



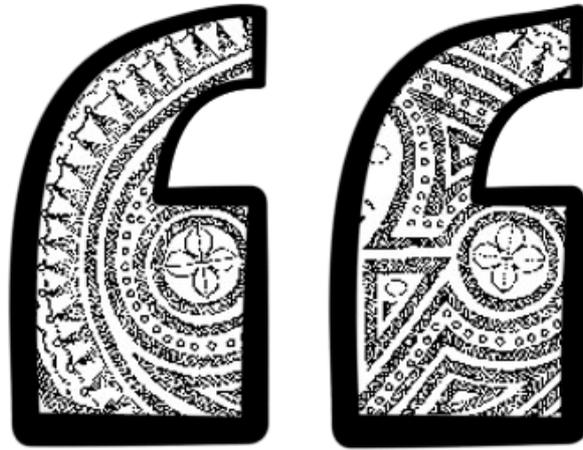
MELANESIAN SCHOOL  
DEBATE



# GLOBAL PRESENCE

Motion Analysis 4





# MELANESIAN SCHOOL DEBATE

## MOTION:

# MELANESIAN COUNTRIES SHOULD SERVE AS A NON PERMANENT MEMBER OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL



**Pacific Institute  
of Public Policy**

GLOBAL PRESENCE Motion Analysis 4

Published by the Pacific Institute of Public Policy, October 2015

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The Pacific Institute of Public Policy is the leading independent, non partisan think tank serving the Pacific islands region. We exist to stimulate and support informed and inclusive policy debate in and about the Pacific island countries

Our Motion Analysis are short papers that dissect and further inform debate motion's that have been put forward in the Melanesian School Debate 2015.

The Melanesian School Debate is an annual event bring the best and the brightest of Melanesian Youth together to debate pressing policy issues affecting our region.

This years event is hosted by the Pacific Institute of Public Policy, in association with the Vanuatu Ministry of Education in Port Vila, November 2015

# Global Presence

**MELANESIA HAS LONG STRUGGLED** to have its voice heard on the international stage. Individually, it seems our small Melanesian countries do not yet have the strength to compete with bigger nations within the Asia Pacific region. But that does not mean we should be excluded. As members of the United Nations we have earned the right to be able to represent our views within the global community. But is it in our best interest to do so?

**The Security Council is perhaps the United Nation's most influential body, tasked with maintaining international peace and security, and with the unique authority to issue binding resolutions to member states. Consisting of five permanent members and an interchanging group of 10 non-permanent members, the Security Council was designed with the intention of providing all UN member states the chance to engage in global affairs.**

In the 70 years of the Security Council's existence, not one Melanesian country has served as a non permanent member. As part of the Asia Pacific group, our Asian neighbours have long dominated the bi-annual position, with little opportunity to date for Pacific island countries to vie for a seat.

As a member on the UN Security Council, a nation is given the power to vote on major security and peace operations. A non permanent member seat can improve a nation's security and foreign policy, as well as gaining respect and influence in world affairs. It can leverage power with other countries that can result in potential trade and diplomatic deals. A successful term on the Security Council could also have the potential to help Melanesia push agendas of regional importance in the future, around climate change obligations or to raise awareness of human rights abuses in West Papua, for example. So if there are such promising benefits, why is it that our Melanesian countries have not taken up the task?

A successful campaign requires a large amount of resources. On most occasions, more than one country will bid for the same seat. When this happens, it is

necessary to campaign to other UN members - who each have one vote to cast. Campaigning is an expensive process requiring national diplomats to persuade foreign officials for their vote. In 2011 Fiji bid only to withdraw before even going to election. With such huge resources funneled into a bid, failure can be a costly exercise, even more so for our small Melanesian countries who don't have cash to splash.

Not only is cash at stake. A quest for allies can come at a price. Bids for a security council chair can be extremely political, with aid budgets and bilateral partnerships on the line. Are our inexperienced countries ready to gamble steady relationships in hope of greener pastures?

