

VARs NEWSLETTER

Ministry of Lands & Natural Resources – Vanuatu Affordable and Resilient Settlements Project Weekly Newsletter



THE WORLD BANK



FIJI MINISTRY OF LANDS & MINERAL RESOURCES AND VANUATU LAND BANK TASK FORCE MEMBERS

FIJI LAND BANK STUDY TOUR TASK FORCE EXPLORES FIJI'S MODEL FOR DEVELOPING CUSTOMARY LAND THROUGH SECURE, TRANSPARENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

FIJI LAND BANK STUDY TOUR

The Vanuatu Ministry of Lands & Natural Resources recently led a multi-agency Task Force mission to Fiji to examine how the country manages and develops customary land through its Land Bank system. Established by the Government of Fiji, the Land Bank provides a mechanism for landowners to voluntarily register idle customary land into a government-managed system, which is then leased for agriculture, tourism, housing, and other development initiatives. Importantly, the model ensures that customary landowners retain full ownership while benefiting from transparent, audited trust accounts that safeguard their financial returns.

During the mission, the Task Force held engagements with key institutions, including the Ministry of Lands & Mineral Resources, the Land Use Division, the iTaukei Land Trust Board (TLTB), the Housing Authority, the Reserve Bank of Fiji, the Ministry of Housing, several NGOs (Habitat for Humanity, UN-Habitat, and RISE), and the World Bank Fiji Office. These consultations provided valuable insight into how Fiji's system promotes long-term investment, supports coordinated planning across government agencies, and expands economic and housing opportunities for communities.

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FIELD VISITS & ENGAGEMENTS

The delegation—comprising senior executives from the Ministry of Lands & Natural Resources, Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Attorney General’s Office, and the Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs—also conducted field visits to agricultural and mining projects as well as upgraded informal settlements. These visits showcased how secure land arrangements can stimulate development and improve community livelihoods.

Following the mission, the Task Force convened a follow-up workshop to consolidate the study tour findings and develop policy options for Government consideration. An initial briefing for the Hon. Minister of Lands & Natural Resources, MP Rick Tchamako Mahe, is scheduled for later this week.



LESSONS LEARNED FROM FIJI

Fiji’s Land Bank model demonstrates that it is possible to balance customary land rights with development objectives through transparency, government oversight, and inclusive planning.



WHAT COMES NEXT

The Ministry of Lands & Natural Resources is reviewing the outcomes of this study to adapt key learnings into local policy recommendations. The overarching goal is to create a framework that supports secure, equitable, and sustainable land use in Vanuatu, while protecting customary ownership and promoting inclusive economic growth.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FEEDBACK & CONTRIBUTIONS:

We want your input!
Send your updates, suggestions, or stories to de@vars.vu by Thursday 3 PM for inclusion in next week's issue.