

**Monday, 24 August, 2015.**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Students participate in parliamentary session**

Student parliamentarians, during the first formal Parliament session last Friday, debated on topics such as teenage prostitution and whether e-learning should be part of the school curriculum.

The outcome of the debate was that parents need to be proactive in ensuring that their children are not subjected to teenage prostitution and that e-learning should be part of the school curriculum.

Opposition Minister for the day, Kaushal Prakash said nowadays it is easier for the students to learn through e-learning tools.

“The implementation of e-learning would undoubtedly enhance the level of education not only on an academic scale but on a technological scale as well.”

Meanwhile, Year 12 student of Lomaivuna High School, Ratu Josaia Dradra Nabati, who was the Leader of Opposition for the formal parliament session, thanked FNU and other stakeholders for their effort in organising Student Parliament.

“I would like to thank FNU and all the other organisers for giving us the opportunity to actually sit in the parliament and debate on issues that is affecting our country.

“This experience has certainly given us great confidence and motivation,” said Nabati.

A Year 13 student of Vunimono High School, Patrick Sharma said this experience has given him a better opportunity to enhance his public speaking ability.

“The two days have been a great learning experience for us student parliamentarians as it has helped us gain confidence and learn more about parliamentary processes. We are better equipped now to take up parliamentary roles, if given a chance in future.”

During certificate presentation at Holiday Inn, Speaker of Parliament, The Honourable Dr. Jiko Luveni told the participants that their contributions, as Young Parliamentary Associates, are important for the strengthening of democracy and their engagement will bear fruit in the coming years.

“A crucial role of elected representatives is to protect and preserve democracy, and for this, we have to create an enabling environment by ensuring vibrant Parliamentary institutions and in this vein, we welcome your meaningful contributions.

“This is a great opportunity for you to serve your country. This is an aspect that should always be at the forefront of your mind,” The Honorable Speaker told the student parliamentarians.

The Japanese Ambassador to Fiji, His Excellency Mr. Takuji Hanatani, congratulated the participants on their accomplishment and urged them to always work to the best of their abilities.

“Maybe in the future, you will return to parliament as real MPs, Cabinet Ministers or even beyond. I say this because you have made a head start in this direction, and as students, your potential in life is unlimited.”

His Excellency Mr. Takuji Hanatani congratulated Fiji National University (FNU) and Dr. Richard Herr, the Adjunct Professor of Governance and Ethics at College of Humanities and Education at FNU, for their contribution in the Electoral Project, the Parliament 101 Guide and the Students' Parliament Project.

“This is a uniquely aligned effort that shows a tertiary institution reaching across to secondary schools and delivering excellence on a national scale. This is practical nation building.”

The student parliamentarians also had the opportunity of touring the old Parliament House after the formal Parliament sitting.

Student Parliament was part of the on-going Electoral project by FNU in coordination with the Japanese Embassy and the Ministry of Education.