



**** PRESS RELEASE ****

6th October 2014

Children Race to Survive dry weather

The official launch of Save the Children's annual Race for Survival has kicked off in Suva today with a clear message to **'Save, Sip and Survive'** in the dry weather to protect your health.

Save the Children Fiji's Race for Survival is a relay race with the message to radically reduce preventable child deaths. This year, more than 400 children from 8 schools in Labasa will be involved in the event to be held on October 17th at Guru Nanak Primary School grounds. Save the Children Fiji says this campaign is a way to give children a voice on issues affecting their health which this year is focused on preventing water borne disease in these drought-like conditions.

SC Fiji's CEO, Raijeli Nicole, said *"previous experiences from the 1997-1998 drought shows water is prioritised for cooking rather than hygiene. This in turn increases the risk of diarrhea and water borne diseases like skin infections which commonly affect children here in Fiji."*

"We are working closely with Ministry of Health with regards to pre-empting any outbreak of water-related illness. We are encouraging the country to save quality drinking water in sealed containers, which are kept out of the sun whilst making sure everyone drinks 2 litres of clean, or boiled water per day. We are also encouraging everyone to wash their hands with soap and seek early medical care if anyone becomes sick."

To help create solutions and build the resilience of communities to drought Save the Children Fiji has already begun running workshops with children across the Central and Northern divisions to educate them on cost-effective ways to keep themselves safe while conserving water at the same time.

"More than 100 school children have already made Tippy Taps, which is low cost but effective device so children can wash their hands with soap even if water shortages or cuts occur," Ms Nicole said.

"Children are clearly aware of the impact the dry weather is having with many already saying people in their communities have become sick and some say they don't have enough drinking water left by the end of the day," she said.

12-year-old Tarusila who attended workshops run by Save the Children Fiji said "it is everyone's job to protect water and is encouraging everyone to turn off the tap and fixing leaking pipes.

"I'm just asking everyone out there to help Fiji become a better place. If you see any open taps anywhere just close it. Even if it's not yours, just close it.... Protect our water and make Fiji a better place," she said.

The Race for Survival will be held in Labasa at Guru Nanak Primary School Oval on the 17th October from 9am – midday.

Save the Children are encouraging everyone to come along to the event and learn how to create cost-effective solutions to saving water and protecting your health in these dry conditions. The National Fire Authority will have their Smokehouse at the event and workshops with Ministry of Health and the National Disaster Management Authority will be run throughout the day.

In the meantime SAVE. SIP. SURVIVE. in this dry weather.

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PRESS EVENT

Launch of Race for Survival

When: Tuesday 7th October 2014
Where: NDMO Conference Room, Knolly Street, Suva
Time: 10am – 11am
Who: Save the Children Fiji, National Disaster Management Authority,
Ministry of Health, BSP Bank
How: The launch is targeted at media to promote the concerns regarding children's health in drought and create a good platform to promote how to keep yourself healthy in drought with cost-effective solutions.

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