



MINISTRY OF
MULTI-ETHNIC
AFFAIRS

STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2027

Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to those who have contributed to the success of this document.

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Our sincere appreciation goes to all the individuals who participated in the consultations. Your perspectives and experiences have enriched our work and underscored the importance of inclusive dialogue.

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All photographs included in this report are our own, and any additional sources have been duly acknowledged.

Lastly, we would like to extend our gratitude to all staff members for their contribution. Your hard work, dedication, and collaborative spirit have been essential in bringing this document to fruition.

Thank you all for your support and commitment to our shared vision.

List of Words

Banaban: Banaban people are originally from the Island of Banaba, Kiribati. They were relocated to Rabi Island in Fiji by the British Government in the 1945.

Coalition-Government: refers to the Rabuka-led tripartite coalition-government.

Colonial period: British rule over Fiji from 1874 -1970.

Diverse ethnic communities/ diverse communities: the two phrases used interchangeably to refer to the fourteen (14) different ethnic communities in Fiji.

Fara: the word means 'to ask' in Rotuman, but is referred to a traditional Rotuman cultural and social event, occurring in the summertime festival of 'av' manea (meaning 'party time' in Rotuman) where groups of singers and dancers traverse from house to house in a prescribed area to perform and entertain their hosts, 'asking', as the name suggests, for their hospitality and participation

Fijian/s: used as the term applicable to all Fijian citizens as regulated under 2013 Fiji constitution.

Fijians of Indian descent: formal term used as per the 2013 Fiji constitution to refer to Fijians with Indian ancestry.

Girmit: term used by the Indian indentured labourers to represent the pronunciation of the word 'agreement'. They used it to refer to indentured labour agreement with the British Government.

Girmit Day: 14th of May declared by the Coalition- Government to commemorate the arrival of first indenture ship to Fiji.

Indenture system: contractual system under which Indian workers were brought to Fiji to work on plantations from 1879 to 1916.

iTaukei: indigenous Fijians believed to be the first people who arrived and settled in Fiji.

Rotumans: the indigenous people of the Island of Rotuma.

Vanua: the term 'vanua' in iTaukei in a broader context signifies their identity to land ownership and genealogy.

Acronyms

CBO: Community-based organisations

MMEA: Ministry of Multi-Ethnic Affairs

MoA: Memorandum of Agreement

MoU: Memorandum of Understanding

NDP: National Development Plan

SDG: Sustainable Development Goal

ToR: Terms of Reference

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Foreword

Hon. Charan J. Singh



It is an honour to present the Ministry of Multi-Ethnic Affairs first Strategic Plan. The 2025- 2027 Strategic Plan outlines the actions that the Ministry will undertake over the next three years to achieve better outcomes for the communities it serves.

The overarching goal is to create a socially cohesive society—one that promotes inclusivity, economic prosperity, and progress towards harmony where Fijians trust and respect each other.

The Coalition-Government focuses on promoting diversity and inclusivity with the hope of shared vision, values, and a common identity. Our rich cultural diversity is what makes us uniquely Fijian.

The establishment of the Ministry for Multi-Ethnic Affairs was an important milestone in Fiji's journey towards realising this vision.

This Strategic Plan is another milestone. It sets out how the Ministry will work with others, including other Government agencies to enable better outcomes for our ethnic communities.

As we move forward, it is crucial to adopt a national discourse of social cohesion and leverage partnerships to address the complex challenges that our nation is facing.

I am confident that with the dedication of our team and the support of all our stakeholders across Fiji, we will make significant strides towards building a more inclusive and cohesive society.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Charan J. Singh'.

Hon. Charan J. Singh

“The overarching goal is to create a socially cohesive society”



Message from the Acting Permanent Secretary

Reshmi Kumari

It is a significant milestone as we unveil the inaugural Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Multi-Ethnic Affairs. This plan delineates our roadmap for the coming years, dedicated to enhancing the wellbeing of the diverse communities we serve.

We diligently crafted these priorities based on insights from the Multi-Ethnic Framework. This comprehensive document reflects the collective aspirations of Fiji's ethnic communities, guiding us to enact meaningful changes that truly impact lives.

Our Strategic Plan is our beginning. It outlines the initial steps toward realizing a Fiji where every individual from diverse backgrounds feel secured, valued, and empowered to participate in a multi-cultural society.

These communities not only enrich our social dynamics but also significantly bolster various sectors of our economy.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all those who engaged with us. Your generosity in sharing your time, insights, knowledge, and lived experiences has been invaluable. Your active participation has been instrumental in shaping this Strategic Plan, ensuring that it authentically reflects the priorities and aspirations of the communities we are dedicated to serving.

Thank you for your invaluable contributions.

Ms. Reshmi Kumari

“Our Strategic Plan is our beginning”



Picture source: Google images

Halo Oleketa
(Solomon Island greetings)

Introduction

The preservation, protection and acceptance of diverse traditions, cultures, religions, languages, and values are crucial for fostering social cohesion and solidarity. This diversity promotes unity, instils a sense of belonging, and promotes acceptance amongst all citizens. To advance this objective, the Coalition-Government re-instated the Ministry of Multi-Ethnic Affairs (MMEA) in accordance with the Legal Notice 17 of 2023.

After its re-establishment, the Ministry sought advice on the design of a framework that could shape its structure and programmes. To assist in this process, two consultants were engaged to draft Fiji's Multi-Ethnic Framework. Consultations were conducted in Fiji, and New Zealand with the Fijian diaspora, over several weeks in late 2023 and early 2024. These included discussions with political leaders, corporate sector, leaders of faith-based groups and ethnic communities, academics, lawyers and regional advocates. The report on the Multi-Ethnic Framework was finalised in March 2024, and its findings and the policy advice are incorporated in the 2025-2027 Strategic Plan.

The re-establishment of the Ministry is a significant initiative designed to enhance social cohesion among Fiji's diverse ethnic groups by improving inter-ethnic relations. This initiative aims to cultivate trust and mutual respect, aligning with the Coalition-Government's vision of promoting multi-ethnic relations as a pathway to national unity and prosperity.

Further, this re-establishment represents a pivotal moment in Fiji's history, offering a contemporary approach to strengthening relationships among various communities. It seeks to foster the development of a dynamic and socially cohesive society that reflects the pride of all people. The Ministry's strategic priorities for 2025-2027 are focused on achieving these objectives, emphasizing the importance of diversity as a catalyst for social cohesion.

