



UniFiji Roundtable on Education and Economic Growth: Remodelling Fiji's National Development Plan post Covid-19.

The University of Fiji will be conducting its second Roundtable community consultation on higher education on 26th February at its Saweni Campus.

The topic of the consultation is "*Education for Economic Growth: Remodelling Fiji's National Development Plan post Covid-19*". It is expected that stakeholders from all sectors of Fijian society will take part in the consultation including NGOs, unions, employers, small agricultural producers, industry, educators, provincial councils, religious organisations and Fiji's Opinion Shapers.

The Acting Vice-Chancellor Professor Shaista Shameem said that the first Roundtable convened by the University on January 15th was on the topic '*Higher Education for the Future*'. The Roundtable was triggered by TSLB's request to higher education institutions to provide their views on the national priority areas and Fiji's human resource needs for the next 10 years. Participants at that consultation recommended that there should be a revision of Fiji's National Development Plan and Education Plans post Covid-19. Hence the University decided to hold another consultation on the topic of education and Fiji's National Development Plan, Professor Shameem said.

She said the University was very conscious of the need for its community to express itself on issues of national importance in education in the current climate where Covid-19 had taken over the world. The global economy's robustness had been tested and found to be very fragile. That meant that educators had to consider the best options for their graduates as employment could no longer be taken for granted, Professor Shameem said.

At the same time, national bureaucracies had lagged behind and could not produce sensible solutions to the economic and social problems. This was due to heavy emphasis on gatekeeping in education and lack of imagination as well as appropriate training and qualifications to think outside the box for the sake of the next generation, she said.

Hence the University of Fiji thought it advisable to re-convene its community for advice on where Fiji's national development plans in the economy and education should be focused given the pandemic's effects on the global economy.