



FIJI



**PEOPLES CHARTER
FOR
CHANGE, PEACE & PROGRESS**

**NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR BUILDING
A BETTER FIJI**

15th December 2008

FOREWORD

In September 2007, the Interim Government of Fiji decided to launch a national initiative to Build a Better Fiji for All through a Peoples Charter for Change, Peace and Progress (PCCPP). Accordingly, the Interim Government recommended to His Excellency, the President, that a National Council be established for that purpose. The President officially launched the Peoples Charter initiative on October 10, 2007 and took steps to establish a 45-member National Council for Building a Better Fiji (NCBBF).

The NCBBF membership as initially established by His Excellency, the President, was broad-based and inclusive in its composition, consisting of representatives and leaders of all major organisations (community, social, civic, religious, business, political) in the country. The inaugural meeting of the NCBBF was held on 16 January, 2008. To accomplish the mandate given to it by His Excellency, the President, the NCBBF, including its Technical Secretariat, were to work independently of the Interim Government. It is to be regretted that some key stakeholders chose not to serve as members of the NCBBF despite the invitation to serve.

In its first meeting, the NCBBF resolved to undertake its mandated task of formulating the draft Peoples Charter through two key steps. The first step was to prepare a comprehensive, facts-based, diagnostic, forward-looking Report on the State of the Nation and the Economy (the SNE Report). The forward-looking SNE Report was to provide a list of recommendations for changes to our system of government, our constitution, laws, economic and resources development policies, leadership values, community relations, and institutional reforms.

In the second step of the process, the NCBBF was to prepare a draft Peoples Charter. This was to be done by drawing upon the findings and recommendations contained in the SNE Report and also the feedback obtained through the NCBBF's outreach activities and consultations undertaken throughout the country including the coverage of all urban centres and more than 1000 villages and settlements across the nation.

The preparation of the SNE Report was to be undertaken through a process of extensive, country-wide consultation and participation. To facilitate such a participatory process, the NCBBF produced a Consultation Document, written in English, 'Vosa Vakaviti' and Hindi. This was issued in February 2008 and widely distributed throughout the country. The Consultation Document was divided into two parts: Part 1 described the current situation of Fiji and Part 2 outlined a list of the probable causes of Fiji's problems and raised a number of critical questions and issues that need to be addressed.

The Peoples Charter process, as a national level inclusive and participatory undertaking, represents Fiji's own way of addressing its deep-rooted, complex and fundamental problems. Integral to this process is the firm commitment of all the stakeholders, including all the members of the NCBBF and in particular the Interim Government, to restore and sustain parliamentary democratic governance, stability, and peace in Fiji.

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

The vision for rebuilding Fiji that underpins this overarching objective is guided by the following key principles:

- a just and fair society;
- achieve unity and national identity;
- merit-based equality of opportunity for all Fiji citizens;
- transparent and accountable government;
- uplifting of the disadvantaged in all communities;
- mainstreaming of the indigenous Fijian in a modern, progressive Fiji; and
- sharing spiritualities and interfaith dialogue.

This SNE Report focuses on the way forward for Fiji. It analyses in greater depth the problems and issues identified in the Consultation Document and, on the basis of that analysis, proposes measures and actions to address them.

To accomplish this SNE Report, the NCBBF set up from within its membership three National Task Teams (NTTs). Each NTT assumed responsibility for the analytical and problem solving work in one of the following broad areas:

- NTT1: Good Governance (Legal, Political, Institutional & Constitutional Reforms);
- NTT2: Growing the Economy; and
- NTT3: Social-Cultural Identity and Nation Building.

The NTTs in turn established nine Working Groups (WGs), each focusing on priority topics, as follows:

- WG1: Governance, Leadership, Constitutional & Electoral Reform;
- WG2: Institutional & Public Sector Reform;
- WG3: The Role of Fiji's Security Forces in National Development ;
- WG4: Clarifying the Respective Roles of Government, Private Sector & Civil Society to achieve stronger growth, greater equity & sustainability;
- WG5: Development of the Financial Services Sector;
- WG6: Development of Resource-based Sectors;
- WG7: Poverty, Social Justice & Human Rights;
- WG8: Meeting Basic Needs: Education, Health & Housing; and
- WG9: National Identity & the Role of Religion & Culture in National Building.

Through the WGs, the NTTs invited additional participants from various sectors of Fiji society to join in the work on the formulation of the draft SNE Report and the draft Peoples Charter.

Close to 200 people were involved at the WG level, the majority being from outside of the Government, i.e. from the civil society, the professions, private sector, and academia. The work of the WGs was facilitated through a number of in-depth Issues and Discussion Papers (IDPs), written mostly by local experts and some generated by the NCBBF Secretariat.

At the end of their work, in late May and early June 2008, each WG reported the results of its deliberations to its respective NTT, where problems of inconsistency or overlap between the recommendations of different WGs were addressed and resolved.

The SNE Report records the results of the analyses and deliberations in the nine WGs and the three NTTs; and also the feedback obtained through the outreach activities and the consultations undertaken at the level of over 1000 villages and settlements, and in all the urban and town centres, in the country.

The findings and recommendations to address the challenges facing Fiji, as contained in the SNE Report, and the extensive consultations undertaken at the local, community, and national levels, formed the basis for the preparation of the Draft Peoples Charter.

The NCBBF endorsed the Draft Peoples Charter for nationwide consultations at its fifth meeting in August, 2008. Just over 250,000 copies of the Peoples Charter documents were published, in English and the vernacular, and disseminated, as widely as possible, across the country. The NCBBF targeted two-thirds of the adult population, aged 18 years and over, for consultations and feedback on the Draft Peoples Charter. As at 10 December, 2008 the NCBBF had received very strong, broad-based support from the people of Fiji for the Draft Peoples Charter.

