



DRAFT

FIJI NATIONAL REPORT

**On Progress in implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for Further
Implementation (MSI) of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA)**

2010 – 2012

“Accelerating Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development”

JUNE 2013

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Background*

1.1.1 The United Nations Conference for Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 2012 (known as Rio+20) called for the convening in 2014 of a third international conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The conference also recognized the importance of coordinated, balanced and integrated actions to address the sustainable development challenges facing SIDS.

1.1.2 The 67th UN General Assembly (UNGA) held in March 2013 in its modality resolution decided that Samoa will host the Third International Conference on SIDS and that the Conference should:

- a) Assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action (BPOA) and the Mauritius Strategy (MSI);
- b) Seek a renewed political commitment by all countries to effectively address the special needs and vulnerabilities of SIDS by focusing on practical and pragmatic actions for the further implementation of the BPOA and MSI;
- c) Identify new and emerging challenges and opportunities for the sustainable development of SIDS; and
- d) Identify priorities for the sustainable development of SIDS for consideration, as appropriate, in collaboration of the post-2015 UN development agenda.

1.1.3 The UNGA agreed that the SIDS Conference in 2014 should result in a concise, focused, forward-looking and action-oriented political document.

1.1.4 The UNGA also decided that regional preparatory meetings be convened in each of the three regions of SIDS in 2013. Fiji is to host the preparatory meeting for the Pacific SIDS on July 10th -12th 2013.

1.2 *National level preparations*

1.2.1 Through the Ministry of Strategic Planning, National Development & Statistics (MSPNDS), the Fijian Government committed to preparing its own progress report. The national level preparation was undertaken in three stages.

1.2.2 The first stage involved preliminary consultations and internal assessments by the MSPNDS on the progress made by Fiji in the implementation of the BPOA and MSI. The outcome of this process was the compilation of issue papers covering various thematic areas under the MSI. Each paper focused on the major progress achieved

over the review period relevant to the MSI strategies, lessons learnt and gaps in implementation.

- 1.2.3 The second stage of national level preparations included stakeholder consultations involving a wide cross-section of stakeholders drawn from Government, private sector, non-government organizations, municipal councils and provincial councils. Two day consultative sessions were organized in the Western Division (Lautoka), Northern Division (Labasa) and Central Division (Suva) between the 23rd and 27th May, 2013.
- 1.2.4 The final stage involved securing political commitment in addressing the issues raised in the Report as well as defining a post-2015 focus for the Fijian Government. The Report was endorsed by Cabinet at its meeting on 18th June 2013.

1.3 **Theme**

- 1.3.1 The Fiji National Report carries the theme '**Accelerating Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development**'. Based on achievements to-date, lessons learnt and the need to further improve implementation, it is now recognized that a more targeted focus is necessary. Accelerating the integrated approach is the key to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our collective efforts towards sustainable development.

2. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS: 2010 – 2012

- 2.1 The MDGs and their associated targets and indicators, which were endorsed in the 2000 Millennium Summit, provide a recognized benchmark to gauge key elements in social, economic and environmental progress. In 2010, Fiji submitted a 5-Year Progress Report on the implementation of the MSI. The report noted that Fiji was on track to achieve five of the eight MDGs by 2015. This included MDG 2 achieve universal primary education, MDG 4 reduce child mortality, MDG 5 reduce maternal mortality, MDG 7 ensure environmental sustainability, and MDG 8 develop a global partnership for development. This progress was achieved in spite of weak domestic economic performance which was further constrained by the fallout from the global financial crisis, an underperforming exports sector, reduced private investment levels and rising imports. The report also acknowledged the challenge Fiji faced in achieving three goals vis-à-vis MDG 1 eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, MDG 3 promote gender equality and empowering women, and MDG 6 combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases.
- 2.2 The MDGs are mainstreamed into the Peoples Charter, which lays the foundation to rebuild Fiji into a nonracial, culturally vibrant and united, well governed, truly democratic nation that seeks progress and prosperity through merit based equality of opportunity and peace. The Strategic Framework for Change and the Roadmap lay out the specific policies and strategies to ensure successful implementation and achievement of MDG targets.

