RIGHTS, EMPOWERMENT AND COHESION (REACH)
FOR RURAL AND URBAN FIJIANS PROJECT

Location & Dates
Suva, Fiji. 12 June (Studio 6) and 14-16 June 2017 (Vodafone Arena)

Activities
(Pre-Expo) 1. Awareness-Raising and Service-Delivery Workshop; (During Expo) 2. REACH Service Delivery Sessions; 3. REACH and UNV Project Booths; 4. REACH Videos and 5. REACH Press Conference

Key Result 1
On 12 June, 100 women from the Eastern Division gained awareness on the REACH Project and on the workshop’s theme of gender-based violence as well as protection of child rights. Services were provided on-venue by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Legal Aid Commission and the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission. The Fiji Police Force contributed to the awareness-raising session, in addition to the above enlisted service providers.

Key Result 2
During the Expo, 137 women from the Western, Central and Eastern Divisions of Fiji participated in the REACH Project service-delivery sessions held at designated timeslots from 14-16 June, and gained information on the services provided by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Legal Aid Commission and the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission.

Key Result 3
At the Expo, 137 participants and 79 visitors obtained information and services from the REACH Booth and REACH Bus situated at the venue respectively. Visitors also acquired information on the UN Volunteers Programme through advocacy materials and discussions at the UNV Booth.

Key Result 4
REACH videos were played at regular intervals in the Vodafone Arena, to 475 stallholders and an estimated 10,000 people who visited the Expo over three days.

Key Result 5
Key contributions to women participants through the REACH Project and Expo were visible in Fiji national media (print and web outlets), and in UNDP social media accessible globally.
BACKGROUND
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supported the third Fiji National Women’s Expo 2017 (the Expo) through the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project, being implemented by the UNDP Pacific Office in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and the Legal Aid Commission.

The REACH Project aims to promote peacebuilding, social cohesion and inclusiveness through awareness of rights, access to services, provision of legal advice and institutional capacity building in Fiji. The three-year project is funded by the Government of Japan, and commenced in June 2015 with the initial focus being to enhance delivery of services through the provision of ‘mobile teams’ visiting urban informal and rural communities.

The National Women’s Expo 2017 was identified as an opportunity to promote the message and mandate of the REACH Project, as one of its key objectives is to empower women and girls to “be the change”. Services were delivered to 137 women participants, in addition to the total of 79 visitors who came to the Expo, strengthening the synergy between REACH Project partners. A series of awareness-raising sessions and advocacy activities were conducted during the three days of the Expo, including a REACH Press Conference. In addition, a one-day pre-Expo workshop was organized by the REACH Project, with 100 women from the Eastern Division in attendance, on the theme of gender-based violence and protection of child rights.

Pre-Expo REACH Workshop

1. REACH Awareness-Raising and Service-Delivery Workshop (12 June 2017)

Key Result
On 12 June 2017, 100 women from the Eastern Division participated in a one-day workshop in Studio 6, Suva to gain awareness and develop their capacity on social, economic and legal services available to them. Presentations were made by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Legal Aid Commission, Human Rights and Anti- Discrimination Commission and the Fiji Police Force.

The Hon. Mereseini Vuniwaqa, Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation delivered opening address at the workshop stating, “Two years ago, the Fijian Government, the Government of Japan and UNDP jointly signed an agreement to improve the access to social and legal services of disadvantaged Fijians, and so the REACH Project was born. In line with REACH’s mandate to ‘reach the furthest behind’, we saw this time as opportune to bring essential services to women from across Fiji present at the Expo.”

An underlying theme of the days’ programme was gender equality and empowerment, and related remedial actions and options available for gender-based violence (GBV) victims, with presentations by the Fiji Police Force and Legal Aid Commission. Protection of child rights was also a key part of the programme, with awareness-raising presentations on the theme provided by the Department of Social Welfare. The workshop was organized by UNDP and the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation.
**Topic 1:** Services provided under the REACH Project (delivered by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Legal Aid Commission and the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission).

**Topic 2:** Gender equality and empowerment

- The gravity of gender-based violence in Fiji, and the importance of awareness of rights and services was provided by the Fiji Police Force. The Eliminate Violence Against Women programme, related legislations and the Violence Free Communities programme were elaborated on by the Department of Women. Legal measures and remedial steps were provided by the Legal Aid Commission once domestic violence complaints are lodged.
- Information on protection of child rights was provided by the Department of Social Welfare.

