Balancing act

By FELIX CHAUDHARY

FINDING a balance between economic survival and the impact to the environment is never easy.

With this in mind, Nadi Basin Demonstration Project manager, Vinesh Kumar said his organization was working with Nadi communities to encourage land use practices.

"Most of the problems we have in the area are due to runoff activities, although we also need to have economic growth. We have to find ways to better manage the system so that activities can continue without degrading the very environment that enables these activities to take place," he said.

Mr Kumar said while government support was crucial, involvement of community and the help of experts in the community was vital to adapt sustainable land use practices and minimise their contribution to flooding in their respective areas.

Water is therefore not just a problem for the Water Authority of Fiji or government agencies, it is everyone’s problem, and all the people must work together. We have the local expertise and we should use this local expertise to find relevant solutions," Mr Kumar said.

The Nadi Basin Demonstration Project is also working with communities to better prepare for floods with the establishment of 16 community disaster management committees.

Balance economic survival and environment sustainability

A Nadi resident stands over the Nadi River.

Nadi bay and rivers improved, says global water expert

By FELIX CHAUDHARY

VISITING global water management authority, Doctor Alfred Duda said since his inaugural visit to Fiji 15 years ago, vast improvements have been made in his attempt to improve water quality in the Nadi Bay area.

Doctor Duda said he noticed during his first trip to Fiji in 1999 that rivers flowing into Nadi Bay were brown in colour, signalling heavy deposit of sediment onto reef systems.

Concerned about the effects on reefs and marine life, the senior advisor on International Waters for the Global Environment Facility (GEF) concurred with the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) and government to discuss the issues and seek solutions.

A Decree to aid water management

By FELIX CHAUDHARY

THE issuance of the Land and Water Resource Management Decree will strengthen efforts by the Nadi Basin Catchment Committee in food preparation and water resource management in the area.

Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Development, Colakasiga said this statement was made at a meeting with the senior advisor on International Waters for the Global Environment Facility (GEF) on Monday.

Te Duda was a tour of project sites funded by GEF in the Western Division over the last two days. Mr Colakasiga said he was concerned about the vulnerability of the Nadi catchment to flooding and tagged it as a "hotspot".

A need for compatible systems

By FELIX CHAUDHARY

Fiji has to ensure that river and rainfall monitoring systems are compatible.

And most importantly the data produced has to reach the relevant authorities as quickly as possible.

Regional Integrated Water Resources Management project co-ordinator Marc Wilson made the comment while visiting the Fiji Meteorological Board office in Namaka on Monday.

"We already have a compatibility problem with the Japan International Co-operation Agency setting up a totally foreign system of rain and river gauges in Fiji hoping to send them to use the systems similar to what we have set up here in Nadi," he said.

Mr Wilson also pointed out that data retrieved from the Ba River was first sent to Japan for analysis and local authorities had to access this information via the internet after a significant amount of time.

Visiting senior advisor on International Waters for the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Doctor Alfred Duda said while it was good to see information systems in place, it was imperative that data was shared through channels and reached people that made decisions in real time.

"Fiji has to manage all river catchment areas in an integrated manner. It all has to be similar and compatible so that relevant authorities can make important decisions with as much information as possible," Dr Duda said.

Integration is key to Nadi basin woes

By FELIX CHAUDHARY

GLOBAL water management expert, Doctor Alfred Duda, commended disaster preparation and water management progresses in the Western Division.

"Dr Duda, a senior advisor on International Waters for the Global Environment Facility, toured a GEF-funded demonstration project to observe how government agencies and communities work together to better prepare for and respond to floods."

"The Nadi Basin Demonstration Project was set up after Nadi Toves was identified as a national hot-spot after the 2007 floods."

Dr Duda said integration was the key to the project’s success and the only way to reduce the impact caused by natural and artificial floods.

He said the project’s success could only be realised through proper management of river systems from farmers in the upper catchment area to fishers making a large amount of water resources systems along the coast with the inclusion of government.

"You live in a hazard area, there needs to be a lot of integration. GEF looks to you and your project to not only involve communities but also to involve Cabinet. Because your entire project involves different ministries. All the relevant parties should work together so you won’t have loss of life and livelihood from flooding," he said while on a tour of the project on Monday.

Welcoming Dr Duda to the country, Minister for Primary Industries, John Cakagoni highlighted GEF’s long commitment to Fiji and the Fiji Government’s continuing support towards GEF funded projects.