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## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

### **Committee Report on the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management 2015 Annual Report**



**PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI**  
**Parliamentary Paper No. 25 of 2018**

*Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2018*

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## Table of Contents

CHAIRMAN’S FOREWORD .....	3
INTRODUCTION .....	4
REVIEW FINDINGS .....	4
GENDER ANALYSIS .....	4
RECOMMENDATIONS .....	5
CONCLUSION .....	5
APPENDICES .....	7
APPENDIX 1: ACRONYMS .....	8
APPENDIX 2: POWERPOINT PRESENTATION BY THE MINISTRY OF RURAL & MARITIME DEVELOPMENT AND NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT .....	9
APPENDIX 3: VERBATIM .....	16

## CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, I am pleased to present the review report for the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management 2015 Annual Report.

The Standing Committee on Social Affairs was established under Section 109(2) (b) of the Standing Orders (SO) of the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji and is mandated to examine matters relating to health, education, social services, labor, culture, media and their administration.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2017, Parliament resolved to refer the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management 2015 Annual Report to this Committee, for the purpose of scrutinizing and reporting back to Parliament at a later date. The focus was particularly on areas of administration, legislation, budget, organization structure, functions, policies, programs/projects of the year as per Standing Order 110(1) (c). The Committee also reviewed the various projects and programmes administered by the Ministry, including the challenges encountered in delivering their mandates.

Subsequent to the presentation made by the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management, the Committee's enquiries and assessments were based on their key outputs and the corresponding budgetary utilization.

The performance of the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management is commendable, however the Committee is of the view that the Ministry must strengthen their systems and processes for a more effective and efficient service delivery to the rural areas and maritime islands.

Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to the Honourable Members who were involved in the formulation of this bipartisan report: Deputy Chair, Hon. Veena Bhatnagar and the Committee members, Hon. Salote Radrodro, Hon. Ruveni Nadalo and Hon. Anare T. Vadei.

In my capacity as the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, I commend this report to the Parliament.



Hon. Viam Pillay  
Chairman

## INTRODUCTION

Using the legislative powers provided to the Committee, this report examines the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management 2015 Annual Report which was tabled in Parliament on 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2017.

The Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster is mandated to manage and coordinate government efforts in rural and maritime development programmes under the Integrated Rural Development Framework (IRDF) to support the aspirations of the People's Charter for Change, Peace and Progress and further to support the "Bill of Rights" provisions of the 2013 Constitution of the Republic of Fiji that are targeted to generate economic growth and improving the standards of living in our rural and maritime communities.

The Committee had perused the Annual Report with the following objectives:

- Scrutinize the Ministry's 2015 Annual Report particularly on their administration, budget, functions, organization structure and policies that were in place;
- Projects/programs of the Ministry in 2015; and
- Report back to Parliament with recommendations for further consideration by the Ministry.

And for further clarification and enlightenment on the Annual Report, the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management provided a brief presentation of their overall performance on 18<sup>th</sup> of January, 2018.

## REVIEW FINDINGS

Listed below are the findings of the Committee:

- The budgetary provisions in 2015 were reduced by \$7.6 million as compared to 2014.
- The challenges faced in transporting materials, machinery, engage skilled labourers and getting contractors to maritime zones to complete projects on time.
- Lack of consistency in the reporting methods used by Divisions.
- There needs to be more awareness of the services provided by the Ministry.
- There was no gender analysis provided.

## GENDER ANALYSIS

Under SO 110(2), where a committee conducts an activity listed in Clause (1), the Committee ensures full consideration will be given to the principle of gender equality so as to ensure matters considered with regard to the impact and benefit on both men and women equally.

The Committee considered range of issues including programmes that were coordinated by the Ministry and how it affects both male and female in Fiji. In particular, the Ministry was very specific on all the

programs that were implemented which are aligned with its mandated responsibilities and these programs had mechanisms that ensured that the benefits are equally distributed amongst the targeted groups which included both men and women in our rural areas and maritime islands. In fact, the Ministry also had various programs in place which benefited both men and women in the areas of their responsibilities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

After thorough assessment and consultations, the Committee commended the performance of the Ministry, however for further enhancement of the Ministry's plan, the Committee makes the following recommendations.

1. A standard reporting method be used by all divisional Commissioners which should be holistic, comparative and analytical for ease of reference.
2. The Ministry must strengthen their systems and processes for a more effective and efficient service delivery to the rural areas and maritime islands.
3. Inclusion of gender analysis in the annual report.

## CONCLUSION

The Ministry continued to deal with the challenges of being a large organization, located in the 14 provinces around the country. It was committed to strengthening its organizational culture by up-skilling its officers through various trainings offered locally and abroad so that they are able to read, understand, and execute precisely what was set out in the ministry's planning documents.

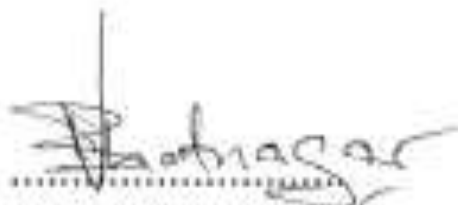
From the outset, the ministry's strategic intents, aligned to the broader outcome of the government. As the agency responsible for the coordination and implementation of rural development programmes, the report mirrored what has been achieved during the year in its strive to assist rural Fijians become self-sustaining and resilient.