**Evaluation Results**

The 12 June workshop proved to be an educational and informative training, and was acknowledged as such by most of the women from the Eastern Division who were in attendance. Over 80% of survey respondents agreed that the workshop increased their knowledge of the respective services provided by the Department of Women, Department of Social Welfare, Legal Aid Commission, Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission and the Fiji Police Force. Furthermore, 85.2% of the post-workshop survey respondents agreed that the workshop allowed participants to provide their inputs and obtain services. 92% of respondents were in agreement that the messages put forth in the REACH video were clear and understandable.

A representative from the Seniqori Women’s Club in Kadavu commented, “The workshop has enabled me to recognize the services provided by different Government Departments and welfare assistance that will be beneficial to people who live in extreme isolation in my community, and are still unaware of the Government assistance available to them.” A member of the Tarawa Women’s Club in Rotuma also added, “This workshop enabled me to share my new knowledge with my community, especially the youth.” The workshop reflected the need for more Government trainings and outreach services for people in remote areas of Fiji, especially maritime and remote inland regions of the country. The afternoon’s segment of the programme covered a visit to the Parliament of Fiji in Suva, where the women were given the opportunity to meet and engage with two women Members of Parliament, the Hon. Jilila Kumar and the Hon. Salote Radrodro. The women received a tour inside the chambers, a presentation on the role of the Parliament in Fiji, a tour of the Parliament Discovery Centre, concluding with afternoon tea hosted by Mme. Secretary General of the Parliament.
Voices of Participants

“Social welfare services, legal aid services, information on the issue on child abuse and other issues shared during the REACH programme was an eye-opener. It was very informative”.

Marieta Tiuhe’a, Rotuma Women’s Association President

“In rural areas, we have limited opportunities to access information and services [on social, economic and legal rights]. I found the REACH programme is the chance for us to do so. It will assist in the needs of our elders, who are the foundation of our Women’s Club.”

Livia Mariwa, Kadavu Province
Fiji National Women’s Expo 2017

2. REACH Awareness-Raising and Service Delivery (14-16 June)

Key Result

During the Expo, held from 14-16 June 2017, 137 women across Fiji (Northern, Eastern, Central and Western Divisions) obtained services that were provided by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Legal Aid Commission and the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission at the REACH bus and their respective booths in the Vodafone Arena, Suva.

Further, 79 persons participating at the Expo gained information and awareness on the REACH Project provided by UNDP’s REACH team, Legal Aid Commission and the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission. In addition, eight REACH videos were regularly played, which were viewed by 475 women stallholders and potentially by 10,000 visitors who were present over three days at the Expo.

Some members of the UNDP REACH team with the President of the Republic of Fiji Major General (Retd.) Jioji Konusi Konrote, the Hon. Mereseini Vuniwaqa Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, the Hon. Veena Bhatnagar Deputy Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, and Dr Josefa Koroivueta, Permanent Secretary for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation

Service delivery on the REACH bus

Visitors to the REACH Booth at the Expo
Leading representatives (L-R) from the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission, Ministry, UNDP Pacific Office, Embassy of Japan and Legal Aid Commission

UNDP REACH representatives with the REACH Bus

Women artisans receive services offered on the bus

Women artisans boarding the bus to receive
REACH Mobile Service Delivery

REACH awareness-raising sessions and mobile service delivery was provided for 1-2 hours daily, together with the REACH partners – the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, the Legal Aid Commission and the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission. Services were provided to 137 people, including women artisans and Expo visitors. Some of the services provided during the Expo included assistance for family law issues, criminal law issues, civil law issues, the poverty benefit scheme, bus fare assistance, social pension scheme and child protection, amongst others.

Voices of Participants

"We appreciate REACH awareness-raising and service delivery. I am now preparing my application for receiving assistance, as advised by the officer handling my case."

Salote Cakau, Suva, originally from Koro Island

"We are very happy regarding the services we received through the REACH Project here. I am currently staying in Suva, after our house in Koro Island was destroyed by Cyclone Winston last February and sending my four children to school. The assistance received will help my family."

