

Inter-Tertiary Moot Competition Launched on International Women's Day at The University of Fiji

The Minister of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation the Hon. Mereseini Vuniwaqa launched the Inter-tertiary Moot Competition at the Saweni Campus of the University to mark the UN International Women's Day on Monday March 8th.

Hon. Mereseini Vuniwaqa while addressing the hundreds of students and staff gathered to witness the moot competition, said advancing gender equality requires the changing of mindsets and this could be done through advocacy, awareness programs, legal reform, settling legal issues through court cases and restructuring archaic social, economic and legal systems and mechanisms.

"The law is a key contributor to the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. And as aspiring lawyers I am hopeful that some of you will hold gender equality issues as the mainstay of your legal careers," she said.

The Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Shaista Shameem said that the leaders of the community and religious leaders as well as every single member of society has the responsibility to eradicate domestic violence.

"The USP mooters said in their submissions that 49% of all crimes in Fiji are sexual offences. That is a shocking statistic. But it is not just the courts, the Parliament or even the Ministry of Women that is responsible for fixing that problem. No single individual is responsible for getting rid of such evil from our society and all of us are in it together. We all need to make sure that we eradicate this problem of gender violence in society," she said.

UniFiji Student Association President, Ratu Sailosi Dawai stated that the University's Strategic Plan 2017-2021 promoted academic freedom and fostered UniFiji's role as a critic and conscience of society.

"In trying to keep track of being the conscience of society, we have identified that gender issues are not eroding away. Gender issues are continuously increasing. What everyone saw today is a discussion on the topic from the point of law. Law students presented arguments on how law can advance this battle," he said.

The Moot Competition will continue for a period of 6 weeks with the next moot scheduled for later this month.