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PRESS RELEASE

Women Press for Progress

Suva, Fiji Islands.

'Women are capable of achieving whatever they set their mind on, nothing is impossible.'

This was the key message conveyed by Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba during the International Women's Day (IWD) celebration at the Fiji National University Nasinu campus today.

Speaking on the theme *Press for Progress*, Prof Nabobo-Baba said IWD was a celebration of women power and their valuable dedication and contribution towards societal as well as global development.

"Women are already helping run the world. If women are not supported then we are losing out. It's a good time to be happy because women have come a long way," said Professor Nabobo-Baba.

The senior academic herself is an excellent role model being the first *i-taukei* female to become a Professor.

The former Ballantine Memorial School Head Girl was a gold medallist at the University of the South Pacific in 1996 and then went on to study and teach abroad.

She has a PhD on Indigenous Epistemology, Knowledge and Implications from the University of Auckland, New Zealand and is a distinguished scholar recognised for original contributions in indigenous knowledge and the academy by the American Educational Research Association (AERA) (2007) –International and Indigenous peoples Education (SIG).

"I have had many great women in my life and some very great men who helped make the woman I've become today. I always believe as women we need to find that one mentor, a group of friends and support group that can help us press forth for progress."

"Success is about serving people. You must pursue what you want, but it should help contribute to the progress of our lives and nation. Do your best and do not apologize for less. I religiously follow the biblical verse *'Do unto others what you want others to do to you'* because I believe it determines how you succeed in life," said Professor Nabobo-Baba.

Event Organiser, College of Humanities and Education, Associate Dean - Research, Dr Zakia Ali-Chand said IWD was not only an occasion to reflect and celebrate women achievements but also to remember women whose voices still remain unheard.

“International Women’s Day is a day that belongs to all communities everywhere - governments, NGOs, educational institutions, corporate bodies and more. Whether through global conferences, community gatherings, classroom lessons or dinner table conversations - everyone must play a purposeful role in pressing for gender parity. To achieve our goals and press for progress, we need to focus on education as the most important tool to break away from the shackles of gender stereotypes and prejudice,” said Dr Ali-Chand.

“It is a day on which we celebrate the courageous and inspiring work women are doing around the world to shape more tolerant and equitable societies.”

For further information, please contact Litia Tuiqaqa on Email: pro-It@fnu.ac.fj or Phone: 3394000 ext. 2886

About the Fiji National University: The Fiji National University (FNU) was established through the merger of 7 government-owned tertiary institutions in Fiji, and commenced operations from 1 January 2010. The constituent institutions are found at over 40 different locations across Fiji, and collectively offer Certificates, Diplomas, Advanced Diplomas, Degrees, Postgraduate qualifications and Skills Upgrading for those who are already in employment. Approximately 30,000 students pass through the University each year. Over the last six years of its operations, the University has registered major achievements with regard to new programme delivery, quality improvements and contribution to research and publications via its 5 Colleges: The College of Humanities & Education (CHE), the College of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences (CMNHS), the College of Engineering, Science & Technology (CEST), the College of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry (CAFF), the College of Business, Hospitality & Tourism Studies (CBHTS) and the National Training & Productivity Centre (NTPC).