



Fiji to build first women resource centre

By Online Editor

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Fiji is working to set up the Pacific island nation's first resource centre for women in Savusavu with support of the Australian government.

“This will be the first centre of its kind for rural women in Fiji and I must acknowledge the vision and commitment of the Soqosoqo Vakamarama Cakaudrove, who in collaboration with the Architects without Frontiers from Australia has been working on this project since 2008,” acting Australian High Commissioner Glenn Miles said here on Wednesday.

According to Miles, with funding support from Australian AID of \$1.3 million Fiji dollars (US \$742,000), the Cakaudrove Women's Resource Centre will provide local rural women with safe accommodation when travelling to Savusavu town to sell their produce and handicrafts.

The centre will also become a key meeting point for women from Cakaudrove to receive training and assistance to improve their livelihood and enhance their culture in Fiji's northern island.

The contribution of women to rural development is already well documented. According to the 2010 UN Women economic analysis report of municipal markets in Fiji, 87 percent of all market vendors were women and rural women in particular reinvest up to 75 percent of their income earned in municipal markets back into their villages on family wellbeing and community commitments.

The centre will also be used as a training facility to empower and train young rural women towards self-employment, which will ensure that women living in remote parts of the northern island of Vanua Levu to have easier access to services over economic opportunities, health, nutrition and education.

“Improving women's economic empowerment is achievable. This centre, once completed, will become the vehicle to do this,” Miles said, adding Australia “is committed to improving the lives of disadvantaged women, men, their families and communities in Fiji”.

As Fiji's largest bilateral donor, Australia is increasing its support to Fiji to an estimated \$100 million (US\$57 million) in official development assistance by 2014.

SOURCE: XINHUA/PACNEWS