



# FIJI TEACHERS UNION NEWSLETTER

*(The Child Our Hope)*

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## GREETINGS

Warm greetings to all our valued members

## 85th ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2015

The AGM and Conference was well attended by the delegates and guests in Nasinu. It was very encouraging to see members in large numbers. Congratulations to Nasinu Branch for the successful organization of the 85th Annual Conference.

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Mr. David Lamotte, the Director International Labour Organisation Office for Pacific Island Countries was the Chief Guest and Keynote Speaker at the 85th AGM & Conference in Nasinu.

While addressing the delegates and guests on the conference theme, he highlighted the importance of social dialogue in education. Education and training have long been recognized as key drivers of social and economic development.

He added that the education sector is constantly undergoing changes, as it responds to meet new demands often due to changing labour market needs and the teaching profession adjusts to new roles and responsibilities. These demands and changing circumstances are clearly evident in Fiji.

Furthermore, he stressed that the ILO supports the key people who deliver education: teachers! Together with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the ILO promotes principles of quality teaching at all levels of education through two recommendations concerning teaching

personnel, as well as the joint ILO/UNESCO committee of experts on the application of the recommendations concerning teaching personnel.

He stated that in Fiji this means actively involving teachers and the community organizations that run, own or manage the schools, in the design and implementation of education reforms.

He encouraged those in management and responsible for national education reforms to provide real and meaningful opportunities for social dialogue with those implementing the reforms – the teachers. Teachers need to engage in these dialogues, individually and through the unions and associations that represent their rights and interests.

In his closing remarks, he shared the hope that in Fiji practical and real actions will continue to be made to improve constructive social dialogue based upon trust and mutual respect in all sectors - including education.





### **PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**

The President, Bro. Muniappa Goundar in his address alluded to the theme and highlighted that to ensure quality education is delivered to the target group, all relevant partners must play their role in a very appropriate and timely manner. It is every child's right to get quality education in whichever institute they choose, it is every parent's expectation that their child will get quality education in a sound learning

environment.

He also added that whilst the Union is appreciative of governments many initiatives to ensure that children of school age are in school, the Union, sadly, notes that not enough is being done for the teachers.

Furthermore, he stressed that the Text Book Scheme, Free Milk, Bus Fare Assistance and Zoning assist the parents and the children in the education process, and are commendable. No other government has done this for the children's welfare and for the provision of quality education.

However, honest and rewarding steps have to be taken to boost the morale of our teachers.

In his concluding remarks, he called upon the Ministry of Education to give serious thought towards making Fiji a knowledge based society and having quality education for all by:

- Restoring the Executive Teacher positions,
- Ensuring that teachers receive their increments,
- Restoring the Public Service Appeals Board as a fair redress mechanism for aggrieved officers
- Restoring the Union's right of representation to make educational decision making more transparent.



## **RESOLUTIONS 2015**

The 85th AGM unanimously endorsed the following resolutions to be submitted to the relevant authorities for appropriate action. The Secretariat continues to engage in dialogue for implementation of the same.

### **1. FTU ON CURRICULUM ADVISORY BOARD**

Noting that National Policies and Action Plans to achieve Education for All must be developed and implemented in partnership with civil society groups, including Teacher Unions and NGOs.

**Fiji Teachers' Union 85th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to ensure that there is active participation of teachers in the development and implementation of education policies, plans and curricula through their respective Teacher Union.**

### **2. TRAINING FOR TEACHERS – SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Recognising that quality education is a human right, Accepting that education must be provided by the state,

Noting that education must be available freely to all, Further noting that education should be all inclusive and people with special needs need assistance to achieve their maximum potential,

**Fiji Teachers Union 85th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to provide more funding towards training of the teachers for effective teaching and learning in Special Education Schools.**

### **3. POST PROCESSING**

Noting the number of complaints received from the members regarding the filling of vacancies,

Further Noting that better merited officers have missed out on promotions,

And that these officers have no mechanism to seek redress,

**Fiji Teachers Union 85th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to include the Teacher Unions in the Central Staff Board Meetings**

**and restore the Appeals Process.**

### **4. NON-TEACHING TIME FOR SCHOOL HEADS**

Acknowledging the enormous responsibility of guiding, developing, monitoring and reporting on teachers and the school,

Noting the time consumed to provide professional guidance, assisting and assessing training needs of the teachers under their care,

And attending to the needs and queries of the parents, appreciating that Heads of ED 1B to ED 4C in Primary and ED 1D to ED 2B in Secondary schools have now been relieved of teaching.

