



PRESS RELEASE

Compliance with ILO Conventions does not mean over-reaching

Sunday 26th October 2025

The Fiji Commerce & Employers Federation (FCEF) is strongly emphasising the need to balance expectations of ratified international conventions, and the socio-economic status of our small island state.

“The ILO Conventions provide for the adoption of minimum labour standards and we must ensure that we are not over-reaching by adopting maximum and unsustainable standards for Fiji in the Employment Relations (Amendment) Bill,” said Mr Edward Bernard the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of FCEF.

Mr Bernard who has worked for the ILO and the Ministry of Employment for more than 17 years says that it is irresponsible for the Fiji Trades Union Congress (FTUC) to continue to use the *“aligning to ILO Conventions card”* and expect unsustainable conditions, high fines and strict criminal penalties to be included in the Bill.

In November 2023, in response to the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions (CEACR), Parliament passed the Employment Relations (Amendment) Bill 2023, to bring the legislation we are now amending, into conformity with ILO Convention 87 (Freedom of Association). In the same year, the Fiji Government re-constituted the Employment Relations Advisory Board (ERAB), bringing Fiji in compliance with ILO Convention 144 (Tripartite Consultation).

“These are some very real examples where FCEF has supported the Government and FTUC to ensure we comply with ILO ratified Conventions. If there are provisions in the current Act that still falls short of the minimum standards articulated in any ILO ratified Convention, then we are yet to see any gap analysis”, said Mr Bernard.

Fiji is a small developing island state with the high cost of doing business, huge outward skills migration and low productivity. The Bill in its current form fails to address these real challenges faced by the private sector. Therefore, we must be vigilant on the extent to which we can afford to comply with ILO ratified conventions.

-END-

For enquiries, please contact:

Gaylene Kamali

Manager Advocacy & Corporate Communications, Fiji Commerce & Employers Federation

T: +679 331 3188 | M: +679 998 3098 | E: macc@fcef.com.fj |