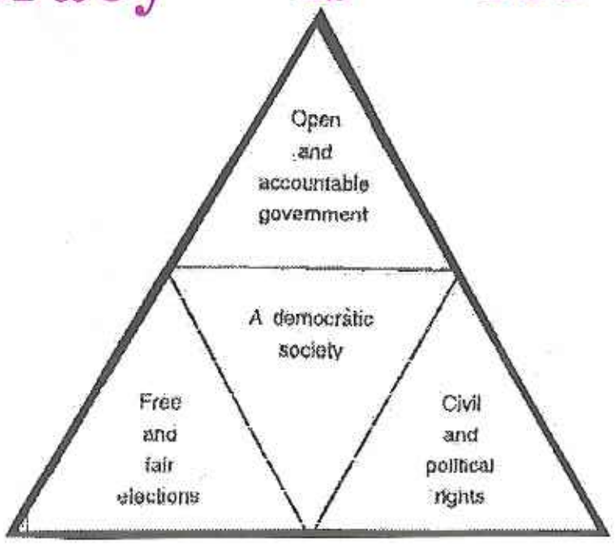
Democracy is for Fiji



What is democracy?

Democracy is a decision-making process that can be used by a group of people to make decisions about the goals to be pursued, rules to be followed and distribution of responsibilities and benefits. The basic principles of this decision-making process are the same for all groups of people - from small families and community clubs to large corporations and nations. The main principles of democracy are:

*Collective decisions - Everyone is entitled to have a say in the decisions that affect their lives

*Popular control - Everyone has a right to participate in all aspects of the decision making

*Equality of rights - Everyone is included - cannot exclude anyone.

What are the minimum requirements for a country to follow a democratic decision-making system?

The four main components or building blocks of a functioning democracy are:

*Free and fair elections - Countries can adopt different electoral systems and processes but all processes and practices must ensure that winners are elected on a fair basis. All citizens are equal and have equal opportunity to stand for elections and vote.

*Open and accountable government - This includes legal accountability to the courts (the rule of law) and political accountability to parliament and the public. Elected officials are held responsible for their actions. People are informed about decisions that are being made.

*Civil and political rights - To participate freely in collective decision making people must have basic civil freedoms, such as freedom of expression, association, movement, discrimination and other freedoms. Civil and political rights also include areas such as a fair electoral system and criminal justice system. These are rights that protect individuals from abuses of those who hold political power.

*A democratic or civil society - Civil society is a term used to describe non-government organisations or associations that are organized independently of the state. Civil society groups represent ordinary people who have a common interest in specific issues and work together to ensure their own particular concerns are reflected in decision-making. Civil society plays an important role to voice public opinion and keep governments and elected officials accountable to the people who elect them.

Once Democracy is established how will it be maintained and strengthened?

*Building up strong democratic institutions such as an independent judiciary (judges/magistrates), active civil society, competent election systems, efficient civil service and free and independent media.

*Firmly established principles of good governance such as allowing public discussion and debates, keeping people informed about actions, decisions and duties and respecting the rule of law and human rights.

Whales cry for help

There is hope that our whales could be saved with the new project being undertaken by Greenpeace. The world renowned environment friendly organisation has embarked onto another project, this time campaigning for the establishment of a South Pacific Whales Santuary.

In a statement released by the organisation, Greenpeace said that if the proposed South Pacific Whale Santuary is successful, it will ban commercial whaling on all great species, allowing severely depleted whale populations to recover and the South Pacific region to develop whale watching.

'Whale Watching has developed into a booming sector of the global tourism industry contributing some US$1 billion to the world economy annually according to an August 2000 report of the International Fund for Animal Welfare(IFAW).

'Small island nations have much to gain from developing whale watch operations,' Greenpeace said.

The organisation added that as small island states of the South Pacific, solidarity on the proposed whale sanctuary is essential, especially in the international arena 'where collective effort holds more power'.

'As a key player in the national economies of Pacific islands, the tourism industry can play an influential role in supporting the adoption of the sanctuary by telling their governments how important whale protection and whale watching is to their environmental an economic sustainability.'

According to Greenpeace there is already significant support in the region for a South Pacific Whale Santuary.

It added that Pacific Island Forum Leaders supported the proposal in 1998 when they said; The Forum continued to attach importance to the sustainable use of marine resource, noting that a greater level of protection for whales was appropriate, and also noting the Internationally recognised need for sanctuaries to assist with long term conservation of great whales.

The South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) which works on environmental and development issues in the region believes a South Pacific Whales Santuary should be complemented by, and support promotion of Pacific Island whale watching tourism.

The 1999 SPREP director, Tamari'I Tatangata was quoted as saying that during its lifetime, one whale alone could be worth millions of dollars in tourism revenue.

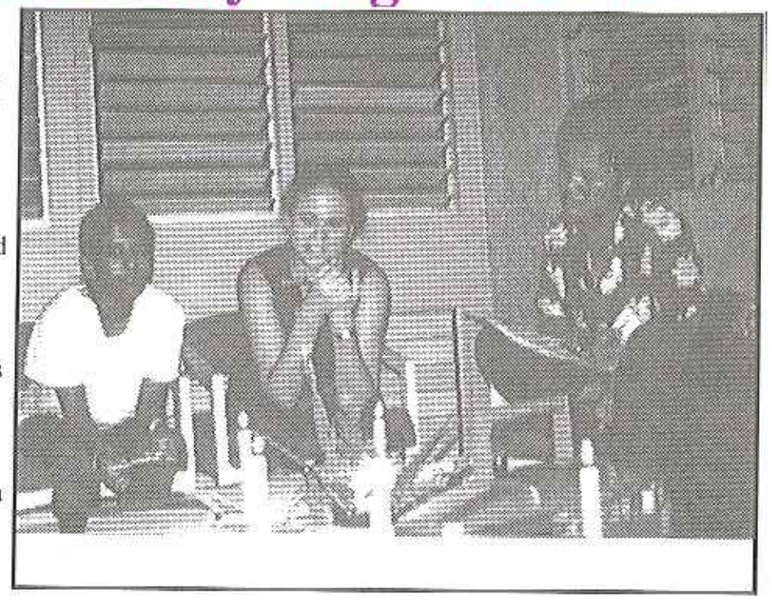
A live whale gives ongoing benefits and is more valuable than a dead one.

'Whaling and whale-watching are not compatible,' he said.

