



PRESS RELEASE 71/2021

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**** For Immediate Release ****

Minister Seruiratu commend efforts of Naitutu youths



Caption: Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management Hon. Inia Seruiratu and Commissioner Central Division Mr. Josefa Navuku with members of the Naitutu Village Transformation Youth Group in Tailevu yesterday.

SUVA- Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management Hon. Inia Seruiratu has commended the efforts of the youths of Naitutu Village in Tailevu who have collectively ventured into yaqona farming to empower them to become independent and financially stable in the long term.

The Naitutu Village Transformation Youth Group comprise of 25 young men. The youth group started their yaqona farm last year, following in the “Rural Millionaire” concept adopted by the villagers of Sawaieke in Lomaiviti in 2018. To date the youths have planted more than 40,000 yaqona plants which they intend to harvest in 2024.

Yesterday, Hon. Seruiratu visited Naitutu Village to officiate at the youth group’s end-of-year celebration.

In addressing members of the youth group, Hon. Seruiratu said he was inspired by the individual efforts and determination shown by the youths through the establishment of their yaqona farm. He reminded the youths to put to good use the money that they would earn from farming for the betterment of their families.

“Nothing is ever hard,” Hon. Seruiratu said.

“Remember progress is impossible without change. People who cannot change their mindset cannot change anything. You have shown that you have fully committed to change and I encourage you to not give up. Keep working together. I have never stopped stressing that during this COVID-19 pandemic, there has never been a better time to be in rural Fiji.”

During his visit, the Hon. Minister also donated some items to assist the youth group in their farming incentive. The items included a chainsaw, tents, and sprayer.

Youth group Chairman Mr. Lekima Soqo thanked Minister Seruiratu and the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management for the much needed assistance, saying it would greatly assist the youths in their daily farming activities.

“We are really thankful to Government for this assistance. Our youths go and camp out in the farm and we do not have any proper shelter so the tents donated to us will enable us to have proper shelter,” Mr Soqo said.

“Also, we have just been wanting to get a chainsaw and we’re grateful that the Hon. Minister is able to assist us in this regard.”

Meanwhile, Minister Seruiratu also called on the youths and villagers of Naitutu gathered at the celebration yesterday to prepare their individual families and village well for the current cyclone season.



Caption: ***Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management Hon. Inia Seruiratu handover the donated items by the Ministry to members of the Naitutu Village Transformation Youth Group in Tailevu yesterday.***

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The Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management is responsible for implementing development strategies that bring Fijians living in rural and maritime regions the same level of access to essential services and economic opportunities as anywhere else in the country. We coordinate and implement the Fijian Government's rural and maritime development initiatives with a mission to empower Fiji's rural sector. We also spearhead disaster risk reduction initiatives at national and sub-national level including disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. We have offices for each of Fiji's 14 provinces including Rotuma, leading the Fijian Government's rural development and disaster risk management operations.

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