

Good Health Leadership and Governance Paramount in Combating Epidemics



The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Prem Misir with the Honourable Minister of Health and Medical Services, Ms. Rosy Akbar.

The University of Fiji in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Fiji and The University of Hamburg hosted a conference to launch the Zika project titled “Climate Change and Prevalence Study of ZIKA Virus Diseases in Fiji” (Zika under a climate change and epidemiological perspective)” on Friday, March 2, 2018 at the Tokatoka Resort, Nadi.

The Zika project is funded by Ministry of Health, Germany and costs 120000euros.

The project intends to assess the extent to which climate change influences the spread of Zika virus diseases in Fiji and provides recommendations for improvements.

Speaking at the launch on the theme “Climate Change: Threats and solutions”, the Vice-Chancellor and Project Director, Professor Prem Misir stated that climate change was amongst variables that influenced the rapid multiplication of mosquitoes.

He commented that with the temperatures soaring high in the past few decades, Zika is happening in many parts of the world where there are high levels of temperature and where there are vagaries of climate change.

“Global warming continues to increase the spread of mosquito borne diseases. The Zika virus has to reproduce in the mosquito for a certain period of time before it can be transmitted to another person in a subsequent bite. The higher the air temperature, the shorter that incubation period and the faster the transmission of the virus. Higher temperatures also cause the mosquitoes to mature faster,” he explained.

Further to his point, he said that Zika virus and many epidemic viruses have a lot to do with prevention. A strong Health system is crucial for a country to be able to combat such epidemics.

“In the final analysis we have to have the Health Systems that are strong enough to withstand, to help you to prevent the diseases. We need to have good health leadership and governance including good service delivery, quality workforce, proper health information system (data collection, processing of the data, and interpretation of the data) and medical products to help with the prevention approach,” he stressed.

Honourable Minister of Health and Medical Services, Ms. Rosy Akbar launched the project and thanked The University of Fiji’s initiative in collaboration with University of Hamburg for contributing towards an important topic of Zika.