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**** For Immediate Release ****

Water project to address water woes



Caption: ***Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management Hon. Inia Seruiratu commissions the Rakani Settlement Water Project in Bua yesterday***

LABASA – Residents of Rakani Settlement in the district of Dama in Bua have expressed gratitude towards Government for the commissioning of their new water project by the Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management, Hon. Inia Seruiratu yesterday.

The water project was completed under the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management's Self-Help Programme (SHP) at a cost of close to \$20,000.

Rakani resident Ms. Parvati said the water issue at their settlement was an issue they had been facing for the past 30 years.

Prior to the commissioning of the water projects, the residents used to fetch water from a nearby creek or a well for consumption and other household chores.

“Life used to be very hard when we had to rely on the well because whenever we had a dry spell, there would be no water and also with the use of the creek, there were risks of water borne diseases. Today we are really happy and we are very thankful to Government, the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and the Commissioner Northern Division for this great assistance. Our prayers for many years have been answered with this project,” said the 61-year-old grandmother.

The water project included an upgrade of the settlement's water system and the provision of a 10,200 litres water tank and piping.

Speaking while commissioning the project, Minister Seruiratu reiterated that although the funding for the project may have been little, the return of investment and the impact to the community are greater.

“Government's plans have not changed,” he said.

“We want to ensure that everyone enjoys the best of the services that can be offered by Government. People in urban areas, they enjoy electricity, they enjoy good water and good roads, the same applies to people in rural areas, but it will take resources to get there. Unfortunately, we cannot address all the issues at once, but let me assure all of you that no one will be left behind.”

Minister Seruiratu also reminded the residents of Rakani to pursue other economic activities available to them as Bua had a lot of potential

“This is an opportunity to improve your lives and I know this will contribute to the economic social development in your community.”

The water project will benefit 35 Fijians from 7 households.

Meanwhile, in addressing the residents of Rakani, Hon. Seruiratu also encouraged them to ensure they were prepared for the current cyclone season. He reminded men from the settlement that they had the biggest role to ensure the safety of their families during times of disaster.



Caption: Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management Hon. Inia Seruiratu, Acting Deputy Secretary for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management Ms. Arieta Dimuri, Commissioner Northern Division (CND) Mr. Uraia Rainima and senior Government representatives based in Bua with residents of Rakani Settlement following the commissioning of their water project 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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For press enquiries:

Rusiate Baleilevuka, NDMO, Tel. +679 9904467, rusiate.baleilevuka@govnet.gov.fj

Aqela Susu, MRMDM, Tel. +679 3216456/+679 9985670 , aqela.susu@govnet.gov.fj