Amelia Diwabau, Mudu Village, Koro Island
3. Visibility

**REACH Project Booth**

The funding support of Japan to the REACH Project was visible in various Expo information-communication materials at the Vodafone Arena. A REACH Booth was set up, providing information and awareness to Expo participants and visitors over three days, with materials displayed and disseminated covering:

- REACH Brochures available at the REACH Booth and bus
- REACH SDG stickers with the slogan “REACH the Furthest Behind First” at the REACH Booth
- 8 REACH videos played on the large screen behind the main stage at the Vodafone Arena
- REACH Project and SDG banners on display at the booths and within the Vodafone Arena
- REACH hanging banners on display at the booths and within the Vodafone Arena
- REACH pop-up wall banner on display, also providing photo opportunities
- REACH “eco” tote-bags distributed to Expo participants and visitors

To provide further information on the services provided under the REACH Project, the Legal Aid Commission and the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission had designated booths inside the Expo venue beside the REACH Booth.
REACH Press Conference

A REACH Press Conference was undertaken on 14 June to highlight the achievements of the REACH Project and contributions made by the Government of Japan. (Articles on the Expo have been featured on the UNDP Pacific website, and contained in Annex 5.) Speakers at the Press Conference were:

**H.E. Mr. Tsuguyoshi Hada, Chargé d’Affaires a.i., Embassy of Japan**

“As Japan is a partner of the REACH Project, together with Fiji’s Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, UNDP’s Pacific Office, the Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission and the Legal Aid Commission, I am very pleased to see that it is a key sponsor of the Fiji National Women’s Expo 2017. This is a practical contribution by the REACH Project, in line with its core objective, which is to empower the women of Fiji.”

**The Hon. Mereseini Vuniwaqa, Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation**

“REACH is an extension of Government’s mandate, the Government’s vision and its services to rural residents. Accessibility to government services remains quite a challenge. REACH was put together for this accessibility issue. One
of the core targets that REACH aims to reach is women and particularly rural women”.

Mr. Seremaia Waqanabeite, Deputy Director, Legal Aid Commission
“The Legal Aid Commission has been mandated by law and given the responsibility by the Fijian Government to provide free legal services to all Fijians regardless of where they live. Through the REACH project, we have been able to fulfil the common objective of the REACH Project and also of the Legal Aid Commission by promoting greater access to justice.”

Mr. Bakhodir Burkhanov, Country Director, UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji and Head of Pacific Regional Programme and Policy
“The REACH Project is designed to support the Government of Fiji to ‘reach out’ to deliver social, economic and legal rights enshrined in the Constitution. Indeed, the Government and development partners have prioritized the provision of these services to all, reinforcing Fiji’s commitment to the implementation of the Sustainable Development agenda, which pledges to ‘leave no one behind’. UNDP is truly proud to be involved in an amazing event that contributes to gender equality and women’s empowerment.”

REACH Videos
The REACH overview video was played in iTaukei and English at regular intervals on a wide screen at the main stage in the Vodafone Arena. The Legal Aid Commission video was also played in English, iTaukei and Hindi. The video introduced services provided by the Legal Aid Commission and its work as part of the REACH Project.

The general feedback received on the REACH video was positive, with comments stating it was “very interesting” and “understandable”. Many of the women artisans agreed that the message was clear and succinct enough for them to understand more about the services being delivered under the REACH Project. Some areas for improvement were requests to highlight child protection and also show more REACH visitations to the community.

In relation to feedback on the screening at the venue, a bigger screen for projection as well as more visible subtitles were suggested by viewers at the Expo. There was a request for having DVDs of the REACH videos on sale so the message could be disseminated to more persons. Some of the suggested topics for new videos were to include testitomies of women vendors at the Expo, social welfare assistance, and empowerment of women.
UNDP Pacific Social Media
Dedicated posts from the Expo have been shared on UNDP’s Twitter and Facebook social media channels. Details are contained in annexes 6 and 7 of this report.

Coverage in the Press
REACH presence during the Expo was covered in the Fijian media’s print and website outlets respectively. Further details are provided in annexes 4 and 5.

Contact Information:
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Programme Manager, UNDP Pacific Office, Email: Christine.Fowler@undp.org
Access to Justice, Rule of Law and Human Rights Programme
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pacific Office
Level 8, Kadavu House, 414 Victoria Parade, Suva, Fiji
Website: http://www.pacific.undp.org/
Annex 1
Copy of the Expo flyer and Invitation

![Flyer Image]

**“BE EMPOWERED - BE THE CHANGE”**

14th - 16th June, 2017
Vodafone Arena,
SUVA

www.welfare-women.gov.fj

For more information, please visit our website

Visit our Facebook Page: Fiji National Women's Expo 2017
Page: Suvaexpo1021595

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**The Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation**

Honourable Mereseini Vuniwaqa

requests the pleasure of the company of

...to the Closing Ceremony of the

2017 NATIONAL WOMEN’S EXPO

at the Vodafone Arena, Suva on Friday 16th June at 5.30pm.

