

**STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF FIJI
 H.E. COMMODORE VOREQE BAINIMARAMA**

**At the Gala Dinner for the**

**High-level Forum on “South-South cooperation for Sustainable Development**

 **ICT, innovation, culture and sustainable urbanization”**

**Hong Kong, 18 July 2013**

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PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Honorable CY Leung, Chief Executive of the Hong Kong

Special Administrative Region;

Ambassador Francis Lorenzo, President of the IOSSC;

Your Excellency John Ashe, incoming President of the

UN General Assembly;

Mr. [Hamadoun Touré](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamadoun_Tour%C3%A9), Secretary General of the International Telecommunication Union;

Honorable Ministers;

Your Excellencies;

Members of the United Nations and the Private Sector;

Distinguished Guests.

As we gather tonight for this official Gala Dinner, I would like to first thank you all for your fruitful and productive engagement during this day of discussions around the theme of South-South Co-operation for Sustainable Development focusing on ICT, Innovation, Culture and Sustainable Urbanization.

On behalf of the Fijian people and Government, I would like to hereby congratulate the organizer of the Forum this morning for the successful organization of the Annual High-Level Forum on South-South Co-operation for Sustainable Development with the theme *“ICT, Innovation, Culture and Sustainable Urbanization”.*

Allow me to extend a special word of appreciation to Honorable Mr CY Leung, Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, for his support and hospitality. I was exceptionally pleased and impressed to be informed that Hong Kong is also the home of the IOSSC Asia-Pacific Regional Committee. I commend the Chief Executive for his devotion to further the ICT agenda of the Asia-Pacific Region and I look forward to future collaboration.

As members of the Global South, it is imperative to highlight the need for inclusive and equitable access to the benefits of Science, Technology and Innovation as it has once more proven to be critical for ensuring that development is truly sustainable. I sincerely believe that the Annual High-level Forum on South-South Co-operation for Sustainable Development organized by IOSSC has reached its objectives to showcase the benefits of using (ICTs) for sustainable development.

The Forum brings together and engages developing countries to explore options to address ICT skills/human capacity in the ICT sector and to learn from the experiences, challenges and best practices of other institutions and entrepreneurs.

Excellencies,

It is undeniable that the outcome of our deliberations has been very successful. The importance of ICT as a tool for sustainable development has not only been recognized but also supported by renewing the partnership between the public and the private sector.

Just over a decade ago, the development world of the UN, and the business world of the private sector were two worlds apart. The UN was exclusively engaged in development projects with national public sector counterparts, and the private sector was developing businesses that would bring about profit. In doing so, both were actually providing significant contributions to development and improving people’s lives. Their work, however, rarely crossed paths.

In the early 2000’s, a fundamental change occurred that brought them together. On one hand, the UN diversified its partnerships and its source of funding, and recognized that the private sector could be an important interlocutor with a positive role to play in its development work. At the same time, social and environmental issues became increasingly recognized by private companies as important ones that can directly affect their activities. Philanthropic associations and foundations linked directly to private companies were established in increasingly large numbers and became actively involved in development initiatives.

As opportunities for partnerships are being explored, partners are getting to know one another better. This is an interesting learning process as the culture, mode of operation and procedures are often different between the public and the private sectors. I therefore welcome the occasion provided here to gather distinguished representatives not only from the public, but also from the private sector to exchange ideas and best practices and forge new alliances and partnerships for the benefit of the Global South.

Finally, I would like to wish all of you a safe return trip home and I hope to see you soon in Fiji.

Vinaka Vakalevu.

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