



REPUBLIC OF FIJI



Fiji National Employment Policy 2018



Moving Fiji Forward



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Minister's Foreword	i
Permanent Secretary's Statement	ii
Acknowledgement	iii
1. Introduction	4-6
2. Why the need for a National Employment Policy	8-10
3. Policy Priorities	12
Policy Priority 1: Create more opportunities for young people aged 15 to 24 years to follow clear pathways from education to productive employment	12-15
Policy Priority 2: Promote private investment to create jobs	16
Policy Priority 3: Boost action on Just Transition of the workforce, creation of decent work and quality jobs in the context of climate change by identifying and promoting green jobs and new green skill sets	17-19
Policy Priority 4: Promote self-employment in the formal economy	20
Policy Priority 5: Promote access to overseas employment opportunities	21-23
Policy Priority 6: Create more income generating opportunities for those reliant on subsistence activities for their livelihood	24-26
Policy Priority 7: Promote greater gender equality in employment and working conditions	27-29
Policy Priority 8: Make it easier for disabled persons and the elderly to earn an income	30-32
Policy Priority 9: Eliminate child labour and social injustice in workplaces	33-34
Policy Priority 10: Strengthen good faith employment relations and promote safe and productivity-driven workplaces	35
4. Implementation strategy	37
Annex A: Agencies involved in the implementation of NEP	38
Annex B: SDG 8 targets & indicators related to each NEP policy priority	39
Contacts	40



MINISTER'S FOREWORD

The global financial crisis of 2008 caused major setbacks to nations across the globe. The damage to employment created by the financial and economic crisis has caused hardship to many working women and men, families and communities, and worsened poverty. As a direct response to the global financial crisis of 2008, the ILO in June 2009 adopted the “Global Jobs Pact”.

Guided by the Decent Work Agenda and commitments made by the ILO constituents in the 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, the Pact recalls that respecting fundamental principles and rights at work, strengthening social protection, promoting gender equality and encouraging voice, participation and social dialogue are critical to recovery and development.

The Fijian Government responded quickly to the crisis by facilitating the employment creation reforms and the promulgation of the National Employment Centre Act 2009. In 2010, the National Employment Centre (NEC) was established to provide a non-discriminatory employment services to the unemployed persons in Fiji.

Since 2010, the NEC has been providing registration services, counselling services, aptitude assessment, life skills training, specific skills training, work attachment, volunteer attachment, and work placement into local employment, foreign employment and regional volunteer placement services to the registered unemployed persons.

The work of the NEC is guided by a National Employment Centre Board (NECB) comprising of the tripartite social partners namely workers, employers and Government representatives, as well as training institutions, Youth representatives and Non- Government Organizations.

In 2017, the NECB decided to formulate and adopt a National Employment Policy (NEP) for Fiji that brings together the current and future potential employment opportunities in Fiji that will address among others the high youth unemployment, lack of productivity and the productive utilization of the land, to name a few that will promote and foster more equal distribution and participation to nation building.

With the support of the wider stakeholders that were consulted across Fiji, and the endorsement of Cabinet in August, 2018, I call on all the unemployed persons to take on the many opportunities suggested in the document and for all the stakeholders including donor agencies to support the implementation of this policy.

Honourable Jone Usamate
MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT, PRODUCTIVITY AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

PERMANENT SECRETARY'S STATEMENT



The changing dynamics of the global labour market due to demographic, socio-economic, political, climate change, natural disasters and technology continue to pose challenges and opportunities in our labour market.

Fiji ratified the ILO Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (C122) in January 2010. As a signatory to C122, Fiji has committed to developing and implementing a National Employment Policy (NEP). The Convention asks the ratifying countries to develop and implement an active employment policy based on the following principles: that 'there is work for all who are available for and seeking work; such work is as productive as possible; and that there is freedom of choice of employment and the fullest possible opportunity for each worker to qualify for, and to use his or her skills and endowments in a job for which he or she is well suited, irrespective of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin'.

Fiji's immediate response to combat the global financial crisis was the promulgation of the National Employment Centre (NEC) Act 2009 under which the NEC was established in 2010 to provide employment creation services to all unemployed persons in Fiji. The NEC is governed by a National Employment Centre Board (NECB) comprising workers, employers and Government representatives including youth, training institutions and non-government organizations.

In 2017, the NECB established a Technical Committee to begin the formulation of the National Employment Policy (NEP). The draft NEP was established through the assistance of the ILO and a nationwide stakeholder consultation was undertaken to get the public's comments and feedback. The feedback from the stakeholder consultation were incorporated and the final draft was presented to the NECB before its submission to Cabinet for endorsement.

The initial focus of the National Employment Policy 2018 is on improving employment opportunities for young men and women of Fiji. This includes providing information about employment outcomes of recent graduates and improving access for young people to existing paid work. There is also attention given to a just transition of the workforce, creating decent work and quality jobs in the face of climate change by identifying and promoting new green jobs and new green skill sets. Also there is attention given to responding to opportunities to work overseas on a short-term basis. Other priorities are to expand employment options in the formal and informal economy. Giving women more equitable access to employment opportunities in the public and private sectors is an important policy priority. Also included are policies to support and protect the vulnerable by focusing on the needs of disabled persons and the elderly, and ensuring that child labour and other forms of social injustice in workplaces are eliminated. Finally attention is given to the importance of strengthening good faith employment relations and promoting safe and productivity-driven workplaces.

The NEP 2018 identifies and targets 10 priority areas for intervention over the next 5 years. These policy priority areas should bring about the maximum benefits to the Fijian labour market in terms of decent employment opportunities to Fijians. The priority areas will require an integrated and holistic approach on implementation, monitoring and review. A separate implementation plan will be designed to demarcate clearly the responsibilities, activities, performance indicators and timelines for monitoring and evaluation.

These ten priority areas will change as new variables intervene in the labour market. Thus, the NEP will be reviewed on a periodic basis to ensure its relevance and applicability to address Fiji's real labour market needs.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Salaseini Daunabuna'.

Salaseini Daunabuna
PERMANENT SECRETARY FOR EMPLOYMENT, PRODUCTIVITY AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
[Chairperson - National Employment Centre Board]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The National Employment Policy (NEP) 2018 has been put together through a consultative approach. It is a reflection of the stakeholders' commitment and persistence to address unemployment and to provide decent work opportunities to Fijians.

I acknowledge with appreciation the work of the NEP Technical Committee, the NEC Board, the technical assistance of the ILO and all the members of the public that took part in the nationwide consultation in Savusavu, Labasa, Sigatoka, Nadi, Lautoka, Ba, Tavua, Rakiraki, Levuka and Suva.





Fiji National Employment Policy 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

1. **The purpose of this National Employment Policy (NEP) for Fiji is to identify and implement ways to improve the growth and quality of employment in Fiji.** The NEP states Fiji's employment objectives and the ways to achieve them. Policies to lift economic growth are necessary for employment growth. However, also needed are policies to increase the range of opportunities for employment for specific groups in the population such as women, young people and persons with disabilities and those in marginalised or vulnerable groups. Attention also needs to be given to increasing options for self-employment in addition to wage jobs. Matching skills training to employer requirements also requires policy intervention. Specific interventions by government and employers are required to improve the conditions of employment in terms of health and safety and other measures.

2. **Employment policies should be based on an understanding of what can be implemented effectively in the context of Fiji's economy and institutions.** Potential areas that need urgent reforms will be highlighted to ensure the right environment is provided for employment creation and growth materialises.

3. **Fiji ratified in January 2010 the ILO Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (C122).** The Convention calls on countries to 'declare and pursue, as a major goal, an active policy designed to promote full, productive and freely chosen employment' (Article 1). As a signatory to C122, Fiji has committed to developing and implementing a National Employment Policy (NEP). The Convention asks the ratifying countries to develop and implement an active employment policy based on the following principles: that 'there is work for all who are available for and seeking work; such work is as productive as possible; and that there is freedom of choice of employment and the fullest possible opportunity for each worker to qualify for, and to use his or her skills and endowments in a job for which he or she is well suited, irrespective of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin'.

4. **The active employment policy is to take due account of each country's level of economic development.** The policy is to be based on 'the mutual relationships between employment objectives and other economic and social objectives'. The policy is to take such steps as may be needed, including, where appropriate, to establish programmes to implement the agreed measures. The policy is to be pursued by methods that are appropriate to national conditions and practices. At the same time, immediate areas needing urgent reforms will be identified with responsible agencies.

5. **With Fiji's adoption of the 2030 global sustainable development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, Government has committed to making progress on growing opportunities for employment.** Goal 8 of the 17

Sustainable Development Goals refers to the need for governments and other key parties to promote ‘inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all’.

A major way to reduce poverty is through access to stable employment which pays a decent income and quality education. Fiji’s 20-Year Development Strategy which offers a ‘vision for transforming Fiji into an even more progressive, vibrant and inclusive society’ emphasises the importance of ‘inclusive socio-economic development’.

The vision states that ‘inclusivity will be at the heart of growth and development and the benefits of prosperity will be shared to improve the wellbeing of all Fijians’. Also stated is that: ‘Successful implementation of the overall strategy will support the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals’.

6. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations to draft a proposed National Employment Policy. This included assistance under the ADB/ILO technical assistance project 'Improving the Performance of Labour Markets in the Pacific'. This draft NEP is based on input from a technical reference group convened by the Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations, and consultations with stakeholders and the public. This included feedback from a validation workshop to discuss a draft NEP held in Suva on 18 October 2017. The participants in the workshop included members of the National Employment Centre Board, the NEP Technical Committee, selected government departments, ILO officials and senior Employment Ministry Officials. Moreover, this draft NEP has incorporated the feedback from the public consultations in Labasa, Savusavu, and Levuka in December 2017 as well as in Sigatoka, Nadi, Lautoka, Ba, Tavua, Rakiraki, Nausori, and Suva in January 2018 and the only written feedback from the Fiji Women Rights Movement.

7. The Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations (MEPIR) holds overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring the National Employment Policy. The core responsibility of the Ministry is to pursue the attainment of decent employment standards through the promotion of employment opportunities, the provision of a healthy and safe working environment, fair employment conditions, good faith employment relations and productive workplaces and also to support the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism and other Government institutions and entities to get young people into work. The 2018-2022 vision of the Ministry is ‘decent work and employment growth’. The Ministry’s Operational Plan 2018 and the Strategic Plan [2018-2022] notes that this vision captures the desire of all workers to be accorded the fundamental principles and rights at work consistent with International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions and includes the non-discrimination of workers through the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) principles. However, as employment is a cross-cutting issue, several other government ministries are also responsible for the activities in the policy. The National Employment Policy is aligned with existing government policies on employment issues.

These include the Government's 5-Year & 20-Year National Development Plan – Transforming Fiji, the 2013 Constitution, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), the Fiji Productivity Charter, and the Fiji Budget Estimates.





The Need for a National Employment Policy

2. WHY THE NEED FOR A NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT POLICY

8

8. The need for a National Employment Policy (NEP) is based on the recognition by policy makers that economic growth alone is not enough to meet the challenge of increasing employment opportunities. Meeting this challenge involves ensuring economic growth creates paid work for those who want to earn an income. It also involves helping those in work to move to better jobs and to improving the working conditions of existing jobholders. At the same time, the NEP provides options for people that prefer other types of employment such as starting a business, self-employment, or investing. A national employment policy addresses community concerns that economic growth is not contributing to a more equal spread of the benefits, such as better income earning opportunities for the working poor. Economic growth that results in few new jobs and other opportunities for growth can be one of the main drivers of social unrest. The lack of decent job opportunities and economic participation can produce social discontent which, among other outcomes, can lead many citizens to decide to migrate overseas to seek a better standard of living elsewhere.

9. The four key questions a national employment policy should address are: (i) what can government do to get the economy to generate more employment for those seeking paid work; (ii) how can government improve the quality of work for those in paid work; (iii) what measures can government take to ensure that the gains from economic growth are shared in a more equal way (iv) what can government do to identify the skills needed to grow the economy and liaise with private sector, public sector and Non-Government Organisations.

10. The labour markets, left alone, often function in imperfect ways, resulting in market failures. Examples of market failure are skill shortages existing alongside high rates of youth unemployment; big differences in bargaining power between employers and low-skilled workers; restricted employment options for women, persons with disabilities and those in marginalised and vulnerable groups; and poor labour market outcomes due to a mismatch between skills training and employer demand. Each of these types of market failures can be addressed by government policy interventions.

11. Several distinctive features of the economic and the labour market in Fiji can be identified, using the findings of the diagnostic study '[Fiji: Creating Quality Jobs](#)' (2015), undertaken as a background analysis for this report.¹ Over the period 1971- 2015, GDP has

¹ See ADB-ILO, 2015, *Fiji Creating Quality Job - Employment Diagnostic Study*. Asian Development Bank and International Labour Organization. Manila.

grown at an average rate of 3 percent. The economy has shown strong growth each year since 2010.² However, the level and pattern of economic growth in the past decade have not helped to create more jobs or reduced the numbers of working poor.³ Agriculture as a share of GDP has declined over the last decade and the industry's share of GDP has remained much the same over the last two decades. The ADB-ILO report noted that the employment challenges Fiji faces are not primarily evident in the unemployment rate. More important indicators of the state of labour market are the extent of informal paid work, the extent of reliance on subsistence activities, and growth in the working poor.⁴ Fiji also faces the challenges of gender differences in employment outcomes, and limited labour market opportunities for young women and men despite an improvement in education attainment.⁵

12. The ADB's Country Diagnostic Study entitled 'Fiji: Building Inclusive Institutions for Sustained Growth' (2015) noted that access to jobs is a key way to ensure the benefits from growth are shared more fairly. The type of employment is crucial to doing this. The report advocated more reliance on productive and adequately paying job opportunities in the formal economy and less dependence on the informal and less productive sectors of the economy. The lack of sufficient jobs or opportunities or lack of knowledge on financial assistance provided by Government for further education for school leavers means many young people have limited alternative pathways to paid work. There is also a mismatch between skills training supply and job requirements, large differences between opportunities for young women and persons with disabilities and between regional areas in their potential to create jobs.⁶

13. The position of young people in the Fiji labour market is vulnerable. Fiji has a significant youth bulge in its working age population: one in four (25 per cent) of the population aged 15-64 years are young people aged 15-24 years in 2017. If the age definition of Fiji's National Youth Policy 15 to 35 years is used, young people in this broader age range accounted for over half (55 per cent) of the working age population 15-64 years. Fiji also has a high youth (15-24 years) unemployment rate (18.1 per cent), according to the 2015-16 Employment and Unemployment Survey (EUS). Preliminary results from the 2015-16 EUS also show that wage and salary jobs have increased between the 2010-11 EUS and the 2015-16 EUS from 148,301 to 167,300, an average of 3,800 a year. However, this number of new jobs is far short of the number of school leavers looking for work each year.

14. Based on the earlier 2010-11 EUS data, near to one-in-five young people in the same age group (18 per cent) are disconnected from education and work.⁷ Also prominent is a continuing reliance on the informal economy for paid work, especially for women. There is also evidence of an increase in the measure of inequality.⁸ Related to this is evidence that the

² Republic of Fiji, 2016, Economic And Fiscal Update: Supplement To The 2016-2017 Budget Address, p 9.

³ ADB-ILO, 2015, p iii and p 5-6.

⁴ ADB-ILO, 2015, p iii and p 5-6.

⁵ ADB-ILO, 2015, p 8.

⁶ ADB 2015. 'Fiji: Building Inclusive Institutions for Sustained Growth: Country Diagnostic Study', p xiv-xv.

⁷ ADB-ILO, 2015, p 8 & 46.

⁸ ADB-ILO, 2015, p 36.

value of real wages has remained constant or marginally declined over time.⁹ One reaction to limited domestic employment opportunities is seen in the continuing high rate of emigration overseas.¹⁰

15. The new 2015-16 EUS survey results need to be analysed to provide up-to-date information on key indicators related to employment. The following ILO decent work indicators, used internationally, are relevant to Fiji's employment situation. These indicators are: (1) the ratio of employment-to-working-age population over time; (2) the overall working age and (3) youth (15-24 years) unemployment rate for males and females; (4) young men and women aged 15-24 years not in employment, education or training (so-called NEET indicator) ; (5) the informal paid employment rate groups (defined as persons generating income but not making contributions to the Fiji National Provident Fund) for men and women by ten year age groups; (6) the proportion of own-account workers and contributing family workers in total paid employment for men and women; (7) the unemployment rates by broad age group for each level of educational attainment and type of post-secondary qualification for men and women; and share of wage employment in non-agricultural employment for men and women by ten year age groups.

16. The Sustainable Development Goal 8 relates to employment. The goal is to 'promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all'. Goal 8 has a number of targets and indicators which are shown in Annex B. Also included in the table is reference to the NEP priority related to that target.

17. Overview of employment policy priorities. The initial focus of the National Employment Policy 2018 is on improving employment opportunities for young men and women of Fiji. This includes providing information about employment outcomes of recent graduates and improving access for young people to existing paid work. There is also attention given to a just transition of the workforce, creating decent work and quality jobs in the face of climate change by identifying and promoting new green jobs and new green skill sets. Also there is attention given to responding to opportunities to work overseas on a short-term basis. Other priorities are to expand employment options in the formal and informal economy. Giving women more equitable access to employment opportunities in the public and private sectors is an important policy priority. Also included are policies to support and protect the vulnerable by focusing on the needs of disabled persons and the elderly, and ensuring that child labour and other forms of social injustice in workplaces are eliminated. Finally attention is given to the importance of strengthening good faith employment relations and promoting safe and productivity-driven workplaces.

⁹ ADB-ILO, 2015, p 36.

¹⁰ ADB-ILO, 2015, p 45.

