

RESERVE BANK OF FIJI



PRESS RELEASE

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PACIFIC REGION LOSES FINANCIAL INCLUSION ADVOCATE

The Reserve Bank of Fiji and the National Financial Inclusion Taskforce in a joint statement today expressed their deepest regret and profound sadness at the news of the untimely passing of Mr Reuben Summerlin who died in a cycling accident on Monday 6 July in Lautoka. Reuben was a key member of the National Financial Inclusion Taskforce and a financial inclusion champion who worked amongst the Pacific Island countries to enable low-income households to gain access to quality and affordable financial services and financial education.

Reuben worked in the Pacific for the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) as the regional technical advisor since May 2012 and was Program Manager for the Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme based in Suva, Fiji. He served as a member of the National Financial Inclusion Taskforce of Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

Reuben has championed financial inclusion since 1996. Prior to joining UNCDF, he worked as a microfinance and microenterprise development consultant for 12 years, during which time he co-founded Alternative Credit Technologies (ACT), a consulting company specialising in building inclusive financial systems. As a consultant, Reuben's geographic areas of focus included Latin America, the Caribbean and the former Soviet Union. Prior to that, he worked in management for microfinance institutions in Haiti and Kyrgyzstan. Reuben served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Kyrgyzstan (1994-1996), where he taught English in a secondary school and assisted small farmers to secure funding for agricultural projects.

The Governor of the Reserve Bank of Fiji and Chairman of the National Financial Inclusion Taskforce, Barry Whiteside said that "he was truly committed and passionate towards the financial inclusion cause in the Pacific and we will really miss his leadership, professionalism and sense of humour. Our prayers are with his family."

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