



Building a Better Fiji for All

The Interim Government's First Year in Office

A Message by the Prime Minister



Commodore Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama
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It is one year since His Excellency the President appointed the Interim Government to administer the affairs of the State.

On my part as Prime Minister, it is imperative to report the performance of the Government in relation to the mandate given by His Excellency the President.

We have made steady progress on a number of fronts amidst rather challenging and constraining conditions.

In our short time in office, we have worked hard and moved very fast for example, after arresting the precipitous decline in the state of nations finances, we stabilized it and we have made steady progress in restoring law and order and formulated a timetable for a quick return to parliamentary democracy.

We have also achieved various milestones with regards to our commitments to the international community. We have developed a proposed People's Charter for Change and Progress as the way forward for the betterment of our country.

Our journey in the last 12 months has been hectic and a challenging one. We treaded on new rugged terrain in our history but what has been satisfying for me is the fact that I know I am doing it for the betterment of the nation so that the future generations of our beloved nation will benefit from the work we are doing.

I have a vision for Fiji's future and it makes four vital demands or obligations on each one of us.

First and foremost, any further deterioration of Fiji's unstable overall economic and fiscal situation must be prevented with utmost urgency.

The announcement of Budget 2008 and the theme "Building a Platform for Quick Recovery and Sustainable Growth" is poised to materialise this.

Second, reforms and restructuring including confidence-building measures are needed to orient the economy towards a path of not only higher but sustainable growth.

Third, leaders throughout the country need to realise, believe and accept wholeheartedly the fact that the vast majority of Fiji's people aspire for and deserve a country, including a system of governance that is characterized by stability, transparency and accountability as well as

the prevalence of law, order, and peace.

Fiji needs to become a more progressive and a truly democratic nation; a country in which its leaders, at all levels, emphasize national unity, racial harmony and the social and economic advancement of all communities regardless of race or ethnic origin.

The overall objective of the vision is to rebuild Fiji into a non-racial, culturally vibrant and united, well-governed, truly democratic nation that seeks progress and prosperity through merit-based equality of opportunity and peace.

The people of Fiji need to individually and collectively come together to actively contribute to help resolve the country's problems. All leaders in Fiji, whether it is at national level, in communities, religious or in the business sector, need to place the national interest ahead of any personal and sectional interests.

“our vision is to rebuild Fiji into a non-racial, culturally vibrant and united, well-governed, truly democratic nation”

We all want a quick return to truly democratic government. The Interim Government is committed to laying a solid

foundation and framework for a Fiji that is strong, prosperous and rich in its diversity and where there is peaceful co-existence, the practice of good governance and the promotion of an accountable and corrupt free Government. We all want our future generations to embrace this vision of ours, and see that there is a place for everyone, regardless of race, religion or creed in our beautiful islands.

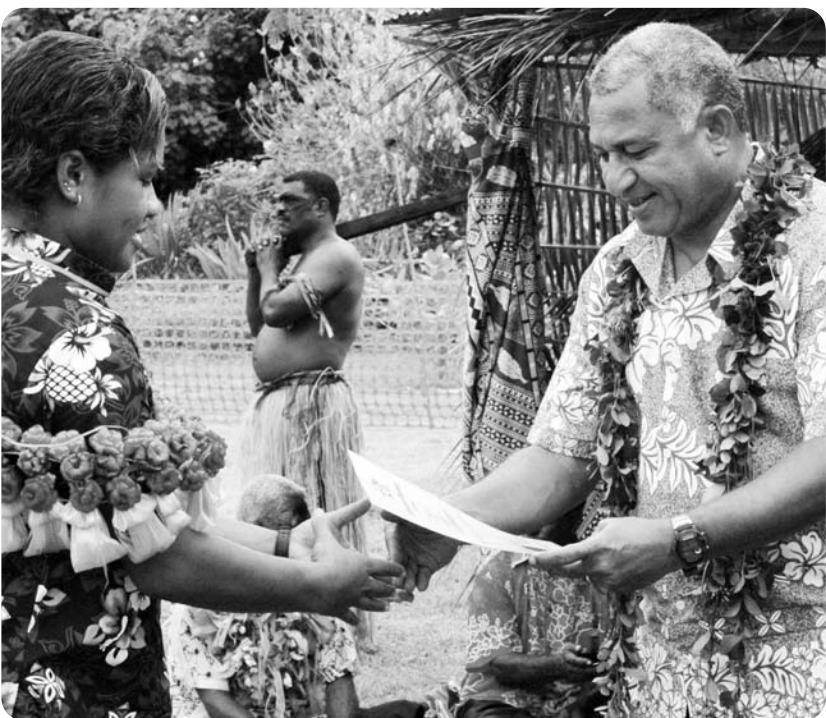
The Interim Government is keeping its doors open for opposing views and the National Council for Building a Better Fiji (NCBBF) which is being formed will continue its genuine effort to get all of Fiji's people

