

**STATEMENT BY MR. MANASA VANIQI, PERMANENT SECRETARY  
MINISTRY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND MULTI ETHIC AFFAIRS  
CSD THEMATIC DEBATE ON AGRICULTURE  
UNITED NATIONS NEW YORK 24 FEBRUARY 2009**

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**Introduction**

Thank you madam Chairperson,

Fiji is pleased to be able to participate in the thematic debate on agriculture. At the outset Fiji aligns itself with the statements delivered by the Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea on behalf of the Pacific SIDS.

Chair,

Agriculture, land and fisheries are intertwined in the economic development of small islands states like Fiji. Likewise, the ever present challenges posed by the ongoing financial crisis, decreasing ODA, climate change, increasing global oil prices, and the food crisis, pose significant barriers to the already dwindling financial and technical resources available to small countries such as mine, to effectively deal with these constraints. These constraints and the challenges posed have already been articulate by the Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea and other member states this morning. They have been well researched, documented and studied.

Chair,

Fiji fully understands its role and responsibility in dealing with the constraints to its sustainable development strategy at the national level. The challenge, as we see it madam chair, is to move from policy options to implementation on the ground. In this regard, **direct partnerships** serve as a useful model for implementation of policy options.

As mentioned, the recent **direct partnership** MOU between the Pacific Island Nations and Italy/Austria and the City of Milan, is an example of partnership effort designed to ensure that development goals and policy options are quickly translated into visible project implementation on the ground that have observable benefits to the local communities. To assist in this area, the Fiji Government has recently established a project implementation and monitoring unit within the Ministry for Rural Development that is mandated to accelerate the project implementation and improve service delivery to the rural communities.

I thank you