



Assistant Minister for Local Government, Housing & Environment

Honorable Ms. Lorna Eden

HEAD OF DELEGATION - GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE FIJI
ISLANDS HABITAT III, QUITO, ECUADOR

RESPONSE TO THE PRESIDENTS OPENING SPEECH TO THE
HABITAT III

CASA DE LA CULTURA ECUATORIANA 18th OCTOBER 2016
QUITO
ECUADOR

FIJI GOVERNMENT STATEMENT

Excellency's
Co-Chairs
Heads of States
Fellow Ministers
Delegates
Ladies & Gentlemen

**Ni Sa Bula Vinaka and a Very Good Afternoon
to you all.**

ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNEMENT OF FIJI I WISH TO THANK THE HABITAT III SECRETARIAT FOR FACILITATING THIS EVENT AND I ALSO WISH TO THANK THE GOVERNMENT OF ECUADOR FOR HOSTING US IN THIS ENCHANTING CITY OF QUITO.

Fiji fully Supports the New Urban Agenda Implementation and although we are just a Small Country we are Proud to have participated in the Draft Plan as part of G77 and China.

As a Small Island Developing State we are especially Vulnerable to the effects of Climate Change, as was highly evident earlier this year when we suffered severe damage from a Category Five Cyclone which tore our Country apart. However, we are a Resilient People and we have resolved to come back Stronger than ever before by Building back Better and more Resilient with a high emphasis on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Our Government is committed to a Shared Vision of Principles to achieve Cities and Human Settlements where all People are able to enjoy Equal Rights and Opportunities, as well as their Fundamental Freedoms guided by the Purposes and Principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including respect for International and National Laws.

The Government of Fiji wishes to reaffirm its Global, Regional, National and Local Commitment to this New Urban Agenda with Participation of all Relevant Actors in readdressing the way our Cities and Human Settlements are Planned, Designed, Financed, Developed, Governed and Managed to help put an end to Poverty and Hunger in all forms and dimensions, Reduce Inequalities, Promote Sustained, Inclusive Urban Growth, Achieve Gender Equality and Empowerment of all Women and Girls in order to fully realize their Contribution to Sustainable Development, Improve Human Health and Well-being as well as Fostering Resilience and Protecting our Environment.

For our Women in particular, our Government works with UN Women and has established a Unique Program called 'Markets for Change' – this program ensures Economic Resilience among Women and Households throughout the Country and is proving to be very successful.

Our Fijian Government is fully committed to Sustainable Urban Development incorporating, Social Inclusion, Sustainable and Inclusive Urban Prosperity with Opportunities for all, Environmentally Sustainable and Resilient Urban Development, Improved Urban Governance Structures, Planning and Management of Urban Spatial Development, and, putting an end to Poverty.

In supporting the Rights to Cities in the New Urban Agenda, the Government of Fiji has incorporated the Bill of Rights relating to Rights to Housing, Sanitation, Economic Engagement and Environment in our 2013 Constitution to ensure that all People are able to enjoy Equal Rights and Opportunities.

Furthermore, the Government of Fiji has approved the National Green Growth Framework and is now formulating its 20 year Strategic Development Plan 2016-2036, that provides an Enabling Environment to both Assist and Encourage all Fijians to achieve Sustainable Economic Growth, that encompasses Employment Creation, Poverty Reduction, Equitable Wealth Distribution, the Principle's of Green Growth, Increasing the Level of Investment, Inclusive Infrastructure Development and overall, Empowering our Fijian People.

In addition to the above Policy, our Government has an Urban Policy Action Plan [UPAP] and a National Housing Policy 2004 and 2011 respectively. Our UPAP Targets, open more Urban Land Market Development, Housing Market Development, Urban Infrastructure and Service Development, Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building, Reviewing of our Urban Management Laws, Urban Environment Management, Urban Economic Management and Poverty Reduction.

Our National Housing Policy provides a clear Strategic Direction for Government via recommended Legal, Administrative, Institutional and Structural changes in the Housing Sector, shifting away from what was a 'piece-meal' approach, to a more Inclusive and Participatory approach, to the provisions of 'Affordable and Decent Shelter for all Fijians'.

Ladies and Gentlemen, to support Urban Management and Housing Policy implementation work, our Government has concurrently Restructured and Reformed the Local Government and Housing Ministry and also increased funding from \$1 million in 2008 to around \$58 million in 2016 for Municipal Councils Investment in Infrastructure Development and Public, Social and Informal Housing Capital Programs to promote Inclusive, Sustainable Urban Growth. We believe this will improve Human Health and Well-being, Reduce Poverty and Hunger, as well as foster Resilience and Protect our Environment.

In closing Ladies and Gentlemen I would like to join her Excellency from the Czech Republic by saying thankyou to all of you who have worked so hard over the years to get us where we are today. Lets ALL join together now and make this happen because.....

TOGETHER – WE CAN !

I thank you for your attention – Vinaka Vaka Levu !