Finally, the Committee acknowledges the efforts and challenges of the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management and looks forward to due consideration and implementation of the recommendations.

## SIGNATURES OF MEMBERS FOR THE SOCIAL AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE



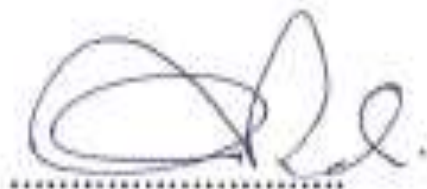
Hon. Viam Pillay  
(Chairperson)



Hon. Veena Bhatnagar  
(Deputy Chairperson)



Hon. Salote Radrodro  
(Member)



Hon. Anare T. Vadei  
(Member)



Hon. Ruveni Nadalo  
(Alternate Member for Hon. Mohammed M. A Dean)

# APPENDICES

**APPENDIX 1: ACRONYMS**

<b>Acronyms</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
SO	Standing Orders
IRDF	Integrated Rural Development Framework



## APPENDIX 2: POWERPOINT PRESENTATION BY THE MINISTRY OF RURAL & MARITIME DEVELOPMENT AND NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT



### Presentation Outline

Presentation to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs

Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management

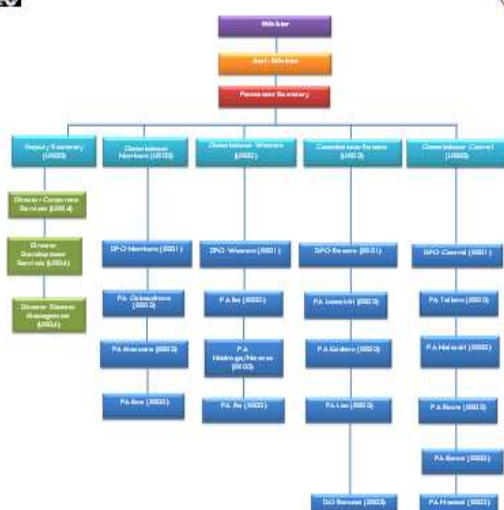
2015 Annual Report

Parliament Big Committee Room  
18<sup>th</sup> January 2018

- Ministry Administration and Structure
- Budgetary Allocation and Programmes Offered
- New Policies and Programmes in 2015
- Achievements and Challengers
- Conclusion



### Ministry Structure



### Administration



#### Ancillary Services

Support services to rural and peri-urban communities. These services include registrations of births, deaths and marriages, issuance of licenses and collection of license and permit fees.

#### Development Assistance

The Ministry is responsible for implementing the following rural and maritime development programmes:

- 1) Self-Help Scheme
- 2) Divisional Development Board Projects Scheme
- 3) Non-cane Access Roads Scheme
- 4) Rural Housing Assistance and Social Welfare Housing Assistance
- 6) Disaster Risk Reduction Programme

#### Statutory Functions

The statutory functions of the Ministry are those of the National Disaster Management Office as espoused by the 1995 National Disaster Management Plan and the National Disaster Management Act 1998 covering disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, emergency operations, relief and rehabilitation.



## Staff Strength



	Established Staff	Wage Earners	Total
Headquarters	62	41	103
Central	48	14	62
Eastern	27	10	37
Northern	43	16	59
Western	47	22	69
<b>Total</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>330</b>

The Ministry is also responsible for the administration of 43 FRA workers via an MoU between FRA and the Ministry.

2 officers (Senior Economic Planning Officer & Integrated Human Resource Development Programme (IHRDP)) on secondment from the Ministry of Strategic Planning.



## 2015 Budget



	OPERATING COSTS	CAPITAL COSTS	VAT	TOTAL
Head 18	\$ 11,092,800	\$20,027,400	988,3000	32,108,500
<b>Major Capital Works Funded in 2015</b>				
CBUL	\$7.9 million			
Rural Infrastructure	\$3.6million			
Self Help	\$1.5 million			
Rural Housing Assistance	\$1.4 million			
Disaster Risk Mitigation	\$2.0 million			
PM Disaster Rehabilitation Fund	\$1.0 million			

Ministry in 2015 was allocated \$32.1 million – a decrease of \$7.6million compared to 2014



## 2015 Budget New Initiatives



### • Headquarters

- (i) Centre for Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific - \$200,000
- (ii) District Advisory Councilors Allowance - \$640,000
- (iii) Government Roadshow in Rural Areas - \$200,000
- (iv) Opening of New District Administration Office for Koro & Gau



## 2015 Budget New Initiatives



### • Commissioner Central Division

- (i) Namosi Government Station - \$650,000
- (ii) Waikalou Flood Gates - \$60,000
- (iii) Upgrading of Navua Landing and Waiting Shed - \$50,000

### • Commissioner Western Division

- (i) Nacula Health Station - \$515,000



## 2015 Budget New Initiatives



## Achievements



### Commissioner Northern Division

- (i) Kubulau Government Station - \$790,000
- (ii) Construction of Staff Quarters at Rabi Health Center - \$415,000

