



## EFATE DECLARATION

### ON MUTUAL RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, COOPERATION AND AMITY BY MEMBERS OF THE MELANESIAN SPEARHEAD GROUP (MSG)

#### PREAMBLE

We the Leaders of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), consisting of Fiji, Front de Liberation Nationale Kanak Socialiste (FLNKS), Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, at the 22<sup>nd</sup> MSG Leaders' Summit held on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2023 in Havannah Boat House, North Efate, Vanuatu

**RECALLING** the 1988 Agreed Principles of Cooperation among Independent States in Melanesia, and the objects and purposes of the MSG enunciated in the Agreement Establishing the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG);

**REAFFIRMING** the principles and purpose of the United Nations Charter including respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, equality, non-interference in the domestic affairs of States, non-use of force and uphold the principles of peaceful co-existence and mutual respect;

**RECALLING** Pacific Islands Forum leader commitments to the 2018 Boe Declaration on Regional Security and the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent's ambition for a peaceful, safe, and secure Blue Pacific region which respects national sovereignty;

**REAFFIRMING** that Climate Change and environmental degradation is an existential threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of our people as recognised in the 2018 Boe Declaration on Regional Security;

**AFFIRMING** human rights, including civil and political rights and economic, social, and cultural rights, align with the traditions and ways of government in our countries, and the settlement of disputes, including territorial disputes, through dialogue and international law;

**REAFFIRMING** our adherence to the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) as espoused in the Bandung Principles, international law and international principles;

**DESIRING** to maintain a 'friends to all and enemies to none' approach and be strategic in our engagement with all partners;

**COGNISANT** of the risks from major power tensions and potential conflict directly affecting the peace and security of the Pacific region;

**DESIROUS** of contributing to global peace and security;

**RECOGNISING** the importance of remaining unified to address common challenges and to capitalize on opportunities;

**CONSCIOUS** of our responsibilities to preserve and improve the security environment in the MSG Sub-region lies in a home-grown approach requiring collective self-help amongst MSG Members;

**RECALLING** our commitments on various existing Regional Agreements on Peace and Security matters, such as the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Rarotonga Treaty), the Lakatoro Declaration on Oceania Cooperation regarding Denuclearisation in the South Pacific, the Waigani Convention on the ban on importation into Forum Island countries of radioactive wastes and to control the trans-boundary movement of hazardous wastes, the Nasonini Declaration on Regional Security, the Aitutaki Declaration on Regional Security, the Honiara Declaration on Law Enforcement Cooperation, the Biketawa Declaration, and the Boe Declaration;

**RECALLING** also international commitments and obligations under such International Agreements as the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) – Article VI on obligations to pursue nuclear disarmament, and the Strategic Arms Reductions Talks (START);

**EXPRESS** the need to ensure that the MSG sub-region is a region of peace, prosperity, and neutrality;

**DESIRING** to focus the security conversation on Climate Change and the security of the environment, identified as our existential threat under the Boe Declaration and the MSG Security Strategy;

**NOTWITHSTANDING** and respecting the bilateral security arrangements that individual MSG Members have concluded with partners;

**HEREBY AGREE TO RECOMMIT OURSELVES TOWARDS:**

**DEVELOPING** a conducive environment under which peaceful co-existence and friendly cooperation in the MSG sub-region can prosper;

**ADVANCEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION** of MSG security initiatives agreed to under the **MSG Security Strategy**, such as the Memorandum on Police Cooperation, the Humanitarian and Emergency Response Coordinating Centre (HERCC), and the Formed Police Unit (FPU) to address national security needs in the MSG region;

**SEEKING FIRST** a home grown and MSG collective self-help solution through respect for, and use of, the Pacific ways of doing things (talanoa, tok stori and tok storian) underpinned by the values and strength of Melanesian cultures and traditions;

**EMBEDDING AND ANCHORING** this home grown and collective self-help approach on the Pacific shared values;

**PROMISING THAT PRIOR CONSULTATIONS AND CONSENT** with the affected Member for **collective action** will be sought before any action is taken in addressing a security situation in any of the MSG jurisdictions;

**AFFIRMING OUR SOVEREIGNTY** to engage with any development partner of our choice based on our respective needs and concerns;

**EXPRESSING GRAVE CONCERN** towards the geopolitical posturing for influence in our region and denouncing the threat and/or use of force;

**CALLING ON PARTNERS**, traditional and non-traditional, to respect the principle of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, and the right to non-interference in internal affairs of independent States;

**UNDERTAKING ACTIONS**, both regionally and internationally, with respect to arms control and disarmament, as well as efforts to reduce international tensions, to limit great power rivalry, to secure human rights, and to ensure the peaceful resolution of disputes; and

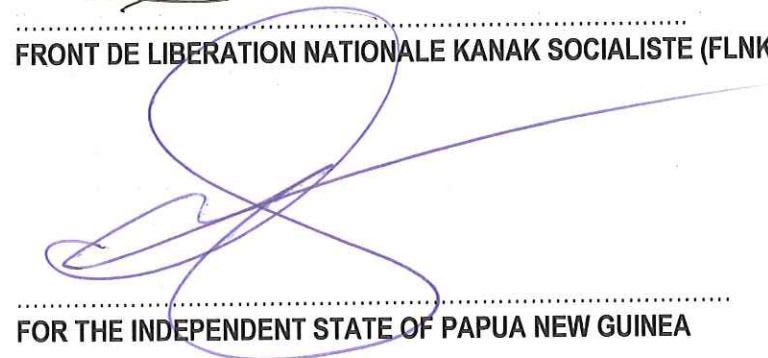
**REAFFIRMING** that Climate Change and environment degradation as our existential threat.

**DONE AT HAVANNAH BOAT HOUSE, NORTH EFATE IN THE REPUBLIC OF VANUATU, this 24<sup>th</sup> day of August in 2023.**

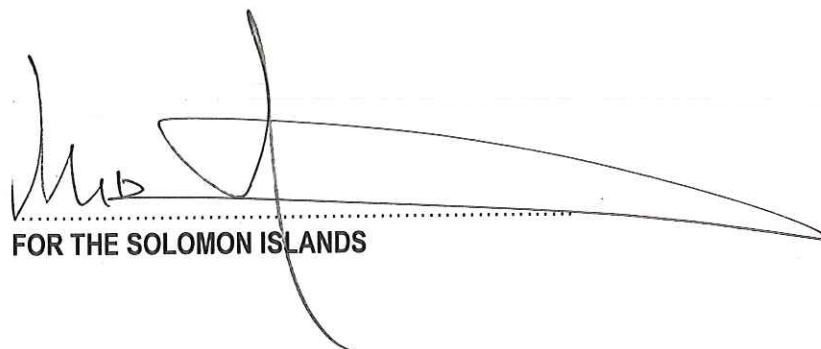
  
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**FOR THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI**



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**FRONT DE LIBERATION NATIONALE KANAK SOCIALISTE (FLNKS) OF NEW CALEDONIA**



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**FOR THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA**



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**FOR THE SOLOMON ISLANDS**



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**FOR THE REPUBLIC OF VANUATU**