The South Pacific Tourism Organisation's chief executive, Levani Tuinabua also supported the proposal and is quoted as saying whale-watching tourism is a growing market segment which is estimated to be worth in excess of US$550 million each year.

Staff of FWRM during the Nuclear Free Flotilla Day organised by GreenPeace

'Girl's Can Do Anything' a Success



The Fiji Women's Rights Movement 'Girls Can Do Anything' campaign was further developed in December 2001, with assistance from the UNAIDS project of the United Nations Development Programme.

This financial assistance enabled the hosting of three two-day workshops in strategic areas around the country.

The first was held here in Suva's Saint Josephs Secondary School, the second was at Saint Thomas Primary School in Lautoka and the third was held at the Dilkusha Methodist Church Hall in Nausori.

The workshops were organised by young women members of FWRM, Oliana Lovodua and assisted by Volunteer Mereani Tabua.

Balance took time out to interview a few girls at the Suva Workshop on their perceptions of the workshop and the issues that were discussed.

Loata Rokovukinavanua is a 16-year old student of Suva Muslim College who attended the workshop out of curiousity as to what her sister Mereani Tabua was doing with FWRM. Loata is a sixth form Science Student who wants to attend Medical School after completing High School.

She didn't regret attending the workshop because she was able to get many things out of it. For instance she enjoyed learning in an evironment where there were women of her own age group which they could socialise with as well. Loata found the session on 'Jobs and How to Get them' very helpful and something that is timely.

Lautoka

Mereani Tabua talked to a few girls on their overall perceptions of the workshop and the issues discussed at the workshop.

Nafiza Dean, 17 Years Old and a Student of Lautoka Muslim College, wants to be a surgeon as a career. She attended the 'Girls Get Together' in Lautoka and Balance asked her a few questions regarding the Workshop.

She was interested in the workshop because of the issues that face young girls right now in this millennium. She told us that one new thing that she has learnt from the workshop was to 'value herself as a person and to know that she is an important'.

Self Esteem was one of the issues talked about at the workshop. Nafiza said that this was one of the sessions that she particularly liked. In particular because girls are brought up to be thought of as homemakers and are not given a chanc eto explore their ability and realise their ambitions. "This session gave me the courage to go on," said Nafiza.

Other areas of focus included HIV/AIDS, sexual harassment and what one could do to counter these problems. Many while they were of the view that they shouldn't have come to the workshop because of the negative connotations associated with "women's rights', they were glad they came because they were able to learn something new and see for themselves what FWRM really does, when they advocate for women's human rights.

Frequently asked Election Questions

1. How successful was the voter registration process for the 1999 general elections?

The Bureau of Statistics estimated that there would be about 421,336 eligible voters. The Elections Office registered over 437,000 voters. This was more than the projected figure.

2. Which parties had won seats in the 1999 general election?

SVT (8); VLV (3); FLP (37); FAP; (11); NVTLP (1); PANU (4); UGP (2); Independents (5).

Source: Elections Office

CEDAW Report Writing Workshop

A report presented by Nisha Buksh, first vice-president of the Fiji National Council of Women, on behalf of FNCW President Miriama Leweniqila, at a CEDAW Forum in Suva. The Forum was organised by Fiji Women's Rights Movement.

We were fortnate to be given the opportunity to attend this three day workshop on CEDAW Report Writing which was held in Auckland from the 13th-15th of February. FNCW was part of a government delegation as NGO representative. Our NGO secretariat, which is the FWRM, was supposed to attend this meeting. Alisi Tuqa, FWRM representative, attended the meeting as an observer.

The Workshop Contents:

It was an eye-opener for me personally for the exposure to a CEDAW Forum and to meet interesting people and most of all gather information on CEDAW and it's Report Writing format. The workshop contents were as follows:

1. Overview of CEDAW within the overall Human Rights context
*Human Rights in the United Nations framework.
*Framework of Human Rights Law
*Brief history of the Convention
*Contents of the Convention
*Relationship between the Convention and other Treatics
*Implementation of Human Rights
*The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.

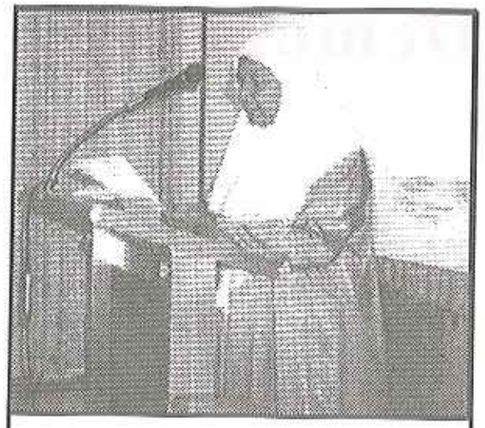
2. Overview of Reporting Process

*Purpose of Reporting
*Importance of Reporting and Timeliness
*The Convention and Reporting requirements under Article 18
*Guidelines for Reporting under the Convention
*Reporting on the substantive provisions (Articles 1-16)
*Role of NGOs

3.Panel Discussion on Country Experiences

Four countries reported on their reporting experiences - Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga and Fiji. They talked about the data collection, key aspects of the report, potential constraints and solutions, in-country clearance process.

Fiji's report was presented by the former Director for Women, Rev. Sereima Lomaloma. I have noticed that one of the constraints was NGO participation and contribution. This is where the FNCW will support the NGO secretariat (FWRM) to develop a shadow report and involve most of our affiliates to participate in providing information for the report. Another major point to consider is that although consultations with NGOs took place in August 1999, NGOs were not consulted about the final document. In other words we did not have a say in the final draft.



FNCW vice-president Nisha Buksh.

4.Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

*The Committee and its composition (under Article 17)The Committee and its method of work
*Presentation and examination of the report
*Concluding comments of the Committee
*General recommendations
*Role of civil societies and NGOs
*Role of specialised agencies

5.NGOs and CEDAW process

6.Presenting an initial report

7.Optional protocol of the Convention

8.Successful strategies at the national level

*Common obstacles and challenges
*How the regional commission, specialised agencies, and UN funds and programs could assist national governments
*Sources of technical assistance and expertise to assist with both the reporting process and reliance

Frequently asked Election Questions

1. What happens to your ballot papers if you place a tick above the line as well as number the portion below the line?

If the numbering below the line is correct, that would be accepted as your preference? If the numbering below the line is incorrect, and therefore invalid, the returining officer would look at the marking above the line to see of that has been done correctly. If it is, then that would be accepted as your preference. If it is not, then the whole ballot paper is invalid.

