FWRM Strategises its Future

Above: All who attended the Strategic Planning Weekend. Front Row 1 (L - R) Kushla Pillay, Sue Elliot, Suman Chandra (Staff), Vinita Prasad (Volunteer), Baby Alysha. Row 2: Andrea Pickering, Sina Emde, Zarina Begum (staff), Gina Houng Lee (staff), Shelly Rao. Row 3: Kata Duaibe (staff), Naeemah Khan, Alisi Tuqa (staff). Back Row: Frazine Dutta, Mili Dumutolu, Dianne Goodwillie (behind Mili) and Asenaca Colwai (staff).

Staff, Management and key people associated with FWRM were taken away for a weekend of Strategic Planning from the 25th to the 27th of November at the Lagoon Resort in Pacific Harbour.

The whole weekend was devoted to the planning of and the shaping up of the current structure of the Movement. In the last issue, we highlighted how OXFAM New Zealand are funding FWRM for the next 3 years. An area of focus of the funding was to strengthen the Capacity of FWRM as a Non-Governmental Organisation.

The Capacity Building Consultants of FWRM, Sue Elliot and Dianne Goodwillie, used the weekend to highlight the current strengths and weaknesses of FWRM. One of the major issues of discussion was the vision of FWRM. This was debated at length. While some felt that FWRM was geared more towards human rights work, others felt that it was not part of the Organisations vision to venture into the area of women's human rights since FWRM was a feminist centered organization.

The weekend consisted of sessions where participants were required to work together in groups to discuss the significance of our activities and the current projects to the building up of the organization.

"We found that FWRM has built up a strong base from foundation stones like the Anti – Rape Campaign for instance," said Rachel Morris, the Capacity Building Intern.

Participants were asked to draw a timeline from when the Movement began in 1986 up till this year. The realization that FWRM had come a long way from a few activities to the many which the 6 staff are now involved with was overwhelming for some. Concerns were also raised as to the reach of FWRM's work. We were asking ourselves if we are an organisaiton that is and should be reaching out to the rural community women, and if we have the capacity to do all the activities which we want for FWRM. These were left unanswered for some, which FWRM hopes to answer in practical terms through the capacity building project.

Further, the staff and management looked at the current structure of FWRM and the validity of it in terms of making progress with issues. A proposed structure was floated, which many felt should be discussed at the Annual General Meeting of the Movement.

Laisa Bale and Mili Dumuloto take part in group work.

The year ahead: Gina on 2001

Ms. Gina Houng Lee, Coordinator of FWRM

This interview was originally conducted for the Fiji Times.

1. What in your opinion would be the biggest challenge for women in the New Year?

As a women's human rights organisation, governance is the critical issue for all of us and because of the insecurity of our legal and government framework we will continue to call for the restoration of democracy and only push for substantive legislative changes with a democratically elected government.

Because of the increase in racism, nationalism and religious fundamentalism that goes against women's human rights, our biggest challenge will be how to counteract these trends. We will need to look at ways to enhance women's leadership roles and to bring in ways of peaceful conflict resolution.

Because of our current situation we are faced with increased violence in our homes and our communities. Moreover we are all facing economic hardships and poverty is on the increase, there will be more unemployment and a lack of interest to provide and protect employment rights. Women will be especially vulnerable to poverty.

2. In view of the feminist movement, how would you rate the year 2000 for women?

There have been some major setbacks for women in the year 2000.

Globally there has been an increase of racial intolerance and fundamentalism. At the Beijing + 5 Review in New York in June, where all states review the progress of the status of women in line with the Beijing Platform for Action, there has been some gains but overall there was a sense that there was a need for renewed commitments from governments to advance the status of women.

In Fiji, because of the political crisis of May 19th, this has been a setback for some of the key gains for the women's movement. For example, the legal and political framework for democracy has been removed and thus the foundation to advance women's status has been lost. Essentially feminist women's organisations have had to concentrate on the restoration of democracy because it the essential platform on which to work for women's human rights.

For example when we went to New York to lobby for women's advancement, we realised that our political foundation, which women's human rights is framed under, was forcibly removed and we needed to work on the foundation of women's human rights. In this climate of "interregnum", just as with a stroke of a pen advancement in women's rights can be decreed so can with a stroke of a pen they be undecreed. We would want to advance women's human rights under the framework of democracy.