10 Policy Priorities



3. POLICY PRIORITIES

Policy Priority 1: Create more opportunities for young people aged 15 to 24 years to follow clear pathways from education to productive employment

Rationale

18. Youth unemployment poses a challenge on several dimensions. First, the overall youth unemployment rate is high, three times the adult unemployment rate, according to the 2015-16 EUS. Second, female youth unemployment rate is higher than male youth unemployment rate. A quarter of young women in the labour force are actively looking for work compared to about one-in-six young men. Third, the youth unemployment rate is higher in the urban sector. For instance, in 2014, the youth unemployment rate in the urban sector was 23 percent compared to 13 percent in the rural sector. Finally, many school leavers lack the skills and work experience and work readiness needed by employers to make them productive workers.

19. Given Fiji's high levels of youth unemployment, priority will be given to this challenge. However, there is a range of issues that need to be addressed on both the supply and demand side of the labour market. In relation to the supply side, these questions need to be answered. Is the current education system, the curriculum and modes of teaching relevant to the needs of employers? More importantly, is the education system responsive to young people's aspirations? In relation to the demand side of the labour market: what can employers do? Can more work attachments be offered to high school and HEI students? What volunteer opportunities are available to provide young people with necessary work experience? Is there scope for private/public partnership volunteer projects targeting young people in towns, regions and rural communities?

Proposed Strategic Actions

20. **Education and training providers need to have closer ties with employers. This should be done by setting up career pathways** from senior secondary schools, universities, Higher Education Institutions, technical colleges and post-secondary TVET providers to specific employers. These pathways should be forged with employers who are able to provide work placements and job offers and who want to shape what and how relevant training is provided. Employers may want skills training providers to rate graduates by their level of proficiency in addition to assessing whether they are competent or not in a range of skills. Looking into the future, the question becomes, how do we create time relevant skills? How do we create a skill that will not become redundant in 5, 10, or 20 years' time? That is a big question for the youths of today. That is the question for us when we set this policy in place, as it should be a policy that is forward thinking and will take us into the future and set a solid platform for us to work on.

21. **The suppliers of post-secondary education and training need to produce evidence each year that they are meeting the needs of employers.** The post-secondary provider

can collect this evidence for each qualification by conducting a course-related tracer survey of recent graduates. The evidence on job outcomes (such as type of job and wage earned) achieved by recent graduates needs to be made public. This will enable potential students and their parents to make an informed choice about the type of training and which training provider to invest in. There is a need to assess the kids from pre-school, primary and secondary schools, in order to identify and provide the right course for them in Universities and other Higher Education Institutions. This ensures they get trained from a young age according to their knowledge and skills, not what their parents or friends want. Thus there are two important issues - skills training and application training.

22. An alternative approach of providing information about the employment outcomes of graduates by qualification should also be investigated. It may be possible for a government agency to make use of tax records or information from the Fiji National Provident Fund records to identify job outcomes for graduates with specific qualifications.¹¹ This method requires the use of a unique identifier for each graduate such as a Tax Identification Number (TIN), a Provident Fund Number or the Voter Registration Number. These records can be used to show the proportion of graduates employed by type of post-school qualification for a specific year. The information could also show whether the graduate's job is related to their field of study and how much the graduate is earning. People in Fiji need to know the important industries that are making the country tick and to align our young generations into thinking of jobs that they will find eventually rather than going into areas that they sit around waiting for an opportunity to present itself which leads to unemployment. Also, we need to look at what the future of work will look like for young Fijians in the face of technological advancement.

23. Reform of the apprenticeship scheme is needed. Apprenticeship is a valuable way for trainees to gain industry skills and work attitudes, based on a pathway to employment. The quality of the person who goes through apprenticeship, learns the theory and applies the practical aspect is much better than the person who learns all the theories then tries to do the practical. By the time you do the practical, the theory part is forgotten. So, there is that challenge. We know the best way to train good workers is through Apprenticeship. However, the current apprenticeship numbers are very low. The apprenticeship system needs more employer and government support to revive, reform and grow. This reform should start with a study of the performance and outcomes achieved by participants and employers in the apprenticeship scheme. This study should include feedback from both employers and apprentices on the quality and duration of training, and working conditions, including pay rates. Apprenticeships are expensive for employers to provide. There is often a trade-off between the ideal and practice in how apprenticeships operate. One such trade-off is between the quality of the training provided and the pay rate of the apprentice. The expense to employers of providing high-quality training requires that apprentices are to be paid low pay rates while they are learning. A high pay rate for apprentices is often at the

¹¹ [New Zealand's Ministry of Education uses information on graduates matched to their tax records to publish data on their labour market outcomes and earnings by qualification.](#)

expense of formal training as employers want their apprentices to be more productive sooner to cover their costs.

24. Resource the National Employment Centre to offer two types of placement services. These should be targeted at young jobseekers looking for work in occupations that do not require post-secondary qualifications. The first type of placement service should be based on an improved version of the simple placement services NEC now provides. The second is a placement service that NEC could provide for a fee which is to interview and pre-screen jobseekers to provide employers with a shortlist of job applicants.¹² NEC is to cater for the needs of employers in terms of placement services.

25. Help more young people to gain the necessary technical and financial skills to engage in self-employment. The Young Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES) has a budget of \$2 million to provide grants up to a maximum of \$20,000 for young people between the ages of 18 and 30. The money is to help start a business. Training and mentoring is also to be provided to ensure that the business is sustainable. Young people should demonstrate first that their business concept is viable by investing their own savings initially to show that they can generate a cashflow.

26. Work attachments for new jobseekers are an important pathway into employment in Fiji.¹³ This is because the most important attribute that many employers want from new jobseekers is relevant work experience.¹⁴ The NEC and TVET providers, such as FNU, ask employers to provide work attachments. The NEC asks employers to take school leavers to give them experience in the workplace. However, little is known about how well this pathway to employment works and we must have mechanisms in place to address this.

27. To improve the success rate of this pathway, information is also needed on the benefits and costs to employers of providing work attachments. Identifying the transaction costs for employers in terms of the money and time involved will enable these costs, where possible, to be reduced. Employers also need to be asked about the issues they would like to see addressed for them to continue to offer work placements. Information on which employers (employment size and sector) are more likely to offer work placements is needed as well as how often placements are required. This information can be used to design a coordinated approach to employers by the NEC and TVET providers in consultation with Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts and Fiji Higher Education Commission.

¹² ADB/ILO, 2017, 'Public Employment Services in Fiji and Papua New Guinea', in [Improving Labour Market Outcomes in the Pacific: Policy Challenges and Priorities](#). ILO Country Office for Pacific Island Countries, June, Chapter 3.

¹³ The conversion rate of work attachments to ongoing employment for 2015 has been estimated to be between one-in-five and one-in-four work attachments (21 and 27 per cent respectively). See ADB/ILO, 2017, 'Public Employment Services in Fiji and Papua New Guinea', in [Improving Labour Market Outcomes in the Pacific: Policy Challenges and Priorities](#). ILO Country Office for Pacific Island Countries, June, pp 87-88.

¹⁴ Peter Cappelli, 2017, 'Skill Gaps, Skill Shortages, and Skill Mismatches', Keynote Address, International Conference on Jobs and Skills Mismatch, International Labour Organization (ILO), Geneva, 11-12 May, p 20.

28. Young job seekers can gain valuable work experience through volunteer work.

The National Employment Centre should work with NGOs to set up programmes for young people to undertake specific work assignments related to the NGOs' objectives. These assignments could include preparing for disaster relief, engaging in post-disaster reconstruction, climate change mitigation or environment restoration. The NEC should seek funding to cover the basic expenses of mobilising young volunteers from the specialist facilities that have been set up to address these issues.

29. Create opportunities for skills transfer from foreign workers on large infrastructure projects.

Young TVET graduates with trade and technician qualifications as well as university graduates in engineering and related occupations usually lack relevant job-relevant skills which can only be acquired by learning on-the-job. A recent ADB report advocates that Pacific Governments insert a requirement in contracts for publicly funded infrastructure such as road construction or other types of urban infrastructure for construction companies to promote opportunities for skills transfer as a condition for importing skilled workers.¹⁵ The ADB report proposes that foreign contractors, as part of their social license to operate in a foreign country, deliver training and mentoring in certified skills sets for national workers.

30. Government contracts for large projects should require contractors to transfer skills from foreign to domestic workers.

The prime contract should include a provision which is costed separately for contractors engaging foreign workers to ensure they transfer their skills to local counterparts. The skills to be transferred could include (1) basic skills for workers in elementary occupations, (2) trade and technician skills, (3) professional and managerial skills or (4) organisation-wide systems for subcontractors such as managing quality control systems. Skills transfer requirements could be specified in several ways: (1) as an input in a contract such as number of training places; (2) as an output such as training in specified skills; or (3) as a performance-based outcome such as training in specified skills to an assessed quality standard to be decided by the Ministry in consultation with stakeholders.



¹⁵ Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2017, 'Promoting Skill Transfer for Human Capacity Development in Papua New Guinea: The role of externally financed infrastructure projects. April, Mandaluyong City, Philippines <http://dx.doi.org/10.22617/TCS178751-2>

Policy Priority 2: Promote private investment to create jobs

Rationale

31. The Government of Fiji sees private sector investment as the driving force behind growth and job creation. The government since 2007 has been committed to modernising Fiji's infrastructure and providing a conducive environment that contributes to a competitive, robust, and resilient private sector. This includes opening the telecommunications market to competition, reducing corporate and personal income taxes, improving access to land and removing barriers to private investment.