It is on the basis of such a feedback from the people of Fiji i.e. their very strong support, that the NCBBF finalised the draft document and submitted this, the **Peoples Charter for Change, Peace and Progress** to His Excellency, the President of Fiji on 15 December, 2008.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We take this opportunity to acknowledge with our sincere thanks all those people, particularly those from outside of the Government, who have served in NCBBF, in the WGs, and across the country; who have freely joined the Peoples Charter outreach and consultation processes. As Co-Chairs of NCBBF, we express to you our deep appreciation for coming forward to help our nation during a time of such great need. We thank you all for getting involved, for your commitment, for your selfless efforts, and for your contributions to-date.

On behalf of us all, including the members of the NCBBF, we thank His Excellency, the President, Ratu Josefa Iloilo Uluivuda, for his vision and leadership in enabling this, the Peoples Charter for Change, Peace and Progress, to become a reality, to move our nation forward, for the betterment of all.

.....
Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama
Prime Minister, Co-Chair, NCBBF

.....
His Grace Petero Mataka
Archbishop, Co-Chair, NCBBF

15th December, 2008

We, the People of Fiji:

- Awake, and we Arise
- To a New Dawn
- To a New Day, and a New Way
- In Our Lives, as One Nation, as One People

For We Are

THE PEOPLE OF FIJI

We, the People of Fiji:

- Affirm that our Constitution represents the supreme law of our country, that it provides the framework for the conduct of government and the people.
- Commit ourselves wholeheartedly, to rebuilding a Better Fiji For All, through this, the PEOPLES CHARTER FOR CHANGE, PEACE AND PROGRESS.
- Declare that the Peoples Charter is a commitment that we, the People of Fiji, make to each other to change our attitudes, our thinking, the way we live and the way we are governed.
- Urge our leaders at all levels, to commit to the Peoples Charter which represents our will and that through this, we seek to strengthen our Constitution, to lay a solid foundation for the rebuilding of our Nation, as One Country, One People.

FOUNDATION FOR THE COMMON GOOD

Based on

OUR SHARED VALUES, VISION AND PRINCIPLES

- We believe in God as a higher power that is in every human and in all of nature and creation. Therefore, as trustees of our Creator, God, we are all one and inseparable from the source of all creation.
- As one people, we are one nation, basing our solidarity in love, dignity, humility and humanity, as we all are loved by our Creator.
- We respect, appreciate and celebrate the diversity and the aspirations of our people. We recognise the freedom of our various communities to follow their beliefs as enshrined in our Constitution.
- We strive to live justly and peacefully with one another, in the knowledge that goodwill alone is not sufficient to sustain peace, just governance, and freedom.
- We accept that we must live by a set of shared moral values and standards, through which we evaluate our individual and collective conduct and performance.
- We hold that these values and standards are the basis of the common good which we hereby

define as consisting of the following principles and aspirations :

- ◇ equality and dignity of all citizens;
 - ◇ respect for the diverse cultural, religious and philosophical beliefs;
 - ◇ unity among people driven by a common purpose and citizenship;
 - ◇ good and just governance;
 - ◇ sustainable economic growth;
 - ◇ social and economic justice;
 - ◇ equitable access to the benefits of development including access to basic needs and services; and
 - ◇ merit-based equality of opportunities for all.
- We seek to safeguard, preserve and value our environment as we benefit from it.
 - We seek to achieve this through consensus so that our people will have a moral vision that will guide our development and governance and that will give our people the responsibility to sustain the common good.

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

- Our problems today are deep-rooted and complex. We, the people of Fiji, must come together, join hands, and work together, to address all our problems.
- Our common and equal citizenship underlines our desire for more inclusiveness, mutual respect, a common national identity, unity, loyalty, social cohesion, integration, confidence, and belongingness to Fiji.
- Our nation is in urgent need of genuine, trust-based dialogue and peace building for which qualities of humility, compassion, honesty and openness to other views and interests are essential.
- To steer our nation forward to A Better Fiji For All, we need visionary, transformative leaders who place the interests of the nation first including national development, good and just governance, and unity.
- Our nation needs to urgently remove all unjustifiable systems, policies and programmes which are based on racial discrimination or narrow communal considerations.

- Leaders in all our communities, in all the key institutions including the government, traditional and religious organisations, the civil society, and in the private sector must change, commit to working together, seek and create broad-based consensus for just and fair solutions to our many problems. Our leaders must lead by example and take responsibility for their words and actions.
- Our nation must have a freely and fairly elected Parliament that is representative of the people of our country to strengthen and sustain democratic governance.
- We believe in an executive government answerable to the Parliament, an independent Judiciary, the Security Forces that enforce the law justly and are answerable to the government and Parliament in accordance with our Constitution.
- We believe in a Public Service that adheres to the law, is merit-based, responsive, efficient and effective in its service-delivery, and accountable.
- We believe in a free, accountable and responsible media that reports truthfully and promotes good and just governance and national development, and holds all institutions accountable including itself.

