



STATEMENT BY MR. LUKE DA'NIYALU, PERMANENT MISSION OF FIJI TO
 THE UNITED NATIONS
 AT THE THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE 66TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL
 ASSEMBLY
 ON AGENDA ITEM 28(A), ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN
 (New York, 12 October 2011)

[Check against delivery]

Chairperson,

As we stand at the threshold of the second decade of the 21st Century, it is clear that women's empowerment globally face both opportunities and challenges. While proper recognition has to be given to the achievements we have made thus far as a global community, we are also aware of the enormous amount of work that remains to be done to ensure that women worldwide are able to progress in the same way. Tackling the challenges that stand under the advancement of women's cause requires collaborative efforts at all levels – the international, regional and national levels.

We wish to acknowledge at this juncture the good work that UN Women has been carrying out this year. Despite the many difficulties, we are confident that UN Women will continue to fulfill its core mission in international women's affairs, advance women's causes and push for greater progress and momentum in the areas of gender equality and women's empowerment. In that regard, Fiji endorses UN Women's priority areas of work in increasing women's voice, leadership and participation enhancing women's economic empowerment, combating violence against women and promoting women's security. The UN Women's presence in the Pacific through its regular field-based office in Suva, Fiji is essential to the delivery of her work in the Pacific for all Island developing States. We will continue to support the work of UN Women's regional office in the Pacific and will continue to support its work in our region.

Chairperson,

Fiji attaches great weight to the causes of women and has worked conscientiously to implement the Beijing Platform for Action. The Platform remains an essential tool in advancing the status of women and girls. In this regard, our Women's Plan of Action is considered to have made significant progress in the area of the goals called for in the fundamental principles of the BPA.

In recognition of the importance of international cooperation in the field of women, Fiji has made efforts to attend and participate actively in global forums on women's issues such as the UN Commission on the Status of Women. The Government of Fiji also endeavours to bring domestic laws in line with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. All these laws have brought about positive welfare change.

Fiji is currently experiencing increasing participation by women in local decision making bodies, thereby empowering rural women, increased enrolment of women and girls in tertiary education, gender mainstreaming within the Government machinery, and increased welfare assistance provision to the marginalized, including single mothers.

The effect, last year, is being effectively facilitated by a new law, enforcement agencies in conjunction with civil society groups. Amongst other things, this law recognizes the difficulty experienced by women and children in gaining access to the justice system, because of family, community, cultural and attitudinal barriers.

A pairperson,

The empowerment of women is crucial to the issue of development – social, economic and political development. At the same time, we recognize that equal opportunities must be provided by education and training. Women's access to and participation in education and training, and through equal access to full employment, will ensure their empowerment and advancement in our communities.

It is only through proper and holistic education that people are enabled to meet the needs of our societies. In Fiji, we depend on parents as the primary caregivers and educators of the children, and regard the family as the fortress from which children depart as well grounded and responsible adults. We depend on our formal education system to provide our society with knowledgeable, well-rounded and skilled individuals, who can prosper in our dignified lives, and more importantly, contribute meaningfully to the advancement of the societal ideals and principles we aspire to.

We believe and act in the field of economic growth and development in our global society.

Economic reforms in Fiji have encouraged women's equal access to the labour market. The Government has also implemented a policy on sexual harassment. Fiji's implementation of its target of having 30% representation

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In accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, Fiji continues to value the significant contribution and role of our women serving in UN peacekeeping missions and

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The Government of Fiji remains committed to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women together with the international community, international organizations and civil society.

Thank you.