



**FijiFIU**

Fiji Financial Intelligence Unit



## ***PRESS RELEASE***

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**Press Release No:** 31/2011

**Phone :** (679) 3313 611

**Fax :** (679) 3302 094

**Date:** 10 November 2011

**E-mail:** [info@rbf.gov.fj](mailto:info@rbf.gov.fj)

[info@fijifiu.gov.fj](mailto:info@fijifiu.gov.fj)

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### **NATIONAL ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING CONFERENCE**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> National Anti-money Laundering (AML) Conference that was organised by the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) on 9 November 2011 at the Holiday Inn in Suva was attended by over 130 representatives from law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, other government agencies and the private sector financial institutions.

The Conference discussed the roles of various stakeholders that are engaged in the fight against money laundering in Fiji and noted the need for collaboration between all agencies and financial institutions in order to successfully deal with the issue of money laundering and other financial crimes.

The Conference heard the outputs of the FIU's financial intelligence on money laundering, proceeds of crimes and other criminal activities and how it contributes to Fiji's AML framework.

The Conference noted that Fiji has very strong laws for detecting and prosecuting money laundering activities. The Conference called for a change in the mindsets of police officers, prosecutors and the judiciary that money laundering was an offence in itself, which requires separate treatment, and not just incidental treatment to the other antecedent offences. The Conference highlighted the need to improve on the sentencing approach in money laundering cases in Fiji.

The Director of the FIU, Mr. Razim Buksh said that the highlight for the Conference was a joint presentation on the *Turtle Island case* which outlined how an employee of a prominent resort embezzled money from his employer and laundered these funds through the local banks. The presentation related how the money laundering activity was initially detected as a suspicious transaction report by local banks and how this led to a full scale investigation and prosecution for money laundering and other criminal offences. The case involved 83 cheque frauds exceeding \$800,000 and is regarded as Fiji's biggest and most complex money laundering case.

Mr. Buksh also announced at the Conference that the *Turtle Island case* received international recognition and commendation by the Egmont Group of FIUs of the world in July 2011 due largely to the manner in which the case was successfully investigated and prosecuted by the FIU, Fiji Police Force, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Judiciary.

The Conference speakers included the Solicitor General, **Mr. Christopher Pryde**; Member of the Judiciary, High Court Judge, **Justice Sithambarampillai Thurairaja**; the Chairman of the Association of Banks in Fiji, **Mr. Norman Wilson**; the Director of the FIU, **Mr. Razim Buksh**; the Director of Public Prosecutions, **Madam Ayesha Jinasena**; Assistant Commissioner of the Fiji Police Force, **ACP Henry Brown**; Assistant DPP, **Mr. Mosese Korovou**; Principal Legal Officer, DPP's Office, **Ms. Nancy Tikoisuva**; the Officer-in-Charge of Anti-Money Laundering Unit, Fiji Police Force, **ASP Puran Lal**; and the FIU Analyst, **Ms. Laisa Kubuabola**.

The Conference also heard from **Madam Nazhat Shameem**, the former High Court Judge and former DPP on Fiji's legal framework for AML and the effectiveness of its implementation and application by relevant stakeholders.

60 certificates were also awarded to officers of financial institutions and law enforcement agencies who graduated from FIU's AML computer based learning centre in 2011.

Mr. Buksh said that the annual conference is an important event in Fiji as it raises awareness on what relevant stakeholders are doing in the fight against money laundering and what more could be done to deal with current and future challenges.

The opening keynote address was made by the chief guest the Attorney-General & Minister for Justice, **Mr. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum** and the closing address was made by the Governor of the Reserve Bank of Fiji, **Mr. Barry Whiteside**.

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