



PRESS SECRETARIAT

MINISTRY OF THE PRIME MINISTER & CABINET

Apia, Samoa

Telephone : (685) 63222 ext 746, 747, 748, (685) 24799, (685) 26397

Fax : (685) 26322 Email: pressesecretariat@samoa.ws

Press Release

7 July 2010

7 July 2010

His Excellency Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama

Interim Prime Minister

Suva

FIJI

Dear Interim Prime Minister

**re: Invitation to be an Observer at the Melanesian
Spearhead Group Meeting – July 21-23, 2010**

I refer to your letter of 24 May, 2010 faxed to my office on 6 July with your invitation to attend the MSG Meeting of Leaders in Suva, Fiji.

I was given to understand that the advice to the Ministerial Contact Group meeting in Auckland at the end of May, by your representative, was that only those non-MSG countries that had indicated a wish to attend would be invited. I had not expressed any such wish. On the contrary, when the media asked me sometime ago if I would attend if invited, my reply was no.

I am afraid that nothing has happened since that has given me any reason to reconsider my decision.

Now that your invitation has come, I wish to let you know that as one of the long serving and senior members of the Pacific Islands Forum, I am afraid that I do not, in all sincerity, feel that it would be right for me to accept your invitation.

An invitation for non-MSG Pacific leaders to an MSG Leaders Meeting has never been made before to my knowledge. Samoa certainly has not been invited previously.

That non-MSG countries were not invited was a state of affairs that made sense to me, as the MSG members would wish to use their meeting to discuss issues pertinent to them. Very importantly the MSG also brought any issues to the Pacific Islands Forum that the MSG felt was of wider interest to the Forum. This is the relationship and practice which has enabled sub-regional groups and the Pacific Islands Forum to exist side by side and work together as well as allowed the latter to retain primacy status in our Pacific region.

For the MSG meeting about to be hosted in Fiji, I would imagine that the MSG members, as done in the past, will bring to the attention of the Pacific Islands Forum any issues from its meeting that they feel the Forum should also consider.

The above said, I want to take this opportunity to again continue to plead and encourage you to quickly return Fiji to Parliamentary democracy and allow the people of Fiji their freedoms and rights.

Yours sincerely

(Tuilaepa Lufesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi)
PRIME MINISTER