

## **JOINT MINISTERIAL STATEMENT BY FIJI AND NEW ZEALAND FOREIGN MINISTERS: MINISTERS WELCOME PROGRESS ON RECOGNISED SEASONAL EMPLOYER SCHEME**

Foreign Minister Murray McCully and his Fiji counterpart, Ratu Inoke Kubuabola, today welcomed the progress made towards Fiji's inclusion in New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme.

This represents another significant step for New Zealand's relationship with Fiji.

At a meeting in Auckland, Ministers noted an agreement will be signed in Fiji on 11 December to set out the RSE arrangements between the two countries.

In a pilot phase of the scheme, thirty workers from Fiji will be employed for seasonal work in Hawke's Bay, Bay of Plenty and Nelson.

"We look forward to the first placement of workers from Fiji in February 2015," Mr McCully said.

Ratu Inoke Kubuabola praised the efforts of departments in Fiji and New Zealand, and employers in New Zealand, to prepare for the scheme to take effect.

Ministers noted that the RSE scheme is employer-driven. It has a strong track record of delivering benefits to the New Zealand economy, along with income and skills for Pacific Island workers, their communities and countries.

"Fiji's participation in the scheme is consistent with the programme of re-engagement between New Zealand and Fiji," Mr McCully said.

Ministers looked forward to their next formal foreign policy consultations early in 2015.

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