

# THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

REPUBLIC OF FIJI

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## **Closing address by Electoral Commission Chairman**

**Mr Suresh Chandra**

**Training of Trainers Workshop**

**JJ's on the Park - Suva**

**18 August, 2017**

**10:00am**

Bula Vinaka and a very good morning ladies and gentlemen.

I would like to start by congratulating you all for successfully completing the training and becoming the first set of trainers for the 2018 General Election.

As the Chairperson of the Electoral Commission, I was very keen to undersee the completion of this training of trainers programme because now you all will shoulder the responsibility of training those people who will work in the next General Election.

Ladies and Gentlemen, you may or may not remember but I asked you a few questions during the opening of the training?

I had asked if you are trained to be a person with an open mind? Are you a trainer who has left behind all the baggage? Are you a trainer who is going to learn all these things afresh? Are you a trainer who is going to display the utmost professionalism in finding us the most suitable individuals who are going to lead our polling stations?

And now after successfully completing the training, I want to ask yourself these questions and check if you are going to be our best trainers.

I am sure that the training that was provided to you was sufficient and I hope you are all well versed with what you were taught. Because now, you will be teaching the same to those who will be selected.

At this point, I would like to re-iterate what I had said to you at the opening of the workshop, that honesty, integrity and being apolitical forms the cornerstone of any independent election management body.

And I sincerely hope that you keep that in the back of your minds when you are conducting the trainings. Because of the 400 plus applicants, you were chosen to be a part of this training.

This means that you will now become the face of the Fijian Elections Office because you are the 80 that can do the job. You are the 80 that are prepared to take ownership of the election and lastly, you are the 80 that will train the best staff to deliver a good, credible, fair and free general election in 2018.

Recently, we opened two Voter Service Centres in the Northern Division. One in Savusavu and one in Labasa. And we told our staff there the same thing. We told them that they are now the face of the Fijian Election Office and the service we provide to the general public has to be the best because they deserve the best.

Ladies and gentlemen, the people you are going to train will come with a lot of blank expressions and a lot of questions. It will be up to you to train them to the best of your abilities so that the task they perform is also to the best of their abilities.

So I hope you will not forget your training and what you have learnt. Because you would have to train the new recruits exactly

the way you were trained. You have to say to the new recruits exactly what you were told during training.

The reason for this is uniformity. We want the same thing to happen at every polling station and counting centre.

We want everyone to be on the same page and we want everyone to understand how important it is that we are on the same page.

And don't think that we will not know. Because we will know which trainer trained the staff from which district. We know where the trainers will be posted and we know what the trainers are supposed to do.

So ladies and gentlemen, I once again thank you for being a part of this training and I wish you all the best in the trainings that you will be conducting.

To those who have conducted the training for these trainers, I thank you all for your tremendous effort in providing them with the best information and processes. You have played your role well and now it is time for your students to take over.

Before I conclude, I would like to remind you all that theme chosen by the Electoral Commission is 'Raising the standards in the delivery of Elections in Fiji'.

And ladies and gentlemen, it is imperative that we continue to raise our standards in whatever we do from now until after the completion of the 2018 General Election.

This is because a lot of people will be voting for the first time in the next General Election and a lot of people will be part of the Election process for the first time.

And I am sure, you all would want to say after the 2018 General Election that it was you that contributed towards the successful delivery of the Election.

That is what you mean by taking ownership. You will be responsible for how the General Election is carried out and therefore, you must take ownership of the service you will provide to the people of Fiji from now until the completion of the election.

With that said, I now declare the Training of Trainers Programme closed.

Thank you, Vinaka Vakalevu and all the best.