

**ADDRESS BY  
VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT, PROFESSOR RAJESH CHANDRA  
AT THE USP ALUMNI FUNCTION,  
TUESDAY 29 JUNE 2010,  
HYATT REGENCY HOTEL, AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND.**

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Kia'ora, Bula, Namaste and a very good evening to all USP Alumni and distinguished guests.

Thank you for taking out time to be here this evening for the first ever alumni function in Auckland. It is indeed a pleasure to meet you all--and I am very happy to see many friends in this room.

Tonight's function is just a small one and I know there are many others there who we could have invited if we had their contacts. But this is just the beginning of establishing a strong alumni network for the future. I am sure next time around we will be able to reach out to many more who are based here in New Zealand.

The University from this year has created an Alumni Office within the Development, Marketing and Communications Division and is currently updating records of all students who have graduated since the first lot of students graduated back in 1971.

I am pleased to say that University's Alumni Web Portal: [www.alumni.usp.ac.fj](http://www.alumni.usp.ac.fj) has just been established. You and other alumnus can log in and register to join the alumni network. We hope that you, as alumni would spread the message across to other alumni as you come across them and make this network grow.

We are very proud of your achievements and those of the other 40,000 USP Alumni. Our alumni occupy top positions in government, academia, international and regional organisations and the private sector. These are noteworthy achievements that make us all very proud.

The University has turned 42 years old this year, and close to 40,000 alumni are found throughout the Pacific Region and across the globe in many professional fields. The University is providing leadership in higher education and engages proactively with communities. The establishment of the Alumni Networks will enable USP to strengthen and expand communication and partnerships, both regionally and internationally.

From its humble beginnings in 1968, USP has surpassed many milestones it had set out to achieve. We are a world class institution, providing premier tertiary education services to our twelve member countries. With the Strategic Plan 2010 – 2012 in place, the University is moving in a new direction. Thanks to the continued strong support of member countries and donor partners, USP now has state of the art facilities, including the most advanced ICT technology in the region. One thing that has not changed, and will never change, is the uniquely Pacific nature of the University, and the core shared values that identify all of us as Pacific Islanders.

One of the aims of USP is to establish a regional "think tank" of experts on all matters "Pacific". This informal network of intellectuals and experts in practice is taking shape as the University's growing numbers of alumni meet with great career success in the private sector, in government, and in civil society. The University's outputs are making a real impact in the region.

We are also fortunate that the Government of Japan has also agreed to fund the construction of a Multi-Purpose Theatre. Work on this state-of-the-art 307 seat lecture theatre has already commenced. This theatre will promote the link between the traditional art, culture, music and

dance of the Pacific and modern technology, and will be the only one of its kind in the region.

The finalisation of the new Master Plan for the University's Laucala Campus is another notable achievement. The new Master Plan maps out the trajectory of campus development, and full implementation will result in a University which is uniquely Pacific in appearance and "feel", which is steeped in tradition yet embraces state-of-the-art technology, and which better integrates the University with the surrounding City of Suva.

The University plans to build a Convention and Cultural Centre with a capacity of 600 people. The Convention and Cultural Centre, which would display the best Pacific art produced at the University, will make it possible for the University to host international conferences and events, thereby enhancing the University's visibility both regionally and internationally. An international student's accommodation which will be linked to the Centre is also on the drawing board.

The development of other USP campuses is also in the pipeline, and includes the construction of a new campus building in Lautoka and Labasa, which will be custom built and more conducive to learning and teaching. We will build and upgrade our campuses in the Marshall Islands, the Cook Islands, and the Solomon Islands.

There has been an increased support from international agencies, and donor countries to enable the development of the University, aligned with the Strategic Plan 2010 - 2012. In addition to this, the University is developing cooperation with well-known universities for mutual cooperation and assistance. We have more than one hundred MOUs with Universities and other institutes. Just yesterday, I have signed a MOU with the University of Auckland. Talks are underway for a MOU with ANU. We have also recently signed a MOU with Korean University.

Alumni are an integral part of the broader "community" of the University of the South Pacific. You are encouraged to share your own ideas with us regarding the future direction of USP, and to join the exciting events we are planning to celebrate the dynamism of this uniquely Pacific Centre of learning excellence.

As I look around the room tonight, and see such prominent alumni whose professional and personal achievements are a credit to USP's good name, I am very gratified. I am so pleased that the University produces graduates of such calibre, and reassure you that the University is committed to continuing to produce graduates such as yourselves, with outstanding leadership abilities, sense of purpose, intellectual capacity, and commitment to the development of the Pacific region. I would like to especially acknowledge John Samy, Steve Ratuva and Walter and thank them for the roles they have played in USP's development.

Thank you once again for coming this evening. As this may be the first time that many of you have met, I encourage you to form and be part of the network of Alumni in New Zealand. From our side we would keep your information in our database and update you with University news through the Alumni Portal.

You are all encouraged to visit your *Alma Mater*, whenever you are in Fiji.