Key human rights based on universal principles of human rights secured in the framework of the 1997 Constitution are now being reviewed by an illegal Constitution Review Commission. For example in the 1997 Constitution, there is a strong equality clause. Section 38 states that:

1) Every person has the right to equality before the law

2) A person must not be unfairly discriminated against, directly or indirectly on the ground his or her;

a) Actual or suppose personal characteristics or circumstance, including race,

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Stand Up and be Counted

It was another bleak day in Suva. But that did not deter several women and men who gathered purposefully and briefly to commemorate World Human Rights Day and speak to the local media organisations invited to the scene. In front of the now somewhat ageing YWCA Building, 'armed' with banners, including one that read "There is Only One Race, The Human Race", the gathering was an act of solidarity for probably one of the most significant commemorations of World Human Rights Day since the formation of the NGO Coalition on Human Rights in 1998!

Activites from the celebration of the 50th Anniversay of Human Rights, held at Sukuna Park on 10 December 1998.

EDWINA KOTOISUVA is a founding member of the NGO Coalition of Human Rights which gathered outside the YWCA Resource Centre on December 10th. She spoke to fem'Linkpacific: "Today is a very symbolic day, during an even more symbolic year. It's a day that brings up a lot of emotions because the NGOs, especially the women's NGOs have marked this day in a big way, and we have not been able to do that this year, and that (makes it) quite a sad day for us."

EDWINA is also the Deputy Coordinator of the FIJI WOMEN'S CRISIS CENTRE (FWCC): "Since the events of May we have witnessed the erosion of women's human rights, and all the gains which had been made by the women's movement over the last 10 years are lost ! It's quite sad but it also makes us want to work harder for the full achievement of women's human rights for all"

It is that determination, that commitment by the members of the NGO COALITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS that has sustained individual and collective action since it was formed in December 1998, to not only commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR) not just to address the issues of Human Rights, but more importantly to bring them to the people.

NIC McLENNAN of the PACIFIC CONCERNS RESOURCE CENTRE was also a founding member of the NGO Coalition: "That 50th anniversary in December 1998 brought together this coalition of NGOs, church groups, women's organisations, environmental groups, a whole range of people. Part of the aim of the coalition is to take the language of international conventions, even of the 1997 Constitution of Fiji, and to get people to understand that it's their rights and they have to live them out in their daily life."

The need for more, ongoing Human Rights Education is of critical concern to the NGO COALITION, as Chairperson REVEREND AKUILA YABAKI, who is also the DIRECTOR OF THE CITIZEN'S CONSTITUTIONAL FORUM highlighted on December 10th. The NGO Coalition is calling upon Commander Voreqe Bainimarama to uphold the rule of law to prevent any further outbreak of violence: "This time last year we couldn't have thought we would have experienced so much human rights violations! In terms of being affected physically, spiritually, for even just to witness. In fact witnessing the violations can be quite traumatic, which is why there is a need for school children's programmes as they have had a living experience as a result of the crisis"

THE NGO COALITION is reiterating its call for a return to constitutional democracy, within the framework of the 1997 Constitution: "That has the framework for Human Rights. It has a very central Bill of Rights provision, and it has institutionalised within it the role of the Human Rights Commission, whose main job is to educate. They have done well in the last twelve months, but they should also be involved in education for schools."

Whilst there is a widespread campaign initiated by the NGO Community, through the distribution of English, Fijian and Hindustani copies of the booklet "Know Your Constitution, Know Your Rights", the NGO Coalition recognizes the need for all sectors of society to be involved to strengthen present efforts. They further recognise the need for not only government, but also educational institutions as well as non-government organisations to continue to educate women, men and children to recognise that the principle of Human Rights is the basis for a culture of peace.

NINA SERU, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE FIJI YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION AND CHAIRPERSON OF FEM'LINKPACIFIC (Media Initiatives for Women), is concerned that many women still do not understand their basic human rights so they remain to live, with their children, in a violent environment, in their own homes, purely because of economic ne-

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On the CPT, *What the participants said...*

The Core Paralegal Training on Human Rights & Democracy was rudely interrupted when the Mutiny occurred at the Queen Elizabeth Barracks on November 2, 2000.

However, despite this the participants of the said training found the four days to be very fruitful and eye opening.

One female Fijian participant said, "The training has helped me recognize the differences between Human Rights, Civil Rights and Political Rights and also what democracy means. Being a Community worker, the knowledge that I have gained from this training would really be useful in my line of work."

