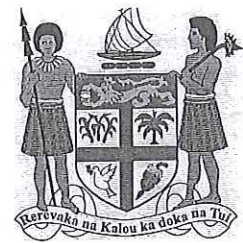




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**SIGNING OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
NEW CALEDONIA CONGRESS AND FIJIAN PARLIAMENT
TUESDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2019**

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS:
HIS EXCELLENCY, SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT
SIR RATU EPELI NAILATIKAU**

**PRESIDENT OF NEW CALEDONIA CONGRESS, HON ROCH
WAMYTAN**

ESTEEMED MEMBERS OF THE NEW CALEDONIA CONGRESS

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

A VERY GOOD AFTERNOON TO YOU ALL!

IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO JOIN YOU HERE TODAY AT
THE SIGNING OF THE INAGURAL MEMORANDUM OF
UNDERSTANDING (MOU) BETWEEN OUR TWO PARLIAMENTS.

IT IS WITH GREAT PLEASURE, THAT I ACCEPTED THE
INVITATION TO BE A PART OF THIS FORUM AS THIS GIVES RISE
TO A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP OF CLOSENESS AND
COOPERATION.

THE GESTURE TO INVITE ME TO YOUR BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY TO
SIGN THE MOU TODAY IS NOT ^{ONLY A} ~~MERELY~~ A SYMBOL OF
^{BUT ALSO}
^{ALREADY} INTENTION TO WORK TOGETHER, ^{CLOSE} IT IS A STATEMENT OF AN
EXISTING RELATIONSHIP AND HOW WE SEEK TO STRENGTHEN
IT.

I BELIEVE THAT THIS FORUM WILL BEAR THE FRUIT OF MANY PRACTICAL OUTCOMES NOT ONLY BETWEEN OUR TWO PARLIAMENTS BUT ALSO DEVELOP MORE COOPERATION BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

WHEN I THINK ABOUT HOW OUR NATIONS ARE OFTEN DESCRIBED, IT IS OFTEN BY TALKING ABOUT THE SIGNIFICANT NATURAL RESOURCES OF OUR COUNTRIES SUCH AS MINERALS, TIMBER AND MARINE RESOURCES.

HOWEVER, THERE IS SOMETHING FAR GREATER THAN ANY OF THESE.

THE GREATEST RESOURCE OF ANY NATION AND ANY STATE IS
HER PEOPLE.

AS WE MEET TODAY, WE DO SO AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
PEOPLE OF NEW CALEDONIA AND THE PEOPLE OF FIJI.

X
X
FIJIAN(S) AND NEW CALEDONIAN(S) ARE NOT JUST MELANESIAN
BROTHERS AND SISTERS ~~HOWEVER~~ ^{BUT} WE GENUINELY LIKE EACH
OTHER AND SHARE SOME VERY IMPORTANT
CHARACTERISTICS.

WE ARE FRIENDLY, OPEN, CARING AND UNPRETENTIOUS. WE ARE DOWN TO EARTH.

WE ALSO VALUE MODESTY, LOYALTY AND TEAMWORK - STICKING TOGETHER EXPECIALLY WHEN TIMES ARE TOUGH.

ONE OF OUR GREATEST NATIONAL VALUE AS WELL IS EQUAL OPPORTUNITY.

X REACHING OUT ^{TO} ~~OF~~ _^ HELP THOSE LESS FORTUNATE. AND OUR HEROES ARE INVARIABLY THOSE WHO TRIUMPH IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY, WHO BEAT THE ODDS.

SOMETHING THAT HAS SERVED US WELL IN TIMES OF NATURAL DISASTER AND ESPECIALLY THE CYCLONES THAT HAVE CAUSED SO MUCH HEARTBREAK FOR BOTH OUR PEOPLES.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, BECAUSE OF THOSE SHARED CHARACTERISTICS AND VALUES, I ASK EVERY PERSON IN THIS ROOM TODAY TO THINK ABOUT WHAT WE CAN DO TO BRING US EVEN CLOSER TOGETHER.

AND ESPECIALLY HOW WE CAN CREATE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH AND PROSPERITY FOR OUR PEOPLES.

OUR PARLIAMENTS ARE THE VERY INSTITUTIONS THAT EMBODY THE RIGHT AND FREEDOM OF EVERY NEW CALEDONIAN AND EVERY FIJIAN TO HAVE A VOICE IN THE FUTURE OF THEIR DEMOCRACY.

AS SERVANTS AND CUSTODIANS OF THESE PARLIAMENTS, WE

~~X~~ SHOULD ALWAYS BE VIGILANT TO ENSURE THAT ~~AS~~ OUR
~~X~~ PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACIES GROW AND EVOLVE AND ~~THAT~~
THEY ARE NOT ERODED.

