

# PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI



## PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

### DAILY HANSARD

**MONDAY, 5TH MARCH, 2018**

**[CORRECTED COPY]**

# CONTENTS

|   | <u>Pages</u> |
|---|--------------|
| Minutes   | 307          |
| Communications from the Chair   | 308          |
| Presentation of Papers & Certain Documents  | 308-311      |
| Presentation of Reports of Committees   | 311-314      |
| Questions   | 315-347      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Duavata Initiative (Q. No. 1/18)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Q. No. 2/18)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Reconstruction of Schools Destroyed by TC Winston (Q. No.3/18)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Statistics of 2017 – Population and Housing Census (Q. No. 4/18)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Climate Vulnerability Assessment (Q. No.5/18)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Ministry’s Disaster Risk Management Response (Q. No. 6/18)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Status of Dredging works – Qawa and Labasa Rivers (Q. No. 7/18)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Marrakesh Partnership for Global Climate Action (Q. No. 8/18)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Land Developed by the State – Intended purpose (Q. No. 9/18)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Environmental Exploitation (Q. No. 10/18)</i></li> </ul> |              |
| Ministerial Statements  | 348-368      |
| Suspension of Standing Orders   | 368-370      |
| Consideration of Motions  | 370-381      |
| Review Report on the Ministry of Social Welfare, Women & Poverty Alleviation<br>2013 Annual Report  | 370-381      |
| Consolidation of Annual Reports for the Ministry of Industry & Trade – 2013 &<br>Tourism Fiji – 2010-2012   | 381-382      |



## MONDAY, 5TH MARCH, 2018

The Parliament met at 9.40 a.m., pursuant to notice.

HONOURABLE SPEAKER took the Chair and read the Prayer.

### PRESENT

Hon. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister and Minister for iTaukei Affairs, Sugar Industry and Foreign Affairs  
Hon. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications; Minister for Education, Heritage, Arts & Library Services and National Archives of Fiji  
Hon. Rosy Sofia Akbar, Minister for Health and Medical Services  
Hon. Mereseini Rakuita Vuniwaqa, Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation  
Hon. Commander Semi Tuleca Koroilavesau, Minister for Fisheries  
Hon. Osea Naiqamu, Minister for Forests  
Hon. Lt. Col. Inia Batikoto Seruiratu, Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management and Meteorological Services  
Hon. Jone Usamate, Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations  
Hon. Faiyaz Siddiq Koya, Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism and Lands and Mineral Resources  
Hon. Ratu Inoke Kubuabola, Minister for National Security and Defence  
Hon. Lt. Col. Laisenia Bale Tuitubou, Minister for Youth and Sports  
Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy, Minister for Waterways  
Hon. Alexander David O'Connor, Assistant Minister for Health and Medical Services  
Hon. Commander Joeli Ratulevu Cawaki, Assistant Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management  
Hon. Veena Kumar Bhatnagar, Assistant Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation  
Hon. Iliesa Delana, Assistant Minister for Youth and Sports  
Hon. Lorna Eden, Assistant Minister for Local Government, Housing and Environment  
Hon. Vijay Nath, Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Transport  
Hon. Viam Pillay, Assistant Minister for Agriculture  
Hon. Mosese Drecala Bilitavu  
Hon. Parmod Chand  
Hon. Mohammed Mursalinul Abe Dean  
Hon. Jiosefa Dulakiverata  
Hon. Viliame Rogoibulu Gavoka  
Hon. Semesa Druavesi Karavaki  
Hon. Ro Teimumu Vuikaba Kepa  
Hon. Ratu Kiniviliame Kiliraki  
Hon. Jilila Nalibu Kumar  
Hon. Dr. Brij Lal  
Hon. Ratu Naiqama Tawake Lalabalavu  
Hon. Alvik Avhikrit Maharaj  
Hon. Ratu Suliano Matanitobua  
Hon. Alivereti Nabulivou

Hon. Ruveni Nadabe Nadalo  
Hon. Niko Nawaikula  
Hon. Mataiasi Akoula Niumataiwalu  
Hon. Howard Robin Thomas Politini  
Hon. Prof. Biman Chand Prasad  
Hon. Aseri Masivou Radrodro  
Hon. Salote Vuibureta Radrodro  
Hon. Lt. Col. Netani Rika  
Hon. Balmindar Singh  
Hon. Prem Singh  
Hon. Ashneel Sudhakar  
Hon. Anare Tuidraki Vadei  
Hon. Samuela Bainikalou Vunivalu  
Hon. Mikaele Rokosova Leawere

**Absent**

Hon. Parveen Bala Kumar, Minister for Local Government, Housing, Environment, Infrastructure and Transport

Mark of respect for the late Honourable Ratu Sela Nanovo

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, please remain standing and let us observe a minute of silence to remember the late Honourable Ratu Sela Vuinakasa Nanovo, who has left us. Ratu Sela Nanovo served with honesty, integrity and without fear or favour.

*(The Parliament observed a minute of silence)*

**MINUTES**

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Madam Speaker, I move:

That the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Friday, 15th September, 2017 as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Madam Speaker, I second the motion.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

## COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

### Welcome

HON. SPEAKER.- I welcome all Honourable Members to the first Parliament sitting day for the year 2018.

I wish to warmly welcome the members of the public joining us in the gallery and those watching the proceedings on television and the internet and listening on the radio. Thank you for taking interest in your Parliament.

### Reports of Committees

Honourable Members, it is to be noted that a large number of reports have been reported back to Parliament by the relevant Committees and I would like to thank the Committees for their hard work and effort.

On the same note, I would like to highlight Standing Order 121(6)(b) which states, and I quote:

“the Minister responsible for the relevant government department must table a substantive response to the standing committee’s report within 60 days of receiving the report.”

At this juncture, I would like to emphasise the need for the relevant ministries to comply with this Standing Order, and provide relevant and satisfactory responses to the recommendations provided in the Committee Reports. The Committee Reports are important documents and the recommendations need to be responded to. Thank you.

## PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND CERTAIN DOCUMENTS

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call upon the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications to table his Reports.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 38, I present the following Reports to Parliament:

1. Fiji National Provident Fund – Annual Report 2017;
2. Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audit Report on State-Owned Entities and Statutory Authorities for 2015;
3. Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption Annual Report 1 January-31 July 2016;
4. Fiji National University Annual Report 2016;
5. Department of Legislature Annual Report 2014–2015;
6. The Independent Legal Services Commission – Annual Report 2016; and
7. Reserve Bank of Fiji – August 2016-July 2017 Report.

HON. SPEAKER.- Please, hand the Reports to the Secretary-General.

*(Reports handed to the Secretary-General)*

HON. SPEAKER.- Under Standing Order 38(2), I refer the Fiji National Provident Fund – Annual Report 2017 and the Fiji National University Annual Report 2016 to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs.

Under Standing Order 38(2), I refer the Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audit Report on State-Owned Entities and Statutory Authorities for 2015 to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Under Standing Order 38(2), I refer the following Reports to the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights:

1. Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption Annual Report 1 January-31 July 2016;
2. Department of Legislature Annual Report 2014–2015; and
3. The Independent Legal Services Commission – Annual Report 2016.

Under Standing Order 38(2), I refer the Reserve Bank of Fiji – August 2016-July 2017 Report to the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs.

I now call upon the Acting Minister for Local Government, Housing, Environment, Infrastructure and Transport to table the Reports.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 38, I present the following Reports to Parliament:

1. Ministry of Local Government, Urban Development, Housing and Environment 2012 Annual Report;
2. Ministry of Local Government, Urban Development, Housing and Environment 2013 Annual Report; and
3. Ministry of Local Government, Urban Development, Housing and Environment Annual Report 2014.

HON. SPEAKER.- Please, hand the Reports to the Secretary-General.

*(Reports handed to the Secretary-General)*

HON. SPEAKER.- Under Standing Order 38(2), I refer the following Reports to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs:

1. Ministry of Local Government, Urban Development, Housing and Environment Annual Report 2012;
2. Ministry of Local Government, Urban Development, Housing and Environment Annual Report 2013; and
3. Ministry of Local Government, Urban Development, Housing and Environment Annual Report 2014.

I now call upon the Honourable Minister for Youth and Sports to table his Report.

HON. LT. COL. L.B. TUITUBOU.- Madam Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 38, I present the Ministry of Youth and Sports Annual Report of 2016 to Parliament.

HON. SPEAKER.- Please, hand the Report to the Secretary-General.

*(Report handed to the Secretary-General)*

HON. SPEAKER.- Under Standing Order 38(2), I refer the Ministry of Youth and Sports Annual Report 2016 to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs.

I now call upon the Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism, Lands and Mineral Resources to table his Report.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 38, I present the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism Annual Report 2014 to Parliament.

HON. SPEAKER.- Please, hand the Report to the Secretary-General.

*(Report handed to the Secretary-General)*

HON. SPEAKER.- Under Standing Order 38(2), I refer the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism Annual Report 2014 to the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs.

I now call upon the Minister for Health and Medical Services to table her Report.

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Madam Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 38, I present the Ministry of Health and Medical Services January-July 2016 Report to Parliament.

HON. SPEAKER.- Please, hand the Report to the Secretary-General.

*(Report handed to the Secretary-General)*

HON. SPEAKER.- Under Standing Order 38(2), I refer the Ministry of Health and Medical Services January-July 2016 Report to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs.

I now call upon the Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations to table his Report.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Madam Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 38, I present the following Reports to Parliament:

1. Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment – 2010 Annual Report;  
and
2. Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment – 2011 Annual Report.

HON. SPEAKER.- Please hand the Reports to the Secretary-General.

*(Reports handed to the Secretary-General)*

HON. SPEAKER.- Under Standing Order 38(2), I refer the following Reports to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs:



1. Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment – 2010 Annual Report; and
2. Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment – 2011 Annual Report.

### **PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call upon the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs to have the floor.

#### Standing Committee on Social Affairs – Consumer Council of Fiji’s 2015 Annual Report

HON. V. PILLAY.- Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present the Committee Report on the assessment made to the Consumer Council of Fiji’s 2015 Annual Report.

The assessment made to the Consumer Council of Fiji 2015 Annual Report was done in accordance with Section 109(2)(b) of the Standing Orders of Parliament, in which the Standing Committee on Social Affairs is mandated to look into issues related to health, education, social services, labour, culture, media and their administration.

The Committee in its first reading through the Annual Report had agreed to invite the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Consumer Council to brief the Committee on their performance in 2015. On Thursday, 12th October, 2017, the CEO had appeared before the Committee and briefly presented the Council’s achievements and all the aspects of their work. During the inquiry, the Committee had raised some questions in regards to the operation of the Consumer Council of Fiji, which includes:

- consumers response towards the usage of the national helpline;
- the functions of the Community Consumer Advisory Group (CCAG);
- how the Council conducts its public awareness;
- the Council’s action towards counterfeit and expiry goods;
- purposes of the Fiji Mediation Centre;
- number of awareness and workshops undertaken;
- issues of concern on second-hand vehicles and clothing; and
- how duty reduction from Government was abused by some traders for their profit gain.

The Committee appreciates the response received from the Council in addressing the issues raised and acting as an advocate to protect the rights and interests of consumers in Fiji.

The Committee observed that in 2015, the Consumer Council of Fiji had registered 1,672 complaints with a monetary value of \$4,739,691, and recovered about \$3,429,561 by solving 1,374 complaints.

The Standing Committee on Social Affairs had reviewed the Consumer Council of Fiji 2015 Annual Report and recommends that the House takes note of its report.

I thank the Honourable Members for their contribution towards the scrutiny of the Annual Report and the formulation of this bipartisan report.

With those words and on behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, I commend this report to Parliament.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Please hand the Report to the Secretary-General.

*(Report handed to the Secretary-General)*

HON. V. PILLAY.- Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 121(5), I hereby move a motion without notice that a debate on the contents of the report is initiated at a future sitting.

HON. V.K. BHATNAGAR.- Madam Speaker, I second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Parliament will now vote.

The Question is: That the debate on the contents of the report is initiated at a future sitting.

Does any Member oppose?

(Chorus of 'Noes')

Motion agreed to.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call upon the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs.

#### Standing Committee on Social Affairs – Public Rental Board 2015 Annual Report

HON. V. PILLAY.- Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present the Committee's Review Report on the assessment made to the Public Rental Board 2015 Annual Report.

The review was in accordance with Section 109(2)(b) of the Standing Orders of Parliament, in which the Standing Committee on Social Affairs is mandated to look into issues related to health, education, social services, labour, culture, media and their administration.

The Committee, in its first reading through the Annual Report, had agreed to invite the General Manager (GM) of the Public Rental Board to present on their 2015 annual performance.

On 4th October, 2017, the Acting General Manager, Mr. Patrick conducted a presentation to highlight the achievements and all other aspects of their work. Mr. Veu also responded to questions raised by the Honourable Members of the Committee on the following:

- organisation structure;
- rent arrears,
- rental subsidy;
- transitional Housing Policy;
- development of rental units and property maintenance;
- social obligation;
- community building;
- major constraints faced by PRB; and
- major funding.

The Standing Committee on Social Affairs had reviewed the Public Rental Board 2015 Annual Report and acknowledged the responses provided by the Board, and also assured the Committee that due consideration will be given to the issues raised.

I thank the Honourable Members for their contribution towards the scrutiny of the Annual Report and the formulation of this bipartisan report.

With these words and on behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, I commend this report to Parliament.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Please hand the Report to the Secretary-General.

*(Report handed to the Secretary-General)*

HON. V. PILLAY.- Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 121(5), I hereby move a motion without notice that a debate on the contents of the report is initiated at a future sitting.

HON. V.K. BHATNAGAR.- Madam Speaker, I rise to second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Parliament will now vote.

The Question is: That a debate on the contents of the report is initiated at a future sitting.

Does any Member oppose?

(Chorus of 'Noes')

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call on the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs to have the floor.

Standing Committee on Social Affairs – Unit Trust of Fiji 2015 Annual Report

HON. V. PILLAY.- Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present the Committee's Report on the assessment made to the Unit Trust of Fiji 2015 Annual Report.

The assessment was made in accordance with Section 109(2)(b) of the Standing Orders of Parliament, whereby the Standing Committee on Social Affairs is mandated to look into issues related to health, education, social services, labour, culture, media and their administration. The Committee was also delegated the responsibility to scrutinise the Unit Trust of Fiji Annual Report 2015.

The Committee in its first reading through the Annual Report had agreed to invite the General Manager (GM) of the Unit Trust of Fiji to come and brief the Committee on their performance in 2015.

On 5th October, 2017, the team lead by Mr. Sakiusa, conducted a presentation to highlight the achievements and all other aspects of their work. The team also responded to the questions raised by the Members of the Committee comprising of the following:

- Organisation Structure;
- The Internal and External policies in place for the Organisation;
- the Contingents Liability;
- Investment and Policy Statements; and
- Risk Management Policy.

The Standing Committee on Social Affairs has assessed the Unit Trust of Fiji 2015 Annual Report and acknowledges the response provided on the concerns raised by the Members.

I thank the Honourable Members for their contribution towards the scrutiny of the Annual Report and the formulation of this bipartisan Report.

With these words, and on behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, I commend this Report to Parliament.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, please hand the Report to the Secretary-General.

*(Report handed to the Secretary-General)*

HON. V. PILLAY.- Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 121(5), I hereby move a motion without notice that a debate on the contents of the Report is initiated at a future sitting.

HON. V.K. BHATNAGAR.- Madam Speaker, I second the motion.

Question put.

Does any Member oppose?

(Chorus of “Noes”)

Motion agreed to.

## QUESTIONS

### Oral Questions

#### *Duavata Initiative* (Question No. 1/2018)

HON. M.D. BULITAVU asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Minister for Defence and National Security inform this House on how effective the *Duavata Initiative* has been in reducing the national crime rate as a measure of collective security?

HON. RATU I. KUBUABOLA (Minister for National Security and Defence).- Thank you, Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the Honourable Member for the question this morning. The *Duavata Community Policing*, Madam Speaker, is the partnership between the police and the community.

In 2017, the Fiji Police Force conducted a total of 4,877 community policing activities. These included visitations to business houses, hotels, villages, communities, informal settlements, farmers, schools, religious organisations, NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations), banks, taxi and bus operators, and integration with Government Ministries.

Madam Speaker, in 2017, it was during the *Duavata Community Policing* concept that the Fiji Police Force was able to make a total of 727 drug arrests; uproot 50,000 *marijuana* plants; and confiscate 1,000 *marijuana* seedlings.

Madam Speaker, the lead role taken by the Crime Prevention Committee has seen the members of the community working actively towards the prevention of crime in crime-prone areas.

The effectiveness of the *Duavata Community Policing* is also reflected in the 2017 Crime Statistics Report, which indicate major reduction in the following categories:

- reduction of overall crime by 9 percent;
- reduction of serious crime by 3 percent;
- reduction of crimes against women by 14 percent; and
- reduction of crimes against children by 12 percent.

In 2017, Madam Speaker, there were 20,565 cases reported; 2,412 cases out of the 20,565 cases reported were from 1997 to 2016. Through the *Duavata Community Policing Programme*, Madam Speaker, members of the community were able to have faith in the justice system and are coming forward to report these crimes.

HON. P. SINGH.- A supplementary question, Madam Speaker. Does the Honourable Minister believe that further reductions in national crime are possible if we can analyse linkages to our social economic gender data that would have been captured in the 2017 Census Report?

HON. RATU I. KUBUABOLA.- Sorry, Madam Speaker, I think that is a new question.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- My figures on sexual offences show that they are increasing. Does this mean that so far as sexual offences are concerned, this programme is ineffective?

HON. RATU I. KUBUABOLA.- As I said, Madam Speaker, there is a reduction in the overall crime rate.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Madam Speaker, in January, the Assistant Police Commissioner had said that there is a 30 percent increase in crime rate in Fiji, and given that this morning, the Honourable Minister has said this model is effective. This model was based on quality assurance management, and also on the context of the *vanua* with the *iTaukei* values to partner with the community, public and private partnership. What are the key indicators in regards to the effectiveness of this model, Honourable Minister?

HON. RATU I. KUBUABOLA.- Madam Speaker, as I had mentioned before, reduction in the crime rate, that is the result of this community policing concept.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Madam Speaker, I note the Honourable Minister had mentioned a reduction for women and children; 14 percent and 12 percent respectively, and I believe there is a lot of unreported cases in terms of violence against women and children. The question to the Honourable Minister is; how or what is the Ministry doing to be able to encourage members of the public to confidently report on violence against women and children?

HON. RATU I. KUBUABOLA.- Madam Speaker, as I said one time that, “police is the people and people is the police”. All of us here, as Honourable Members of Parliament ...

(Applause)

... we should work together with the police. Even for reporting, we should encourage people to report crimes to the police.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission  
(Question No. 2/2018)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Prime Minister inform this House whether there is any intention on the part of the Government to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to reconcile and unite the people of Fiji?

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA (Minister for i-Taukei Affairs, Sugar Industry and Foreign Affairs).- Madam Speaker, the short answer to that question is a big “no”.

Madam Speaker, there is no need for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission because today, the Fijian people already stand more united than at any other point in our history, and that is owed to the unprecedented state of civil, political and socio-economic rights and sign for all time in our Constitution. For those who do not know, this Constitution, our Constitution ....

(Applause and acclamations)

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Madam Speaker, unlike those on that side of the House (this side of the House) and unlike past governments in Fiji, my Government knows that the only true path to unity is through equality and that belief, that commitment, Madam Speaker, is both defined and given everything Fiji has achieved under my leadership.