Dress Code: Purple & Green Semi Formal

“Be Empowered, Be the Change”

RSVP to Alena Waqaasiwa (alenaw@govnet.gov.fj) or Sullana Loli (sullana.loli@govnet.gov.fj) on or by Monday, 9th June, 2017

Guests are requested to present Card upon arrival and be seated by 5.00pm
Annex 2
Expo Programme

(a) 12 June: Awareness-Raising and Service Delivery Workshop (detailed agenda)

National Women’s Expo 2017

Awareness-Raising & Service Delivery for Women
from Fiji’s Eastern Division
Monday, 12 June 2017
Studio 6, Off Waimanu Road, 1-3 Wolu Street, Suva, Fiji

Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Facilitators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.00am</td>
<td>Registration of participants</td>
<td>UNDP</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.45am</td>
<td>Welcome and introduction</td>
<td>UNDP &amp; MWCPA</td>
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<tr>
<td>(8.45am-8.55am) Welcome address</td>
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<tr>
<td>(8.55am-9.00am) Workshop objectives</td>
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<td>(8.00am-8.15am) Screening of REACH overview video</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.15am</td>
<td>REACH awareness-raising session: focus on gender-based violence</td>
<td>MWCPA, LAC, HRADC, Fiji Police Force</td>
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<td>(8.15am-9.30pm) Dept. of Women, MWCPA</td>
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<td>(9.30am-9.45pm) Dept. of Social Welfare, MWCPA</td>
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<tr>
<td>(9.45am-9.55pm) LAC Service Video</td>
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<td>(9.55am-10.10am) LAC</td>
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<td>(10.10am-10.25am) HRADC</td>
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<td>(10.25am-10.40am) Fiji Police Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.40am</td>
<td>Address by Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation</td>
<td>UNDP</td>
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<td>(10.55am-11.00am) Group photo with the Minister</td>
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<td>(11.00am-11.15am) Morning Tea</td>
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<td>11.15am</td>
<td>REACH service-delivery</td>
<td>MWCPA, LAC, HRADC, UNDP</td>
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<td>(11.15am-12.15pm) Service delivery by MWCPA, LAC and HRADC</td>
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<td>(12.15pm-12.25pm) Introduction to post-survey questionnaire, UNDP</td>
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<td>(12.25pm-12.40pm) Administering post-survey questionnaire, UNDP</td>
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<td>(12.40pm-12.45pm) Concluding remarks</td>
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<td>12.45pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>(12.45pm-1.45pm) Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1.45pm-2.30pm) Transport to the Parliament of Fiji</td>
<td>UNDP and Parliament</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.00pm</td>
<td>Visit to the Parliament of Fiji</td>
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<td>(2.00pm-2.15pm) Assemble outside Parliament</td>
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<td>(2.05-2.10pm) In-house greeting by the Civic Staff</td>
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<td>(2.10pm-2.20pm) Tour of the chamber</td>
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<td>(2.20pm-2.50pm) Presentation on the role of the Parliament</td>
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<td>(2.50pm-3.00pm) Q&amp;A session</td>
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<td>(3.00pm-3.15pm) Meet an MP (7BC)</td>
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<td>(3.15pm-3.45pm) Tour of the Parliament Discovery Centre</td>
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<td>(3.45pm-4.15pm) Afternoon Tea with Mine. Secretary General</td>
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<td>(4.15pm-4.30pm) Group photo</td>
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FIJI NATIONAL
Women’s Expo
Be Empowered, Be the Change!

