



Hon. Charan Jeeth Singh
Minister for Multi-Ethnic Affairs and Sugar Industry

Sugar Industry Workshop

FSC Training Centre
Lautoka

Fri 10th May 2024
0930 Hours

The Acting Prime Minister and Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation - Honorable Viliame Gavoka;

The Minister for Agriculture and Waterways - Honorable Vatimi Rayalu;

The Minister for Land and Mineral Resources - Honorable Filimoni Vosarogo;

The Permanent Secretary;

Chairman and Board Directors of FSC, SCGF, SCGC, SPFL and SRIF;

CEOs of the various Sugar Institutions;

The Media Personnel present;

and Invited Guests.

1. As we convene this inaugural Sugar Industry Stakeholder's Workshop, I stand before you deeply honored and inspired to witness the dedication of all of you here to chart the course for our sugar industry. And importantly, work with each other and through each other to make a better industry.
2. Your participation at this workshop reflects our shared commitment to the future of Fiji's sugar industry, a sector that is integral to the heart and soul of our nation.
3. Since taking office in December 2022, the Coalition-government has remained steadfast in its promise to revitalize our sugar sector and I say that with all confidence.
4. Our Sugar Industry stands as a cornerstone of economic vitality and social cohesion, contributing significantly to livelihoods and national revenue. In just one year and four months, we've embarked on a journey to restore the former glory of the sugar industry.
5. A significant milestone in this journey is the historic achievement of the highest cane payment in our history—an impressive \$91.38 per ton of cane. This milestone reflects our unwavering dedication to our hardworking farmers, the backbone of our industry and we regard them as the most important partner.

6. Moreover, we've introduced innovative programs to unlock the potential of our farmers, such as the Farm Incentive program, providing additional support for increased production.
7. While I could delve into other programs, like the infield drainage project and lease renewal initiatives, time constraints prevent a comprehensive list of our government's efforts in such a short period of time. And as I have spoken in parliament that the sugar industry is here to stay for many decades ahead; and that is the commitment that our coalition-government attests to the sugar industry.
8. Amidst these commendable achievements, we have many challenges ahead and that is the primary reason why I have convened this workshop for all of you; aimed at finding strategies to review these challenges and pave ways towards a sustainable future for Fiji's sugar industry. We intend to stimulate dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders and within the industry to elevate sustainability of the sugarcane industry.
9. As you know our current cane production of 1.6 million tons pales in comparison to our past production, exceeding 3 million tons and even surpassing 4 million tons in some years. Those were the prime years of the industry with the advantage of European Union's preferential sugar price.

10. Land lease issues, an aging farming population, and outdated infrastructure, compounded by the impacts of climate change, have reshaped the sugar landscape drastically and not eliminating the sugar-politics.
11. However, within adversity lies opportunity. This gathering symbolizes our collective determination to confront these challenges head-on.
12. Our mission is clear—to develop a strategic blueprint rooted in pragmatism rather than extravagance.
13. We aim not just to address the concerns of a few but to lay the groundwork for a comprehensive revival ensuring the lasting prosperity of our sugar industry.
14. As Minister of Sugar Industry, I pledge unwavering dedication to this cause. I firmly believe that through the synergy of our intellect, the passion of our ideas, and the depth of our resources, we can overcome the trials before us and pave a path toward unprecedented growth and prosperity for Fiji's sugar industry.
15. Today's workshop was a well-thought decision and a strategy to bring all of us together to discuss and stream-line number of issues that are ahead of us.

16. I urge each of you to engage wholeheartedly in the discussions and deliberations ahead. Your insights, wisdom, and enthusiasm are invaluable as we embark on this transformative journey.

Thank you