- We believe in a strong and free civil society as vital to democracy, good and just governance, and sustainable social and economic development.
- We strongly endorse that a holistic approach to human security be adopted by our Security Forces as the basis of the democratic state and the institutions for national security.
- We affirm that sustained economic growth is essential for a prosperous and harmonious Fiji, for employment and income generation, redistribution, poverty reduction, social justice, security and peace, for the advancement of all of our communities.
- We must ensure that the individual indigenous landowners are empowered and assisted to participate meaningfully and productively in the modern, market-based sectors of the economy.
- We aspire for Fiji to be an educated, knowledge-based society where all our people have access to education and continuous learning. We must retain and use our individual and collective knowledge and skills to develop our country, to achieve its real potential to be a prosperous and well-governed country.
- We affirm that the ultimate test of our civility as a people is what we do, individually and collectively, to empower and uplift the lives of all the citizens in our country, including what

we do to protect and enhance the interests and aspirations of women, youth and the vulnerable and disadvantaged sections of our communities.

- We must achieve the efficient and effective as well as sustainable utilisation of the nation's resources for our socio-economic development.
- We believe that Fiji can best contribute to international cooperation for relief, peace, development and improvement of human security by further developing capacity and skills to effectively render assistance to promote peace in the Pacific and the World.
- We reaffirm our recognition of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all individuals and groups, safeguarded by adherence to the rule of law, and our respect for human dignity and for the importance of the family.
- We affirm that the richest resources of a nation are her people; that there is no human problem that the people of Fiji cannot solve in humane ways.
- We believe that the Peoples Charter provides the just and equitable framework for Change, Peace and Progress for the people of Fiji today, and in the future.

KEY PILLARS

For

REBUILDING FIJI

1. Ensuring Sustainable Democracy and Good and Just Governance
2. Developing a Common National Identity and Building Social Cohesion
3. Ensuring Effective, Enlightened and Accountable Leadership
4. Enhancing Public Sector Efficiency, Performance Effectiveness and Service Delivery
5. Achieving Higher Economic Growth While Ensuring Sustainability
6. Making More Land Available for Productive and Social Purposes
7. Developing an Integrated Development Structure at the Divisional Level
8. Reducing Poverty to a Negligible Level by 2015
9. Making Fiji a Knowledge-based Society
10. Improving Health Service Delivery
11. Enhancing Global Integration and International Relations.

KEY PILLARS OF THE PEOPLES CHARTER



Ensuring Timely and Effective Implementation

**PEOPLES CHARTER
FOR
CHANGE, PEACE AND PROGRESS**

PEOPLES CHARTER

PILLAR I

ENSURING SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY AND GOOD AND JUST GOVERNANCE

Critical Problems and Issues:

A fair and just Constitution is the basis of good governance. However, a Constitution that divides the people and separates them, which does not provide for equal opportunities, can be neither fair nor just. The world community, in declarations and treaties expressing the highest ideals, has opposed racism and injustice. We the people of Fiji are all too aware of the harm racial division has done to our country. We declare, through this Peoples Charter, our commitment to a Fiji free from all forms of discrimination.

Democracy must be entrenched in our Constitution in accord with our pledge to rebuild a Better Fiji for All: one nation, one people with a common identity and shared destiny.

Fiji's electoral system is racially discriminatory and undemocratic. The United Nations Convention on Discrimination and the Right to Universal and Equal Suffrage requires each individual vote to be equal in value. The current communal system of representation entrenches inequalities, by not providing one value for one vote, has contributed to the "coup culture", and the consequent ethnic-based politics that has impeded our national development. We commit ourselves to a free and fair electoral process, that promotes one people, one nation and one identity.

We acknowledge that democracy is more than just a matter of voting. Effective democratic governance must place the people at the centre. We, therefore, affirm our commitment to secure a more

transparent and accountable process of government. The peoples eyes are the eyes of the nation; their ears are the ears of the nation, and their voice, the voice of the nation. To perfect democratic governance in Fiji, we, the people, must be free to see, to hear, and to speak on the affairs of our country.

In the wake of the coups since 1987, Fiji suffers the stigma of having a “coup culture”. We must put an end to the cycle of coups.

The Way Forward:

The following key measures and actions must be taken with due priority and urgency¹:

- Reform of the Electoral System:
 - ◆ abolish the communal representation system as provided for under the Constitution and the Electoral Act 1998, and replace this with the use of a common roll system for all future elections.
 - ◆ establish a fair system of voting so that all the interests and wishes of the people of Fiji can be represented in the Parliament as expressed through free, fair and honest elections and for this adopt an Open List Proportional Representation (PR) Electoral and Voting System.
 - ◆ incorporate specific anti-discrimination measures into Fiji’s electoral laws to ensure no person is discriminated against by political parties on the grounds of race, religion, gender or circumstance.
 - ◆ remove the mandatory power sharing arrangement as provided for under the current Constitution.
 - ◆ Size of the Cabinet be limited constitutionally.

¹ For the detailed recommendations and proposed implementation actions, see the **Report on the State of the Nation and the Economy**.

- ◆ reduce the voting age from 21 to 18 years of age.
- ◆ maintain compulsory registration and abolish compulsory voting.
- ◆ promulgate an Anti-Discrimination Act.
- ◆ the electoral system be removed from the Constitution and enacted as law so that it may be amended and reformed from time to time according to the will of the people. However, the fundamental recommendations of non-ethnic voting, equal franchise and Proportional Representation be enshrined in the Constitution.
- To ensure good and just governance, including greater transparency and accountability, and to combat corruption:
 - ◆ The government be fully accountable to the people of Fiji through Parliament and its procedures. These include:
 - a robust and effective Opposition, able to fully scrutinise the programmes and policies of government.
 - a Parliamentary Committee system that has the resources and capacity to consider matters before the Parliament in a non-partisan manner in the interest of the people and the nation.
 - the people have access to Parliament through their petitions and proposals and that these receive appropriate and due consideration.
 - ◆ The Parliament of Fiji must have the capacity to adequately carry out executive and administrative oversight of governance through its own or

constitutionally created independent statutory agencies. These include:

- an independent and well resourced Ombudsman's Office with broadened powers of investigation;
 - an independent and well resourced Fiji Human Rights Commission;
 - an independent and well resourced Auditor General's Office; and
 - an independent and well resourced Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC).
- ◆ The Government must publish timely public reports with adequate details so that the people of Fiji are aware of what is being done in their name and with their taxes.
 - ◆ Enact Freedom of Information legislation and establish a Media Tribunal.
- To end the cycle of coups:
 - ◆ Adopt and apply a fourteen-prong principles-based strategy including reforms addressing ethno-nationalism, leadership, good governance, human rights and national reconciliation.