Our People

We represent people of all ethnic origins:



iTAUKEI



**FIJIAN OF
INDIAN
DESCENT**



ROTUMAN



EUROPEAN



BANABAN



KIRIBATI



NI-VANUATU



CHINESE



**PAPUA NEW
GUINEA**



SAMOAN



**SOLOMON
ISLANDS**



TUVALUAN



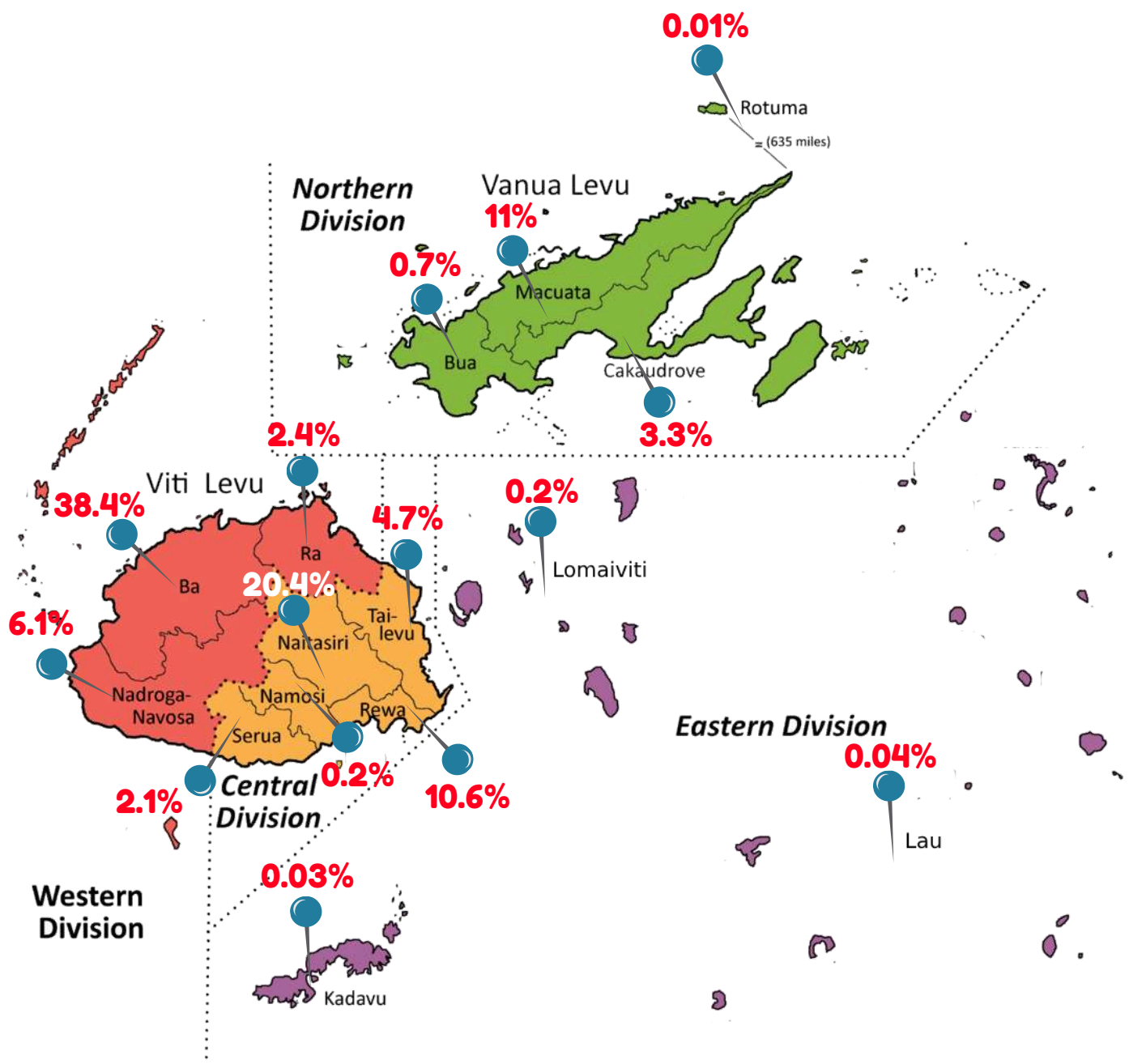
TONGAN



OTHERS

Where are our People?

The following map shows where the diverse minority communities are located by provinces. The demographic data excludes the indigenous population.



Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics; 2017 Population and Housing Census



Picture source: Google images

The Rotuman garland, known as tefui, is emblematic of Rotuman identity. The traditional garland (before christianity) called the tefui lei were made with a variety of shells or a combination of selected shells like the white cowries, golden cowries, royal purple cowries, pearl shells, pearls, selected bird feathers, whales teeth, turtle bones and shells. The modern day tefui are made from plant materials as well as manufactured materials.

About this Strategy

The 2025-2027 Strategic Plan outlines the initial priorities and strategic directions for the Ministry, based on the findings and recommendations from the Multi-Ethnic Framework. These strategic priorities were identified during consultations with stakeholders, and specific initiatives and projects are designed to advance these priority areas.

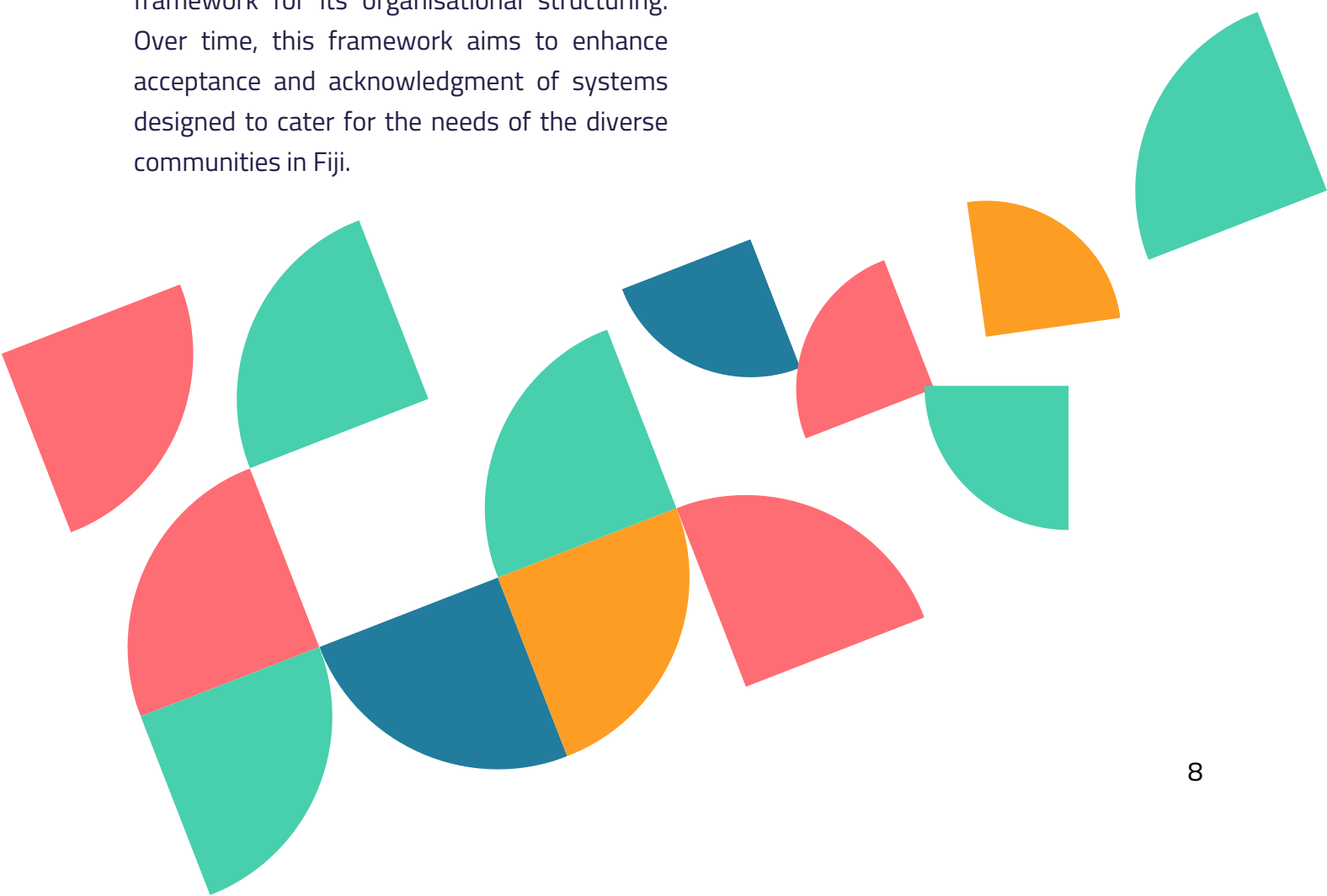
The overarching goal of the Ministry is to achieve a socially cohesive society—one that promotes inclusivity, economic prosperity, and progress towards harmony where everyone trusts and respects each other.

