

## **MEDIA RELEASE: CLARIFICATION FROM THE FIJIAN GOVERNMENT**

A media release issued by the Chinese Foreign Ministry after talks in Beijing between the visiting Fijian Foreign Minister, Ratu Inoke Kubuabola, and his Chinese counterpart incorrectly depicts Fijian policy towards China's territorial claims in the South China Sea.

The relevant section of the media release that the Fijian Government wishes to clarify reads as follows:

"Fiji supported China's proposition on the issue of the South China Sea. The two sides called on parties directly concerned to stay committed to peaceful settlement of disputes over territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests through friendly consultations and negotiations in accordance with bilateral agreements and pursuant to the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea. International judicial and arbitration bodies should fully respect the declaration on optional exceptions made by countries under Article 298 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea(UNCLOS). The two sides stressed that the right of sovereign states and States Parties to UNCLOS to independently choose the means of dispute settlement shall be respected and that prior consent of parties to the dispute must be sought before proceeding with any third party settlement."

The facts of the matter are as follows:

Fiji does not "support China's proposition on the issue of the South China Sea".

In line with our policy of strict non-alignment, Fiji enjoys friendly relations with all countries bordering the South China Sea, including China. We also believe in the strict adherence to and enforcement of international law. In relation to the South China Sea, Fiji calls on all relevant parties to resolve any territorial disputes by peaceful means under international law.

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