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Press Release

Ninth Sapru House Lecture

by

H.E. Hon. Ratu Inoke Kubuabola

Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation,
Republic of Fiji

on

‘Developments in Fiji 2007 onwards’

(11 February 2014)

The Indian Council of World Affairs organised the 9th Sapru House Lecture on 11 February 2014 at Sapru House, New Delhi. The lecture titled, ‘Developments in Fiji 2007 onwards’ was delivered by H.E. Hon. Ratu Inoke Kubuabola, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Republic of Fiji. The lecture was attended by diplomats, academics, scholars and media persons from India, Fiji and other countries.



H.E. Hon. Ratu Inoke Kubuabola, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Fiji, delivering the lecture

In his welcome remarks, Mr. Nagendra Kumar Saxena, Deputy Director General, ICWA highlighted the importance of Fiji in Indian foreign policy on account of the large Indian diaspora in the country. He stated that Fiji’s foreign and domestic policy have a profound impact on India given its historical and cultural ties with the island nation.

The Lecture was chaired by Ambassador Sudhir Devare, former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs and former DG, ICWA. In his opening remarks, he highlighted the high level interactions between the two countries in the past and the old civilisational and cultural ties. Ambassador Devare enlisted the bilateral engagements at various levels, including educational & cultural exchanges, cooperation in technical education, military training and renewable energy.

Foreign Minister Ratu Inoke Kubuabola, in his lecture, primarily discussed the political and economic developments in Fiji and the country's foreign relations. Discussing the role and relevance of Fiji in South Pacific politics, he stated that Fiji had adopted its fourth Constitution in last September, aimed at eradicating the ethnic fissures and promoting a just and equitable society. Alluding to the Fiji's Prime Minister,



H.E Hon. Ratu Inoke Kubuabola, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Fiji with other dignitaries

Commodore Frank Bainimarama speech in UN last year to make Fiji a sustainable parliamentary democracy with robust institutions and public reforms, he stressed that Fiji would not default on its promise of free and fair elections in September this year. He informed that a six member election commission has been constituted and enrolment of more than 80 per cent of voters has been achieved.

Highlighting the country's diplomatic efforts of opening new missions to promote trade and economic ties, he stated that Fiji's 'Look North' policy is aimed at reaching out to the other partners. He added that Fiji has chaired the G-77 plus China and also UN led forums such as UNDP and UNFPA, which was a challenging task but a fruitful experience. After its suspension from the Pacific Island Forum (PIF) and the Commonwealth, Fiji has floated a new organisation, Pacific Island Development forum to address the challenges faced by the small Pacific island nations. He added that Fiji is trying to build consensus on climate change and development issues through forums, such as Melanesian Spearhead Group. It has engaged its neighbours for deliberations on the issues like maritime protection and creating awareness about the global warming.

During the Q&A, he addressed a number of questions related to the role of Indian Diaspora in Fiji, China, Russia, tourism, aviation industry, foreign direct investment and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the Pacific island nations.