Furthermore, the Strategic Plan 2025- 2027 represents the Ministry's foundational framework for its organisational structuring. Over time, this framework aims to enhance acceptance and acknowledgment of systems designed to cater for the needs of the diverse communities in Fiji.

Anticipated Impact of Our Strategic Plan

A Fiji where:

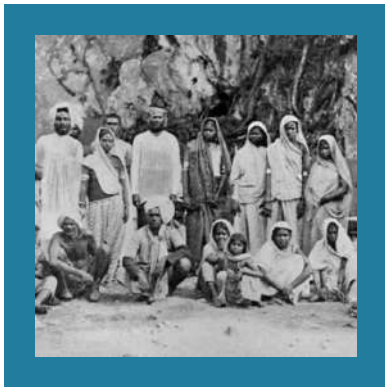
- there is a growing level of trust and respect between the diverse communities and the government;
- there is a re-invigorated approach to serving the people by the Public Service;
- communities are actively engaged in shaping the future;
- there is a deeper level of mutual understanding and appreciation among the diverse communities;
- factors that strengthen social cohesion among the people are prioritised, while elements that reduce social cohesion are effectively eliminated.



Fiji's Multi-Ethnic Dynamics



Picture source: Google images



Picture source: Google images



Picture source: Google images



Picture courtesy: Kalashree Sidhorna Rao

Fiji is an independent country in the Pacific with a population of approximately one million people. The country is culturally diverse. The iTaukei community make up the majority (56.8%) population. This is followed by Fijians of Indian descent comprising 37.5%, and 5.7% others (Fiji Bureau of Statistics; Census 2017). The others category include Rotumans, Banaban community, Fijians of Chinese descent, Europeans and other Pacific Islanders who have made Fiji home.

Fiji was ceded to Great Britain on 10th October 1874, thus beginning the era of colonial legacy. Fiji's colonial period was characterized by a range of economic and social changes. These changes marked the introduction of plantations of agriculture produce, the development of a cash-based economy, and the establishment of a formal education system.

Moreover, it had significant impacts on Fiji's ethnic makeup, as it led to the arrival of large numbers of indentured labourers from India, and neighbouring Pacific countries. The recruitment of Indian labourers commenced under the indenture system bringing in 60,537 labourers from 1879 to 1916. Labourers from Vanuatu and Solomon Islands were also recruited under the indenture system from 1904 until the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In 1808, a group of Chinese on board the Eliza were shipwrecked on the reefs of Mocea. They later remained on the island of Rotuma, and were joined by many others before and after the cession who served as cooks, traders, gardeners, and merchants on trading ships. The island of Rotuma was inhabited by Chinese along with Tongans and Samoans further enriching the cultural mix in Fiji. With continued phosphate mining on Banaba in the Ocean Islands (Kiribati), Banaba became uninhabitable. These hostile conditions forced the Banaban community to relocate 2000 miles to Rabi Island, also in the Fiji group. Over time, these various ethnic groups made Fiji their home, resulting in the diverse and multi-ethnic population that characterizes Fiji today.

Due to its multi-ethnic and multi-cultural mix, Fiji has developed a unique culture. It does not predominantly feature one ethnic group but contains a combination of cultural aspects of all ethnic groups. This is evident during religious festivals, cultural events and national celebrations. Despite this, ethnic tensions remain a central challenge in Fiji's multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society. Therefore, social cohesion is vital to maintain a peaceful and prosperous Fiji.

Source: Sandhiya Sivanjali Gounder, University of Otago



Si'i pe kae hā – We are a small island, we are still great.

This Tongan proverb means- you do not have to be large in numbers, have lots of resources or money to be great.

Picture source: Google images

The Ministry of Multi-Ethnic Affairs serves as the voice of Fiji's diverse ethnic communities in Government—our voice comes from our communities.

VISION

Fiji, to be a nation that honours its indigenous culture, embraces its diverse ethnic communities, and fosters inclusivity across all its diversity.

MISSION

Promote a socially cohesive Fiji where citizens trust and respect each other and the systems that administer their needs.

Our roles include:

Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with stakeholders on actions to improve the wellbeing of the diverse communities. • Monitor the wellbeing of the diverse communities. • Ensure equitable access to government services. • Provide capacity-building opportunities. • Lead or participate in cross-government action to improve system-wide understanding and responsiveness on matters of diversity.
Advise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer evidence-based advice to both public and private sectors on policies and interventions impacting communities, focusing on key issues and opportunities for enhancing their long-term wellbeing.
Research and Information Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate and carry out research projects relevant to the diverse communities. • Assess the effectiveness and impact of programs aimed at benefiting the diverse communities. • Collect valuable insights and data directly from the communities. • Anticipate upcoming challenges and possibilities for enhancing the wellbeing of the diverse communities. • Serve as the hub of information for researchers, academics, students and other stakeholders.
Operational Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise events and community programmes that promote social cohesion in partnership with relevant stakeholders. • Provide information to stakeholders on the key findings from our research and community mapping activities. • Facilitate training needs of the diverse communities. • Promote and protect cultural and language diversity. • Support the establishment of community organisations.



