Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission
Neither Greater nor Lesser but EQUAL: Dignity, Equality and Freedom for all in Fiji

COMMUNIQUÉ

Strengthening Human Rights Implementation in Fiji: A Capacity-Building Workshop for Public Sector Duty Bearers

Novotel Resort, Lami, Fiji

28-29 October 2026

INTRODUCTION

The Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission (FHRADC), with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through the Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission Capacity Development Project, convened a two-day workshop on *Strengthening Human Rights and implementation in Fiji: A capacity building workshop for public sector duty bearers* (the workshop). The workshop brought together representatives from the Government Ministries, constitutional offices, state-owned enterprises, law enforcement agencies, development partners, and other key stakeholders to strengthen understanding of human rights obligations and foster collaborative approaches to addressing emerging national human rights challenges (See Annex A for a list of participants).

The workshop was convened in recognition of Fiji's ongoing commitment to strengthening human rights protection, promoting inclusive governance, advancing social cohesion, and enhancing accountability among duty bearers. The discussions reflected Fiji's constitutional commitments and international human rights obligations while responding to complex contemporary challenges, including inequality, gender-based violence, the drug crisis, HIV transmission, misinformation, climate vulnerabilities, and barriers to equal access to services and justice.

1. Achievement of Objectives

The workshop successfully achieved its intended objectives by providing a structured platform for learning, dialogue, reflection, and collaborative planning.

Participants strengthened their understanding of fundamental human rights principles, international human rights standards, and the constitutional framework governing human rights protection in Fiji. The workshop enhanced participant knowledge of the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) and demonstrated practical methods for integrating human rights principles into Government policies, programmes, and service delivery mechanisms. The workshop also discussed the UN international human rights system including treaty ratification, the Universal Periodic Review, the Special Procedures and the reporting and implementation of recommendations.

Government representatives increased their awareness of their responsibilities as duty bearers and gained a deeper appreciation of the relationship between rights holders and duty bearers within the context of governance, policy implementation, and public service delivery. The workshop also encouraged Ministries and agencies to critically assess their current practices and policies and identify opportunities for strengthening institutional responsiveness to human rights issues.

The workshop further provided participants with an opportunity to collectively reflect upon systemic challenges affecting the realization, enjoyment and safeguarding of human rights in Fiji and to examine potential avenues for collaboration across sectors to strengthen national responses to these challenges.

2. Outcomes Achieved

Outcome 1: Enhanced Human Rights Knowledge and Capacity Among Duty Bearers

Participants demonstrated an improved understanding of human rights concepts, principles, and frameworks, including the universality, indivisibility, inalienability and interconnectedness of human rights. Discussions reinforced the importance of adopting a Human Rights-Based Approach in policy design, programme implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Government officials reported increased confidence in identifying human rights implications within their respective sectors and recognized the importance of mainstreaming human rights considerations into day-to-day decision-making processes. Participants also gained practical skills through case studies, group discussions, and policy simulation exercises which demonstrated how human rights principles can strengthen governance outcomes and improve service delivery.

Outcome 2: Strengthened Understanding of Emerging Human Rights Challenges

Through presentations, sector discussions, and thematic analyses, participants gained a deeper understanding of the evolving human rights landscape in Fiji. Key issues identified included:

- The increasing impact of drug abuse and associated public health concerns.
- Rising HIV infection rates and the need for rights-based health interventions.
- Gender-based violence and discrimination.
- Technology based violence.
- Competent and ethical use of AI.
- Barriers faced by persons with disabilities.
- Social and economic inequalities affecting vulnerable populations.
- Challenges affecting children and youth.
- Climate-related vulnerabilities and their human rights implications.
- Misinformation, hate speech, divisive rhetoric, and threats to social cohesion.
- Access to justice and institutional accountability challenges.

Participants recognized that these issues are interconnected and require coordinated responses that place human dignity, equality, participation, and non-discrimination at the centre of Government action.

Outcome 3: Strengthened Interagency Collaboration and Partnerships

A significant outcome of the workshop was the establishment of stronger working relationships among Government agencies, statutory bodies, independent institutions, development partners, and civil society stakeholders.

Participants acknowledged that human rights challenges cannot be addressed by a single institution. The roundtable enabled stakeholders to identify areas of common and diverse interests and opportunities for joint planning, information sharing, coordinated interventions, and policy development.

Several Ministries expressed interest in strengthening partnerships with FHRADC to improve awareness programmes, policy reviews, public engagement strategies, and capacity-building initiatives within their sectors.

Outcome 4: Advancement Towards a National Human Rights Protection System

The workshop initiated important discussions regarding the development of a more coordinated national human rights protection and safeguarding system in Fiji.

Participants emphasized the need for regular dialogue between Government agencies, independent oversight bodies, civil society organisations, and development partners to strengthen accountability and ensure that human rights considerations remain integrated within national development processes.

The workshop contributed to laying the foundation for a whole-of-Government and whole-of-society approach to human rights protection and promotion, with FHRADC positioned as a central coordinating and convening institution.

Outcome 5: Institutional Strengthening of FHRADC

The event reinforced the FHRADC's role as Fiji's National Human Rights Institution and demonstrated its ability to convene diverse stakeholders around critical national issues.

The workshop increased stakeholder awareness of the Commission's mandate, functions, and strategic priorities while strengthening confidence in its role as an independent and credible institution. The initiative further contributed to advancing the Commission's alignment with the Paris Principles by promoting engagement, transparency, accountability, and multi-stakeholder participation in human rights processes.

