

PM CALLS FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

Ministry of Information

Dec 10 |14:57 pm

Another important milestone has been announced on the path to implementing true parliamentary democracy in Fiji in 2014.

The Prime Minister, Voreqe Bainimarama, is calling for expressions of interest from individuals and organisations who would like to become members of the Constituent Assembly that will debate and adopt the draft Constitution currently being prepared by the Constitutional Commission.

Under the relevant decree, the chairperson and members of the Assembly will be appointed by the Prime Minister.

A newspaper advertisement to be published tomorrow (Tuesday) sets out the duties of the Assembly and the conditions under which its members will be appointed.

It says the function of the Assembly is to debate the draft Constitution and the Explanatory Report and adopt the draft Constitution. In doing so, the Assembly is required to keep the people of Fiji fully informed of the progress of its deliberation.

The Assembly is also required to observe the purpose of the Decree, which includes adherence to its non-negotiable principles and values such as the removal of ethnic voting, a common and equal citizenry and a secular state. It is also required to incorporate appropriate provision for immunity, as set out in the Decree.

To be eligible for membership of the Assembly, a person must – quote – “be a citizen of Fiji; be a person of experience in public affairs; and must have utmost honesty and integrity in every respect.”.

A person is not eligible to be appointed if that person is “declared to be of unsound mind; is convicted of an offence of dishonesty or an offence carrying a maximum penalty of six months in prison; or has been removed from public office for misconduct”.

As provided in the Decree, and as recently announced by the Prime Minister, the membership and composition of the Assembly shall reflect the diversity of the people of Fiji and shall consist of the broadest possible cross-section of the Fijian society.

In order to qualify for appointment as members of the Assembly, individuals and organisations will need to demonstrate that they represent a significant constituency in the country.

They are also required to adhere to a Code of Conduct that stipulates that all members of the Assembly must be guided by a commitment to the best interests of the nation and the Fijian people as a whole.

Expression of interest – which the Government says will be treated in strict confidence - close on New Year’s Eve, Monday December 31st.

The Permanent Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister, Pio Tikoduadua, urged all Fijians capable of meeting the criteria to consider taking part in the process.

“We want as many qualified people and organisations as possible to join this very important step in implementing true parliamentary democracy in Fiji”, he said.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

All EOIs are to be addressed to the Prime Minister and marked as "EOI – CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY" and sent in one of the following ways:

- Posted to the Office of the Prime Minister at P. O. Box 2353, Government Buildings, Suva, Fiji;
- Hand-delivered to the Office of the Prime Minister at 4th Floor, New Wing, Government Buildings, Suva; or
- Emailed to piotiko@gmail.com . A hard copy of all EOIs sent by email must also be posted or hand-delivered to the above-mentioned address.

All EOIs will be treated in strict confidence and must be received no later than 4.30pm on Monday, 31 December 2012.

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