In the very Preamble to the Fijian Constitution, Madam Speaker, it states clearly that we are all Fijians, united by common and equal citizenry. Because of our Constitution, for the first time in our history, we are all equal in the eyes of the law and united in common purpose.

(Applause and acclamations)

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Because of our Constitution, Madam Speaker, every Fijian knows that their vote and voice matter the same, that all of our citizens have an equal, say regardless of their ethnicity, regardless of their religion, their socio-economic status, their gender, their physical ability, or where they live in Fiji. And that, Madam Speaker, is the truth the Fijian people deserve, a truth that my Government was able to make a reality.

Our Constitution, Madam Speaker, also recognises the rights of indigenous Fijians, the *i-Taukei* and Rotuman people. It guarantees the ownership and protection of their land and their unique culture, tradition, customs and language. Under that same Constitution, Madam Speaker, every Fijian has equal access to justice through the courts or tribunals, executive and administrative justice, freedom of speech, expression and publication, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, the right to fair employment practices, the right to equality and freedom from discrimination, freedom from compulsory or arbitrary acquisition of property, the right to education and economic participation, the right to work and a just minimum wage, the right to reasonable access to transportation, the rights of children and the rights of persons with disabilities. The list goes on, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, that is the basis for unity. That is a Fiji for every Fijian and with that foundation of equality in place, we have embarked on a programme of legal and policy reform that has uplifted every Fijian from all walks of life all across our nation. We have achieved eight straight years of economic growth. We have achieved the lowest unemployment in 30 years. We have made education free.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- We have built a network of reliable infrastructure and services throughout the country. We have formed our first national university. We have expanded access to scholarships and affordable tertiary loans.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- We have done that, all that, Madam Speaker, because we have adhered to our mandate set up by the Fiji Constitution.

(Honourable Members interject)

(Acclamations)

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.-We have achieved such success because for the first time in Fijian history, we can say with every confidence that our unity is our great strength. We have not bound the divides in our society that past governments sought to entrench. We have levelled the playing field for every Fijian and we have put greater opportunity in the lives of all our people everywhere in the country.

Madam Speaker, while on the subject of truth, I see great irony that the Opposition is posing this question when they themselves are so blind to the true history of our country. They ask about truth and reconciliation while they themselves live in denial of the truth. They live in denial of the years of institutionalised, discrimination and systemic oppression of our fellow Fijians that crippled our nation for decades.

My Government recognises that dark part of our history and we have come to grips with the grim reality that was faced by far too many Fijians for far too long. Fijians who felt unwelcome in their own homes and those on the margins of society who were excluded from meaningful participation in their country. My Government recognises the immense harm those years caused Fiji and I have made it my personal mission to ensure that Fiji never slips back into those lost years.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Because we cannot afford to take backward steps, we need more, more than ever...

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- You have failed!

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.-....to look to the future. We need to ensure that discriminatory practices of the past stay dead and buried in the past where they belong.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Talk to him.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- You talk on Friday.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- No, talk today!

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Madam Speaker...

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, interjections are getting disruptive, please.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Tell them to shut up, please, for once. Okay.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, please continue, Honourable Prime Minister.



HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Madam Speaker, it is our Constitution and the strong and independent institutions that establishes and guarantees equality in our society and it is equality that unites us as one nation and one people. That is the truth and armed with the truth Madam Speaker, we will continue to carry Fiji into the future. Thank you.

(Acclamations)

HON. SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to Honourable Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, one important view of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is to stop *coups* and counter *coups*. I am very sad about this.

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBER.- What is the question?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Given that, what is the alternative that the Honourable Prime Minister have to stop any future *coups*? What do you have? What is the plan?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Prime Minister.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Madam Speaker, if there was for example an investigation into the events of 2000, someone like him would be brought to the floor for taking money into George Speight's camp.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Why do you not do it? Why do you not do it?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Professor Biman Prasad.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Thank you, Madam Speaker, the Honourable Prime Minister showed the Constitution possibly as part of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Would the Honourable Prime Minister inform this House whether Section 119 of the Constitution, which requires the Mercy Commission, will be established soon?

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBER.- That is a different question.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- It is not a different question.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, on a point of order!

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of order!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- The Honourable Biman Prasad shows his ignorance. If he looked at the Order Paper, there is a question, exactly the same question by Honourable Bulitavu tomorrow. Why is he asking a question that is completely unrelated and in fact that is listed as a question for Tuesday's Order Paper?

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Madam Speaker, it is a question to the Honourable Prime Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- A point of order, you keep quiet, I am addressing the Honourable Speaker.

That is my point of order, the point of order is, it is already listed as a question and it is unrelated to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, I agree.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mercy Commission has got nothing to do with it.

HON. SPEAKER.- I agree with the point of order.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Read the law!

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- It is the same question.

HON. SPEAKER.- I agree with the point of order. Let us be succinct and relevant in our questions. I now give the floor to the Honourable Karavaki.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Madam Speaker, could the Honourable Prime Minister tell this House the truth of what the Government will do to those who were unjustly tortured and killed in 2000, and also those that were unjustly terminated from their work? Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Prime Minister.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Madam Speaker, if the Honourable Member can come up with a list of names of those who were removed from their employment, maybe I can let him know.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- What about all those people who died?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. There being no other question, I now give the floor to the Honourable Mikaele Leawere.

Reconstruction of Schools Destroyed by *TC Winston*  
(Question No. 03/2018)

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications inform the House on the progress of the reconstruction of the schools destroyed by *TC Winston*?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications).- Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for this question. Given the circumstances, Madam Speaker, the progress is going well. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Supplementary question, Honourable Salote Radrodoro.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you Madam Speaker. Right now the Avea District School in Vanua Balavu is still not being repaired and it did not come under the New Zealand Government Rehabilitation Programme because of relocation to new site issues. Can the Honourable Minister explain where the children are attending school right now and when will the school be rebuilt?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the Avea District Primary School, sorry, Madam Speaker, there is one tent with 10 students in it.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Two years and still in the tent?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I am answering the question. There is one tent with 10 students in it and temporary sheds are going to be built when the work has been tendered out. This is the work that was referred to much later on and that is the situation of Avea Primary School. The school is continuing there with one tent with 10 students in it. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Parmod Chand, you have the floor.

HON. P. CHAND.- Madam Speaker, can the Honourable Minister advise this august House whether the full recovery and rehabilitation of schools destroyed by *TC Winston* will be systematically addressed in the next proposed budget?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I fail to understand the question, if the Honourable Member could elaborate.

HON. P. CHAND.- I thought you are very smart.

(Laughter)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order!

HON. P. CHAND.- Can the Honourable Minister advise this august House whether the full recovery and rehabilitation of schools destroyed by *TC Winston* will be systematically addressed in the next proposed budget. Is that clear?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the Honourable Member forgets that as a human being we need to be able to have humility which he lacks. So, when I do not understand anything, it is not an indication of my intellect or lack of or smartness, it is time to clarify the question. He needs to really refrain from making this kind of personalised comments.

Madam Speaker, as he would know, as he should know...

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, please would you like to withdraw that particular statement?

HON. P. CHAND.- I withdraw that, if it is offensive to him, thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Can you withdraw again without the...?

HON. P. CHAND.- Yes, I withdraw that, Madam Speaker, thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, as the Honourable Member would know and should know that when a budget is presented, the budget is presented with details, and the budgets have all the details of any expenditure to do with any of the Heads where monies will be expended. So, obviously any funds that will be utilised whether it is rehabilitation or whether to put up new developments will all be expanded and explained in the Budget. It is a preposterous question.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Niko Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Can the Honourable Minister confirm to the House whether the reconstruction work of all the schools in Koro has been completed or not?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- The Honourable Member knows that the schools in Koro have actually not been completed.

Madam Speaker, like the New Zealand Government had decided to build schools in Vanua Balavu, which the New Zealand Government has completed. There are three schools:

1. Tuatua;
2. Koro High; and
3. Qalivakabau Primary School.

All these three schools, Madam Speaker, have been adopted by ACAP which is under the Australian Education Scheme, and the Honourable Leawere knows ACAP. Tuatua has been 70 percent completed by ACAP, Koro High has been 72 percent completed by ACAP and Qalivakabau Primary School has been completed - 72 percent. There was one school Kade where someone had agreed to adopt but they have not turned up with the funds and we have now called for tenders for that. So, that is the situation.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Lastly, Honourable Leawere?

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Seek some clarification from the Honourable Minister, Sir, two years and 12 days since *Cyclone Winston* and the delay that some of these children are suffering. Is there any guarantee when this rehabilitation will be completed? Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Sorry, the question - is there a guarantee the rehabilitation will be completed?

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Yes.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Yes, it will be completed.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa, the Leader of the Opposition.

Statistics of 2017 – Population and Housing Census  
(Question No. 4/2018)

HON. RO T.V. KEPA asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications explain why the Fiji Bureau of Statistics cannot release data on ethnicity from the 2017 Fiji Population and Housing Census since the issues, for example on Health, Education and Social Welfare are impacted by ethnicity.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communication).- Madam Speaker, this is again an indication of the Opposition's obsession with ethnicity, really an obsession with ethnicity. It would be really nice if the Honourable Leader of the Opposition asked us: Did the Census reveal how many poor people do we have? How many doctors do we have? How many people are actually earning a particular wage? The majority of population - what ages are they below? How many people have bank accounts? How many people have access to mobile telephones? How many people have access to roads, water and electricity? These are more pertinent questions that need to be asked, Madam Speaker, not with this obsession with ethnicity.

Madam Speaker, Health, Education and Social Welfare are not impacted by ethnicity. Health, Education and Social Welfare are impacted by the range of services available to them. Do we have enough doctors? Do we have enough specialists? Do we have enough medical equipment? Do we have enough health sanitation in remote areas? In respect of education, do we have schools with proper facilities? Do we have enough specialist teachers? Social Welfare; how many people are below the poverty line, without having reference to ethnicity? What is this obsession with ethnicity, Madam Speaker? It is completely irrelevant, completely unrelated to whether a person ethnically, which particular category they are in, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Supplementary questions, Honourable Professor Biman Prasad.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Madam Speaker, I do not understand the Honourable Attorney-General's logic about not releasing the data that Bureau of Statistics has collected. I mean, you have collected the data, talking about ethnicity differences in health or specific aspects of health about the particular community. It is not talking about racism, it is not talking about ethnicity. In fact the UN Rapporteur, Madam Speaker, pointed out very clearly and let me just quote this for the information of the House. It says:

“In order to measure progress made on the elimination of racism and racial discrimination and to evaluate the effectiveness of the policies of inclusiveness setup by the current Government, there needs to be an objective valuation which only be undertaken if statistics and particular dis-segregated data collected are made available.”

So that, Madam Speaker, includes data on ethnicity. I think if the Bureau of Statistics is collecting the data, why do you not release the data?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, again Honourable Professor Biman Prasad is always very good at telling half-truths. I have the recommendation here, Madam Speaker, the conclusion of the US Special Rapporteur. Let me read the recommendation, Paragraph number E, which you need to know.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- I have read it.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- No you have not, you did not quote it. He did not quote it.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- I quoted it.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- He did not quote it, Madam Speaker, he did not quote it. Let me read it out to you. He did not quote it. The Special Rapporteur, Madam Speaker, says :

“The Special Rapporteur calls upon the Government to evaluate the effectiveness of the policies and programmes of inclusiveness which have been put in place. This can only be achieved with detailed statistics and in particular disaggregated data which needs to be collected and made available. In order to measure progress made on the elimination of racism and racial discrimination, a whole range of different factors such as gender, age, sexual orientation, geography, income, access to social economic services and rights need to be assessed in order to provide an objective evaluation of the different measures the Government has adopted to provide the baselines upon which future policies and programmes can be designed”.

That is precisely the point, Madam Speaker. We, of course, had discussions, I am sure the Opposition had discussions. The US Special Rapporteur, Madam Speaker.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Why collect the data? Do not collect the data.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- No such data was collected. He needs to understand that. There has been no aggregation of data based on ethnicity under the 2017 Census, none whatsoever. So, they need to move away from that, they think we are hiding it, we are not hiding it. There was no collation of data.

HON. OPP. MEMBER.- Release it?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, there has been no collation of data, how can you release it? You are a bloody academic.

(Laughter)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- I withdraw “bloody”.

HON. OPP. MEMBER.- Point of Order!

HON. SPEAKER.- He has withdrawn.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- I withdraw “bloody”, I withdraw “bloody”.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- You better!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- You are an academic, you are supposed to know that. What kind of academic you are, that is something for people to decide.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- That is not for you to judge.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYHUM.- Madam Speaker, the point of the matter is this; if there is no data, no reliable data collected in the Census, how can you release it? The data relating to professions, the data relating to other aspects of where people are employed, in which region, et cetera, Madam Speaker, this will be released because it takes times to collate the data in relation to professions. Whatever preliminary data that has been released has already done the public rounds, in respect of the numbers.

The growth rate is 0.6 percent. That is something we need to be all concerned about, 0.6 percent growth is actually not a very good growth. We need a higher level of growth to create consumer demand to be able to grow the economy. These are the things that we need to look at, Madam Speaker. The GDP per capita, Madam Speaker, in Fiji has increased to \$12,000, the GDP per capita in 2006 was \$6,000, GDP per capita in Fiji has doubled since 2006, Madam Speaker.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- These are the aspects that we need to be looking at, Madam Speaker, if we want to grow as a country, if we need development. Why should we measure welfare or poverty alleviation based on the persons’ ethnicity? This has been the bane of our country. These two political parties have been obsessed with that. We have had questions in the past from the SODELPA camp asking what the breakdown of the scholarships are.

Honourable Prem Singh has asked what is the breakdown of Civil Service. Madam Speaker, these are the stereotypes that they have in their minds. We cannot progress as a country if you have an Opposition, two parties that are completely obsessed with ethnicity. Madam Speaker, they need to understand that in order to represent and carry out proper development, which I will also talk about in the next question about climate vulnerability, we need to be able to look at the development, areas and issues that affect development, not to be based on ethnicity.

We had a Constitution in 1990 that appointed at seats based purely on ethnicity. The 1997 Constitution has a similar reference to ethnicity. We had a quota system in the Civil Service. The quota system in the Civil Service was, if there are x number of *i-Taukei* people, x number of *i-Taukei* people must be in the Civil Service, x number of Indo-Fijians, x number of Indo-Fijians must be in the Civil Service. What about merit? What about merit?

Madam Speaker, how can you run a modern nation state and we all know, they are so obsessed with ethnicity. The *Fiji Sun* obviously released today, how one of the Members talk about religion? Madam Speaker, this is the kind of nonsense that will perpetuate and make us go back to the past. This is why no data is available, no data has been collected and will be collected.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, I now give the floor to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Madam Speaker, a supplementary question. Madam Speaker, the question was asked because the Honourable Member, many of the things he tells us in Parliament, there is a big disconnect with what he tells us and what is actually on the ground.

So, my supplementary question, Madam Speaker is; how are community leaders expected to put together strategically targeted interventions in the absence of correct data, to deal with people who are lagging behind in education in terms of the Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)? Deaths are up-to 80 percent, according to the statistics, the poverty levels in the country, that is why I asked that question. So, how are community leaders expected, without the correct data, to put these interventions in place without the correct data? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, again you see, unfortunately the Opposition are not able to extricate themselves from that way of thinking. Community decisions are made based on the needs. For example, the people living in maritime areas, we know that people living in the maritime areas have certain challenges.

Do we need an ethnic breakdown to understand the challenges faced by the people in the maritime areas? Do we need to know the ethnic breakdown of people who are drinking from wells? Do we need to have an ethnic breakdown of people drinking from creeks or people whose land has been salinated now? No.

We need to be able to understand what people are facing as Fijians in respective areas and provide the solutions for that. That is the fact of life, Madam Speaker. That is what we need to do because the reality is that ethnic measurement quota system has been the bane of our political life in Fiji, bane of our Constitutional development in our country. Every single point in time, we have seen draft versions of various manifestos of certain political parties. You read the first few pages, and it is all about ethnicity.

There is no progress. There is no discussion of what do we need, we do not even have a qualified Fijian speech therapist. Why are they not talking about that? And they are obsessed with ethnicity.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has an enormous misunderstanding that we cannot have economic development or social policies implemented without having reference to ethnicity. It is incorrect. Thank you.



HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you Honourable Viliame Gavoka, last question.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. This is a very difficult issue for us to understand and we just ask Government; do they know of other democracies that collate statistics on ethnicity? I know for a fact that the British Isles, UK does it. If one of the leading democracies in the world is collating statistics on ethnicity, why is Fiji so hung up on these things? I agree with my leader, that it is useful to target special segments of the population, in terms of addressing their needs. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, there is a world of difference between the British Isles, United Kingdom and Fiji. They were the colonisers, we were the colonised.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Oh, come on!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- They imposed various structures within our country, from which one can argue, we are still suffering from it today. And unfortunately, our post independent leaders carried on with those structures. Madam Speaker, just because there are certain things that are done in the UK, it does not mean that it should be done here too. If you listen to their debate, Madam Speaker, you do not have the Opposition spokesperson every time breaking it down into some ethnic breakdown analysis.

They do not do that, the Opposition does not go around asking in the House of Commons, can you give us the ethnic breakdown of our civil service? They do not ask, can you give us the ethnic breakdown of our scholarships? They do not ask those questions. Maybe they need to listen to their proceedings. They do not have that but unfortunately, we have an Opposition that is obsessed with that and continuously talk about that. Our history is different, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, I now give the floor to the Honourable Mataiasa Niumataiwalu.

Climate Vulnerability Assessment  
(Question No. 05/2018)

HON. M.A. NIUMATAIWALU asked the question upon notice:

Can the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises and Communications elaborate on the actions needed to be taken after the results of the Climate Vulnerability Assessment on Fiji was released in Bonn, during COP 23? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy Public Enterprise and Communications.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises and Communications).- Thank you, Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the Honourable Member for this question.

Madam Speaker, the Climate Vulnerability Assessment is very critical for those Members who may not necessarily know about the Climate Vulnerability Assessment, it is important for defining the risks that are posed by Climate Change and provides information to identifying adaptation measures.

It enables practitioners and decision-makers to identify the most vulnerable areas, sectors and social groups within our society. This, in turn, means climate adaptation options targeted and specified contracts are now developed and implemented. This of course is our approach to development and as you know, the National Development Plan, which we will be talking about later on in the week. We will be giving copies of it too to the Honourable Members and is of course, is available online.

This is our approach to development, Madam Speaker. We believe in generating evidence and then using the evidence to logically sequence our developmental agenda, not based on ethnicity or any other consideration. This is the Climate Vulnerability Assessment that was carried out and it was done in conjunction with the World Bank. This also had an impact on our National Development Plan, Madam Speaker, and it was factored into the National Development Plan.

Madam Speaker, what is really interesting and some of the results that come out of it is that, the enormous financial implications in order for us to be able to build resilience in our infrastructure and our people. Of course, using the right technology to be able to ensure that we are able to withstand the now enormous increase in frequency of climatic events.

Madam Speaker, the climatic events, one example is *TC Winston*, we recently had *TC Gita*, et cetera, in this part of the world. There are more insidious implications of climate change which includes ongoing issues, for example, the slow but in fact fast, one may argue, sea level rises. We have already relocated three villages to higher ground. An assessment has been made and there are probably about another 42 or 43 villagers that are subject to being inundated by rising sea levels.