### Commissioner Eastern Division

- (i) Completion of Waiting Shed on Koro Island \$50,000
- (ii) Repair of Suspension Bridge in Levuka \$517,000
- (iii) River flood protection works for Toki village - \$348,500

### New Policy

- Formulation of the Ministry Honorarium Policy
- Human Resource Management Manual

### Highlights for 2015

- Conducted 4 Government Roadshows - \$200,000
- Hosting of the Center for Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific Executive and Governing Council Meeting at the Tanoa International in Nadi - \$200,000
- Divisional Commissioners were invited by the Government of Thailand for the Study Visit on Sufficiency Economy



## Achievements Ancillary Services



SPECIFIC AGENCY OBJECTIVE	Central	Eastern	Northern	Western
No. of Births, Deaths, Marriages Registrations	Births – 54 Marriages – 119	Births 166 Marriages 30 Deaths 30	Births – 386 Marriages – 233 Deaths – 85	Births – 1135 Marriages – 1303 Deaths – 85
Number of Liquor licenses Issued	538	13	17	154
Number of permits issued	-	120	745	1059
Number of quarters managed	98	174	246	566
Number of gaming application processed	18	0	-	7
Number of After Care Fund clients served	288	-	-	2438
Number of fishing permits issued	151	334	3162	221
Number of business licenses issued, renewed or cancelled	1478	630	1043	2550
Number of protocol services attended to	6	32	25	50
Quarterly reports on revenue collection	N/A	4	-	4
Upkeep of Burial Grounds and Historical Landmarks	3	18	-	1
Administration of Hotel Licenses	10	0	-	N/A
Report on Administration of Exemption Certificates	N/A	0	-	N/A
Report on Administration of Judiciary Services	N/A	27	-	N/A
Number of forms issued for other Government Services not represented in the district	N/A	N/A	-	N/A



## Achievements (Central)



### Capital Projects

CAPITAL PROGRAMME						
PROGRAMME	TOTAL PROVISION	SON PROVISION	TOTAL PROVISION	TOTAL COMMIT & EXPENDITURE	BALANCE AVAILABLE	IMPLEMENTATION RATE
NCAR	\$179,780.00	\$127,716.00	\$413,496.00	\$413,496.00	\$0.00	100%
SRP	\$100,311.56	\$132,895.64	\$334,107.20	\$333,986.00	\$29.20	100%
RHA	\$1,882,032.20	\$66,739.26	\$248,772.56	\$248,772.56	\$0.00	100%
PAP		\$45,066.50	\$45,066.50	\$45,066.50	\$0.00	100%
<b>DIVISIONAL TOTAL</b>	<b>\$558,124.86</b>	<b>\$464,356.02</b>	<b>\$1,042,462.86</b>	<b>\$1,042,322.46</b>	<b>\$240.20</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>PERCENTAGE</b>			<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>		

### PSIP Projects

No	PROJECTS NAME	TOTAL PROVISION	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	FINANCIAL PROGRESS	PHYSICAL PROGRESS
1	Waikalou Roadworks	\$80,000.00	\$80,000.00	100%	100%
2	Namoni Deviation	\$850,000.00	\$850,000.00	100%	100%
3	Upgrade Nivua Waiting Shed	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	100%	100%
	<b>TOTAL PSIP</b>	<b>\$160,000.00</b>	<b>\$160,000.00</b>		



## Achievements (Central)



### MAJOR DIVISIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Commissioning of Wainisavulevu DAM, Monasavu by the Hon. Prime Minister
- Commissioning of Waivaka Suspension Bridge by the Hon. Prime Minister
- Commissioning of Gelekuru Water Project by the Hon. Prime Minister
- Commissioning of Waiting Shed for Beqa Island farmers at Navua Town by the Acting Permanent Secretary
- Commissioning of Drill Rig for ground water testing by the Hon. Minister for Lands
- Commissioning of Waidina Secondary School's Ginger Production/Distribution Center for Tikina of Nawaidina
- Ex-serviceman Remembrance Day, Vunidwa and Korovou Centres
- Opening of New School Dormitory (Navuso Agriculture School) by the Hon. Prime Minister
- Completion of Dada Government Station
- Completion of the Waikalou Floodgate



## Achievement (Eastern)



### Self-Help Projects

Office	No. of Projects	Allocation	Progress	
			Financial	Physical
PA Lau	16	\$166,084.01	100%	95%
PA Lomaiviti	12	\$63,603.38	100%	96%
PA Kadavu	7	\$64,236.16	100%	98%
DO Rotuma	10	\$33,342.26	100%	98%
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>\$347,265.81</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>96.75%</b>

### Non-Cane Access Roads

Office	No. of Projects	Allocation	Progress	
			Total KM	Physical
PA Lau	1	\$42,969.13	4km	95%
PA Lomaiviti	2	\$91,246.47	8km	100%
PA Kadavu	3	\$129,804.33	12km	100%
DO Rotuma	0	0	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>\$264,019.93</b>	<b>24km</b>	<b>98.33%</b>