ENDING THE COUP CULTURE: 14 KEY PRINCIPLES

- Remove the political, economic and social conditions for coups and strengthen the sanctions against coups.
- Build genuine national reconciliation through dialogue, forgiveness and appropriate conflict resolution mechanisms for groups and individuals affected by coups.
- Redefine and clarify the role of the RFMF to ensure it is committed to defending the Constitution..
- Transform the role of public leadership.
- The Courts to be empowered to penalise including orders of dissolution of political parties that engage in activities that breach important values of the Constitution.
- Improve ethnic relations at the personal, communal, institutional and national levels.
- Enlarge public accountability for national security.
- Implement electoral reforms.
- Strengthen the accountability and transparency of State institutions, the private sector and civil society organisations in particular to enhance their adherence to the rule of law.
- Establish civic programmes to raise public awareness about the injustice and illegality of coups and issues of democracy and good governance.
- Reform institutions and rehabilitate individuals and groups which are most prone to being implicated in coups such as ethno-nationalists and religious fundamentalists.
- Ensure a separation between religion and state.
- Facilitate greater public participation in all aspects of governance.
- Those found guilty of treason or coup related offences by a court of law be prohibited from contesting elections for life.

Re-align the role of the RFMF to include Human Security:

- enhance the RFMF–community development partnership by strengthening its developmental role to ensure that its professional, technical and social potential is fully realised. This to be achieved through the implementation of the National Youth Service, and in areas such as conservation of biodiversity, basic infrastructure rehabilitation and development, especially in the rural areas through an expanded Engineering Corps; and provision of security services.

- To redress the law and order situation:
 - ◆ reduce overall criminal offence rate;
 - ◆ reduce crime rates against women and children;
 - ◆ reform laws that impede the combating of crimes;
 - ◆ enhance enforcement capacity to address crimes including sophisticated crimes and cross-border security issues.
 - ◆ reduce prison population through measures such as alternative sentencing, community service, and restorative justice.

PEOPLES CHARTER

PILLAR 2

DEVELOPING A COMMON NATIONAL IDENTITY AND BUILDING SOCIAL COHESION

Critical Problems and Issues:

- We lack a common national identity and unity as citizens of Fiji.
- Beginning with our colonial legacy of “divide and rule”, and the institutionalisation of communal identities, our people have tended to identify more strongly with their religions, ethnicity and by their various communities or provinces than by nationality.
- Racially divisive leadership has contributed to the situation that we are now a fractured and fragmented society.
- We have tended to focus on the differences that divide us rather than on our common shared values and interests.
- We must change for our common good, as one nation and as one people, through our shared vision and values for a common national destiny.

The Way Forward:

The following key measures and actions must be taken with due priority and urgency² :

- The name of our Nation to be: FIJI.
- Adopt as the common name: "Fijian" for all the citizens of Fiji with full recognition that the indigenous people are the i -Taukei.
- Develop a national moral vision for the common good.
- Encourage and promote religious freedom and understanding and the conduct of interfaith dialogue and the sharing of spiritualities.
- Promote shared national values through the national education curriculum.
- Ensure teaching of the vernacular languages and the comparative study of major religions. Ensure minority indigenous Pacific languages like Rotuman and Banaban, be taught, and examinable in those island schools.
- Promote multi-cultural education.
- Gradually phase out institutional names that denote racial affiliations.
- Promote national moral vision, narratives, rituals and symbols. National Anthem to be sung in all public state functions and flag ceremonies to be observed in all schools and important state functions.

² For the detailed recommendations and proposed implementation actions, see the **Report on the State of the Nation and the Economy**.

- Review and revitalise National Youth Service Scheme.
- Eliminate racial and inappropriate categorisation and profiling in government records and registers. The status of Vola Ni Kawa Bula (VKB), Native Lands Commission (NLC) and Native Lands Trust Board (NLTB) records since these apply specifically to the affairs of the i-Taukei, however, will **not** be affected.
- Principles of inter-communal dialogue and accommodation.

PRINCIPLES OF INTER-COMMUNAL DIALOGUE AND ACCOMODATION

We recognize, accept and deeply respect that the i-taukei and other communities in Fiji have their cultures, histories and sense of identities that they deeply cherish and that these qualities have enabled them to contribute effectively, in great measure to the development of Fiji as a multicultural, progressive democratic nation.

We recognize that for the people of Fiji to build, develop and strengthen a deeper sense of multicultural nationhood into the future, we must ensure that the i-taukei and all our other communities' interests that give each of them their identities and sense of place and belonging to Fiji must be recognized and respected in our relationship and mutual conduct.

