



TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY

Media Release

(For Immediate Release)

3rd July, 2013

Verbal Assurance Not Enough: Make it Happen

The Citizens' Constitutional Forum acknowledges the assurances given by the Attorney General to the International Coordinating Committee on the appointment of an Independent Electoral Commission and an independent Supervisor of Elections.

CCF CEO Reverend Akuila Yabaki asserts that, "independence of the electoral commission and the supervisor of elections is determined by firstly, representation of the bodies that appoint the members of the electoral commission and the office of the Supervisor of Elections."

"Secondly, the actual representation of the members of the public office," says Rev Yabaki.

According to Rev Yabaki, "compliance in these areas were as what was reflected in the 1997 Constitution where the Electoral Commission saw the Chair appointed by the President and the members appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister following consultation by the Prime Minister with the Leader of Opposition."

"Members of the electoral Commission themselves consisted of a chair who is a judge or qualified to be one and four other members."

In the case of the Supervisor of Elections, who is tasked to certify the validity of the electoral process, the position holder should be qualified to practice as a Barrister or Solicitor and the appointing body was the Constitutional Offices Commission.

The 2013 Government Draft Constitution did not have the same guarantee of independence leaving the appointments mainly in the hands of the Prime Minister and the Attorney General. Without pre-empting the outcome of the provisions of the prospective constitution, CCF CEO insists that "these measures for independence need to be firstly addressed and noted in the upcoming constitution as this is the only assurance for independence."



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“Hence, CCF recommends the setting up of an Independent Constitutional Officers Commission as the appointing authority for the Supervisor of Elections and the appointment of an electoral commission by a group of credible individuals who would represent the criteria of Independence by all stakeholders including the citizens of Fiji.”

“The issue of electoral integrity and the legitimacy of the electoral and constitutional processes hinges on how these crucial appointments are eventually made under the government’s constitution,” stresses Rev Yabaki.

For further information please contact the communications team at CCF on communications@ccf.org.fj

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Reverend Akuila Yabaki

CEO - CCF