



MINISTRY OF WATERWAYS

Press Release

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Media Release

Navunievu and Waitabu Pleas Heard

More than twenty years of requests for a seawall to be constructed along the Navunievu and Waitabu shoreline to safeguard the two village communities have finally been answered.

Construction of the 400-meter nature-based solutions seawall by the Ministry of Waterways is expected to be completed in four weeks, bringing a sigh of relief to these two coastal villages in the district of Bua, Vanua Levu.

While inspecting the site during his most recent trip to Vanua Levu, Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment Hon. Dr Mahendra Reddy said safeguarding the livelihoods of ordinary Fijians was a priority for the Fijian Government.

"Though you are here in the rural area of Bua, you are not out of mind, we have you on our mind and I want to assure you that we will safeguard you," said Minister Reddy.

"I wanted to see the progress of the seawall first hand. We have 160 seawalls to construct now and you are part of that list. Your village was chosen because your village is very low lying. After all, when I went to see it, I could see the level the sea reached.

"Thank you for the support, the boulders, the soil and we've brought some more machines to meet the timeline of our project here and hopefully with favourable weather, we can complete this seawall within four weeks," said Minister Reddy.

Meanwhile Waitabu village headman Taisake Nabeca has thanked the Ministry of Waterways for the works done so far, sharing that the two neighbouring villages have been pleading for more than 20 years for the construction of a seawall.

"Our villagers were very happy after we saw the machines coming into the village to build the seawall. We knew that our pleas of more than 20 years were finally heard," he said.

"Throughout the years, we saw the sea levels rise right up from our shoreline into the village. Seawater has entered and reached halfway into our village, houses have water under them and some have water enter into the houses.

“Over the years, we have seen the sea threaten us and our elders who live here can say that it is very different now compared to back then, we are very thankful to the Government for what they have done for us,” said Mr Nabeca.

The nature-based solutions seawalls are built using natural products, including rocks sourced from within the communities. Vetiver grass is planted along the seawall to net themselves into the rocks and firm them up. The nature-based seawall also has crevices engineered into the walls where species of plants and animals can thrive.

Mangroves are also planted around the wall, which turns into a biodiversity-rich protected area, while at the same time protecting the coastline from erosion. These walls also protect local communities from rising sea levels, loss of lives, loss of property etc. At the same time, they have no chemicals or construction-based waste impact on our marine seascape areas.

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