32. However, according to the World Bank's Doing Business indicators, Fiji ranks 97 out of 190 countries in terms of the ease of doing business in terms of government policies and other related factors. This ranking for 2017 is lower than the 2016 rank by 13 places. The policies assessed for the overall ranking are: starting a business, dealing with construction permits, getting electricity, registering property, getting credit, protecting minority investors, paying taxes, trading across borders, enforcing contracts and resolving insolvency. In particular, on the ease of starting a new business, Fiji is ranked at a low 159 out of 190. This compares with a rank of 1 for New Zealand, 7 for Australia and 37 for Samoa.¹⁶

Proposed Strategic Actions

33. **Fiji's international ranking in the World Bank's Doing Business needs to improve.** Special attention should be given to raising Fiji's low ranking for starting a business. To create a faster turnaround time to set up a new venture in the formal economy, this requires simplifying or omitting steps, shortening the duration of delays and lowering the high costs of compliance with the legal requirements. Also, there is a need to assess the time and cost for someone wishing to start a small business to complete these procedures. These procedures include obtaining all necessary licences and permits and completing with the relevant authorities any required notifications, verifications or inscriptions for the company and employees.

34. **Access to land, particularly communal land for commercial purposes is a major challenge.** This is in terms of the granting of lease from TLTB mainly for those in the village, when they want to do private investments in farming. They need to have a registered lease before they can access loans from the bank. Through the TLTB, one of the constraints is having to pay premiums upfront before you even start your farming, so, how can you reduce that? Because many people in the villages are living on their lands and many of these are *mataqali* land, leasing out is a difficulty. Further, capital is an issue and can be a deterrence from getting into large scale farming and employing people. Some of the premiums are quite high and Government could look into this.

¹⁶ Economic Profile 2017: Fiji. Doing Business 2017. World Bank Group Flagship Report, 14th Edition, p 6 & 11.

Policy Priority 3: Boost action on Just Transition of the workforce, creation of decent work and quality jobs in the context of climate change by identifying and promoting green jobs and new green skill sets

Rationale

35. A Just Transition of the workforce towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all, and at the same time creating decent work and quality jobs is critical in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement.

36. Transitioning to low-carbon economies offers potential for job creation particularly in the renewable energy sector however the transition process must be socially just and inclusive. In the ILO World Employment and Social Outlook 2018: Greening with Jobs, it is estimated that 24 million new jobs will be created globally by 2030 if the right policies to promote greener economy are put in place. Further, action to limit global warming to 2 degrees Celsius will result in sufficient job creation. New jobs will be created by adopting sustainable practices in the energy sector, including changes in the energy mix, promoting use of electric vehicles and improving energy efficiency of buildings.

37. Under Fiji's COP23 Presidency we have committed to achieve 100 per cent renewable energy and reduce carbon emissions by 30 per cent by 2030.

38. Fiji, like other countries in the world, aims for sustained economic growth, decent work and quality jobs while at the same time minimising the impact of economic activity on the environment.

39. To do this, new skills are needed based on new materials, technologies and working methods in construction, sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and renewable energy sources. Skills training policies need to be highly responsive to support this investment in green jobs to avoid skill shortages where supply does not meet demand. New skills are needed to meet the requirements of newly emerging occupations. New investment in green jobs will also increase demand for skills in existing occupations. The lack of qualified teachers and trainers will be a major obstacle to the development of the new skills required for green jobs.

40. Businesses need to take into account the impact of climate change and to reap the benefits of technological innovation. While climate change has major negative implications for Fiji's three main export sectors of agriculture, tourism and fisheries, there are also new opportunities for employment and business that need to be taken up. For instance, businesses can invest in green jobs in tourism, such as promoting eco-tourism. In agriculture, green jobs need to be created to support the sustainability of production in agriculture and fisheries. New skills are needed in the construction industry with the adoption of new energy efficient building materials, more cyclone-proof building designs and the use of more stringent quality systems. Also, green jobs are created from the need to plan for and implement disaster risk reduction and mitigation activities to reduce the impact

of climate change. Green jobs are also created from the funding of new measures to improve biodiversity in the environment.

Proposed Strategic Actions

41. Identifying jobs for the future is important to help young people invest in the education and training they need to find decent work. Describing the occupations needed for new green jobs and new skills sets needed for existing occupations is a good example of anticipating future work requirements. However, having appropriate skills does not create jobs. An analysis of current and planned investments by governments, donors, and the private sector can provide better information about new green jobs or green skills sets needed for occupations.

42. New environmental policies require supporting development of green job skills strategies so they can be implemented. This requires close coordination between the agency responsible for the environmental policy and a consultative approach with other key stakeholders, to spell out what new skill sets are needed for existing occupations and the new occupations needed, and the skills that training providers need to teach. Resources and institutional capacity are also needed to implement the green job skills development strategies. Particular attention should be given to the local level and direct ties between the employers involved in new green activities and the local skills training providers.¹⁷

43. Education and training curricula related to green skills should be reviewed periodically. This is to ensure that relevant education and skills training remain up-to-date to maximise the employability of students. Curricula and training programmes should be designed to attract more entrants in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects. This is needed to address current and future skills deficits related to the environment in particular.¹⁸

44. Career guidance for secondary school students needs to include relevant labour market information on green jobs. This information should cover opportunities on how to train for new green jobs or how to add green skill sets to training for existing occupations. This guidance should be based on recent information connected to the labour market outcomes for green skills such as type of job and wage level. It is crucial that up-to-date information be provided to students which matches qualifications or skill sets to green jobs in local labour markets. Where reliable statistics on green jobs and skills demand are lacking, qualitative approaches such as interviews with large employers in local labour markets should be used and, where possible, direct pathways to be set up between a skills training provider and an employer.

¹⁷ G20 Development Working Group, 2013, Meeting skill needs for green jobs: Policy recommendations 2013. Policy recommendations developed by the ILO at the request of the G20 Development Working Group under the Human Resource Development Pillar by the Inter-Agency Working Group on Greening Technical and Vocational Education and Training and Skills Development.

¹⁸ G20 Development Working Group, 2013, p 7.

45. **A greener economy does not automatically deliver decent jobs.** Achieving good working conditions requires a conscious effort on the part of employers, workers and government. Workplace policies to improve worker skills in areas such as occupational safety and health, managing waste, knowledge of workers' rights and collective bargaining may be needed to improve working conditions and avoid occupational hazards.



Policy Priority 4: Promote self-employment in the formal economy

Rationale

46. Self-employment is an important way of creating jobs for people with skills in demand. This applies not only to professionals such as doctors and accountants, but also to those with in-demand trade skills such as electricians, plumbers, and refrigeration and air-conditioning mechanics. Workers with information technology (IT) skills are also well placed to offer their services to a number of purchasers. However, workers with trade skills in demand also need business management skills to provide these services. Access to credit is also a major challenge. Financial institutions need to offer new products to assist business start-ups once they have demonstrated that they are viable. The combination of TVET skills training, training in business management skills and access to credit provides the foundation for a sustainable form of self-employment.¹⁹

Proposed Strategic Actions

47. **A self-employed aiming to grow and not merely survive requires skills in running a business.** TVET providers of trades skills training should also provide training on how to manage a business such as the 'Start and Improve Your Business' (SIYB) programmes of the ILO. This training covers the topics of selecting a business idea, developing a business plan, marketing, costing and pricing goods and services, record-keeping, planning, and ways to lift productivity.

48. **Small businesses need access to credit to grow.** Financial institutions should provide short-term, low interest loans to workers with marketable trade skills and training in how to manage cash flow. Financial institutions should use as collateral for a short-term, low interest loan, evidence of a person's in-demand trade skills, and relevant training in how to run a business. On short-term loans for small businesses, financial institution facilities could be guaranteed by a government small business fund which could also provide mentoring to monitor the self-employed who take up a loan.



¹⁹ Majurin, Eva, 2016, Does the combination of vocational and business management training produce extra benefits?: A comparative exploration of cases from the Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Senegal and Vietnam. International Labour Office. Geneva: ILO.

Policy Priority 5: Promote access to overseas employment opportunities

Rationale

49. Foreign labour mobility schemes offer important employment opportunities for Fijians, given the global changing demographic, environmental and technological changes. These opportunities should extend to new markets in addition to our traditional markets in New Zealand and Australia.

50. Fiji needs to encourage more labour mobility, given the high likelihood of circular mobility. Workers return with savings, more skills and confidence to add-value to their local economies. There is a need to establish more bilateral agreements with overseas countries. This is to ensure that we have a better monitored system where work conditions and the workers are well protected given the risks associated with global labour mobility such as human trafficking.

51. The re-integration of returning workers and the welfare of their families also has to be addressed. A whole-of-government approach is needed to assist in the re-integration of short-term migrants. Specific interventions are needed to encourage them to build up their savings, make wise investments and to bring new ideas and ways of working back home. Success stories and lessons learnt must be properly documented and shared with key stakeholders to show others how to harness the benefits of working overseas.