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to participate in this undertaking since this is of great national importance.

We should therefore come together as one nation, strengthened by our plurality, to work shoulder to shoulder to build a better Fiji for all: a Fiji where there are no barriers between people, a Fiji where each and every citizen can stand proud and proclaim that he or she belongs to this nation.

With a reservoir of collective strength let us work together and move forward to build a better Fiji for all.



A Focus on Achievements

Stabilised Government finances & set platform for economic recovery & growth.

01

Saved taxpayers more than \$40 million through tighter controls against mismanagement and corruption.

02

Reduced wastage and mismanagement, thus containing Government deficit at 2%.

03

Set up the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC) to fight against corruption.

04

Eased burden on people by the removal of the 2.5% increase in Value Added Tax (VAT) imposed by the SDL.

05

- Increased SUPPORT FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR in terms of the retention of key investment incentives and new incentives announced for small and medium business, import substitution, ICT sector and tourism investments.
- FITIB- successfully implemented \$110 million worth of investment projects creating 1189 employment opportunities.
- Consolidation of friendly relations with South East Asian countries as well as China, India and Pacific Island countries.
- Statement to the 62nd session of the United Nations General Assembly and Fiji's commitment towards returning to parliamentary democracy.
- Successful participation in 38th Pacific Islands Forum meeting held in Tonga in October.
- Major initiatives launched for creating an avenue for dialogue and consensus building through (NCBBF) and (PCCP) initiatives; and Removal of discriminatory provisions in Government policies.
- Conduct of a National Census.
- Implementation of National Export Strategy with a grant of \$2.5 Million.
- Review of Native Lands Trust Board and Fijian Administration.
- Streamlining Board memberships by removing political appointees and those holding dual memberships.
- Educational Advancement - Removing the biased policies, mainstreaming government assistance, increasing building grants and tackling head-on the teacher- shortages in

- secondary schools.
- Appointment of the Electoral Commission.
- Advertisement of the post of Supervisor of Elections.
- Acceptance in principle of the Report of the Independent Assessment Team and March 2009 timeline for elections.
- Agreement to the proposal for a Scoping Mission to determine and identify the resources needed for Fiji's return to parliamentary democracy.
- Safeguarding FNPF.
- Accelerating the pace of public service and public sector reforms.
- Improved Public Services -Vast improvements in public services are now being seen in areas that even previous administrations left by the wayside.
- Public Service - Implementing a 5% pay cut for all government workers. Deferring of payment of Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and 1% restored in December 2007.
- A cost saving of \$1.44 million per annum with the reverting to the Permanent Secretary scheme from the previous Chief Executive Officer System. Deferment of the Partnership/Industrial Relations Agreement with the Public Service Unions resulting in a significant total reduction in financial commitment and saving of \$115 million. Reduction in salaries and wages by 5% and saving \$30 million.
- Merging of functions resulting in the redeployment and de-establishment of surplus posts and aged vacancies achieved a