So, what are we going to do about them? What will be the cost implications for these villages? Of course, it is not just about relocating the village itself but it is about sustained livelihoods, whether they are going to be relocated to higher grounds, access to water or access to electricity but also their access to livelihoods is very much an implication which we need to consider.

Madam Speaker, the other point of course is that, we have in this Climate Vulnerability Assessment, an innovative analysis and methodology. For example, it investigates the impact of climate disasters on poverty and inequality, so that the Fijian Government can make risk management decisions that are informed by poverty impact and not just based on aggregate cost. You seem to be obsessed with aggregate cost in Fiji saying, "oh, what was the cost of that cyclone?" But we need to look at other social implications of a climatic event or a cyclone. For example, we have places in Vanua Levu, where certain areas of the arable land were farm lands, they are no longer farmable because of the fact that salination has increased in those soil. The farmers' livelihood is actually affected.

The Honourable Minister for Waterways, for example, is doing a lot of water management issues in respect of the dams, the waterways, getting the floodgates operating

properly. The Honourable Minister for Agriculture obviously has certain issues that are caused by climatic events because of the change in weather patterns. You may not necessarily be able to plant at that particular point in time. You may need to change the time that you plant. The water levels is going to be made available through the rainy season. It may shift for a change and in fact or may reduce. So these are the sort of assistance that has been carried out and of course it is very important for us to be able to understand the implications of it. Madam Speaker, this assessment carried out by the World Bank envisages that we need about \$9.3 billion over the next 10 years to be able to keep up to speed with the climatic changes that have an impact on our economy.

So, these are some of the issues that have come out of that. Now, of course I can elaborate further given in time. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Biman Prasad?

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the Honourable Minister for those answers, very important. However, as part of the cost, can I ask the Honourable Minister to inform this House whether we have already accessed Green Climate Fund or we are in the process of accessing those funds and what are the possibilities of us getting that as well?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, as highlighted to this Parliament in the Budget previously, that we are the first Pacific Island country to actually access the Green Climate Fund. This is for the water management project that will cost in fact about \$300 to \$400 million over the next five years in the Suva-Nausori corridor. The Honourable Prime Minister signed this in Bonn with the European Investment Bank.

As part of the loan facility, we have about four agencies that are actually involved with that funding. One is the European Investment Bank, the other one is the Asian Development Bank, the Fijian Government and also the Green Climate Fund. The Green Climate Fund has actually given us a grant of about \$32 million. This was the first time to actually get that \$US32 million. Madam Speaker, there are other projects of course that we have to be able to identify and put our submissions in to the Green Climate Fund. One of them of course, as we have highlighted, is the Nadi River Rehabilitation Project, which is actually the right project in respect of that, Madam Speaker.

The Green Climate Fund of course, Madam Speaker, is offering two types of funding now. One of them is grant funding and the other one is soft loan where the interest rate is quite minimal but they want you to partner up with other institutions. Madam Speaker, the other important point is the Green Bond that we have, that enables us to get funding for climate adaptation projects.

As we have highlighted now, it is in the public space, we are the only emerging economy in the world to actually issue Sovereign Green Bonds. The third in the world after Poland and France, and we are also now working on listing our Green Bond on the London Stock Exchange. We are looking forward to the CHOGM (Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings) where the Honourable Prime Minister will actually launch the Green Bond at the London Stock Exchange.

We are working very hard behind the scenes at the moment in respect of the prospectus that needs to be developed. It is an enormous stride for us but the reality is that the \$9.3 million is something that we should not shy away from. We need to be able to be smart as to how we are going to access financing for those projects and be able to raise particular types of revenues. We should also be able to tap into organisations such as Green Climate Fund and various other organisations.

His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was here on Friday, also had a team of people with him who are actually interested in respect of funding projects relating to climate issues. We met on Friday and we hope to forge some new relationships. They are not grants but they will look at viable propositions in the same way the Honourable Prime Minister had talked about the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation, where there is a sustainable manner, for example, giving accessibility to Fijians who may not be able to access assistance under medium to long term, be able to be connected to the national grid.

So, they need access to those kinds of renewable energy sources too. So, there is a multiplicity of agencies that we can work with and we just need to be smart and position ourselves. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Salote Radrodoro.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you Madam Speaker, and I am sure we all agreed to all that has been alluded to in terms of the threats brought to us by climate change. In the previous Pacific Women Parliamentary Meeting in the Solomon Islands, the countries highlighted the great difficulties each country encounter in trying to access funding, for example, through Green Climate Funding. It also adversely affected the achievement of our SDG goals, if we do not handle climate change.

My question to the Honourable Minister is that, do you agree that there should be a Parliamentary Standing Committee to specifically focus on climate change or an *ad hoc* Committee and if not why not? Thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER. - Honourable Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, we do not believe there needs to be a Standing Committee on that because the fact of the matter is we have a very good team. We have been given the Presidency of COP23, led by the Honourable Prime Minister. We have made enormous strides and also in respect of not just internationally but also domestically. The Honourable Prime Minister will also be issuing a Ministerial Statement in respect of Climate Change and our activities in COP 23 and we will get to hear more about it. We have got a very able team, we have got a Climate Change Division Office in the Ministry of Economy led by the Director of Climate Change, Mr. Nilesh Prakash. We have the announcement of Chief Negotiator of COP 23, Mr. Luke Daunivalu. We have the Minister for Agriculture, Honourable Seruiratu, our climate champion and Minister for Agriculture who is also mainstreaming it.

We also have the Ambassador, Mr. Deo Sharan, of course in Europe, who is also our climate ambassador. Apart from that, we have a lot of people planted within the respective ministries who are actually carrying out the implementation of these projects that relate to

climate change. The accessibility of the Green Climate Fund has always been an issue and that was also raised in Bonn about the bureaucracy that is related to Green Climate Fund. They have also been asked through the Presidency, the Honourable Prime Minister, who has also made a number of statements in respect of streamlining the fairly onerous bureaucratic requirements in Green Climate Fund and we believe some changes had been made.

The issue of course about climate change funds is that most of the countries, who are in what we call the developing world, in particular, small island states and small states itself, are more focused on the access to adaptation finance as opposed to mitigation finance. The adaptation finance essentially is to be able to adapt to climate change whereas mitigation finance is more in respect of the emissions, adopting a smarter technology. One of the challenges that has been brought to the forefront, has been through the Fijian Presidency of COP23 about raising the awareness about adaptation finance.

In fact, the pledge that was made in Bonn, through the Presidency of the Honourable Prime Minister, the ADF funding has in fact increased. Pledges have been made by the developed countries, but that is apart from the fact that we also have the Green Climate Fund that has been made available too. So, we still hope to see some changes in that respect, but the reality is that the Climate Change issue is something that is the round of the course work now for all the governments throughout the world.

Similarly with the Fijian Government, whoever is in Government will need to deal with this matter through the Government implementation in streamlining processes of mainstreaming climate change.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Ratu K. Kiliraki?

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Whilst we presented the climate vulnerability assessment of Fiji in Bonn, there is a local component to the local community in terms of mitigating and adaptation. My question is, whether the awareness and the policy in place effective to mitigate and adapt to climate change because we see indiscriminate developments, especially the mangroves? You see in Nawi in Savusavu, Veisari and you see littering has been an issue previously in the papers. My question is, how effective is the awareness towards the assessment?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the Honourable Member has raised issues more to do with environmental impact assessment. As we know that all developments in Fiji, they need to be approved by the respective agencies. One of them of course is to have the Ministry of Environment carrying out the EIA. Obviously, there should always be a balance between, for example, development needs and also an economic development creation of jobs, and also some people may argue about is the environmental standard that we need to maintain.

Madam Speaker, I think the EIA assessments need to be thoroughly implemented. In instances where they have not been implemented, we need to ensure that they are implemented, stop work orders have also been issued. In respect of the Savusavu issue that is raised, there is another question coming up this week specific to that, and I am sure the Honourable Minister responsible will be able to actually answer that question in respect to that.

Madam Speaker, the other point that the Honourable Member perhaps un-wittingly may have raised is that things like, for example, mangroves have a higher rate of sequestration. In other words, mangroves and sea grass areas, have a much higher ability to suck in carbon. There are certain plants, for example, oceanic life that actually sucks in carbon a lot more. There is obviously a need to be able to, if for example, there are certain mangrove, forest, et cetera, that is affected, we need to be able to ensure or the question we need to ask is; are we actually replanting and how are we replanting?

Are we for example stopping illegal harvesting of mangroves? As you know, for example, one of the issues that we had raised in the budget the last time is to provide a Government allocation in this budget for a gas cremation services and we have already got funding allocated for that. We are talking to some of the *Hindu* crematoriums or organisations because as you know, *dogo* (mangrove) is used in the Central Division for cremation purposes.

So, if we have that demand for it, then obviously there will be a pressure on perhaps the resource-owners and there is a temptation to be able to cut that down and sell it and get a revenue for it to be able to facilitate a particular service. In the Western Division, cremation is done using rain tree timber which is different. In order to be able to fix the problem, of course, people need to be cremated and they need to go through their rituals. So, we have made an allocation in the budget to provide for gas driven crematoriums.

We are talking to some of the Committee members to be able have that launched in Nausori very soon. When we look at climate change, Madam Speaker, and how we are able to address this issues, we simply cannot look at the issues in one fold. It is a multifaceted issue. We need to be able to be systematic about how we address this issue.

Similarly, for example, if people have argued that if the biodiversity is being affected because people may actually have a need. There are so many people, for example, if you are talking about environmental impact, people are selling small sized crabs and fish by the roadside. Why are they doing that? Awareness has been created, but sometimes people are actually doing it for economic reasons. We need to be able to address that economic issue of theirs and that is what holistic development is all about. They are being addressed of course, EIA must be implemented and carried out and the Ministry of Environment is addressing those issues too, Madam Speaker. I urge the Honourable Members, if people are actually breaching laws to bring that awareness to us, bring that awareness to the actual respective Ministry or the Honourable Minister responsible for it and they will be able to address it.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Members we do not have enough time to accommodate another question and therefore I will now adjourn the sitting for morning tea. We will resume at 11.30 a.m. Thank you, Honourable Members.

The Parliament adjourned at 10.53 a.m.

The Parliament resumed at 11.31 a.m.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Members, you may be seated. We will continue from where we left off and I now give the floor to the Honourable Howard Politini to ask his question.

Ministry's Disaster Risk Management Response  
(Question No. 6/2018)

HON. H.R.T. POLITINI asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management and Meteorological Services, in line with the recent *Cyclone Gita* passing through parts of our country, can the Honourable Minister update the House on what the Ministry has developed for Disaster Risk Management and responses?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the Honourable Member for the question. Before I answer the question, Madam Speaker, let me just say two very important things, in regards to disaster responses in Fiji. One, we wish to remind all Fijians and all Honourable Members of this House, that we are still in the cyclone season. Let us hope and pray that we will be spared during this season and 1st November to April is our cyclone season.

However, I wish to state, Madam Speaker, that we have been following the trends lately in Fiji. A lot of times during the cyclone seasons, we focus only on cyclones and hurricanes. But with the changing weather pattern, this is not only for Fiji but in most of the vulnerable small island states, particularly in the Caribbean, one thing that is common now is the damage done to vulnerable countries through heavy, intense rainfall. The weather pattern has changed significantly.

This morning, we have been talking about Climate Change and the trend now is, we will have extreme hot weather and then followed by intense heavy rainfall as well, within a very short period of time. For example, in January, Toge in Ba was flooded and most of the crops within the river banks in Ba were damaged. The rainfall they received in a few hours, Madam Speaker, was the equivalent of about three months rainfall, and this is the trend now in Fiji and most other tropical countries. So, let us not only focus on cyclones, let us also be wary of the devastating effects of flooding because the weather pattern has changed significantly.

Disaster Risk Management responses and of course specifically on *TC Gita*, Madam Speaker, again any Disaster Risk Management response is guided by two parent documents for Fiji: Disaster Management Act of 1998 and the Disaster Management Plan of 1995. Madam Speaker, both these documents are currently under review for various reasons but I will not go into detail on that. Disaster Response Management, Madam Speaker, is usually divided into three main segments. Firstly, pre-disaster, a period before disaster, secondly, during disaster and thirdly, post-disaster.

For pre-disaster, Madam Speaker, the focus is on weather information and warning systems, training and advocacy, capability and as well as capacity development. And of course,

if we recall *TC Gita*, the warning was consistent because there were two Tropical Depressions developing during that period. *Tropical Depression 07F* and *Tropical Depression 08F* respectively and these were occurring from the 1st to the 9th of February and of course we had *TC Gita* on the 9th of February.

I thank the National Weather Office, likewise the Disaster Office, the respective arms of Government and of course our partners. The various stakeholders were responsible for continuing with the dissemination and preparing the communities as well. I will not go into the details. But during *TC Gita*, the local communities were well prepared based on the information that they received. One thing that we applauded during *TC Gita* was the communication that we had prior to and of course even during and after *TC Gita*. It was still possible for us to communicate with the communities particularly the *Turaga Ni Koros* in the respective villages of the affected islands. There were evacuation centres as usual, activated and in Ono-i-Lau, in the four villages we had eight, in Vatoa we had one evacuation centre and of course Kadavu as well. About 1105 people were moved into these evacuation centres. Again, these are very positive lessons learnt. Most people are now very responsive and taking seriously the advice that they are given by moving earlier to the safe evacuation centers rather than regretting later, prior to the cyclone hitting these various communities.

On our post-disaster response, Madam Speaker, in the first few days, we were communicating with the communities while we were waiting for the Australians. Through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, they assured us that they will provide us some aerial photographs for us, that they did provide. We also sent the team on the 18th, on two Government vessels, the *MV Iloilovatu* and *MV Vatulawa* to take the team over and with the relevant stores for assistance. We focused mainly on our water needs because water sources were in great demand. There was a need for them to have some food and to carry out the damage assessment as well. The damage assessment, Madam Speaker, has been completed and it is now with the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and will be submitted to Cabinet shortly. Thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- I would like to ask the Honourable Minister about the strength of the structures of these houses. Not so much the schools, but before we used to have the hurricane relief that comes to the villages to build the house that can withstand the strength of the cyclones. Now after *TC Winston*, with no plans, with no structural plans, with no supervision, how can the Honourable Minister assure the nation that those structures can withstand cyclones?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Madam Speaker, I hope the Honourable Member is aware that the Ministry conducted training ...

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- .... for various communities for them to be able to build the homes that were damaged.



Madam Speaker, the security and safety of all Fijians is the primary concern of any Government and, of course, we ensure that homes are built to standard.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- However, we also should be aware of the fact that most of the homes in rural Fiji and, of course, elsewhere the cost is borne by the homeowners and in some instances, Government does subsidise.

Madam Speaker, wherever Government subsidises, homes are built to standard. If you go to Vuma Village, the only three homes that were spared out of Vuma Village during *TC Winston* was the three that was built by Government, so we ensure that homes are built to standard. Not only that, Madam Speaker, through the Disaster Risk Awareness Communities that we have, we ensure that they are given copies of plans that they should use when they are constructing their homes and, of course, with the assistance of those who had been trained, we ensure that homes are built to standard. This is something that we will always continue because the safety of the people is again, always of importance to Government. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Alvick Maharaj?

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- Madam Speaker, food security is always a concern post any disaster. Can the Honourable Minister explain what action has been taken with regards to the food security needs of the community after *TC Gita*?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Madam Speaker, I mentioned that on the 18th when the Government team departed on the two Government vessels, Government Officials together with Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and all the key stakeholders were deployed to the Lau Group.

Madam Speaker, the priority islands for us were Ono-i-Lau and Vatoa and, of course, we were prepared as well to economise and also ensure that the needs of those communities are met before the final damage assessment and the recommendations from the teams are submitted and approved as well.

There was a 10 men team from the Ministry of Agriculture that was divided into respective groups. Amongst these 10 men, eight were from Crop Extension and two from the Livestock Sector. We also took about 6,000 cuttings of *kumala* and, of course, we took with us vegetable seeds as well. We are targeting the first three months and hopefully, in these first three months if the people do plant the *kumala* cuttings and they have started planting, as well as the vegetable seeds, it should be enough to complement whatever little that has been spared during *TC Winston*, Madam Speaker.

Likewise, we have looked at the welfare of the animals as well, particularly on livestock because most of the Lau Group they do complement the livestock market, particularly the *magiti* at FMIB. So, we have also sent in the veterinary officers or livestock officers to go and ensure that the animals are also vaccinated and, of course, given the necessary attention as well.

For Ono-i-Lau, Madam Speaker, some initial assistance on ration has been given to them as anticipated by us and based on the advice given to us by the *Turaga-ni-koros* but any further assistance will depend on the recommendations of the Team under the Commissioner Eastern Division and, of course, through the Permanent Secretary for Disaster Management and Meteorological Services.

Of course, we have tasked the Extension Officer in Lakeba to follow through with the replanting programme, just to ensure that cuttings and, of course, the seedlings that they had been given are planted and looked after to complement their food security needs. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to the Honourable Viliame Gavoka.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, in times of cyclones like *TC Gita*, the local community would invariably seek shelter in a community hall which becomes the evacuation centre. Can Government make an effort to ensure that across this country, that every community hall used as an evacuation centre meets the engineering specifications and are structurally sound? We cannot be President of COP23 while our people are running for shelter into a structure that could be blown away by cyclone. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Madam Speaker, the Honourable Member is not aware that we have already gone into this well after 2011 and if you go to Narata Village today, you will see the first purpose-built Evacuation Centre ever in the history of Fiji.

(Applause)

HON. SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to the Honourable Politini.

HON. H.R.T. POLITINI .- Supplementary question, Madam Speaker. Honourable Minister, you mentioned that the Disaster Management Act is currently under review, could you please elaborate on why and who is responsible for this review?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. These are two very important documents for Government. One is time, it has evolved and, of course, these documents need to be reviewed because some of what is in the Disaster Act 1998 and the Disaster Management Plan 1995 are no longer relevant, Madam Speaker.

A few key areas of concern and thus, this leads to the need for us to have this review. Firstly, in the current Act of 1998, it only involves natural disasters, it does not involve man-made disasters. We have just had an oil spill in Suva Harbour lately because of a sunken ship and this is an example of man-made disasters which we cannot avoid as well and, of course, needs to be looked into. So this is one of the key areas we need to address in the Disaster Act.

Likewise, Madam Speaker, the involvement of all the stakeholders, one key component that is missing from the current Act is the role of local government. We only have a national government and we have communities and, of course, the various Government agencies. If we go

to Sydney and Wellington, the City Councils they have their own emergency plans and, of course, this is an area that needs to be looked into as we move into the future because under the Paris Agreement and under the Sendai Framework, there is one important component of both these documents is about resilience cities and resilience cities are good as well because of our macroeconomic resilience when it comes to post-disaster issues.

I have talked about those two documents, Madam Speaker, again, this is one of the reasons why we need to also review the Disaster Act of 1998 and the Disaster Management Plan 1995 because new documents have come into play which Fiji has ratified as well. Madam Speaker, 2015 was a very important year in the global calendar where we adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and, of course, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and, of course, the Paris Agreement for climate change adaptation and mitigation. So this is one of the major reasons too why we need to review the Act.

Lastly, the need for us to involve other stakeholders as well. I have talked about local government but it is practised all over the world now, Madam Speaker, the active involvement of non-government stakeholders and most of them, together with Government, are organised into clusters and this cluster arrangement, we have about eight clusters under the various thematic that also need to be included together with their role and their lines of communication in the Disaster Act; thus the reason for us to have the review. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.-Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Ratu Kiliraki.

