



PARVEEN KUMAR BALA

FIJI MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT, PRODUCTIVITY AND INDUSTRIAL
RELATIONS, YOUTH AND SPORTS

Salutation

- The President of the Conference
- The Director General ILO
- Distinguished Delegates
- Your Excellency's
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bula Vinaka and Warm greetings from Fiji:

Your Excellency's.

Ladies and Gentlemen, It gives me great pleasure to address this 110th Session of the International Labor Conference (ILC) on behalf of the Fijian Government.

First and foremost, I would like to congratulate Your Excellency Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Services of Argentina for being elected as the President of the Conference on 27 May 2022. We will be profoundly guided by your experience and leadership during this meeting Mr. President.

Mr. President, I agree with the sentiments of the Director General that the ongoing conflicts in the world has brought suffering to the working people and damages to the enterprises and we as a small Island nation are facing the full brunt of this. We must take collaborative action now to protect the future of work and the future we want to leave for our children.

Mr. President, Despite these setbacks we continue to strengthen our response to address challenges like poverty, job loss, climate change and many other issues in the world of work to ensure that we provide the best to our Fijian people. Whilst at the same time we would like to provide an enabling environment for social dialogue and good faith in all aspects of employment, labour relations and productivity.

Mr. President, A safe and healthy working environment must be at the center stage of any employment relations discussions and conditions. Thus it is important to note that health and safety must not be compromised in any way for workers safety and well-being.

Mr President, The Fijian Government has provided a robust plan of recovery from this Pandemic to ensure that we provide the best possible framework to recover lost hours of work and associated job losses caused during the pandemic. Our government's main aim is to ensure that no one is left behind and that every Fijian is provided the best possible care during this pandemic or in any state of disaster. Our COVID safe recovery framework ensures that we open our economy gradually so that we are able to meet the demands and ensure COVID safe working environment.

Mr President, The Fijian Government continues to assist the unemployed through government assistance programmes. In 2021, the Fijian Government provided \$430m to assist more than 400,000 Fijians in the formal and informal sector.

Mr President, as a nation, the last two years with the impact of COVID- 19 has been a time of promoting and raising awareness on the importance of having a positive health and safety culture at the work place. With the joint efforts of our government Ministries, Statutory organizations and relevant stakeholders, the Fijian Government conducted nationwide workplace awareness and audits to monitor the operations of workplaces to ensure compliance of COVID-19 protocols.

Mr. President, The Fijian government made a planned move to review the national minimum wages and 10 sectoral minimum wages to ensure we provide decent wages to our workers. We have implemented the wages increase in 4 tranches. As we speak, the Fijian Government is embarking on the setting up of the Productivity Commission to measure productivity across all wages sectors.

Mr. President, We are thankful to the Government of Australia and New Zealand for their continuous support in providing employment to Fijian workers under the labour mobility program.

I thank you Mr. President and all participants for the opportunity to make this address on behalf of the government and people of Fiji.

Vinaka Vakalevu, Thank You.