2. Can I vote if my name does not appear on the electoral roll?

No. You are only entitled to vote if your name is on the electoral roll.

3. What was the percentage turnout of voters in the 1999 general elections?

90.18% turned out to vote.

Source: Elections Office

they need to be able to relate to it, to belong to it."

At a global level, as a result of the intensified pressure placed on the 'Economic Global Powers" countries can look forward to the long awaited implementation of the Financing for Development plan as the UN, the IMF and WTO work together in an unprecedented collaborative effort to identify ways of mobilizing financial resources for the full implementation of the action plans agreed to in all major UN conferences of the last decade, including the Beijing Platform for Action.

Does this mean an end to the development rhetoric?

Smiles remains optimistic: "I can only end by urging women's organizations and NGOs to take Global Finance out of the 'too hard basket' and to look for every opportunity to influence policy, so we can really reduce poverty and promote economic justice and gender justice that allows all people to live in dignity, and their children to have the possibility to improve their lives."

After all, as UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan reminded the world during his annual IWDAY message, women have the skills and experiences to enable them to make a greater contribution, especially during times of post-conflict reconstruction:

"We must make greater use of that potential. We must ensure that these experiences are replicated at all levels, in national and international arenas. We must build partnerships among all actors — governments, non-governmental organizations, community groups and the private sector — to bring more women to the negotiating table and into decision-making positions. We must act on the understanding that women's full participation in preventing and resolving conflicts is essential for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security in the 21st century. On this International Women's Day of 2001, let that be our credo for a more peaceful millennium."

Tuqa attends NZ CEDAW workshop

There is a need for National governments to enhance their knowledge and understanding of women's rights in accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination on Women.

This was one of the objectives of a recently held workshop, organized by the New Zealand Government's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), UNDP Fiji, and the Economic and Social Commission in Asia and the Pacific(ESCAP).

The workshop which was held in Auckland, was attended by the Movements GEER Project Officer, Ms Alisi Tuqa.

Ms Tuqa said that the workshop focused on report writing and was called the Sub-regional CEDAW Report Writing Workshop.

"The first day focused on the general content of the Convention, whereby we exmined all the articles of the Convention," Ms Tuqa said.

She added that she learnt a lot from the workshop, especially the report writing bit, as she had no idea how to write an official report for CEDAW.

"From the year you ratify the Convention, you are required to submit a report the following year and then every four years after that to the CEDAW Committee.

"Therefore by writing reports, you are in a way showing that you are taking steps to eliminate discrimination in all facets of life," she said.

In this case, ratify means when an organization signs up with CEDAW and agree to take up all the elements of the

GEER Project Officer Alisi Tuqa

Convention.

Another objective of the workshop was to strengthen the capacity of Government officials who are responsible for preparing initial and periodic reports, as well as monitoring progress in implementation of the Convention.

Ms Tuqa said that they were also encouraged to exchange experience with the implementation of CEDAW, especially in terms of obstacles and challenges and common strategies to overcome these obstacles.

"Another objective of the workshop was encourage those states which have not yet done so to ratify the Convention and to increase awareness and capacity of representatives, of NGOs/civil society about the Convention, the rights contained therein and the critical role they play in advocating for ratification and in implementation and monitoring."

Participants at the workshop affirmed the significant role CEDAW played in the protection of women's human rights

Some of the recommendations they came up with at the end of the workshop were:

- That the Pacific Island States (PIS), which have not ratified CEDAW, be encouraged to do so by the year 2005
- That the PIS subsequently considers ratifying or acceding to the Optional Protocol of CEDAW
- That the PIS be provided with the required technical assistance and funding support from appropriate donors to enable them to ratify or accede to CEDAW and to enable them to meet their initial and subsequent reporting obligations on a regular basis.
- That the national reporting process of CEDAW seek to also include relevant information that are documented in other national reports, human rights instruments, including the implementation of the "Beijing Platform for Action."
- That reporting by PIS be integrated into the whole notion of the women's empowerment framework and rights-base approach utilising sex disaggregated data.
- That in recognising the valuable contributions of civil society and NGOs, the national reporting process on CEDAW is encouraged to include the participation of these organisations.
- That information and country experience on CEDAW be routinely shared and ideally disseminated, through networking.

NEW STAFF

Gladys Terichow

Bula Vinaka. I'm a Canadian journalist/community development worker on a two-year placement with CUSO-a Canadian development agency that provides technical assistance in developing countries. Fiji is a small island country but any perceptions of "island time" or a laid-back work environment are quickly dispelled when you work at FWRM. This is a dynamic and professional organization of women activists who are committed to "balancing the scales". I've learned that the issues facing women and women's organizations here are similar to the issues in Canada. My primary duties are to assist the communications department with developing and implementing public image campaigns, media plans, media monitoring and other projects assigned to this department.

Priscilla Singh

Hello everyone. I've been an active member of FWRM for many years and am pleased to be a new member of the staff. I am responsible for overall Finance and Administration of FWRM. My vision for the movement is that it will become a strong regional voice in our own key program areas which are; Legal and Human Rights, Economic and Employment Rights, Democracy and Good Governance, Health, Family Law, Networking and Communications. My appreciation for NGO's and their valuable contributions to society come from my involvement with trade unions and local government.

Christine Gounder

Hi. Fiji Women's Rights Movement is giving me a challenging opportunity to develop my communications, public relations and IT skills am also pleased to be on the team. I graduated from USP in December, 2000, with a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Literature and Language. I'm looking forward to using my skills to strengthen NGO networks in Fiji. I believe that by working together we can achieve our common objectives of national unity, equality for all and respect for human rights.

Catholic nuns sentenced for war crimes

by The Associated Press

BRUSSELS, June 8 - A highly unusual trial ended today when four Rwandans, two of them Roman Catholic nuns, were sentenced in a Belgian court to lengthy prison terms for war crimes committed during the mass killings in their homeland in 1994. Vincent Ntezimana, a physics professor, and Alphonse Higaniro, a factory manager and former government minister, were sentenced respectively to 12 and 20 years. The two Benedictine nuns, Sister Gertrude and Sister Maria Kisito were given 15- and 12-year terms.The guilty verdicts, which were delivered earlier today, were remarkable not only because they were pronounced some 4,000 miles from Rwanda, where some 500,000 people were killed in what was repeatedly described in court as "Africa's Holocaust." The eight-week trial has also made legal history because it was the first time a jury of ordinary citizens was asked to sit in judgment of war crimes in another nation. Until now, only military or civilian magistrates had decided such cases. The four Rwandans were found guilty by 12 Belgian men and women, ages 30 to 50, all of them white, among them a cook, a teacher, a hairdresser and a truck driver. In the view of lawyers and human rights advocates from several countries who have followed the case, the trial represented a major step in the application of international justice that may provide a springboard for future cases in other countries.