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Given that we are still addressing *TC Winston's* post disaster issues, and now this year, *TC Gita* came passed the Southern Lau, how do you prioritise in terms of addressing the post disaster issues in these two cyclones? Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Madam Speaker, again, this is not new. We were still recovering from *Cyclone Thomas* in 2010 when we had *Cyclone Evans* in 2012, and we were still recovering from these two when we had *TC Winston* again in 2016. This is not new, but the beauty of what we are doing, Madam Speaker, is, since 2012 with *TC Evans*, we have started going into post-disaster needs assessment.

The post-disaster needs assessment leads us to recovery frameworks, so *TC Winston* has already been taken care of through the recovery framework. And of course, subject to the detailed assessment that will be provided by Commissioner Eastern and his team, again, there will be a plan for *TC Gita* in the respective islands and communities involved. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to Honourable Alvick Maharaj.

Status of Dredging works - Qawa and Labasa Rivers  
(Question No. 07/2018)

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Minister inform the House on the status of dredging works that are being carried out at the Qawa and Labasa Rivers in Vanua Levu, and how effective it has been in mitigating flooding for Labasa town and the communities? Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister for Waterways?

HON. DR. M. REDDY (Minister for Waterways).- Madam Speaker, I want to thank the Honourable Member, Honourable Maharaj for asking the question.

Madam Speaker, dredging is an internationally practised approach to excavate or remove sediments and debris from water bodies; lakes, rivers, river mouth, to ensure that there is a smooth flow of water out of those water bodies, so that during periods of rain, the water in the water body, whether it is river, lakes or creeks do not overflow and affect side-by communities or villages or also affects schools or roads, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, dredging has been undertaken at Labasa, Vanua Levu, precisely Qawa River, Labasa River and Wailevu River because these three rivers have been identified to be having that major problem of getting sediments from upstream and therefore are subject to frequent flooding with medium to very high intensity rain and flooding in nearby communities, causing lot of damage, Madam Speaker, not only to households, but also to the agricultural sector in these areas.

Madam Speaker, we were lucky to have two dredges with us, one in Nausori, at the Luvuluvu Depot and one in Labasa. These dredges are about 40 year old, Madam Speaker, so we are looking at retiring these two dredges this year. There is an allocation of \$3 million in the 2017-2018 budget to purchase a new dredger but we have looked at piling that amount to undertake immediate dredging work by outsourcing for Sigatoka and Penang, which I am going to explain later on this week or next week, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the Labasa Town and surrounding farming areas have been frequently subjected to flooding and this is not only in the town area but also the households and also the agricultural sector in Vunimoli, Korotari areas.

Madam Speaker, the Labasa River, Qawa River and Wailevu River dredging works actually began in 1998, where a total of 11 kilometres of dredging works were involved in the first phase to open up the heavily silted river mouths to access free flow of water.

We are looking at, Madam Speaker, since then, 80,000 cubic meters of silt and soil were removed from the river beds in these three rivers. Last year, the dredger was under repair and this year about two months ago, we commissioned the dredger again after repair works. We are looking at dredging the Qawa River, the Labasa Navigational channel and also if we could move the dredger to Dalega area to dredge Dalega River as well. We have identified these three areas which has a negative expiratory on the nearby plains.

Madam Speaker, looking at the next two months or so, to dredge a total of 80,000 cubic meters of silt and soil from these three rivers will assist in these areas of mitigating any overflow of water from the river into these communities; the Qawa Flats, Soasoa Flats, Basoga, Vunivau, Namara, Nagai Village, Nacula Village, Wasavulu Village, Nailawa, Nasekula Village, Wailevu Flats and Tabadola Flats.

Madam Speaker, since dredging works in 1998, there has not been any major flood in Labasa area. There were minor floods but since 1998, there was no major flood. Prior to that, there were some major floods which resulted in loss of lives as well, Madam Speaker. So, we now began again in the process of ensuring that we dredge and increase the frequency of water flow in these three rivers, which are the three major programme activities. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Prem Singh?

HON. P. SINGH.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the Honourable Minister inform this House, when will dredging works commence in the red zones of Rakiraki, Ba and Nadi Rivers, given their frequent flooding?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, I would urge if the Honourable Member can wait, I am looking at a full ministerial statement on the Nadi River alone on Monday and for Rakiraki, the tender has been out to undertake major dredging works there.

The Rakiraki issue is two-fold. Firstly, we need to first clear the entire Penang River of debris. Secondly, once that is done, then we will need to not only deepen dredge but also widen it. We are looking at the tender, it has been closed. We are also looking at the processing with the Ministry of Economy and giving out to potential earthworks to undertake the dredging works. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Niko Nawaikula?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, the issue for Qawa is not so much siltation and therefore dredging, but it is pollution from none other than the Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC) mill. Could the Honourable Minister assure this House that there will be no more pollution within the Qawa River?

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, my feeling is that the Honourable Member does not have the latest information. There is no more discharge from FSC on to the Qawa River. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Bulitavu?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is a supplementary question to the Honourable Minister, given that he had said that there are no more major floods in Labasa since 1998 but the people there in Labasa were affected by major floods in 2003 and also in 2006. Even the former Commissioner Northern, the Minister for Agriculture can testify to that, but given the heavy rain for the last weeks and even the overflow in the Labasa River, Wailevu River and even other rivers that have affected some drains, rice farms and affected the economy in the north. Madam, what is the report received by the Honourable Minister, given the adverse weather we received last two weeks for the rivers that he has mentioned, which has not affected the community as he is alluding to?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, there was no flooding due to overflowing of these three rivers.

HON. MEMBER.- There was.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- No. The flooding that was seen, for example, in Siberia Road is due to some drainage issue. Probably, the Siberia Road issue will be dealt with maybe by next week.

Approval has been given to do a proper drainage of this Siberia Road which has been a problem for the last 10 years, Madam Speaker. With rain the Siberia Road becomes inaccessible to foot traffic as well as vehicles so we are going to fix that next week, it will be fixed forever, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, on the progress of dredging, we are looking at finishing the Qawa River dredging may be at the end of this week and then we will move the dredger to the navigation channel, and then from there to Dalega River, and then we will have to bring it to the shipyard and probably we might have to retire them. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Your last question, Honourable Parmod Chand?

HON. P. CHAND.- Madam Speaker, we talked about flooding and the Honourable Bilitavu asked about Siberia. I would like to ask the Honourable Minister whether he said that next week, they will do it, but that is what I have been hearing it from the last 10 years.

There are two places that always get flooded, that is, Vunimoli and Siberia and they have no relation to the dredging of the river, but related to the drainage problems in Siberia and in Vunimoli. During heavy downpour the road is closed for, at least, a few hours. What can the Honourable Minister do about this?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, I am not aware of the flooding in Vunimoli but I can assure the Honourable Member that I have seen the flooding in Siberia, I have visited the place. The process is that we need to get an engineer to scope the work, that has been done, quotations have been taken and last week the PS had approved for the work to be undertaken for Siberia.

For Vunimoli, Madam Speaker, I would want to see what the issue is so that our staff can visit and examine whether it might be an FRA issue or .....

HON. P. CHAND.- I can resend those letters to you.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Do that, thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to the Honourable Ruveni Nadalo.

Marrakesh Partnership for Global Climate Action  
(Question No. 8/2018)

HON. R.N. NADALO asked the Government, upon notice:

As the High level Champion for COP23, can the Honourable Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management and Meteorological Services explain to this House the role of the Marrakesh Partnership for Global Climate Action?

HON. SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to the Honourable Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Developments, Disaster Management and Meteorological Services to have the floor.

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI.- A point of order, Madam Speaker. A clarification on the Marrakesh Partnership for Global Climate Action or is it Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action. In the question, the last four letters is spelt as 'kesh' but should be 'kech'. In that respect, Madam Speaker, whether this question can go forward or you wait, give another....

HON. SPEAKER.- I think, putting spelling error aside, there is an understanding that we are referring to the same partnership.

Honourable Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development, Disaster Management and Meteorological Services, you have the floor.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU (Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development, Disaster Management and Meteorological Services).- Thank you, Madam Speaker, whether it is Marrakesh or Marrakech, climate change affects everyone.

(Laughter)

We are all in the same canoe.

Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for the question.

The Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action was launched in 2016 during the COP22, of course, in Marrakesh, Morocco. Madam Speaker, let me give a bit of background to this.

The decisions emerging from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties in 2015 recognised the important role that the non-State or sometimes called the non-party stakeholders play in achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement. I think this is an important thing that we should all know, especially all the Honourable Members of this House.

In the implementation of the Paris Agreement, we have parties and we have the non-Party stakeholders. COP is Conference of the Parties and Parties are those that ratified the Paris Agreement and they include our national government. In Fiji's instance, Government ratified the Paris Agreement and Government has committed to reduction of global warming through the lowering of carbon emission through its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). And this morning, we have been talking about mitigation, adaptation and, of course, resilience. Mostly the big components of our NDCs is mainly on mitigation because more

mitigation now means lesser adaptation in the future and, of course, we are small emitters, but we still have a role to play and we have made our commitments.

Likewise, Madam Speaker, when it comes to the implementation of the Paris Agreement, it is not only the Parties that are going to implement the Paris Agreement, majority or most of the emission, Madam Speaker, comes from the non-Party stakeholders. I will give examples - from businesses, the private sector, from cities and towns, the various industries that I will talk about later on, so the recognition of the role that the non-Party stakeholders play in the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Madam Speaker, what led to this? Let me say, particularly as from a Small Island Developing State that it was from the insistence of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) that led to Decision 121, if I remember correctly, of the Paris Agreement which mandated the Presidencies of the COP to appoint what we call the Global Climate Champions. This year, it is between Fiji and Poland and it is the role of the Global Climate Champion, Madam Speaker, to coordinate the efforts of the non-Party stakeholders in the implementation of the Paris Agreement. But let me talk more about the Marrakesh Partnership itself.

I mentioned, Madam Speaker, that in the implementation of NDCs, it is not only parties nor governments, most of the implementation is from the non-Party stakeholders.

Majority of the emissions, Madam Speaker, that occurred within our environment takes place from the non-Party stakeholders and, therefore, to ensure that there is a coordinated approach and, of course, guided by a framework that was established in November 2016 during COP22 and the two Global Champions the were from France and Morocco, Madam Speaker, have put in place the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action.

Madam Speaker, as I have alluded to, the Marrakesh Partnership gives effect to the agreed outcomes in the Paris Agreement by providing a structured and coherent framework for the UNFCCC process to accelerate the scale and pace of climate action. UNFCCC, Madam Speaker, refers to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Madam Speaker, the Marrakesh Partnership involves national and subnational governments, civil society, financial institutions, investors, cities, local communities and, of course, the private sector. The Partnership provides a platform for sharing experiences, working together and multiplying effects, and this includes assistance in the delivery of finance, technology and capacity building.

Talking about subnational governments, Madam Speaker, a perfect example would be the United States. The Federal Government has decided to come out of the Paris Agreement but that legally will take place after four years but yet, the subnational governors are still committed to the Paris Agreement and that is one beautiful aspect of the non-party stakeholders involvement in the Paris Agreement and they have an initiative called the "We Are Still In" initiative that is still focussed on the implementation of the Paris Agreement. But to cut it short, Madam Speaker, I will just touch on the seven thematic areas.

What are the seven thematic areas?



When you look at emission all over the world, particularly amongst the non-parties stakeholders, about 80 percent of the emission comes from these areas, and I will end here, Madam Speaker.

One is on land use, and of course agriculture, we have made some progress, the Honourable Prime Minister will speak on it today. But agriculture is a problem but of course it is a big solution as well. So, land-use covering agriculture, forest and other land use are covered under land use. And of course, we have oceans and coastal zones, and we have water, human settlements, transport and energy. So these are the seven thematic areas that contribute about 80 percent of the global warming and this is where the focus of Marrakesh partnership is. And they are organised into coalitions and initiatives, and of course under the framework and the Secretariat of the UNFCCC, guided by the champions, we are working towards the commitment of parties in the NDCs and how it can be enhanced through the participation of non-parties stakeholders. That is basically what the Marrakesh Partnership for Global Climate Action is all about, and you would have seen it in the Bonn Zone, and of course the Honourable Dulakiverata in Germany; the involvement of the non-party stakeholders.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Just before we continue, a clarification on the spellings, Marrakesh is the English spelling. Marrakech is the French spelling.

Honourable Nawaikula, you may speak.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.-The Honourable Minister referred to the Government's commitment to reduce carbon, but we all know that one of the programmes, the reforestation was a total waste, and the Honourable Minister for Forests will explain to us why plants were wasted in Nabou.

(Honourable Members interject)

So my question is, Madam Speaker, given that that was a total failure, what other programmes that the Government has to reduce carbon?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Madam Speaker, the simple answer to this is just ...

(Inaudible interjection)

... grab a copy of the NDC and that is where all Government's commitment in terms of lowering carbon emission is ....

(Inaudible interjection)

We are limited for time, I will not go into the details.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Renewable energy. Clean transportation. Read before you come and make comments on the floor. Read and make common sense and come.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Ashneel Sudhakar.

HON A. SUDHARKAR.- Madam Speaker, a supplementary question to the Honourable Minister. What initiative, if any, has the COP23 Presidency done to bring the Marrakesh Partnership for Global Climate Action into Fiji and the region?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, one of the major challenges that the champions undertake is shifting from north to the south in terms of technology, in terms of implementation all towards the implementation of the Paris Agreement. But, Madam Speaker, again this is an important one for us here in the region. As I have stated it was on the insistence of AOSIS in which we the small island developing states are members of, that the champions be established to look at the pre-2020 period.

And of course, Madam Speaker, the COP23 Presidency, to answer the question by the Honourable Government Whip, what the presidency has done is to mirror or bring that framework to the region. Last year in July, we had an event organized here in Suva called the Climate Action Pacific Partnership (CAPP) and that was organised along the framework that I have mentioned - the Marrakesh Partnership for Global Climate Action and this is something that is being replicated in other regions as well. The Climate Action Pacific Partnership was convened in Suva last year in July. I have talked about Climate Action as the agenda of non-party stakeholders, but since it was the first for the region, COP23 Presidency decided to bring our leaders as well, the Pacific Leaders.

Last year, as we were gearing towards the pre-COP and of course the main COP as well in November. So, that was last year, and this year in the calendar that the COP23 presidency has come up with. There will be a technical officials meeting, probably next week here in Suva where we will continue in the seven thematic areas that I have talked about and how the Pacific islands are doing all these, Madam Speaker, and of course the leaders will come later in July again to look at regional issues along the lines of the Marrakesh Partnership. So that is the initiative that the COP23 Presidency has undertaken in bringing the Marrakesh Partnership to the region and of course us contributing towards further reducing global warming and carbon emission.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Ratu Kiliraki?

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

One of the tasks of the high level champions is to engage with all stakeholders, and voluntary launch initiatives to increase the ambition, transparency, alignment with the objective of the Convention and aims of the Paris Agreement and SDGs.

My question is on SDGs. We struggle with the database information on SDGs. In line with the primary question, what can the Government say about addressing the SDGs?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Madam Speaker, Government has come up with the National Development Plan, and of course that is very much aligned to the SDGs and I can only

talk on specific issues on climate change. But even here locally, I am not responsible for initiatives within Government, because the champion is an appointment that is for the wider global community.

I am not answerable to our local stakeholders, but of course through the partnership, I am organising non-party stakeholders. I would suggest to the Honourable Members on the other side of the House to read our National Development Plan because it is very much aligned to the SDGs of the United Nation.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to the Honourable Dr. Brij Lal.

HON. DR. B. LAL.- Supplementary question, Madam.

HON. SPEAKER.- Supplementary question.

HON. DR B. LAL.- Can the Honourable Minister explain the Pacific NDC hub which is part of the Marrakesh Agreement. Its strength is to help South Pacific Island nations.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Madam Speaker, again the major focus of the Paris Agreement is about lowering global emissions, and I have said that Government has committed to that through our Nationally Determined Contributions.

As part of the Marrakesh initiative last year, we are thankful to our partners, particularly the German Government, Australia, New Zealand and lately the UK as well, they have come in to our assistance. Next week as well, Madam Speaker, we will convene the first meeting for the Pacific Regional Hub as it is called and this is something that was born out of the Marrakesh Partnership event, the Climate Action Pacific Partnership that was organised in July last year.

What is the NDC Hub all about? Madam Speaker, very briefly, I will not go into the details. It is about reviewing our current NDCs, implementing our NDCs and its about enhancing our NDCs because in Article 2 of the Paris Agreement, it not only focuses on holding global warming to 2 degrees but hopefully as we hold, we will also pursue further towards 1.5 which is consistent with what we the Pacific demanded under the Suva Declaration.

So next week is the first of the regional NDC Hub. We have talked this morning about accessing finance through GCF and we hope that through this Pacific Regional NDC Hub, they should be able to assist us to get our NDCs better organised, so that we can easily access the funding that comes with it, not only on mitigation, but most importantly on adaptation and resilience as well, which is a big priority for Pacific Island countries, including Fiji. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- We will now move onto the next item on the Order Paper. I now call on the Honourable Jiosefa Dulakiverata to ask his written question.

Written QuestionsLand Developed by the State - Intended Purpose  
(Question No. 9/2018)

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Minister advise this House on acres and sites of land developed by the State and the intended purpose of each site of land development?

HON. F.S. KOYA (Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism, Lands and Mineral Resources).- Madam Speaker, I would probably have to cut down a small forest to answer the question that the Honourable Member is asking. The way he has actually framed it, it does not have any specifics, parameters, and the way it is asked, does he want me to go back to the Colonial days, does he want me to go back ten years, what is he actually asking? It does not contain any specifics, Madam Speaker and I would gladly answer it so long as he just gives me some specifics.

HON. SPEAKER.- It is a written question.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- It is a written question, he can re-frame it, it is entirely up to him, Madam Speaker, but as it is right now, I will turn up here with 300 million pages.

The way he has framed it, Madam Speaker, it says, "Can the Honourable Minister advise this House on acres and sites of land developed by the State and the intended purpose of each site of land development?" How far does he want me to go; back to the Colonial days, ten years ago, five years ago, two years ago or one year ago? Which particular site? There are no specifics.

HON. MEMBER.- 1874.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- 1874 maybe, Madam Speaker, I am not sure. So, if he does that, then I can properly answer him.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. We will appreciate your concerns of this question but the question as is was approved by the Business Committee.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Yes, Madam Speaker, but I do have the right to ask for specifics, if I may.

HON. SPEAKER.- In your written question, I am asking that you must answer this question as is.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- I will provide a written answer later, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Minister.

Environmental Exploitation  
(Question No. 10/2018)

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Minister for Local Government, Housing and Environment, Infrastructure and Transport inform this House on the number of complaints received by the Ministry in relation to environmental exploitation by various firms operating around Fiji, and what actions (if any) were taken in respect of each complaint to remedy the matter?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Acting Minister for Local Government, Housing and Environment, Infrastructure and Transport).- Madam Speaker, we will provide the written answers as provided for under Standing Orders.

HON. SPEAKER.- The time for Questions is over, however, we do not have enough time to accommodate the next Ministerial Statement and we will therefore adjourn for lunch.

We will adjourn sitting until 2.30 p.m.

The Parliament adjourned at 12.23 p.m.

