

# Fiji's Journey Towards Inclusive Rural Development and Disaster Preparedness



**H.E. SAKIASI  
DITOKA**

Minister for Rural and  
Maritime Development and  
Disaster Management,  
Fiji

**T**oday, as we join the global community in celebrating World Rural Development Day, we reflect with pride on the progress Fiji has made in uplifting our rural and maritime communities.

The Fiji Government's vision for rural development is rooted in inclusivity, resilience, and sustainability. For a country that is very susceptible to the impact of climate change and the extreme intensity of natural disasters, this vision becomes more prevalent than ever. Being a small island nation amongst the bigger economies that are members of the Centre of Integrated Rural Development for the Asia Pacific, Fiji is privileged to join them in our solidarity to give prominence to the development of rural areas in our respective countries. Our citizens who live in rural areas deserve to be served with a perspective of equality and fairness so that they are not left behind. As rural development practitioners we stand committed to our aspirations that we will support our citizens with passion and determination to uplift their standard of living, empowering them to enhance their skills, resources and talents, whilst they enjoy their lives with pride in their living environment.

Fiji's rural region is home to 44.1% of our population. These communities hold vast potential for sustainable growth, innovation, and leadership. This potential is what drives the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management to transform rural development in Fiji, guided by the Coalition Government's National Development Plan 2025-2029 and Vision 2050. As the agency that administers the National Disaster Risk Management Act 2024, it is imperative that we foster a culture of resilience and disaster risk reduction initiatives bundled in our rural development programmes. The Ministry has been in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Governance for Resilience Project (Gov4Res) and the United Nations



for International Organisation for Migration on such programmes. We also acknowledge and appreciate our unwavering commitment and support from prominent partners, including the Governments of Australia, New Zealand, Japan and Korea, for providing resources to support the Ministry in various initiatives towards disaster risk reduction for the safety of our vulnerable communities across the country. We acknowledge that CIRDP is also including these topics in its development programmes as they are our common needs and we must embrace changes that require us to be adaptable and resilient countries.

As we mark this special day, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to the community leaders, government officials, development partners, and every Fijian across our remote rural and maritime communities who continue to contribute to this shared mission - where all communities - urban, rural, and maritime - can enjoy equal opportunities and the same level of access to rural development. We will do our best in ensuring that rural voices are heard and prioritised in our national development agenda.

Happy World Rural Development Day! God Bless CIRDP and its member countries.

**Vinaka Vakalevu and Thank You!**