Picture source: Google images

Papua New Guinea language is Tok Pisin.

In Tok Pisin, wantok means “one talk” – meaning the language of the tribe or clan that a person belongs to.

Our Core Values



Respect

We respect the diverse make up of our society, including the indigenous peoples of Fiji, the contributions of Fijians of Indian descent and their ancestors, as well as all other communities and their vital roles in shaping our nation.



Integrity

We are committed to upholding the highest standards of integrity in all our actions and decisions, fostering transparency, accountability, and trust.



Collaboration

We are dedicated to working in partnership with all communities and the government, engaging meaningfully with the youth to collectively achieve our vision for a united and inclusive society.



Inclusive

We embrace inclusivity as a core value, ensuring that every voice is heard and valued, regardless of background or identity.

The Importance of Promoting a Socially Cohesive Society

Social cohesion is based on the understanding that societies do better when citizens feel they belong, are included and enable to participate fully, where differences are recognized and where people accept the legitimacy of institutions that act as mediators when issues arise. Therefore a socially cohesive approach is needed to resolve issues and challenges arising amongst the people of Fiji in areas of social and contractual settings to promote progress and prosperity.

It is also observed that effective governments across the world accept the mandate to protect the economic and other interests of all their citizens and enhance their social well-being. They do this through a myriad of economic and social policies and programmes that ensure sustainability of the society. To achieve this effectively requires governments to take account of all the relevant variables that affect the development of their interests and those of their citizens. Where culturally diverse societies are socially cohesive and all citizens largely share and agree on the direction of the nation, they tend to do better economically and socially and are more successful at addressing challenges as they arise.



Social cohesion is a driver of political stability and prosperity. It is shaped over time.

It is imminent that from the immemorial times, communities have used art as a medium to reflect on what they see happening around them, as a statement of contemporary issues and a way of connecting with their fellow citizens. Societies with diverse populations such as Fiji, generally take every opportunity to publicly celebrate through language, arts, music, and festivals of their constituent communities. Throughout the world many of the largest events in the calendar of celebrations are effectively of this nature. The belief is that such events increase opportunities for citizens to learn something of each other's traditions and art forms, be empowered to celebrate their own, and to enhance the sense of being part of a bigger diverse collective.

Social cohesion also provides the platform for all cultures to express themselves through celebrations and rituals. Those of a particular culture know intimately the deep symbolism and meaning behind celebrations and special events and usually take enormous gratification from participating in them. Many celebrations, like Fiji Day, Girit Day, Prophet Mohammad's Birthday, Easter, Fara, Diwali, Holi, Eid ul-Fitr, Chinese New Year, and Christmas, have become standard events in many cities and communities in Fiji. Furthermore, the entire community joins the festivities, which include food, music and art displays. If promoted and planned well, such occasions can become powerful and useful pathways for building social cohesion.

Social cohesion is also essential if countries are to meet the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDGs) because actions will require everyone's cooperation and involvement. Social cohesion provides a lens through which diverse communities can understand and engage in their collective roles and responsibilities.

The Coalition-Government is committed to build national unity through social cohesion. Achieving this goal will require Fiji's intellectuals as well as its political, academic, and community leaders to turn their minds to harnessing the power of social cohesion as an organising framework to shape a whole of government approach.

The next section aligns the Ministry's objective, priorities and programmes towards the achievement of global goals (SDGs) and aspired developments (NDP).



Picture source: Google images

The Banabans were relocated to Rabi Island in Fiji from their home Island in Kiribati in 1945.

Our Commitment to Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as Global Goals, are a set of 17 integrated and interrelated goals to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that humanity enjoys peace and prosperity by 2030.

Reporting on the SDGs is important in communicating to stakeholders our commitment to contributing to the Global Goals; claiming accountability and responsibility to take the necessary actions and measuring progress over time.

Social cohesion is the connectedness and harmony among groups in a diverse society. There are two main dimensions:

- the sense of belonging of a community, and
- the relationships among members within the community itself.

It is achieved by establishing social balance, economic dynamism, sense of belonging, with an objective of promoting equity, and avoiding social tensions.

Social cohesion is a social process which aims to consolidate diversity by reducing inequality and socioeconomic differences in the society. It reflects peoples need for both personal development and a sense of belonging. Hence, it links together individual freedom and social justice, economic efficiency, the fair sharing of resources, pluralism and resolving conflicts.

Social cohesion as a multifaceted concept is linked to SDG 10 -Reduced Inequalities and SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.





Social cohesion is linked to **SDG 10** in several important ways:

1. **Equitable Opportunities:** Social cohesion encourages inclusivity, ensuring that marginalized groups have equal access to resources, services, and opportunities. This directly supports SDG 10's aim to reduce inequality.
2. **Social Justice:** A cohesive society fosters a sense of belonging and fairness, helping to address systemic injustices and discrimination. This aligns with SDG 10's emphasis on promoting social, economic, and political inclusion.
3. **Community Support Networks:** Strong social ties enable communities to support one another, especially vulnerable populations, thereby reducing economic disparities and contributing to the goal of fostering inclusive societies.
4. **Participation in Decision-Making:** Social cohesion promotes collective action and civic engagement, ensuring diverse voices are heard in policymaking, which can lead to more equitable policies that address the root causes of inequality.

Linking social cohesion with **SDG 16** involves emphasizing the importance of peaceful, just, and inclusive societies.

1. **Peaceful Societies:** Social cohesion fosters trust and solidarity among community members, reducing conflict and violence, which aligns with SDG 16's aim to promote peaceful societies.
2. **Access to Justice:** A cohesive society often ensures equitable access to justice, which is a critical component of SDG 16. When communities work together, they can advocate for fair legal systems and support each other in seeking justice.
3. **Inclusive Institutions:** Social cohesion encourages diverse participation in governance and decision-making processes. This aligns with SDG 16's focus on building effective, accountable institutions at all levels.
4. **Community Engagement:** Engaged communities are more likely to address issues collaboratively, strengthening social bonds and contributing to the reduction of violence and corruption, both key targets of SDG 16.

Aligning with the National Development Plan

Aligned to the NDP targets, the Ministry of Multi-Ethnic Affairs and Sugar Industry will be promoting the Fiji's rich ethnic diversity, encompassing Melanesians, Polynesians, Micronesians and various other groups. While the majority comprises indigenous Fijian (iTaukei and Rotuman), other ancestries including Fijians of Indian descent, Chinese, and Europeans, and other Pacific Islanders contribute to the nation's cultural mix of population. Fiji's rich cultural heritage, ranging from languages, food, festivals, rituals, arts and traditions holds intrinsic value for both present and future generations.