### Rural Housing Assistance & PAP

Office	No. of Projects	Allocation	Progress	
			Financial	Physical
PA Lau	9	\$116,834.22	100%	100%
PA Lomaiviti	13	\$134,403.89	100%	100%
PA Kadavu	4	\$42,724.02	100%	99%
DO Rotuma	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>\$293,962.13</b>		<b>99%</b>



## Achievement (Eastern)



### PSIP Projects

PROJECTS	BUDGET (\$)	ACTUAL COST (\$)	ACTUAL EXP. (\$)	PHYSICAL STATUS
Completion of Waiting Shed - Koro	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	100%	80%
Repair of Suspension Bridge - Lomaiviti	\$217,000.00	\$107,575.14	100%	100%
River Flood Protection Works - Taki Village	\$248,500.00	\$248,000.00	100%	100%
<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>\$1,885,500.00</b>	<b>\$1,477,575.14</b>	<b>\$1,562,335.14 (96%)</b>	<b>86.75%</b>

Completion of Waiting Shed in Koro – budget provision of \$50,000.00 was transferred to the Fiji Roads Authority on 09/04/15 to implement the project. The actual work commenced towards the end of December hence the physical progress of 80 percent completion.

Repair of Suspension Bridge in Lomaiviti – RRMF commenced construction on 02 October. Balance of \$231,500.00 was wired towards Taki Village River Flood Protection and \$164,544.00 for the Emergency Water Supply in the Western Division.

River Flood Protection Works in Taki Village – through the tender process, only bidder, Multi Works Civil Engineering & Building Contractors, tendered for \$782,654.22. After some negotiations, the company agreed to begin work within the allocated amount of \$500,000.00. This was approved by the Government Tender Board. Additional fund of \$221,500.00 was wired from the Lomaiviti Suspension Bridge for completion.





## Achievement (Northern)



### Self-Help Projects

Office	Economic Project			Social Project		
	No. of Projects	Allocation	Progress (%)	No. of projects	Allocation	Progress (%)
PA Calaudiva	4	\$ 89,009.18	100%	2	\$ 32,243.22	100%
PA Sue	3	\$ 43,769.22	85%	3	\$ 116,361.48	100%
PA Macuata	3	\$ 58,710.71	99%	10	\$ 119,975.62	100%
Total	10	\$191,489.09	95%	21	\$ 268,579.32	100%

### Non-Cane Access Roads

Office	No. of Projects	Length of Road (km)	Allocation	Balance	Progress (%)
PA Calaudiva	1	3	\$50,000.00	-	75%
PA Sue	-	-	-	-	-
PA Macuata	7	12	\$308,616.00	-	100%
TOTAL	8	15	\$358,616.00	-	88%



## Achievement (Northern)



### Rural Housing Assistance & PAP

Office	No. of Clients Assisted	Govt. Contribution	Total Contribution	Progress (%)
PA Calaudiva	8	\$ 119,312.39		98%
PA Sue	19	\$50,772.76	\$50,772.76	100%
PA Macuata	22	\$118,928.44		100%
TOTAL	49	\$289,013.59	\$50,772.76	

### PSIP Projects

No	Project Title	Province	Total Cost	Financial Implementation Rate	Physical Implementation Rate
01	Kali Duplex Quarters	Calaudiva	\$ 415,000.00	77%	100%
02	Kubulau Government Station	Sue	\$ 700,441.00	100%	100%



## Achievement (Western)



### Self-Help Projects

No.	Name of Project	Village / Settlement	Tikina	Province	Cost	Status
1	Bonal Water Project	Bonal	Sulu	Ba	\$2,789.21	Project completed
2	Nadrau Water Project	Nadrau	Nalaga	Ba	\$4,276.62	Project completed
3	Koro No. 2 Water Project	Koro No. 2	Tavua	Ba	\$19,900.00	Project completed
4	Tunalla Borehole	Tunalla	Ravivani	Nadroga	\$15,171.66	Project completed
5	Vatukulu BH	Buyabuya	Savatu	Ba	\$15,510.00	Project completed
6	Logi Water Project	Logi	Wal	Nadroga	\$12,408.00	Project completed
7	Hyder Road Water Project	Mulomulu	Nawaka	Ba	\$5,999.91	Project completed
8	Waye Jet	Waye Island	Waye	Ba	\$12,271.51	Project completed
9	Balekulu Fishing Project	Nalaga	Vitogo	Ba	\$9,290.40	Project completed
10	Manukulu Fishing Project	Manukulu	Tavua	Ba	\$7,238.00	Project completed
11	Tuvu Water Project	Tuvu	Nalaga	Ba	\$2,753.73	Project completed
12	Nadrala Water Project	Nadrala	Conia	Nadroga	\$21,383.12	Project completed
13	Nalavasa Water Project	Nalavasa	Namataku	Nadroga	\$17,106.90	Project completed
14	Nalou Settlement WIP	Nalou	Wal	Nadroga	\$2,068.00	Project completed
15	Nalinal Settlement Water Project	Nalinal	Raidrali	Ra	\$21,383.12	Project completed
16	Barotu Cemetery Water Tank	Barotu	Savou	Ra	\$2,672.89	Project completed
17	Saloko Youth Boat & Engine	Saloko	Nakoro	Ra	\$18,234.25	Project completed
TOTAL					\$210,000.00	