X THE IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES OF REPRESENTATION, OF
FREEDOM, OF INDEPENDENCE AND OF EVERY MEMBER
SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF THOSE WHO ELECTED THEM TO
SERVE WITH INTEGRITY AND DILIGENCE ARE KEYS TO SEE ^{ING} OUR
INSTITUTIONS THRIVE IN OUR NATION AND STATE.

GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF OUR PARLIAMENTS, OF WHAT
THEY BOTH REPRESENT AND HOW THEY FUNCTION, AND WHY
THAT IS INTRINSICALLY IMPORTANT TO FREEDOM AND
DEMOCRACY WILL STRENGTHEN EACH OF OUR COMMUNITIES
AND OUR PARLIAMENTS.

AFTER ALL, WHAT WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND WE DO NOT
VALUE. WHAT WE DO NOT VALUE, WE DO NOT PROTECT OR
DEFEND.

THAT IS WHY EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN UNDERSTANDING
AND INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE
PROSPERITY OF OUR COUNTRIES.

EDUCATION, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING IN
OUR RESPECTIVE PARLIAMENTS ARE KEY ELEMENTS OF THIS
X AGREEMENT AND ^{WILL TO} ^{WHAT WE DESIRE} [^] [^] [^] ~~HELP~~ ^{ACHIEVE THIS.}

EFFECTIVE DEMOCRACY IS ABOUT SHARED LEADERSHIP AND
ACTIVE AND INFORMED CITIZENSHIP.

X IT ALSO REQUIRES OUR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS TO BE
SUPPORTED BY^y HIGHLY TRAINED PROFESSIONAL STAFF.

OUR PARLIAMENTS, BOTH UNICAMERAL PARLIAMENTS, ARE
IMPORTANT AND WE MUST PROMOTE SHARED
UNDERSTANDING – BETWEEN ALL MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT,
BETWEEN OUR STATE AND NATION AND AMONGST OUR
RESPECTIVE COMMUNITIES AS WELL.

THIS PARLIAMENTARY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT IS THE
RESULT OF THE COOPERATION AND HARD WORK OF MANY
PEOPLE AND I ACKNOWLEDGE AND SINCERELY THANK THEM
FOR THE FORMATION OF THIS PARLIAMENT PARTNERSHIP
AGREEMENT.

X I NOTE THAT THIS AGREEMENT WILL SEE US ACTIVELY WORKING
TOGETHER THROUGH SUCH THINGS AS:

- EXCHANGES OF INFORMATION REGARDING THE WORK OF
THE TWO PARLIAMENTS AND ON MATTERS OF COMMON
INTEREST;

- REGULAR EXCHANGES AND DIALOGUE REGARDING THE
TRAINING NEEDS OF PARLIAMENTARIANS AND
PARLIAMENTARY STAFF LEADING TO TRAINING ACTIVITIES
X BETWEEN ^{OUR} THE PARLIAMENTS THAT ^{WILL} PROMOTE
PARLIAMENTARY DEVELOPMENT; AND

- EXCHANGES OF VISITS BETWEEN THE TWO PARLIAMENTS
AS A MEANS OF FOSTERING LINKS BETWEEN
PARLIAMENTARIANS AND PARLIAMENTARY STAFF.

LOOK FORWARD TO US
X ~~I LIKE THAT WE WILL BE~~ ACTIVELY WORKING TOGETHER.
^

PROACTIVELY BUILDING RELATIONSHIP – BEING INTENTIONAL
AND DELIBERATE ABOUT FOSTERING INCREASED
UNDERSTANDING, GREATER COOPERATION AND SHARED
GROWTH WILL BENEFIT BOTH THE NEW CALEDONIAN
PARLIAMENT AND THE FIJIAN PARLIAMENT.

AND IF OUR PARLIAMENTS BENEFIT, THEN OUR PEOPLE BENEFIT.

MY HOPE IS THAT THIS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WILL CONTINUE TO WATER THE SEEDS OF DEMOCRACY, – THAT EACH GENERATION WILL GROW STRONGER THAN THOSE WHO GO BEFORE, UNDERSTANDING THEIR FREEDOMS, TAKING UP THE RESPONSIBILITY TO LEAD AND LEARNING TO SERVE THEIR COMMUNITIES WITH INTEGRITY, WITH DILIGENCE AND WITH THE STRENGTH THAT COMES FROM SHARED KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING.

I LOOK FORWARD TO THIS PARTNERSHIP BEING A BLESSING TO
EACH OF OUR PARLIAMENTS, AND IN TURN TO THE PEOPLE OF
BOTH NEW CALEDONIA AND FIJI.

MAY GOD BLESS NEW CALEDONIA AND MAY GOD BLESS FIJI.

THANK YOU.

END