

APRIL 17<sup>TH</sup>, 2003

**PRESS RELEASE:**

**JOINT STATEMENT ON THE ONE-TO-ONE TALK BETWEEN THE  
PRIME MINISTER HON LAISENIA QARASE AND THE LEADER OF FIJI  
LABOUR PARTY HON MAHENDRA PAL CHAUDHRY**

WE, THE PRIME MINISTER OF FIJI, MR LAISENIA QARASE AND THE LEADER OF FIJI LABOUR PARTY, MR. MAHENDRA PAL CHAUDHRY, HELD OUR ONE TO ONE MEETING THIS MORNING, 17<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2003. OUR DISCUSSION FOCUSED ON A NUMBER OF CRITICAL ISSUES FACING OUR NATION TODAY THAT NEED TO BE RESOLVED. THE MEETING WAS BOTH CONSTRUCTIVE AND USEFUL.

WE DISCUSSED ISSUES RELATING TO LAND TENURE, THE NEED FOR SOME CHANGES TO OUR CONSTITUTION, THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE SUGAR INDUSTRY, THE MULTIPARTY CABINET CASE AND THE IDEA OF A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY, THE REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (CERD), AND THE NEED TO CURTAIL RACIAL REMARKS AND PROMOTE RACIAL HARMONY.

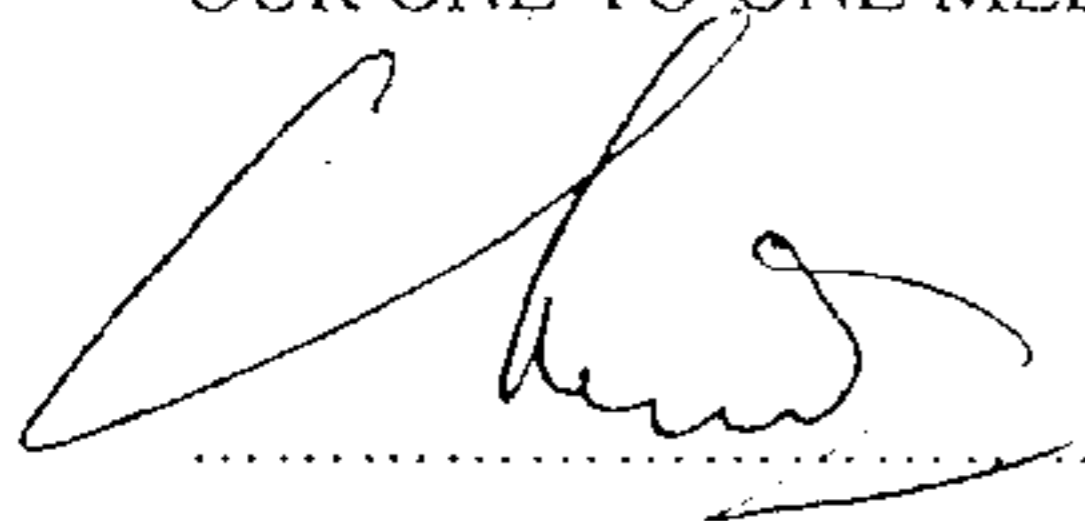
ON THE QUESTION OF THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE SUGAR INDUSTRY, WE AGREED THAT THE ISSUE WILL BE DISCUSSED IN THE PARLIAMENTARY SELECT COMMITTEE ON SUGAR. WE AWAIT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUGAR RESTRUCTURING STEERING COMMITTEE WHICH WILL FORM THE BASIS OF THE CONSULTATIONS IN THE PARLIAMENTARY SELECT COMMITTEE.

WE HAVE HAD A USEFUL DISCUSSION ON THE QUESTION OF MULTI-PARTY CABINET AND A SUGGESTION FOR A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY. WE HOLD VERY DIFFERENT VIEWS ON THESE TWO ISSUES, BUT WE MAINTAIN FLEXIBILITY TO DISCUSS THE ISSUES FURTHER.

