



## FIJI TRADES UNION CONGRESS

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### FTUC RELEASE NO: 57-01/14

#### **New Minimum Wage – A Bad Joke on Workers of Fiji**

The Fiji Trades Union Congress condemns the Regime's decision to set the minimum wage at \$2.00 an hour. This is grossly inadequate and will perpetuate continued poverty and hardship on workers and their families. The minimum wage is even lower than those in the Wages Council Orders that have been set many years ago and is a huge step backwards for workers in Fiji. The poverty line as at 2008 stood at \$187.00 per week for a family of 4. Inflation since 2008 to 2013 has increased by more than 30%, yet we have a Regime that tells its people that earning \$80 to \$90 gross a week in 2014 is sufficient. This has to be a bad joke on the workers of Fiji.

We have continually heard that small businesses would not be able to cope with higher wage. While that may be true for some, it is no justification for businesses that can afford to pay decent wage. The Government has a responsibility to be fair to all. Businesses that cannot afford to pay decent wage must be able to prove that and be exempted. It is wrong to have big businesses hide behind small businesses and drag the wages levels well below the poverty line. There needs to be greater responsibility shown by those that advocate that it is alright for workers to live in extreme poverty. The FTUC does not believe that maximum profits should be the only aim of businesses. They also have a social responsibility to their employees.

The FTUC questions the Government's commitment to eradicate poverty in Fiji. We estimate that more than half of Fiji's population live below the poverty line and majority of these live in extreme poverty. This is an indictment on the regime and demonstrates its inability and lack of commitment in dealing with the issue of poverty. The large increase in squatter settlements around the country is a clear demonstration of the worsening economic situation of the people.

The regime attempts to trumpet its new minimum wage as creating history. Yes, indeed it has created history by setting the minimum wage at less than half of a living wage. It has deprived workers and their families of a decent living. The FTUC calls upon the Regime to review its baseless decision without delay. The workers will have their say on this matter soon.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Felix Anthony', is centered on the page.

**Felix Anthony**  
**National Secretary**

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