



# FIJI HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

GPO Private Mail Bag  
SUVA, FIJI ISLANDS

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14 September 2007

## **Press statement on UN Indigenous Rights Declaration**

The Fiji Human Rights Commission states that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is in concert with the 1997 Constitution of Fiji. The Commission today said that it had studied the UN resolution carefully and found that there was complementarity between the resolution and Chapter 4 of the Constitution, as well as Chapter 13 Group rights.

In particular, the right to equality expressed in section 38 of the Constitution was compliant with Article 46 of the resolution which sets out that ‘no State, people, group or person could perform any act or engage in any activity contrary to the Charter of the United Nations’, or ‘to authorize or encourage any act or action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States’.

The majority of member States voted for the resolution with 11 states abstaining. The FHRC said it was curious that only 4 countries voted against this important UN resolution- those against were Fiji’s close neighbours, Australia and New Zealand, as well as Canada and the United States. These countries have significant minority indigenous populations which have constantly fought for centuries over land and other rights that were alienated from them after European colonization.

The FHRC said it would be interested to know how the national human rights institutions and law commissions in these countries would explain away their countries’ lack of support for such an important human rights resolution to their international human rights colleagues.

It was a proud moment for Fiji because it co-sponsored the resolution. Fiji has been actively involved in the negotiations which took 22 years before the resolution was finally passed by the UN General Assembly yesterday with only 4 votes against.

Dr Shaista Shameem

**Director**