- saving of \$16 million.
- Quarantine reforms
- Port reforms.
- Government Supplies reforms.
- Government quarters reforms.
- Endorsement and launch of the Fiji Tourism Development Plan 2007 to 2016.
- Allocation of \$12 million to the Fiji Islands Visitors Bureau as part of its promotional and marketing campaign.
- Investment in new hotels and the refurbishment of existing properties exceeding \$70 million in the last 12 months.
- Opening of at least 20 new hotels with a total bed capacity in excess of 700 rooms and a tourism shopping complex.
- \$5 million for Vanua Levu Development project.
- Increase in grant to social welfare recipients to \$18 million.
- Assessment survey on all Family Assistance (FA) recipients.
- Assistance to about 1000 squatter families.
- More than 1000 families in various parts of Fiji now have electricity from a grant of \$6 million
- In addition another 800 households now have electricity on Vanua Levu through the Solar Home Systems Program.
- Resettlement of 16 evicted farmers at Navovo and payment of NLTB premiums for 265 farmers.
- Increased funding for rural development projects focussed towards poverty alleviation.

Government committed to assisting Fijians



The Interim Government is committed to improving the quality of life of the Fijian people sadly neglected by the previous governments.

The Ministry of Fijian Affairs has undertaken a number of programmes in coordination with other ministries to assist the indigenous Fijians. These programmes include assistance on land, education, business, housing, social welfare, after-care fund, personal references and provision of employment opportunities.

The Ministry is in the process of identifying areas of neglect in the NLTB and indigenous Fijian administration to ensure that better policies and procedures are put in place so that ordinary indigenous Fijians, amongst other things, get a fair and equitable return from their lands.

The Fijian Affairs Board (FAB) has been restructured so that it is focused on its core activities and is aligned to the work of the provincial councils.

- \$5.5 million set aside for assisting indigenous Fijians to set up and expand their businesses.
- More than 1000 villagers (men and women) provided with leadership and appropriate technology training to assist Fijians acquire leadership and entrepreneurship skills which they can utilize to develop their resources.
- Review of the Blueprint Programme so that the disadvantaged receive its maximum benefits.
- Establishment of a new and Fiji's First National Art Gallery. A committee has been formed to facilitate this.
- Village Improvement Scheme to continue but in a more focused direction than what was previously practiced.
- Assisted more than 40 schools around the country worth a total of \$627,310.81 with new classroom blocks, furniture, teachers quarters and the likes of water tanks, computers and school generators.

A Focus on Achievements (Continued)

Relief for poor with reduction of duty on basic food items so food prices are expected to come down.

06

\$60 million allocated for various projects to help the poor and disadvantaged.

07

Good news for consumers as agreement reached on deregulation of telecommunications industry.

08

Vatukoula Gold Mine restarts and a rehabilitation scheme set up to help out-of-work miners.

09

Creation of new Fiji Water Authority and water supply improvements in the Suva-Nausori corridor.

10

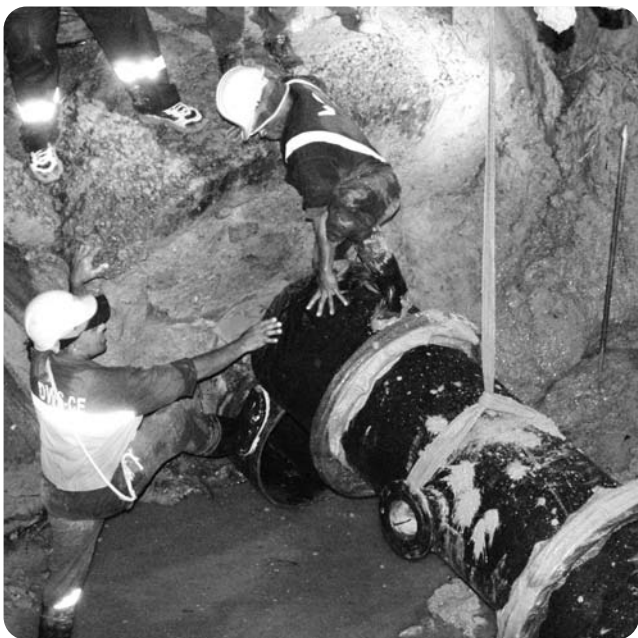
Sugar industry back on track

The interim Government has turned the sugar industry back on track by restoring the Fiji Sugar Corporation's (FSC) financial health and has forged ahead with the industry reforms and diversification projects.