## Achievement (Western)



### Non Cane Access Roads

No.	Name of Project	Village/Settlement	Tikina	Province	Cost	Status
1	Tokoni Farm Road	Tokoni Sett	Savatu	Ba	\$16,929.00	Completed
2	Makaveli Wallalal Farm Road	Makaveli	Nalaga	Ra	\$15,850.00	Completed
3	Yaladro Farm Road	Yaladro	Conia	Nadroga	\$15,850.00	Completed
4	Nadudua Farm Road	Nadudua Sett	Savatu	Ba	\$20,070.00	Completed
5	Tilivalevu Farm Road	Tilivalevu	Wal	Nadroga	\$19,900.00	Completed
6	Koroua Farm Road	Koroua Sett	Savatu	Ba	\$20,000.00	Completed
7	Namimila Farm Road	Makaso Sett	Nalaga	Ra	\$20,000.00	Completed
8	Savudrodro Farm Road	Savudrodro	Savou	Ra	\$15,000.00	Completed
TOTAL					\$194,400.00	

### Rural Housing Programme

No.	Name of Applicants	Village/Settlement	Tikina	Province	Cost	Status
1	Makaveli Sulevu Housing Scheme	Soso Village	Nalaga	Ba	\$73,219.14	Completed
2	Vilama Bogla	Nalaga Village	Nalaga	Ba	\$18,000.00	Completed
3	Oril Tabone	Makaveli Village	Nalaga	Ba	\$6,204.00	Completed
4	Imbas Khan	Nalaga	Nalaga	Nadroga	\$2,527.20	Completed
5	Ratu Sakisa Ononimolea	Tunaru Sett	Savou	Nadroga	\$14,920.00	Completed
6	Waleke Nacevau	Nasucoko	Namataku	Ra	\$14,920.00	Completed
7	Tuvusa Gulamimuri	Togovene Village	Raidrali	Ra	\$12,852.01	Completed
8	Pari Duanival	Nalaga Village	Nalaga		\$14,920.00	Completed
TOTAL					\$157,621.25	



## Achievement (Western)



### Non Cane Access Roads

No	Name of Project	Village/Settlement	Tikina	Province	Cost	Status
1	Tokoni Farm Road	Tokoni Sett	Savaii	Ra	\$26,229.00	Completed
2	Matavelo Wallalal Farm Road	Matavelo	Nalaeua	Ra	\$25,850.00	Completed
3	Valadno Farm Road	Valadno	Conua	Nadroga	\$25,850.00	Completed
4	Nadududua Farm Road	Nadududua Sett	Savaii	Ra	\$30,070.00	Completed
5	Tilivalevu Farm Road	Tilivalevu	Wall	Nadroga	\$19,300.00	Completed
6	Koroua Farm Road	Koroua Sett	Savaii	Ra	\$20,000.00	Completed
7	Namimila Farm Road	Namimila Sett	Nalaeua	Ra	\$30,000.00	Completed
8	Savudududua Farm Road	Savudududua	Savaii	Ra	\$15,000.00	Completed
TOTAL					\$194,400.00	

### PSIP Projects

No	Name of Project	Village/Settlement	Tikina	Province	Cost	Status
1	Relocation of Nalaeua Health Centre	Conua	Conua	Nadroga	\$610,000	Project completed



## National Disaster Management Office

### Disaster Risk Reduction Programme



No	Project Name	Location			Government Contribution	Progress (%)	
		Village/Sett	District	Province		Physical	Financial
1	Oranika Evacuation Centre	Oranika	Nadi	Ra	\$122,476.07	100%	100%
2	Nalaeua Evacuation Centre	Nalaeua	Nalaeua	Colakoua	\$94,661.79	100%	100%
3	Ola Evacuation Centre (Upgrading)	Ola	Tamoni	Colakoua	\$19,339.14	100%	100%
4	Mulien Village Drainage	Mulien	Vanabalavu	Lau	\$121,129.82		
5	Mulien Evacuation Centre	Mulien	Vanabalavu	Lau	\$126,917.76	100%	100%
6	Wakaloa Evacuation Centre	Wakaloa	Lafaga	Nuafu	\$97,422.91	100%	100%
7	Naduf Evacuation Centre (Upgrading)	Naduf	Naduf	Nuafu	\$11,086.96	100%	100%
8	Koroua Evacuation Centre site Construction and Site Levelling	Koroua	Nalaeua	Nalaeua	\$73,925.06	80%	100%
9	Galladua Evacuation Centre Construction and Site Levelling	Galladua	Venakula	Namoa	\$94,000.00	80%	100%
10	Savaii Evacuation Centre	Savaii	Savaii	Ra	\$49,026.65	100%	100%
11	Nadududua Building Renovation	Nadududua	Savaii	Ra	\$94,331.23	100%	100%
12	Savaii Evacuation Centre	Savaii	Savaii	Ra	\$94,077.65	100%	100%
13	Nalaeua Salvage Insurance	Nalaeua	Savaii	Talieu	\$115,772.07	100%	100%
14	Nalaeua Evacuation Centre	Nalaeua	Savaii	Talieu	\$94,745.42	100%	100%
15	Savaii Island General	Savaii	Savaii	Talieu	\$19,669.33	100%	100%
16	Kum Coastal Protection	Kum	Vaea	Talieu	\$121,784.33	80%	100%
Total					\$1,217,933.86		



