



MEDIA RELEASE

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Rakiraki farmers set to receive agro-supplies in preparation for cyclone season

Over 1,500 farmers across Fiji will receive vegetable seeds, farming tools, fertiliser, insecticide, and information booklets to help return their produce farms to pre-Winston state.

The initiative aims to support farmers whose vegetable gardens and small farms were devastated by TC Winston, and is the result of a partnership between the Fiji Ministry for Local Government, Housing and Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, and UN Women's Markets for Change Project, through funding from the Australian Government.

Today, 200 farmers from Rakiraki Municipal Market will receive these supplies, in one of several distributions planned for eight Fiji markets. These markets include Ba, Lautoka, Nadi, Namaka, Rakiraki and Tavua, as well as Winston-affected farmers supplying Nausori and Suva. Vegetable seeds will include chinese cabbage, tomato, long bean, watermelon, cow pea, french bean, cucumber, okra, eggplant and english cabbage. Farmers will also receive a crop guide and good farming practices booklet, a range of tools including cane knives, forks, files and hoes in addition to fertilizer and insecticide.

"I know for a fact the assistance provided today will lead to positive changes in the lives of the farmers and the consumers of the products that will be brought to the market by these farmers," says the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Environment, Hon. Parveen Kumar Bala.

Nicolas Burniat, UN Women Deputy Representative for the Fiji Multi-Country Office, says "the distribution supports women to more quickly regain their income streams and help provide for their families through growing and selling their produce at the market. During and after disasters, the impacts experienced by people are often compounded for women, and as women are central to the well-being of families, this also reverberates into the wider community."

Also funded by the Australian Government, UN Women has built temporary structures such as tents, tables and chairs for affected markets. These have been partially distributed in Ba, Nadi, Rakiraki and Tavua, with the remainder to be distributed before the end of the year.



“This marketplace is an example of the resilience of Fiji’s people in rebuilding their lives and the Australian Government is pleased to support farmers here in Rakiraki and in seven other cyclone-affected markets to return their farms to productivity,” says Amy Crago, Deputy Australian High Commissioner.

Varanise Maisamoa, President of the Rakiraki Market Vendors Association says, "the Rakiraki Market Vendors Association would like to sincerely thank UN Women and Australian Aid in recognising our needs after Cyclone Winston. Providing seeds and farming tools to the farmers who supply crops to the Rakiraki market enables our businesses to thrive again. It also puts us back on track in terms of family and our children's survival."

UN Women is also working with the Ministry of Local Government, Housing and Environment, and the Australian Government on rebuilding Rakiraki municipal market, including a women’s accommodation centre. The design for this building is currently being finalised.

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