**Fiji Teachers Union 85th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to reconsider their stance and allow all School Heads to have zero teaching load to enable them to carry out their administrative duties effectively.**

### **5. EXECUTIVE TEACHER POSITIONS**

Noting that the 1993 JEE saw merit in making recommendation that 854 Executive Teacher positions be created in primary schools,

Further noting that the recommendation was implemented in 1997 which had since brought in a marked improvement in the quality of classroom work in primary schools,

That this allocation of 854 ET positions was reduced to 427 by the Ministry of Education as a cost cutting measure in 2009, and which had a negative impact on the delivery of quality education,

**Fiji Teachers Union 85th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to restore the ET positions to its full complement.**

### **6. IN-SERVICE TRAINING**

Noting that teaching methods and Curricula are ever changing,

Acknowledging that new standards for children require that teachers have deep and flexible knowledge of their subject matter and wide repertoire of teaching skills,

**Fiji Teachers Union 85th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to inject more**



**funds into the in-service programmes and ensure that these programmes are structured and provide opportunities for greater number of teachers to enhance their teaching / learning skills.**

## **7. ENTRY POINT SALARY - NEW RECRUITS**

Noting that teachers recruited in 2015, have been put on ED 9A salary of \$12,360.00,

Acknowledging that the 1993 Job Evaluation Exercise Agreement had made major changes to make teacher grade to be more realistic and attractive by putting graduates on appropriate salaries, namely ED 8A and ED 8G,

Realising that ED 9A salary is making the teaching profession undesirable and that the huge reduction in salary is de-professionalising the teaching profession and that the profession will not be attracting talented individuals,

**Fiji Teachers' Union 85th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to revert and restore the new recruits' [2015] salary to ED 8A and ED 8G and place them on the correct entry point.**

## **8. RESOLUTION - CHIEF GUEST'S SPEECH**

Noting that Fiji joined ILO in 1974,

Further Noting that Fiji is a signatory to promoting rights at work, encouraging decent employment opportunities for women and men, conditions of work, freedom, equity, security and human dignity and enhancing social protection,

Acknowledging with delight the signing of the Agreement by the Social Partners in Geneva in March this year to advance industrial relations in a more cooperative and productive manner and in compliance with the international labour standards,

**Fiji Teachers' Union 85th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Honourable Minister for Education to follow the cue from the Geneva signing that dialogue is the way forward and step forward to dialogue with the Unions on issues concerning the members.**

## **9. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

Acknowledging that learning begins at birth and the pre- condition for quality education, equity and

efficiency are set in the early childhood years, Noting that pre-school education provides children with a "head start" for their primary school, which positively influences their later performances in school,

Appreciating that the Ministry of Education will be paying the salary of all ECE teachers registered with the Ministry with effect from 1st July 2015,

Further appreciating the Government's policy that all Fijians must have access to quality education,

**Fiji Teachers' Union 85th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to formally recognise all ECE schools and bring them under its jurisdiction , develop a salary structure for the ECE teachers and take full responsibility of providing quality Early Childhood Education to all.**

## **10. TEACHER APPRAISAL**

Recognising that the Appraisal system is a positive and tangible way of rewarding teachers,

Noting with concern that the Ministry of Education is planning to formulate an Appraisal System unilaterally,

Further Noting that the points allocated to the planned Appraisal System is seriously flawed; Supervisors to give 20 points, Students to assess teachers and allocate up to a further 20 points and 60 points based on Results,

**Fiji Teachers Union 85th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to formulate the Appraisal System in full consultation with the Teacher Unions to ensure a just and fair means of appraisal and remuneration.**

## **11. COVERAGE OF WORK**

Noting the members' concern that it is extremely difficult to cover the syllabi in two terms,

Further noting complaints from the parents that children are over burdened with homework, as this syllabi has to be covered,

Realizing that quality teaching and learning is not taking place as priority is given to finishing the syllabi,

**Fiji Teachers' Union 85th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to reconsider its position and allow schools to complete the syllabi in the prescribed time.**

## 12. MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

### WORKSHOPS FOR TEACHERS IN SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

Recognising that school breaks are the only form of earned leave for teachers,

Noting that there is no other provision for annual leave like other Civil Servants,

Further Noting that extensive studies have proven that both teachers and students need these holidays,

