

WHO Western Pacific Regional Director Dr Kasai visits FNU

The Fiji National University (FNU) hosted the newly appointed World Health Organisation (WHO) Western Pacific Regional Director Dr Takeshi Kasai for a special guest lecture on health challenges in the region at the Pasifika Campus yesterday.

Dr Kasai, who was appointed to the WHO Executive Board two weeks ago visited the FNU's College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) in the morning before touring the Public Health and Primary Care at Tamavua Campus in the afternoon.



WHO Western Pacific Regional Director Dr Takeshi Kasai speaks at the FNU College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences Pasifika Campus.

In his speech, the WHO Executive highlighted that health security, climate change; non-communicable diseases; health system strengthening and ageing were key WHO priorities in the Pacific

"First and foremost, we have to monitor what kind of impact climate change poses to us," Dr Kasai said.

"We already feel it we just have to bring out some evidence and using that evidence, we have to really appeal that health is an important component of climate change discussions."

"Non-communicable diseases is also an increasing burden in the region, with approximately 40 per cent of tertiary healthcare costs in 2011 attributed to the treatment of NCDs."

"Drug resistance is another key issue and our region consumes the most antibiotics. Consumption is not only in the human but animal sector as well."

"We also look forward to working with Fiji National University in the areas of critical development of the health workforce for Fiji and the Pacific, through ongoing training and development, scholarship supports for student and workforce development and supporting research and collaboration," commented the regional WHO Head.

Dr Kasai also highlighted the importance of conducting research on health issues that would influence policies and global discussions.

"We have to encourage people to do research and we ask institutions around the world to conduct research so evidence can be generated to use and advocate to the entire world at a political level."

"So obviously the quality of norms and standards on health issues will depend on the outcome of the research."

He added that the Western Pacific region was unique in that it showed significant health developments compared to the other five WHO regions.

"If you see the statistics, this is the region that has made significant changes in the past 10 years and will continue to make dynamic changes."

"This is good because it means much healthier lives. But the challenge for healthcare workers and doctors is that peoples demand will be higher," Dr Kasai stated.

CMNHS Dean Dr William May reiterated its commitment of continued collaborations with WHO in the areas of technical, academic and scientific work alongside other countries in the Pacific.

"We also concur that research is a priority in the region and the College does its best to address this need," Dr May said.

"We also propose to strengthen mutual collaboration through establishing collaborating centres and also engage WHO technical officers or staff to provide monthly technical updates on current health issues in a forum here on campus."

"We express our appreciation for including FNU and CMNHS in your historic visit and look forward to tangible outcomes."

A plaque was also unveiled by Dr Kasai at FNU's School of Public Health and Primary Care Tamavua Campus to commemorate his visit to CMNHS.



WHO Western Pacific Regional Director Dr Takeshi Kasai and CMNHS Dean Dr William May unveiling the plaque at FNU's Pasifika Campus.