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## PRESS RELEASE

### FNU breaks barriers against Disability

**Suva, Fiji Islands.** Fiji National University (FNU) reaffirmed its commitment to provide an inclusive environment which fosters and encourages equal participation of persons with disabilities during the International Day for Persons with Disability celebrations.

With the theme 'Transformation towards sustainable and resilient society for all', FNU announced its plans to make all its campuses accessible and safe for all.

Acting Dean College of Engineering, Science & Technology (CEST), Salabogi Mavoava said as the *national* University, FNU recognises the rights of persons with disabilities including their right to quality education.

"The University aims for students to have equal accessibility to education and training, equal opportunity, respect and tolerance for diversity. As such, we have refurbished all existing campuses to ensure no one is disadvantaged. Renovations have completed in Namaka campus and we are happy to announce that the campus is now fully fledged to cater for students with disabilities and we hope to soon complete work currently underway at our Nabua and Derrick campuses," said Mr Mavoava.

The Acting Dean added, for his campus, there are plans to constructing lifts for easy access to workshops.

"We will ensure all future buildings for FNU are planned wisely to be safe for every person with disabilities. We will also be creating a Centre where students can go to receive academic assistance. This Centre can also be used by students to complete assignments or sit for exams or simply to socialise," said Mr Mavoava.

Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation (FDPF) President, Mr Joshko Wakaniasi said people with disabilities are no longer just spectators but are now active participants of society.

"We have broken down the barrier that used to prevent us from entering tertiary institutions and I'm thankful to FNU for setting up a Centre that looks after the needs of students with disabilities led someone who has gone through the system. We are thankful to the University for making the commitment to provide a designated centre where students can come and socialise, ask questions or sit for exams. Many students who enter tertiary institutions undergo scary experience but having the comfort and resources around them, aspires them to do the best in their university life," said Mr Wakaniasi.

"With the multiple developments that the University is now committed to, more people with disability will have the confidence to join FNU. There is not any more excuse to not be able to pursue tertiary education and to achieve our life long dreams," said the FDPF President.

FNU currently has a total of 105 students enrolled in various programmes from the five colleges who are registered with the Office for Disability Services.

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**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).