Industrial Relations Bill

This is the final sections of the Critique of the Industrial Relations Bill. This issue begins with 'Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value'.

21 Equal Pay for work of equal value

Part X of the Bill addresses this principle. The heading is entitled 'Equal pay for work of equal value. This principle is not covered at all in the current Employment Act.

Labouring under the Law addresses it when referring to Wages Council activities. It recommends that there be standardization of Wages Council Orders to ensure equality of conditions for men and women workers in unorganized industries *'especially with respect to wage rates, paid public holidays, work on Sundays, annual leave and sick leave, and in support of the principle of 'equal pay for work of equal value".*

As indicated elsewhere the Bill ensures a standardization of many conditions of employment by providing statutory minimums for all workers regardless of gender. This is not so however with minimum pay or where the Minister is given a discretion (not an obligation) to fix minimum wage rates on a class of worker by class of worker basis.

The Bill as it is currently drafted may not, in the writers' opinion, deliver equal pay for work of equal value, but rather will simply deliver equal pay. It will ensure that where men and women are working at the same or *substantially similar* work their pay must be equal.

The writer notes the criticism made in Labouring under the Law of gender bias in Wage Council Orders between minimums set in female dominated classes of workers such as garment workers, and male dominated classes such as building and civil engineering. FWRM, as does the International Labour Organisation itself, envisage that the principle requires some sort of assessment of the work skills across classes of workers and sectors of industry.

At most, this Bill enables a comparison of work skills, effort, and responsibility across an 'instrument' see clause 87.

' for determining whether there exists an element of differentiation, based on the sex of the workers, in the rates of remuneration of male workers and female workers for any work or class or work payable under an instrument, and for the purpose of making the determinations....

Even if instruments do cover differing classes or workers the comparison must be made between workers within the instrument and cannot be between instruments.

Other sections in this part of the Act also provide for a very narrow interpretation of equal pay and make it highly doubtful whether this part of the Act will enable a comparison of skills etc for different work, even if instruments do cover

on work of that description by reason of the sex of that person.

This provision is very limiting. It sets the comparison between persons with the *same or substantially similar qualifications* employed in the *same or substantially similar circumstances* doing *work of that description.*

This latter provision is very similar to legislation in New Zealand and has never delivered equal pay for work, which is different, but of equal value. It simply ensures that men and women doing the same or substantially similar work are paid equally. It would mean that a male and a female garment worker or a male and a female builder would have to receive the same pay. There could be no differential in their pay based on their sex.

Yet the ILO Committee has strongly criticized New Zealand for not providing equal pay for work of equal value. They have reiter-

Source: International Women's Tribune Centre

different classes of workers.

Section 85(1) of the Bill defines equal pay as meaning: *a rate of remuneration for work in which there is no element of differentiation between male and female workers based on the sex of the workers.*

Section 86 of the Bill sets out what constitutes unlawful discrimination in rates of remuneration:

An employer must not refuse or omit to offer, or afford a person the same rates of remuneration as are made available for persons of the same or substantially similar qualifications employed in the same or substantially similar circumstances

ated that the principle requires a broad comparison between the jobs performed by men and the jobs performed by women where there is a sex-segregated labour market. It has said'

In order to ensure implementation of the principle in an occupation or industry employing mostly women, it is essential that there be a basis of comparison outside the limits of the establishment or enterprise concerned.

The ILO Committee in Recommendation 190 also points to the importance of the following in assisting women to have equal pay for work of equal value and so im-

national playing field decidedly uneven. Recent cases have shown a strong tendency to favor the developed nations. These trends, she warns, actually inhibits the state's ability to take care of people's basic needs.

These 'non-negotiables' are highlighted by South African feminist scholar, Vivian Taylor, in her book "Marketization of Governance". According to Smiles, Taylor reiterates that the provision of the fundamental needs for people to survive (including food, security, healthcare and education) is the responsibility of government, as an integral part of the state's function.

"But the globalization model being pushed on the world operates on an entirely different set of values based on user pays ideas and it's seen privatization of such services as water supply and health."

The International debate on Good Governance has been reduced to what kind of government is needed for an efficient global market:

"Government attention has been diverted from providing for its citizens and directed towards securing foreign investment and markets. And that is what's called the Marketization of Governance."

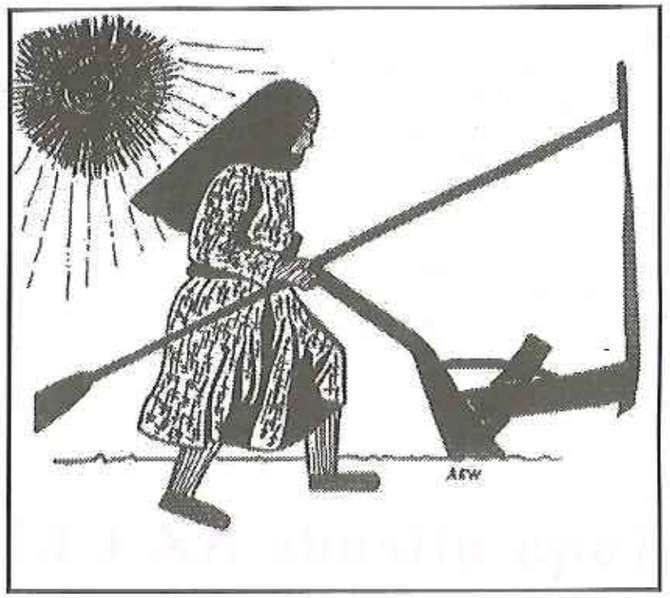
What does this mean in practical terms?

This means that a woman in the business of growing and selling locally grown tomatoes for a living ends up competing against the imported tomatoes sold by a local supermarket at a cheaper price! As a result she ends up unable to pay her children's school fees!

"Women have the skills and experiences to enable them to make a greater contribution, especially during times of post-conflict reconstruction."
(Kofi Annan)

Or, a woman who works in a garment factory does not get paid enough to live on, during normal times, and as recent cases in Fiji have highlighted, a downturn in the economy or political unrest often means she is one of the first people to lose her job when the investors make a hasty retreat with whatever capital they may have!