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME

14th - 16th
JUNE 2017
Vodafone Arena, Suva
## DAY 1 | Wednesday 14th June

### OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY—NATIONAL WOMEN’S EXPO 2017
- **9.00am** Participants & invited guests to be seated
- **9.25am** Arrival of the Chief Guest: H.E. The President of the Republic of Fiji
- **9.30am** Major General (Retired) Jogi Konuski Konrote
- **9.40am** Devotion
- **9.50am** Welcome Address by the Minister for Women, Children & Poverty Allevation: Hon. Meresey Vuniwaqa
- **9.55am** Official Opening Address of the National Women’s Expo by H.E. The President of the Republic of Fiji - Major General (Retired) Jogi Konuski Konrote
- **10.20am** Launch & Unveiling of the National Women’s Expo Commemorative Stamp
- **10.30am** Vote of Thanks
- **10.40am** End of the Opening Ceremony
- **10.45am** Farewell Address by the Chief Guest
- **11.15am** Retirement of the Chief Guest & the Official Entourage
- **11.20am** Expo Opens to the General Public
- **12.30pm** Ministry of Health and Medical Services

### NETWORK & INTERACTION SESSION (MAIN STAGE)
- **1.00pm - 1.30pm** Climate Change Information Session
  - Permanent Secretary - Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management: Ms. Meleti Taiwaimaratu
- **1.45pm - 2.15pm** Human Trafficking Session - Pacific Dialogue: Ms. Keo Lekita Lekita
- **2.30pm - 3.00pm** Fiji Women’s Fund Information Session - RPAF: Ms. Michelle Reddy

### NETWORK & INTERACTION SESSION (MAIN STAGE)
- **2.00pm** Social Protection Session (1.00pm - 3.00pm)
  - a) Women in Business Forum: REACH Services (c) Sewing / Maintenance (a) Flower Arrangement (e) Rocket Store Training
  - b) Basic Beauty Therapy / Hair Salon

### NETWORK & INTERACTION SESSION (MAIN STAGE)
- **2.00pm** Audience with the Minister of Women, Children and Poverty Allevation: Counselor and Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Japan, Deputy Director Legislative and Commissioner & Country Director and Head of National Consultative Council and Programme UNDP
- **3.10pm** Provincial Fun Segment
- **3.20pm** Entertainment by the Ba Women
- **3.45pm** Entertainment by the Manuadrome Women

### NETWORK & INTERACTION SESSION (MAIN STAGE)
- **4.00pm** Child Welfare Information Session, Assistant Director Child Services, Eba Tolukalavu
- **4.15pm** Provincial Fun Segment
- **4.45pm** Entertainment by the Ba Women
- **5.15pm** Entertainment by the Lai Women
- **5.45pm** Entertainment by the Naitakata Women

### NETWORK & INTERACTION SESSION (MAIN STAGE)
- **7.45pm** END OF PROGRAMME—DAY 1

## DAY 2 | Thursday 15th June

### OFFICIAL CLOSING CEREMONY—NATIONAL WOMEN’S EXPO 2017
- **5.50pm** Participants & invited guests to be seated
- **6.00pm** Arrival of the Chief Guest: Minister of Women, Children and Poverty Allevation: Hon. Meresey Vuniwaqa
- **6.10pm** Welcome
- **6.15pm** Address by the Minister of Women, Children and Poverty Allevation: Hon. Meresey Vuniwaqa
- **6.40pm** Presentation of Prizes
  - Cultural Performance, Fijian Embassy
  - Provincial Fun Segment
- **7.10pm** Entertainment by the Sena Women
- **7.20pm** Entertainment by the Namosi Women
- **7.30pm** Entertainment by the Kadavu Women
- **7.45pm** Vote of Thanks

## DAY 3 | Friday 16th June

### NETWORK & INTERACTION SESSION (MAIN STAGE)
- **10.00am - 10.30am** Women in Entrepreneurship Session, Ms. Apo Ramisiga
- **10.40am - 11.10am** NCD & Wellness Session - Ministry of Health & Medical Services: Dr. Ismelie Tukana
- **11.20am - 11.50am** Career and Vocational Session, Ministry of Education, Mrs. Reana Pareti

### NETWORK & INTERACTION SESSION (MAIN STAGE)
- **1.00pm** Welcome
- **1.10pm** Official Opening Address of the Rural Women’s Fashion Show by the Assistant Minister of Women, Children and Poverty Allevation: Hon. Neena Bhatnagar
- **1.20pm** Entertainment Segment from the Women of Ratu
- **1.30pm** Indonesian Cultural Show
- **1.40pm** Fashion Show
  - Traditional Category
  - Casual Wear Category
- **2.45pm** Entertainment Segment by the Tagiue Women
- **3.00pm** Fashion Show
  - Traditional Category
  - Casual Wear Category
- **4.00pm** End of the Rural Women Fashion Show
- **5.30pm** Provincial Fun Segment
  - Entertainment by the Nadiwai / Navosa Women
  - Entertainment by the Rewa Women

### OFFICIAL CLOSING CEREMONY—NATIONAL WOMEN’S EXPO 2017
- **7.45pm** END OF PROGRAMME—DAY 3
Annex 3
REACH Project Brochure

The REACH Project aims to promote peace building, social cohesion and inclusiveness. The project conducts awareness-raising at the local, national and regional level in Cape Town, Western Cape, and other areas of South Africa.

