



REPUBLIC OF FIJI – EUROPEAN UNION

Enhanced Political Dialogue

Suva, Fiji, 15 June 2015

Joint Conclusions

1. The Government of the Republic of Fiji represented by the Hon Mr Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji, and the European Union (EU) represented by the Hon Mr Edgars Rinkēvičs, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, on behalf of High Representative of the European Union, met in Suva on 15 June 2015, pursuant to Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement. This was the first High Level Political Dialogue since Fiji's return to parliamentary democracy and ending of the measures under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement. The Parties exchanged views on recent political and economic developments in Fiji and the EU. They reviewed bilateral political relations and strategic priorities.
2. In connection with the visa waiver, the EU acknowledged Fiji's interest to be included in the Annex II of the Council Regulation (EC) No 539/2001. In this context the EU confirmed that it will take into account Fiji's request to have visa free status when revising the Regulation later on this year. The final list of visa free countries would need to be agreed by the Council and the European Parliament. Fiji noted that visa waiver continues to be one of the instruments it uses to enhance its trade and diplomatic ties within the global community, and to date, 26 out of the 28 EU countries enjoy visa free status to Fiji.
3. Fiji outlined its successful transition to constitutional and substantive parliamentary democracy since 2007 under a truly democratic electoral system set out in the new Fijian Constitution. Fiji also outlined the work done by the Fijian Parliament since its first sitting in October 2014. The Fijian parliament elected its first woman speaker. Both sides agreed that this is a great example for empowering and giving inspiration to all women. Fiji expressed its appreciation to the UNDP and the EU for their contribution in the setting up of a

modern and well equipped parliamentary facility. The EU congratulated Fiji on successful elections, recalled the support it had provided for the process, and further recalled the recommendations for future elections made by the Multi-lateral Observer Group and the EU Election Expert Mission. It went on to congratulate Fiji on the establishment of a well-functioning Parliament and acknowledged the excellent collaboration enjoyed with the Fijian Parliament particularly through its support programme implemented by the UNDP. The EU congratulated Fiji on the decision by the Fijian Parliament to re-join the Inter-Parliamentary Association, and welcomed the hosting of ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in Fiji.

4. Fiji provided an update on the significant progress it has made to review its labour laws in line with the recommendations made by ILO. In this regard, Fiji has tabled a Bill in Parliament to amend the Employment Relations Promulgation, which fully incorporates the recommendations of the ILO Direct Contacts Mission by repealing the Essential National Industries Decree 2011 and expressly providing all workers in essential services and industries as well as in Government with the full right to freedom of association and collective bargaining. The EU welcomed these developments, highlighting the importance of alignment with international standards and full consultation with social partners.
5. With regard to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Fiji informed that out of a total of 138 recommendations proposed by the UN Working Group on Human Rights, Fiji has accepted 112 recommendations, while it has noted the remaining recommendations. Fiji's UPR report was extremely well received by the UN Working Group on Human Rights, including in particular the progress made by Fiji to enhance human rights through the modern and robust Bill of Rights in the Fijian Constitution, as well progress in the ratification of the United Nations Convention Against Torture (UNCAT), and the abolition of the final remaining provision on death penalty in the armed forces. Fiji also discussed its commitment to fighting gender-based violence and discrimination of marginalised groups and that great progress has been made in putting in place a legislative framework in this regard. Fiji noted that legal provisions were in place, thanks in particular to the Bill of Rights set down in the Constitution, that guaranteed freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and freedom of association. It also noted that laws were being formulated on freedom of information.
6. The EU welcomed the complete abolition of death penalty and the Fijian Government's decision to ratify UNCAT and encouraged Fiji to ratify the full provisions of the Convention as soon as practicable. The EU commended Fiji for having appointed the Chairperson and Commissioners to the Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission (FHRADC), and asked Fiji to

consider signature and ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Fiji affirmed its commitment to give support to FHRADC to become fully compliant with the Paris principles. The EU commended Fiji's achievements in empowering women through policy and legislative means and encouraged this to become a trend to be extended throughout society. It recalled the importance of enhancing efforts to eradicate the wide spread gender based violence, which is not only an issue for Fiji but throughout the Pacific. Emphasising the importance of a regulatory framework that ensures media freedom, the EU looked forward to the enactment of the anticipated freedom of information legislation, which would strengthen further media freedom.