Ms Ali echoes the need for the upholding of principles such as Good Governance, which contribute to a peaceful and stable political climate:



"Most women last year lost a lot of opportunity. Smaller businesses were the ones who lost out first because they couldn't suppress the pressure of credit squeezes. One the other hand those businesses who were labor intensive, such as the garment industry, they lost out as well. What they need is support. And if we can give them the confidence - they are creative. Women are gifted. It is a natural response for women, as nurturers to 'pick up and pieces' and move ahead, not just for themselves, but for their children, their family."

However Smiles warns that as Fiji was already facing serious economic problems trying to comply with WTO and other globalization requirements, even without the set backs of May 2000! And with increasing trade pressures to try and recoup all these losses for merely a comparative advantage over their competition in the global market, sets the scene for further economic exploitation:

"Women provide most of the cheap labor underpinning the few meager trading advantages of the South. Much of this is shunting women into low paying, zero benefit jobs with health and safety implications!

"And what can the women's movement in Fiji do to effectively address these global and national trends?

According to Ali, Women in Business has been addressing the need to increase the capability of women, to take a step towards boosting self confidence and providing women with the business skills needed to market her ideas, prepare business proposals, and generally have the ability to undertake the required business negotiations to see her vision through.

But these efforts need to be strengthened throughout the women's movement. To ensure activities and actions designed to improve the status of women are relevant to the women:

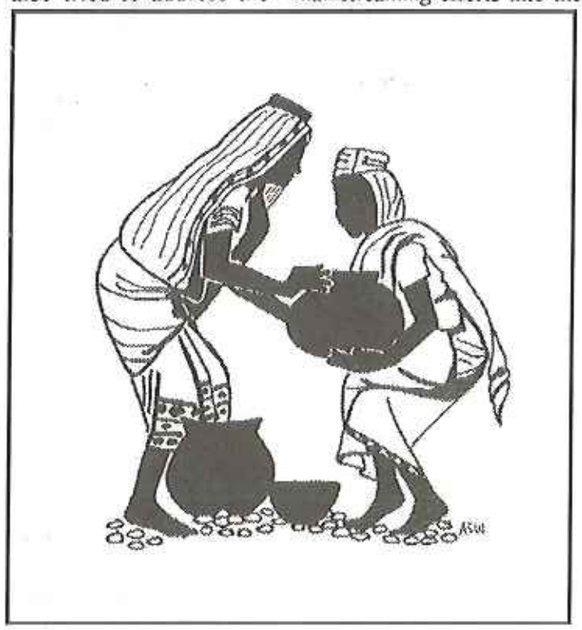
"(Women's) contribution to the economy is phenomenal. We need to redefine the whole concept of development and our contribution. But we have to combine our efforts! We can't be doing this in a fragmented manner. We need to bring all the groups together like at our Women in Business function last night. We had social workers, we had businesswomen, the women in government, we had everybody. I think that combined approach is what we need. We have to take our women forward

Women and the Economy

Responding to the need for increased gender-based dialogue and discussion to address current social, economic and political issues, caused primarily by the May 2000 Crisis, the FIJI WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT and fem'Linkpacific (Media Initiatives for Women) collaborated to highlight the issue of Women and The Economy (A Shared Vision for 2001) at FWRM's annual International Women's Day Breakfast.

The speakers were Noor Bano Ali, President and founder of WOMEN IN BUSINESS (WIB) and Seona Smiles, the Communications Officer of DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era)

This report from fem'Linkpacific:



FWRM's Coordinator, Gina Houng Lee set the stage for the breakfast speakers when she highlighted that International Women's Day (IWD) was a day for the women's movement to not only take stock of our accomplishments and challenges of the last year, but also consider strategies for the future:

"As women's NGOs we use this day to reflect on the gains and also to ask and review what needs to change. What more work do we need to focus on? FWRM has been active in the area of women's employment and economic rights. We have prepared legislation to change the Industrial Relations Bill; We have also educated women on employment literacy such as sexual harassment, maternity leave rights and also tried to address the grievances that women face in the formal working sector. While there have been many improvements for women to participate more in the formal economy - there are also some very real difficulties that women face - women, while they may make up the majority (of workers) in the garment industry, this industry is one of the lowest paid! This industry was also great affected by the political and economic crisis! "

The breakfast presentation provided the opportunity for the morning's speakers to highlight a local and global perspective on economic and development issues and policies within the context of Fiji's current political climate, which as both speakers concurred requires a greater gender perspective!

What's the Business Scene? Well actually, it is not very women-centered (but then we've all probably experienced that in some form or another!)

The challenges for women to further enhance gender-mainstreaming efforts into the economic scene would be far more daunting if it not for organizations such as FWRM, WIB and DAWN who are working to make a difference in the lives of women.

In fact NOOR BANO ALI admits feeling angered when she experienced first-hand, how women were treated in the male-dominated business sector. Her own experiences, and similar experiences faced by likeminded women led to the establishment of WIB:

"We are different (from men); we do things differently, we manage businesses differently! My experience within the accounting profession, which is a very male-dominated profession highlighted that woman's way of managing a business is very different from men. (It is) more inclusive, participatory, in all facets of her business, and that is what the world is requiring."

ALI says the formal business sector needs to recognize that it is this very multi faceted nature of women which actually provides women with the natural talent to "get into business":

"It is this skill which augurs well for today's business environment. What we can do through our various groups is to strengthen that capacity in women."

But DAWN Pacific's communications officer, Seona Smiles is a little more skeptical about the gains made by WIB.

She highlighted in her presentation that whilst the recent strides to attain equality within a political framework have assisted in further advancing at least some sectors of women, enabling them to get education, employment and start moving up the ladder, this is often undertaken within the globalization and trade regulations that keep the inter-

Industrial Relations Bill

proving women's pay:

- equal access to vocational training and employment counseling for women
- encouraging women to use such facilities
- providing welfare and social services for the needs of women workers particularly those with family responsibilities
- providing equal access to jobs

Recommendation

- Change definition of equal pay so that it includes the ability to compare, for the purposes of making a determination as to what rate would constitute equal pay, work which is different in nature but requires comparably similar skills, experience and qualifications, and is carried out in comparably similar circumstances.
- Insert requirement for Wages Council's to take account of principle of equal pay for work of equal value
- Insert requirement that Minister when fixing minimum pay rates for a class of workers is required to take account of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value(if an across the Board minimum wage does not eventuate)
- Clarify that the tribunal, when determining the classification of work or rate of remuneration, can consider rates and types across industries.

