



## PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

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Panel Discussion for HS at the Forum – Achieving the SDG'S Agenda 2030  
Through Inclusive Development.

Venue: Bali, Indonesia

Date: 6th to 7th September 2017.

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### PANEL DISCUSSION:

Topic: Ending Violence, Sustaining Peace

Venue: Nusa Dua Hall 1, 2, 3,

BNDCC Chair: Dr. Fadli Zon (Vice Speaker of Indonesian House of Representatives)

Special Guest: H.E. Mr. Jusuf Kalla, (Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia/ Chair of Indonesia Red Cross)

### Panel Session:

1. Hon Chair, esteemed panelists, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen .Bula vinaka and a warm welcome to you all.
2. At the outset, I would like to thank this august body, the World Parliamentary Forum on Sustainable Development hosted by House of the Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia, for the opportunity to share my thoughts at this plenary session.
3. At this session I will discuss the outbreak of violence and its effects on societies. To be relevant, I will contextualize by localizing this focusing on examples of violence in Fiji. Lastly I will also discuss what the Fiji Parliament can do enabling participatory governance from stakeholders to address these challenges of ending violence and sustaining peace.

4. Before going to the local context, allow me to state this. Containing and resolving violent conflicts continue to be an ongoing challenge, from the past years prior to World War 1 and World War 2 up to the establishment of the UNO in October 24, 1945.
6. Hon, Chair, we all know that the UNO was established to promote international co-operation amongst nations and create and maintain international order but has its hands full in finding solutions to this never ending problem. Deadly conflict and warfare continues unabated in various parts of the world today.
7. EXTREMISM, TERRORISM, DIFFERING IDEOLOGIES AND GENDER, RELIGIOUS BELIEFS WITH DIFFERING EXPECTATIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS TO NAME A FEW ARE THE UNDERLYING CAUSES.
7. On this thought Chair, as we speak the whole world is watching and holding its breath on the actions of North Korea in recent days and the ensuing war of words which can escalate to a nuclear confrontation.
8. Nuclear war is ground zero meaning total annihilation and destruction of mankind.
9. Let us not forget the lessons of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Parliamentarians this impacts to us the importance of us reflecting on our roles in our various countries especially in ensuring legislations that can help towards sustaining peace and not furthering violence.

10. Let's keep our fingers crossed that cool heads and wisdom will prevail.
11. In trepidation I am worried for us all. More so, I am already having this fear for my dear homeland and for my fellow Pacific islanders who are already besotted by climate change if this impending violence on the world stage erupts.
11. I reiterate that there is no end in the foreseeable future and the safety and prosperity of future generations is in jeopardy and herein lay the challenge for Parliaments.
12. The causes of violence are many and vary from one area to the other.
13. For Fiji there have been instances of violence that have caused undue stress to the economy and the lives of its people.
14. In 1987, within a week of the election, a violent and terrifying campaign of arson, sabotage, roadblocks, and protest marches rocked Fiji climaxing with the military-led overthrow of the Bavadra government on May 14.
15. This coup awakened the dark side of Fijian society and racism reared its ugly head.
16. Fijians of iTaukei descent turned on their fellow citizens, snubbing them, beating them and robbing them. Houses and farms were burned. Sugar cane farmers were forced off their lands etc..
17. A temple was burnt in Lautoka City.
18. People with skills and education went out of Fiji in droves, taking Fiji back economically.

19. Again Fiji underwent a horrendous and a traumatic experience of violence in the political instability arising out of the attempted coup d'état of 2000.
20. The elected government of the day and other parliamentarians were held hostage. This was an unforgettable moment in Fiji's history for Fijians killed Fijians though on a smaller scale compared to other areas the world over. Still blood was shed and nothing will ever change that.
21. Hon. Chair, the scenarios described illustrated the lack of respect for the law and for Parliament by state sanctioned authorities and civilians. Parliament was not able to fulfil its functions as mandated by the people.
22. With the description of violence during conflicts and wars, let us not forget the domestic scene, the violence in the homes.
23. Hon.Chair, being Women leader who stands for and insists on improving the status of women in Fiji, the latest statistics from a survey conducted by the Fiji Women's Centre in 2013 is extremely disappointing.
24. The national survey on women's health and life experiences titled Somebody's Life, Everybody's Business showed that Fiji's rates of violence against women and girls are among the highest in the world. 64% of women suffer sexual and physical violence in their lifetimes.
25. Hon. Chair and Colleagues, What I have just described pose questions on our roles as Parliamentarians in our various Parliaments.