Perhaps another alternative is to work together - to suppress individualistic national aims and focus on regional goals that affect all of Melanesia. By joining together, and supporting one representative we could share the financial burdens in order to achieve a united Melanesian voice. But is this a realistic possibility?

For our small island nations, a chance to be heard on the world stage holds great promise. But is it worth sacrificing what small funds we have to pursue worldly exploits?

# Key Terms to Define

**DECONSTRUCTING THE MOTION** will ensure you are clear in the parameters of your debate. By understanding and analyzing each term you can gain a deeper understanding of the underlying issues.

## TERMS to deconstruct

**SERVE:** how are you selected to serve as a Non permanent Member? What requirements do you need to be selected? How do you apply to serve, and who makes the selection?

**NON PERMANENT MEMBER:** how does this differ to a permanent member? What is involved - what are your roles and responsibilities as a Non permanent member? Which other countries are Non Permanent members? What can we learn from their experiences?

**UNITED NATIONS (UN) SECURITY COUNCIL:** how is the UN Security structured - who are the current permanent and non permanent members? Has a Melanesian country been a non permanent member previously?

## CONCEPTS to research

International Relations

Diplomacy

Asia Pacific Group

Small Island Developing States

Membership requirements

Bidding Process

United Nations

Bilateral Foreign Aid Incentives

political stability

Permanent Member States

UN Peacekeeping

Veto Power

Financial burdens

Diplomats and Embassies

# Essential Reading

**IN DEPTH RESEARCH IS CRUCIAL** to constructing a convincing and accurate argument. Be creative and use different methods to collect your research material. Talk to organisations, find case studies in the newspaper, look up books or search through journal articles online.

**REMEMBER! All sources should be as recent as possible. Try not to use sources older than 5 years - from 2010-2015 is best! Here are a few to get you started:**

Pacific Institute of Public Policy "Patriot Games" *Discussion Starter 21*, 2012  
<http://pacificpolicy.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/2/files/2012/06/DP21.pdf>

R. Gowan, 'Australia in the UN Security Council' *Analysis for the Lowy Institute* 2014  
<http://www.loyyinstitute.org/files/australia-in-the-un-security-council.pdf>

United Nations, 'Security Council Elections' *Special Research Report, October 2015*  
[http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/srr\\_unsc\\_elections\\_2015.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/srr_unsc_elections_2015.pdf)