The Parliament resumed at 2.30 p.m.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, we are now into Ministerial Statements.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

HON. SPEAKER.- The following Ministers have given notice to make Ministerial Statements under Standing Order 40:

- 1) Honourable Prime Minister and Minister for iTaukei Affairs, Sugar Industry and Foreign Affairs;
- 2) Honourable Minister for Defence and National Security; and the
- 3) Honourable Minister for Waterways.

Each Minister may speak up to 20 minutes. After each Minister, I will then invite the Honourable Leader of the Opposition or her designate to speak on the Statement for no more than five minutes. There will also be a response from the Honourable Leader of the NFP or his designate to also speak for five minutes. There will be no other debate.

I now call on the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister for *iTaukei* Affairs, Sugar Industry and Foreign Affairs to deliver his statement.

#### Fiji's Presidency of COP23

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Madam Speaker, I rise to inform Parliament of the progress we are making in our Presidency of COP23, and the ongoing UN Climate negotiations that continues until we hand over the Presidency to Poland in the month of December.

I want to begin with the detailed briefing of where we now stand, having formally assumed the Presidency of COP23 in November, 2017, and of how we intend to proceed for the remainder of our term until we formally handover to Poland at COP24 in December.

Madam Speaker, a great deal has been achieved by the Fijian COP team since I last briefed the House, and I am sure that this will be universally welcomed because we have not only carried out the role of COP President with distinction by moving the United Nations (UN) Climate Negotiation forward, we have also succeeded in branding COP23 in a distinctive Fijian way.

Many of the legacy items from our Presidency will continue to benefit Fijians and the citizens of other vulnerable nations for decades to come. They include the historic agreements on agriculture, the importance of women as well as indigenous people and communities in the climate battle, a global scheme to provide access to more affordable insurance for climate vulnerable nations and a recognition by many in the global community through Fiji's Ocean Pathway initiative of the inextricable link between climate change and the health of our oceans, something that is obviously of critical importance to Fiji, our Pacific neighbours and indeed every nation on earth. They are just some of the many initiatives that emerged from COP23 in Bonn in November and I urge Honourable Members of the House who have not already done so, along with every Fijian to read the full list of achievements on our website, COP23.com.fj (<https://cop23.com.fj>).

Madam Speaker, a number of global climate initiatives we are spearheading through our Presidency are actually carrying Fijian names. The Fiji momentum for implementation decision underscores the importance of making the Paris Agreement of 2015 operational as soon as possible with the implementation guidelines to be finalised at COP24. These decisions also means that there will be a stock-take on pre-2020 action, in addition to the *Talanoa* Dialogue, which I will return to shortly.

The Koronivia joint work on agriculture strengthens the potential for climate adaptation and mitigation programmes to safeguard our food security. The Fiji clearing house on risk transfer connects vulnerable nations with information about access to affordable insurance and the Suva Dialogue on loss and damage will provide a new important opportunity to raise awareness about the particular vulnerability of small island developing states and of course to explore options for mobilising expertise, technology and support.

Madam Speaker, all these are new part of the climate action agenda across the world. They are giving us a global reputation as a motivator for more decisive actions way beyond our relative size and influence and every Fijian can be very proud of our achievement. For most of these initiatives is the 2018 *Talanoa* Dialogue that would be a centrepiece of COP24, when Poland takes over the COP Presidency from Fiji in December, but Fiji will continue to preside over the *Talanoa* Dialogue in partnership with Poland even after our former term as COP President has ended.

Madam Speaker, we are all aware that *talanoa* is a word used not only in Fiji but in Tonga and Samoa to describe a very Pacific way of decision-making by consensus and agreement, of sharing stories and best practices with the view to reaching decisions that are inclusive, devoid of figure pointing and are in the common good. At Fiji's urging, the global community has embraced this concept as the way to reach agreement on what needs to be done to increase climate ambition. For each nation to do more, to reduce the heat trapping emissions of greenhouse gases that are causing global warming and because the *talanoa* concept was Fiji's idea, we will continue to lead and shape that dialogue moving forward and in a way that no Pacific nation has ever had the opportunity to do before.

Through the *Talanoa* Dialogue, the grand coalition for climate action that has always been at the centre of Fiji's COP Presidency is marshalled into action and in a manner that is inclusive, respectful and recognised as the fundamental truth that Governments alone cannot solve this crisis. So, we are bringing together all the members of the coalition, Governments at every level, nations, states and cities plus civil societies, the private sector and the scientific community in a genuine engagement with one overriding purpose; to urgently raise ambition to reduce carbon emission through our Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). In short, to get the world to do a lot more and in the shortest possible timeframe.

Madam Speaker, we must all work with maximum determination to reduce net carbon emission to zero as soon as possible. As I keep saying, time is running out and only by pursuing this course in tackling the fundamental cause of climate change can the global community avert catastrophe. We need as a matter of urgency to use all our ingenuity and resources to speed up the transition from dirty energy like fossil fuels to clean energy like hydro, solar and wind.

We must scale up investment in the emerging technologies such as battery storage that will enable us to significantly reduce carbon emission which is still providing us with the power we need to run our homes and economies, and we must make this alternative clean energy sources more affordable and more widely available throughout the world and especially in the developing countries.

Madam Speaker, all this is essential if we are to place the world on track to meet the more ambitious target of the Paris Agreement of 2015 which is to limit global warming to no more than 1.5 degrees celsius above that of the pre-industrial age. I have made the 1.5 degrees target, the signature of my Presidency of COP23 and my fellow Pacific leaders are with me on this. I repeat, we need the co-operation and assistance of every nation, every Government and State, regional and city level, all branches of civil society and the private sector, scientists and ultimately every single person on earth - maximum ambition, maximum action.

Madam Speaker, the *Talanoa* Dialogue takes our Presidency in a new direction this year and it must not fail. Fiji and Poland have been entrusted by the global community to ensure that this process delivers and we look to our Polish partners at COP24 to work as closely as possible with us to make that happen.

Madam Speaker, we also needed to refine our own COP23 team to make the changing demands of our Presidency and to meet that challenge, I have decided that we need to make a change to the Fijian delegation at COP, to have the most integrated and dedicated team possible to maximise the chances of this dialogue succeeding. That is why I have chosen Ambassador Luke Daunivalu to assume the job of Chief Negotiator, replacing Ambassador Nazhat Shameen Khan for the remainder of our term.

I have already expressed my thanks to Ambassador Shameen Khan for her role in making our COP Presidency the success it has been so far, but I have come to the view that because we are now moving to the new face of our Presidency with the *Talanoa* Dialogue, we needed a rejuvenated team unquestionably willing to work with all members of the COP23 Presidency team.

Ambassador Daunivalu has the personal qualities and experience to shape the consensus for more ambition the world needs to reach. He is a team player and I am convinced that he has the leadership skills, patience and perseverance that can bring our then coalition together for this mission and give the *Talanoa* Dialogue the best possible chance of succeeding.

I have asked Ambassador Daunivalu to co-chair our Presidency Dialogue with the team - United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), a high level Champion - Minister, Honourable Inia Seruiratu. While the final dialogue will be between parties to the Paris Agreement, it is crucial to effectively communicate the views of non-party stakeholders and scientific institutions with whom the champion has been working. Madam Speaker, I am sure that every Member of this House joins me in congratulating Ambassador Daunivalu on his appointment and wishing him the very best. His new role is critical not just for Fiji but the whole world and especially the more vulnerable nations and I know that he will have the prayers and best wishes of all of us as he leads this process forward. Madam Speaker, we thank Ambassador Nazhat Shameem Khan for her service and turn our eyes to the future.

Our Presidency is in the steady and capable hands of people, the calibre of our Climate Champion the Honourable Inia Seruiratu, our Climate Ambassador, Ambassador Deo Saran, Luke Daunivalu, now our Chief Negotiator, the Attorney General and Minister responsible for Climate Change, Honourable Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum and the head of COP23 President Secretary, John Connor and of course, I, as President. And behind them is a very effective group of Fijians and advisers from here and overseas, all of them experts in their fields. Madam Speaker, the members of this team, Team Fiji at COP have already demonstrated their value by earning us the international reputation we now enjoy. Of a small country, once again punching above its weight and leading the world in the fight against climate change.



Madam Speaker, God knows how our own lives depend on it. Lives of Fijians and billions of people living in more vulnerable parts of the world like our own. As we all know, we recently commemorated the second anniversary of *TC Winston* and again pause to remember the 44 Fijians who lost their lives. It is the loss of those people and many others in previous natural disasters in Fiji that is foremost in my mind as COP President. Not the speeches in the UN and other global forums, however, worthy about the need for something to be done about climate change that the need to link the global with the local, to turn those deliberations into practical action on the ground, and for me to be able to look at the families of those who were killed by *TC Winston* in the eye and honestly tell them that I am doing everything I can to make sure that their loved ones did not die in vain.

Madam Speaker, every Honourable Member of this House will join me again today in sending our condolences and love to the families of those who died and to reaffirm our determination to do everything in our power to address the underlying threat that took them from us. That is the essence of our COP Presidency, and I know that I have the overwhelming support of the Fijian people as we complete this mission.

Madam Speaker, we cannot rest as a nation until we effectively build our resilience to events like *TC Winston* and we owe it to every family who still mourns, every Fijian who lost their homes, every student who was deprived of a classroom to exert maximum pressure on the global community to take effective action. We know because we have seen it with our own eyes that those cyclones are becoming more frequent and more intense. We know that along with these extreme weather events, the seas are rising and more communities are being forced to relocate. We know that our agriculture and consequently our food security is threatened as we lose precious arable land to salinity and drought.

At sea, we can see that our coral reefs are rapidly deteriorating because of increased levels of acidity and bleaching. Madam Speaker, every Honourable Member of this House, every Fijian will be alarmed by the prediction that our reef would be extinct by the end of the century. Imagine no more coral within the lifetime of someone born today. It cannot happen and it must not happen or all of what we will be as Fijian and Pacific leaders will be lost. A part of us, Madam Speaker, will die. As I keep saying, climate change is the greatest challenge humanity has ever faced and we owe it to ourselves and to future generations to act with urgency and decisiveness to reverse this process once and for all.

Madam Speaker, there is an old saying “God help those who help themselves” that is also why we have taken the COP Presidency, we are not sitting in Fiji playing victim, we are going out into the world to play a leading role in confronting this challenge head-on. Assembling some of the best mind that we can muster at home and linking them with experienced outsiders including some of the most talented people in the climate field in the world.

Madam Speaker, our COP campaign has provided us with definitive proof of the value of a small nation like Fiji partnering with others, whether it is partnering with Germany to enable us to preside over COP in Bonn in the first place or partnering with those non-Fijians in our team who have not only enhanced our skills but have assisted our fundraising. These members have a wider support, they have helped us gain access to US\$26 million dollars in donation from a range of countries and organisation which as COP President, I again want to acknowledge and thank today.

The Asian Development Bank, Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, The Climate Works Foundation, the European Union, Estonia, France, Germany, the German Development Agency (GIZ), India, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Khartan, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United Nation Development Programme and early in our presidency the United States of America.

Some of these nations, Madam Speaker, have also contributed in other ways, Germany with its generous hosting of COP23 in Bonn plus the EUR\$110 million that Germany has contributed to the insurance resilience, global partnership. They have given EUR\$110 million which would bring an affordable insurance and other financial protection to millions of vulnerable people around the world. Britain has contributed another £13 million to this important COP 23 legacy initiative and Fiji is also very grateful for that.

Madam Speaker, this long list of nations and organisations are truly Fiji's friends, and I seek your indulgence to please ask the House to acknowledge their generosity in the usual manner, thank you.

(Applause)

Madam Speaker, I also express Fiji's thanks to the many influential individuals who are supporting us, people like Governor Jerry Brown of California who is my special COP23 envoy for State and Region. The former Mayor of New York and Climate Benefactor Michael Bloomberg, and the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, Patricia Espinosa. Then there are individuals and foundations who are coming forward to assist Fiji with COP legacy projects of our own, tangible benefits of our Presidency to enhance the lives of ordinary Fijians.

We are making it a special priority to bring clean, renewable energy to as many Fijians as possible and one of those partners is of course the actor Leonardo Dicaprio who has a foundation in the United States, the Leonardo Dicaprio Foundation of the United States which is working with us on a plan to bring solar power to Fijian communities because of their isolation cannot be connected to the national grid in the medium and long term. I again salute this great actor in humanitarian for his generosity and vision and look forward to welcoming Leonardo Dicaprio in Fiji to launch this project. I also call on other men and women of means in the world to follow his example.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I trust that I have given Honourable Members and through them the Fijian people a better idea of the enormity and complexity of the task we took on as COP23 President. Also, a better appreciation that with the sound leadership and management of the process we are providing, we have risen to that challenge.

Fiji has had the honour of being the first Small Island Developing State to be entrusted in the global community in presiding over COP, and I am pleased and proud to report to you that we are making a success of the task and we will continue to do so. We now have a fully integrated team that communicates well and trust each other. We now have a team that is fully committed to ensuring the success of the *Talanoa* Dialogue and all our legacy projects, and we are well equipped to lead the climate actions struggle all the way to COP24 in Poland and beyond when the snow will be up to here. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(Applause)

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call on the Honourable Leader of the Opposition or her designate to speak in response.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Madam Speaker, I rise to reply on behalf of my party and reply to the statement made by the Honourable Prime Minister.

Madam Speaker, at the outset, let me say that we cannot be proud of our Presidency of COP23 when *TC Winston* and the aftermath of it is still in shambles. We cannot be proud of hobnobbing with all these big names in the global community when our students are still studying in tents and people are still living in make shift homes.

Madam Speaker, I spoke this morning I asked the Honourable Minister for Agriculture about the Evacuation Centres. During *TC Gita*, I saw TV images of the island of Ono-i-Lau and where the *Category 5 Cyclone* was heading, and I know that invariably they would run to a community hall which is the Evacuation Centre.

I know that a lot of these evacuation centres are not engineering specific in terms of their strength. While we hobnob with the rich and famous, think of our people who at the height of a Cyclone 4 or Cyclone 5 are cowering in a structure that is not structurally sound. I would urge the Government to spend its time to make sure that every evacuation centre in Fiji is up to engineering standards. You do not have to build new ones, you just have to strengthen those community halls that were built by the SDL Government...

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Not built to stand.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- ...and which were poorly stopped by the regime and Fiji First Government. You do not have to build new ones, all you need to do is strengthen them. It was a very sad day for Fiji when this Government stopped the construction of community halls which have now become the refuge for people in the villages. We can be sitting in our nice homes and think of what people in the outer islands who would be relying on a structure like that.

Madam Speaker, we are far from impressed with the Presidency of COP23.

Madam Speaker, listening to delegates who went to COP23, the feedback we got was that 80 percent of what they stressed was to rely on indigenous way of doing things. There are ways that we have protected our planet in our own special way. Here in Fiji, we do not place our indigenous ways as highly as it should. We do not want to recognise International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 169, we do not recognise the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP). So, how can we go out there and talk about this *meke*, the *Bula Spirit*? The *Bula Spirit* is not *meke* and *yaqona* ceremony. The *Bula Spirit* is much deeper than that and you are not doing your part in strengthening the *Bula Spirit*.

Here we talk about the *Talanoa* session. In the last two, three years Madam Speaker, not once has the Honourable Prime Minister called the Honourable Leader of SODELPA or the Honourable Leader of the National Federation Party for a cup of tea for a *talanoa*. Here we are *talanoaring* with Mr. Jerry Brown with Arnold Schwarzenegger, et cetera.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- (Inaudible)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- As we said before, Madam Speaker, in Fijian we normally say ‘*tekivu mai Jeruisalemi*’, start from Jerusalem. A lot can be done for climate change, Madam Speaker, if we start properly from here. Not makers of champion, and be our own making and go out there and try and fly the flag but it is not supported by the people of Fiji.

Madam Speaker, I would have liked the Honourable Prime Minister to take on the economy of these vulnerable nations. We are known as the small nation but big island states. Our resources, our tuna, our land should be commanding the proper prices in the world market. There should be a leading initiative on the part of Government, Madam Speaker because the economy is more important.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call upon the Leader of the National Federation Party or his designate to speak in response.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Thank you Madam Speaker. I thank the Honourable Prime Minister for his statement. Madam Speaker, I congratulated the Honourable Prime Minister when he assumed the Presidency but I also at that point in time pointed out a number of issues for which the Honourable Prime Minister criticised me here in this Parliament.

Madam Speaker, COP23 is and was a great opportunity for Fiji to work *talanoa* spirit. Unfortunately Madam Speaker, that *talanoa* spirit as rightly pointed out by my colleague has not been displayed by the Honourable Prime Minister and the Government side here in this Parliament or elsewhere where we want a dialogue.

However, Madam Speaker, I am not going to talk about that today. I will concentrate on some specific areas and it may help the Honourable Prime Minister as COP Chair and others who are negotiating to undertake some of these issues.

The Honourable Prime Minister talked about the legacy, Madam Speaker, and I want to talk about the legacy and the ability to progress. Some of the critical issues for these small developing states, and one issue, Madam Speaker, that I think was not pursued vigorously by the negotiating team were the loss and damage, and all we achieved from the negotiations is a dialogue to be held in April or May 2018.

In fact, the desire for this item to be placed on the Agenda of SDI subsidiary body for implementation and eventually the COP, Madam Speaker, was not realised. On other issues, Madam Speaker, if you look at the issue of finance which probably was one of the most important things for the Fiji Presidency in terms of where Fiji and other Pacific Island countries are put in place and this of course relates to Article 9.5 of the Paris Agreement which requests developed countries to report to developing countries on the floors of climate finance.

In fact, Madam Speaker, I understand the African Group held up the proceeding at one of the plenaries with the expectation that Fiji could use its power of mediation, but I think Fiji struggled to do so. The other issue, Madam Speaker, of course was the issue of agriculture again this was initiated by the African Group some four years ago and this is of course an on-going issue.

Let me just also talk about the decision to put the NDC hub in Fiji. Madam Speaker, that is a positive outcome but in any case Fiji was always the front runner in terms of the strategic location in the Pacific. This may or may not have anything to do with the COP23

Presidency. A quick perusal of NDC Implementation Roadmap Madam Speaker, of course this was completed by expensive GGI consultant imported from Europe.

Basically, concentrated on the theoretical frameworks of MRB financing but more importantly on the power sector. The Fiji Urban Water Supply and Waste Water Management Project, we have been hearing about since 2015, Madam Speaker. This is a loan with an injection of \$31 million grant as pointed out by the Honourable Attorney General this morning from the GCF. The European Investment Bank agreed to loan us a further \$70.8 million in addition to ADB's \$153.2 million incumbent upon Fiji's own core financing contribution of \$150.1 million.

Madam Speaker, there are a number of issues in terms of the GCF contribution to the Fiji project. In any case, it was merely masking an existing ADB project and we have yet to take full advantage of the huge amounts of funds available for the allocation under the GCF. Despite the active involvement of the Ministry of the Economy, I do not think we have advanced to a state where we are going to progress and get the amount of funds that we are looking at Madam Speaker.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- (Inaudible)

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Above all, Madam Speaker, we look forward to the tabling of accounts in terms of the Trust Fund in this Parliament as a matter of transparency in the future. Thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now call on the Honourable Minister for Defence and National Security to deliver his statement.