52. Fiji's national economy benefits from the remittances of overseas migrants. Remittances are a major source of foreign exchange in the country.²⁰ Remittances also improve the well-being of dependent households by paying for miscellaneous education costs and healthcare, improvements in housing, and funding new businesses. Fiji benefits through brain gain when these workers return to Fiji after having worked in an overseas labour market. As noted above, the Fiji labour market has shown a decline over time in numbers employed in some skilled occupations. The option to work overseas is an important outlet for qualified workers who cannot find work in Fiji matched to their field of study. This outlet is needed where TVET providers are supplying new graduates in numbers in excess of the available entry-level job vacancies.

53. Migration can be short-term (less than a year) based on opportunities to work in Australia and New Zealand under the seasonal worker programs. These opportunities include not only work in agriculture but also in tourism in Australia's case. Migration for the medium term (up to three or four years) for work abroad is available for those with the required skills to gain a temporary skilled work visa in Australia or New Zealand. Long-term migration overseas is available for a small number (250) each year through a ballot under the

²⁰ The National Strategic Human Resources Plan 2011-2015 (Ministry of Strategic Planning, National Development & Statistics. August 2011) notes (p. 21), 'Recently, migrant remittances have exceeded the export revenue generated by sugar and garment exports and have been the country's second largest source of foreign exchange earner after tourism.'

Pacific Access Category visa to New Zealand or as a highly skilled migrant to Australia or New Zealand. Recent changes to temporary skilled work visa requirements in Australia and New Zealand will mean that many going for work will be circular migrants as lower skill work opportunities will be limited to medium term periods abroad.²¹

Proposed Strategic Actions

54. Both short and medium-term migration opportunities exist for Fijians to work in Australia or New Zealand. The NEC promotes the availability of seasonal work opportunities in these two countries by managing the recruitment and departure process. However, more needs to be done in-country to increase the number of employers in horticulture in Australia and New Zealand for employers who want to recruit workers from Fiji.

55. Fijian workers with Australian-recognised qualifications for occupations in hospitality and tourism can also work in Australia under the Seasonal Workers Program. The NEC can request information from the 10 Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in Fiji including USP or APTC about their graduates who are not employed or in jobs not related to their occupations and seek to place them in available jobs in the tourism sector in Australia under the Seasonal Workers Program. The availability of these workers will need to be marketed to Australian and New Zealand employers.

56. Other short-term work opportunities exist in New Zealand. These work opportunities are between one and three years, mainly as truck drivers and forestry workers. There are also jobs available for qualified workers in aged and disability care as well as in other health care roles. Contacts with employers are the key to accessing these job vacancies. Many workers for the short to medium term jobs are recruited in New Zealand so that employers can vet them face to face. A smaller number are recruited from Fiji.

57. Opportunities also exist for sports professionals to be sponsored by sports clubs overseas to play. In the years from 2011-12 and 2016-17, 146 visas for footballers and 327 visas for 'sportspersons' were granted to play in New Zealand as sponsored team members of New Zealand sports clubs. However, these sponsorship arrangements are informal and are not treated as an employment contract. More formal arrangements and third-party vetting will be needed to make this a more stable means of earning money and gaining valuable experience as sports professionals. These opportunities can be more actively marketed to a wider group of young people who have the talent to play at professional level.

58. The Government of Fiji needs to work with the Australian and New Zealand Governments to identify suitable employment opportunities. The new basis for doing this is under the 2017 Labour Mobility Agreement, linked to the Pacific Agreement on

²¹ See R. Curtain, M. Dornan, J. Doyle and S. Howes, 2016, 'Labour mobility: the ten billion dollar prize', the Australian National University and the World Bank, Pacific Possible Series of the World Bank, Pacific Region.

Closer Economic Relations (PACER Plus). Funds may be allocated by Australia and New Zealand Governments to engage labour market intermediaries in both countries to identify these opportunities by making contact with employers seeking qualified workers from overseas and facilitating their recruitment from Pacific countries.

59. The Fijian Government can address employer concerns about the loss of skilled workers. This can be done by monitoring the flow of migrants out (emigrants) as well as the migrant flow in (returning migrants and non-citizen workers) compared with occupational profile of the domestic workforce to assess whether there is a major deficit, broad balance or over supply of qualified workers in key occupations. Government can use migration departure and arrival cards to ask migrants to record their occupation in two or more words and to code this information, using ILO's International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08). Specific occupations can then be analysed, comparing migrant flows to the number of domestic jobholders in that occupation, using the most recent EUS to work out the balance between occupation drain and gain.

60. Professional or occupation-based associations, private and public sectors should be consulted and be involved in identifying and addressing skill shortages and skills gaps in their profession or occupation. In construction, these associations include the Fiji Institution of Engineers, the Fiji Institute of Architects, Master Builders Association of Fiji and the Fiji Electrical Contractors Association as well as other professional associations. Skill shortages refer to the lack of national workers with the required skills and qualifications to perform available work. These shortages are often shown through the need from employers to import foreign workers in a specific occupation. Skills gaps refer to the lack of skills and appropriate qualifications of existing national workers compared with the skills and qualifications of foreign workers in the same occupation.



Policy Priority 6: Create more income generating opportunities for those reliant on subsistence activities for their livelihood

Rationale

61. The labour force in Fiji is characterised by high levels of informal employment to generate some income, supported by subsistence activities. In the 2015-2016 Employment and Unemployment Survey, a total of 58,026 persons reported being engaged in subsistence work only which was a decrease of 22.3 per cent from the earlier 2010-2011 estimates. In the youth age group a total of 8,489 persons were engaged in subsistence work only.

62. Two types of self-employment in the informal economy need to be recognised: self-employment for survival and self-employment for growth. The first type of self-employment refers to work where people take on activity that offers a low return because they have no choice. They are vulnerable because their income is low and unreliable and they may have working conditions that are harsh and harmful to their health. The second type of self-employment refers to activity that offers a stable and good income. This type of self-employment allows persons to run a business in response to an identified opportunity and may be able to afford to pay others as employees or to offer a service that is in demand as a stable own-account worker. Alternatively, a self-employed can be an own-account worker offering a service that is in demand and offers a stable income, such as an electrician, plumber or builder. These two types of self-employment require different policy responses.

63. The development of a proper regulatory framework is crucial for the informal economy. However, at the same time people working in the informal economy should be encouraged to graduate to and operate in the formal economy. The regulatory framework should define the parameters for its operation and show how to graduate to the formal economy. The subsistence activities need the right supportive environment to thrive. The identification of products suitable for the right region is important. One approach is the one-village-one-product model based on a Japanese regional development program and adopted in Thailand and in a range of other countries.²² Proper marketing and technical support services from relevant Government agencies will be needed to support the sector growth and contribution.

64. Workers in informal employment often lack access to credit, receive little or no formal training related to how they earn their income and underutilise official social security systems such as the Fiji National Provident Fund. Also, as they are outside the formal economy, workers in the informal economy receive little or no legal protection. It is the absence of these forms of support and protections that are responsible for the low-quality and precarious nature of informal employment.

²² Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry 'One Village, One Product Campaign -Since 2006'. Government of Japan http://www.meti.go.jp/english/policy/external_economy/trade/OVOP/index1.html

Proposed Strategic Actions

65. The first requirement is to measure the extent of informal employment based on the two different types of self-employment. One type is for survival and the other is aimed at growth, each with different value to the national economy. This information is necessary to identify the needs of those in different types of self-employment so that appropriate forms of support can be developed to increase the productive potential of these types of work. It is also necessary to improve the working conditions and social protection for the workers who are vulnerable to poor health and exploitation. The forms of support can include ways to access credit for those who need it by developing an appropriate regulatory framework, and helping workers to acquire more legal protection and support.

66. New opportunities for self-employment also need to be identified. These may be in activities to mitigate the effects of climate change based on investments by government, donors and communities. These activities may include the processing of waste products, improved farming methods based on drought resistant crops and better land management practices, better managing of water resources, soil restoration, planting new forests, replenishing fishing stocks, mangrove replanting and community-led managed marine areas. Other relevant activities are the strengthening of buildings to withstand extreme weather events, and constructing adaptation and mitigation works in exposed areas. When we talk about employment, it's not about everybody leaving the village to go and work. You can just stay in the village and look for income generating avenues. But one thing you should learn first is financial literacy - learning how to save money. How are you going to use the resources around you to get an income? Eco-tourism. Tourists that come to Fiji do not come for the big shopping. When you go to Denarau, at sunset, you will see tourists lying down on the beach to watch the sun go down. They pay thousands of dollars to come and watch the sun set. Others just come at night and lie down and look at the stars because in their countries they don't see stars as it is foggy in their countries. We can stay in the village but we use resources around us in such a way to generate income for us. In Natalaira people pay money to just go and watch the dolphins. Also, for income generating opportunities we can also think of traditional apprenticeships - the traditional knowledge possessed by our forefathers. Planting yams, trapping mud crabs – these are things we can learn. These are the knowledge that we have that can enhance and sustain our lives.