- 2.3 This report focuses on progress achieved in the period 2010 to 2012. Consistent with the approach of the national consultative process, the report assesses progress of thematic areas which have been grouped under three broad clusters: Environment and Climate Change, Economic Development and Social Development. The report has also been framed in line with the reporting template of UNDESA which requires an assessment of progress, consideration of lessons learnt and gaps in implementation, and the identification of new and emerging challenges.
- 2.4 Overall, Fiji has made some progress in implementing sustainable development strategies over the past three years. The draft Fiji MDG Scorecard (refer **Table 1**), provides a snapshot of progress since 2010. The Scorecard shows that Fiji remains on track to achieve five of the eight goals. While progress has been made in some areas under goals 1, 3 and 6, it has been assessed that these goals will unlikely be achieved by 2015. The progress over the past three years is reflected in the improvement of Fiji's HDI ranking from 108th in 2009 to 96th in the 2012 Human Development Report.
- 2.5 The progress made in the areas of primary education, improving infant and maternal health, environmental management and strengthening local and global partnerships have been achieved on the back of consistent and focused Government support. Over the past three years, Government has pioneered initiatives in the education sector such as bus fare assistance, distribution of free textbooks, school zoning and abolishing external examinations which has allowed previously marginalized school kids to improve attendance rates and access higher levels of primary and secondary education. The partnership between Government through the Ministry of Health and development partners has played a significant role in improving infant and maternal health.
- 2.6 As a small developing country dependent upon its natural resources for socio-economic development, adhering to environmentally sustainable practices continues to be a challenge. However, policies and strategies relating to sustainable environmental management have been mainstreamed into the development plans of all resource based sectors. In addition, there already exist legal and institutional frameworks that govern environmental management and thus support Fiji's progress in this area.
- 2.7 While Government has prioritized poverty alleviation, improving gender equality and combating HIV/AIDS, progress on these fronts has been slow. Based on the 2008-2009 Household Income and Expenditure Survey, the national incidence of poverty fell to 31% compared to 35%, 5 years earlier. However, the incidence of rural poverty increased in this period from 40% to 43%. Addressing rural poverty has been a major focus of Government's development agenda over the past three years with increased investment in basic infrastructure to create a conducive environment to stimulate economic development in depressed regions. Investment levels have increased from 14% of GDP in 2010 to 18% of GDP in 2012. It is envisaged that this growing

confidence in the Fijian economy will translate into more employment opportunities and improvement in living standards.

Table 1: Draft Fiji MDG Scorecard

MDG Target	Target for 2015	Status: will target be met?	State of supportive environment
MDG1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger			
1.A.	Halve the proportion of people living below the national poverty line	Unlikely	Fair
1.B.	Achieve full and productive employment for all including women and young people	Unlikely	Fair
1.C.	Halve the proportion of people suffering from hunger	Potentially	Strong
MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education			
2.A.	All children will complete a full course of primary education	Likely	Strong
MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women			
3.A.	Eliminate gender disparity in education	Likely	Strong
3.B.	Share of women in wage employment formal sector	Unlikely	Fair
3.C.	Proportion of seats held by women in n parliament	Unlikely	Weak
MDG 4:Reduce child mortality			
4.A.	Reduce child mortality by two-thirds	Likely	Strong
MDG 5: Improve maternal health			
5.A.	Reduce maternal mortality by 75%	Likely	Strong
5.B.	Achieve universal access to reproductive health services	Inadequate data	Weak but improving
MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases			
6.A.	Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	Unlikely	Strong
6.B.	Achieve universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all who need it	Potentially	Weak but improving
6.C.	Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases	Likely for TB	Fair
MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability			
7.A.	Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources	Potentially	Strong
7.B.	Reduce biodiversity loss	Potentially	Fair
7.C.	Halve the proportion of population without sustainable access to improved drinking water and sanitation	Potentially	Strong
7.D.	Achieve significant improvement in the lives of urban slum dwellers	Unlikely	Fair
MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development			
8.A.	Develop further open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system	Potentially	Fair
8.C.	Address the special needs of SIDS	Potentially	Fair
8.D.	Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries	Potentially	Fair
8.E.	Provide access to affordable essential drugs	Potentially	Strong
8.F.	In cooperation with the private sector, make available the	Potentially	Fair

	benefits of new technology		
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Source: Draft Fiji MDG Scorecard, Ministry of Strategic Planning, National Development & Statistics, 2013.