Gabriel Penjueli of Suva said, "Law is such an intergral issue in the context of Human Rights and the Constitution that when you seriously ponder these issues deeply one can be doing 'violence' to the fundamental rights of individuals and the environment without realizing it."

The training has offered the participants a somewhat deeper insight into the constitution and the importance of it for good governance. "From this training, I have learned a lot about democracy, good governance and United Nations [Conventions] also, how all laws and legislations are binded & linked together and how it affects individuals," said Kamal Singh of Sigatoka.

Overall the participants reiterated how the training has helped them in the understanding of their rights and how this has helped them to be more confident knowing that they are protected under the law.

LRTOs Hold Simultaneous Workshops

Participants of the Fijian Speaking Multi-ethnic Workshop in Sigatoka pose for a group picture.

The Legal Rights Training Officers recently conducted a multi-ethnic workshop in Sigatoka. The workshop ran during the week of the 28 November to the 2nd of December. Legal Rights Training Officers Asenaca Colawai and Zarina Begum conducted the simultaneous workshops in both Fijian Language and Hindustani respectively.

The officers once again went to task in educating the community on their legal rights in Family Law. The week-long workshop was conducted in the two langauges so that the learning curve of the participants would be greatly improved, having their legal rights translated to them in their mother tongues.

The usual areas of the family law legal literacy programmes were workshopped. Participants were given an understanding of what is the law and how one is protected under it. Other areas of discussion included matrimonial property and divorce.

Zarina Begum, Assistant Legal Rights Training Officer, with the Hindi Speaking Participants of the Sigatoka Workshop.

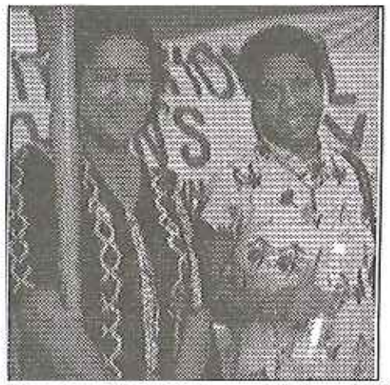
Women and conflict situtations

By Vani Dulaki

Ministers parliamentarians, senior government officials, academics and representatives of non-governmental organisations, inter-governmental organisations and other agencies attended the Commonwealth South Pacific Symposium on Gender, Politics and Conflict/Peace. They were representative of 13 Commonwealth Countries in the Pacific. It also included 4 Countries of the wider Commonwealth countries namely India, Seychelles, Trinidad and Tobago and the United Kingdom (National Assembly for Wales).

The Symposium focused on experiences by Pacific Islands countries representatives on how they have dealt with or how they are dealing with conflict situations internally, and the role which women play by bringing about peace. Dr Marilyn Warring presented an overview of gender and politics in the South Pacific as she has facilitated a few regional programs on women and politics.

The other aspect of the symposium was well presented as it looked at gender and conflict/peace in the South Pacific. I say this because participants were able to hear first hand from a woman who was heavily involved in the Bouganville conflict who shared her experience. The focus of her sharing was based mainly on the difficulties women of Bouganville and Papua New Guinea had in trying to impress upon their male citizens that they should be involved. It was encouraging to here from her that whenever they were faced with barriers that were erected unnecessarily, they found strength in each other to challenge those barriers. Those who were not well aware of the issues or the roots of the problem in Bouganville were grateful for the information shared to us during the session.



Vani Dulaki(left),Collective Member of FWRM.