22 Wages Council Act

This legislation remains though presumably it will be amended consequent to the Industrial Relations Bill being enacted. It is important that those functions relating to the setting of leave entitlements be revoked so as to ensure the integrity of the statutory minimum leave and other standard provisions in the Industrial Relations Bill are not eroded by the back door.

Alternatively, instead of revoking their powers to set conditions wider than wages it is recommended that there should be a section inserted into the Act which provides that the Wages Council cannot fix by way of Order terms and conditions of employment which are less favourable than those contained in the *Industrial Relations Act* 1999.

Further it is recommended that a section be inserted into the Act which requires all Councils appointed to fix the rate in a female dominated or women only class of workers *in accordance with the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.*

It was recommended in Labouring under the Law that the Wages Council Orders be indexed on an annual basis to the cost of living. Clause 75 of the Bill requires the Minister to undertake a 3 yearly review of minimum rates that have been prescribed, in consultation with the Labour Advisory Board, The Minister then makes recommendations to Cabinet which appears to have the final approval on adjustments. FWRM recommended an annual review in Labouring under the Law.

There is also no reference in the clause as to the criteria the Minister is to take into account in doing the review.

The recommendations made in *Labouring under the Law* in relation to mining and garment workers are covered in the recommendation that the Minister is required to prescribe minimum rates of pay for all classes of workers over the next 3 years. Other recommendations as to conditions are taken care of by the establishment of minimum conditions in the Industrial Relations Bill.

Recommendation

- Amend *Wages Council Act* to include a requirement for Councils to take account of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value when assessing female only or female dominated classes of workers and to consider rates in other different but comparable industries or work sectors.

23 Fiji National Provident Fund

It was recommended in Labouring under the Law that domestic workers should have the right to compulsory membership of the Scheme.

Recommendation

- A consequential amendment be made to the Industrial Relations Bill to revoke references to domestic workers and outworkers from the exemption in the First Schedule to the National Provident Fund .

24 Fiji National Training Act.

Labouring under the Law's concerns in this area are with the need to *bridge the immense gulf that exists between men and women with respect to opportunities for formal training under the FNT Act.* It suggest 2 ways of doing this .

First to examine the feasibility of having 'female trades' included in the schedule of designated trades/occupations. The second recommendation is to consider drawing up affirmative action guidelines for private sector recruitment and training policies for women in non-traditional work.

Recommendation

- Add a provision to the functions of the Board requiring it to ensure an equitable distribution of resources to be spent on vocational training as between boys and men and girls and women.
- Insert a specific special measures/ EEO provision in the legislation enabling the Board to set minimum numbers of females in training courses and/ or to run special training courses for women and to be able to give women who apply preference
- Require the Minister appointing the Board to keep in mind the goal of equal representation as between the sexes, in line with s 38 of the Constitution.

In the next issue we will bring you the conclusion of the Industrial Relations Bill.

New Prize honours Women as Leaders in building Peace

New York - Two Pakistani sisters whose lives have been threatened for defending women's and human rights, a Kosovar Albanian pediatriciann sentenced to 12 years in prison for organizing against violence in Kosovo, a Rwandan who helped women resume their lives after the traumas of the 1994 massacres, a Papua New Guinea organization that fostered peace among splintered communities, a Colombian group that stages massive women's peace demonstrations, and a worldwide network of women against war are the first recipients of the Millennium Peace Prize for Women. This new international award is sponsored by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the London-based human rights organization International Alert.

The award is the first of its kind to specifically recognize women's integral role in peace negotiations, and their commitment to sustaining families and communities during war. While the Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded since 1901, only 10 of the approximately 106 winners have been women or women's organizations. The new Millennium Peace Prize for Women acknowledges women's vital participation in rebuilding regional and national economies, and their efforts in fortifying democratic principles of equality between the sexes, various ethnic groups, tribes and religions. This year's winners are: Flora Brovina (Kosovo); Asma Jahangir and Hina Jilani (Pakistan); Veneranda Nzambazamariya (Rwanda); Ruta Pacifica de las Mujeres (Colombia); and the Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency (Papua New Guinea); and, Women in Black (Global).

"The intertwining forces of gender inequality and conflict threaten peace and security around the world," said Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director of UNIFEM.

"How is it that we can, in good conscience, bring warlords to the negotiating table and not women? The Millennium Peace Prize for Women says to the world that it is time we recognized women as equal partners in peace building, and in all other political and economic realms."

"While women are affected disproportionately by violent conflict, they are not passive victims, as they are so often portrayed," explained Kevin Clements, Executive Director of International Alert. "Larger numbers of women must be invited to shape peace negotiations. What vision of peace can we expect if only half the population is included in the process?" The prize winners arrived in the United States on Sunday, March 4 and participated in briefings, luncheons and meetings in Washington, DC and in New York City.

An eleven member international Prize Selection Committee -including New Zealand's Prime Minister Helen Clark, Pulitzer Prize winning author Alice Walker, Like Water for Chocolate author Laura Esquivel, and Nobel Prize winner Jose Ramos Horta- reviewed nominations and selected the women to receive the awards. Winners received a statue designed by artist Tim Holmes, whose works appear in art collections held by collectors Edward Albee, Madam Jehan Sadat of Egypt, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and President Jimmy Carter, among others.

Frequently asked Election Questions

The general time-table for the conduct of the forthcoming general elections this year is as follows:

**Availability of Nomination Forms - w.e.f 1 June 2001*

**Last day for processing registration of political parties- 11 July 2001.*

**Writs of Elections issued- 12 July 2001*

**Last day for lodging Petitions of Demonstrated Support with the Supervisor of Elections- 16 July 2001*

**Nomination Day- 26 July 2001 [8.00am - 3.00pm]*

**Objection Day- 27 July 2001 [9.00am - 1.00pm] [2.00pm - 4.00pm]*

**Withdrawal of Candidates- 27 July 2001 [by 2.30pm]*

**Endorsement by Party of candidates-27 July 2001*

**Last day for lodging lists of Preferences- 2 August 2001*

**Polling Begins- 25 August 2001*

**Polling Ends- 1 September 2001*

**Rest Day- 2 September 2001*

**Commencement of Counting- 3 September 2001*

Source: Elections Office

Women use skills to build houses

Women around the country can now try their hands at building houses with the new initiative being taken up by Habitat for Humanity Fiji.