- 2.8 Socio-cultural barriers continue to hinder the empowerment of women, particularly in the rural setting. However, there is greater awareness and acknowledgement of the role and capability of women within Government as evident in improved representation in the senior executive service and on the Boards of public sector companies and statutory authorities.
- 2.9 Addressing the increase in the incidence of HIV/AIDS over the past few years presents a unique challenge for Government and advocates in civil society. On one hand, it reflects the growing challenge of containing the spread of the disease, particularly among the working age population, and on the other hand, it reflects the impact of awareness and sensitization within the community that breaks barriers and gives individuals the confidence to come forward and take a voluntarily test. Advocates working in this area attribute the latter as the main factor behind the increase in detection over the past few years.

3. ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE

Under the cluster of Environment and Climate Change, there are five thematic areas which include Climate Change and Sea-level rise, Natural and Environmental Disasters, Management of Wastes, Freshwater Resources and Biodiversity. Overall, the progress in implementing strategies under these thematic areas has been positive, particularly in relation to putting in place institutional mechanisms. On the other hand, the effectiveness of these mechanisms, given resource and capacity constraints is an ongoing challenge.

3.1 *Climate Change and Sea level rise*

- 3.1.1 The adverse effects of climate change and sea level rise present significant risks to the sustainable development of SIDS. The long term effects threaten the very existence of some small islands. Since ratifying the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1993, Fiji has pursued policies that recognize the importance of managing the environment and natural resources, to ensure social and economic prosperity in the present and for the future. While not a major contributor to climate change, Fiji, like other small island countries, is at the frontline of its impacts. Climate change is having a widespread impact, affecting all sectors of the economy from health, infrastructure, water resources, agriculture, forestry and fisheries. The burden of this impact is being shouldered more by the rural populace because of their dependence on vulnerable sectors such as agriculture and tourism, for their livelihood.
- 3.1.2 Government has endorsed a new National Climate Change Policy (2012). The policy defines objectives and accompanying strategies to mainstream climate change into relevant sector plans. It ensures Fiji meets its international commitments under the

UNFCCC and other international conventions such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.

- 3.1.3 In addition, a Disaster Risk Reduction programme has been introduced to address the relocation of communities threatened by rising sea levels. In 2013, the village of Vunidogoloa in the province of Cakaudrove in the Northern Division became the first village to be relocated under the programme. At a regional level, Fiji is working with MSG countries on appropriate policies and strategies to address 'climate refugees'.
- 3.1.4 With the support from the UNDP and SPREP, the Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change Project was launched in 2010. The objective of the project is to address long-term adaptation measures in order to increase the resilience of coastal areas, associated infrastructure, water resources and food production to the adverse effects of climate change. For Fiji, the focus is on improving crop resilience and drainage systems in lowland farming areas in the Tailevu-Rewa and Serua-Namosi Provinces to deal with the impacts of climate change.
- 3.1.5 With increased NGO activities at community level, there is a need for better coordination and coherence with Government funded development initiatives in order to achieve beneficial results at the local level. The presence of a national level Steering Committee that links with a divisional office will assist provincial and district councils in ensuring initiatives implemented at the local level are relevant and consistent with national objectives. This would avoid duplication and overlap of development work at the local level.

3.2 *Natural and Environmental Disasters*

- 3.2.1 Fiji is located amongst the most vulnerable sub-regions in the Pacific in relation to the intensity and frequency of severe natural disasters which occur during the November-April wet/cyclone season. In the past 3 years, Fiji has endured two severe tropical cyclones and at least four major flooding incidences. As shown in **Figure 1**, approximately 85% of all natural disasters in Fiji over the past 30 years have been tropical cyclones, with an average of 2 cyclones occurring annually.

Disaster Prevalence Rate 1985 - 2012

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