

UniFiji to Sign MoU with PIDF and United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

A deeper understanding of human rights norms and a rigorous exchange of ideas are main requirements to influence both practical human rights change and new approaches to policy. As such, for the first time in the Pacific, an Institute of Human Rights Research (IHRR) will soon be established to carry out cutting-edge and policy-oriented research and analysis.

The University of Fiji is about to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and Pacific Island Development Forum (PIDF) for this purpose.

Dean of the Justice Devendra Pathik School of Law (JDP SoL), Professor Shaista Shameem, states that the MoU would expand JDP SoL's postgraduate work and also bring public attention to the research done through the Institute.

“The Institute will facilitate collaboration with similar institutes around the world and attract world class scholars as Fellows to the Institute. It will enhance the publications profile of the SoL and also attract post-graduate students,” she explained.

The University of Fiji will host and administer the Institute while OHCHR and PIDF will provide technical guidance. The IHRR, in particular, aims to facilitate postgraduate research through an academic think-tank in areas related to human rights and freedoms, including but not limited to, climate change and migration, disabilities and mental health, the Sustainable Development Goals, democracy and good governance, business, and the environment.

The OHCHR, The University of Fiji and PIDF will, as partners in the MOU, raise awareness of human rights through short educational courses that focus on specialized areas of human rights discourse and target youth, human rights defenders, law enforcement officers, judicial officers, businesses, civil society, the public service sector, the media, Parliamentarians, lawyers, and others that may be affected by these areas; and collaborate and advocate for human rights discourse capacity building programmes, in particular public seminars and publications.

The University is fortunate to have attracted the partnership of the PIDF and OHCHR to this initiative and the JDP School of Law looks forward to working closely with both the partners to produce world class research in human rights.