



# 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)

---

June 2022

### Media Release

#### **Balevuto Landowners say “yes” to Retention Dam Construction**

Balevuto landowners have given their greenlight to waive fishing rights to make way for the construction of a water retention dam to mitigate flooding downstream in Ba town and adjacent floodplains.

In a meeting with villagers, and the land owners at the Balevuto village in Ba last Friday, the Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy said the issue of climate change continued to be further exacerbated due to various activities.

Minister Reddy informed the landowners of their intention to construct a water retention dam to collect flood waters during rainy season and release it slowly to minimize flooding downstream. He said apart from undertaking a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment, they also need their consent on waiver of fishing rights.

He noted that with their generosity, the construction of a retention dam at the upstream of Qalinabulu River in Ba which will protect and safeguards thousands of Fijians living downstream, including the businesses in Ba town.

Dr. Reddy said “climate change coupled with various new activities upstream such as logging and agricultural activities is contributing to a much larger volume of water to flow downstream along with sediments and debris. The increase intensity and frequency of rainfall is contributing to more water that needs to pass through our waterways compared to the volume of water that used to pass through four decades ago. Secondly, activities upstream are resulting in sediments and debris which reduces the discharge capacity of our waterways. This dual effect is creating havoc downstream during rainy seasons. While we are working downstream to increase the discharge capacity of the waterway, we also want to prevent large volume of water coming down in a very short period. Whenever there is heavy rain, the water will be collected in the dam and will be released slowly thus minimizing flooding downstream,”

Minister Reddy said this will safeguard the farms, households, and businesses in Ba town during floods.

Located in the Highlands of Ba, this will be the first retention dam to be constructed in Ba at the Qalinabulu creek. The community will benefit immensely during the construction period

as laborers will be hired from the neighboring villagers. Once the EIA is approved, construction can then begin and the construction period could be for twelve months.

..END..