



## FNTC is now TPAF

*After 30 years of upgrading the skills and knowledge of the Fijian workforce, the role of the Fiji National Training Council (FNTC) was expanded and repositioned as the Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji (TPAF). It was officially inaugurated on 26 May 2003 by Fijian Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase. In conjunction with the occasion, the 2003 National Productivity Awareness Campaign was also launched. More than 300 guests comprising cabinet ministers, governmental officials, members of the diplomatic corps, top business executives, and school teachers and students attended this momentous joint event.*

**L**ike its predecessor, the TPAF will continue to serve as the national body for technical and vocational training and as the national productivity organization to promote and enhance productivity as a viable economic strategy. The functions of the TPAF will be conducted through the following three councils: the National Training and Productivity Council, National Quality Awards Council, and National Standards and Accreditation Council.

According to TPAF Director-General Jone Usamate, the work and responsibilities of the National Training and Productivity Council and the National Quality Awards Council are simply a carryover of the activities of the former FNTC. The new activities of the TPAF will be those to be undertaken by the National Standards and Accreditation Council, which are to develop a national qualifications framework that complies with international standards; make regular reviews of vocational competency standards relating to qualifications specified in the national qualifications framework; arrange for the accreditation and registration of training providers and trainers; review such accreditations and registrations; administer and conduct national examinations and tests for trades and vocational skills pertaining to qualifications specified in the national qualifications framework; and manage the national apprenticeship and traineeship programs.

Prime Minister Qarase, in his keynote speech at the launching ceremony, said that the establishment of the TPAF “will bring productivity closer to the center of our drive to take the economy forward and to banish poverty.” The

message for Fiji is very clear, he added, “If we want the country to progress, we have to foster a productivity culture. We do not have a choice in this. It is about producing the highest quality of goods and services at least cost and in minimum time. It means hard work, investment in education and training, innovation, motivation, and a strong national commitment.”

The Prime Minister told the gathering that the government's road map for a better Fiji calls for the economy to grow by at least 5% a year if there were to be more investments and jobs, bigger pay packets, and a lifting of living standards. He stressed that the new wealth, once achieved, must be spread more evenly so that the poorest can also share in it. Fiji's economic growth for this year is projected to reach 5.1%, as against 4.4% for last year. Despite this expected robust performance, Prime Minister Qarase told his people not to be complacent as “we are a long way from the level of success we are seeking... only when large numbers of our people move out of poverty, only when unemployment falls and crime retreats, only when we have better roads and water supplies, and so many other improvements, only then will we be able to say that we have achieved our goals.”

Fijian Minister for Labour, Industrial Relations and Productivity Kenneth Zinck, in his welcome address, said that the 2003 Productivity Awareness Campaign will comprise a range of programs designed to raise the awareness of the need to enhance the productivity of Fiji and to motivate all segments of the community to improve quality and productivity continuously, in the workplace and in other walks of life. “It is vitally important that the productivity message

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Guests at the launching ceremony



Prime Minister Qarase

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and the development of partnerships to enhance quality and productivity touch the lives of every single citizen of our nation,” he added.

In his congratulatory message on the repositioning of the FNTC as the TPAF, APO Secretary-General Takashi Tajima said that the historic event was

a recognition of the past important and outstanding contributions of the FNTC to the socio-economic development of Fiji. It also reflected a renewed and enhanced commitment of the Government of Fiji to productivity improvement as a key strategy in the further development and prosperity of Fiji. The Government of Fiji, he said, should be lauded for establishing the TPAF. 