HON. RATU I. KUBUABOLA.- Thank you Madam Speaker, the Hon. Prime Minister, the Hon. Leader of Opposition, Hon. Ministers, Hon. Members of Parliament, Ladies and Gentlemen: I rise this afternoon to update Parliament on the outcomes of the recently completed Melanesian Spearhead Group Leaders Summit which I was appointed to deputize for the Honourable Prime Minister and the Honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Leaders' met for their 21<sup>st</sup> Biennial Summit from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> of February, 2018 at the Stanley Hotel in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea with the theme, "*Strengthening Trade and Sustainable Development for an Inclusive Melanesia.*"

Madam Speaker, this meeting began with two events. The first one of which encompassed the traditional handing over ceremony of the MSG Chairmanship from the Solomon Islands Prime Minister Honourable Rick Houenipwela to the Papua New Guinea Prime Minister Honourable Peter O'Neill who would be holding the chairmanship for the next two years.

Madam Speaker, the Leader's Retreat as well as the Plenary Session were chaired by the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea Honourable Peter O'Neill and attended by his colleagues the Prime Ministers of Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, and also the New Caledonia's spokesman for the Fronte de Liberation Nationale Kank et Socialiste (FLNKS). Also represented at the summit were Associate member, the Republic of Indonesia and Observer, the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP).

The leaders acknowledged the leadership of the group by Solomon Islands and the former Prime Minister, Honourable Manasseh Sogavare whose dedicated leadership together with the current Director General took the MSG out of the difficult situation it was in, in 2016 to where it is now.

It was noted that the revamped secretariat would need durable and innovative leadership, and that Leaders were confident that Papua New Guinea would provide that as the secretariat attempted to serve the needs of members in a more efficient and effective manner in the next two years.

Madam Speaker, in the plenary, the leaders approved the revised criteria for Observers, Associate Members and New Membership Guidelines.

Following this approval, Madam Speaker, the leaders then agreed on the decision that the application for Full Membership by the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP) be referred back to the secretariat for consideration against the revised guidelines for observers, associate membership and the new Membership Guidelines.

Also endorsed by the Leader's, Madam Speaker, was a report of the MSG Ministerial Mission to New Caledonia and the Action Plan for the FLNKS 2018 Self Determination process.

Madam Speaker, leaders took note of the Report on the work of the Secretariat through the reforms and financial report and acknowledged the work that has been done.

At this juncture, Madam Speaker, I wish to state for the record the tremendous and commendable effort that our very own Ambassador Amena Yauvoli as Director General of the MSG has done within a period of one year in turning around the organisation with the implementation of strict financial management, organisational reforms, and reviews.

Madam Speaker, the MSG Secretariat was in the red for about VT50 million or FJ\$25 million and when we met in Papua New Guinea about two weeks ago the MSG's Secretariat is now in surplus. The financial turnaround that he has managed to achieve with the Secretariat within a short period of time is truly commendable and needs to be acknowledged and should augur well for the secretariat in its future undertakings. In view of this, the leaders went ahead and endorsed the work programme and Budget of the MSG in the next two years.

Madam Speaker, discussions also centred on the adoption of the:

- a) Finance Ministers Meeting;
- b) Culture and Arts Ministers Meeting;
- c) Police Ministers Meeting; and
- d) Foreign Ministers Meeting.

Madam Speaker, the leaders had also directed the Director General of the MSG to engage in a more active manner at regional and global levels in order to advocate and advance MSG sub-regional issues, interests and priorities. Overall, the leader's amongst other issues adopted the report by the Foreign Ministers meeting as well as the report presented by the Director General.

Madam Speaker, prior to the Leaders' Summit, Senior Officials and Foreign Ministers had also met to discuss a number of policies, work programme and budget for the coming two years for the MSG which required the endorsement of leaders.

Madam Speaker, on the bilateral front, I was also honoured to call on the Honourable Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea Honourable Peter O'Neill on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> February to reassure Fiji's support to PNG in the upcoming Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). During this meeting Madam Speaker, Honourable O'Neill confirmed that Leaders from the Pacific would be invited to attend the APEC that is on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of November this year.

Madam Speaker, also in this meeting, Prime Minister O'Neill had made known his wish to visit Fiji this year to address Parliament if possible on PNG's preparations for the APEC summit in November. This APEC Honourable Madam Speaker, we are expecting about 10,000 delegates to attend this meeting. During the meeting, Honourable Prime Minister O'Neil also discussed the land swap arrangements for Fiji and PNG chanceries and also our residence and the 2018 referendum in New Caledonia. It was an opportune occasion for us to advance certain issues with the Honourable Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea.

Madam Speaker, also along the margins of this meeting I had the opportunity to meet with my counterpart the Papua New Guinea Police Minister, Honourable Jelta Wong, and we discussed potential capacity building in terms of peacekeeping and riot control between our two Police Forces. The Honourable Minister Jelta Wong also acknowledged Fiji's readiness to provide security assistance in the upcoming 2018 APEC meeting in Port Moresby. Following this meeting, an MOU on the Police Cooperation between Fiji and Papua New Guinea was signed on Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2018.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I would like to acknowledge and express my gratitude to our Honourable Prime Minister for allowing me to deputise for him at the MSG Leader's Summit. Thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call on the Leader of the Opposition or her designate to speak in response.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to respond to the Ministerial Statement by the Honourable Minister for Defence on behalf of the Honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs in regards to the MSG meeting.

Madam Speaker, first of all, we would like to congratulate the Honourable Prime Minister Peter O'Neil now being the Chair for the MSG for a two year term, and also the Director General Mr. Amena Yauvoli, one of ours who has been manning the Secretariat.

First of all, Madam Speaker, the Opposition also pays tribute to previous governments too in participating in the MSG. Fiji was first led into the MSG during the SVT Government and UGP Coalition time under the leadership of the former Prime Minister Major General Sitiveni Rabuka. That outlook has provided the platform for other successful governments that have come after that and even improving our trade within the Melanesian group.

We thank the MSG for also allowing the application for membership under a newly approved guideline for West Papua, and on the basis of indigenous rights and probably both were

represented West Papua and also Indonesian representatives were also at the MSG in regards to that issue, but that application has now formally gone through the process.

The other issue Madam Speaker, probably the other resolution from the meeting was supporting the secretariat to put their differences aside especially Fiji and Papua New Guinea and Fiji, addressing those issues with Papua New Guinea in terms of the rules of origin of liberalisation of goods and services, allowing free flow of goods into the region. We thank the trade within the group that has allowed Fiji to be a participant.

One of the resolutions that was passed during the meeting, Madam Speaker, was the involvement of an engagement with New Caledonia under the Melanesian Free Trade Agreement to be verified in an immediate future given that in New Caledonia, there are Kanaks who are part of the Melanesian grouping but due to French sovereignty over New Caledonia, but the MSG has also resolved the MSG group to trade freely with goods and services to New Caledonia.

Also, the other undertakings, Madam Speaker, in regards to the other things that the Director-General would undertake through dialogue. I am further requesting member countries to participate in dialogue and working together in the sub-regional issues and other issues in regards to their international community.

Those are few things from this side of the House, and as I have already said, that we have got the experience of the Honourable Minister for Defence attending this meeting as a former diplomat and also a former Minister for Foreign Affairs and to fill in the shoe of the Honourable Prime Minister on this occasion. I think the nation is in good hands with the Honourable Minister for Defence and probably I would say that the Government should consider at least reverting this portfolio for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs back to the Honourable Minister for Defence.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- He is in capable hands, he has got relationships in the region and also internationally, which gives him as the best person on the other side of the House to hold that portfolio.

On the other hand too, Madam Speaker, given that we are also talking about national security and also his talks with the other counter parts, if the government can consider for the Department of Immigration to revert back to the Ministry of Defence. We thought that it be aligned to the mother ministry to allow the Minister to perform his duty diligently. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Sort out your problem first.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call upon the Leader of the NFP or his designate to speak in response.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the Honourable Minister for his Ministerial Statement. I must admit that I was initially confused when I saw the title of the Ministerial Statement on Trade and Sustainable Development coming from the Minister for National Defence. As my colleague said, we know he is experienced in the area and we appreciate a statement from him.



However, Madam Speaker, the MSG has struggled financially for a while and I am glad to hear from the Honourable Minister that, that problem is out of the way and hopefully the MSG as a group can now concentrate on the theme which the MSG Leaders Forum had of “Strengthening Trade and Sustainable Development in an Inclusive Manner for the whole of Melanesia”.

With that, Madam Speaker, itself, I think poses many challenges. One of course, as pointed out by the Honourable Member from this side of the House, is the issue of West Papua and including the West Papuans within the MSG as associates or observers. I think that impasse will continue as far as the MSG is concerned because Indonesia is now an associate member and Indonesia provides a lot of funding to the MSG as well.

Madam Speaker, under the MSG, we welcome the Trade Agreement. As we had in the past, there have been issues with Papua New Guinea in terms of our trade. I think we need to look at the MSG Trade Agreement and perhaps provide more transparency and accountability in terms of what we are doing here, from the point of view of Fiji in terms of increasing our export. I would also go to the extent of suggesting that we need to look at some kind of short term incubation for some of our SME exporters. Madam Speaker, right now, only the large exporters are able to benefit from the markets within the MSG group.

Many of the products, Madam Speaker, and I think the Government has talked about increasing agriculture export. A figure of \$100 million has been put forward and to achieve that, Madam Speaker, we need more attention, more transparency and accountability in terms of trade and how we can promote some of the non-sugar export crop sectors. It is also important to find out whether we can increase our exports in that area within the MSG countries.

Madam Speaker, despite the positive picture painted by the Honourable Minister with respect to the MSG and its vision for strengthening trade and having inclusive sustainable development, I think there are lots of issues that need to be resolved; not only to finance it but the strengthening of the secretariat itself would lead to or give the ability, resources and the capacity to the secretariat to allow it to deal with the MSG members and push some of these issues like trade and inclusive bill of money in a more integrated manner, then what we have seen in the past. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, I now call on the Minister for Waterways to deliver his statement.

#### Statement - Ministry of Waterways

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, Honourable Prime Minister, Honourable Leader of Opposition and Honourable Members of Parliament: thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to speak to you all on the Ministry of Waterways.

Madam Speaker, in keeping up to the changing global trends in the water sector, issues of climate change and taking into account other national policy reforms, our Honourable Prime Minister last year created a new ministry, Ministry of Waterways. Announcement of this was made during the 2017-2018 Budget Address by our Honourable Minister for Economy, Honourable Sayed-Khaiyum along with financial appropriations.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry is tasked to set out the future direction for waterways sector in achieving sustainable development and management of the nation's water resources for economy-wide benefits and an increase in the availability of water supply and sanitation services.

Madam Speaker, to achieve this, we are tasked to manage our waterways. Waterways have implications for all water using key sectors of the economy, such as the households, agriculture, energy, industry, livestock, mining, environment, tourism and fisheries.

Madam Speaker, the term "Waterways" refers to any river, creek, stream, floodplain or estuary which exists naturally, as well as canals and drains which are constructed by humans.

Madam Speaker, man-made waterways are found in both urban and rural areas. These are water bodies in the urban environment including natural features and those constructed as part of a drainage system. Open unlined drainage channels, closed pipes and concrete pipes also included in urban waterways.

Madam Speaker, unsatisfactory development of the water sector has revolved around inadequate understanding and appreciation of the central role waterways plays in key sectors of the economy, the vulnerability of the economy to climate variability, lack of clarity with regard to the institutional framework for water resources development and management, inadequate, inequitable provision of services and insufficient financing.

Madam Speaker, through the Ministry of Waterways, the urgent actions on land degradation and water catchments, and the protection of marine, lakes, rivers, dams and environment provide important guidance for the implementation of comprehensive and prioritised water conservation and environmental protection measures.

Madam Speaker, this strategic focus of the Ministry on specific roles of various sectors, through clearly defining roles and responsibilities will ensure fair play among the various actors and sectors.

Madam Speaker, Waterways Ministry will endeavour to address cross-sectorial interests in water, watershed management and participatory integrated approaches in water resources planning, development and management. Furthermore, it will lay a foundation for sustainable development of the country by mitigating any negative impact of downstream waterways at the same time, leveraging waterways to support downstream industries.

Madam Speaker, water is a shared common resource fundamental to life and sustaining the environment and plays a central role in the social and economic development of Fiji. It touches all spheres of life including domestic, agriculture, livestock, fisheries, wildlife, industry, energy, recreation and other cultural and socio-economic activities.

Madam Speaker, water is vital for sustainable socio-economic development as a strategic primary input in a pivotal role in poverty alleviation through enhancing food security, domestic hygienic security, hydropower, industrial development, mining, navigation and the environment for sustenance of ecosystems. Availability of adequate water supply of good quality reduces time spent in fetching water, increases health standards and ensures a favourable environment for increased children's school attendance. Use of contaminated water poses health risks to the population as evidenced by the prevalence of water-borne diseases

such as diarrhoea and cholera. It is for this reason, Madam Speaker that SDG6 of the 17 goals clearly stipulates and I quote:

“Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.”

It is against this background that Waterways Ministry will work closely with other ministries and statutory bodies like Water Authority of Fiji to ensure we provide maximum support to Fiji’s growth and development.

Madam Speaker, at both local and global levels, sustainable growth calls for the protection of existing water resources and the development of new resources because they are vital inputs to the nation's productive sectors.

Madam Speaker, as alluded to earlier on, households derived water from our waterways for their consumption, water resources in big and small rivers, the lakes and ground water are being exploited for agricultural production and development. Renewable energy projects such as hydro-electricity projects are also linked to our waterways and so are small scale transportation systems amongst the rural and interior communities.

Madam Speaker, rural and interior communities’ lifestyles are also linked to waterways, to the extent that some even derive their basic food from our waterways. As with land, water is a public asset with access controlled by rights to use, both formal and customary rights.

Water supply, both quality and quantity, is influenced by the management of land. Water resource management is also influenced by the range of legislation and regulations affecting land.

Madam Speaker, water availability is a function of variations in climatic conditions. High temporal and spatial availability in rainfall has resulted in endemic drought in some parts of the country and occasional floods in other parts, and has far-reaching consequences on water resource management.

Madam Speaker, high availability in-flows in the rivers pose very difficult conditions for managing large agricultural production as well as other activities such as providing a steady stream of water to households. It has also disrupted hydro-electricity projects, in Fiji.

Madam Speaker, you would also note from time to time, unplanned settlements and human activities in rural areas which are contributing to significant and environmental degradation, soil erosion and pollution of streams, all of which impact on downstream and in-stream water users.

These settlements, both in rural and urban/peri-urban areas also create unplanned water demands that can impact on other users. However, discourse on and attention to deeper causes of these disruptions, the importance of protecting our waterways never took off, Madam Speaker, with the little concern that were generated during this period subsiding after our waterways started flowing again. Madam Speaker, neither do we have a comprehensive national Waterways Policy and a comprehensive waterways legislation to address these issues.

Madam Speaker, we intend to kick-start this discourse on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, which is UN-dedicated “World Water Day” with the theme this year as “Nature for Water.” At the global

level, the United Nations is arguing that we have a major crisis with regard to water shortage looming ahead of us against the backdrop of climate change.

In the 2018 Report titled “Humanitarian Action for Children”, the UN notes that one in four of the world’s children would be living in areas with extremely limited water resources by 2040 as a result of climate change.

Madam Speaker, the report further notes that within two decades, 600 million children will be in regions enduring extreme water stress, with a great deal of competition for the available supply. The poorest and most disadvantaged will suffer most thus further contributing to spatial inequality.

Madam Speaker, the African region, in particular, is under major spotlight by the UN. A 2017 United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Report titled: “Thirsting for a Future, Water and Children in a Changing Climate”, looked at the threats to children’s lives and well-being caused by depleted sources of safe water and the ways in which climate change will intensify these risks.

The report notes that where demand is extremely high then water stress will increase. The report further states that drought conditions and conflicts are driving deadly water scarcity in parts of Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen. UNICEF anticipates that more than 9 million people will be without safe-drinking water this year in Ethiopia alone, while nearly 1.4 million children face imminent risk of death from acute malnutrition in South Sudan, Nigeria, Somalia and Yemen.

Noting the gravity of the water problem, South Africa’s wealthiest City, Cape Town City leaders have declared 16th April as “Day Zero”, this is the day when the city’s water supply will be turned off until the rain arrives, leaving residents to line up for water rations at one of the 200 points across the city. That is the level of seriousness they are giving to this issue, Madam Speaker. The entire water system will be shut down and they will be rationing water to the residents of this wealthiest city in South Africa.

Madam Speaker, the city’s predicament is not only due to lack of adequate rainfall over the last three years, but also due to poor planning. While the City’s population since 1995 grew by 79 percent, water shortage only increased by 15 percent, we can see a major mismatch between demand and supply, Madam Speaker.

The Middle-East region is also facing severe problems with their water sector with Iran facing a water crisis that is unparalleled in its modern history.

Madam Speaker, the impact of climate change on water sources is not inevitable, we need to act now. So far, I do not think we have had any major discourse on the importance of our waterways, and what we should do to protect it not only for the benefit of our current generation, but also to ensure that future generations can also benefit from water that we derive from the various waterways that we have in Fiji.

Madam Speaker, we cannot continue in this manner. Given the above, the Ministry of Waterways was created to oversee all waterways related-issues. In doing so, the new Ministry has taken over the Land and Water Resource Management Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and the three Divisional Drainage Boards with a much larger mandate.

With this establishment, Madam Speaker, a fully-fledged Ministry, scope has widened drastically, not only in terms of geographical coverage but also in terms of activities and responsibilities.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry will now do the following: firstly, it will have a direct oversight of all waterways in Fiji.

Secondly, it will ensure large rivers and tributaries are maintained so that they do not pose any threat to communities, households and settlements from flooding. Work on this will continue and will include dredging of inland rivers, river-widening and re-alignment and construction of flood mitigation dams and detention ponds.

Madam Speaker, river dredging is by far the largest single flood mitigation project undertaken in the country. It has proven to be a sound investment in disaster-mitigation, reducing the impact of flooding. Properly maintained rivers and drainage networks reduces frequency and intensity of floods, thus reduces flood damage and brings more land under production and investor-confidence for potential developments and economic activities.

Madam Speaker, the following major rivers had been dredged so far:

- a) Rewa River;
- b) Navua River;
- c) Nadi River;
- d) Ba River;
- e) Labasa River, Qawa River, Wailevu River;
- f) Sigatoka (we have finished the First Phase).

Madam Speaker, the following rivers are planned for this financial year (remaining four months):

- a) Sigatoka River 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase; and
- b) Penang River (for which tenders have just been closed).

Madam Speaker, we will continue to maintain the designated irrigation schemes of which are under rise. These include:

- a) Navua Irrigation Scheme;
- b) Dreketi Irrigation Scheme;
- c) Nasarowaqa Irrigation Scheme;
- d) Korokadi Irrigation Scheme;
- e) Droca Irrigation Scheme;
- f) Naruwai Irrigation Scheme; and the
- g) Vunivau Bua Irrigation Scheme.

Madam Speaker, we will continue to maintain the designated drainage schemes. There are 92 drainage schemes that were developed in the 1970s and 1980s to make unproductive land in coastal areas and water-logged areas for productive use for agricultural production.

Increase in population and demand for good available land for sugarcane production pressured farmers and authority to issue land leases for cultivation on sloping lands for sugarcane production which affected soil erosion issues and siltation of waterways.

Fiji's topography and landscape is such that a lot of good land and productive lands are located along coastal areas. These areas are frequently subjected to sea water intrusion and are prone to flooding as well. Seawalls, tidal gate structures and drainage system networks were developed to protect these areas and to sustain for agricultural productive activities. The operations and maintenance of these drainage schemes are being undertaken by the Ministry's via the various drainage boards.

