



PRESS RELEASE 02/2022

Date: 06/01/2022

**** For Immediate Release ****

Minister Seruiratu calls on villagers to put donor funding to good use



Caption: Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management Hon. Inia Seruiratu with villagers from Mau in Namosi who participated in the Saemaul Undong Workshop in Suva yesterday.

SUVA- Villagers from three villages in the provinces of Tailevu and Namosi that are currently piloting the Korean Saemaul Undong concept have been urged to ensure that funding given by the taxpayers of Korea are put to good use.

Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management Hon. Inia Seruiratu made the comments while addressing the villagers who participated in a one-day Saemaul Undong Workshop in Suva yesterday.

Hon. Seruiratu reminded the villagers that because the SMU programme was now under his Ministry, he had high expectations for the programme.

“We don’t want to put the Korean tax-payers money to waste. This is funded by donor partners and we must take this responsibility seriously,” Hon. Seruiratu said.

“They have made commitments in the next five years for the three respective villages and there is probably some room as well for expansions, but it will depend on the success and the level of commitments that we will make.”

“I am here to emphasise that as the Minister responsible, we will not fail them. We will have to deliver.”

The SMU concept is a Korean community development program implemented in Fiji, focused on building a village or community to improve villagers’ quality of life based on the spirits of diligence, self-help and cooperation, and approaches by the villagers, of the villagers and for the villagers. The concept is also based on self-reliant decision-making through the process of planning, implementation, evaluation, and feedback to the next phase.

Through this joint partnership between the Korean and the Fijian Government, the villages of Silana, Naimasimasi and Mau have been assisted with funding for social projects to help raise living standards in their individual communities.

Minister Seruiratu also urged the villagers to start venturing into economic empowerment projects for the betterment of their families.

In opening the workshop yesterday, Permanent Secretary for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management Mr. David Kolitagane said the Government, through the Ministry was grateful to the people and the Government of Korea for considering Fiji as a recipient of this initiative.

“We foresee this fruitful cooperation as a means to boost rural development in Fiji and set a platform that will provide quality life standards for our citizens,” Mr Kolitagane said.



Caption: ***Korean Ambassador to Fiji H.E. Young-Kyu Park, Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management Hon. Inia Seruiratu, Saemaul Undong Secretary General Mr. Seok Jin Kim, and Permanent Secretary for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management Mr. David Kolutagane with participants at the Saemaul Undong Workshop in Suva 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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