The Government through the establishment of Ministry of Multi Ethnic Affairs has made provision to take the responsibility of the various ethnic communities in the development and progress of Fiji and its people to foster unity, social cohesion and mutual respect through cultural celebration, maintaining rich culture tapestry through supporting and empowering community based projects in areas of culture, heritage and arts. Additionally, Fiji's Multi-Ethnic Framework which sets out strategic objectives and programmes will foster inclusivity and harmony among Fiji's diverse ethnic communities as outlined in the NDP.

The keys areas which the Ministry will be focusing as per the NDP are:

- Develop and implement Fiji's Multi-ethnic Framework.
- Strengthen partnership with multi-ethnic organisations and community groups to promote, protect and enhance cultural practices.
- Develop and maintain cultural sites, heritage spaces and associated infrastructure.
- Establish partnerships and links with professional cultural heritage institutions locally and overseas to support technical training on heritage management and preservation.
- Build community partnership through advocacy and awareness programmes.

Source: Fiji's National Development Plan 2025-2029 and Vision 2050



Picture Courtesy: Fiji Muslim League Facebook page

Multi-Ethnic Framework

The Multi-Ethnic Framework thematically lists the concerns raised by those consulted on the major issues the Ministry needs to address. It provides insights into the prevailing concerns of people, and encompass six thematic areas:

- inclusive approach
- knowledge of language
- understanding of cultural protocols
- land use policies
- decision making process
- sense of belonging

Inclusive Approach

Based on the Multi-Ethnic Framework, there is a general understanding among minority ethnic groups that while the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs adequately represents the interests of indigenous communities, there is no equivalent institution advocating for other ethnic communities. This indicates that people are unfamiliar with the role of the Ministry of Multi-Ethnic Affairs in advocating and catering the needs of the diverse communities. Therefore, the Ministry needs to benchmark its existence and objectives towards diverse communities in Fiji.

Many informants cite instances where their reasonable requests for Government intervention or assistance on certain issues were either ignored or inadequately addressed. In order to address these issues, the Ministry intends to adopt an inclusive approach and advocate for practices where citizens are treated with respect and their concerns are taken seriously. The Ministry hopes to collaborate with relevant stakeholders and Government departments to respond promptly to the requests of ethnic communities.

Furthermore, informants perceive other ethnic groups as posing no threat to indigenous interests. Some who felt excluded speculated that their future prospects largely depend on emigration opportunities. These notions imply insufficient platforms and social opportunities that foster dialogue among diverse groups, thereby limiting the understanding of their respective concerns. Through its strategic priorities, the Ministry is committed to providing spaces that facilitate dialogues, discussions, and collaboration among diverse communities.

Knowledge of Language and Culture

The Multi-Ethnic Framework highlights a widespread concern regarding the noticeable lack of familiarity with each other's language. These observations were made in various villages, homes, and communities, particularly during significant life events. While informants acknowledge the introduction of diverse language studies in primary schools, they suggest more extensive efforts were required. The framework suggests that expanding language education would represent the most effective means of enhancing mutual awareness, respect, and emotional connectivity among communities. In light of this, the Ministry in collaboration with other stakeholders, aspires to initiate programmes that will promote different languages and cultures in school, community, corporate and national levels.

Understanding Cultural Protocols

The Multi-Ethnic Framework emphasizes the importance of greater efforts among all ethnic communities to understand various cultural protocols, especially when visiting each other's homes, villages and communities. The report recommends implementing initiatives to enhance knowledge on cultural protocols across diverse ethnic communities, including the iTaukei culture and organizational structure of the *Vanua*. iTaukei informants participating in the consultations expressed their willingness to develop and provide meaningful experiences for other ethnic groups to familiarize them with iTaukei protocols. Moving forward, the Ministry will facilitate similar efforts to be undertaken in all ethnic communities.

Land Use Policy

The Multi-Ethnic Framework recommends the need for a creative solution to reconcile traditional ownership land in Fiji with the desires of farmers and tenants, aiming to utilize land as a productive resource. The framework articulates that it is in the country's economic interests to optimize the utilization of productive land. By undertaking this initiative, farmers can sustain their livelihoods and significantly contribute to enhancing both local and national economies.



Decision Making Process

With reference to the consultations, meetings, discussions, and workshops, participants felt excluded from important decision-making processes that significantly affected their interests. This includes a sense of marginalisation and inadequate representation in discussions related to the development and maintenance of community amenities and infrastructure (such as water and electricity supply, footpaths, and community centres), planning cultural celebrations, and addressing economic issues. In order to ensure people's voices are adequately represented in the decision-making processes, the Ministry will engage in broader consultations with diverse communities and, where possible, employ a collaborative-design approach in policy-making. The Ministry will ensure that all stakeholders are included and represented.

Sense of Belonging

There has been a significant period of political, economic, social, and technological changes in Fiji. The cumulative effect of these changes has had profound impact on the diverse ethnic communities. The Multi-Ethnic Framework indicates a sense of being forgotten or deliberately ignored, resulting in a loss of a sense of belonging among people, particularly evident in job applications and workplace promotions. The general feeling of exclusion has led people to retreat into their own social circles and institutions. The Ministry aims to organise programs, events, and projects that will unite diverse communities.





Our Strategic Priorities:

The progress of Fiji towards greater unity with a shared objective of inclusiveness and respect for diversity is paramount in achieving development goals outlined in the National Development Plan. To achieve this, the Ministry of Multi-Ethnic Affairs outlines its six (6) main strategic priorities.

Picture Courtesy: Kalashree Sidhorna Rao

Priority 1:

Ensure Equitable Access to Government Services for Ethnic Communities

The objective of this priority is to ensure Government services are more responsive to the particular needs of ethnic communities. This includes the accessibility of broad range of services including education, employment, health, social services, housing, amenities (water, electricity) and community safety.



Picture courtesy:
Sandhiya Gounder

PRIORITY 1

Strategic Outcomes

1. Increased accessibility and utilisation of Government services by ethnic communities.
2. Identified and addressed gaps in service provision for ethnic communities.
3. Strengthened connections and communication between Government agencies and communities.

Ministry Initiatives	Planned Activities
Organise and conduct consultations with ethnic communities to gather feedback on their experiences with Government services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schedule and conduct meetings and discussions with representatives from ethnic communities.• Develop and distribute surveys to gather quantitative data on service accessibility and satisfaction.• Analyse feedback and prepare a report summarizing key findings and recommendations.
Perform a mapping exercise to identify where service gaps exist and assess the accessibility of current services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify key areas and services to be mapped.• Collect data on current service provision and community needs.• Create a visual map highlighting service gaps and areas of high demand.• Publish and share the map with relevant stakeholders.
Develop and implement strategies to advocate for and establish effective linkages between Government agencies and ethnic communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organise workshops and forums to foster dialogue between Government agencies and ethnic communities.• Develop and distribute advocacy materials to promote understanding and collaboration.• Establish a working group to oversee the implementation of recommendations and monitor progress.• Facilitate training sessions for Government staff on culturally responsive service delivery.

