



**Address by the
Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Rajesh Chandra at the
Launch of the USP – New Zealand Partnership Agreement (2016-2018)**

The New Zealand High Commissioner, His Excellency Mr. Mark Ramsden and staff from the High Commission;
Honourable. Chief Justice, Mr. Anthony Gates;
Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council, Mr. Winston Thompson;
Excellencies and members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Representatives of the University's main Development Partners;
Members of the Regional and International Organizations;
Senior Fijian Government Officials;
Members of the University Council, Executive Committee, FIC, ARC and Senate;
Members of the Senior Management Team;
Staff and students of The University of the South Pacific;
Distinguished Guests and friends of the University;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Bula Vinaka, Namaste, Kia Ora tatou, and a very good evening to you all and welcome to this evening function to mark and celebrate the new partnership between the Government of New Zealand and USP.

A very special welcome and greetings to H.E Mr. Mark Ramsden.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the new NZ-USP Partnership Agreement, which His Excellency Mr. Mark Ramsden will launch shortly, will provide a total of NZD 15 million for the current triennium, 2016 – 2018. I will not dwell on the partnership details as I am sure His Excellency will speak on this at length, but I should add that in addition to the NZ\$15 million for the Partnership, NZ has also committed support for a major ICT project.

I do, however, wish to record the University's deep gratitude not only for the signing of the new Partnership Agreement, but also for the fact that Government and people of New Zealand have provided crucial and assured support to USP since its establishment 48 years ago. This strong support over almost five decades is noteworthy and shows just how strong the partnership is between the Government and people of NZ and the University. I am convinced that this long-term, stable and assured funding has been one of the reasons for the University's steady and remarkable development since 1968.

The signing of the new partnership and the maintenance of the level of funding at a time when it is not uncommon for agencies to have their aid cut is very much appreciated by the University. This expression of confidence by the Government of New Zealand in the University is a source of motivation for us to strive even harder to achieve the excellence that we aspire to achieve.

Our partnership with New Zealand goes beyond funding support. In addition to its funding support, New Zealand continues to provide strategic level contributions and

support through its presence in the University Council, University Grants Committee (UGC), and also through the annual High Level Consultations (HLC).

Support from New Zealand towards the Strategic Plan (2013-2018), and the University, in the form of public statements, introductions to key universities and institutions in New Zealand, and provision of scholarships for study at USP are all incredibly powerful and important statements of New Zealand's confidence in USP.

Ladies and Gentlemen, USP and New Zealand both firmly believe that a better future for all Pacific Islanders can be created through education and human resource development. The USP Strategic Plan (2013-2018), maps the steps that need to be taken to create a better university over the next two and a half years.

Ladies and Gentlemen, USP will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2018, just two years away. We have already begun our discussions on this. We are confident that NZ will mark this major milestone in higher education in the Pacific with a gesture commensurate with its status as one of the founders of USP and one of its longest contributing and most consistent development partners.

Your Excellency I would like to assure you that the University is committed towards effectively and efficiently delivering its obligations under the new Partnership Agreement through the implementation of the USP Strategic Plan.

On behalf of the Pro Chancellor and the University Council, Senior Management Team, Staff and Students, please accept our sincerest appreciation of your Government's reliable, consistent and unwavering support towards USP.

With these brief remarks Ladies and Gentlemen, I take much pleasure in inviting H.E. Mr. Mark Ramsden to deliver his address.

Vinaka Vakalevu Dhanyabad Thank you

(13 April 2016)