Madam Speaker, previously the drainage boards used to levy farmers to pay for the drainage works, but no more of that is happening now. The Honourable Minister for Economy, two years ago, removed all the levies on farmers and Government has started to provide grant to the Drainage Board, both Operating and Capital to undertake all the drainage maintenance work.

Madam Speaker, from this financial year, the Ministry of Economy has also provided a grant of \$1.3 million that we were using to provide to the Municipal Councils to undertake drainage work within the municipal boundaries. This is a small amount for this year, we will assess the full requirement and then make appropriate budgetary submission for the following year.

Madam Speaker, of the eleven municipal councils, some are making good progress, while a large number of them have not utilised the grant to-date. We intend to meet them to discuss the bottlenecks so that we will quickly address some of these drainage issues within their boundaries immediately.

Madam Speaker, again, for the first time ever, Government has provided for a grant to \$2 million to address the issue of drainage in water-logged farms in the sugar industry.

Madam Speaker, we have also noted that the Cane Producers Association is also providing grant to farmers to assist in drainage provision for water logged farms on a 50-50 cost sharing basis. Our Permanent Secretary has discussed with the Cane Producers Association so that our Ministry can pick up the farmers share of 50 percent and we will utilise the other 50 percent of the Cane Producers Association to expand our programme to full Sugar Industry related farms.

Madam Speaker, we will also assist in the provision of proper drainage in villages and settlements, up to-date all the village drains except those that were not looked after by anyone. Our mandate also requires that we address the issue of any village and settlement they may have regard in drainage. The urgent ones with small expenditure outlay will be attended to over the next three months, while major projects will be factored into the next budget.

Madam Speaker, we will also assist and protect coastal communities from dangers of coastal erosion and salt water intrusion. This will require a major Fiji wide assessment which will be undertaken this year and external assistance would be sought. Madam Speaker, the Ministry will work very closely with the Water Authority of Fiji to ensure waterways are protected and maintained so that safe and uninterrupted drinking water is accessible to its reservoirs for its reticulation system.

Madam Speaker, as I had alluded to earlier on, we have so far taken for granted water from water ways without dealing or addressing how we can protect the waterway so that good quality water comes into the reticulation system. The Ministry's mandate covers urban and rural communities and its work to improve storm management, mitigate flooding and improve irrigation, the Ministry will incorporate aspects of hydrological forecasting, drainage surveillance, realignment, waterways dredging and river embankment management.

Madam Speaker, there are settlements, schools, villages, agricultural farms and roads which are in danger of being swept away due to river bank erosion. Madam Speaker, Nakaikogo River, Vunivau and Navua River and Votua River in Ba, you name it, there are settlements beside these rivers, there are villages beside these rivers, there are roads beside these rivers and these rivers are being washed away.

Madam Speaker, there are coastal communities whose villages are being affected by salt water intrusion as the sea level is rising. We need to urgently take stock of these areas, undertake detailed engineering scoping of these and seek major external support to prevent any further loss. Following this Parliament sitting Madam Speaker, our Ministry will call for submissions Fiji wide and then map out a long term strategy to deal with these issues.

We cannot be reactive in nature to a problem which is increasing in scope, it is quite widespread, and it is becoming a threat to our livelihood. We have to develop a comprehensive database and seek external support, not only financial but also technical support. This is not a small task. We are also looking at how we could manage our water shed. For all the water that comes in the Waterways and then into the water reticulating system is collected at our water sheds.

We are now working very closely with our partner Ministries to ensure how we can collectively or holistically get together and manage our watersheds so that our water ways get appropriate amount of water which can then be utilised for the households, technical sector and various other activities such as hydro dams.

Madam Speaker, we have some very challenging and exciting times ahead of us and we intend to engage some of the best and brightest minds in this technical area of waterways, hydrology and water engineering to protect our waterways for future generations. I am blessed to be appointed to head this Ministry at such a crucial stage of its establishment and I wish to assure you that I will do all my best to deal with the outline issues going forward. Thank you very much Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you Honourable Members, we would now take a short break for afternoon tea and we will have the responses after the break.

The Parliament adjourned at 3.39 p.m.

The Parliament resumed at 4.18 p.m.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, we will now resume from where we left off. I now call on the Honourable Leader of the Opposition or her designate to speak in response.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Madam Speaker, firstly, if I may, before responding to the Honourable Minister's Statement, thank you for your condolences on the passing of the Honourable Ratu Sela Nanovo last month, whom had served the House faithfully for three years. Also, I urge you, Madam Speaker, for his replacement to be made and the Electoral Commission to sit and do its job of making that replacement known to you, Madam Speaker.

In regards to the Honourable Minister's Statement, Madam Speaker, I would like to register the Opposition's support for the Honourable Minister and the Ministry of Waterways as it is important that we face the effects of both, climate change and the 12 years of neglect on our drains, roads, canals, et cetera, that we continue to work together to improve the lives of ordinary Fijians.

Madam Speaker, it is also good to see that the Honourable Minister got this portfolio which was initially under the Office of the Prime Minister. It is heartening to see the top two in the FijiFirst Government release more portfolios that they hold on to, to the more qualified and more experienced Honourable Members of Government.

Madam Speaker, this will reduce the stress and the mediocre delivery of services which we currently experience where there is mainly a big disconnect in what is being said in this House and elsewhere, to what has been delivered, Madam Speaker.

Since the establishment of the Ministry of Waterways in July 2017, we have not received any updates so it is good to see that this update has been given today, Madam Speaker. On what the Fiji Government had planned to do to improve and implement - storm water management systems, mitigate flooding and improve irrigation throughout Fiji. How the Ministry expects to incorporate aspects of hydrological forecasting, drainage surveillance and realignment and something, Madam Speaker, I hold dear to my heart which is the management of waterways, dredging and river embankment.

Also in that regard, Madam Speaker, I bring to the attention of the Honourable Minister, two issues that I would want him to be aware of, as follows:

1. the existence of the scalloped hammerhead sharks which are becoming endangered species, especially in the lower reaches of the Rewa River, Madam Speaker, mainly around the Vutia area which is used as a nursery by these sharks; and
2. to ask the Honourable Minister to consider the types of tax incentives that could be considered by Government for companies to carry out dredging works that has been very slow in being addressed over the past 12 years.

Madam Speaker, I would want to remind the Honourable Minister that the people of Rakiraki Town have once again being asked to brace themselves for more floods today, as a low pressure system creeps across the Fiji group.



Madam Speaker, Rakiraki Town has already been flooded eight times this year alone. I am told that what Water Authority of Fiji does after the flood is clean the streets, pavements and drains. That, Madam Speaker, is what the people do after the flood, just to clean the streets, pavements and drains.

Madam Speaker, over the last 12 years, nothing has been done in this regard, so something revolutionary has to happen with the way we, as a nation, manage storm water and our drainage system.

As the Climate Change COP23 President, Madam Speaker, he must do his work and ensure that all these weather-related difficulties that we are having are addressed by him as we have heard this morning where he was loading his own achievements. So, that Madam Speaker, is what we need to do.

In terms of the activities, we must also begin to see the possibilities of establishing community storm water management clusters in Fiji, who will help look into the reduction of home site runoff and how individual companies, communities and municipalities manage their runoff watersheds.

Activities in the small watershed areas, Madam Speaker, ultimately impact on the larger watersheds. Although many may not think about it, their individual actions affect everyone downstream in the watershed and the fact of the matter is that we all live downstream from someone else. In real, Madam Speaker, we live downstream from Naitasiri. That is a fact of the matter, whether we like or not, and what they do upstream, Madam Speaker, impacts on us downstream.

Madam Speaker, we are looking at the areas that the Honourable Minister has spoken about. We also need to look at the new flood trends, Madam Speaker, the developments that have taken place around the flood-prone areas and the contributions to such disasters, like Nadi River is a prime example, and that the Government should look into the area where they are putting in more developments if there is always flooding when heavy rains happen. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call upon the Honourable Leader of the NFP or his designate to speak in response.

HON. P. SINGH.- Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Minister for his Ministerial Statement and since it is his first Ministerial Statement after being appointed Minister, congratulations.

The advent of flooding in our low lying areas after spates of intense rainfall bring about anxiety amongst our people and I think this august House would be more comforted if we were to have a firm understanding of the systematic approach to the maintenance of drainage system and the management of our waterways, including creeks, rivers and tributaries.

Madam Speaker, particularly if the Budget allocation to this Ministry is limited, hence there is a need for a master plan for drainage within the municipalities in and around and we have seen many ways that the development in the municipalities, the relaxation of the Building Code and the associated relaxations have really caused flooding in areas where it has not

flooded before. Madam Speaker, I take this opportunity to say that after 12 years of neglect, there is a lot of anxiety amongst people without representation of municipal councils and this has have been left in a decaying state for a very long time.

Madam Speaker, it will be a huge task and a catch up to, at least, address this in a short term in terms of mitigating flooding. As certainly alluded to by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Rakiraki township has had 8 events of flooding this year alone, and this has all come about because of the natural water causes that were there and the tributaries and drainage that were linked to it have been either clogged or left unattended.

Madam Speaker, most of the river systems in Fiji as alluded to by the Honourable Minister had been dredged at some point in time but dredging alone could last 10 years and dredging in the Nadi Basin has not taken place and this is where we have a lot of problems. More critically, the change in weather patterns will continue to occur because the global world has not been able to arrest carbon emissions in the shortest possible time.

This august House must also be comfortable about how robust and publicly available environmental impact assessments and how we carry out this critical maintenance. Madam Speaker, it is pointless if we are doing this without protecting our natural environment because climate change dictates that our drive must be based on a precautionary approach not knee jerk reaction approach.

Furthermore, given that the Ministry's mandate includes management of waterways such as creeks, tributaries and rivers, it should be in the Ministry's interest to consult closely with the Ministries with similar mandates and ensure that all our creeks, tributaries and rivers are best maintained in their natural habitat. Therefore, illegal gravel extraction and the impacts downstream should be watched very carefully, especially given our COP23 Presidency role.

With that, Madam Speaker, I urge the Honourable Minister to immediately address these issues which can happen with funding and more allocation in the budget to ease the flooding problem because on a daily basis, continuous rainfall for 12 hours will see most of these informal settlements get flooded, and these are the people who live from hand to mouth and they cannot afford to build another home or provide for themselves or their families, given these natural disasters and man-made disasters, Madam Speaker. So I urge the Government, after 12 years of neglect can we have something going? Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- The next item on the agenda is Consideration of Bills. I have been informed that there are no Bills for consideration, but we do have a suspension motion at this time and I now call upon the Leader of the Government in Parliament to have the floor.

### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Madam Speaker, I move, under Standing Order 6:

That so much of Standing Order 23(1) is suspended, so as to allow the House to sit beyond 4.30 p.m. today.

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Madam Speaker, I second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- I call upon the Honourable Leader of the Government in Parliament to speak on his motion.

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Madam Speaker, as listed in the Order Paper, we have two motions; one by the Honourable Viam Pillay and the other one by the Honourable Lorna Eden. These are from the Reports, as agreed to in the Business Committee that the Reports of the Committees need to be debated in the House. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- The motion is up for debate. Honourable Prem Singh?

HON. P. SINGH.- I rise on a point of order, I just seek a clarification.

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of order.

HON. P. SINGH.- In the Business Committee, we had agreed as per Standing Orders, that Reports that had been tabled in Parliament were supposed to be responded to by the relevant Ministries within 60 days. And in the absence of that, do you still want to continue, because there are some findings in the Reports which really takes the Ministries to task, and whether they had been given this opportunity to respond, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- The Standing Order is silent on whether Parliament can only proceed to debate on a Committee Report after receiving a substantive response from the Ministry. For the information of the Honourable Member, Parliament debated Committee Reports without the substantive response from the Ministries last year. Therefore, I rule that we will proceed with this business.

I now call upon the Honourable Leader of the Government, if you wish to speak any further.

LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- No, thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. The motion is now up for debate, if any. I invite any input to the motion that had just been tabled.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, I seek clarification; do we not ask the Government side to first talk on the motion before we reply?

HON. SPEAKER.- The suspension motion has been seconded.

There being no other comments on the motion, Parliament will now vote. The Question is that under Standing Order 6:

That so much of Standing Order 23(1) is suspended, so as to allow the House to seat beyond 4.30 p.m. today.

Does any Member oppose the motion?

(Chorus of “Noes”)

HON. SPEAKER.- There being no opposition, the motion is agreed to unanimously.

Motion agreed to.

### **CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS**

HON. SPEAKER.- For the information of Honourable Members, there are two motions from respective Chairpersons of Standing Committees; one by the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs and the second motion by the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs.

At the outset, I wish to clarify that the wording of the motions allows Parliament to debate the contents of the Reports. At the end of the debates, we will be voting merely to note the Reports. I remind Honourable Members that once the vote is taken on the motions, it ends there and the Reports will not be debated again in Parliament.

I now call upon the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs to move the motion.

### **REVIEW REPORT ON THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WELFARE, WOMEN AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION 2013 ANNUAL REPORT**

HON. V. PILLAY.- Madam Speaker, I move:

That Parliament debates the Review Report of the Committee on the Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation 2013 Annual Report that was tabled on 9th February, 2016.

HON. V.K. BHATNAGAR.- I second the motion, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now invite the Chairperson of Standing Committee on Social Affairs to speak on the motion.

HON. V. PILLAY.- Madam Speaker, the Honourable Prime Minister, Honourable Ministers, Honourable Leader of the Opposition and Honourable Members of Parliament; on behalf of the Honourable Members of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, I take this opportunity to speak on the motion in regards to the review that was made to the Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation's 2013 Annual Report.

At the outset, the Committee was satisfied with the overall performance of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation in 2013. This was in terms of the Programmes that were initiated to support their mandates on the care and protection of children, provisions of income support, policy intervention for older persons, promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women in our society.

Most importantly, given the number of years that has left the Social Affairs Standing Committee hopes that the issues raised and the challenges faced in the 2013 by the Ministry has been addressed. Madam Speaker, with those few comments, as a Member moving the motion, I thank you for this opportunity.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. The motion is open for debate and I invite input. Honourable Nawaikula?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- By way of contribution, Madam Speaker, I have seen this Report and there are only two recommendations. The first recommendation is that, the budgetary allocation for the Ministry of Social Welfare be increased and then it notes that that has been addressed. The second recommendation is for increase in capacity.

But the point I wish to say is that, I feel that that is not enough and the Committee should do more in looking into the performances or the outputs and the targets for its Ministry and that is not being done here, so basically that is not enough. More so because if you look at the performance of this Ministry in 2013, there were a lot, actually too much that the Auditor-General's Report highlighted which warranted close scrutiny, and if I could just list down some of those.

First, the Auditor-General's Report for that year noted that there were clear indications of lack of human resources management skills in this Ministry. Second, that the funds were not fully utilised, which means in this year there was a surplus, meaning that the Ministry was sitting on its back doing nothing.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- (Inaudible)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Yes, they were not doing anything. There was over \$1 million that they will have to return to the Government and that is what the Auditor-General said. Funds were there to be utilised but was not used, because of lack of management skills, bad management.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- (Inaudible)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- It is here! It is here!

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Poor work performance and laxity in regular supervision by senior officers and that may result in favouritism. Yes, for this Ministry. You want to hear more.

Files not properly maintained and there is a lot of risks in fixes of Government recipients. So, some people were receiving Government assistance twice.

No monitoring, no supervision, missing files, lack of supporting documents in recipient files and there is a lot there.

HON. MEMBER.- Transparency.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Lack of transparency

(Laughter)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Payment of Protection Allowance to people who are over the age of 18 years. There is restriction why you pay these allowances to people below the age of 18 years old but they paid to persons who are over 18 years.

The Ministry does not review the case files regularly for children. Anomalies in Social Pension Schemes; officers responsible for receiving applications did not complete accuracy when

making recommendation or approving did not perform their tasks properly. Anomalies in grants given to NGOs and this year Madam Speaker, the Ministry gave out funds to the Methodist Church, there is one global compassionate, most of these were not acquitted as noted by the Auditor-General.

HON. MEMBER- No accountability.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Non-accountability, that is it.

(Laughter)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- So grants approved in 2013 without acquittals being submitted and then here you see there were only two recommendations, so totally not enough. There is a lot more but I will stop there. The point that I wish to make is that, I really feel that when you look into something or the performance of a Ministry, you do not look only at the annual entries? You also look at the Auditor's Report and the Annual Accounts, as well as their targets and performances. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Parmod Chand, you have the floor.

HON. P. CHAND.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just to begin with in my contribution, there are key findings which clearly report here, "The Ministry had limited capacity to coordinate and drive efforts towards achieving its objective to look after all its social determinants, including all geographical settings in all Fijian communities." The list goes on to four. It also says, "The recommendations highlighted two key areas of concern which included the Ministry's budgetary allocation, the capacity and capability of the Ministry in carrying out its social responsibilities."

Basically, this report says that the Government fails and then I should say the lack of finances. I am reminded of the change of flag where millions of dollars was wasted to no achievement. That money could have gone to the Social Welfare Scheme. The \$9 million for golf, it would have made a big difference in the lives of our poor people who are suffering in this nation, Madam Speaker.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- A Point of Order, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of order.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the Honourable Member says that he is talking about the two recommendations. He is misleading Parliament because the recommendation says that the budgetary allocation of Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation is to be increased, to cater for Ministry's mandated responsibility of its own Fijian communities. Then in brackets it says, "This recommendation has been accommodated by the 2016 Budget", which he did not read and he has just taken that first part to say, "Not enough money has been allocated." He is misleading Parliament. He needs to read the entire recommendation which is Recommendation 1.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. In the absence of your...

HON. P. CHAND.- Madam Speaker, basically this Report was given in 2013 Report and we are discussing it in 2018. So, that in itself is the carelessness and the slackness of the Government. You cannot stand up and tell me that I am misleading Parliament because time has changed, money value has changed, more money should be given every year.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, again, just a point of order; the point of order that I raised was about misleading Parliament about the budgetary allocation. The Honourable

Member is now talking about the timing of the Report. I am not talking about the timing of the Report, I am talking about what we are debating today, the recommendation by the respective Committee pertaining to the Annual Report 2013. We know it is all the 2013 Annual Report and it had observed that there should be an increase in finances which it says, "...has already been accommodated." That is the point he needs to be talking about.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I would urge the Honourable Members that when you read a report, you read it in totality rather than leaving out the parts that do not comply with the original.

HON. P. CHAND.- I am reading from these pages, Madam Speaker, unless I could read from elsewhere. Anyway, I will continue.

One of the findings in the Department of Women says; "Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children." Indeed, it is growing and one of the biggest problem is the Crimes Decree which is brought about today and there are many men and women who walk up to the Family Court and go to the Magistrates Court and have a DVRO, without the next party attending counselling, et cetera, and this causes a lot of problems. I believe some of these things need to be changed.

It also says; "Access to basic services, including health and education." What are we talking about in basic services? Water supply. A woman needs good water supply to wash the dishes, wash the clothes, and bath the children, so it is very very important. But in many areas right in the town of Labasa and its vicinity - in Siberia, Vunika, Tuatua, et cetera, there is water cut all the time. This Report is talking about these things and where is the money for the water supply access of money?