Deliverables

- 1. Community Consultation Reports:** Comprehensive reports on consultations with ethnic communities about their experiences and access to Government services.
- 2. Service Gap Map:** A detailed mapping of service gaps within ethnic communities.
- 3. Advocacy Reports and Recommendations:** Reports and recommendations for improved linkages between Government agencies and ethnic communities.

Priority 2:

Empower and Strengthen Diverse Community- based Organisations

The objective of this priority is to enrich diverse community-based organisations through state provisioned resources. Fiji's network of diverse ethnic organisations play a crucial role in providing a wide range of services and in supporting their members during unfavourable times (pandemic, natural disasters, etc.). These organisations rely on the resources provided by their members. They are also valuable channels for information, advices and discussions on issues critical to diverse ethnic communities.



Picture source:
Google images

PRIORITY 2

Strategic Outcomes

1. Preservation, modernisation, and improved functionality of traditional structures, heritage sites and cultural facilities.
2. Developed capabilities for community-based organisation.
3. Increased impact of intercultural community programs.

Ministry Initiatives	Planned Activities
<p>Oversee refurbishment projects for community facilities in area of culture, heritage and art.</p> <p>Provide seed funding to support establishment of projects.</p> <p>Conduct surveys of community/cultural centers to assess needs and identify modernisation opportunities.</p> <p>Design and implement grant awards program.</p> <p>Seek donor funding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare refurbishment plans and budget for music, art and cultural centers, cemeteries, community halls, etc. • Tender and oversee refurbishment contracts. • Complete surveys of cultural centers and draft reports. • Design and distribute grant guidelines and application forms. • Review and assess grant applications. • Organise grant award event. • Monitor the implementation and outcomes of the funded projects.
<p>Develop and deliver capacity-building sessions and training programs to strengthen organisational management, planning, and personnel capabilities.</p> <p>Liaise with training providers</p> <p>Establish Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Training Providers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct surveys, interviews and consultations with organisation leaders and members to understand their current capabilities and challenges. • Design modules for training sessions, workshops, mentorship programs, or resource development. • Conduct training, workshops and seminars. • Offer resources such as manuals, templates, and toolkits to support implementation. • Gather feedback from organisations about the effectiveness of the capacity-building activities. • Document the outcomes, lessons learned, and best practices from the capacity-building program. • Prepare reports for stakeholders, including the Ministry and participating organisations.
<p>Advise and support Community-based Organisations (CBO) in integrating social cohesion principles into their activities and projects.</p> <p>Provide financial assistance through grant to promote social cohesion and understanding between ethnic groups.</p> <p>Monitor and evaluate the impact of funded projects on social cohesion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop criteria for social cohesion project funding. • Award grants and support project implementation. • Monitor and evaluate the impact of the project on social cohesion and community integration.

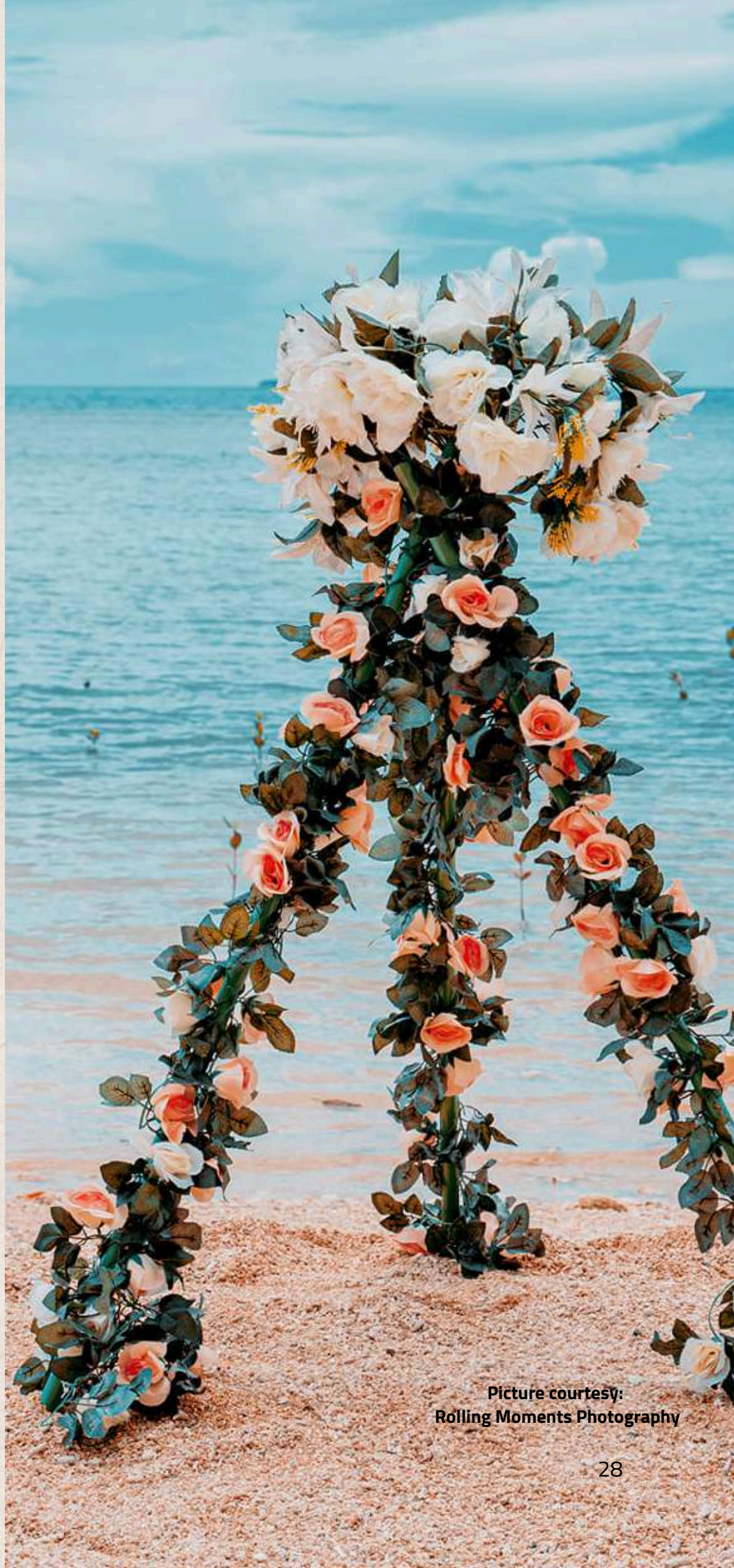
Deliverables

1. **Enhanced Cultural Facilities:** Refurbished and upgraded cultural centers.
2. **CBO Support Fund:** established and operational grants for CBOs.
3. **CBO Development Program:** Training and capacity- building programs for various CBOs (youth groups, women's groups, etc.)
4. **Social Cohesion Projects:** supported projects aimed at improving social cohesion, greater engagement and understanding between different ethnic groups.

