



## **Media Release**

### **The Uprising of the Cost of Living.**

*The community concern about the rising cost of fuel, food and fees has become the national talking point. The social and economic systems are on the verge of catastrophic change, for which our communities have not been prepared.*

*Since embracing the economic policy of globalization and all that goes with it, we as a nation relied totally on this for deliverance to economic prosperity. The present crisis of cost uprising is the result of this over reliance on one system.*

*We failed to change or inculcate a behaviour change in our people. The corporate sector remained fixed with the idea of growth and profit maximization.*

### **We are part of the global price uprising emergency due to these conditions:**

- The end of the era of “cheap” energy, which has brought shifts in all costs and living style of the people.
- The quest of accumulation of wealth, personal and corporate. It is estimated that 40 % of the people in Fiji have 65% of the wealth, (Abbot,D.A.,2006,Analysis of the 2002 / 2003 HIES Survey.)
- Globalisation has focused on and promoted commodity-oriented economic systems that advanced consumerism as ideal for happiness and fulfillment.
- The demise of traditional sustainable livelihoods, because of rural urban migration, expiry of land leases, loss of young people to the sporting and security forces world and above all the belief that success is white collar jobs.

The above combination of dangerous conditions is the driving force behind the ever increasing rise of cost of living and has led to major social and economic crisis abroad and is bound to affect Fiji unless we take immediate steps to change the lifestyle and our consumer behaviour.

# Media Release

## How do we combat the current situation?

There is no magic solution for overnight reduction in price; however, people have the power to change their own future.

Suggested guidelines for action derived from information on alternative economic policies at the international CSOs and various publications and report of Fiji meetings include:

- There is a need to realize the fundamental limits of the 'vanua' or the mother earth and concept of 'sautu', the wholesome way of living. (Fiji Education Summit Report of 2005).
- Within these limits can the people work together to achieve sustainability and set new standard of economic sufficiency and social wellbeing?
- The resetting of peoples priorities within the values systems and pathways that is far more sustainable and personally rewarding. Promotion of on going energy conservation by switching off unnecessary lights at all times.
- The crucial need to correct the current economic imbalances and inequities with social responsibility, trade and distributive justice, to achieve equity for peaceful solutions.
- Restarting the "Young Farmers" programme at the school level to enhance the agro-business industry.
- Promoting entrepreneurship and enterprise development in the schools to bring about self employment and self reliance amongst the younger generation.
- Promotion of the culture of conservation and saving of not only money but everything in life by respecting life and property.
- The long term solutions require a move away from the present position and ideologies focused on pursuing economic growth, maximization of profits and accumulation of personal wealth as the main engines of community wellbeing, towards a society that can equitable adjust to reduced levels of production and consumption.