Therefore, any changes to promote an over-arching and stronger nation state identity based on the principles of equal and common citizenship, must recognise the unique identity of the i-taukei and other communities interests that are important to their own identities and this calls for consultation and dialogue that are based on principles of mutual respect, outcomes that are broadly accepted as legitimate and reasonably justifiable in a free and democratic society.

PEOPLES CHARTER

PILLAR 3

ENSURING EFFECTIVE, ENLIGHTENED AND ACCOUNTABLE LEADERSHIP

Critical Problems and Issues:

- Our people have suffered the type of “leadership” that has been elitist, parochial, divisive, extremist and self-centred. This has done little to advance the interests of our ordinary people.
- We need leaders who are committed to genuine consultation, inclusiveness and accountability.
- Our leaders in most cases have failed to involve us in making the major decisions that affect our well-being and our daily lives.
- We need leaders who are positive, visionary, transformative and constructive.
- We need leaders with a progressive vision for Fiji, a vision that is uplifting, motivating, unifying, and inspiring.

The Way Forward:

The following key measures and actions must be taken with due priority and urgency³:

- Enact, and effectively enforce, a Code of Conduct for public servants, public and independent constitutional office holders, Municipal Councils, and Members of Parliament and persons who hold statutory appointments or governing or executive positions in statutory authorities.
- Develop a leadership model and vision which clarifies the legitimate roles of elected and non-elected leaders in a democratic Fiji, with emphasis on honesty, integrity, professional ethics, and service to communities.
- Enhance, support and ensure the participation of women leaders at all levels of decision making.
- Step up and enhance training and development of public leaders including parliamentarians, traditional, civic and community as well as youth and women leaders.
- Increase public awareness, including civic education at school level, on key leadership principles.

³ For the detailed recommendations and proposed implementation actions, see the **Report on the State of the Nation and the Economy**.

VISION FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP GUIDING PRINCIPLES

RECOGNISING the different types of public leadership that exist in Fiji at all levels of society and that such leadership is ultimately about service to the people of Fiji, the communities they belong to, and what is in their best interests;

ACKNOWLEDGING the conduct standards that are set out under subsection 156(2) of the Constitution for holders of high public office, and the measures that need to be taken under law to enforce these standards and the Key Principles for Good Leadership adopted by Pacific Island Forum Leaders as being relevant for Fiji's national leaders;

The People, through this Charter, identify the following qualities as being the most desirable of any person who seeks and exercises a public leadership role in Fiji:

Visionary: Public leaders who are able to inspire people through a vision consistent with values to provide a better future for Fiji based on a fair and just society; merit-based equal opportunity for all Fiji citizens; transparent and accountable governance, and uplifting the disadvantaged in all communities.

Integrity and Honesty: Any person who holds a leadership role at the national, local or community level should behave honestly and with integrity when performing their responsibilities.

Selflessness: Leaders should not use their positions for private or personal gain and should endeavour to act in the best interests of the people they are responsible for. For national leaders the public or national interest should always come before personal or specific community interests.

Competence: Leaders at all levels have a responsibility to ensure any undertaking given to the people, the community or the nation is carried out effectively and efficiently in accordance with the law.

Openness: Decision making on behalf of the people should be open and transparent. Open discussion and dialogue is necessary before such decisions are made.

Unity: Leaders at all levels should seek to promote unity within and between all communities and groups in Fiji.

Accountability: Leaders at all levels should take responsibility for their actions and where necessary to allow for appropriate scrutiny of these actions

PEOPLES CHARTER

PILLAR 4

ENHANCING PUBLIC SECTOR EFFICIENCY, PERFORMANCE EFFECTIVENESS, AND SERVICE DELIVERY

Critical Problems and Issues:

- Our Public Sector which includes the Civil Service must be efficient and effective in terms of both its capacity and performance.
- In its service delivery role, our Public Sector often fails to meet the expectations of the people of Fiji; and this adversely affects the peoples lives, in particular the poor in our communities.
- The Public Sector is characterized by a lack of established service standards, ineffective work systems, ineffectual leadership, lack of transparency and accountability, and low productivity.
- The Civil Service is too large for a small nation.

The Way Forward:

The following key measures and actions must be taken with due priority and urgency⁴:

- Develop a vision for Fiji's public sector for the 21st century that seeks to build a new culture in the public service which is performance and service-oriented as well as accountable and ethical.

⁴ For the detailed recommendations and proposed implementation actions, see the **Report on the State of the Nation and the Economy**.

- Separate the constitutional and statutory powers of the Public Service Commission (PSC) and strengthen the independence of PSC.
- Remove political interference in the public sector.
- Accelerate the right-sizing of the public sector through restructuring; modernizing human resource management and remuneration; rebuilding the capacity of the public service; and introducing e-governance.
- Introduce Service Charters in all ministries and departments outlining services to be provided and the performance standards to be met.
- Enhance the corporate governance of public enterprises through introduction of a national code of corporate governance and the implementation of a director development programme for all boards of public enterprises.
- Compulsory training of civil servants at all levels.
- Effective application and enforcement of merit based appointment in the Public Service.
- In its service delivery role, our public sector must meet the expectations of the people of Fiji; as failure will adversely affect the people's lives, in particular the poor in our communities.
- The Public Sector must have established service standards, effective work systems, effective leadership, transparency and accountability and high productivity.

PEOPLES CHARTER

PILLAR 5

ACHIEVING HIGHER ECONOMIC GROWTH WHILE ENSURING SUSTAINABILITY

Critical Problems and Issues:

- Fiji's economy has been performing far below its potential. There is a need to build confidence and raise investment levels.
- The Government plays an over dominant role in the economy with politicians and officials second guessing the business decisions of private sector entrepreneurs (through investment approvals, planning approvals, price control approvals) rather than in planning and implementing their own primary responsibilities, especially in the provision of basic public services.
- Fiji's infrastructure has seriously deteriorated and in some areas is close to collapse.
- Deficiencies must not be allowed to persist in the business and institutional environment that impede access to assets and increase transactional costs.