The REACH Project has been successful in providing mobile service delivery for rural and urban communities. The project has reached the furthest behind first, providing services to underprivileged and vulnerable communities.

The REACH Project supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The project has focused on increasing awareness in rural, urban and marine communities, promoting social and economic wellbeing, and justice, focusing on legal aid through the provision of mobile services.

The REACH Project has been successful in mobilizing resources and support for investment in effective and coordinated service delivery for rural, urban and marine communities.

Policy making informed and based on evidence through research and analysis in the relevant areas related to the empowerment of women and girls, promotes equality and inclusive frameworks for sustainable development.
## Annex 4

**List of Media Coverage**

### (a) Online Coverage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>URL</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fiji Sun Online</td>
<td>16 June 2017</td>
<td><a href="https://fijisun.com.fj/2017/06/16/reach-initiative-assists-in-accessibility-to-govt-services/">https://fijisun.com.fj/2017/06/16/reach-initiative-assists-in-accessibility-to-govt-services/</a></td>
<td>REACH Initiative Assists In Accessibility To Govt. Services</td>
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### (b) Articles in Daily Papers

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<th>Source</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fiji Sun</td>
<td>16 June 2017</td>
<td>REACH initiative assists in accessibility to govt. services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji Sun</td>
<td>13 June 2017</td>
<td>Support our women, Vuniwaqa appeals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fiji Sun</td>
<td>13 June 2017</td>
<td>Workshop prepares women for show</td>
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</table>
Empowering Women to Empower More People

A hundred women from Fiji’s Eastern Division were able to access social, economic and legal services and increase their awareness on the rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji during a workshop recently organized in Suva. The workshop was coordinated by the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project implemented by the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, and the Legal Aid Commission with support from the Government of Japan and UNDP.

The workshop aimed to empower women by providing opportunities to access information and services for the women who came from maritime communities of Lau, Kadavu, Lomaiviti and Rotuma who have particular challenge to do so due to their geographical locations.

They had the opportunity to strengthen their knowledge on issues they are concerned about such as gender equality and gender based violence. The women were also provided with individual services by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Legal Aid Commission, Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission and Fiji Police Force to become empowered to address their issues of concern.

The Rotuma Women’s Association President, Marieta Tiuhe’a said, “The social welfare services, legal aid services, information on the issue on child abuse and other information that was shared during the REACH programme was an eye-opener for us. It was very informative.”

“We, 14 of us, are privileged to be part of the programme today. We don’t have many chances to have this kind of awareness raising so we will share what we learned today with our people back home,” she added.

Head of the Nabukelevu District of the Kadavu Province, Livia Mariwa, found the REACH service delivery a good opportunity to obtain necessary information to assist elderly women in her women’s club.
In the rural area, we have limited opportunity to access information and services. I found the REACH programme is the chance for us to do so. It will assist for the needs of our elders who are the foundation of our women’s club.”
“I am getting information on how to obtain assistance so they can benefit from those services such as bus/boat fare assistance and social pension scheme,” she added.

Providing the opportunity for women to have increased knowledge and access to information and services then enables women to support others who need assistance. Empowering women will result in empowering more people through them and further support gender equality which is a crucial condition for sustainable development.

The participants made their travel from their respective island communities to Suva to attend the Fiji National Women’s EXPO 2017 organized by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation from 14 to 16 June 2017.

The women were warmly welcomed to the workshop by Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Hon. Mereseini Vuniwaqa.

“You, the women of the Eastern Division, from the provinces of Lau, Kadavu, Lomaiviti and Rotuma have travelled days ahead of the National Women’s Expo from so far away,” said Hon. Vuniwaqa.

“Rural women are leaders, entrepreneurs and service providers, and their contributions are vital to the well-being of families, communities and economies, and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

“We saw this time as an opportune one to bring to you essential services under the coordination of the REACH Project.”