Priority 3:

Promote and Create Awareness on Ministry's roles

It is important to promote the Ministry and its roles to raise awareness among citizens. This involves disseminating accurate information about the Ministry's role, guiding citizens on how to engage with it regarding specific issues, and clarifying expectations of the Ministry's services and support.



Picture courtesy:
Rolling Moments Photography

PRIORITY 3

Strategic Outcomes

1. Established awareness of the Ministry's roles and functions.
2. Increased visibility through programs and initiatives.

Ministry Initiatives	Planned Activities
<p>Identify and compile a list of all relevant organisations in the ethnic relations scope.</p> <p>Create and maintain an updated directory, including contact details, roles, and functions of each organisation.</p> <p>Ensure the directory is accessible to the public through online platforms and print copies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a database structure to organise collected information effectively, including fields for organisation name, contact details, roles, functions, and geographic reach. • Review and verify the information for reliability, accuracy and consistency. • Create a process for organisations to submit updates or corrections to their information. • Create digital versions of materials for online distribution through the Ministry's website and social media platforms. • Design and print a user-friendly booklet or pamphlet version of the directory for distribution at community centers, government offices, and relevant events.
<p>Organise meetings, workshops, and seminars tailored to different audiences, including community leaders, youth, and general citizens in various regions to ensure broad access and participation.</p> <p>Each event will focus on specific themes such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the Ministry's mission and services. • How citizens can engage with the Ministry. • Addressing common issues faced by ethnic communities. <p>Collaborate with community leaders to promote events within their networks, encouraging participation and fostering a sense of ownership.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise, publish launch the Strategic Plan of the Ministry. • Develop a detailed timeline for the series, specifying dates, locations, and target audiences. • Secure venues that are accessible to all community members, including schools, community centers, and local government offices. • Provide training sessions for speakers on the Ministry's roles and effective communication strategies to engage audiences. • Develop brochures, pamphlets, and slide presentations outlining the Ministry's functions and engagement processes. • Advertise and promote events. • Distribute feedback forms to attendees. • Prepare a comprehensive report summarizing the outcomes of the series, including attendance figures, feedback highlights, and recommendations for future awareness efforts.
<p>Develop a multi-channel marketing strategy (social media, local radio, community newsletters, and partnerships with local organizations).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Ministry's website, social media pages. • Design brochures, flyers, banners, billboards, etc. • Develop informative Ministry videos.

Deliverables

- 1. Comprehensive Directory Created:** A directory listing all organisations involved in ethnic relations, including state bodies, local government, voluntary agencies, and civil society organisations.
- 2. Nationwide Awareness Programs Conducted:** A series of presentations and seminars conducted across the country to educate people about the Ministry's roles and how to engage with it.
- 3. Enhanced Media Presence:** Development and dissemination of social and print media content to raise awareness about the Ministry's functions and services.

Priority 4:

Develop Partnership with key Stakeholders

It is crucial for a new Ministry to establish partnerships with other Ministries to coordinate services, programmes, and advise Government effectively. These Ministries play critical and complementary roles in policy areas such as language, culture, heritage, and arts. Additionally, the Ministry will maintain relationships with development partners to explore opportunities for cooperation in ethnic affairs and social cohesion initiatives.



Picture courtesy:
Rolling Moments Photography

PRIORITY 4

Strategic Outcomes

1. Effective collaboration between the Ministry of Multi-Ethnic Affairs and key line ministries, leading to coordinated programs and initiatives.
2. Enhanced mutual understanding of cultural practices and histories among different ethnic communities in Fiji.
3. Promotion of linguistic diversity in Fiji.
4. Preservation and accessibility of Girit records through digitisation efforts.

Ministry Initiatives	Planned Activities
Identify and engage with relevant ministries and stakeholders to discuss collaboration opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map out key ministries and development partners for collaboration. • Conduct introductory meetings to discuss potential areas of cooperation. • Draft and negotiate a MoU/ MoA with partner ministries to formalise collaborative efforts.
Organise dedicated language weeks in schools and communities to celebrate and promote linguistic diversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose specific weeks dedicated to celebrating different languages, considering significant cultural events or anniversaries. • Develop themes for each language week that highlight specific aspects of the culture and language. • Work with Ministry of Education to integrate language week activities into the school curriculum. • Provide lesson plans, activity guides, and resources to support educators. • Plan community events such as language fairs, storytelling sessions, and cultural performances to celebrate language diversity. • Use local media and social media to promote language weeks and encourage participation from the public. • Create promotional materials that highlight the activities planned for each language week.
Initiate a project to digitize existing Girit records, ensuring preservation and accessibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with the relevant bodies such as Fiji Girit Council, museums, universities, libraries and the Girit Center to identify the records that are held with them. • Digitise the available records.

Deliverables

- 1. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Completed:** Formal agreements with key ministries and development partners outlining areas of cooperation and collaboration.
- 2. Collaborative Development and Advocacy for Diverse Languages:** Promote and support the inclusion of indigenous and minority languages in educational and community settings.
- 3. Digitised Archive of Girit Records:** A publicly accessible digital repository of Girit records.

Priority 5:

Promote Social Cohesion through Cultural Celebrations

Fiji's diverse cultural and religious festivals and events provide rich sources of remembrance, enjoyment, and celebration for many communities. When carefully harnessed, they have the potential to foster greater inter-cultural and inter-religious understanding. By organising various cultural and religious events for communities, the Ministry aims to provide a powerful avenue for promoting social cohesion among citizens.



Picture source:
Google images

PRIORITY 5

Strategic Outcomes

1. Enhanced recognition and celebration of cultural heritage across various communities.
2. Increased participation and collaboration among communities in events that promote social cohesion.
3. Provide platforms for dialogue and sharing best practices to enhance social cohesion and inclusion.

