



### **MACFEST Hosting Agreement Signing Remarks**

Today marks an important step in our journey towards hosting the 8th Melanesian Arts & Culture Festival.

As we sign this agreement, we are simply not completing a formal process.

We are renewing our shared commitment to protect and celebrate the living spirit of Melanesia.

Our cultural identity is very important in guiding our journey and transformation as a people.

In a world that is changing quickly, our Melanesian identity remains our compass.

This agreement shows Fiji's commitment to creating a space where our living traditions can be celebrated and preserved.

From the rhythmic beats of bamboo music to the detailed patterns of our weavers, from the strong designs of our traditional ocean-going canoes to the skills of our artisans and seafarers, these traditions are part of who we are.

In hosting MACFEST, we want to build the festival around our Melanesian identity, recognizing that culture is the foundation of sustainable environmental, economic, and social development.

We also want to strengthen our sense of solidarity and family, guided by the message, “We are Melanesia.

We are family, which reflects the strength of Melanesia and the MSG.

We place strong importance on youth engagement by ensuring that traditional knowledge, culture, heritage, and arts are passed on to the next generation as our intergenerational wealth that our young people must embrace, protect, and live out.

We also acknowledge the strong regional cooperation that has brought us this far, including the efforts of previous hosts such as Vanuatu for the 7th MACFEST, and we commit to offering a uniquely different learning experience and celebration here in Fiji.

We understand that our culture is not something from the past, but the foundation of our social and economic strength.

By hosting MACFEST 2026, Fiji honours the legacy of our ancestors and the hopes of our young people.

To our brothers and sisters in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and the FLNKS of New Caledonia, Fiji is ready.

After the success of the 7th MACFEST in Vanuatu, we accept the responsibility to carry the torch forward.

We promise to deliver a festival that is proudly Fijian in its hospitality and deeply Melanesian in its spirit.

This agreement ensures that the necessary logistical, security, and administrative arrangements are in place to welcome our regional family to a safe and vibrant celebration of who we are.

As we look ahead to 2026, may this signing send a clear message to the world:

We are Melanesia.

We are family.

Our culture is our strength, and it binds us together as one.

With this, I am honored to formally sign this agreement, marking the beginning of our collective journey towards a historic and transformative MACFEST 2026.

Vinaka vakalevu and thank you.