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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **FNU to train medical professionals from Timor-Leste**

**Suva, Fiji Islands.** Fiji National University (FNU) and the Ministry of Health of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (MoH RDTL) have signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) that has established a working partnership on the development of Human Resources in the Health Sector.

The MoA enables FNU's College of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences (CMNHS) to work closely with the MoH RDTL and train its medical students.

FNU Vice Chancellor, Professor Nigel Healey said the signing reaffirms the University's commitment to partnering with international institutions to share knowledge and expertise which will benefit both staff and students.

"I am very pleased that we have finally managed to complete the negotiation in the build up to this signing. We are pleased as a University to be associated with the government of Timor-Leste through its Ministry of Health for the purpose of learning and skills training of medical staff here in Fiji," said Professor Healey.

CMNHS has a long standing history since its establishment in 1885 with the Fiji School of Medicine (FSM) and Fiji School of Nursing (FSN) and has served and taught thousands of prominent health professionals for the Pacific region.

"We are one of the oldest institutions in Fiji and probably regarded as the first medical school in the Pacific region. This partnership with Timor-Leste recognises the intention of FNU to expand its corporation in a broad range area and to work together with the Ministry for mutual benefit. The agreement is really intended to foster genuine and mutual beneficial collaboration in the area of human resource development in the health sector. Through this MoA we will undertake a number of activities including educational training, so we agree to work together to promote education to medical staff, direct delivery and franchise FNU courses in Timor-Leste and professional development," said Professor Healey.

The Vice Chancellor highlighted as the state University, FNU is recognised for its practical work and students from Timor-Leste will be encouraged to complete internship prior to graduation.

CMNHS Acting Dean, Dr William May said the event highlights the importance of networking and strengthening ties with fellow partner universities and institutions in the region.

"The core objective of this partnership today is to open up doors and opportunities for the development of human resources in the area of health," said Dr. May.

Vice Minister of Health, Timor Leste Honorable Dr Ana Isabel Soares said the new alliance presents great opportunities for their students and will boost the human resource development of its people.

"This is the first time in the history of Timor-Leste, that the Ministry of Health, RDTL, and Fiji National University will formalise its collaborative partnership. I'm confident that many of the programmes of cooperation will be established in the field of exchange of education and training for Timorese Health professionals, officials, other health professionals and experts; assistance in the development of human resources; development of research in the field of medicine and health care," said Dr Soares.

The Vice Minister said the MoA would further strengthen its health system.

“The MoA will help us improve the professionalism, knowledge, skills and ability of our health professionals particularly in the development of doctors, lab technicians, pharmacists and nurses among others that in turn will improve the health of our people and well-being of our community.”

**For further information, please contact the Communications Office on 3394 000 ext 2890.**

**About the Fiji National University:** The Fiji National University (FNU) was established through the merger of 7 government-owned tertiary institutions in Fiji, and commenced operations from 1 January 2010. The constituent institutions are found at over 40 different locations across Fiji, and collectively offer Certificates, Diplomas, Advanced Diplomas, Degrees, Postgraduate qualifications and Skills Upgrading for those who are already in employment. Approximately 30,000 students pass through the University each year. Over the last six years of its operations, the University has registered major achievements with regard to new programme delivery, quality improvements and contribution to research and publications via its 5 Colleges: The College of Humanities & Education (CHE), the College of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences (CMNHS), the College of Engineering, Science & Technology (CEST), the College of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry (CAFF), the College of Business, Hospitality & Tourism Studies (CBHTS) and the National Training & Productivity Centre (NTPC).