26. The issues of violence that confronts us are real .How can we address this seemingly never ending problem? How can we bring about sustainable peace?
27. We know the United Nations has its hands full in trying to contain these wars and the seemingly endless violence including on the domestic front. But we at this forum can take guidance and courage from the United Nations itself.
28. Hon.Chair, Fiji's executive arm of government with the able assistance and support of its Parliament ensures that support for Peace Keeping on the international stage continue and Fiji has its personal serving in peace keeping forces in many violence stricken areas of the world since 1978.
29. Fiji Parliament delegations in support of the United Nations, have spoken out in many parliamentary forums against violence in all its forms.
30. It is very much in support of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons for the fear of what it has already wrought in the Pacific and other parts of the world and the impending calamity it can bring to everyone today.
31. Locally, Fiji through its Parliament has ratified nine UN human rights treaties. Two examples are: The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) ratified on 11 January 1973. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Acceded on 28 August 1995.
32. I feel there needs to be improvement in the awareness of the roles and relationships between the executive arm and the

legislature and security state institutions and with civilians to prevent future political instability.

33. The parties mentioned need to learn from the mistakes of the past where there has been failure by political leaders to govern peacefully and equitably.
34. There SHOULD AT ALL TIMES be respect for the rule of law by all stakeholders including all sections of Fiji's local population.
33. The adoption of the new Constitution in 2013 by Parliament is a step in the right direction.
34. On the domestic violence, I have mentioned at forums using the high profile of my position that I do not condone violence against women and children.
35. In Parliament I have initiated programs like the Speakers Debate, the Parliament Bus, Meet the Speaker etc. to also address issues of violence against women.
36. I am a firm believer in raising the status and profile of women through education and leadership programs. A mock women's Parliament was organised in 2016 with the aim of promoting women's leadership and political participation at the highest decision making levels.
37. Through their empowerment these women and other educated women can be effective advocates at the communities in fighting violence against women.
38. Before I close, Hon. Chair and esteemed panelists, the Fiji Parliament has now established a new Parliamentary Committee

for Gender for the advancement of Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering of all Women and Girls.

39. This Committee is made up of all the Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the six (6) Standing Committees of Parliament and assisted by the Parliament Secretariat.
40. In March this year I launched the Practical Toolkit on Scrutinizing Legislation from a Gender Perspective to mark this milestone for the Fiji Parliament.
41. The toolkit guides the Committee on how to implement the Standing Order 110(2) relating to gender analysis when scrutinizing legislations.
42. I can assuredly say that Fiji is at the forefront of efforts to mainstream gender in the work of Parliament which will ensure future legislations will be fair and partial to women and girls.
43. And this will cascade into relevant rules and regulations being reviewed to ensure that women are given the just treatment they deserve and not the violence they currently face.
44. Our Parliament believes that the laws of our country- the very framework upon which our societies are built and governed are considered from a gender perspective to make it easy in creating the equality we strive for in society.
45. With these few thoughts I thank you for listening.





<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/report-secretary-general-b-maintenance-international-peace-and-security-0>

## Solutions:

Fiji has now established a new Parliamentary Committee for Gender to consider Parliament's contribution to the advancement of Achieving Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls.

The Committee is made up of all the Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the six (6) Standing Committees of Parliament and will be assisted by the Parliament Secretariat.

It is important that laws of our country –the very framework upon which our societies are built and governed are considered from a gender perspective to make it easy in creating the equality we strive for in society.

Fiji is at the forefront of efforts to mainstream gender in the work of Parliament.

In March this year I launched the Practical Toolkit on Scrutinizing Legislation from a Gender Perspective to mark this milestone for the Fiji Parliament.

The toolkit will guide the Committee on how to implement the Standing Order relating to gender analysis when scrutinizing legislations.

There are good intentions across the whole Parliament on the issue of gender equality but the challenge has been turning this good will into effective action and the toolkit is the missing chain in this link.

I also take this opportunity to acknowledge UNDP, European Union, Governments of Australia, New Zealand and Japan for the assistance in developing this toolkit.

Mainstreaming gender in Fiji can take many forms and I am working closely with women Parliamentarians to address them.