The Minister also raised the issue on gender based violence as one of the most severe obstacle in the empowerment of women and identified the efforts made by the Government and communities to eradicate the violence, including the recently launched national domestic violence helpline.

“Gender based Violence is one of the most severe, detrimental, and inhumane obstacle in the empowerment of women. One thing we have understood well, is that gender based violence is a result of gender inequality.

She added, “I wish to remind you that it is your right to be safe, protected and to have access to justice through legal services. I hope you have taken good note of the services that are available for you and all Fijian women and that you will help anyone in need with relevant information regarding these services.”

UNDP Programme Manager for Access to Justice, Rule of Law and Human Rights, Christine Fowler, said, “As of 12 June 2017, 4775 people have benefitted from the REACH Project awareness raising and service delivery of which 2326 are women. Also, 3428 services have been accessed by people including 2158 services provided to women by the REACH team comprised
of the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Legal Aid Commission and Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission”.

The Government has endorsed the global Sustainable Development Goals which aim to ensure that no one will be left behind and endeavor to reach the furthest behind first. Goal 16 is a commitment to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. For Goal 5, there is commitment to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. The REACH Project supports the achievement of these goals.

*By Tomoko Kashiwazaki, Communications & Advocacy, UNDP Pacific Office*

**Be Empowered, Be the Change**

*Amelia Diwabu (left) was grateful to be part of the Fiji National Women's Expo and spoke on the benefits of the REACH Project*  
*(Photo: UNDP/Tomoko Kashiwazaki)*

Empowering a woman empowers a nation – this was recognized by women who were present at the recent Fiji National Women’s Expo and had the opportunity to access social, economic and legal services provided by the Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) for Rural and Urban Fijians Project.

Akanisi Tawa, President of Natogo Wise Women’s Club, Tavua, Western Division found an opportunity to apply for a ‘Care and Protection’ support through REACH mobile services at the Expo.

“I am a mother of four children and also a grandmother. I sell vegetables at Tavua market and some handicrafts through our women’s club. Those are our source of income, which is barely enough to support my family,” she said.

“I was explained the documents required to apply for the assistance. And then I was assisted by a Legal Aid Commission officer immediately and provided with further assistance. I was given the statutory declaration to submit for my application”.

“I am hopeful that my application will be accepted this time. I am glad that I took the opportunity provided through the REACH Project,” she smiled.

Empowering women has a positive impact on their families and communities at large. Access to information, social, economic and legal services gives Fijian women a sense of boldness towards change.

The Expo organized by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, brought women artisans to Suva, the capital city of Fiji and provided the platform to showcase their handicrafts and other products with the objective to promote their talent and provide them with access to new marketing opportunities. It included information and awareness raising sessions on health awareness and check-ups, financial products and climate change.
475 artisan women from the Western, Northern, Eastern, and Central Divisions of Fiji, many of whom are from rural and remote maritime communities, are now confident to make a positive change in their lives after the Expo.

Women and visitors at the Expo were able to meet and consult officers from the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Legal Aid Commission and Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission who were part of the REACH mobile service team. The REACH Bus, also referred to as a ‘mobile office’ was showcased at the Expo and used by the team to deliver REACH services to remote and rural communities.

Women were also informed of their constitutional rights through videos featured in three languages - English, iTaukei and Hindi.

Mr. Seremaia K Waqainabete, the Deputy Director, Legal Aid Commission said, “During these outreach programs, the Legal Aid Commission has been providing services such as free legal advice, information on the rights of citizens under the Constitution, free witnessing of documents like birth certificates, academic transcripts, as well as assist in the filling of legal aid application forms for those seeking assistance.”

Ameria Diwabau was another who made a positive step to improve her situation.

“I am from Mudu Village in Koro Island. The Tropical Cyclone Winston was devastating and destroyed my house, and so I currently stay in Suva with my four children and parents.”

“The officer advised me what documents I need to submit to apply for the family assistance so I could continue sending my children to school as well as looking after my parents. I like this service provided while we are here.”

Hon. Mereseini Vuniwaqa, Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation talked to women and said, “It is very important that in times where we are striving to promote women’s economic empowerment, we create an equitable enabling environment for our women.”

“Under the coordination of the REACH Project, we saw this time as an opportune to bring to you essential services that you may not be able to easily access,” she added.

