

MEDIA RELEASE

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ADDRESS BY MR VISHNU MOHAN, FSC BOARD CHAIRMAN AT 2018 GROWER TALANOA SESSION, IN DRASA, LAUTOKA

Bula vinaka, Namaste and a very good morning to All our Growers present here today.

It gives me great pleasure to stand here and advise that much progress has been achieved since I was appointed as Chairman of the FSC Board.

This has come about through a lot of hard work and commitment of a new and revitalised Executive Management Team and the continued commitment of our many staff across our mills in Viti Levu and Vanua Levu.

At this juncture, I also wish to thank and acknowledge you, our growers, for your resilience and perseverance this year, especially after the devastation of the two tropical earlier this year. Your continued efforts in ensuring FSC receives a consistent flow of the sugar cane crop are assisting our production targets very well.



Right: FSC Board Chairman Vishnu Mohan addressing the growers

Earlier this year, in March 2018, FSC was fortunate to have the Honorable Prime Minister and Minister for Sugar, iTaukei Affairs and Foreign Affairs Rear Admiral (Retired) Voreqe Bainimarama, launch our new tractor and implements fleet.

These thirty new tractors and implements have now been deployed across the cane belt and hired out to you at cost-effective pricing. Needless to say, these efforts are beginning to yield positive results in terms of crop output.

And then in June 2018, we launched twenty new water tankers to assist with the supplementary irrigational needs of our growers. Whilst this is not sufficient for all your irrigational needs, we are working on how best we can address drought related farming issues through proper mechanical solutions.



Right: Grower Josefa Cagi making a point at the Grower Talanoa Session

You would have also seen on our roads that we have brand new FSC four wheel vehicles. We have replaced sixty-two vehicles for the Agricultural Services division; this is the division which services your needs as growers. We wanted our people to be more accessible to our growers, to allow for a better working relationship or cohesion between you, our growers and our people.

FSC is actively looking to grow our cane production. We are actively seeking more land for cane development. We are knocking on doors and talking to lapsed growers, newly interested people and landowners in an effort to achieve our cane development targets.

FSC is now aggressively pursuing Joint Ventures. Recently we had a ground-breaking ceremony at Nasarawaqa in the province of Bua; who are coming on board with sugar cane farming. This is a game-changer for the industry and it will only get better from here on-end. So if you know lapsed growers or landowners who have land and want to come back to sugar cane farming, we will welcome them with open arms.

Last month, we exported US\$1.2 million worth of Fairtrade sugar to Europe. This directly benefitted our three cane producer associations. FSC will continue to work towards getting good rewards for our growers like this Fairtrade sales deal.

We are grateful to the continued support of our Government of Fiji, who continues to inject provide much needed subsidies to aid our growers. Fertiliser, weedicide and transportation costs from Penang to Rarawai and now Lautoka, have all been subsidised to assist your production costs. This year the government has increased its financial support to the industry from \$60 million to \$62.3 million to allow these subsidies to continue into next year.



Left: Grower Ranjit Singh addressing the FSC panel at the Grower Talanoa Session

Whilst we have this positive platform in place, let's make the most of it. Let's work together to revive this industry. When the sugar industry is successful, the multiplier effects across the country will be felt.

So I urge you all, let's work together as an industry. Let's progress what we have achieved this year and grow it next year and beyond. Our long-term cane production target is 3.5 million tonnes, so 2 million tonnes for the next crop would be a good start.

I thank you all for attending our invitation and I take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy Fiji Independence Day, which falls next week, and successful end to this year's season.

ENDS

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