

## **Foot-bridge provides easy access for Vunibau Villagers**

Crossing the flooded creek to get access to the other side of the village will no longer be a barrier to one hundred households and close to five hundred villagers of Vunibau in Navua.

This was after a newly constructed Foot-bridge was commissioned at the Vunibau village in Navua which is the part of a Hop Skip & Jump Project to be completed by the Ministry of Waterways and Environment.

While commissioning the Foot-Bridge, the Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy highlighted the importance of securing households and providing social security for sustainable livelihoods for rural communities.

“Realizing the fact that our rural population is dominated by the younger generation and the elderly, the provision of the footbridge is increasingly important if we are to ensure the safety of the above age group, especially in vulnerable areas,” he said.

Minister Reddy further reiterated that it is a government gesture to build a vibrant and stronger rural economy through such developments to the rural communities.

“To support Governments' aim of a balanced, vibrant, and stronger rural economy, the Ministry through the provision of foot-crossing provides the enabling environment for the realization of greater development plans for rural communities as outlined in the National Development Plan,” said Hon. Dr. Reddy.

“The provision of foot crossing links the communities. Such investments provide for much needed social cohesiveness, it links communities which are often demarcated by creeks and streams and harnesses the power one community, rightly befitting in the rhetoric of one nation,” he said.

Meanwhile, a Sixty-Six-year-old villager Mr. Jone Waqa said getting access to the other side of the village was an obstacle for the villagers, especially for the elderly's and children.

“During the high tide and in a heavy downpour, the creek is filled up with water and the children usually fall in the river as crossing on a culvert was difficult especially during night time,” he said.

“Sometimes school children miss their school bus when it is high tide in the morning as the crossings get flooded and become difficult for children to cross,” he said

‘We are thankful for the Ministry of Waterways for providing this foot-bridge which now provides relief for the village elders and also for the parents as they now will no longer have to worry about the safety of their children to cross the river in the day or even at night times,’ said Mr. Waqa

