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## **Press Release**

### **New scholarships to boost climate resilience in vulnerable nations**

**Suva, Fiji Islands.** The Fiji National University (FNU) will host one scholarship for a student from the Caribbean in its new multidisciplinary Masters in Climate Resilience and Mitigation programme, inviting applications from April 2019.

The Duke of Sussex, Prince Harry in his role as Commonwealth Youth Ambassador, made this announcement at The University of the South Pacific (USP) in Suva earlier today.

The new Queen Elizabeth Commonwealth Scholarships managed by the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) will increase cultural awareness and expertise in climate resilience between Caribbean and the South Pacific.

USP will host one scholarship for a student from the Caribbean on one of the six Masters programmes that it offers, while the University of the West Indies (UWI) will host two scholarships for students from the Pacific in 2019 and 2020.

The four Queen Elizabeth Commonwealth Scholarships for Climate Resilience will be offered to young people from the Pacific and the Caribbean from 2019, encouraging Pacific-to-Caribbean mobility, enabling further exchange of ideas and innovations in the field of climate resilience between the two regions.

Supported by the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan with the ACU, these new scholarships will support the work of the Commonwealth Climate Resilience Network (CCRN) whose funding members include FNU, USP and UWI.

CCRN was established by the ACU and founding members at the 20<sup>th</sup> conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CEEM) in February this year and is a key commitment of Nadi declaration.

The Chief Executive Officer of ACU, Dr Joana Newman said these life-changing scholarships will help ACU to target vital research outcomes in the field of climate resilience and put Commonwealth citizens at the cutting edge of climate resilience, creating important opportunities to better protect vulnerable nations and their communities.

“Our mission in managing the Queen Elizabeth Commonwealth Scholarships is to increase student mobility across the world, build deeper and stronger international bonds and empower young, talented people to effect positive change,” said Dr Newman.

FNU Senate recently approved a Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and Master of Interdisciplinary Studies in Climate Change Resilience and Mitigation as one of the three new programmes that the University will start offering soon.

FNU Vice Chancellor, Professor Nigel Healey, while announcing the new programmes, said the Master of Interdisciplinary Studies in Climate Change Resilience and Mitigation programme is aimed at preparing

future-business and political leaders for a world in which climate change increasingly dominates decision-making and planning.

“The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a devastating report, warning that the average global temperature will reach 1.5C above preindustrial levels by 2030,” said Professor Healey.

“At present levels of fossil fuel consumption, temperatures will reach 2.0C above pre-industrial levels by 2100, eradicating coral reefs, raising sea levels by 1.0m and leading to lethal heat waves, bush fires and devastating cyclones. Critically, moreover, there is a decades-long time lag between changing the emission of greenhouse gases and a subsequent change in global temperatures.”

“What this means for us in the South Pacific is that the huge increase in greenhouse gases that were pumped into the atmosphere over the last 50 years will continue to drive up temperatures, raise sea levels and intensify cyclones for decades to come, whatever steps the world’s leaders decide to take in terms of the Paris Agreement.”

“Dealing with the impact of the climate change already ‘in the pipeline’ will require major changes in the way we manage our organisations and societies,” Professor Healey added.

**ENDS**

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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).