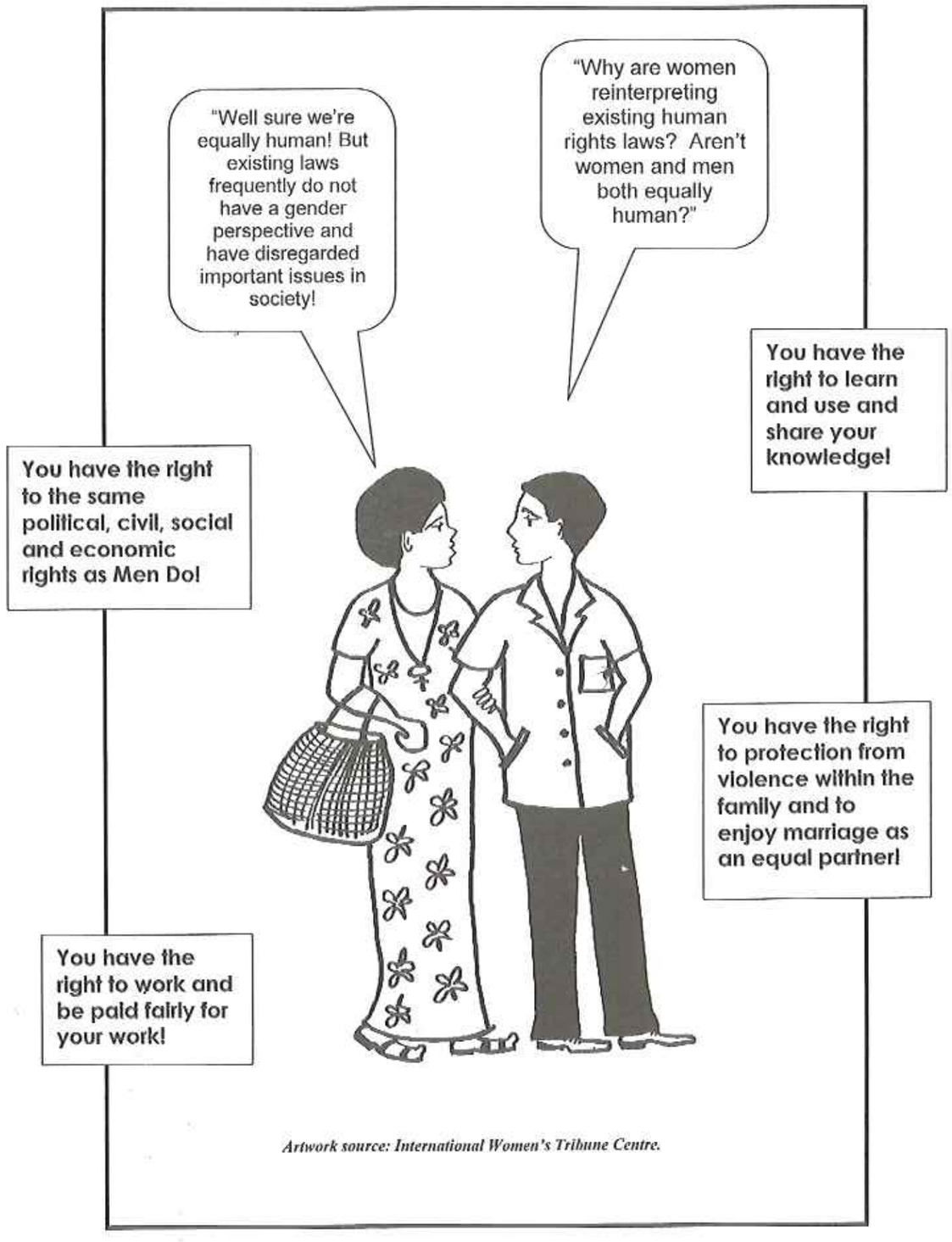
Solomon Islands was also invited to make a special presentation on the situation in country and this became a very emotional session. The issue of land rights was seen by many around the table as the main cause of conflicts in many part s of the world now. The discussion from this led to a collective agreement that those countries that are not affected yet by the issue need to take heed and try to intensify efforts that would ensure that it does not happen in their country. However, the need to educate people on issues and more importantly focusing on rights should be enhanced and targeted to people in a sensitive and a responsible manner. It was also highlighted that some aspects of cultural traditional principles and values that recognizes peace and harmony within the community need to be encouraged at school level.

Fiji's situation was discussed very broadly as it had just happened and was a very difficult one to address because the issue was not that clear as the others. There were very differing views expressed such it being a racial issue and Fijians are unable to accept a person of another race to lead the country as Prime Minister. Some who were following the situation more religiously argued that it had nothing to do with race but leadership skill displayed over the year by the prime minister. I believe the situation was more complex than what was being highlighted by the media.

The group session organized during the symposium was very good in that it allowed people to interact and discuss issues more elaborately, thus bringing out points not on the official program. We were later grouped together by countries to discuss specific issues. This was also very beneficial, as people were able to share situation experiences and discuss on how to use it in other similar situations.

Generally the Symposium proved very beneficial and one organized at a very crucial time when Pacific societies need to look at the role women can play in peace building during conflicts. The meeting at the same time was very emotional and it was very difficult to address relevant issues because of the differing views which people have, which is understandable. Overall the symposium was an eye opener and I believe that FWRM should continue to empower women to understand the roles and appropriate skills of being leaders particularly at national level.

