

Fellow Delegates. A very good afternoon to you all. I have much pleasure in welcoming each one of you to the Fiji Institute of Accountants BSP Life Sponsored “Women in Leadership” seminar this afternoon. It’s great to see you all and thank you for attending this seminar.

The Fiji Institute of Accountants continues to play an important role as a professional body for its members and other stakeholders as it strives to carry out a critical role between business, Government, the academic sector and civil society.

The idea of organising events to promote women to leadership roles was initiated during the World Congress of Accountants 2018 in Sydney by our Past President Zarin Khan. The FIA Council endorsed this initiative at the November Council meeting and activities were to commence in 2019 led by Renu Chand and Beverly Seeto. The aim was to promote women to key leadership roles by providing them with opportunities to listen to and interact with women who can share their experiences and journeys by inspiring confidence.

From the FIA Strategic Plan 2017-2021 the mission is “to lead, develop, facilitate and support accounting, assurance, finance and business advisory professionals so that they will excel in their role and contribute to building Fiji and the region”. “Another mission is “to commit ourselves to a strong, active and devoted sense of duty to our members and communities.”

Let me share some statistics on our membership to give a fair idea on the membership composition.

In 1995 the FIA had a total of 424 financial members, **84% men and 16% women**. By 2007 women accounted **for 31%** of the financial membership and in 2018 this had increased to **38% of the 800 plus total financial membership**. This is approximately a growth of 1% per annum over the past 24 years.

Since 1972 the FIA has hosted many events in a year attracting a wide cross-section of people from the Accounting fraternity, business community, Government, academics, non-government organisations, members of the diplomatic corps as well as from abroad. But since the formation of the FIA, we have never focussed an event on women's achievements in Fiji. I am happy to say that we have started this now.

Within the FIA there are many successful women in all membership categories who have much to share about their experiences and their journeys to roles of leadership with the younger members. The activities would provide an opportunity to find a mentor and motivate them to achieve their leadership goals.

I would like to thank Priya Singh – our Guest Speaker for accepting our invitation and coming to present at today's seminar. Priya thank you very much. Your presence here today will surely inspire our women and especially young women to take up the challenge of becoming leaders in their field of work.

Thank you to all our penalists for accepting our request to be part on the Panel for this afternoon's discussion.

Events such as this are made possible through our Kind Sponsors who come on board and support such good initiatives. I would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank our Sponsor **BSP Life** for their support and sponsoring the FIA Women in Leadership series. Thank you BSP Life.

To all our Delegates present here, I thank you once again for your time this afternoon and I urge all of you to take advantage of this opportunity and make most of it from the engaging session that we have planned for you all.

Thank You.