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**HIS EXCELLENCY, SPEAKER OF THE PARLIAMENT**  
**OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI, SIR RATU EPELI**  
**NAILATIKAU**

**INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION 141<sup>ST</sup> ASSEMBLY**  
**BELGRADE, SERBIA**  
**13 – 17 OCT 2019**

**GENERAL DEBATE TOPIC**  
**STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL LAW:**  
**PARLIAMENTARY ROLES AND MECHANISMS, AND**  
**THE CONTRIBUTION OF INTERNATIONAL**  
**COOPERATION**

- **HONOURABLE SPEAKERS**
- **HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT**
- **DISTINGUISHED GUESTS**
- **LADIES AND GENTLEMEN**

**IT IS INDEED A PLEASURE AND PRIVILEGE TO ADDRESS YOU TODAY ON A SUBJECT WHICH IS CONNECTED TO OUR NATIONAL SENTIMENT TO THE WIDER UNIVERSAL VALUES THAT FIJI SEEKS TO PROMOTE GLOBALLY.**

**SOME YEARS AGO, WE, THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS RESOLVED THROUGH GOVERNMENTS, OF THE TIME TO COMBINE EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN SECURITY AND STRENGTHEN UNIVERSAL PEACE, FOSTER THE HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS OF ALL, AND PROMOTE THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT OF ALL PEOPLES.**

**THUS, THE POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM WERE ESTABLISHED.**

**TODAY, WE, THE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENTS, AS ELECTED BY THE PEOPLE, HAVE THE MANDATE TO OVERSEE ACTIONS OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS, REAFFIRM THE SOARING VISION AND COMMON PURPOSES THAT ANIMATED THE DRAFTERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER.**

**TOGETHER WITH ITS FAMILY OF AGENCIES, THE UNITED NATIONS IS THE EMBODIMENT OF A POWERFUL IDEA, THAT OF WORLD COMMUNITY.**

**IT IS TO STRENGTHENING THE BONDS OF THAT COMMUNITY THAT WE NOW RE-DEDICATE OURSELVES TO AND WHERE WE CHANNEL OUR NATIONS' ENDEAVOURS.**

**THE NOTION OF WORLD COMMUNITY IS AN UNQUESTIONABLE REALITY TODAY.**

**PEOPLE ARE LINKED ACROSS NATIONAL BORDERS BY SHARED NETWORKS OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION, OF PRODUCTION AND TRADE, OF LARGE-SCALE TRAVEL AND POPULATION MOVEMENTS, OF IDEAS AND AIMS, OF GOODS AND CAPITAL, OF VISITORS AND REFUGEES MOVING ACROSS BORDERS WITH ASTONISHING SPEED.**

**SO DO DISEASES, DRUGS, CRIME, ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND FINANCIAL UPHEAVALS.**

**THE THREATS TO NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY TODAY NOT ONLY EMANATE FROM THE WORLD'S MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS, BUT FROM THE PROBLEMS AND FORCES SWEEPING ACROSS STATE BOUNDARIES THAT NO SINGLE GOVERNMENT CAN CONTROL ON ITS OWN.**

**OVER ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY YEARS AGO FAR-SIGHTED PARLIAMENTARIANS REALISED THAT HUMANITY HAD A SHARED INTEREST IN MAINTAINING PEACE AND PROMOTING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRESS AND IN BUILDING WORKABLE INTERNATIONAL MACHINERY TO ACHIEVE THOSE GOALS.**

**TO THAT END THEY CREATED THE FIRST  
INSTITUTION OF MULTILATERAL CO-OPERATION,  
THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION.**

**SINCE THEN THE STRUCTURES FOR  
INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION HAVE EVOLVED,  
AND TODAY THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM  
PROVIDES THE MEANS FOR ATTAINING OUR  
COMMON ENDS.**

**OVER THE YEARS, THE WORLD ORGANISATION HAS SUCCESSFULLY ESTABLISHED INTERNATIONAL LAW, SET INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS, AND DEvised INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES IN EVERY FIELD OF HUMAN ENDEAVOUR.**

**WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE SYSTEM'S LIMITED POWERS.**

**BUT WE ALSO REMEMBER THE UNITED NATIONS IS NOT A WORLD GOVERNMENT.**



**IT DEPENDS ON THE POLITICAL WILL OF ITS MEMBERS AND ON THE SPIRIT OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND GOODWILL.**

**REGULATING THE EVERYDAY LIFE OF THE WORLD'S PEOPLES IS A TASK THAT CANNOT BE RELINQUISHED BY NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS WHICH ARE CLOSER AND DIRECTLY ACCOUNTABLE TO THEIR CITIZENS.**