## Challenges



- Conduct of Ancillary Services
- Officials Visits and Tours
- National Consultation
  - (i) National Flag
  - (ii) National Development Plan (NDP)



## Thank You

AP



## PENDIX 3: VERBATIM

### **VERBATIM NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS HELD IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM (EAST WING), PARLIAMENT PRECINCTS, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS ON THURSDAY, 18<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2018 AT 2.00 P.M.**

**Submittee:** Ministry of Rural & Maritime Development & National Disaster Management

#### **In Attendance:**

- |    |                      |   |   |
|----|----------------------|---|---|
| 1. | Mr. Setareki Tale    | : | Commissioner, Central Division                |
| 2. | Mr. Anare Leweniqila | : | Director, NDMO                                |
| 3. | Ms.. Ana Tora        | : | Director, Corporate Services                  |
| 4. | Ms. Raijieli Bakewa  | : | Principal Administration Officer, Development |

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Honourable Members, once again welcome to the meeting. Today, with us, we have the Commissioner, Central Division, Mr. Setareki Tale; Director, NDMO, Mr. Anare Leweniqila; Director, Corporate Services, Madam Ana Tora; and Principal Administration Officer, Development, Madam Raijieli Bakewa. A very warm welcome to all of you, Sirs and Madams.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, we accord you a warm welcome to today's meeting. We are looking forward to your presentation, and as we have already deliberated on the Annual Report for the year 2015 for the Ministry of Rural & Maritime Development and National Disaster Management, we need some clarifications. Also, we have got some questions for you, so basically, we will go through the presentation first and then the second half, we will be presenting our questions to your team.

So, once again, thank you very much for your time and we look forward to your presentation now, the floor is yours.

MR. S. TALE.- Madam Chairperson and Honourable Members of the Standing Committee, allow us this time to thank you very much for the opportunity to clarify a number of issues that had arisen out of our Annual Report 2015.

Firstly, we bring to you the apology of our Permanent Secretary who unfortunately is unable to be here today due to unforeseen circumstances but we are here on his behalf, and we will be happy to clarify issues, some of which had been conveyed to us just now. We are happy to provide any further clarifications that might arise out of the presentation today.

We thank you very much for the clarifications as well that you have already deliberated on the Annual Reports. So we will go through the presentation very briefly because some of these issues had been eased out of the Annual Reports, so we take it that you had gone through most of it.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson, please, allow us to proceed to the presentation.

The Outline of the presentation that we have before you today is, as on the PowerPoint, we have the Administrative Structure of the Ministry; the Budgetary Allocations, the New Policies and Programmes that were introduced in 2015; and some of the Achievements and Challenges that the Ministry faces in the delivery of its responsibilities and, of course, we will conclude the presentations.

We apologise for the very small prints but this is the structure of the Ministry. It is structured in a way that we are decentralized to the four Divisions.

The Ministry Headquarters in Suva is comprised of the Permanent Secretary and the Headquarters team whereas the services are decentralized to the four Divisional Commissioners which are based in the four major centres around Fiji.

Within our Administration, we have Ancillary Services. These are services that are required of us to provide on behalf of the other ministries as in licensing, issuing of permits, birth, death and marriage functions of the Registrar General's Office. These are some of the services that are required of our Ministry to provide to communities in the absence of those line ministries whose core responsibilities are these Ancillary Services.

We have the Development Assistance that we provide to the communities, and under that, we have six programmes:

1. Self-Help Scheme: This is where we provide two-thirds contribution to the communities to be able to develop businesses, construct community programmes;
2. Divisional Development Board Projects Scheme;
3. Non-Cane Access Roads Scheme: We construct roads for communities which require access to their farming communities;
4. Rural Housing Assistance;
5. Social Welfare Housing Assistance; and
6. Disaster Risk Reduction Programme.

Statutory Functions of the Ministry: we are two-fold in that sense, firstly, because the core roles of the Ministry are covered only in the Integrated Rural Development Framework of Government that was passed by the Government in 2009, whereas the legal framework for the Ministry is only for the National Disaster Management Office. That is covered under the National Disaster Management Act of 1998, which is the fore-runner to the National Disaster Management Plan of 1995.

Staff Strengths of the Ministry: as earlier alluded to, our staff are decentralized to all the divisions. We have in total 330 staff who are deployed to the four Divisions around Fiji.

In 2015 as well, we had Senior Economic Planning Officers that were deployed from the then National Planning Office to assist with the implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programmes (PSIP) in the four divisions.