Mainstreaming gender in Parliament means ensuring that women are prominent in leadership position in the legislature.

With a Parliament that has a woman Speaker, a woman Secretary General and a woman Deputy Secretary General you cannot get much more prominent than this.

3.8 Parliaments can also progress SDG5 by mainstreaming gender into its legislative processes and scrutiny of the executive. This can involve integrating gender-based analysis into standing orders and other rules and systems of parliaments. For example, in the Fiji Parliament gender mainstreaming is now part of the parliamentary legislative and scrutiny process where MPs and committees are mandated through the Standing Orders (110(2)).

## Sustainable Development Goal 16

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Violent conflicts have increased in recent years, while homicides have declined slowly and more citizens around the world have better access to justice. A few high-intensity armed conflicts are causing large numbers of civilian casualties. Progress promoting peace and justice, together with effective, accountable and inclusive institutions, remains uneven across and within regions.

In 2015, between 5.2 persons and 6.7 persons per 100,000 persons worldwide were victims of intentional homicide. While the homicide rate has declined over the past decade, people in some countries located in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa and Asia face increased risk of intentional murder.

Various forms of violence against children persist, including discipline that relies on physical punishment and psychological aggression. In 76 countries (most are developing countries) with available data from 2005 to 2016, about 8 in 10 children from 1 to 14 years of age were subjected to some form of psychological aggression and/or physical punishment on a regular basis.

Countries have made solid progress in terms of detecting victims of trafficking in persons, as reflected by the increasing number of detected victims over the last decade. Globally, more women and girls than men and boys were identified as victims of trafficking in 2014. However, the share of women and girls has slowly retreated, from 84 per cent in 2004 to 71 per cent in 2014. While the share of victims trafficked for sexual exploitation has declined, the proportion of those trafficked for forced labour has increased. About 28 per cent of all trafficking victims detected in 2014 were children, with girls outnumbering boys (20 per cent and 8 per cent, respectively, of total victims).

Sexual violence is perhaps the most disturbing of children's rights violations. Underreporting and a lack of comparable data limit understanding of the full extent of the problem. In 35 low- and middle-income countries with data, the proportions of women between 18 and 29 years of age who experienced sexual violence for the first time before 18 years of age ranged from 0 per cent to 16 per cent.

Rates of pretrial detention suggest that progress with respect to the rule of law and access to justice has been slow. Globally, the proportion of people held in detention without being sentenced for a crime has remained almost unchanged — from 32 per cent of total prisoners in 2003-2005 to 31 per cent in 2013-2015 — which indicates that substantive progress has not been achieved in the ability of judicial systems to process and try the accused in a fair and transparent manner.

Opaque, burdensome and inefficient regulations and procedures nurture opportunities for corrupt officials to extract bribes or unofficial payments. In 2015, over 18 per cent of firms worldwide reported receiving at least one bribery payment request. The share of firms in low- and lower-middle-income countries totalled 25 per cent, compared to 4 per cent in high-income countries.

To provide a sound basis for development, government budgets should be comprehensive, transparent and realistic. While expenditure in nearly 2 in 3 countries was within 10 per cent of their original national budgets, more than 1 in 7 countries deviated by at least 15 per cent. Nevertheless, budget reliability has improved over time, with about 8 in 10 countries in Southern Asia and Eastern Asia and the Pacific showing improvement.

Birth registration is a first step towards safeguarding individual rights and providing every person with access to justice and social services. While many regions have reached universal or near universal birth registration, globally the average is just 71 per cent, on the basis of available country data reported from 2010 to 2016. Fewer than half (46 per cent) of all children under 5 years of age in sub-Saharan Africa have had their births registered.

Legislation that calls for freedom of information has increased steadily, but slow or inefficient implementation of such laws remains a concern. More than 110 countries have adopted freedom of information legislation and policies. However, expert assessments suggest that 47 of those countries fall short of having clear legal provisions for exceptions to that right, while another 47 countries lack sufficient provisions for public education.

Independent national human rights institutions play an important role in ensuring that States deliver on their human rights obligations and that no one is left behind. By the end of 2016, 37 per cent of countries had a national human rights institution that was compliant with internationally agreed standards (the Paris Principles), while 57 per cent of countries had been reviewed for compliance by their peers.

Source: Report of the Secretary-General, "Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals", E/2