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## **PRESS RELEASE**

(Suva-Sep 29, 2011) ONE hundred and seventy nine (179) junior and senior prefects of Adi Cakobau School in Sawani will undergo a one-day youth empowerment seminar conducted by Transparency International Fiji tomorrow in an effort to build their capacities to be good decision-makers and responsible youth citizens.

Themed “**Empowering Youth Citizens for Integrity, Influence and Inspiration**”, the programme was designed to enhance students’ knowledge of rights, roles and civic responsibilities, boost their understanding of participating in community and nation-building and explore ways in which youth citizens can be effective agents of meaningful change and lasting peace.

ACS Principal, Salote Nawalowalo, said the programme will help her students learn the skills of making appropriate and informed decisions.

“These students, who are school leaders and some of them who will be leaving the school at the end of the year, will be faced with situations that will be challenging for them if they do not have the right information to base their decisions on. When they learn how to make reasonable decisions it becomes a skill that will help them in whatever situations they are in,” Mrs Nawalowalo said.

She said the primary objective behind organizing the event for the Sawani girls, was to help mold them to be virtuous and law-abiding citizens of Fiji.

“Instead of being a burden to the community in regards to inappropriate behaviour and attitude and being useless, they will help the community in being good role models to their peers and younger siblings. When youths learn how to behave, to be useful members of society, it does not put much pressure on the government financially.”

TI Fiji Executive Officer, Koila Kabu, said the programme supported efforts championed by the organization to instill among Fiji’s citizens the values of integrity, accountability, honesty and transparency as effective tools for eradicating corruption and bribery.

“We at TI Fiji believe that, if given the right support and encouragement, youths can play a pivotal role in the fight against corruption because they form a huge portion of the population and have the dynamism and creativity to front moves targeted at weeding it out from our communities and society. The session hopes to contribute to

this effort and we commend the school and its management for recognizing the importance and need for such a training,” Mrs Kabu said.

TI Fiji Board Director and former student, Suliana Siwatibau, is expected to open the session with a mentoring speech to participants and set the scene for the rest of the day’s discussions and activities.

The seminar is part of TI Fiji’s Youth Leadership, Advocacy and Civic Education (LACE) programme, implemented with the partnership of the Vodafone ATH Fiji Foundation’s World of Difference Programme.

The seminar is funded through financial support from the Department of Youth and Sports. It starts at 8am tomorrow (Friday, September 30) and ends at 3.30pm with the presentation of certificates to participants.

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