Women's Rights Are Human Rights.



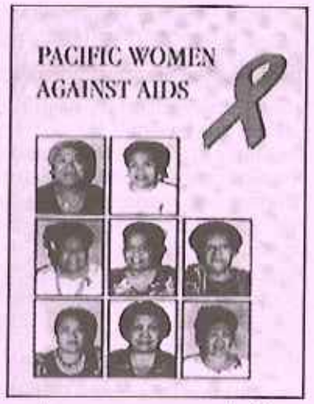
Artwork source: International Women's Tribune Centre.

'Pacific Women Against AIDS'

The latest publication from UNAIDS is a booklet on 'Pacific Women against AIDS'. The publication was launched at The Fiji Women's Rights Movement Christmas Party.

In launching the booklet, Adi Davila Toganivalu, of UNICEF commended the work of individuals and agencies that have gone into the successful publication of 'Pacific Women Against AIDS'.

Adi Davila, stated in her speech that at first glance one would think that AIDS is a Pacific Issue alone. "The launching of the Pacific Women Against AIDS booklet on the eve of the 2000 World AIDS campaign (official launch on December 1 2000) which has as its theme 'Men make a difference' could not



have been a more apt title nor better timed. For AIDS is just as much a men's as well women's business and concern – young or old".

"The Women in the Pacific have registered their voice on HIV/AIDS in 'Pacific Women Against AIDS'. Maybe it is opportune in the forthcoming 2000 World AIDS Campaign on Men – Make a Difference, that the men will take on the challenge as women have done."

Adi Davila also mentioned the culture of 'silence' that permeates throughout our societies. "If it is anything to do with sexuality, drugs, violence and gender (often controversial, embarrassing and uncomfortable issues) we can be sure that every few of us will take them on publicly."

The courageous stories of 3 Pacific Women with AIDS are featured in this book, which breaks the culture of silence that the Pacific is permeated with.

Copies of these booklets are available from UNAIDS.

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cessity: "They'd rather get food on the table, and the attitude is such that they don't want to rock the boat, so to speak, to mess with the status quo. So it is vital for them to find out what their rights are. Then they can make their own choices. We need to empower them to make these choices for themselves, to stand up for what they believe is right!"

WORLD HUMAN RIGHTS DAY was also significant for THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACTION GROUP, the coordinators of the Sanctuary camp currently based at the Girmit Centre in Lautoka. The camp opened six months ago to the day (December 10th) and the organisers of the camp are feeling the pressure of not only a depressing Christmas, but an uncertain future for the families at the camp: "We have traveled from the west, through the rain to show solidarity for the day, " said ANIT SINGH. "Where they are going (on) from there at the moment, we don't know, but there is pressure from the Girmit Council. A lot hinges on the Court of Appeal ruling on the Judge Gates decision. 'Til then, it is a wait and see game. We got Christmas coming up." Through a new self-sufficiency approach, the families at the camp are staging an open day (December 16th), hoping that through the sale of 'camp made' artifacts and other items, they will be able to earn a little extra to share with each other for Christmas.

Whilst the sanctuary camp is a glaring reminder of the violations of Human Rights that took place, in the "heartland of our country", there has been a distinct lack of public protest about such abuses: "Fear and insecurity lead to this lack of awareness within the constraints of cultural norms! Very few people, especially women are literate about their basic human rights, " says Nina Seru.

Or is it because, as espoused by several key political players (since 1987 in fact) that the Universal Principles of Human Rights are a 'foreign flower', even though Fiji has ratified various UN Human Rights Conventions, including the Convention Against all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)?

Rev. Yabaki warns of the danger in merely taking a conceptual approach to the principles of Human Rights. He says this is not an attitude unique to Fiji: "It happens in other parts of the world. But it is when you are bitten, that's when you feel it, when you internalise the concept." He adds that even not speaking out against existing Human Rights violations is a violation itself: "Somebody once said, the way for evil to triumph in the world is for good people to say nothing."

That is the true challenge for World Human Rights Day.

This article was received from Femlink Pacific: Media Initiatives for Women. FemLink was established in 2000, by a group of women concerned that the initiatives of women were being watered down by the mainstream Media. Contact: femlinkpac@hotmail.com.

NGOs Applaud 'Constitution' Ruling

"The revocation of the 1997 Constitution was not made within the doctrine of necessity and such revocation was unconstitutional and of no effect. The 1997 Constitution is the supreme and extant law of Fiji today". ***Justice Gates***

The ***Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM)***, a multicultural non-governmental organization welcomes the recent judgment of Justice Gate's ruling, which declares that the 1997 Constitution has not been abrogated, and is still the supreme law of Fiji.