- Sugar industry restructure to continue regardless of European Union (EU) funding
- Additional mill to be set up in Seaqaqa to assist ethanol production and cogeneration; no job loss recorded.
- Refurbishing of ageing mills through Indian Government loan to optimize capacity and improve plant efficiency and reliability in Fiji's four sugar mills - 75% of the mill upgrading project completed.
- Restoration of Accelerated Cane Replanting Programme in 2007 as part of the endorsed strategies outlined in the National Adaptation Strategy to restructure the industry in the next 8 years.
- Potential buyers Tate and Lyle and British Sugar have indicated their willingness to consider providing technical assistance, financial support, and to consider investments in certain areas of the industry's operation.
- Potential buyers including British Sugar have expressed interest in entering into a long-term commercial agreement with FSC.



New directions for Water



After years of neglect, water has become a top priority of the Interim Government. And rightly so! A basic necessity of life, the move to bring continuous water to your doorsteps is being done through the following multi pronged approach:

IG formulated the promulgation of the Water Authority to ensure the establishment functions and powers of the Water Authority of Fiji and its Board.

Suva/ Nausori Improvements

- The IG with the Asian Development Bank is working to ensure that its multi million dollar Refurbishment of Water infrastructure along the Suva/Nausori corridor is completed. Close to \$40 million has been spent in the refurbishment of the Suva/Nausori Water Infrastructure system. The project aims at the Rehabilitation of water supply and sewerage system with the Suva/Nausori corridor and the institutional reform, for the purpose of improving efficiency, reliability, transparency, accountability, customer service and sustainability.
- Decrease in water being carted to customers this year due to the completion of major Water Infrastructure along the Suva/Nausori corridor where about 220,000 people live.
- Completion of projects at the Nagatugatu Reservoir system along Khalsa Road, the Wainibuku/Navitoka Reservoir, Nausori Rewa Delta Water Distribution system.

A Commitment to LAW & ORDER

The IG has made preservation of law and order and the provision of an efficient system of justice a top priority. The institutions responsible for maintaining law and order, that is the Judiciary, Police, Prisons and Legal Services are being reorganised and developed to provide a just and efficient service.

Some of the highlights include:

- Restructure of the Attorney General's Chambers.
- Amendment of Trust Account Act to enable adequate provision of legal aid services.
- High Court Act has been amended to facilitate an increase in the number of High Court judges to provide better and more efficient services. Judges from different countries are sourced for efficiency in services provided by the courts.
- Commission of Inquiry into the Magistracy.
- Reorganisation of the Judiciary.
- Prison services reform.

Appointment of a new Police Commissioner Commodore Esala Teleni to enable the Fiji Police Force to forge ahead with new directions set by the Interim Government. Some of the highlights in this regard are the reduction in crime and in road fatalities. Offence against lawful authority has decreased by 6% and offence against property recorded a decrease of 9%.



