



Vani Catanasiga, Executive Director Fiji Council of Social Services Welcome Remarks

Monday, 23 June 2025 | 9:00am | Jovili Meo Mission Centre, Suva

Good morning everyone,
Ni sa bula vinaka and a warm Pacific welcome to you all.

It is my honour and great pleasure to welcome you to this important regional training on Human Rights, Climate Change, and Business in the Pacific. Fiji Council of Social Services is especially proud to be co-hosting this program alongside the Diplomacy Training Program, PIANGO, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

This gathering is timely and vital. Across our region, we are living with the compounding impacts of climate change—rising seas, intensifying storms, and deepening inequalities. These challenges do not respect borders, and neither must our responses.

In particular, we must confront the risks posed by extractive industries, whose unsustainable practices not only degrade ecosystems and displace communities but also accelerate the very climate crisis we seek to address

That is why this program—bringing together participants from Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, PNG, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu—is so valuable.

It provides a unique platform for civil society, government, and business to build a shared understanding of the human rights dimensions of the climate crisis, and to develop the skills and relationships needed to drive transformative change—grounded in justice, equity, and solidarity.

We are particularly honoured to welcome Professor Surya Deva, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development, whose presence underscores the global importance of the issues we are addressing this week.

At the Fiji Council of Social Services we remain committed to supporting inclusive, rights-based, and community-led development, and we are encouraged by the shared purpose represented here today.

Thank you again to our partners and to all of you for being here. We wish you a productive, inspiring, and empowering week ahead.

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