Then we are talking about including health. You go to the hospitals. In the Labasa Hospital, when people come in the morning, they will go back home at 3.00 p.m., or 4.00 p.m., or 5.00 p.m. In the night when they come at about 8.00 p.m. or 10.00 p.m. there are one or two doctors and they will continue to have problems, sitting there, mosquitoes biting them. There are more dengue cases reported from the Labasa Hospital then from outside. So, this is what we are talking about - lack of medicine, blood pressure tablets and diabetes tablets, all

these things are very important. These are basic necessities of life. A good health system, a good hospital, a good health centre is very important.

Madam Speaker, one of the most important thing is this, we need...

HON. SPEAKER.- Order! What you are submitting now should have been submitted to the Committee.

HON. P. CHAND.- We do understand...

HON. SPEAKER.- What you are submitting now should have been presented to the Committee during the Committee Stage. Right now we are debating on the Report that had just been tabled. So, please, be relevant in your response.

HON. P. CHAND.- Thank you. One of the things that has been said here is about Bus Fare Assistance provided for elderly people.

HON. SPEAKER.- Which Report are you talking about, please Honourable Member?

HON. P. CHAND.- Some of the things that I have noted here. One of the things that is being said is about bus fare assistance for elderly people.

HON. SPEAKER.- Which report are you taking about please, Honourable Member?

HON. P. CHAND.- The same report, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Is that the ....

HON. P. CHAND.- It is written here.

HON. SPEAKER.- Is that the Chair's report?

HON. P. CHAND.- Yes. I am using the same report, only a photocopied one. I am making reference to what is put here.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. SPEAKER.- All right, carry on!

(Chorus of interjections)

(Laughter)

HON. P. CHAND.- We are talking about elderly people. It is very, very important that assistance for the elderly people should be provided. What has happened is that many cases have been brought to us where widows, whose husbands had good jobs, they have passed away. They have homes and when they go to Social Welfare, they are told that "you have got a big house, you will not get this welfare assistance." One of the woman asked them, "can I eat this house? I need money, I need food on my table." Simply what we are saying, this budget may have increased in 2016 and 2017, but the effect is not there on the ground. The people are not getting that assistance which they need to get: our elderly people, the elderly women, the divorcees and the single mothers. These are the kinds of situations that are there and the last thing I would talk about is, we are looking here in the report as saying, "bus fare assistance programme for the elderly."

One thing I must make it very specifically clear that this Elderly Bus Fare Scheme, 50 percent reduction over 60 years and to the disabled is given by the bus operators themselves after they lost all the zero-rating VAT refund and then zero-rated came in, diesel duty refund and rebate.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. P. CHAND.-So, Madam Speaker, basically what we are saying is this, when you give something, then you tell that I am giving something, when someone else gives, do not take the glory on yourself.

(Laughter)

It is very important for us to know, but anyway I would suggest that the Honourable Prime Minister should ask his Minister for Economy to get some more money especially for the dialysis people. We are talking about health, we are talking about basic services. Health is very important. Health is the wealth of a nation and our people, they are about eight, every eight hours a day, if I am not mistaken, an amputation takes places in Fiji. So, what are we doing?



In Labasa, Madam Speaker, there are some people that have had problems with amputation, their feet was supposed to be amputated, they came to ....

HON. J. USAMATE.- I think whatever he is mouthing off about is totally irrelevant to what are discussing. He is talking about everything under the sun other than the recommendation that we have here. Can we have a bit of sanity in the House? A bit of sanity so we can talk about - he is just ranting on and on and on. Please let us stop the waffling, let us focus on what is before us.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Point of Order is taken and I totally agree with you. This is why I commented that all these things that you are talking about should have been heard of at the committee stage. But anyway, the floor is still yours, you have that 20 minutes.

HON. P. CHAND.- I will finish off by saying this, Madam Speaker. Government should take out \$5 million for kidney dialysis. It is very, very important. A lot of people are dying because of lack of kidney dialysis and to end, I must say this; when the Ministers stand up to answer questions, they give big ministerial statements then Honourable Usamate does not step up to interject or raise point of order. It is very important to know this.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. P. CHAND.- Do not give a big speech, just give a short answer.

HON. SPEAKER.- Do you have any other comments? Thank you. Chairperson, would you like to present your.....

Oh sorry! Honourable Minister for ....

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to firstly commend the Standing Committee on Social Affairs for the Review Report on the Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation, 2013 Annual Report.

Madam Speaker, we have heard a lot about what the Opposition has to say about the 2013 Annual report for the Ministry. The Year 2013, Madam Speaker, was a year of achievements for the Ministry. In fact, Madam Speaker, I would go so far to say that until the Bainimarama-led Government came into power in 2006, this Ministry has never been much more than an afterthought for Government. Just a very general comparison of budgets here. Madam Speaker, in 2013, the budget for the Ministry was \$32.9 million compared to a \$113 million this year.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Progressive increases in the ministerial budget to cater for the many programmes that the Ministry looks after for Fijians.

Madam Speaker, we have heard today, and I would like to quote this. "Government has failed, Government failed", looking at the two recommendations in the report. How has Government failed?

I would like Honourable Parmod Chand to say that, that Government has failed to the over 25,000 Fijians that are helped through the Poverty Benefit Scheme.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Madam Speaker, the over 4,200 single parents, single mothers, single fathers, who look after their children when they do not have any other source of income, to the 26,300 Fijians over the age of 65 years, who get the Pension Scheme from the Ministry and that for the information of Honourable Chand, Madam Speaker, does not look at whether the house is a nice house, or if they have a television set in the house. All we look for is the age which should be 65 years and above and that the person has no other superannuation or receiving any other form of pension or income. It does not look at the house or anything else for that matter and that assistance is being given to the elderly in this country, Madam Speaker.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Madam Speaker, in 2013, the Poverty Benefit Scheme was introduced to take over the Family Assistance Scheme that existed prior to that. The Poverty Benefit Scheme is targeted specifically at the poorest of the poor in our country. It looks at the income level, the ability to look after a family, and it is on that basis alone that this scheme is based.

Madam Speaker, furthermore in 2013 the Social Pension Scheme which started at 70 years in 2013 was introduced by Government. That did not exist before. There is a new pension scheme introduced by Government through the Ministry. Accordingly, the Care and Protection Allowance 2013 targeted to assist poor, single parents who have no other source of income to look after their children, again in 2013.

Madam Speaker, the other programmes that were being carried out by the Ministry, including the Bus Fare Concession, the Fire Relief Assistance which continues to-date, the Welfare to Workfare Assistance, grants to NGOs, Madam Speaker, has also been highlighted here.

Honourable Nawaikula has brought up such issues in the Auditor-General's Report, and that is the beauty of the mechanism we have. We have an arm that actually looks at how Government ministries perform in relation to how they use the finances during a year and it is from those comments, some we take with a pinch of salt, some with a bottle, some are true and it is with those comments that we are able to make our systems better, year after year, and it is due to those kind of comments that Government has come up with the Civil Service Reform for instance, which looks at the performance of staff which has been highlighted here, hardworking staff by the way, who are carrying out all these programmes on behalf of Government for those who are not as fortunate as those sitting in this House.

Madam Speaker, Government has also come up with other reviews, not only relation to the workforce, but also in relation to those who supervise civil servants, permanent secretaries, for instance. There are guidelines in place, there are mechanisms in place, to ensure that those issues being raised in the Auditor- General's Reports are not repeated year after year, and if it is found that there are matters that may be criminal in nature, civil servants have been taken to task, have been prosecuted, and have been convicted for such incidences.

Madam Speaker, another great initiative that was initiated in 2013, the Child Helpline for those children who suffer from abuse or neglect. There is a Helpline that was initiated in 2013, Madam Speaker, that actually allowed these children or their friends or parents or teachers to be able to report it to the authorities. Something that did not exist before.

Madam Speaker, there is also some mention about the elimination of violence against women and the reference to the Crimes Decree. I think there is a mistake there. It is actually the Domestic Violence Act that looks at Domestic Violence Restraining Orders in relation to domestic violence.

Madam Speaker, if I heard correctly, the comment that was made was that access to DVROS was too easy, it was one-sided. That is the whole point. These DVROS are accessible by victims of violence and it is the very nature of domestic violence necessitates that this assistance is available and accessible to the abused person as soon as possible and even through just a phone call. That is the whole essence of it and that is the whole intention of the Act.

If we were to invite the other party, the perpetrator, to a Domestic Violence Act to have his/her views heard before Domestic Violence Restraining Order, Madam Speaker, we are putting a lot of lives in danger; not only the two who would be fighting, we are talking about children's lives as well inside a home where domestic violence is perpetuated and that is the whole essence of this domestic violence law that we have.

Madam Speaker, so in relation to recommendation one, the budget increases that the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation has been receiving year after year from 2007 to 2013 and up to now has been increasing to basically cover the mandate that the Ministry has been getting year after year.

In relation to recommendation two and the Department of Poverty Alleviation's capacity and capability, Madam Speaker, I would just like to refer to the poverty statistics in Fiji. That speaks for itself on where we are at as a nation in relation to poverty rates in Fiji. It is notable that from 2008 to 2009 we were sitting at 31 percent and that has decreased (we all know that) to 28.1 percent in 2013 to 2014. So the mechanisms that we have in place, that Government has in place, through the implementation of the Ministry that I serve in, in my humble opinion, Madam Speaker, is working great for the mandate that we have as a Ministry, and as a Government. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Attorney-General, you have the floor.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the Honourable Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation has said quite a few things that I wanted to say but just again reiterate the fact that in respect of recommendation two on the streamlining, building capacity and capability within the Ministry, Honourable Nawaikula, he correctly whilst he did quote the Auditor-General's Report which is not the subject matter of this discussion, but it is the actual Annual Report of 2013.

Those matters, yes, they do exist in ministries but you cannot hold the Honourable Minister responsible for that. This is why we need Civil Service Reform, it is very critical to have Civil Service Reform and they in the Opposition, Madam Speaker, have been running down Civil Service Reform. We have said, Madam Speaker, that civil service need to be held accountable, they need to be able to be implementing systems that shows a lot of compassion, need to be implementing a system that are streamlined, it is client friendly. We have, Madam Speaker, many processes within the civil service that actually has been there since the Colonial times; we need to change that. So part of the Civil Service Reforms is not only about making sure that people who are appointed to the civil service are appointed on merit, are the right people to the job but also as part of the reforms we are looking business processes.

We need to look at business processes. For example, how many forms does a person have to fill out, how far do they have to travel to go and fill out the form; all of those issues are being looked at and as you have said that we are carrying out a number of reforms within the IT capacity and capability within Government, we should address that. But just to drive home that point, Madam Speaker, Honourable Nawaikula when he talked about missing files, of course it does happen. It has happened but we need to ensure that it does not happen. Should we have, for example, physical files, or should we have electronic files. These are part of the IT programmes and structures that we are carrying out.

The other point that Honourable Minister has also highlighted about the Crimes Act, Honourable Member I think mentioned the Crimes Decree but it is actually the Crimes Act. The Crimes Act, Madam Speaker, has got nothing to do with DVRO. The Domestic Violence Act is to do with the DVRO and as the Honourable Minister said, the restraining orders, the DVROs are critically important. If a woman is being bashed up at 2 in the morning, where will she go and get some kind of redress. She can now under the Domestic Violence Act go to a police station, get a DVRO. What the Honourable Chand is proposing is that they need to sit down and talk. This is a very patriarchal way of looking at the dynamics between a male and a female. There is absolutely no sensibility to the gender differences that exist within our society. It has been shown time and time again from the other side. So is washing of clothes, it is only the women who do it, washing of dishes only the women who do it.

Madam Speaker, the reality is that, the Honourable Member has quoted the wrong law. If he has quoted the wrong law, you can imagine what other wrong things he has said. In the same way, Madam Speaker, there is absolutely no empirical evidence to show that dengue is spread from Labasa Hospital in Labasa. How can you say that the dengue is spread from Labasa Hospital mosquitoes? If there are indeed mosquitoes in Labasa Hospital, even if there are, there is absolutely no empirical evidence to suggest that. It is preposterous, he is making a mockery of this Parliament to make those kind of wild suggestions, that is what he said. It is on record, the Hansard needs to be looked at. There is absolutely no evidence to that.

Madam Speaker, the other point also is that this Government has recognised that de-facto relationships under the Family Law Act and various other provisions now. We have made amendments to be able to recognise de-facto relationships, he talked about that. We are the only ones with the Family Law Act passed under the previous Government in 2006, it did not recognise de-facto relationships. We know many people have many kitchens in Fiji and those kitchens were now brought to the fore when they had to settle disputes, when they had to settle property settlements, when children had to be paid the maintenance; all of that has now been reinforced.

Honourable Salote Radrodro when she talked about that the incidence has increased. Yes, why? Because people feel confident in the laws, they know that no longer when they come and report the matter gets swept under the carpet. We have removed the rules of corroboration. I do not know if the Honourable Members understand the rules of corroboration. The fundamental premise of rules of corroboration when it came to sexual assault was that when a woman says yes sometimes, she actually means no or when sometimes she says no, she means yes. Therefore we had to go an additional burden of evidently hurdle to prove that sexual assault took place, indeed it was only rape. Now we have a broader offence of sexual assault. It is not just penetration by the penis, but penetration by all sorts of other things, all sorts of shenanigans do take place, all of that is recognised. We need to talk about these things openly and we have removed the patriarchal notion that actually existed in our laws.

The Crimes Act that he talks about was in fact something he inherited under the Penal Code that came from Queensland and British India; had not been amended for over a 100 years. The Crimes Act actually modernises our laws, recognises new offences, giving people the capacity to fill the level of confidence to come and report cases.

If you talk to the Commissioner of Police, the Minister of Defence can actually clarify that, women are now coming forward of cases that existed years ago because they feel confident to report those cases. So Madam Speaker, whenever we debate these issues, Honourable Minister as Minister for Women deals with these issues. Hotline is being setup for women to call up now. All of these monies have been expanded not just for the payment of social welfare but the expansion of these services. We are now having budget consultations for disabled associations. When did ever any government go down to disabled associations and have budget consultations with them? Never. There is a recognition of them.

We now have a 300 percent tax rebate that if an employer employees a person who is disabled, they get a 300 percent tax rebate and Madam Speaker, that goes directly to the issue of poverty because as we saw generally the people who are disabled were not seemed to be employable. I must tell this story, I think I may have told this Parliament before, when we went for budget consultation to Lautoka, a young man who actually could not speak and maybe did not walk in the right way that we normally walk in, he used to work for a printing press and when he got sick, they did not pay him sick leave. They said, “no, go away.” When he actually asked for annual leave, they said, “no, go away.” So he was there at their behest, at least he made the effort to do so, his family helped him. Today he is gainfully employed. His company gets a 300 percent tax rebate. So poverty has a direct co-relationship with disability and we need to be able to understand that within the context. In this year’s budget, we have a specific allocation for person’s with disability. We will hopefully be able to debate in two days’ time the Disabled Bill that the Committee will put before us. We have ratified the International Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities. All of these, Madam Speaker, feed into this ministry.

The Honourable Prime Minister also reminded me that we, today are building health centres because of different population isolation. Before health centres were built only to service say 2,000 people, but they did not take into account that maybe three villages have to travel one whole day on a horse back to get to the health centre. Today, we are taking health centres out to those places that are isolated albeit that those villages may only have 50 people, only 100 people. That actually goes directly to the health and the well-being of these people and it is directly again into the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation.

Honourable Chand also failed to address this Parliament and tell the Parliament the VAT that he is talking about, in fact, they do not pay VAT anymore. They get to keep the VAT; that was a trade-off.

(Inaudible interjection)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- They get to keep the VAT and therefore they give transportation for those people over a particular age. That is part of the deal, Madam Speaker. They are also winning too, this is not a one way traffic.

The reality is, Madam Speaker, that there is a number of changes that have taken place. The Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation has also been given a lot of funding to fund these projects. Rural pregnant women, Madam Speaker get food vouchers; pre-birth, post-birth. Why are we doing this? Because we want the mothers and the babies who are in the wombs of these mothers to be healthy, to eat nutritious food, so they do not have problems with delivery, they do not have malnutrition babies that are born.

All these are part and parcel of ensuring that people who are on the periphery of our society are brought into the centre:

- i) where you have healthier people
- ii) where they are looked after
- iii) free education
- iv) subsidised bus fares
- v) subsidised electricity

All of these things work. They are like clockwork. They are like the gears in a bicycle. All of the gears need to work for the bicycle to actually move ahead.

Madam Speaker, I would urge the Members that with the list of recommendations that have been made, I think recommendation (2) goes towards what Honourable Nawaikula was

mentioning and we recognise that. Of course, if you spoke to every single Minister, every single Minister will tell you “yes, processes can be improved” but the question is are we doing anything about it? Yes, we are doing something about it. Yes, we have got Civil Service Reforms, it is not only about attracting the best people and making sure that Government is a choice employer, but also being sure that we get right salaries and also improve the business processes which needs to be improved to bring about better accountability and indeed service to ordinary Fijians.

Madam Speaker, I would therefore support the recommendations by the Chairman of this Committee. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Chairman of the Committee, you have the right of reply.

HON. V. PILLAY.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I believe this report is quite straight forward. As Chair of the Committee and also whenever we deal with any report, we deal with that particular report from that particular year especially since this report was the 2013 Annual Report. Presentations were made by the Permanent Secretary and the Director. All the Members agreed that they were satisfied with the performance of the Ministry in that particular area. That is all, Madam Speaker from my side.

HON. SPEAKER.- The Parliament will now vote to note the content of the report. Does any member oppose the motion?

(Chorus of “Noes”)

HON. SPEAKER.- There being no opposition, the motion is therefore agreed to.

HON. SPEAKER.- I call on the Chairperson Standing Committee on Economic Affairs to move the motion.

### **CONSOLIDATION OF ANNUAL REPORTS FOR THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY & TRADE - 2013 AND TOURISM FIJI - 2010-2012**

HON. L. EDEN.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I move that Parliament debates to consolidate the report on the Annual Reports for the Ministry of Industry and Trade 2013 and Tourism Fiji 2010 – 2012 which were tabled on 28 September, 2016.

HON. SPEAKER.- Do we have a seconder?

HON. V. NATH.- Honourable Speaker, I second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now invite the Chairperson Standing Committee on Economic Affairs to speak on the motion.

HON. L. EDEN.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the Honourable Prime Minister, Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Honourable Ministers and Honourable Members of Parliament, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, I take this opportunity to speak on the motion with regards to the review that was made on the consolidated reports of the Ministry of Industry and Trade Annual Report 2013 and the Tourism Fiji Annual Report 2010 – 2012.

Madam Speaker, overall, the Committee was satisfied with the performance of the Ministry of Industry and Trade and Tourism Fiji, and given the number of years that have lapsed since those reports; the Committee chose to reserve comments for more recent reports, thus no recommendations were put forward. Madam Speaker, with those few comments, as the Member moving the motion, I thank you for this opportunity.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. The motion is now open for debate and I invite comments, if any?

Thank you, there being none, then there is no need to speak in reply.

Parliament will now vote to note the content of the report. Does any member oppose the motion?

(Chorus of “Noes”)

HON. SPEAKER.- There being no opposition, the motion is agreed to unanimously.

Honourable Members, it has been brought to my attention that the House will urgently need some fumigation services. Therefore, the Parliament will be adjourned until Wednesday at 9.30 a.m. Additionally, the business items for Tuesday will be carried forward to Wednesday and Thursday.

Parliament is therefore adjourned until Wednesday 7th March, 2018 at 9.30 a.m. Thank you Honourable Members.

The Parliament adjourned at 5.11 p.m.