As a human rights organization concerned with the events of May 19th we are pleased that the 1997 Constitution, which the wider community and we had played a part in building, has been upheld. The 1997 Constitution has one of the most progressive Bill of Rights, which is in line with fundamental human rights international standards, and the core ideals of human kind.

As a organization seeking the removal of sex discrimination and the protection of women's human rights, the 1997 Constitution has a very important provision under Section 38 which states that no one can be discriminated directly or indirectly on the grounds of his or her actual or supposed personal characteristics, including race, ethnic origin, colour, place of origin, gender, sexual orientation, birth, primary language, economic status, age or disability.

With respect, we call on the Members of the Interim Administration to begin the process of paving the way for the Government of National Unity. Moreover this is a clear indication from the courts, that no substantive decrees such as the proposed National Security Decree and any other anti- human rights decree should be decreed pending the appeal process. The Interim Administration should take a minimalist approach in making any legislative change.

The High Court judgment has also declared that the Constitutional Review Commission has no legal foundation. We should note that the 1997 Constitution has ample provisions in which to make changes and this should be followed.

As citizens of this country we must respect the rule of law as we move towards the path of democracy within the framework of the 1997 Constitution.

The ***National Council of Women Fiji (NCW Fiji)*** reaffirms its commitment to the restoration of the 1997 (Amended) Constitution and welcomes the recent decision by Justice Anthony Gates which upholds the 1997 Constitution.

And the NCW Fiji is calling upon the President and the Interim Administration to respect the ruling and to take this opportunity to expedite the restoration of the 1997 Constitution and the return to parliamentary democracy, through the appointment of a Government of National Unity, comprising of legally elected members of parliament from all political parties.

Responding to the Interim Attorney General's plan to appeal Justice Gates' ruling, the NCW Fiji is unwavering in its condemnation of any move to stall the return to democracy:

"The State must respect this decision which is a legal remedy to the political turmoil, social upheaval and economic disaster caused by the events of May 19th. The Interim Administration has served its purpose, this decision clearly highlights a legitimate path for the political leadership of this country to follow. Furthermore, if there is a need to review the 1997Constitution, let it be through legitimate channels, rather than through a process imposed upon the peace-loving citizens of our country."

The NCW Fiji further states that the onus is on the Security Forces to continue their efforts in the maintenance of law and order and to contain any attempts to disrupt efforts to restore Parliamentary Democracy.

From May 21st to July 24th, the NCW Fiji through its WOMEN'S ACTION FOR DEMOCRACY AND PEACE Initiative staged daily Peace Vigils in response to the May Crisis, during which time the organisation not only condemned the violent actions of May 19th but also called for the restoration of the democratic process as outlined in the 1997 Constitution.

This ecumenical forum now continues on a monthly basis as an ongoing women in community action for Peace and Reconciliation, based on the NCW Fiji's Mission Statement: "Our strength is our multi ethnic diversity which reflects solidarity of women in Fiji. Together we promote the development of women economically, socially, politically and spiritually."

EDITORIAL

Fiji-wide is still waking up to Human Rights. This has definitely been the call of the NGO Coalition on Human Rights, since its inception in 1998. Calling for the state to uphold structures that promote basic human rights for all people regardless of race, class, age, religion, sex and so forth.

WIthin the NGO Coalition, FWRM's work deals with women's human rights in the areas of employment and family law. For 14 years, FWRM has tirelessly worked for the attainment of women's human rights, expanding into the rights of young women. This work was awarded this year when they won the Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) Human Rights Awards for the Pacific Region.

Other organisations in Fiji tirelessly advocate for the human rights of all races in Fiji to be respected. Can you imgaine a world where there is no tolereance for people of cultures other than your own, for races other than your own, and a nation where your religious beliefs are suppressed?

In this issue we bring you news of what FWRM has been advocating, and what other NGOs and groups are doing for the speedy return to democracy and the restoration of the 1997 Constitution, which protects the human rights of all individuals in Fiji. Happy New Year!

Fiji's Blue

Many of us have heard about the Fiji BLue Committee but have no idea what they are or what they are up to. Recently the Fiji Blue have been more visible in their campaign to inform the public on the 1997 Constitution and urge the speedy return to parliamentary democracy.