Called Women's Build, the new project is set to take off from the 23rd-30th June and the houses will be built by volunteers from the community and the homeowners themselves.

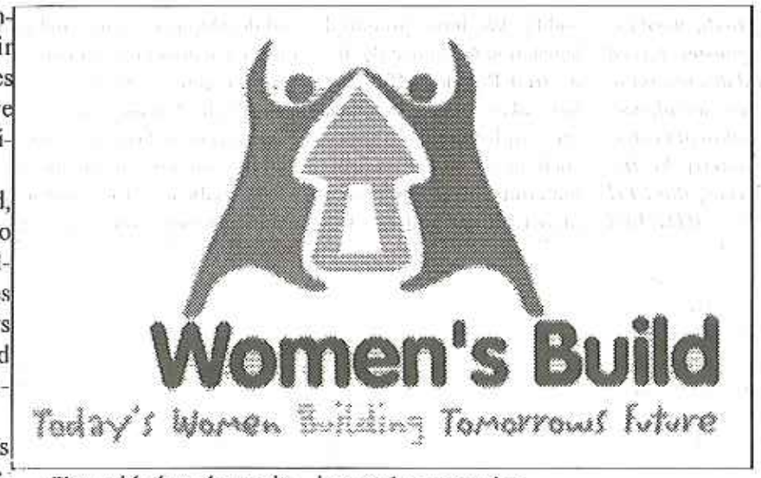
Habitat for Humanity's Affiliate Co-ordinator, Saras Singh said that her organisation builds more than houses.

"It builds hope, enhances communities, uplifts the living standards of the underpriviledged, encourages partnership and works with grassroots people.

"We see this project objectively, and believe that this will bring about positive changes in the lives of those involved in the project as well as those who are not directly involved," she said.

Mrs Singh added that the project can be seen as empowering women into taking up more constructive, definitive, and active roles.

"It will also reflect that women can bring about changes and contribute immensely to the development of not only their own families, but also their communities, and the nation in general."



She said that the main objective of the project was to set a platform for mending bridges and bringing about reconciliation and to recognize the aspirations and efforts of women towards development.

"It's not just putting hammer to nail, nail to board and board to home.

"It's bringing people together towards a common goal."

Mrs Singh said that those interested do not have to take part directly. They are many different opportunities for women to participate in this project.

"For example, as members of the Women's Build committee; as administrators; as volunteer leaders; as media and publicity personnel and so on," she said.

Mrs Singh added that she urged women to think about Women's Build with enthusiasm, interest, joy, and compassion.

"Think about what a good feeling it is to see tears of joy in the eyes of someone who, up until now, has been deprived of a decent home."

Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit organization dedicated to the eradication of poverty housing. They build and renovate houses with partner families in need of simple, decent shelter through volunteer labour and tax-deductible donations of money and materials.

The families selected for the program go through a screening process to determine their need for assistance, their ability to repay the interest free loans with which Habitat provides them and their willingness to invest a stipulated amount of volunteer labour to the program.

Mrs Singh emphasised that the selection process does not discriminate by race, religion, colour, creed, ethnicity or gender.

FWRM staff and members will participate in the programme on June 25th and welcomes all members to join.

TODAY'S WOMEN BUILDING TOMORROW'S FUTU

Habitat for Humanity invites women, men, children and stude join with other community mem to build four homes in Wailoku, need your talents!!

PLEASE CONTACT US AT:
8 Thurston Street,, Suva, Fiji
P.O. Box 2530, Govt Bldg,
Suva, Fiji
Phone: (679) 314 374 / 309 249
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www.fiji-online.com.fj/npo/hfhfiji

Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of Balance 2001, which also includes a 15th Anniversary issue. Reflecting back on 2001, it was an extremely stressful year for Fiji Women's Rights Movement and the country as a whole with the political crisis of May 19th affecting us all.

For an advocacy non-government organization this saw a change in policy direction with senior staff participating in advocacy activities seeking the return to democracy. Furthermore the activities around legislation changes have remained on hold while we wait for the return to parliamentary democracy.

I would like to say thank you and pay tribute to staff and board members who have left us. They are Raijeli Nicole WEER Project Officer and Kata Duiabe Communications Officer. And to the outgoing Board members, Praveen Sharma, Dr Mridula Sainath, Viniana Seeto, Raijeli Naruma, Vani Dulaki, and Sheetal Shah. We thank you all for your guidance and support.

FWRM has new team members who have joined us and we welcome, Alisi Tuqa GEER Project Officer, Priscilla Singh, Senior Finance and Administration Officer and Christine Gounder, Communications Officer. Incoming board members are Frazine Dutta Treasurer, Patricia Sachs Cornish, Shayne Sorby and Laisa Bale.

FWRM would also like to acknowledge the support from OXFAM New Zealand under the Capacity Building Project that has kept FWRM afloat and allowed us manage change internally in an unstable political and economic climate.

As we consolidate and renew our energy for 2001 we note the gains we have made in the last 15 years of our existence and continue in our pursuit for equality and human rights for all.

Gina

IN BRIEF...

Website coming soon

FWRM will be launching their website soon. This is not only to keep up-to-date with technology but will also benefit those doing research both locally and overseas on issues that concern women, human rights and democracy.

Fiji Media Watch workshop

Fiji Media Watch held a workshop for Journalists and Communication Officers at the Berjaya hotel from May 28th-1st June. Called *Steering Fiji Back to Democracy 2001:A Challenge to the Journalists of Fiji,* the workshop aimed at helping journalists and communications officers to understand each other and create a strategy to help them while reporting during the General Elections in August.

FWRM Open Day.

FWRM held its Open Day on May 22. People visited our new office at 88 McGregor Road and learned more about our projects and services.

FWCC Visit

Regional participants who attended the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre Regional training visited our office on May 22. Presentations were made by project officers about the role they played at FWRM. The Movement's Co-ordinator, Gina Houng Lee, also gave a brief report on the status of the Movement.

Number of poor increasing daily:UN

UNITED NATIONS—The world population is growing, with the numbers of poor far out reaching the numbers of rich, and growing; the amount of water available per person bout a third of what it was 50 years ago; half the forests on earth are gone and there will be an "unstoppable" flow of migrants workers, legal or illegal, from the south to the north. Oh yes, the guy who developed all these statistics is "optimistic" that everything will turn out just fine.

