

Foundation celebrates 13th anniversary - Fiji Times Online



THE Foundation of Rural Integrated Enterprises and Development (FRIEND) Fiji celebrated its 13th anniversary in Lautoka yesterday.

The prominent non-governmental organisation marked the event with a ceremony officiated by Minister for Health and Medical Services, Jone Usamate who recognised the firm's immense contribution to rural development especially in the sugarcane belt of the Western and Northern divisions.

"I am fully aware of the good work that FRIEND has done for the past 13 years integrating social, economic and health in development and running a holistic health program for five years now even in the face of financial support challenges amongst other difficulties common to interested health stakeholders other than MOH in this country," he said.

Mr Usamate said the organisation had also taken the bold step of addressing the non-communicable diseases crisis in the country.

"I am aware that FRIEND has banned instant noodles, fizzy drinks, tinned meat from all its events and from its premises.

"I'm sure it was not an easy decision because many of us depend on these things and it's hard to think about food without these items but leadership has taken a stand to ensure their staff members are healthy.

"Can we do the same as heads of families and heads of organisations?"

FRIEND Fiji associate director Dr Jone Hawea said the celebration was also a means to raise awareness for the work that the organisation hoped to carry out in the next few months.

Dr Hawea said the main focus would be on NCDs and assisting the Health Ministry in gathering more information needed to address the crisis.