**IT IS INCUMBENT ON US TO ENGAGE IN DECISION-MAKING FOR OUR NATIONS ON WHETHER TO ASSUME BINDING INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS THAT CAN BE UNDERTAKEN.**

**IN FIJI WE ARE BLESSED TO ENJOY A MEASURE OF PEACE, SECURITY, AND PROSPERITY THAT SOME COUNTRIES STRUGGLE TO PROVIDE ITS CITIZENS.**

**FOR FIJI, WE BELIEVE THAT THE RIGHT OF PEACE SHOULD BE ENJOYED BY ALL OF HUMANITY.**

**THAT IS WHY WE HAVE GIVEN 40 YEARS OF SERVICE AND SACRIFICE, TO THIS CAUSE FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, PEACE AND SECURITY AND WE STAND READY, TO PLAY OUR PART IN THIS CRITICAL GLOBAL EFFORT. FIJI HAS ALWAYS, WILLINGLY, ANSWERED THE CALL FOR GLOBAL PEACEKEEPERS AND PEACEKEEPING DEPLOYMENTS.**

**FOR FIJI, UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS HAVE OFFERED A SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE OUR COMMITMENT TO THE IDEALS OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND INTERNATIONAL LAW AND ORDER.**

**DESPITE OUR SMALL SIZED-POPULATION OF AROUND 850,000, FIJI HAS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE UN'S PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS FOR THE PAST FOUR DECADES.**

**SINCE 1978 FIJIAN PEACEKEEPERS HAVE SERVED IN ALMOST EVERY MAJOR CONFLICT ZONE, INCLUDING ANGOLA, BOUGANVILLE IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, CAMBODIA, CROATIA, DARFUR, GOLAN, IRAQ, KOSOVO, KUWAIT, LEBANON, LIBERIA, SINAI, NAMIBIA, THE SOLOMON ISLANDS, RWANDA, SOMALIA, SOUTH SUDAN AND TIMOR-LESTE.**

**AT ONE STAGE, OVER SEVERAL YEARS FIJI HAD THREE PEACEKEEPING BATTALIONS DEPLOYED IN THE MIDDLE EAST AT THE SAME TIME – ONE IN LEBANON ALONG THE LEBANON ISRAEL BORDER WITH UNIFIL, ONE IN SYRIA ALONG THE SYRIA ISRAEL BORDER WITH UNDOF AND ONE IN SINAI ALONG THE EGYPT ISRAEL BORDER WITH THE MFO.**

**PER CAPITA SINCE 1978, FIJI HAS CONTRIBUTED MORE PERSONNEL TO UN PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS THAN ANY OTHER STATE.**

**AROUND HALF OF FIJI'S MILITARY IS EITHER DEPLOYED OVERSEAS OR TRAINING TO REPLACE THOSE DEPLOYED OVERSEAS.**

**FIJI IS COMMITTED TO UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS AS IT IS INTEGRAL TO OUR COUNTRY'S NATIONAL SENTIMENT – OUR PRIDE AND APPRECIATION FOR OUR PEACEKEEPERS IS VERY MUCH A PART OF HOW EVERY FIJIAN SEES OUR NATION IN THE WORLD.**

**FIJI IS A SMALL COUNTRY, BUT WE ARE MORE THAN WILLING TO DO OUR PART TO PROTECT THE INNOCENT, SHIELD THE VULNERABLE AND UPHOLD THE BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS OF ALL PEOPLES.**

**THIS IS CONNECTED TO OUR NATIONAL SENTIMENT AND TO THE WIDER UNIVERSAL VALUES THAT FIJI SEEKS TO PROMOTE GLOBALLY.**

**FOR WE REGARD PEACEKEEPING AS A NOBLE AND HONOURABLE DUTY.**

**THIS REMAINS A CONSENSUS APPROACH WITHIN FIJIAN POLITICS, AS ALL THE PARTIES IN PARLIAMENT ALSO AFFIRM THEIR COMMITMENT TO PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS.**

**FIJI'S MAIN MOTIVATION IN ITS CONTRIBUTING PEACEKEEPERS TO THE UNITED NATIONS IS DUE TO ITS BOLD DETERMINATION TO PLAY A FULL PART AS A RESPONSIBLE SIGNATORY OF THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER.**

**FOR SMALL COUNTRIES LIKE FIJI, THE INTERNATIONAL RULE OF LAW AND PEACE IS A GUARANTEE FOR INDEPENDENCE AND SURVIVAL FOR THE SMALLER MEMBER STATES OF THE UN.**

**FIJI'S INVOLVEMENT IN PEACEKEEPING AND  
PEACE-BUILDING WORLDWIDE IS THUS THE PRIME  
MANIFESTATION OF FIJI'S COMMITMENT TO GOOD  
GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP THROUGH THE  
MULTILATERALISM OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND  
OTHER MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS.**

**THANK YOU.**

**END.**