**Pacific Disability Forum**

Personal Profile of Candidate Standing for Election to the Board

**(Maximum of 700 words)**

Full Name: Sovaia Sisi Coalala

Date and Place of Birth: 8th of April, 1981 at the Lautoka Hospital

Organisation You Represent, Current Position and Function(5 lines maximum):

I am representing the United Blind Persons of Fiji (UBP) as the president. UBP is an organisation for visually impaired and blind adults in Fiji. Their function is to advocate for the rights of blind and vision impaired persons, to council and refer members and their families to appropriate services, to promote blindness prevention and to work with national, regional and international organisations in improving the lives of persons with disabilities.

Other Relevant Committee or Board Governance Experience (10 lines maximum):

I have been the member of the board of the United Blind Persons of Fiji ever since 2005. I have also been a member of a number of committees including

* Education committee for the Fiji National Council for Disabled People (FNCDP)
* The informal working group for disability at the Pacific Islands forum Secretariat (PIFS)
* Secretary of the Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation (FDPF)
* I was also part of the consulting committee who sat and heard submitions for the ministry of education’s special and inclusive policy when it was still in its drafting stages

Therefore, I am no stranger to issues faced by persons with disabilities in the community and I am especially passionate about education and employment.

Educational Background (5 lines maximum):

I completed both my primary and secondary education at regular mainstream schools. I then went on to complete my bachelors degree at the University majoring in education and literature and language. After a seven year gap, I was fortunate to win a scholarship to study in Australia in 2013 to 2014 where I completed a double masters in Commerce and Strategic Human Resource Management.

Any Other Activities Relevant to the Work of the PDF (10 lines maximum):

I have been a teacher for visually impaired children for over seven years and have ample experience in the education system of Fiji and providing support for blind and vision impairment students in this sector. At the same time, I bring with me a working knowledge of human resource management and efficient financial outlay wich I feel could be of some use to the organisation. I currently sit on two DPOs boards, both at grass roots and national level and so I will be able to contribute a broader perception of issues at these levels when deliberating at the regional level. At the same time, my work as the coordinator of disability services at the Fiji National University has also broaden my skills to also include support for all groups of disabilities at the education sector.

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