The Way Forward:

The following key measures and actions must be taken with due priority and urgency⁵ :

- Ensure that government provides an enabling environment and plays its part in supporting and facilitating and catalyzing private sector-led growth.

⁵ For the detailed recommendations and proposed implementation actions, see the **Report on the State of the Nation and the Economy**.

- Enhance cooperation and partnerships between government, the private sector, and civil society.
- Maintain macroeconomic stability through sound, consistent and progressive policies.
- Ensure the principles of fiscal responsibility in the Financial Management Act 2004 are binding upon the Government.
- Enhance the National Strategy for the development of micro, small, and medium enterprises; and improve access to micro finance at affordable rates.
- Enhance export-orientation through diversification, value-addition and appropriate policies and incentives.
- Strengthen the financial services sector through establishment of (i) a Financial Services Commission; and ii) a Capital Markets Master Plan.
- Modernise, and make more relevant, the legal framework of the commercial sector.
- Upgrade, provide and maintain infrastructure essential for enhancing both economic activity and the basic quality of life.
- Increase food security through the revitalisation of the agriculture and marine sectors.
- Strengthen institutional capacity for environmental management.
- Give priority to the protection of environment, sustainable management and utilisation of natural resources.

PEOPLES CHARTER

PILLAR 6

MAKING MORE LAND AVAILABLE FOR PRODUCTIVE AND SOCIAL PURPOSES

Critical Problems and Issues:

- Ethno-nationalists and those politicians who seek power on the basis of divisive, race-based politics have tended to make land a highly emotive issue.
- The principal issue regarding land in Fiji is not one of ownership; it is about access, its productive use and ensuring an equitable sharing of benefits. The issue of ownership is fully protected under the Constitution, and must so remain.
- Vast amounts of land in Fiji currently lie idle or are greatly under-utilized.
- The sharp growth in the numbers of people living in squatter settlements in Fiji is alarming and troublesome. It is estimated that close to 15% of Fiji's population live in over 200 squatter settlements around the country. The greater Suva area has the highest number of squatters, with Nasinu dubbed the "Squatter Town". It is estimated that, if squatter settlement programmes remain static, by 2010 the Suva/Nausori corridor will have 15,000 squatter households with 100,000 people. This will place a large strain on the entire urban infrastructure, such as water supply, sewerage, electricity, roads, traffic congestion and social services.

- A major national challenge is not only to increase the supply of land, under acceptable leasing arrangements, for agricultural, commercial or social purposes but also to transform the capital inherent in land into capital that can be used either to develop that land or as collateral in the financial market or for other economic and social purposes.

The Way Forward:

The following key measures and actions must be taken with due priority and urgency⁶:

- Create a market for leased land, through sustainable lease arrangements, to improve accessibility to all users.
- Make land available for housing as well as infrastructure development in both rural and urban areas with government playing a key facilitating role and where appropriate, encourage joint ventures in consultation with NLTB and land owners on housing development aimed at resettlement of squatters in rural areas where subsistence and market agriculture are possible.
- NLTB to be part of government programmes in promoting agro-based of economy, in the formulation of programmes and facilitating land owners support.
- Formalise “vakavanua” or informal settlement on all types of land in consultation with NLTB.
- Ensure security of tenure and equitable returns to both landowners and tenants through a market-based framework for utilisation of land.

⁶ For the detailed recommendations and proposed implementation actions, see the **Report on the State of the Nation and the Economy**.

- Establish a Land Use Advisory Board including a National Land Register and a Land Use Development Plan under Ministry of Primary Industries and Department of Town and Country Planning and comprising relevant stakeholders.
- Empower indigenous landowners' rights to access and lease native land, to effectively spearhead individual indigenous landowner's participation in commerce and entrepreneurship and build financial and technical advisory capacity of NLTB in business.

PEOPLES CHARTER

PILLAR 7

ESTABLISHING AN INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT STRUCTURE AT THE DIVISIONAL LEVEL

Critical Problems and Issues:

- The dual system of governance at the local level, through the Provincial and Advisory Councils, is ethnic-driven and conflicts with the vision of one nation, one people.
- The i-Taukei Administration or Tabacakacaka i-Taukei, as a system of governance for indigenous Fijians, despite some successes such as in the promotion of culture and heritage, has failed in the areas of economic and social development.
- Coordination of efforts in the planning and execution of social and economic development programmes at the local levels remain fragmented and ineffective.

The Way Forward:

The following key measures and actions must be taken with due priority and urgency⁷:

- Establish representative Provincial Development Boards (PDBs) for each Province by integrating the present Provincial and Advisory Councils:
 - ◆ The Ministry of Provincial Development (or equivalent) to be the central agency/ministry playing coordination role at divisional, provincial and district levels.

⁷ For the detailed recommendations and proposed implementation actions, see the **Report on the State of the Nation and the Economy**.