The FHRADC to convene, facilitate and broker specific human rights session for the various Government Ministries.

3. Methodology and Approach

The success of the workshop was underpinned by a participatory and inclusive methodology designed to maximize engagement and practical learning.

The programme combined:

1. Human rights awareness and capacity-building sessions.
2. Interactive group discussions.
3. Ministry-based analysis sessions.
4. Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) case studies.
5. Policy simulation exercises.
6. Reflection and experience-sharing sessions.
7. Multi-stakeholder dialogue forums.
8. Collaborative planning and commitment-setting exercises.

This approach enabled participants to move beyond theoretical discussions and apply human rights principles to Governmental and Departmental policy and programme challenges. The methodology encouraged peer learning, collective problem-solving, and the development of practical recommendations tailored to Fiji's context.

4. Key Commitments and Way Forward and Recommendations

Participants committed to strengthening the integration of human rights principles within the policies, programmes, and operational procedures of the Ministries, Departments and Statutory Bodies.

Key Recommendations include:

1. **Identify and establish a Human Rights Focal Point within Government Ministries and Statutory Bodies.**
2. **For Ministry of Civil Service (MCS) to include FHRADC in policy development exercises.**
3. **FHRADC to increase its visibility and mandated services to Government Ministries and Statutory Bodies.**
4. **FHRADC to assist with reviewing existing policies with a HRBA and GEDSI lens.**
5. **FHRADC to provide human rights awareness and tailor specific training to Ministries, Departments and Statutory Bodies (follow up awareness/training).**
6. **HRBA Training of Trainers for Government Ministries, Departments and Statutory Bodies.**
7. **FHRADC to work closely with central agencies example, Strategic Planning, OPM, Finance and MCS.**
8. **FHRADC to co-ordinate human rights training, liaise and partner with the Ministry of Civil Service through FLIPS.**
9. **Enter MOU's & MOA's (inter Ministry and Ministry with the Commission).**

10. **Ministry of Youth and Sports – FHRADC to be part of the programs and activities.**
11. **FBC – FHRADC to have their services on the platforms regularly e.g. radio, tv and social media.**
12. **Development of IEC materials tailor made on the 9 core human rights treaties and the Bill of Rights translation in the vernaculars (iTaukei, Fiji-Hindi, etc).**
13. **The Ministry of Civil Service to develop a Human Rights Based Policy Register in partnership with FHRADC.**
14. **FHRADC visitation to detention centres to include the military detention facilities.**
15. **FHRADC monitoring mechanisms to be strengthened.**
16. **Mainstreaming HRBA across Government planning and service delivery.**
17. **Strengthening collaboration between Ministries, Statutory Bodies, FHRADC, and development partners on human rights awareness initiatives.**
18. **Enhancing monitoring and reporting mechanisms for human rights issues.**
19. **Supporting efforts to address misinformation, hate speech, and social division while protecting freedom of expression.**
20. **Strengthening policy responses to the drug crisis, HIV prevention, gender-based violence, and other priority human rights concerns.**
21. **Establishing ongoing platforms for dialogue, information sharing, and coordinated action among Government agencies and key stakeholders.**

Way forward:

- **Quarterly meetings and check up on participants so we can be more agents of change (whether this will be another workshop or meeting with specific Ministries and Statutory Bodies).**
- **FHRADC to provide training on data collection, as and when required for reporting purpose within the context of the human rights-based approach.**

6. Conclusion

The Multi-Stakeholder Workshop on *Strengthening Human Rights Implementation in Fiji: A Capacity-Building Workshop for Public Sector Duty Bearers* successfully created an opportunity for dialogue, learning, and collaboration among Government Ministries, Departments, Statutory Bodies and key stakeholders. The event demonstrated a strong commitment to strengthening human rights governance in Fiji and highlighted the willingness of duty bearers to adopt more inclusive, participatory, and rights-based approaches to policy development and public service delivery.

The workshop confirmed that sustainable progress in addressing Fiji's human rights challenges requires collective responsibility, meaningful partnerships, and continued investment in institutional capacity. The outcome of this workshop will provide an important foundation for future collaboration and contribute to the realization of a more inclusive, equitable, and rights-respecting Fiji.

Adopted by consensus at Novotel Hotel, Fiji, on 29 October 2026.

Annex A: List of Government Ministries, Government Agencies and Statutory Bodies.

1. Ministry of Immigration
2. Fiji Corrections Service
3. Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs
4. Fiji Law Reform Commission
5. Ministry of iTaukei Affairs
6. Ministry of Youth and Sports
7. Office of the Attorney General
8. Ministry of Policing and Communications
9. Housing Authority of Fiji
10. Ministry of Education
11. Ministry of Fisheries
12. Fijian Broadcasting Corporation
13. Ministry of Women, Children, Social Protection and Cohesion
14. Ministry of Civil Service
15. Ministry of Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport
16. Fiji Roads Authority
17. Ministry of Public Enterprises
18. Ministry of Health and Medical Services
19. Ministry of Finance
20. Republic of Fiji Military Forces
21. Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources
22. Land Transport Authority
23. Ministry of Justice
24. Ministry of Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics
25. Legal Aid Commission
26. Office of the Prime Minister
27. Judicial Department
28. Ministry of Information
29. Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation
30. Water Authority of Fiji
31. Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Workplace Relations
32. Ministry of Local Government
33. Ministry of Multi-Ethnic Affairs, Culture, Heritage and Arts