7. The EU undertook to seek means to support Fiji in its work towards fulfilling the UPR recommendations where possible. It referred to the 11th EDF allocation in the area of access to justice and encouraged Fiji to complement it with additional efforts on further supporting the Fijian judiciary. It also offered to work, through its regional programme, on a range of issues such as Public Financial Management.
8. The EU reaffirmed its support by means of the on-going and future assistance through the 11th EDF to help Fiji's sugar sector in better coping with the possible future challenges, which was greatly appreciated by Fiji.
9. Fiji noted that 60% of the contracted allocation had been disbursed under the "Accompanying Measures for Sugar Protocol countries (AMSP) programme" and expressed its wish for a rapid disbursement of the remaining funds to help the completion of the vital reform of the sugar industry. Moreover Fiji informed that it had made a submission to the EU through the ACP Ministerial Committee on Sugar to seek for additional support to this effect. The EU stated that disbursement levels for ongoing support programmes were good, with €24 million more due to be disbursed over the next two years. Fiji also highlighted the need for EU to work in conjunction with, and complement, the Fijian Government's plans and strategies for the sugar sector rather than work only through NGOs.
10. Fiji informed that it has provisionally applied the IEPA to ensure continued access in the EU market for its exports. The EU commended Fiji's progress and affirmed its commitment to work closely with Fiji on all issues within the ambit of the EU-Fiji-PNG Joint Trade Committee during their next meeting from 23-24 June 2015 in Brussels, Belgium. Both Parties reaffirmed their commitment to the EPA process, including an acceptable solution for the regional EPA.
11. The EU reaffirmed that sustainable development, including the sustainable management of fisheries resources, is a key issue for the EU. Fiji indicated that

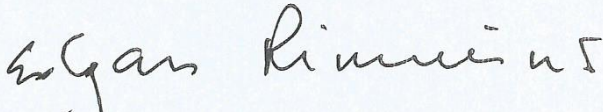
the speedy conclusion of the comprehensive EPA is essential to regional integration and for the growth of economic relations between the Pacific and the EU. The EU reiterated the message contained in the Trade Commissioner's letter on the need for an overall review of the conservation and sustainable management of fisheries before negotiations can resume. The EU also reiterated its support in the framework of the 11th EDF Pacific Regional Programme with a substantial increase compared to the 10th EDF, over a similar time-span.

12. Fiji updated the EU of its main Millennium Development Goals (MDG) achievements and expressed its full support to the ongoing multilateral processes on the new Sustainable Development Goals. The Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF) was highlighted as a contemporary and inclusive regional mechanism which can play an important and transformative role in effectively mainstreaming the SDGs in the region, in collaboration with existing regional organisations, for instance the PIF and the SPC.
13. The Parties agreed to work on the new Global Partnership which should reflect the paradigm shift to a universal, transformative and inclusive agenda. The EU reconfirmed its commitment to the Global Partnership including on the EU's collective ODA commitments. Moreover Parties agreed to work on a solid set of indicators, which would reflect the comprehensiveness and balances of the SDGs.
14. The EU commended Fiji on establishing a forward-looking Green Growth Framework for Fiji which guides country's sustainable development as SIDS and ensures the fulfilment of its international commitments. The Parties reconfirmed their commitment to jointly work towards securing a fair, ambitious and legally-binding international agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference in December in Paris. EU welcomed Fiji's intention to announce its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) in September which will inspire others to action in facilitating an ambitious deal in COP21 in Paris. The Parties agreed to seek common positions to tackle key international challenges such as climate change, SDGs and responses to international crises.
15. The EU recognised the crucial contribution the UN mission in the Golan Heights is making to stability in the region and that it must be allowed to continue its work without restriction or intimidation. The EU reiterated its full support of UNDOF in maintaining the ceasefire in the Golan and the EU's gratitude to the brave peacekeepers serving in the mission, among whom many are Fijians.
16. Parties agreed that the next enhanced political dialogue will be held in Brussels, Belgium, in the second semester of 2016

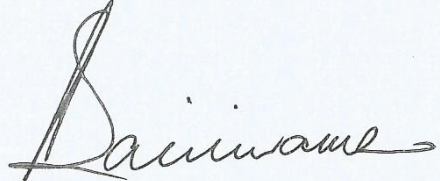
Done in Suva, 15 June 2015

For the European Union

For the Republic of Fiji



HE Edgars Rinkēvičs
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Latvia



Hon. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama
Prime Minister of Fiji