

# Emerging issues in tourism development

**F**iji was appropriately the site of the APO seminar on “Emerging Concerns and Issues in Tourism Development,” 19–23 April 2004.

Twenty participants from 15 member countries and two observers from Fiji took part. Fijian Minister for Labour, Industrial Relations and Productivity Kenneth Zinck gave the opening address, an occasion which was also graced by Mayor of Nadi Councillor Bal Ram.



*Minister Zinck (seated 6th from left) with participants in the seminar*

Minister Zinck said that tourism plays a critical role in Fiji’s development and it is the leading tourism destination in the South Pacific. Tourist arrivals are expected to exceed 450,000 this year, as compared with about 250,000 in 2001. Optimism about the future of the industry underlines the importance of training adequate hospitality personnel to meet demand, especially to ensure that there are no mismatches between output delivered and industry expectations. However, the industry faces accommodation and airline seat constraints.

Minister Zinck also mentioned the increasing attention being paid to the relationship between the environment and tourism and the adoption of a holistic approach to development where there is an integration of economic, social, cultural, and environmental issues. He welcomed the growth of eco-tourism as it has immense benefits for smaller rural communities in Fiji. He also pointed to the growing backpacker segment. “Serious attention should therefore be paid to the catering and hospitality standards of the smaller establishments that cater to this market.” He concluded his address with a call to the industry to be forward thinking and to stay in tune with customer requirements. 🌀