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## ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL WORKS ON PROGRAMS

6/30/2011

A one-day national environment council meeting at the Southern Cross Hotel discussed various environment projects undertaken in Fiji better coordinate stakeholders.

The Department of Environment in partnership with other government ministries and departments, non government organisations (NGO) through donor funding, has implemented various environment programs throughout Fiji.

These are in the areas of:

- Biodiversity conservation,
- Sustainable biological resource use
- Climate change
- Waste and pollution; and
- Development control (and other programs related to Fiji's obligations under regional and multilateral agreements).

Local Government, Urban Development, Housing & Environment permanent secretary Mrs Taina Tagicakibau said the national environment council was established under the Environment Management Act (EMA) and membership made up of stakeholders who focused on environment.

The key features of the EMA 2005 are:

- The setting up of a National Environment Council to coordinate the formulation of environment related policies and plans;
- The requirement for Environment Impact Assessments to be binding on all parties, including Government;
- Permits to discharge waste and pollutants into the environment;
- National Resource Inventories, National Resource Management Plan, National State of the Environment Report, and the National Environment Strategy; and
- Declarations, enforcement orders, stop work notices will ensure environmental compliance according to the laws.

"We have representatives from agriculture, lands, forestry and NGOs who have an advisory role to the Government through the Local Government Ministers on policy matters," Ms Tagicakibau said.

"We already in place domestic legislations on the ground such as the EMA to protect and manage the environment and the Litter Decree

Some of the implementations taken by the department includes:

- Production of Fiji's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
- National Land Use Policy (Land Use Department, 2005)
- First National Communication on Climate Change Strategic Actions (2005)
- Solid and Liquid Waste Strategies (2006)
- Endangered and Protected Species ACT (2002)
- Environment Management Act (EMA) 2005
- Litter Decree

Mrs Tagicakibau said consultations taking place around country were to put in place a solid waste management strategy.

"It is important for the cleanliness of our environment and we have a strategy in place to be presented to Cabinet. We are going to increase recommendations to be able to fulfill the management of waste. We also might recommend to Cabinet on incentives such as user-pay program to carry out waste management," she said.

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