- ◆ Effective reviews of the roles and functions of the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs, Department of Multi-Ethnic Affairs, Ministry of Urban Development, and the Ministry of Provincial Development to eliminate duplication, ensure optimum use of resources, and increase efficiency.
 - ◆ Indigenous Fijian development interests to be mainstreamed into national development plans and programmes with line ministries and other implementing agencies responsible for implementation.
 - ◆ Upgrade the professional capacity and skills at the divisional levels to ensure robustness in the delivery of development services.
 - ◆ The integrated Development Boards at the national, divisional, provincial and district levels are to be the key consultative and planning forums for development, in line with budget, planning and formulation processes.
- Revitalize economic activity in rural areas and the outer islands through the PDBs and provision of basic infrastructure including town and centres.
 - Upgrade the skills, leadership abilities, and professionalism of staff of the PDBs.
 - More decision-making powers devolved to Divisional Commissioners to draw up divisional and local development plans and priority setting with local participation.

PEOPLES CHARTER

PILLAR 8

REDUCING POVERTY TO A NEGLIGIBLE LEVEL BY 2015

Critical Problems and Issues:

- We live in a land where there is a strong practice of faith but a strange lack of compassion and togetherness.
- Increasing numbers of our people are having to face a bleak future; one that guarantees nothing but poverty and hopelessness, in the rapidly growing squatter settlements in the urban areas, and in our rural communities.
- Almost 4 out of every 10 persons in our communities live under conditions of poverty.
- A large proportion of the poor, while in full time employment, constitute the "working poor"; 55% of the wage earners earn incomes that are below the poverty line.
- Income inequalities in our nation remain deep: the poorest 20% of our people receive only 6% of the national income while the richest 20% receive 48% of the national income.
- Squatters often live in unsafe, under-served and overcrowded houses where exposure to pollution and other health risks are greatest. People living in such conditions are most likely to indulge in risky behaviour

out of circumstances rather than by choice, often going hungry, living under stress, consuming poor quality foods, excessive intake of kava/tobacco/alcohol, even drugs like marijuana and getting into criminal activities.

The Way Forward:

The following key measures and actions must be taken with due priority and urgency⁸:

- Launch a concerted and coordinated National Programme to Reduce Poverty (NPRP), with the target to reduce poverty in line with the Millenium Development Goal No. 1 with a view to going beyond the level of halving the incidence level by 2015.
- Strengthen coordination, implementation and monitoring of poverty alleviation programmes including partnership agreement between government, the civil society, and the private sector.
- Introduce a national minimum wage and at the same time enhance national productivity.
- Encourage and protect the savings and investments of the poor.
- Ensure affirmative action programmes are needs-based.
- Enhance research and analysis on issues relating to poverty and social justice programmes.
- Align affirmative action programmes to a shared social justice preamble.

⁸ for the detailed recommendations and proposed implementation actions, see the **Report on the State of the Nation and the Economy**.

PREAMBLE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE PROGRAMMES

We acknowledge and accept that social justice is an essential element of the common good and our moral vision, and, therefore, in our endeavour to build a more free and responsive nation. We believe that we are obligated to ensure that no one is deprived of a life lived with dignity and the opportunities to seek and achieve a better quality of life.

We acknowledge and accept that a fundamental goal of social justice in our society is that we take care of our poor and the disadvantaged, and, in this regard, we believe that we and our government have the shared responsibility to continually work at achieving a standard of living that befits the dignity of the poor and the disadvantaged in our midst.

We believe that social justice means equal dignity and, in our aspiration to build a just and good society, we must ensure this for all our citizens by conferring on all our members an honoured place. Therefore, we hold that the aim of social justice and affirmative action programmes is to restore dignity to all those who are poor and disadvantaged, by ensuring that their basic needs are met.

We acknowledge and accept that while in the short term affirmative action programmes are essential, we hold that in the long run, job creation, the promotion of entrepreneurship, and the empowering of our people to take initiative and responsibility in improving their own lives and standards of living, are much more important.

We believe that in seeking to alleviate the plight of the poor and the disadvantaged among us, and mindful of the rights and freedoms of other persons and groups and in our desire to build a nation of equal dignity for all, we hold that social justice and affirmative action programmes must not unnecessarily disadvantage any person and group.

PEOPLES CHARTER

PILLAR 9

MAKING FIJI A KNOWLEDGE-BASED SOCIETY

Critical Problems and Issues:

- In the wake of the coups since 1987, and with persisting political instability and a growing sense of insecurity, our nation has lost, through emigration, substantial numbers of its experienced professionals and skilled workers. The skills gap that has emerged cannot be readily filled because new entrants to the labour force lack expertise, education, experience and training.
- Over 10% of Fiji's children aged 5-14 years do not attend school. More than half the total numbers in final year of primary school do not progress to secondary education.
- The need to address access and equity issues to support social justice and promote unity and harmony. The difficulty of access because of poor infrastructure in rural and remote areas combined with the meagre incomes of most families are among the major factors contributing to the high drop-out rates, and also the disparities in academic achievement between the poor in rural and urban areas and the well-to-do families.
- Of the 16,000 students coming out of the school system, only about 8,000 are being absorbed in the formal job market.

The Way Forward:

The following key measures and actions must be taken with due priority and urgency⁹:

- Ensure access to quality education for all.
- Establish a statutory body for Community and Non-Formal Learning.
- Establish a modular system of education.
- Establish a coherent national tertiary education system.
- Increase access to tertiary and higher education.
- Ensure improved overall quality of teaching and learning through better-trained educators.
- Implement a progressive and responsive curriculum.
- Strengthen early childhood education, especially in the rural areas and the outer islands.
- Improve the financing of education.
- Enhance skills and vocational training as well as promoting leadership and entrepreneurship training and facilitate job placement in partnership with the private sector.
- Introduce a system for the distribution of all education grants that specifically recognises and is based on the disadvantage of schools.

⁹ For the detailed recommendations and proposed implementation actions, see the **Report on the State of the Nation and the Economy**.