A number of major capital allocations for the Ministry which are related to the Development Programmes of the Ministry are as follows:

- ✓ CBUL (Committee for Better Utilization of Lands): This funding was allocated specifically by Government to entice landowners to provide their lands for lease. The lease is calculated on a 6-

percent basis where the lease is worked out according to the UCV (Unimproved Capital Value) of the land and the lease is normally 6 percent. This allocation by Government allows iTLTB to provide a lease at 10 percent to entice landowners to lease their land for sugarcane and for other communities, especially those leases that were expiring;

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- They are coming through Land Bank.

MR. S. TALE.- Not through Land Bank, we go through the iTaukei Land Trust Board.

- ✓ Rural Infrastructure: these are for roads and other developments;
- ✓ Self-Help Projects;
- ✓ Rural Housing Assistance: we have two; the allocation of \$1.4 million is allocated to two specific programmes, the first one is the Rural Housing Programme and the other one is the Poverty Alleviation Programme for those that are not able to afford the one-third contribution that is required for this assistance. The Poverty Alleviation Programme especially is for those that have been endorsed by the Social Welfare for assistance under this Programme;
- ✓ Disaster Risk Mitigation Fund: this is allocated for mitigation of those areas that are especially vulnerable to natural disasters. This funding has been expanded to include climate change adaptation programmes;
- ✓ Prime Minister's Disaster Rehabilitation Fund: this fund is allocated specifically for natural disasters. These are the initial respond fund that is available to government whenever a national disaster strikes. This funding is used to allow government to respond and provide immediate response to those affected by natural disasters.

In the Budget for 2015, there were a number of new initiatives that ought to be mentioned here. One of which is the Centre for Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP). This is an organization for the Pacific where Fiji is the only member from the Pacific.

In 2015 as well, with the allocated fund, Fiji hosted the meetings of the governing council and the executive council meetings of this body, the first of its kind to be held in the Pacific. That funding allowed us to achieve that milestone for the Government of Fiji.

In 2015 as well, we received an allocation for the District Advisory Councilors. Previously, there was no allocation to support our District Advisory Councils. In essence therefore, their assistance was honorary in nature where they provided free service to the Government.

In 2015, we thought it was important to ensure that they are reciprocated for the work they were providing, not only for the government but for the people of Fiji. With the provision of these allowances, we are able to demand of them reports on the activities that they undertake in their various areas.

The Government Roadshows as well in 2015 were allocated \$200,000 for Government roadshows. This is an initiative from within the Ministry to support Government in the delivery of its services to those communities that do not normally have access to a number of various services. With this programme, we were able to provide registration of births and deaths in locations where roadshows were held.

It allowed us as well to enter those that were born and had not been entered into the *i Vola ni Kawa Bula* for the iTaukei landowners. It allowed us to provide passport services to those in the remotest parts of Fiji.

I think that has been well-appreciated from <sup>20</sup>2015 and that programme now continues. Of course, the Government is seeking to expand its footprints to all around Fiji.

In 2015, we saw the opening of the District Administration Offices in Koro and Gau.

For the Central Division, we have the Namosi Government Station opened in Dada, and that is in the centre of the Namosi Inland and the Waikalou Floodgates. These are some of the development programmes that were undertaken in 2015 and we wonder if you would like to go through all but we will just mention a few.

For the Commissioner, Western, as part of Government's initiative to expand its services, it opened the Nacula Health Station in the Yasawas as well.

For the Commissioner, Northern, it is still part of the Government's initiative to expand its footprint to all around Fiji, the opening of the Kubulau Government Station and the construction of the Staff Quarters at the Rabi Health Centre.

With the Commissioner, Eastern, we constructed the Waiting Shed on Koro Island and the Repair of the Suspension Bridge in Levuka and, of course, the River Flood Protection Works for Toki Village in Ovalau.

New Policies: these are some of the internal initiatives within the Ministry that are meant to strengthen the operations of the Ministry and to ensure that we are able to deliver effectively as a Ministry. There is a formulation of the Ministry's Honorarium Policy and the Human Resource Management Manual. These are some parts of the Public Sector Programmes that are currently being undertaken.

Highlights for 2015: we conducted four Government Roadshows. As earlier mentioned, for the first time, Fiji hosted the governing council and the deputy council meetings for the Center for Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific.

Also in 2015, the Divisional Commissioners were invited by the Government of Thailand to visit their Self-Sufficiency Programme in Thailand.

Ancillary Services: you will see that these are the services that we are demanded by Government to provide on behalf of other line agencies.

Capital Projects for the Ministry in 2015: as listed in the PowerPoint that have been circulated, the NCAR (Non-Cane Access Roads) are roads that we construct, especially for farmers who have produce that needed to be transported to the markets.

The Self-Help Programme, Rural Housing Assistance and the PAF (Poverty Alleviation Fund) are houses that we construct for those that are not able to afford the one-third amount required through the housing assistance.

PSIP Projects: these are programmes for the Central Division in 2015; the Waikalou Floodgates in Navua; Namosi Government Station; and upgrade of the Navua Waiting Sheds, this is especially for passengers waiting for ferries to Beqa and areas around the Navua area.

