

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION  
**FIJI NEWS SUMMARY**

20/08/14

5:00PM

1. **FIJI AND NEW ZEALAND MINISTERS TO HOLD TALKS IN NADI**

Fiji's Foreign Affairs Minister Ratu Inoke Kubuabola will meet with his New Zealand counterpart, Mr Murray McCully, in Nadi this Friday, August 22.

This will be the first New Zealand- Fiji Foreign Ministers' Consultation since 2006 and will include the senior officials of both sides. In May this year, the two foreign ministers had met in Suva for bilateral discussions.

During the high level consultation, the two Ministers are expected to discuss a wide range of bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of importance to their countries.

An update on Fiji's election progress and the multinational observer group are expected to be a central part of the consultation.

Other issues likely to be on the agenda are the development cooperation arrangements between the two countries, preparations for the third international conference on Small Island Developing States to be held in Samoa next month, as well as regional institutions and interests.

-ENDS-

## **2. EXPERTS BEGIN FLOOD CONTROL STUDY FOR NADI**

Following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Fijian Government and the Government of Japan, two experts have started work to look at mitigating flooding in Nadi.

Nadi Town special administrator Robin Ali says the two Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) officers are carrying out assessment works at the Nadi River and will put a report on proposed solutions.

The two have been working out of the Nadi Town Council and will put together a detailed and comprehensive report for best flood control practices.

"They are working with the Ministry of Agriculture's Land and Water Resource Management Unit to compile a report that would best address the issue of flooding in Nadi," he said.

"We are grateful to Government for making this a priority as flooding in Nadi affects close to 50,000 residents and puts a lot of constraints to services to the people including tourists."

The Japanese government has already committed three hundred million dollars for the project.

Mr Ali says this solution will be a huge relief to the people of Nadi.

"I can say that it's going to bring a lot of relief to the Nadi people. Flooding we don't know what is the extent of rainfall but this cut-off channel is going to take the bulk of the water to the other side so obviously the level of water would be much, much less compared to the last floods."

"It's taken more than a decade to get the project started but thanks to the Government for getting this far in getting a flooding solution for Nadi and the next three years will see further studies carried out before the actual diversion begins in 2016," Mr Ali added.

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### **3. DOUBLE CELEBRATION FOR TAVUA SCOUT**

Tavua district scout camper Nikhil Prasad was all smiles when Minister for Youth and Sports Mr Viliame Naupoto visited his camp yesterday at Queen Victoria School.

Nikhil celebrated his 12<sup>th</sup> birthday at the jamboree camp site and was joined by fellow scouts and teachers from Tavua and Australia in a surprise birthday celebration soon after the opening ceremony.

"This is indeed a surprise and I will surely not feel homesick as I have found many friends here in just a day," said the shy Nikhil.

"I'm really happy and proud of my teachers and friends for organising a surprise party for me," said the 12-year-old scout.

The Minister was chief guest and opened the 12<sup>th</sup> National Scout and Centennial Jamboree at QVS today that is attended by 1410 scouts from around Fiji including Australia and New Zealand.

During his rounds at the camp site, Mr Naupoto was elated to be invited to join Nikhil and his fellow scouts for the birthday celebrations.

The national jamboree coincides with the centennial celebration of scouts in Fiji.

"I would like to congratulate the scout movement on its 100th centurion anniversary. It is a significant milestone for the Scouts movement in Fiji," said Mr Naupoto.

"The scouting movement in Fiji has come a long way since it began in Fiji in 1914. It is the oldest youth movement in Fiji and has 8000 members, with volunteers that serve the scout movement with dedication and commitment."

The scouts will march through the capital Suva on Thursday where Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama will officiate at the closing. Scouts will disperse from QVS on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> August.

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#### **4. TOURNAMENT TO INFLUENCE SPORTS DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTH**

The Fiji Primary Schools Netball Inter-District Championship currently held in Labasa is expected to create interests and harness the development of netball in the northern division.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports permanent secretary Mr Josefa Sania while opening the netball championship this week said that this sporting tournament "will have rippling effects in the latter days".

"Not only it will unearth raw talents but will also create more interests and netball enthusiasts in the northern division," said Mr Sania.

He added that too often, organisers of big sporting events for primary and secondary schools neglect those in rural and remote areas.

"Those in rural are the most deprived financially, technically and lack up-to-date sporting equipment and facilities," said Mr Sania.

"However, they sacrifice the most and accumulate the most funds and travelling distances to make it to sporting tournaments as such."

He said that Government's 'Look North Policy' covers all forms of development including sports and he urged the Northerners to learn from the tournament and consolidate shortfalls if any when hosting another or a bigger event.

"I urge you all to work and create a well-balanced environment that will nurture and harness their sporting prowess," said Mr Sania.

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## 5. **Fiji Represented at UNESCAP Meeting**

A delegation representing the Fijian Government is attending the 3<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Committee on Social Development at UNESCAP in Bangkok from 18-20 August.

The meeting serves as the preparatory meeting for the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review, which will be held in Bangkok from 10-14 November 2014. Pita Tagicakirewa, Counsellor with the Fiji High Commission in Malaysia, who is representing the Fijian Government, delivered Fiji's country statement during the meeting.

"The combination of measures in the region, in particular redistributive policies, the enhancement of social protection, and the promotion of productive and decent work, especially for women, have been continuously addressed by the Fijian government over the past few years. In particular, the enhancement of social protection has been an important focus area, which, hopefully will contribute to further reducing the poverty level in Fiji", Counsellor Tagicakirewa said.

"A 2011 World Bank Report on *"Assessment of the Social Protection System in Fiji and Recommendations for Policy Changes"* guided the Fijian Government's direction in enhancing social protection. This led to a review of current programmes and the introduction of new initiatives to bolster our social protection programme. As a result, poverty mapping and family assistance schemes have been progressively streamlined", added Counsellor Tagicakirewa.

"Fiji recently introduced a National Minimum Wage which is expected to address inequality in income, especially amongst women, in the informal sector. The recently introduced free education programme from pre-school to secondary level will, in the long run, address inequality in access to education.

Families that previously could not afford education at these levels are now benefitting from this programme. Fiji's new Constitution, which was promulgated in 2013, is our principal document that seeks to redress inequality across key population groups. Legislations, policies and strategies that will emanate from this document should support the current "leveling the playing field" approach that the Fijian Government has been implementing. Cabinet recently approved Fiji's National Gender Policy," said Counsellor Tagicakirewa.

The outcome of the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review will feed into the review of the implementation of the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#) during the 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, to be held in New York next year.

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Govt Participants at the Disaster Risk Management & Climate Change workshop in Novotel, Suva today



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