, treaties, frameworks, agreed principles have been established and are operational. The FLNKS participation in all these mechanisms has been made possible through the establishment of the FLNKS Unit at the MSG Secretariat in 2012 as a recommendation from the MSG Ministerial Mission to New Caledonia.

And also, since the FLNKS term as chair of the MSG (2013-2015), we have seen greater integration and participation of the Government of New Caledonia – including the private sector – in MSG affairs, including trade meetings and the hosting of regional culture and sports events.

Similarly, the Report of the UN Visiting Mission to New Caledonia held in March 2014 pointed to the same recommendations and actions. The UN Report referenced A/AC.109/2014/20 noted that *“The Chair of the Melanesian Spearhead Group believed that the Special Committee’s visit to New Caledonia, conducted within the framework of the Nouméa Accord, was a historic one. Even though FLNKS was not a country, it had been able to join the Group and to benefit from its support. [The place occupied by FLNKS on the Group’s membership would eventually be taken by New Caledonia once self-determination was achieved.] The Group wished to accompany the process of self-determination of New Caledonia with the support of its member States.”*

Among these recommendations that call for immediate actions is the urgent need to:

- (i) ***Enhance the training of high-level executives for the public and private sectors, particularly in view of the ongoing transfer of powers from the Government to New Caledonia.(113);***
- (ii) ***[The mission] urges the administering Power to develop clear and reliable capacity-building programmes to enable New Caledonians to determine their future.(114);***
- (iii) *The mission calls upon the administering Power to take all measures necessary to address the concerns expressed with regard to the question of the promotion of the systematic influx of foreign immigrants into the Territory.(115)*
- (iv) *The mission reaffirms the call made by the General Assembly for France, the administering Power, to cooperate fully in the work of the Special Committee and to participate formally in its future sessions.(117);*
- (v) ***In view of the many calls for a greater integration of New Caledonia in the regional context, the mission believes that concrete measures to facilitate the recognition of education degrees between New Caledonia and other countries should be taken without further delay.(118);***
- (vi) ***The mission considers that the integration of New Caledonia into the AsiaPacific region and the strengthening of the partnership with Pacific countries are both urgent and beneficial.(119);***
- (vii) *The mission further encourages all parties in New Caledonia to avail themselves of the opportunities for exchange and dialogue provided by the Special Committee throughout the year, particularly as the Nouméa Accord enters its final phase.(120);*

(viii) *The mission considers that for the future of New Caledonia it is essential that the recommendations contained in the 2011 report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, in particular those concerning Kanak participation in the political arena and governance (see A/HRC/18/35/Add.6, paras. 72-76) and those relating to social and economic disparities (ibid., paras. 84-88), be urgently implemented.*(121);

(ix) *The mission recommends that the Special Committee continue to closely monitor the situation in New Caledonia in the context of the implementation and eventual expiration of the Nouméa Accord in 2019 and advise the General Assembly as appropriate. (122).*

*Mr Chairman,*

*Before concluding, I wish to offer some proposals on the way forward to be considered by members of this Committee, in consultation with all parties to the Noumea Accord.*

- **The Way Forward to the referendum on self-determination in 2018 and beyond**

*Mr Chairman,*

The Melanesian Spearhead Group will continue to provide its full support to the FLNKS and the people of New Caledonia in their tireless efforts and commitment to find the most viable option suited for the future and in their aspirations for to run their own affairs.

To this effect, the MSG Leaders signed the Noumea Declaration in 2013 to renew their commitment to:

- (i) Pursue and protect the right to self-determination of the indigenous Kanak people of New in accordance with the UN Charter and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights [including the UN Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples];*
- (ii) Take appropriate steps to assist the FLNKS in the implementation of the decolonization process according to the Noumea Accord and to be alert to any move to delist New Caledonia from the UN Decolonisation List;*
- (iii) Take further steps in complementing the work of the UN Special Committee on Decolonisation on the question of New Caledonia and take appropriate steps to assist the FLNKS in the process leading to the [2014] referendum;*
- (iv) MSG Leaders to maintain advocacy for the independence of the Kanaky people in all appropriate UN and regional forums;*
- (v) Encourage information exchanges between FLNKS and independent members of the MSG and the UN regarding technical assistance in political, economic, trade, social and educational aspects of cooperation;*
- (vi) The MSG in consultation with the FLNKS and with the agreement of the Government of New Caledonia, to assist in securing UN funding to assist the development needs of [the] Kanak[s] people [...] in New Caledonia.*

- **Proposals**

*Mr Chairman,*

In line with our distinguished representatives from the FLNKS and in support of genuine efforts to bring the decolonisation process in New Caledonia to a successful end when the referendum on self-determination for the people of New Caledonia is due, the Melanesian Spearhead Group wishes to offer the following proposals as a way forward, for the Special Committee and concerned parties to consider.

Like in 2014, the MSG through its UN-based missions had expressed interest to host this year's Pacific Regional seminar. As we approach the series of referenda on self-determination to be held in New Caledonia under the Noumea Accord by 2018, and in a genuine effort by all parties committed to the eradication of colonialism in the remaining Non Self-Governing Territories in Melanesia, in the Pacific and in other parts of the world, the MSG will again submit its interest to host the next UN C24 regional seminar in the Pacific. Also, in line with its renewed commitment to the FLNKS and the decolonisation process underway, the MSG will resume its ministerial missions to New Caledonia to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Noumea Accord in the lead-up to the referendum in 2018.

Therefore, in an effort to combine expertise and resources, it would be wise, for the MSG and the UN Decolonisation Committee to consider a combined mission to New Caledonia prior to the next Pacific regional seminar with the objective of gathering first-hand information on the continued implementation of

the Noumea Accord in its final term and present a preliminary report to the regional seminar, as it was done in 2014 in Fiji. Without pre-empting the recommendations from the visiting mission, the report could require the need for a UN Observer mission to the first self-determination referendum in New Caledonia in 2018.

- **Conclusion**

*Mr Chairman,*

As we enter the second half of the Third (and hopefully the last) Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) wishes to renew its support to the Special Committee on Decolonisation, to the Administering Powers and to representatives of the respective Non-Self Governing Territories and all parties involved to work harder towards eliminating colonialism from the face of the Earth and to welcome those last colonies into the bigger family of free nations.

Muchas gracias! I thank you! Ole!!