



# MINISTRY OF WATERWAYS

## Press Release

318 TOORAK ROAD, BALI TOWER, SUVA

P O BOX 1292, SUVA

Phone: (679) 3383155 Fax: (679) 338354 Email: [waterwaysfiji@gmail.com](mailto:waterwaysfiji@gmail.com)

---

September 2021

### **Navutu Riverbank Stabilization Works commissioned**

The loss of arable land resulting from Riverbank erosion and flooding will no longer be a concern for 250 villagers of Navutu in Sigatoka.

This is achieved after the completion of the Navutu Village River Bank Stabilization Works using the Nature-Based Solution (NBS) worth \$4,000.00.

The project was a partnership between the Ministry of Waterways and Dialogue Fiji funded through the European Union.

While commissioning the NBS River Bank Stabilization Works in commemoration of World River Day 2021, Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy reiterated that integrated ecosystem-based approaches to address riverbank and coastal erosion was vital in maintaining Fiji's ecological balance.

He said using the eco-friendly Nature-Based Solution was an effective tool in response to climate-induced crises.

"We at the Ministry of Waterways have Science-backed models for riverbank and coastal stabilization where we use natural resources of planting vetiver grass, placing boulders, backfilling, and planting mangroves alongside the riverbanks to prevent further erosion," he said.

"A sustainable solution to a problem caused by nature should arise by nature itself and therefore soft engineering works with nature-based solutions to protect riverbank and soil erosions is vital, such as using vetiver green technology to protect our waterways for the safeguard of our communities, infrastructure and other sectors linked to waterways," added Dr. Reddy

Hon. Reddy further reiterated that community-centric approaches were equally vital to address such problems through ecological means.

The Ministry of Waterways, through the project, has completed close to 300 meters of riverbank protection works directly addressing the concerns of the villagers of Navutu.

The ambassador for the European Union His Excellency Seam Sujir present as chief guest said the European Union is committed to protecting local communities who have been affected by Climate change.

He further highlighted the EU's commitment to promoting biodiversity towards building resilience for the communities.

"With the project we have in place, we want to improve the quality of life for the villagers through these projects which will allow them to regain the loss of arable land," he said.

According to Mr. Josese Korovatu, a farmer in the village, riverbank erosion has been a major concern for more than 250 villagers as most of their village land is now in the river.

"The major problem we face here is the loss of arable farming land due to flooding every year".

"Farmers here in the village have lost more than 2.5 acres of land in just one (1) year as the farms are located near the River Bank.

There are more than 40 full-time committed farmers in the village and due to the loss of arable land every year, farmers are not able to get into commercial farming," he said.

Now with the completion of this NBS River Bank Stabilization works, it is a sigh of relief for farmers who are planning to venture into commercial farming.