Mr. Ashwin Raj, the Director of Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission, who took part in the awareness raising activities with the women participants, encouraged them, “Every Fijian has the right to know exactly what these rights are and how to access institutions to be able to materialize those rights as well as where to seek redress when those rights have been impinged upon.”

During Expo 82 people (70 women and 12 men), accessed the services on the REACH Bus and 79 people (67 women and 12 men) acquired information and assistance at the desk during the three days of the Expo.

Mr. Bakhodir Burkhanov, Country Director and Head of Pacific Regional Policy and Programme, UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji reported the result to-date, “the REACH mobile service delivery has reached 4,775 people in 48 districts across 11 of the 15 provinces in Northern, Eastern, Central and Western Divisions, on a mission to raise awareness of the social, economic and legal services available.”

Mr. Tsuguyoshi Hada Chargé d’Affaires a.i., Embassy of Japan, said, “Japan is happy with the overall progress of the REACH project since it started in 2015. I am very pleased to see that the REACH Project is a key sponsor of the Fiji National Women’s Expo 2017. This is a practical contribution by the REACH Project, in line with its core objectives, which is to empower the women of Fiji.”

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals launched on 1 January 2016 with 17 goals, addresses the needs of people in both developed and developing countries - emphasizing that “No one should be left behind”. The REACH project will contribute particularly to achieving Goal 5: Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls and Goal 16: Promoting just, peaceful and inclusive societies.
The REACH Project aims to promote peace building, social cohesion and inclusiveness through awareness of rights, access to services, provision of legal advice and institutional capacity building in Fiji. The project is implemented by the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, and the Legal Aid Commission with support from the Government of Japan and UNDP.

*By Adebimpe M. Femi-Oyewo, Intern, UNDP Pacific Office*
Annex 6
Facebook Posts by UNDP Pacific

**UNDP in the Pacific and PNG**
18 hrs ·

Like Comment Share
You, Viliame Vocevuka and 10 others
19 June 2017

**UNDP in the Pacific and PNG**
17 hrs ·
and they had opportunities to access social, economic and legal services at the REACH workshop.

Like Comment Share
You, Viliame Vocevuka and 3 others
19 June 2017

**UNDP in the Pacific and PNG**
8 hrs ·
REACH bus was made available for delivering services for participants and visitors during the Fiji Women’s EXPO 2017.

Like Comment Share
You, Viliame Vocevuka and 4 others
20 June 2017

**UNDP in the Pacific and PNG**
6 hrs ·
REACH bus was made available for delivering services for participants and visitors during the Fiji Women’s EXPO 2017.

Like Comment Share
You and Viliame Vocevuka
20 June 2017
Legal Aid services were provided also at the booth inside the EXPO venue. Enquiries made, applications submitted, statutory declarations written, etc.

Legal Aid services were provided also at the booth inside the EXPO venue. Enquiries made, applications submitted, statutory declarations written, etc.
Annex 7
Twitter Posts by UNDP Pacific

11 June 2017 [Link]

11 June 2017 [Link]

13 June 2017 [Link]

13 June 2017 [Link]

13 June 2017 [Link]

13 June 2017 [Link]
Ria S @Ria151 · Jun 13
Now happening! #Fiji #WomensExpo 2017 500 caftswomen showcasing their wares. #REACH presence too! Come one & all @UNDP_Pacific


Tevita Dawai @tubinawaqa09 · Jun 13
UNDP Pacific Office Country Director providing his statement at Fiji Women Expo 2017: Being Empowered for Change @UNDP_Pacific

13 June 2017 http://bit.ly/2suxL0f

Ria S @Ria151 · Jun 13
At #Fiji #WomensExpo 2017; @UNV_Pacific presence, for engaging #youth. @UNDP_Pacific #SDGs #empoweryouth


Tevita Dawai @tubinawaqa09 · Jun 13
Vinaka na volunteers at the Women Expo 2017 for your support #VolunteersView2017 #SDGsfor2030 @UNDP_Pacific

13 June 2017 http://bit.ly/2sK3pcd

Ria S @Ria151 · Jun 13
Now #FijiREACH Press Conf @WomensExpo 2017 Minister and dignitaries in presence, before #women entrepreneurs @UNDP_Pacific @BekhotUNDP

13 June 2017 http://bit.ly/2skLEQh


13 June 2017 http://bit.ly/2suxL0f

13 June 2017 http://bit.ly/2sK3pcd

13 June 2017 http://bit.ly/2skLEQh


