

**Women Peacebuilders in Fiji Commemorate Resolution 1325  
Sharon Bhagwan, National Council of Women Fiji (NCWF) at St. Anne's Primary  
School for their Peace Day celebrations, 2002**

Good Morning.

First of all may I thank Sister Wendt, Mrs Tabutabu and all of you for welcoming the National Council of Women Fiji and our members and friends to be part of this wonderful commemoration of today. Today is a very special day for us, as women's NGOs and women-peacebuilders because we are remembering or commemorating that the UN through its Security Council, 2 years ago today, signed UN Security Council Resolution 1325 titled Women, Peace and Security, which means that at the highest global decision-making level, women, in the many roles that we play as daughters, wives, mothers and even, grandmothers, are being recognized for the important role we play, and can play in ensuring peace.

The resolution is also an acknowledgement of all the women, across the world, who have been working for peace in their countries, just as women, from all faiths, came together during the Blue Ribbon Peace Vigil in 2000 here in Suva, and today continue to work and pray for peace in our country. In our own pacific island region, we also remember our sisters in Papua New Guinea/Bougainville, Solomon Islands, West Papua and other countries who are also working for Peace. At a global level, as we hear through the news, with all the discussions and debates currently highlighting the very important need for Global Peace.

It is a time for leaders worldwide to review just how far they have come in 'making good' on their commitment to ensuring the women's perspective and presence at all levels of peace building and also in addressing Security issues. When the women's perspective is included - we know that it includes issues for her family, her neighbours and community and her country. So what better way to commemorate today, than to do so with you, young women and your teachers, who are showing a dedication and commitment to peace. You are our future and we are very proud to be able to share your initiatives.

Here in Fiji, especially in Suva, we can all remember the sad events of 2000, most recently, which has affected everyone. And as the NCWFiji, we feel that we have a very important responsibility, to make sure we do not face another situation like May 19th, because we know just how many families and children, are still recovering from what happened 2 years ago, because there is no 'quick fix' or magic wand, that will make it all disappear. Working for Peace is not easy, but it is very important. It means, that we are working to ensure that in our country, we are showing an interest or a commitment to not just think about or look after ourselves, but also our neighbor, families and groups who may not be as well-off or fortunate as us. We are listening and learning to understand the different communities that together make up the one family that we belong to as Fiji Islands, because we are thinking about everyone's needs. And when we have peace in our communities, in our country, our government - our leaders, are able to concentrate on making good development decisions about issues like education, health and the

environment.

When there is peace, it means people have been working together to discuss problems that our country or our community may be facing. When there is peace, it also means that families are also talking about things that affect them and working together to work through whatever problems they maybe facing. So Peace is everyone's responsibility - we are all instruments of Peace.

So thank you once again, for welcoming us into your commemoration of Peace, and we hope that as you grow up, you will continue the work that our mother and grandmothers have begun, to ensure that the Fiji Islands, once again will be a country that is truly a peaceful paradise. Vinaka-Shukria, Peace