67. These investments need to go hand in hand with matching skills training targeted at young people, women, people with disabilities and the population aged 60 and over. Appropriate training is needed to equip workers with the necessary technical and management skills so that the work can be carried out to the required quality standard. Also traditional skills need to be harnessed to ensure that the activities undertaken are consistent with local knowledge.

68. Better access to credit for those with a stable earning income in the informal economy. The Fijian Government in 2017 had set up a new regulatory framework to make it easier to use movable, personal property such as livestock, crops, farm machinery or

business equipment as collateral for loans. This new approach is supported by a central, searchable registration system to allow quick searches to see whether an item has already been used as collateral for a loan.²³ This new initiative, however, will require working with potential borrowers to ensure they are aware of the benefits and the costs of the new access to credit.

69. Access to social security should be integrated with assistance provided by government. Recipients of government support from the Micro and Small Business Grants Initiative should be required to become members of and contribute to the Fiji National Provident Fund. The recipients should be also required to complete training in financial literacy, and open and make use of a low-cost savings account.

70. Regular monitoring is needed of micro enterprises that receive government support. This is to ensure that they are accountable for the funds they receive and have the help they need. Recipients of funding from the government’s Micro and Small Business Grants Initiative should be asked to report online to the Fiji Development Bank twice a year on their progress and the challenges they face. This information should be collated and statistics presented on the progress of grant recipients based on a five-point scale from highly successful to no longer operating. The reporting should also list the challenges they face and what assistance is available or is planned to help micro entrepreneurs.

71. The skills needed to work as a self-employed person in the informal economy are different to skills training for wage jobs. First, marketing skills or access to key informants are needed to identify economic opportunities. Skills are also needed to plan and carry out the identified activity. People wanting to earn an income in the informal economy also need literacy and numeracy to make the most of training in how to run a business and manage cashflow. Access to micro-finance is also likely to be needed. Continuing business advice by a mentor who has business experience and skills is another form of support that will increase the chances of success.



²³ See Parliament of the Republic of Fiji, 2017, [Report on the Personal Property Securities Bill 2017](#). 12 September.

Policy Priority 7: Promote greater gender equality in employment and working conditions

Rationale

72. Despite little differences in the educational attainment for males and females, women fare worse in the labour market in terms of their higher unemployment rate and more limited options for employment.

73. In the 2017 Census by the Fiji Bureau of Statistics the labour force participation rate showed a significant differential in gender. The labour force participation rate for males was 76.4 per cent compared to females at 37.4 per cent. In the unemployment rates there is also a significant differential in gender which is 2.9 per cent for males and 7.8 per cent for females.

74. A large proportion of women are in unpaid work where 234,059 males are in paid work compared to 106,680 females engaged in unpaid work.²⁴ This leaves females with a lack of social security mechanism and equal employment opportunities despite equivalent education opportunities. This is a major barrier to realising the benefits of large public investment in women education.

75. Women's employment generally is also segregated by industry and occupation. For example, in the services sector, more women are employed than men (46 per cent of women in employment compared with 39 per cent of men). Within the services sector, women are largely employed in wholesale and retail trades; education, health, and arts; and accommodation and food services. Men dominate all of the 10 main occupational groups, except for clerks, of which 65 per cent are women. After clerks, women account for 43 per cent of professionals, and a third of technicians/associate professionals and managerial occupations.²⁵

76. The share of small business conducted by women is low. An estimate in 2008 showed that only one-in-five registered businesses were in women's names.²⁶ Data from the EUS 2010/11 show that very few women, some 800 women compared with 4,300 men, are self-employed in the formal sector, further evidence of the low level of involvement of women as owners of small businesses. Also, businesses owned by women tend to be smaller, have lower revenues, and be less likely to export than businesses owned by men.

77. Women's economic activity outside the home produces better outcomes for girls and women. These outcomes for women and families include improved health and reduced domestic violence for women. The benefits for society as a whole are greater economic growth and increased household incomes.²⁷ Family-friendly policies in employment enable women not just to enter the workforce but also to stay in the workforce and to achieve senior

²⁴ 2017 Population and Housing Census, Fiji Bureau of Statistics

²⁵ Asian Development Bank, 2016, p 49.

²⁶ Asian Development Bank, 2016, p 52.

²⁷ Winkler, A, 2016, 'Women's labor force participation'. IZA World of Labor <https://wol.iza.org/articles/womens-labor-force-participation>

positions in government, the private sector, education and in non-profit NGOs. Given these societal benefits from more women in employment, such as greater economic growth through access to a large pool of educated workers, government and employers have a strong interest in setting up and supporting policies such as parental leave and child care to enable more women to gain paid work.²⁸

Proposed Strategic Actions

78. Identify ways for more women with post-school qualifications to stay in or return to formal employment. Monitor the share of women with post-school qualifications who are in formal sector jobs in each industry sector and occupation, using the latest EUS data. The information can show where the position of women is improving, declining or remaining stable. Making this information public will highlight to employers the loss of valuable skills to the economy and may encourage them to offer more incentives to retain or seek out qualified women who want to return to the workforce.

79. Reducing segregation in employment for women requires training providers offering young women with more opportunities to train in occupations traditionally dominated by men. It also requires that employers give jobs to women in workplaces that support women in non-traditional jobs. It is important in emerging areas of work, such as jobs related to renewable energy, environmental protection and climate responsive agriculture, that specific opportunities be provided for women to train for and to gain employment in these new areas of work.

80. Women need equal access to public sector jobs and promotions. The Government of Fiji is implementing a system of recruitment and selection based on the values of objectivity, impartiality and fair competition. The Open Merit Recruitment and Selection Guidelines aim to ensure that workers in the Fijian Civil Service are recruited and selected in a consistent way for positions based on their ability, education, experience and other characteristics of merit. Open merit-based recruitment and selection is defined in the Guidelines as a system of appointing employees based on their ability to do the job. This ability is to be assessed against objective selection criteria which do not discriminate against or give preference to any group or individual. The following principles are to be adhered to: open and transparent competition for all positions, with decisions based on the requirements of the position, transparency, accountability, fairness and gender equity.

81. These principles underpinning the Recruitment and Selection Guidelines in Government should be the basis for implementing and monitoring Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) policy in all workplaces. Also needed are gender balanced training opportunities in occupations as well as in school subjects that have a high male or female bias. Employers should provide more support for women employees working

²⁸ Winkler, A, 2016, Women's labor force participation'. IZA World of Labor <https://wol.iza.org/articles/womens-labor-force-participation/long>

in occupations with a male bias. Women should also be encouraged to apply for government funding for projects in agriculture where the applicants are mostly men.

82. Making it easier for more women with children to enter the paid workforce requires specific policies.²⁹ These include employers and government providing more and better-quality childcare directly or through subsidies. Employers also need to provide other family-friendly policies, including support for paid maternity and paternity leave and other forms of parental care-related leave for men as well as women. Also, important to creating a family-friendly workplace are suitable work arrangements such as flexible start and finish times and part-time work options.

83. Investigating and producing gender de-segregated data on women's labour force participation, unremunerated care work, motherhood gap as well as female labour force patterns in Fiji as part of the broader objective to produce strategic action that seeks to address gendered occupational segregation as well as address the various forms of inequalities that exist within the female labour force participation in Fiji.

84. Addressing the gender pay gap in Fiji within public and private sector as well as place emphasis on the promotion of gender economic equality in labour force participation.

85. Greater enforcement of sexual harassment policies in public and private sector. Ministry of Employment to provide adequate training to implement any type of harassment and abuse of power issues in the workplace.

86. Addressing the limitations of Maternity Provisions under the Employment Relations Act (ERA) 2007. Undertake a review of the Maternity Provision within the ERA to promote “breastfeeding friendly” work environment, paternal leave and marketing of quality and affordable care for working mothers including the provision of day care facilities and family-friendly work time arrangements.



²⁹ Winkler, A, 2016, ‘Women’s labor force participation’. IZA World of Labor. <https://wol.iza.org/articles/womens-labor-force-participation/long>

Policy Priority 8: Make it easier for disabled persons and the elderly to earn an income

Rationale

87. People with disabilities have limited opportunities for employment due to lower educational attainment, often caused by lack of accessibility to higher levels of education. As a result, they have lower employment rates than the wider population and where they are employed, often experience discrimination in the workplace.³⁰

88. Fiji is a leader on disability issues in the Pacific Region, particularly relating to the vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities in this region. In June 2010 Fiji signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons (UNCRDP) and its optional protocol. Fiji has progressed in the implementation of legislative initiatives, and at the moment is the only country in the Pacific that has labour legislation with a provision on employment of disabled persons.

