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**** For Immediate Release ****

Minister Seruiratu receives courtesy call from Korea's Saemaul Undong SG



Caption: From Left: Korean Ambassador to Fiji H.E. Young-Kyu Park, Saemaul Undong Secretary General Mr. Seok Jin Kim, Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management Hon. Inia Seruiratu, and Permanent Secretary for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management Mr. David Kolitagane after the meeting yesterday.

SUVA- Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management Hon. Inia Seruiratu received a courtesy call from Korea's Saemaul Undong Secretary General, Mr. Seok Jin Kim and the Korean Ambassador to Fiji, His Excellency Young-Kyu Park, yesterday.

The Saemaul Undong (SMU) concept is a Korean community development program implemented in Fiji as part of a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Fijian Government and the Korean Government.

Yesterday's meeting was the beginning of the handing over process from the Ministry of Youth and Sports to the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management as the lead implementing agency in coordinating rural developments through this partnership.

The two parties discussed issues ranging from the implementation of development programmes under the SMU concept, future cooperation and the establishment of a joint technical working group, the Ministry's major assistance programmes, the reopening of Fiji's borders and COVID-19 fight, and Fiji's bilateral relations with Korea.

In his remarks during the meeting, Hon. Seruiratu assured the visiting team that the Ministry would continue to work from where the Ministry of Youth and Sports had left off.

Hon. Seruiratu said the Ministry's team is looking forward to visit communities that have been assisted so far through the SMU partnership.

"Let me assure you that the success of the Saemaul Undong initiative is something that we take seriously and this is one of the reasons why I am happy that it is now, with your concurrence has come back to this Ministry as the implementing agency," Hon. Seruiratu.

Hon. Seruiratu also reassured the visiting delegation of the Ministry's support towards the effective implementation of the MOU.

"We reaffirm Fiji's commitment to strengthening Fiji-Korea relations and we assure that to the visiting delegation of the Ministry's support towards the effective implementation of the MOU."

Mr Seon Jin Kim reiterated that the SMU concept referred to any community development movement, and is defined by 3 pillars which are Diligence, Cooperation and Self Help.

"I am impressed with the SMU village models namely Silana, Naimasimasi and Mau in Namosi. With the minimum support from the centre, we appreciated the contribution and the dedication of the community members to complete the planned projects" said Mr Seon Jin Kim

"The dedication of the communities is all founded are the pillars of the centre. We will continue to provide assistance to expand the SMU model across Fiji, while using these three (3) villages as the baseline to ensure that the New Village Movement concept is adopted to provide the quality of life that every communities deserve."

He also assured Hon. Seruiratu and team that the SMU initiative in Fiji intends to focus on economic driven projects in addition to social projects that they currently assisting several villages with.

Ambassador Young-Kyu Park said the Korean Government was glad that the SMU partnership would continue with the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management as the new lead implementing agency.



Caption: Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management Hon. Inia Seruiratu with Saemaul Undong Secretary General Mr. Seok Jin Kim after their meeting 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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