



MINISTRY OF WATERWAYS

Press Release

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Desilting Works Commissioned for Korotari River

The loss of arable land, crops, and damaged infrastructure as a result of flooding will soon be addressed for the Korotari and Vunimoli communities on the outskirts of Labasa in Vanua Levu.

This after the commissioning of two kilometers of river desilting works at the Korotari River by the Ministry of Waterways under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Program with contractor A. Khan Services.

The desilting works are expected to mitigate flooding and benefit 500 households and close to 2500 Fijians mainly the sugarcane, crop, and livestock farmers living and farming adjacent to the river.

While commissioning the river desilting works in Korotari Labasa, Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy said that river desilting works would increase the water discharge capacity of the river by removing approximately 10,000 cubic meters of silt material.

Minister Reddy noted that the Korotari area was renowned for vegetable production in the Northern Division, and assured the farmers that government would continue to support them to grow.

Dr. Reddy reiterated that the desilting works would address flooding and riverbank erosion, and would further support the expansion of commercial agriculture program through increasing agricultural activity in the community.

"Government is committed to building resilience amongst the communities and we will do this carefully, addressing issues about waterways, through increasing the conveyance capacity and releasing the free flow of water," he said.

He further noted that this project was also undertaken to mitigate the effect of climate change and build resilience amongst the communities.

Meanwhile, 58-year-old sugarcane and crop farmer Rajeshwar Dutt of Vunimoli in Labasa said flooding had been a major constraint in the community where farmers not only lost their crops but also land as a result of river bank erosion.

"Farmers who are adjacent to the river have lost acres of land due to flooding over the years, and I want to thank the Ministry of Waterways as our farms have been constantly and adversely affected by floodwaters, these farmers heavily depend on farming for food and income security, and are the major suppliers of vegetables in the Labasa market," said Mr. Dutt.