# DEBATE IT!

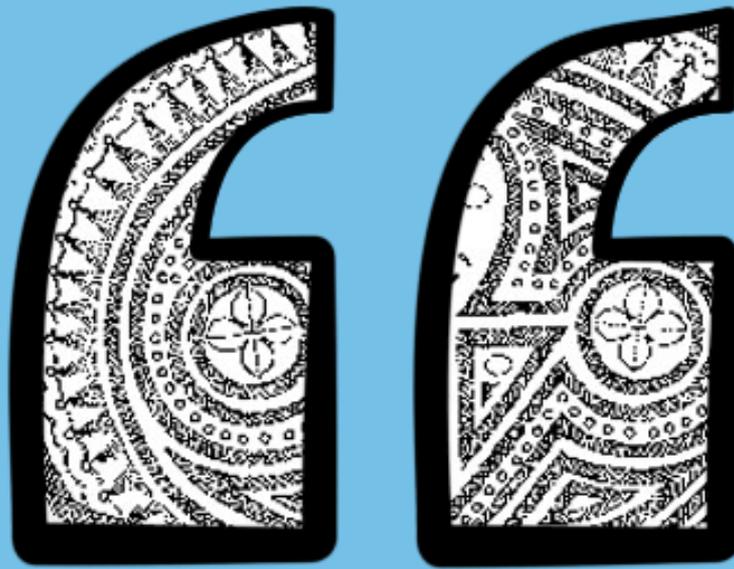
## AFFIRMATIVE

- Melanesian countries have been members to the United Nations for over 70 years. Despite being comparatively small countries, we have the equal right to sit in the UN Security Council and be heard as any other country. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) was set up to be a democratic process that allows all UN members the opportunity to engage and have a say in world affairs. Only recently the region that included Pacific nations has changed its name, from "Asia" to "Asia and Pacific Island States." With this new recognition that of the Pacific, it is time Melanesian countries took advantage of the opportunities presented.
- Often referred to as the most powerful room in the world, there is great potential in having a voice on this huge international platform. Most importantly lies the opportunity to bring Melanesia's issues to the forefront of the international stage. As the world continues to resist consensus on binding measures for climate change, a seat on the UNSC could help Melanesian countries further drive the debate. Here we would have an opportunity to encourage the adoption of the term Climate Refugee, to ensure that people fleeing their homes due to climate can be legally acknowledged as a refugee and supported. It would also provide an opportunity for the Pacific to push for binding financial commitments by the developed world, to ensure climate change targets can be met with viable action.
- As a non permanent member of the UNSC, we would have the opportunity to highlight the ongoing human rights abuses of our brothers and sisters in West Papua, that have so far continued to fall on deaf ears. In this role we could drive the conversation on implementing measures of peace, including pushing for the deployment of UN Peacekeepers to the region to bring an end to the violence.
- A non permanent member seat can improve a nation's security and foreign policy, as well as gaining respect and influence in world affairs. A successful term in the UNSC can demonstrate maturity and success in a country, elevating its status and voice in future regional and global affairs. A seat in the UNSC can leverage power with other countries that can result in potential trade and diplomatic deals. New partnerships can generate increased aid, trade and exchange possibilities.
- Melanesian countries do not necessarily need to expend all their resources to bid for a seat. A more practical method could look to support one candidate to represent the region. This would lighten the financial burden, but still allow for Melanesia to be represented at the highest level. This could be achieved with the support of existing regional organisations such as the Melanesian Spearhead Group.

# DEBATE

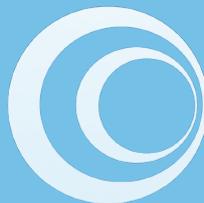
## NEGATIVE

- A bid for the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is an extremely costly exercise. On most occasions, more than one country will bid for the same seat and it is then necessary to campaign to other UN members, who each have one vote to cast. This requires diplomats to be based in embassies around the world, usually for two or more years with the intention of forming a partnership with the host country, to secure their vote. This initial set up is a costly exercise, leaving bidding governments to foot the bill for diplomat's allowance, cars, housing, family support and more. For our small and struggling Melanesian economies, this kind of expense should not be an immediate priority.
- Politically instability with Melanesian governments will greatly reduce the possibility of gaining traction and support with fellow countries. A government vying for a seat on the UNSC needs stable policies and clear vision. Ongoing instability, and regular changes of government will make other countries hesitant to commit to ongoing support, as deals and partnerships cannot be guaranteed into the future. Similarly, most diplomats are politically employed and therefore susceptible to the changes caused by political instability. With regular votes of no confidence and changing of government diplomats are quickly rotated and experience is lost. To ensure Melanesian governments can make a viable contribution to the UNSC, it is crucial that we first address our own challenges at home and work to stabilise government structures internally before branching out to international affairs.
- Bidding for a seat on the UNSC is a diplomatic exercise that has the ability to undermine bilateral relations. To secure a vote Melanesian countries would need to expand the current friendship base to secure a majority of the votes. However, often the promise of a vote comes with strings attached; for example foreign aid, diplomatic or business deals or a vote in return. For our inexperienced diplomats, we may run the risk of complicating diplomatic arrangements with both friends and foe.
- Some question whether there is any value in dealing with the UNSC at all. As a non permanent member there is still little opportunity to take a stand, with the five permanent members retaining the power through the Veto vote. Although there is a chance to table issues, there is no guarantee that any action will be taken.
- Realistically, no country in the Pacific could wage a campaign on its own under the current rules of the United Nations. Coupled with Asia in the non permanent seat regional group, the Pacific will always languish in the shadow of the Asian superpowers. Melanesian countries do not have the capacity or resources to compete with the likes of Japan, India and Singapore.



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