**The 85th Annual General Meeting of FTU submits to the Ministry that teachers must not be engaged in any duty during the school holidays.**

## 13. JEE FOR TEACHERS

Noting that the 2003 JEE was completed by the Public Service Commission in full consultation with the Public Sector Unions,

Further noting that the outcome of the review was to be implemented across the Board,

Registering deep concern that the recommendations have been selectively implemented for some sectors of the Civil Service

**The 85th Annual General Meeting of the Fiji Teachers Union submits that a fresh JEE be carried out in partnership with Teacher Unions and be implemented from 1/1/2016.**

### 2015 CONFERENCE SPORTS RESULTS

SPORTS	WINNER	RUNNER UP
Soccer	Nadroga	Nasinu
Netball	Suva	Ba
Men's V/Ball	Suva	Ba
Women's V/Ball	Nasinu	Suva
Best Player Soccer	Jitesh Kumar (Nadroga)	
Best Player Men's V/Ball	Naushad Khan (Ba) Waisale Suka (Suva)	
Best Player Women's V/Ball	Luisa (Suva) Maca Guruna (Nasinu)	
Best Player Netball	S e r a s a i n i Lala(Suva)	

## DUTY HOURS

As reported in the last newsletter, the Permanent Secretary in her letter dated 25/2/15 had stated that any work outside 8.00am and 3.30pm is done on a "voluntary basis mutually agreed by all parties".

The Union has noted with concern that Circular 30/15 and emails from some new Education Officers are to the contrary. The matter has once again been brought to the attention of the PS verbally as well as in writing. (Letter of 25/2/15 copied)

## MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

It is pleasing to note that the Union membership has seen steady growth in the recent years. There are however, a good number of those who need to be educated on the benefits. Members are requested to enlighten these teachers on the various services they enjoy. Larger membership means more benefits.

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## INHOUSE MEDICAL INSURANCE

As promised when the scheme was inceptioned 4 years ago, the benefits have been increased incrementally on an annual basis. The 85th AGM approved the following:

1. We will pay for cost where a member under FTU Stop Loss Policy has been put on waiting list at the Public Hospital and as a result on approval obtains treatment at a Private Clinic. The maximum payable will now be \$5,500.00 and 50% of the balance of the actual incurred cost w.e.f 01/07/2015. Before it was \$4,500.00 and 50% of the balance of the actual incurred cost.
2. That the medical levy for members in the ED9A grade be waived for 12 months or when their salary is adjusted to \$16,000, whichever is first. The Union is pursuing the case with the relevant authorities.

3. The Medical Insurance cover (age limit) has been extended from 65 years to 68 years w.e.f 1/1/2015.

## REMINDER

Members are once again reminded of the following:

1. Members are advised that from 1st July 2014 any new member (below age 30) joining FTU needs to provide a standard medical report (For forms refer to [www.ftu.com.fj](http://www.ftu.com.fj)). Applicants above age 30 need to provide standard medical report (For forms refer to [www.ftu.com.fj](http://www.ftu.com.fj)) as well as chest x-ray and full blood count results. Costs incurred in providing these reports to be borne by the applicant.
2. Members with medical insurance cover elsewhere and wishing to withdraw from FTU medical scheme need to provide evidence of other cover in place, then only withdrawal from FTU Insurance is possible as our scheme comes compulsory with membership.
3. Members are reminded that if you are aware of your overseas evacuation, it is very important to have your passport ready. We have had a few cases where delays have been caused due to passports not being ready.
4. Members are also reminded to update their marital status at FTU office and ensure correct premiums are being paid.

## FTUC MATTERS

Members would recall the historic signing of the MOA by the Social Partners in Geneva in March. As per the agreement, government reinstated the check off system in early April.

The Employment Relations Advisory Board chaired by the Solicitor General met and agreed on key aspects of the E.R.P to restore Trade Union Rights in compliance with the I.L.O. standards. The Decrees that deny basic Trade Union rights are to be repealed. The Bill was tabled in Parliament on Friday 22nd May 2015.

It is expected that the July session will see the legislation being passed for implementation.

The remaining issues of concern to the Union movement and the ILO will be deliberated upon in the next meeting of ERAB scheduled for the 3rd week of June. Once again kudos to FTUC and the National Secretary Bro Felix Anthony in particular.

## 2015 AGM AND CONFERENCE IN PICTURES





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