

REMARKS BY

**VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT, PROFESSOR RAJESH CHANDRA AT THE
CORPORATE COCKTAIL OCEANIA CENTRE, THURSDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2017**

Welcome and Acknowledgements

- Pro Chancellor and Chair of USP Council, Mr. Winston Thompson and Mrs. Queenie Thompson;
- Excellencies and Members of the Diplomatic Corps:
 - H.E Mr. John Patterson Oti,
 - H.E Mr. Masahiro Omura,
- Members of the Fijian Government;
- Members of our Senior Management Team;
- The Chair of the Fiji Higher Education Commission, Dr. Milika Sobey;
- Head of JICA, Mr. Hiroyuki Sawada;
- Representatives of our development partners;
- Business leaders and representatives;
- Representatives of Civil Society;
- Principals of Schools;
- Members of staff; staff and
- Friends, ladies and gentlemen

Welcome to our end of the year drinks. Thank you all for coming this evening as a measure of our relationship and your interest in and support for the University.

We have had yet another year of success and I take this opportunity to reflect and celebrate our achievements for 2017.

2. Major Achievements in 2017

I am very pleased with the progress the University has made this year.

We have continued to make very good progress towards the implementation of our Strategic Plan 2013 – 2018.

The core aim of the SP is the transformation of the University from a good to an excellent university. This is to be achieved through international accreditations and we are pleased that this year we surpassed the KPI relating to international accreditations. We now have a total of 24 accreditations out of which 8 programmes are from Pacific TAFE. We also have 9 international recognitions. This means that these courses are comparable with courses in reputable Universities overseas.

We recently had the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) Accreditation Mock Audit visit and will have our Seeking Accreditation Visit in April 2018. This are steps towards achieving the American Accreditation for the University.

We have also introduced some new programmes to help cater for the need for educated workforce in these areas for the benefit of our region.

The University has also registered patents this year. Three (3) USP inventions that have received patent certification from the Australian Government and registered under the Australian Patents Act in 2017.

1. Braille Slate to Teach Children with Visual Disabilities – By Mr. Nikhil Singh, Mr. Vinal Prakash, Ms. Monika Koroi-Robinson and Dr Utkal Mehta

2. Aromatic Network for Power Distribution System - Dr F M Rabiul Islam, Dr Kabir Mamun, Mr. Krishneel Prakash and Mr. Avneel Lallu

3. GSM Based Early Flood Warning and Monitoring System - Mr. Sheikh Azid, Dr Bibhya Sharma, Mr. Reginald Nath, Mr. Vikrant Sharma, Mr. Abhinendra Chand, Mr. Sumeet Prasad and Ms. Angele Jacquier

Our enrollment this year stands at around 30,321 students. We continue to progress in enrollment growth as our programmes gain international recognition and becomes more attractive for students all over the region.

We also had a very successful High Level Consultation meeting with our development partners, Australia and New Zealand earlier this week.

USP and Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF) signed a MOU on 17 November 2017 to explore mutually beneficial commercial projects at the University. USP plans to expand its commercial operations to generate future cash flows for the benefit of the students and as part of its broader strategy to diversify its income streams, the University is seeking to leverage its resources more fully. The University had invited an Expression of Interest (EOI) for partners to develop the commercial projects and FNPF was selected as a very competent joint venture partner through the Tender Committee.

USP continues to partner with overseas Universities through MOU so that USP staff and students benefit in terms of learning and teaching and research and in the aim of capacity building to support the regional member countries. We recently signed an MOU and a Student Exchange Agreement with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

We are also bringing about major changes to the University Library at Laucala Campus to be in line with modern learning rooms to enhance student learning.

We continue to participate in the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders, Ministerial and CROP Executives meetings. The University's regional ICT engagement has been scaled up and the CROP ICT Working Group (WG) has been strengthened.

We will go into 2018 with an excellent annual plan where our income for the first time will cross \$200 million and where, despite an ambitious programme of activities, to end the year with an operating surplus of about \$8 million to finance our capex. This is a major increase from \$134 million in 2008 when I took over the Vice-Chancellorship.

3. 50th Anniversary

Next year marks the 50th year since the establishment of The University of the South Pacific and to mark its Golden Jubilee, the University will be holding events in all its member countries throughout the year starting with the launch of the celebrations on the 5th of February next year, which is the exact date the very first classes start at the University back in 1968. In March of 2018 we will officially unveil a remembrance monument which will feature the hull of a New Zealand flying boat with the wings of an albatross which is the insignia of the 5 squadron that was based in Laucala Bay area during the world war. I want to take this opportunity to invite all of you to be part of this historic milestone in the development of USP and the development of our region.

4. Closing

USP is always willing to work collaboratively with everyone to produce benefits in human capacity and research for its regional member countries and beyond and I thank everyone present here for your input into this.

Let us now take some time to unwind and reflect on our plans and resolutions for next year and also re-energise for even bigger and better achievements in the lead up to our 50th Anniversary in 2018.

May the spirit of Christmas bless you with a successful end to the year and I wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and a very productive and healthy New Year.

Thank you, Vinaka Vakalevu and Dhanyabaad