89. The lack of equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities forms one of the root causes of poverty. It is estimated by the United Nations that the incidence of disability in Fiji is likely to be higher than 10 per cent of the population.³¹ The Employment Relations Act specifies a provision for a 2 per cent quota for people with disabilities. However, the quota has not been filled. The problem appears to be the lack of effective enforcement and awareness or the lack of required training to fill up quota positions. The results of a baseline survey conducted in 2008/09 on *Persons with Disabilities in Fiji and Rotuma* revealed that only 12 per cent of the disabled could find useful jobs. Another Survey of 183 disabled persons in 2012 (114 men and 69 women) by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific showed that only 4 per cent of the disabled surveyed were employees, 12 per cent were self-employed, 27 per cent were unemployed (that is actively looking for work) and 56 per cent were not looking for a job.³²

90. Social enterprises have been set up to provide employment opportunities for the disabled. Include Disability Employ this Ability (IDEA) Initiative has brought together five disabled people's organisations to work with government and employers to promote job opportunities for people with disabilities. The project promotes the capacity of people with disabilities through a local media campaign to address stigma and builds the capacity of task force members from various disabled people's organisations through on-the-job training. For example, the Spinal Injury Association Fiji has set up Include Disability Employ this Ability (IDEA) Domestic Clean to give persons with disabilities opportunities for decent work in professional domestic cleaning.

³⁰ ESCAP, 2012, 'Livelihood, disability and poverty' Chapter 3 in *Disability, Livelihood and Poverty in Asia and the Pacific: An Executive Summary of Research Findings*.

³¹ Country profile: Fiji, Asia Pacific Development Center on Disability. Proportion of persons with disabilities to total population: United Nations for the global prevalence of disability (2008).

³² ESCAP, 2012, *Disability, Livelihood and Poverty in Asia and the Pacific: An Executive Summary of Research Findings*, Table 6, p 13.

91. The elderly population in Fiji will continue to grow in numbers given the longevity of people. In 2016, Fijians aged 60 years and over accounted for 10 per cent or one-in-ten of the total population. However, this share of the population will increase into the future. According to UN projections revised in 2017, one-in-five (19 per cent) of Fiji's total population by 2050 will be aged 60 and over.³³ This highly experienced and skilled component of the population can be better utilised through targeted employment and training opportunities.

Proposed Strategic Actions

92. Developing appropriate policies to promote more employment opportunities for Fijians with disabilities requires good data. The 2017 Fiji Population and Housing Census provide relevant employment related statistics for Fijians with different types of disability called 'functioning challenges'. The published census results should include for Fijians with disabilities their employment status by three broad levels of education attainment by industry sector and in total. Employment status should include whether they are in wage job, self-employed, unemployed or not in the labour force. The information needs to be provided for each of Fiji's provinces and districts. These statistics can be used as indicators of the change needed, where it is needed and the progress achieved over time.

93. Better access to public transport is needed for the vulnerable. Town Councils and providers of public transport should do more to provide safe and friendly public places and easier access to public transport for persons with a disability and the elderly. Particular attention should also be paid to the needs of disabled people and the elderly on public transport. This should include providing easier ways to boarding a bus and the provision of special seats on buses and taxis for these two groups in the population.

94. Changes to improve access to workplaces are also needed. Employer associations should identify and make public the ways in which employers have improved and plan to improve access to workplaces for persons with disabilities. These include changes to workplaces in terms of 'reasonable' modifications and/or adjustments to make it easier to meet the individual needs of persons with disabilities. 'Reasonable' changes refer to where these changes do not impose on employers a disproportionate or undue burden.

95. Employment through not-for-profit social enterprises is an important option for Fijians with disabilities. NGOs, with government and donor support, need to foster these economic opportunities. By providing skills training and real employment opportunities, different groups of Fijians with disabilities such as the young, women and the elderly can be supported to take part better in economic activities. This increased economic participation

³³ United Nations, 2017, World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. Custom data acquired via website.

of Fijians with disabilities will also have a flow-on effect for their families and the surrounding community.

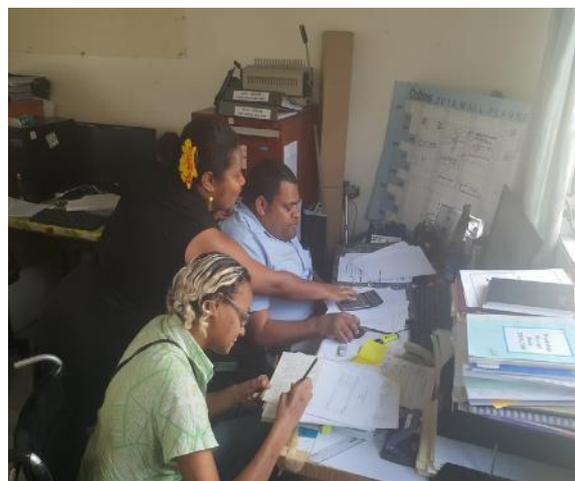
96. Older Fijians need better access to employment opportunities. The share of Fijians aged 60 years and over in the total population is estimated to double by 2050. Fijians aged 60 and over need more opportunities to earn an income and increase their food security. Training and support are also needed to help older Fijians respond to the opportunities. These opportunities should be in agriculture in relation to cash cropping, livestock and food production for home consumption. There should also be focus on opportunities of older Fijians to earn an income in urban areas.

97. Key stakeholders need to be involved. The National Council for Older Persons and the National Council for Persons with Disability should be involved in planning and monitoring the success of relevant employment initiatives.

98. Relevant skills training are also needed for Fijians with disabilities and the elderly. Skills training needs to be delivered which meets the needs of Fijians with disabilities and the elderly, in conjunction with clearly identified opportunities to earn an income. NEC should provide special services to disabled persons and the elderly to help them obtain suitable jobs.

99. Better enforcement of the 2 percent employment quota of physically disabled persons in workplaces with 50 or more workers under the Employment Relations Act. Encouraging Government Ministries to take on 5 physically disabled persons, given all the training opportunities that are being provided by the Government and that quite a percentage of people with disabilities are ready for employment.

100. **Introducing a tax rebate** for those organisations that employ physically disadvantaged persons as well as the elderly. Relevant incentives to be provided to organisations that provide equal employment opportunities that include the physically disadvantaged persons.



Policy Priority 9: Eliminate child labour and social injustice in workplaces

Rationale:

101. Like other developing countries, Fiji faces the challenge of eliminating child labour. Child labour prevents children from acquiring the skills and education they need for a better future. A study by the ILO based on five child labour surveys report that children in Fiji are engaged in child labour, including in street work, and in the worst forms of child labour such as commercial sexual exploitation.³⁴ Children in Fiji are also found involved in hazardous work such as collecting and handling scrap metals, chemicals, and carrying heavy loads. Poverty, parental or family neglect and other social problems, combined with the need for cash for personal requirements, remain the key factors that push children into child labour.³⁵

102. Fiji has recorded 173 cases of child labour from 2011 to 2014.³⁶ The Employment Relations Act empowers labour officers to enforce the minimum age and conditions of employment for children who are above 15 years. Fiji has not ratified the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, or the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.³⁷

Government Initiatives

103. Since 2015, Fiji has made efforts to eliminate child labour. The Ministry of Employment, Productivity, and Industrial Relations has increased significantly the number of labour inspections conducted throughout the year. In addition, the Government was actively involved in the launch and implementation of the *Tackling Child Labour Through Education Project*. This aims to strengthen government coordination, monitoring, and enforcement of policies and programs related to the eradication of child labour. The Government has also opened a new rehabilitation centre for children found begging in the streets.

Proposed Strategic Actions

104. **Increase community awareness at all levels of society on the negative impact of child labour.** A Public Awareness Committee (PAC) involving the Ministry of Education, schools, teachers, trade unions, parents, and the wider community is needed to promote policies to reduce child labour. The focus of the Committee should be to work out ways to ensure that children have the opportunity to receive a good quality education and remain in school until they finish their formal secondary education. Such a collaborative effort is likely to reduce child labour in the country.

³⁴ The five surveys were: Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Survey, Street Children in Child Labour Survey, Child Labour Survey in Rural Agriculture Communities, Child Labour Survey in Informal and Squatter Settlements, and Child Labour School-based Survey.

³⁵ For details, see ILO 2010, *Child Labour in Fiji - A survey of working children in commercial sexual exploitation, on the streets, in rural agricultural communities, in informal and squatter settlements and in schools*, International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) - Suva: ILO.

³⁶ See Fiji Sun Online, 13 June 2015, 'Usamate Highlights Drop in Child Labour'.

³⁷ Child Labour and Forced Labour Report for Fiji 2015, United Nations Department of Labour, Bureau of International Labour Affairs

105. **Early school leavers need to be engaged in relevant post-primary education and skills training.** Vocational teachers and community-based NGOs need to be trained in programs such as the ILO's 'Know About Business' to learn to manage money and take up forms of self-employment that are not vulnerable and precarious. The aim of this training should be to help early school leavers to find a reliable and stable form of self-employment that is sustainable over time.

106. **More government support is required to strengthen and enforce legislation regarding child labour.** Also needed are mechanisms to monitor child labour, and more resources allocated to the rehabilitation, education and training of children found in or at risk of child labour. There is a strong need to promote interventions to withdraw or prevent children from becoming involved in child labour. Government should ensure that labour inspectors have the resources to access rural areas and outer islands to conduct inspections to identify any underage children 'trapped' in child labour.