The Fiji Blue Committee is a joint agreement between Businesses, Labour, Unions, Employers and Society (BLUES).

On 10 October this year, the Blues Committee, dedicated the Day to a Blue Day, whereby they encourged people to wear something blue to show their support for the return to Parliamentary Democracy within the 1997 Constitution.

They also encouraged people to fly blue flags, to put up blue or just to do something radically blue to symbolise the day.

On 8 December, the campaing continued with a mass campaign on the 1997 Constitution. The booklets 'You and Your Constitution' were distributed to the members of the public on the streets and they were asked to read and be informed about their constitution.

The Fiji Women's Rights Movement supports the return to Parliamentary Democracy because it is essential for the attainment of women's human rights - their right to proper working conditions, their right to life, their right to education and all the other basic rights.

The Fiji Blue's Website can be found at the follwing url: www.fijisblue.com. They can also be contacted via email at info@fijisblue.com

ethnic origin, color, place of origin, gender, sexual orientation, birth, primary language, economic status, age

This provision has been critical to the work of women's human rights.

In the area of women's decision making, women had made great gains in that targeted approaches and projects to encourage women to enter into politics saw more that 20 women stand for the 1999 elections. We then saw 5 women become cabinet ministers. This was a big step and advancement for women, which unfortunately because of the coup has now been lost.

Moreover following on from the 1995 4th World Conference on Women, Fiji made five commitments outlined in the National Plan of Action. These are:

1) Mainstreaming of women's and gender concerns in the planning process and all policy areas;
2) Women and the law
3) Micro Enterprise Development
4) Balancing Gender in Decision Making
5) Violence Against women and children

This 10-year plan needs a strategic focus with committed budgetary allocations.

3. What would be the major projects for your organisation in the New Year?

We will continue to focus on economic and employment rights, improving the working conditions of women and continue to work on human rights education. We held our first Community Paralegal Training on Human Rights and Democracy in October and we will continue with the next 5 workshops throughout the year. We will work on the continuation of our five-day family law legal literacy workshops in the rural areas. As a legislative advocacy group we will continue through the NGO Coalition on Human Rights and the Fiji Blue Campaign to call for the restoration of democracy and the rule of law and will not push for any legislative changes until we have a democratically elected government.

Another area, which we have identified, is a young women's leadership program. We need to invest in young women, as they are our future leaders. We received funds from UNAIDS and we will run a "Girls Get Together" Workshops in January 2001 where young girls can get together to discuss issues such as health and employment issues.

We are also looking internally to strengthen the capacity of our organisation including a focus on good management and financial systems.

4. Are there any special goals that the organisation has for the New Year?

See 3, but the main goal will be a focus on the young women's rights project, which is a pilot project, and we will look at how we can expand and incorporate it into our existing projects.

To end on a positive note, FWRM's work received recognition when we won the RRRT Human Rights Awards for the year 2000. As this has been an extremely tough year, we are pleased that our work has been recognised through this award. B

NEW STAFF AT FWRM.

Fiji Women's Rights Movement has recently recruited a new GEER Officer, Miss Alisi Tuqa. Alisi Tuqa takes over from Mrs. Raijeli Nicole the previous officer for WEER. This year the WEER project shifts into its next phase, GEER. This is a changeover from Women's Employment and Economic Rights Project to Gender, Employment & Economic Rights. Alisi Tuqa holds a Bachelor of Commerce in Industrial Relations from the University of Wollongong. She was previously the Coordinator of Fiji Media Watch, a not for profit organisation that monitors the use and misuse of the Media. FWRM welcomes Alisi Tuqa on board!