Joseph Chamie, director of the Population Division of the UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs Thursday presented the results of a year long study on the relations between population environment and development. The report, prepared by the Commission on Population and Development, found:

- The population of the world is about 6.1 billion, with less developed regions accounting for 80 per cent of the total.

- The world is growing at a rate of about 1.2 per cent annually—or 77 million new people.

- The more developed countries are growing at about 0.2 per cent, while the less developed are growing at about 1.5 per cent.

- The very least developed countries are growing at 2.5 percent a year.

Antonio Goin of the University of Rome, said that the working age population of between 20 years old and 40 years old was decreasing in europe by 2 percent per year, and increasing in sub-Saharan Africa by 3 percent per year , leaving a gap of 5 percent a year.

"In the recorded history of human kind this has never happened," he said. "it will result in an increasing and unstoppable international migration."

While the commission is charged mainly with developing analyses, and not solutions, asked at news conference for his "gut" recommendations, commission chairman Makoto Atoh said "we need slower population growth, policies aimed at decrease in pollutants, a change in behavior of habits unfriendly to the environment, and a technological transfer from developed countries to developing countries especially in the areas of saving energy and keeping the air clean."

Chamie said "I am optimistic." The population control efforts have been "a success story" he said fertility, was another success because "men and women are deciding the number and spacing of their children." "In regards to environment, we have seen a great deal of improvement in many of the regions of the world," he said.

"In development, compared to the 1950s many countries of the world are better off now than they were then," he said.

He said there were "challenges" in health and environment throughout the world, "my gut feeling is a very optimistic one."

He said the critical challenge "is right under this roof" of the Unite Nations, in the form of international cooperation.

"Global problems," he said, "need global cooperation and global solutions."

Staff Movements

*Alisi Tuqa attended an Asia Monitor Resource Centre Board meeting in Hong Kong from the 6th to the 10th of February this year

*Alisi also attended a CEDAW sub-regional Report Writing Workshop in Auckland, New Zealand from the 12th to the 18th of February.

*She also went to an Oxfam Partners Capacity Building workshop in Auckland, New Zealand from the 24th to the 31st of March.

*Following this she attended a NGO Regional Consultation on Globalisation, Trade and Debt in Nadave, Fiji from the 30th of April to 2nd of May.

*In addition, Alisi and FWRM volunteer Loi Lovodua attended a Ministry of Health, HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan meeting on the 14th of March.

*Gina attended an APWLD Regional Council meeting in Chiang Mai, Thailand, on the 12th of January. She also attended an OXFAM Partner's Capacity Building Workshop in Auckland, New Zealand from the 24th to the 31st of March.

*Gina made a presentation of FWRM's work on human rights at the PDLP program in USP on the 7th of May.

*In addition, she also made a presentation to a History Politics course at the University of the South Pacific on National Policies for Women in Development.

*Asenaca facilitated a Community Paralegal Training (CPT 2) on HR and democracy at the Tradewinds Hotel and Convention Centre form the 12th to 15th February.

*She also attended the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women meeting in New York from the 27th to the 17th of April.

*Asenaca also attended the APWLD Women's Rights Human Rights Task Force meeting in New Delhi, India from the 16th to 17th of April.

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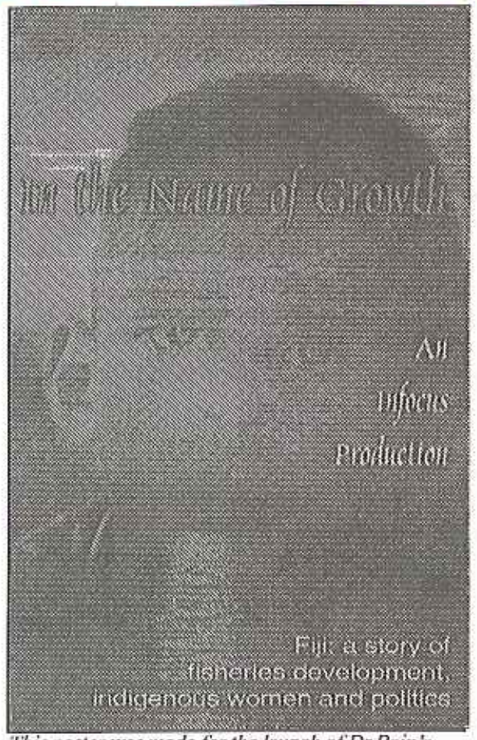
"Balancing the Scales" January - June 2001

New Video focuses on Women's Issues

THE Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM) and the Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) co-launched the documentary film *In the Name of Growth* in Suva on the 17th of May at the Australian High Commission in Suva.

The film is an hour long documentary made by 'Atu Emberson-Bain and Michael Preston, which focuses on the operations of the Levuka tuna cannery PAFCO, and the experiences of its women workers and their communities. It traces the important historical role of Levuka in Fiji's colonial and post colonial history, and is set against the backdrop of global economic trends and local political upheavals.

According to producer-director 'Atu Emberson-Bain, the film focuses on some of the unsung heroines of development in Fiji: the women who skin, clean, cut and can Pacific tuna for export markets of Canada and Europe.



This poster was made for the launch of Dr Bain's documentary 'In the Name of Growth'.

The world premiere of the documentary film took place in Levuka followed by the screening in Suva.

"Both occassions have been organized as a way of expressing appreciation to the town and its people for all the support received during the making of the film," Dr Bain said.

She added that because much of the film is in vernacular with English subtitles, the film should be more accessible to the Fijian speaking audience.

"Preston and I are very grateful for this support, and were greatly encouraged by the enthusiasm shown in Levuka," she said.

Dr Bain and Preston won a gold medal from the New York festivals and UNESCO for their documentary *Where the Rivers Meet* in January this year.

The medal was awarded for excecellence in television programming and was chosen from amongst entries from Africa, the Arab States, Latin America, the Carribbean, Central Asia and Eastern Europe as well as the Asi-Pacific region. The film was commissioned by the World of Churches in 1998 for its Peace to the City Campaign.

It has been described as 'a poignant story of community courage and commitment to peace demonstrating the unique humanity to be found in Fiji's strife-torn multi-ethnic society'.

In this issue...
Women use skills to build houses; Women and the Economy; Whales cry for help; Tuqa attends Cedaw workshop; Democracy is for Fiji; *Girls Can Do Anything* a success; New staff join FWRM team; Catholic nuns sentenced for war crimes; Industrial Relations Bill; Number of poor increasing; New Prize honours women and Staff movements...