



20th session, Human Rights Council
2nd Universal Periodic Review of Fiji
Delivered by Carl Reaich
29 October 2014

Mr President,

New Zealand welcomes the opportunity to engage with Fiji on its human rights situation and we thank the delegation for its comprehensive national report.

New Zealand welcomes Fiji's recent parliamentary elections in September as an important step in Fiji's return to democracy. We welcome the preliminary report of the Multinational Observer Group assessing the election to be credible and broadly representative of the will of the Fijian voters. We congratulate Fiji for the successful first sitting of Parliament and Fiji's continuing steps to strengthen democratic processes.

We welcome the visit by the ILO Direct Contacts Mission in early October and the constructive engagement that this Mission had with a wide range of stake holders in Fiji.

New Zealand remains concerned about the situation of human rights defenders, given their crucial role in Fiji's evolving democracy. We **recommend** that the Government of Fiji takes all relevant steps to protect human rights defenders.

We welcome the news of Police investigations into recent allegations of violence committed against individuals held in custody by police. New Zealand **recommends** Fiji continues to take steps to implement stronger accountability mechanisms and ensure the independence of investigations into allegations of human rights abuses when they occur.

New Zealand welcomes the reconvening of the Fiji Law Society. New Zealand **recommends** Fiji accept outstanding requests from special mandate holders, including that of the Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, to visit Fiji. New Zealand has a standing invitation for special mandate holders and has recently been visited by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.

In keeping with the positive tone of recent developments in Fiji, we **recommend** that Fiji considers becoming a party to the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture.

Thank you Mr President