

**U.S. Statement at the UPR of Fiji, 20<sup>th</sup> Session, October 29, 2014**

The United States welcomes the Fijian delegation.

We welcome the Government of Fiji's significant planning efforts ahead of the September 2014 elections, and congratulate the people of Fiji on the peaceful outcome of those elections.

We are concerned, however, that certain legislation such as the Public Order Act Amendment Decree, the Media Industry Development Decree, and the Administration of Justice decree unduly restrict fundamental freedoms and may compromise the independence of the judiciary. We urge the government to ensure that all stakeholders can make their voices heard and participate in the political process.

We remain concerned about respect for internationally recognized labor rights, in particular freedom of association. We welcome the visit to Fiji by an ILO Direct Contacts Mission as an important step, and urge further cooperation with the International Labor Organization following the trip to ensure that legislation and practice respect such rights.

We are also concerned about the persistence of gender-based violence in Fiji.

Bearing in mind these concerns, we recommend that Fiji:

1. Ensure respect for freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, and association by amending aspects of decrees such as the Public Order Act Amendment Decree, the Political Parties Decree, and the Media Industry Development Decree, that unduly restrict fundamental freedoms;
2. Take steps to bring labor laws and practices in line with its international obligations, including under relevant ILO Conventions; and
3. Build on the work of Fiji's Ministry of Women, Social Welfare, and Poverty Alleviation to improve the protection of women and girls by effectively addressing gender-based violence, particularly intimate partner violence, and by advancing programs to combat gender discrimination.