



Fiji President praises UNODC role in Pacific Anti-Corruption



Fiji President Ratu Epeli Nailatikau

Suva (Fiji), 21 July 2015 - Fiji President Ratu Epeli Nailatikau linked the visit of UNODC Executive Director Yury Fedotov to Fiji so soon after the re-establishment of democratic Parliament in late 2014 with the strong commitment since of Fiji's Government and Parliament to anti-corruption.

President Ratu Epeli was opening a Pacific-wide Parliamentarians workshop on anti-corruption today in Nadi, Fiji, hosted by UNODC, UNDP and the Global Organization of Parliamentarians (GOPAC).

"We were honored by Yuri Fedotov's visit so soon after our return to a full Parliament last year as a show of faith in us. I express my sincere gratitude to UNODC, GOPAC and UNDP for holding this important workshop on anti-corruption as we lead into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)," said Ratu Epeli.

"We need to ensure that as much as possible we are leaving a corrupt-free State to future generations. Corruption robs us of honest, clean and sustainable livelihoods. Now, we have finally addressed the culture of silence and gift-giving."

Members of Parliament (MPs) from Fiji, Nauru, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu are gathering in Nadi on 20-21 July for the Anti-Corruption Workshop for Pacific Parliamentarians, with a focus on the five remaining of the 15 Pacific Island countries yet to accede to the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).



Fiji's Speaker, Dr. Jiko Luveni

Making the keynote address, Fiji's Speaker, Dr. Jiko Luveni, said that Parliaments and Parliamentarians have a key role in questioning the Executive and providing financial oversight.

"Parliament should play a robust role in oversight," said Dr. Jiko, who reminded the Parliamentarians that the new SDG16 outlined a key objective with targets to address corruption and enshrine good governance.

"UNCAC has created global momentum in the fight against corruption and Parliamentarians need to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to implement UNCAC."

Dr. Jiko said that the Parliament in Fiji had responsibility for legislating for UNCAC and other treaties originally and now had a key role in oversight and the review process.

"Parliamentarians have to promote awareness of the negative aspects of corruption."

On behalf of the UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Sonja Bachmann said that Parliamentarians had a vital role looming following the adoption of the SDGs.

"While government, the private sector and civil society have an important role to play, your role and leadership as Parliamentarians is also vital to ensure transparency, accountability and rule of law," said Ms. Bachmann.

A major announcement at the workshop came from the Tuvalu Speaker, Hon. Otinielu Tauteleimale Tausi, that his Government's Cabinet had agreed for the country to officially begin the process to accede to UNCAC.

With just four Pacific countries remaining to formally announce agreement to accession, Tonga's strong support to establish the Pacific's first Standing Committee on Anti Corruption with a mandate to progress UNCAC accession is another indicator of UNODC

investment in fostering political will for anti-corruption in the Pacific Kingdom.

An Anti-Corruption Pacific Islands Directory, a detailed Directory of anti-corruption actors in each Pacific Island country, was also launched by Ms. Bachman.

The workshop is an activity of the UN Pacific Regional Anti-Corruption (UN-PRAC) Project, a four-year joint initiative of UNDP and UNODC, and supported by the Australian Government.

The UN-PRAC Project and GOPAC are committed to the process of Pacific-Pacific learning so regional Parliamentarians will continue to participate as mentors and resource people, along with UNCAC focal points, Ministers and civil society representatives from the Pacific.

About the UN Pacific Regional Anti-Corruption Project

The joint UNDP-UNODC project aims to help Pacific Island countries fight corruption by supporting: i) ratification of UNCAC; ii) UNCAC implementation through the strengthening of policies, laws, measures and institutional frameworks; and iii) engagement in the UNCAC processes, including the Implementation Review Mechanism. The Project draws on the strong global partnership and comparative advantages of both organizations in the fight against corruption.

Pacific Island States Parties to the UN Convention against Corruption

Country	Date of ratification/ accession
Papua New Guinea	16 July 2007
Fiji	14 May 2008
Palau	24 March 2009
Vanuatu	12 July 2011
Cook Islands	17 October 2011
Marshall Islands	17 November 2011
Solomon Islands	06 January 2012
Micronesia	21 March 2012
Nauru	12 July 2012
Kiribati	27 September 2013