The Score - Card on the Interim Government's Mandate

No	President's Mandate	Interim Government's achievement's
1	To continue to uphold the Constitution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been no breach of the Constitution. However when the country's national security has been threatened or seem to be threatened, it is necessary to impose certain restrictions to maintain law and order.
2	Where necessary facilitate all legal protection and immunity, both criminal and civil, to the Commander, Officers and all members of the RFMF.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promulgation of Immunity decree.
3	Give effect to the actions of the RFMF including the respective suspensions, dismissals and temporary removal from office of civil servants, CEO's, those appointed by the Judicial Services and Constitutional Services Commissions, the Judiciary and Government appointed Board members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reorganisation of Civil Service. • Reorganisation of Judiciary. • Promulgation of more than 30 Decrees. • Appointment of new magistrates. • Streamlining of Board memberships.
4	Steady our economy through sustained economic growth and correct the economic mismanagement of the past 6 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised Budget 2007-Securing Financial and Economic Stability. • Removal of 2.5% increase in Value Added Tax (VAT). • Safeguarding FNPF. • Agreement reached on deregulation of telecommunications industry. • Implementation of National Export Strategy with a grant of \$2.5 Million. • The announcement of Budget 2008 by the Interim Government with its theme "BUILDING A PLATFORM FOR QUICK RECOVERY AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH". • Re-starting of Vatukoula Gold Mine. • Vatukoula Rehabilitation Scheme to assist unemployed miners. • Savings of \$40 million through prudent financial management.
5	Lift up the living standards of the growing poor and underprivileged of our country.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ease social hardship, the interim Government immediately removed the increase in VAT to 15% imposed by the SDL and in Budget 2008 provided further relief through reduction in Customs Duty on a number of staple food items. • Educational Advancement - Removing the biased policies, mainstreaming government assistance, increasing building grants and tackling head - on the teacher - shortages in secondary schools. • Inclusion of personnel who have served in peacekeeping missions in the After Care Funds. • People will continue to be assisted under Government's Small Grant Scheme (SGS). We have approved more than \$300,000 for 84 small projects around the country under its small grants scheme.
6	Restructure the NLTB to ensure more benefits flow to the ordinary indigenous Fijians.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reforming the Native Lands Trust Board, Audit of IT System and Review of NLTB operations. • Traditional lands being given back to indigenous landowners. • IG is in the process of identifying areas of neglect in the NLTB and indigenous Fijian administration to ensure that better policies and procedures are put in place so that ordinary indigenous Fijians obtain better and improved services from these institutions. • Village Improvement Scheme to continue but in more focused direction than what was previously practiced. • Removal of income tax exemption on Fijian Holdings Unit Trust and Unit Trust of Fiji. • Review and continuation the Blueprint programme.
7	Eradicate systematic corruption by including the setting up of an anti-corruption unit through the Attorney General's Office and set new standards of Governmental and institutional transparency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of new laws and international commitments in respect of corruption. • Establishment of first ever Anti Corruption Unit. • Promulgation of Anti Corruption legislation. • Promulgation of a corresponding anti-bribery legislation. • Saved more than \$40 million through a clamp down on mismanagement and corruption in the public sector, which had become endemic under the Qarase regime. • Continuing the process of dismantling discriminatory and race based policies. • More than 1000 complaints of various nature of corruption that have been submitted to FICAC. All complaints are currently being investigated. Some cases have proceeded to the Courts and are being handled by the Judiciary. At the moment some cases are currently being pursued by FICAC and the relevant authorities concerned and the due process of the law will follow. • Amendment to Criminal Procedure Code and Penal Code to improve co-ordination between DPP, FICAC and Police.
8	Improve our relations with our neighbours and the international community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidation of friendly relations with South East Asian countries as well as China, India and Pacific Island countries. • Statement to the 62nd session of the United Nations General Assembly and Fiji's commitment towards returning to parliamentary democracy. • Successful participation in 38th Pacific Islands Forum meeting held in Tonga in October.
9	Take our country to democratic elections after an advanced electoral office and systems are put in place and the political and economic conditions are conducive to the holding of such elections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roadmap to True Parliamentary Democracy - 2 year timeframe for elections and a commitment to Forum Foreign Working Committee & EU. • Conduct of a National Census. • Appointment of the Electoral Commission. • Advertisement of the post of Supervisor of Elections. • Acceptance of the Report of the Independent Assessment Team and March 2009 timeline for elections. • Agreement to the proposal for a Scoping Mission to determine and identify the resources needed for Fiji's return to parliamentary democracy.
10	Immediately as practicable introduce a Code of Conduct and Freedom of Information provisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative process underway.
11	Give paramountcy to national security and the territorial integrity of Fiji.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of a local Commissioner of Police. • Steady progress in restoring law and order. • Increase in 2008 Budget for Police Force.