Staff Movements

- A Core Paralegal Training was held at the Tradewinds Convention Centre in Lami. The Workshop was organized by the Legal Rights Officers Asenaca Colawai and Zarina Begum and took place from 30th October to the 2nd of November 2000.
- Zarina Begum attended the Diplomacy Training Programme that was held at the Lagoon Resort in Pacific Harbour.
- Gina Houng Lee and Katalaini Duaibe attended the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre launch of the "Rainbows not Rambos" campaign on 20 November 2000.
- Katalaini Duaibe and Mereani Tabua were invited to talk to the Youths of the Ra Soqosoqo Vakamarama at Shelly Park Lautoka on 25 November 2000.
- The staff, and management of Fiji Women's Rights Movement were away for the weekend of 25 – 28 November for the organisation's Strategic Planning Weekend.
- The Legal Rights Training Officers conducted Family Law Legal Literacy Workshops simultaneously with the Sigatoka Women's Club from 28 November – 2 December 2000. Asenaca Colawai conducted the Fijian Speaking Workshop while Zarina Begum held the Hindi Speaking one.
- Zarina Begum was out of the office for the Regional Rights Resource Team Impact Assessment from 4 – 8 December 2000.
- Zarina Begum conducted a Hindi Speaking workshop on Family Law Legal Literacy with the Ba Sanatan Women's Club from 18 – 22 December.
- Alisi Tuqa and Katalaini Duaibe attended the NGO Coalition on Human Rights Meeting. This was held at the Citizen's Constitutional forum on 5 December 2000.
- Gina Houng Lee was away on Annual Leave from 4 – 15 December 2000.
- Asenaca Colawai & Katalaini Duaibe attended the RRRT Human Rights Awards 2000 at Centra Suva on 11 December 2000.
- Suman Chandra attended a Pacific NGO Leadership & Management Training from 12 – 15 December 2000 at the Centre for Appropriate Training & Development in Nadave, Bau Landing. The training was on the theme "Culture & Values of the not-for-profit sector".
- Volunteer Mereani Tabua attended the 'Girls in Action' launch held at Saint Joseph's on 16 December 2000.

Visitors to the Office

~ Chris Boswell from Prince Edward Island, Canada
~ Gene Shaeffar from Alaska.
~ Laurel Terichow from Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
~ Brian Peters, CUSO Vanuatu, Port Vila, Vanuatu.
~ Letila Ceres from Deuba, Fiji.
~ Kmiecik Anna and Gosebrigh Marcia, students from Poland.

Upcoming Activities

- *Girls Get Together* – a series of workshops will be held to discuss issues of concern to young women. Issues to be discussed: Jobs and how to get them; girls health; relationships and their problems; sexual harassment; how do NGO's work. The first workshop is to be held on 9 – 10 January 2001 at Saint Josephs Secondary School, Suva. The second will be held in Lautoka from 17 – 18 January 2001 at the Saint Thomas Primary School. The third workshop will be held in Nausori at the Dilkusha Methodist High School on 3rd February and 10th February. For more info: info@fwrm.org.fj
- A Regional Council Meeting with the Asia Pacific Forum on Women Law and Development in Chiang Mai Thailand on 12 January 2001.
- Legal Literacy Workshop on Family Law will be conducted with the Anjani Mothers Club, from 15 – 19 January 2001, in 8 Miles Nasinu, Fiji. The facilitator will be Assistant Legal Rights Training Officer, Zarina Begum. For more information please contact: zarina@fwrm.org.fj
- A Field Trip to the FWRM Office by the University of the South Pacific's Regional Students on January 17 2001.
- International Women's Day - 8 March 2001.

Fiji Women's Rights Movement
GPO Box 14194, Suva.
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Balance

Newsletter of the Fiji Women's Rights Movement

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FWRM Human Rights Work Awarded

The Fiji Women's Rights Movement was a recent recipient of the 2000 RRRT Human Rights Award on 11 December 2000. The awards were presented at a low-key ceremony at the Banyan Room of the Centra Suva Hotel.

The RRRT Human Rights Award recognizes the efforts of a civil society organization whose work has contributed to the advancement of Human Rights in the region. In particular, it recognizes an organization's efforts in promoting the human rights of marginalized groups such as women and children.

Jackie Creighton, head of the UK DFID Pacific, presented the awards to the Acting Coordinator, Ms. Asenaca Colawai, who received it on behalf of the organisation. In her speech, Jackie Creighton said that FWRM was an NGO that had become a model in the region. " FWRM has made a significant contribution in pioneering human rights education in Fiji. The organization is dedicated to improving the lives of women and the girl child through the promotion of women's rights as human rights."

Ms. Creighton also said that FWRM has demonstrated extraordinary commitment and extensive influence through its numerous projects and campaigns. "Its 'Girls Can Do Anything Campaign' and the 'Women's Constitutional Forum on Women's citizenship Rights are just two examples of its achievements. Through its community level legal literacy workshops FWRM has promoted greater understanding of the law and legal rights, in the process given women greater access to the legal system."

In her acceptance speech, Ms. Colawai acknowledged the hard work and dedication of the staff of the Movement whose stamina and commitment to the cause of Human Rights for all has enabled Fiji Women's Rights Movement to be recognized regionally.