



## **JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT**

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### **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Fiji Immigration Department**

Building on Fiji's long tradition of humane treatment of asylum-seekers and refugees was the focus of a workshop jointly hosted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Fiji Immigration Department (FID) which concluded today.

The two-day workshop looked at deepening the understanding among officials of how to identify and act on the protection needs of people seeking international protection, and to provide technical advice on the development of its national refugee determination system.

UNHCR's Regional Representative, Richard Towle, today thanked the Fiji Immigration Department for co-hosting the highly successful workshop, and said it was evidence of the strong working relationship which has developed over many years between UNHCR and the Department.

Minister of Defence, National Security and Immigration, Ratu Epeli Gavidu Ganilau, said that, as a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, Fiji was keen to play its part in ensuring that those people who are in need of international refugee protection receive it.

Mr Towle said the workshop was also an opportunity for UNHCR to offer a global perspective and outline the complex factors relating to insecurity and conflict around the world that lead to people fleeing their homes and seeking international protection and to make sure people needing protection were able to find it, even in the small Pacific Island States of this region.

"Fiji is an important role model for other Pacific Island States through its treatment of refugees and we encourage it to continue on this positive path", Towle said.

"Despite Fiji's isolated location in the Pacific, we live in a globalized world where people are very much on the move", the Minister noted.

Fiji is a leader in the Pacific as a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and through its adoption of a national refugee legislation and refugee status determination system.

Through this workshop, UNHCR and FID have recommitted themselves to working in a cooperative way to build on and strengthen the systems by which Fiji upholds its international refugee law and humanitarian obligations.

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