PEOPLES CHARTER

PILLAR 10

IMPROVING HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY

Critical Problems and Issues:

- Fiji's overall progress towards the three health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDG) i.e. reduction in child mortality, maternal mortality and HIV/AIDS, is disappointing.
- Resources allocated for health service delivery, as a proportion of GDP, remains low by international standards including compared to countries such as Solomon Islands and Tonga.

The Way Forward:

The following key measures and actions must be taken with due priority and urgency¹⁰:

- Increase financing as a proportion of GDP by 0.5% annually to 7% within the next 10 years.
- Strengthen institutional arrangements by centralising decision making and decentralising the delivery of health care.
- Expand private sector role in public health care delivery such as through outsourcing.
- Strengthen public and private sector coordination including with the medical professional organisations, to meet the manpower needs.
- Consider other options for health financing such as social health insurance in addition to tax financing.
- Establish a Health Policy Commission

¹⁰ For the detailed recommendations and proposed implementation actions, see the **Report on the State of the Nation and the Economy**.

PEOPLES CHARTER

PILLAR 11

ENHANCING GLOBAL INTEGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Critical Problems and Issues:

- In the wake of successive coups since 1987, Fiji's image internationally is that it is a country prone to a "coup culture", lawlessness and bad governance.
- One of our neighbour countries has described Fiji as a "pariah state", a label that has the power to inflict disastrous consequences upon us as a nation.
- We are challenged to regain our rightful place in the international family of nations.

The Way Forward:

The following key measures and actions must be taken with due priority and urgency¹¹:

- Strengthen local capacity including the participation of the private sector, to engage in the global trading system.
- Enhance existing bilateral and multilateral relations.
- Improve investment, trade facilitation and negotiation capacity.
- Advocate Fiji's interest in regional and international institutions such as Pacific Islands Forum, the Commonwealth, the European Union, and the United Nations.

¹¹ For the detailed recommendations and proposed implementation actions, see the **Report on the State of the Nation and the Economy**.

PEOPLES CHARTER

ENSURING TIMELY AND EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

Critical Problems and Issues:

- The problems that we face today, as a nation, are so deeply-rooted and complex that we must think and act “outside of the box”, with a keen sense of urgency, responsibility and speed, rather than in a “business-as-usual” manner.
- The responsibility to deal with these problems cannot, and must not, be left to our political leaders alone, including the incoming elected governments. It is our collective responsibility, as the people of Fiji.
- We must remain vigilant and hold our leaders responsible and responsive be they traditional, community, civic, business, professional, or political leaders. We must ensure that our leaders serve the interests of our nation first and foremost.
- Fiji, as a nation, is paramount.

The Way Forward:

The following key measures and actions must be taken with due priority and urgency¹²:

¹² For the detailed recommendations and proposed implementation actions, see the **Report on the State of the Nation and the Economy**.

- Establish, as a Constitutionally created independent entity, a National Peoples Charter Council (NPCC).
- Membership of the NPCC should also include the Chairperson and one Opposition member of each Sector Standing Committee of the House of Representatives.
- The Prime Minister to play a strong leadership role in the Peoples Charter implementation and establish a secretariat in the Prime Minister's office to support that implementation.
- Establish an independent Commission on Healing, Truth and Justice.
- Advance national dialogue on key issues that impact on national development (e.g. reach consensus on national identity; land reform; a vision for the indigenous institutions in advancing the well being of the indigenous people; and a changing role for the RFMF that brings it closer to the people through emphasis on human security).
- Broaden and deepen leadership capacity at all levels, within and outside the public sector, to support Peoples Charter implementation.
- Align the national budget with Peoples Charter implementation.

COMMITMENTS AND PLEDGE

We, the people of Fiji:

COMMIT

- To support the Constitution and this the Peoples Charter as the foundation for rebuilding our Nation as one country, as one people.
- To uphold the shared moral vision and values and principles articulated through the Constitution and in this the Peoples Charter, as the standards by which we evaluate our individual and collective conduct in our overall governance and in the development of the Nation.
- To oppose without fear those who sow seeds of racism, intolerance, divisiveness, hatred, vengeance and vindictiveness in our country.
- To support the principles of equal citizenship, one national identity, and loyalty to Fiji as our motherland.
- To support genuine initiatives to prevent conflict, building peace, dialogue, healing and reconciliation based on compassion, humility, respect, and inclusiveness.
- To support leaders who are visionary, honest, responsible and accountable in government, religious organisations, the private sector, traditional and civil society organisations, at all levels.
- To support a strong and free civil society and a well informed, responsible and accountable media.
- To endorse a holistic approach to human security as the basis of the democratic state and the operations of our Security Forces.

- To support all actions to alleviate poverty and strengthen social justice programmes based on need for the disadvantaged in our community, including the enhancement of participation and promotion of the interest of the youth and women.
- To respect and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals and groups, safeguarded by adherence to the rule of law and our respect for human dignity.
- To ensure that while seeking benefits from it, we safeguard and protect our environment for its sustainability.

PLEDGE

We hereby pledge, as citizens of Fiji, to uphold and be guided by the above declared commitments.

We pledge to do this through -

- Our own individual conduct and conscience;
- Within our own families, communities and institutions;
- Our expectations of our fellow citizens;
- Holding responsible and accountable those who hold positions of leadership and responsibility: i) in our communities, ii) in the organisations to which we belong; and (iii) at the national level in our political governance.

And, as we make this pledge, we place our faith in God and our people's humanity to help us to fulfil these commitments in the time of our lives.