Policy Priority 10: Strengthen good faith employment relations and promote safe and productivity-driven workplaces

Rationale:

107. The Employment Relations Act sets out a legal framework for employment contracts, wages, leave, hours of work, equal employment opportunities, redundancies, employment grievances, trade union registration, collective bargaining, strikes/lockouts and the Employment Relations Tribunal. Amendments to the law regarding employment relations have also been introduced.

108. Fiji faces the challenge of balancing a desire for efficiency improvement with a need to address the concerns of employees about increasing work intensification, job insecurity and job dissatisfaction.³⁸ Chapter Four of the ADB/ILO report *Fiji: Creating Quality Jobs* highlights the importance of labour market institutions to provide stable and responsive monitoring and protection for the legitimate interests of employers and employees.

Strategic Actions/ Interventions

109. **The Government of Fiji believes in and supports social dialogue.** Healthy and impartial industrial relations are an important element in building support for stronger democratic institutions through ensuring safeguards for employers and employees. Well-designed regulations play a key role in promoting efficiency and equity in labour markets. The Tripartite Agreement signed in March 2015 was an important milestone for improving relations between employers, employees and the government. The Tripartite Agreement not only strengthens the application of freedom of association in its labour laws and practices. The Agreement is also the basis for further developing a sound climate for stable and productive industrial relations. Implementing the agreement can improve the prospects for negotiated solutions to achieving fair terms of employment, decent working conditions, and other important economic and social outcomes.

110. **The Government of Fiji to strengthen the monitoring capacity of the labour inspectorate** through the provision of adequate resources. Other changes recommended by the 2015 ADB/ILO report include greater government support for a more robust minimum wage-setting process and extending the effective coverage of social security.³⁹

³⁸ Sagoa, I 2013 (January 6), 'Industrial or Employment Relations in Fiji'. HRM603: Comparative Studies in Industrial or Employment Relations, Fiji National University, Suva.

³⁹ ADB/ILO report, 2015, p 76-77.



Strategic Interventions

BOATLE

SUNVA

VE
Boat

4. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Implementation tools

The ten policy priorities outlined above are proposed as objectives for the NEP. These objectives can be achieved through a mix of strategic interventions. Each policy priority can be linked to one or more quantifiable targets to enable assessments of work and ensuring that the results are achieved.

Specific indicators should be set for each identified outcome to measure performance and monitor progress over time; they should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. At least one quantitative indicator should be attached to each outcome. An implementation or work plan is needed which specifies the outputs to be produced, and activities to be undertaken to deliver on the outcomes. The work plan should also include who is responsible for delivery of an outcome and the timeframe for doing so.

Organisational and institutional framework for implementation

The set of strategic interventions identified to achieve the objectives of the NEP are the responsibility of or involves in some way different ministries and different governmental levels (national, regional, local). The implementation plan should also include employers' and workers' organisations as well as specialised agencies (public and private employment agencies, training providers, etc.). Bringing all these actors together and coordinating their interventions to implement the NEP will be a major challenge. A well-designed, tripartite, and inter-ministerial coordination mechanism is required.

The new coordination framework needs to enable all the different actors of the NEP to work together in a coordinated, coherent, and consistent manner. The existing National Employment Centre Board includes the five permanent secretaries of the ministries concerned with promoting employment as well as representatives of employer and employee associations, youth and training providers. The Board should set up a committee of the board to oversee and monitor the implementation of the NEP. A technical secretariat to service this committee should be provided by the Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations, under the responsibility of the most senior official of the Ministry in charge of Employment. The district officials of the ministry should be entrusted with reporting on implementation of the NEP at the district level.

Both monitoring and evaluation should be integral parts of the national employment policy. Monitoring requires primary data collection and analysis on inputs, outputs, and outcomes to track programme implementation and performance. This requires developing systems to collect relevant data for the indicators specified in the implementation plan. Evaluations will form an objective assessment of a completed or on-going programme in relation to its original design, implementation and results.

ANNEX A: AGENCIES INVOLVED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NEP

Policy Priorities	Agencies involved
Policy Priority 1: Create more opportunities for young people aged 15 to 24 years to follow a pathway from education to productive employment	Government, statutory organisations, town councils, training institutions, employers, workers organisations, NGOS, Religious organisations, donors.
Policy Priority 2: Promote private investment to create jobs	Government, statutory organisations, town councils, training institutions, employers, workers organisations, NGOS, Religious organisations, donors.
Policy Priority 3: Boost action on Just Transition of the workforce, creation of decent work and quality jobs in the context of climate change by identifying and promoting green jobs and new green skill sets	Government, statutory organisations, town councils, training institutions, employers, workers organisations, NGOS, Religious organisations, donors.
Policy Priority 4: Promote self-employment in the formal economy	Government, statutory organisations, town councils, training institutions, employers, workers organisations, NGOS, Religious organisations, donors.
Policy Priority 5: Promote access to overseas employment opportunities	Government, statutory organisations, town councils, training institutions, employers, workers organisations, NGOS, Religious organisations, donors.
Policy Priority 6: Create more income generating opportunities for those reliant on subsistence activities for their livelihood	Government, statutory organisations, town councils, training institutions, employers, workers organisations, NGOS, Religious organisations, donors.
Policy Priority 7: Promote greater gender equality in employment and working conditions	Government, statutory organisations, town councils, training institutions, employers, workers organisations, NGOS, Religious organisations, donors.
Policy Priority 8: Make it easier for disabled persons and the elderly to earn an income	Government, statutory organisations, town councils, training institutions, employers, workers organisations, NGOS, Religious organisations, donors.
Policy Priority 9: Eliminate child labour and social injustice in workplaces.	Government, statutory organisations, town councils, training institutions, employers, workers organisations, NGOS, Religious organisations, donors.
Policy Priority 10: Strengthen good faith employment relations and promote safe and productivity-driven workplaces	Government, statutory organisations, town councils, training institutions, employers, workers organisations, NGOS, Religious organisations, donors.

ANNEX B: SDG 8 TARGETS AND INDICATORS RELATED TO EACH NEP POLICY PRIORITY

8	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
8.2	Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors
	Policy Priority 2: Promote private investment to create jobs
8.2.1	Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person
8.3	Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services
	Policy Priority 3: Boost action on Just Transition of the workforce, creation of decent work and quality jobs in the context of climate change by identifying and promoting green jobs and new green skill sets
	Policy Priority 4: Promote self-employment in the formal economy
	Policy Priority 6: Create more income generating opportunities for those reliant on subsistence activities for their livelihood
8.3.1	Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, by sex
8.5	By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
	Policy Priority 5: Promote access to overseas employment opportunities
	Policy Priority 7: Promote greater gender equality in employment and working conditions
	Policy Priority 8: Make it easier for disabled persons and the elderly to earn an income
8.5.1	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities
8.5.2	Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities
8.6	By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training
	Policy Priority 1: Create more opportunities for young people aged 15 to 24 years to follow a pathway from education to productive employment
8.6.1	Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training
8.7	Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms
	Policy Priority 9: Eliminate child labour and social injustice in workplaces.
8.7.1	Proportion and number of children aged 5-17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age
8.8	Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment
	Policy Priority 10: Strengthen good faith employment relations and promote safe and productivity-driven workplaces
8.8.1	Frequency rates of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries, by sex and migrant status
8.8.2	Increase in national compliance of labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on International Labour Organization (ILO) textual sources and national legislation, by sex and migrant status

Postal	Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations PO Box 2216 Government Buildings Suva FIJI
Web	www.employment.gov.fj
Email	customercare@employment.gov.fj

Headquarters

Level 4, Civic House
Suva
Tel - (679) 3303 500
Fax - (679) 3304 701

Nadi Office

Customer Service Centre
Government Buildings
Nadi
Tel - (679) 662 9020 / 662 9021 / 662 9022

Headquarters

Customer Service Centre
Level 1, Civic House
Suva
Tel - (679) 3303 500

Namaka Office

Level 2, Jagdish Gosai Building
Queens Road
Namaka
Tel - (679) 6702 429 / 8937 861 / 3557 121
Fax - (679) 6702 229

National Employment Centre

Level 1, Civic House
Suva
Tel - (679) 3314 628 / 3310 331

Lautoka Office

Level 2, Tavaiaqia House
Lautoka
Tel - (679) 6660 305 / 6666 630

Central/Eastern Division

Level 2, Post Fiji Building
Suva
Tel - (679) 3314 999 / 3306 372

Ba Office

Level 2, Koronubu House
Ba
Tel - (679) 6674 732
Fax - (679) 8811 069

Mediation Service

Level 5, Civic House
Suva
Tel - (679) 3314 878
Fax (679) 3100 242

Labasa Office

Level 3, Ratu Raobe Building
Jaduram Street
Labasa
Tel - (679) 8811 643
Fax - (679) 8811 477

National OHS & Workers' Compensation Service

Level 6, Civic House
Suva
Tel - (679) 3316 999
Fax - (679) 3315 029

Savusavu Office

Vunilagi Building
Main Street
Savusavu
Tel - (679) 8850 104
Tel/Fax - (679) 8850 414

Notes



