

Welcome Remarks by Dr. Ganesh Chand, Vice Chancellor, Fiji National University

54th Workshop Meeting of Heads of National Productivity Organizations, Sheraton Fiji Resort, Nadi, Fiji, 29 October 2013

Prime Minister Commodore Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama;
APO Secretary-General Mari Amano;
Members of of the Fiji National University Council and National Training and Productivity Centre (NTPC) Advisory Board;
Chairman of the NTPC Advisory Board Nesbitt Hazelman;
Director of the NTPC and NPO Head for Fiji Kamlesh Prakash;
Distinguished Delegates and Advisers;
Invited Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of Fiji National University (FNU) and its NTPC, I would like to extend my warm welcome to you all to the Fiji Islands and especially to this 54th Workshop Meeting of Heads of NPOs in Fiji. I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to HE Prime Minister Commodore Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama for officiating this morning. Your esteemed presence is indeed an honor for us and demonstrates the support that you have for the NPO and for the productivity movement in Fiji. We are most thankful to you.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to APO Secretary-General Mari Amano and all delegates, experts, and observers for making it to this very important planning meeting of the APO. Your presence on our shores confirms your conviction of the need for enhancing productivity in the Asia-Pacific region and for advancing the lives and living standards of people, which is the mission of the organization.

The purpose of this meeting is to undertake strategic planning and confirm APO programs for the coming years until 2016. This meeting will also evaluate the impact and effectiveness of last year's projects and deliberate on productivity issues and emerging needs of member countries.

The NTPC is the NPO of Fiji. The NTPC is entrusted with spearheading the productivity movement in the country. It has been doing so since Fiji became a member of the APO in 1984. As an undertaking to raise the productivity of our higher educational institutions and to realize greater effects and economies of scale, the Government of Fiji in 2009 made a conscious decision to merge the key higher education institutions in the country, thus giving birth to the FNU. The Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji in late November 2010 was also brought in to become a central part of the university. A specialized center, the NTPC, was thus established. The center houses the NPO function and is headed by Director Kamlesh Prakash, who is also the APO Alternate Director for Fiji. The university is fully committed to delivering its mandate more effectively.

The NTPC undertakes training and consultancy on a whole range of productivity improvement and business excellence programs for industry, government, and all levy payers. The center is now well resourced and staffed and has fostered very close relationships with government and employer and employee organizations through its customized portfolio of programs. Last year, it established an APO Alumni group for the first time.

Fiji, let me acknowledge, has benefited immensely from the association with the APO through the various training courses, workshops, conferences, observational study missions, seminars, research, and e-learning programs. Being a small island country subject to the all the vulnerabilities imaginable, including the challenges of operating in an intensely competitive globalized world, it is imperative that we deliver our products and services with utmost reliability, efficiency, quality, and value. The assistance from the APO through its multiple programs and facilities is greatly valued by us in this regard. We remain committed as the NPO of Fiji, with even greater support from the government today, to promoting productivity in the country and fostering closer relations with the APO and other NPOs.

Before I conclude my remarks, I would like to thank sincerely the member countries and Secretariat of the APO for the support and cooperation extended to us thus far in our journey to raise productivity. We look forward to working with new Secretary-General Amano in leading the APO to greater heights.

It is now my pleasure to invite our chief guest, HE Prime Minister of Fiji Commodore Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, to deliver the inaugural address and declare this 54th Workshop Meeting of Heads of NPOs open. Thank you.