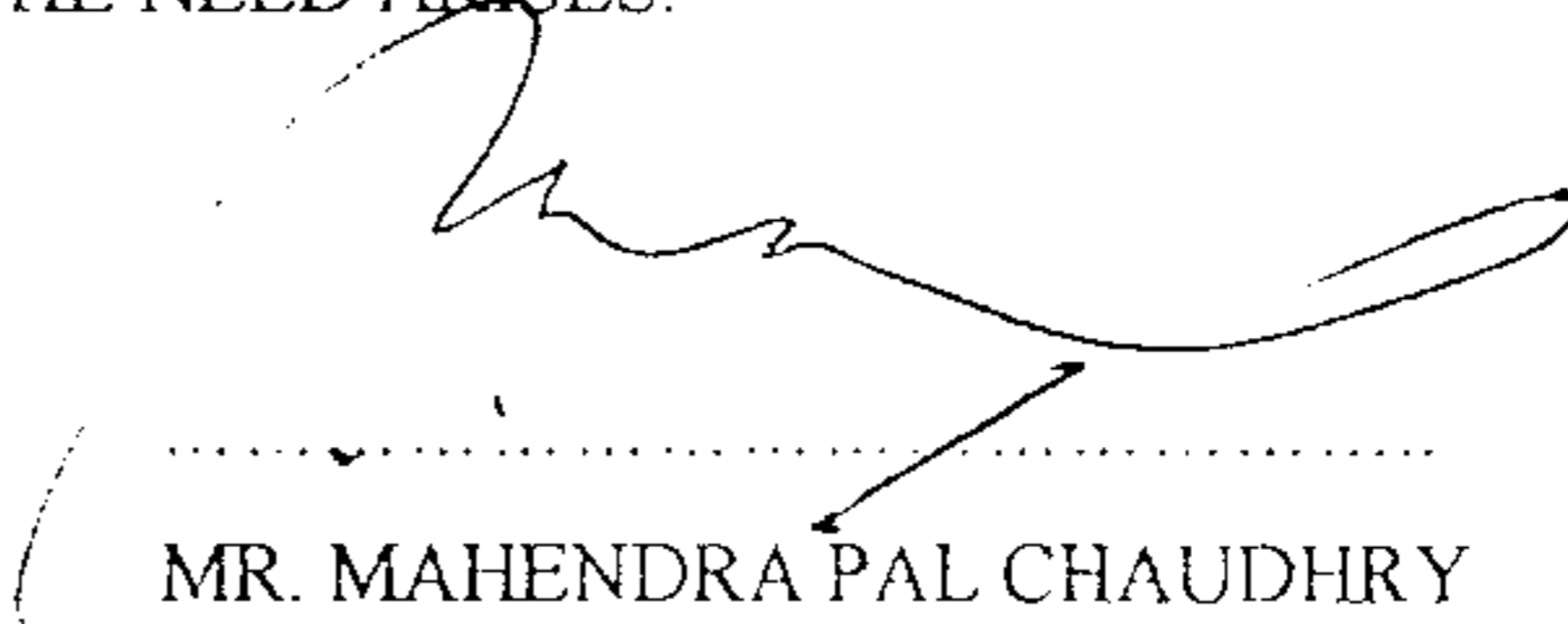
WE AGREED THAT THE BI-PARTISAN TALANOVA SUB-COMMITTEE WILL CONTINUE TO MEET TO DISCUSS FURTHER THE ISSUES OF LAND TENURE, CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES, AND THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CERD REPORT. WE AGREED THAT OUR MAIN TALANOVA SESSION TO ADDRESS THESE QUESTIONS, WILL TAKE PLACE AFTER THE SUPREME-COURT DECISION IN JUNE.

FURTHER CONSULTATIONS ON THE MULTI-PARTY CABINET CASE WILL TAKE PLACE AFTER THE SUPREME COURT DECISION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROCEDURES LAID DOWN IN THE CONSTITUTION.

WE AGREED TO CONTINUE TO MOVE ON A POSITIVE PATH AND TO HOLD OUR ONE-TO-ONE MEETINGS AS THE NEED ARISES.



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MR. LAISENIA QARASE  
PRIME MINISTER



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MR. MAHENDRA PAL CHAUDHRY  
LEADER OF FIJI LABOUR PARTY

APRIL 17<sup>TH</sup>, 2003

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