Ministry Initiatives	Planned Activities
<p>Design and implement programs that highlight and celebrate the diverse cultural practices of Fiji's ethnic communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girit Commemoration • Inter-faith Iftaari • Chinese New Year • Holi Mela • Other celebrations and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with community groups, cultural organisations, and schools to co-host events and activities. • Involve local artists, performers, and cultural practitioners in program development. • Encourage community members to share their cultural stories and practices. • Organise cultural festivals showcasing traditional performances, art exhibitions, and culinary experiences. • Develop exchange programs where community members can visit and learn about each other's cultural practices.
<p>Coordinate activities in schools and communities, promoting cultural exchange and understanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music and Arts fest • Food fest • National sports initiative • Social cohesion themed competitions in schools and communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite musicians, dancers, and artists from various cultural backgrounds to participate, and local restaurants, food vendors, and community members to showcase traditional dishes. • Organise workshops led by artists to teach traditional music and arts techniques, and cooking demonstrations. • Design tasting stations where attendees can sample different cuisines. • Provide information about the origins and significance of each dish. • Create themes related to social cohesion, such as "Unity in Diversity" or "Cultural Heritage." • Organize competitions such as art contests, essay writing, poetry, and storytelling. • Collaborate with Ministry of Education to integrate competitions into their curriculum and extracurricular activities. • Host events to showcase winning entries and celebrate participants. • Feature competition winners at the Music and Arts Fest or Food Fest to enhance visibility.

Deliverables

- 1. Host Commemorative Events and Celebrations:** Successful commemoration and celebrations in multiple communities.
- 2. Creative Cultural Program Established:** A program that fosters knowledge and appreciation of various cultural practices across ethnic communities.
- 3. National Social Cohesion Programs:** Organised activities that bring together diverse communities to celebrate cultural diversity.

Priority 6:

Facilitate Evidence-based Policy Advice to Government and Stakeholders

To provide well-informed policy recommendations to the Government and information on diverse ethnic communities, the Ministry will progressively enhance its knowledge base and research capabilities.



Picture source:
Rolling Moments Photography

PRIORITY 6

Strategic Outcomes

1. A well-maintained repository of information on social cohesion, including developments and best practices.
2. A systematic approach to commissioning research that measures progress on social cohesion and identifies contributing factors.
3. A robust collection of data on ethnic communities to inform policy and program development.
4. A dedicated group to guide efforts toward advancing social cohesion in Fiji.

Ministry Initiatives	Planned Activities
<p>Plan and facilitate a series of conferences, workshops, discussion forums, and training focused on strategies and methods for promoting social cohesion inaugural:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Cohesion Conference focused on best practices and innovative approaches to social cohesion. • Ethnic Voices Conference focused on strengthening diverse perspectives and fostering dialogue among various ethnic communities to promote understanding, collaboration, and social cohesion in Fiji. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a committee consisting of representatives from the Ministry, community organisations, and relevant stakeholders to oversee the planning process. • Choose a theme that resonates with social cohesion goals. • Select a date that allows ample time for preparation and avoids conflicts with other major events. • Identify and reserve a venue that can accommodate attendees and provide necessary facilities (e.g. audio-visual equipment, seating arrangements). • Create a detailed agenda that includes keynote speeches, panel discussions, breakout sessions, and networking opportunities. • Invite influential speakers such as community leaders, academics, and practitioners with expertise in social cohesion. • Organise panels featuring diverse perspectives on issues related to social cohesion, cultural diversity, and community engagement. • Call for presenters. • Design flyers, posters, and digital content to promote the conference and share it across various platforms. • Create an online registration system for participants to sign up and provide necessary information. • Compile conference materials, including agendas, speaker profiles, and informational brochures.
<p>Identify key areas for research, engage with academic institutions, and fund studies on social cohesion.</p> <p>Develop methodologies for gathering and analysing data on ethnic communities, ensuring inclusivity and accuracy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a list of prioritized research topics based on community needs, literature gaps, and governmental objectives (e.g., ethnic relations, cultural integration, land lease issues). • Contact relevant academic institutions to explore collaborative opportunities for research on social cohesion. • Organize workshops where academics and community leaders can discuss research needs, methodologies, and project ideas. • Offer fellowships or internships for students and researchers focusing on social cohesion topics, incentivizing research that aligns with Ministry priorities. • Create a competitive grant program for researchers to apply for funding to conduct studies on identified social cohesion topics. • Identify specific research projects and directly commission researchers or institutions to carry them out, ensuring alignment with Ministry goals. • Publish findings in accessible formats for both academic and public audiences, ensuring the information is widely disseminated. • Partner with media outlets to share research findings and their implications for social cohesion in Fiji, raising public awareness.

PRIORITY 6

Ministry Initiatives	Planned Activities
Form and convene Consultative Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appoint members with diverse expertise and backgrounds to guide social cohesion initiatives.• Establish clear Terms of Reference (ToR), outlining the committee's roles, responsibilities, and objectives.• Organise meetings with stakeholders to gather input on issues related to inter-ethnic relations and social cohesion.• Establish mechanisms for regularly assessing the effectiveness of the committee's initiatives and their impact on social cohesion.• Create feedback channels with communities to ensure continuous improvement and adaptability of strategies.• Develop a communication strategy to keep the public informed about the committee's activities, successes, and future plans.• Prepare periodic reports that highlight progress and share best practices with other ministries and stakeholders.• Compile insights and recommendations based on the committee's discussions and activities to inform government policy on social cohesion and inter-ethnic relations.

Deliverables

1. Established Research and Information Digital Hub:

- A centralised platform for storing and accessing research and information related to social cohesion.
- A comprehensive dataset that reflects the demographics, needs, and contributions of various ethnic communities.
- Regular publications that summarise findings from commissioned research on social cohesion.

2. **Consultative Committee Framework:** An established advisory committee with clear roles and responsibilities for promoting social cohesion.



The Way Forward

The six key priorities outlined in the 2025-2027 Strategic Plan for the Ministry will enable us to achieve its core objective of creating a socially cohesive society and create a Fiji with the following outcomes:

- **Policy implication:** All voices are integrated into the policy formulation process, fostering an inclusive environment where diverse perspectives are valued.
- **A Sense of Belonging:** Every individual, regardless of ethnic or cultural background, feel integrated into wider communities. This sense of belonging will be rooted in mutual trust, respect for the rule of law, and recognition of civil and human rights.
- **Active Participation:** People are engaged fully in economic and social activities—cultural, religious, and recreational—across all areas of life. Whether in the workplace, family, community organisations, or civic duties such as voting or serving on a school Board of Trustees, everyone have the opportunities to participate meaningfully.
- **Equity of Opportunity:** All individuals experience fairness in accessing opportunities and outcomes related to the labour market, income, education and training, social benefits, health services, housing and all economic advancements. We aim for a society where equity is a lived reality.
- **Recognition of Diversity:** Everyone is valued for their unique identities and contributions. We promote respect for differences, ensuring protection from discrimination and harassment, and fostering a safe environment for all.
- **Confidence in Public Institutions:** People have faith in public institutions to protect their rights and interests, mediate conflicts, and respond effectively to community needs. These institutions play a crucial role in fostering social cohesion and building trust among all communities.

By prioritising these areas, we are committed to creating a Fiji where everyone feels included, valued, and empowered to contribute to a socially cohesive society.

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 318 Toorak Road, Bali Towers, Suva
 +679 8924376
 mmeasienquiries@gmail.com
 www.mmeasi.gov.fj