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Press Release

FNU scientist wins climate change research award

A compelling presentation about powerful greenhouse gases that affect climate change won Fiji National University scientist Dr Francis Mani an award at a recent world science conference in Denver, United States.

Dr Mani, assistant Professor in the School of Applied Sciences of the FNU College of Engineering, Science and Technology, received the award for an outstanding scientific paper in recognition of excellence in research and presentation, selected from amongst 120 presentations made each day of the conference.

The World Climate Research Programme Open Science Conference held 24 – 28 October drew almost 2000 participants from 86 countries, including 332 from developing countries.

One of its main aims was to bring scientists from all over the world to identify the grand challenges facing the climate research community and help establish future priorities for climate research. They also contributed to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fifth Assessment Report.

Dr Mani said he believed he was the only representative from the Pacific Islands region.
The focus of the conference was on all aspects of understanding and predicting climate variability and change and covered a comprehensive assessment of climate research.

Dr Mani's paper was on 'The longest atmospheric record, radiative forcing and emissions for perfluorocarbons'.

Perfluorocrabons (PFCs) are powerful greenhouse gases with very long atmospheric lifetimes of thousands and thousands of years. His paper discussed the atmospheric trends of these PFCs from information reconstructed by analyzing old air trapped in snow and ice in Antarctica.

Where PFCs came from, trends in their emission and their potential for altering the balance of the atmosphere were highlighted. The amount of these gases in the atmosphere was extremely low but that didn't mean that people could be unconcerned about them, Dr Mani said.

"Most of these gases are produced by humans and their concentration is increasing at an alarming rate," Dr Mani said. Some new PFCs had been identified in the atmosphere which is not regulated under Kyoto Protocol on environment protection.

"If these gas emissions continue unabated then they will surely add to climate change." He warned that once released in the atmosphere the gases' effect was almost irreversible because of their very long atmospheric lifetimes.
Dr Mani, with a team from the University of East Anglia, are in the process of publishing the first results of the new PFCs that have been identified in the air. Dr Mani holds a PhD specialising in climate change science from the University of East Anglia, United Kingdom.

Dr Mani's work secured him a travel grant worth approximately FJD7, 500 from the organising committee and the World Meteorological Organization to attend the conference.

"Getting the travel grant itself was an achievement, but getting an award for an outstanding presentation was the icing on the cake," he said.

Dr Francis Mani is located at the School of Applied Sciences in the FNU College of Engineering, Science and Technology on Samabula Campus, in C Block Room C202 9M), and is available on 7148188 or 3389359.