Major Divisional Highlights for the Division: these were administered from the West but listed under the Central Division: the Wainisavulevu Dam in Monasavu; the Waivaka Suspension Bridge (this was of critical importance to the communities because this bridge is used for school children and members of the communities to cross a river onto the road in Namosi; the Qelekuro Water Project; and the Waiting Shed for Beqa Island. (I am sorry, I do not need to read all these, I understand that you have seen all these in the Report.)

I would like to refer now to the NDMO (National Disaster Management Office) on the second last page. We have got the Achievements of the NDMO here but there was one achievement that was inadvertently omitted from the Report and ought to be mentioned here.

In 2015 as well, Fiji deployed the first-of-its-kind of assistance to *Tropical Cyclone* victims in Vanuatu. That was through the instruction of Government's National Disaster Management Office who deployed a total of around 50 personnel with specific skills, military engineers, doctors, surgeons, specialized nurses and, of course, these NDMO officials were to assist the National Disaster Management in Vanuatu, in the administration of their response to the *Tropical Cyclone Pam* that affected Vanuatu in 2015.

These are challenges but we are obligated to provide, especially the ancillary services, to the communities. The only reason we see these as challenges is because whilst we are required to provide these services in addition to our core responsibilities, we have to provide these services without additional staff and without additional resources to the Ministry.

The other challenge that we have is quite apart from our daily responsibilities. We are required to provide protocol and logistical services for all officials in Government tours and visits.

In 2015, we assisted with the National Flag consultations and the consultation on the National Development Plan that had been finalized.

Madam Chairperson and Honourable Members of the Committee, that in brief is the Report in a nutshell from the Ministry of Rural & Maritime Development, and we will be happy to take questions, thank you, Madam Chairperson.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you, Commissioner, for a very comprehensive presentation, it was much enlightening as well. I do not have a lot of questions but may be just only two small questions from my file that need clarifications.

Looking at the roles and responsibilities that your Ministry is assigned to, do you think there is enough awareness on the ground of the services that you provide to the people?

MR. S. TALE.- Thank you, Madam Chairperson, in relation to services, we understand that in a lot of cases, we are only taking the lead role in the rural areas but there are other ministries that are providing other services that are complementary to the services that we provide.

As in the Ministry of Youth, they have their Youth Development Programme; the Ministry of Social Welfare have their programmes of assistance to other communities.

Yes, we think there are sufficient programmes<sup>22</sup> of assistance to the communities. I think the only challenge we have is, and that is one of the reasons that the Integrated Rural Development Framework was developed and approved by Cabinet in 2009, to ensure that we are able to coordinate our programmes so that we are able to fairly distribute the programmes to all the communities in the rural areas.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- The second question, Mr. Tale, is: do you think that the budgetary allocation to your Ministry is sufficient to carry out, accommodate or meet the demands on the ground?

MR. S. TALE.- I know that the obvious question that all Ministry will say is “We do not have sufficient funds”, but I think our answer to your question is, Madam Chairperson, we are doing our best with the funding that we have, understanding that there is only limited piece of cake that is available for all ministries.

We would be happy with additional funding but as of now, we are content to deliver service with the funding that is available to us.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- And the fund utilization is 100 percent?

MR. S. TALE.- Yes, that is a good question but in 2015, frankly, we did not quite achieve the 100 percent. One of the reasons, especially, was with the salaries and wages. There were positions that were made vacant in 2015 and these are some of the things that are beyond our control that resulted in the shortage in the utilization of funds.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- So basically, once you do not utilize those funds, it goes back to the Ministry of Economy?

MR. S. TALE.- Yes, Madam Chairperson.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you very much, Honourable Members have got a lot of questions at hand, so Honourable Members, the floor is all yours.

HON. A.T. VADEL.- Thank you, Madam Chairperson, I wish to thank the Commissioner, Central and the team for coming forward to present their 2015 Annual Report to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs.

My question is on page 15 of the Annual Report, it is in regards to Non-Cane Access Roads: last paragraph, a total balance of \$13,808.75 from the provision of \$277,000.

In line with that, the Rural Housing Assistance Scheme, PAP, the amount of \$2,762.52; and on the other page, Page 14, on the Self-Help Projects, there is an amount of \$4,737.98, balance from the provision. Can you elaborate on those two figures; Non-Cane Access Road that was utilized for the administrative costs in the Division; and the other for Rural Housing: what happened to that balance?

MR. S. TALE.- Thank you, Honourable Member, in relation to the questions for Non-Cane Access Roads, a total balance of \$13,808 was utilized by the Division as administrative costs.

For your information, Madam Chairperson and Honourable Members, the allocations are specifically for construction of roads, especially if you were going to go to outer islands, we needed to ferry the



machines, we needed to provide logistics and<sup>23</sup> this is the reason we need administrative costs for some programmes and that would be the answer to the question by the Honourable Member.

I cannot point out which of the programmes needed this but I could take it that this is possibly the gist of why we needed to ferry equipment to the locations of these projects.

As in Rural Housing Assistance, PAP, we had an amount of \$2,762 being balance from the provisions; what is done in relation to this, it would ring true for the Self-Help Programme.

For the Self-Help Programme, these allocations are held Under Requisition at the Ministry of Economy. What is done through the applications? We vet the applications and submit the request to incur expenditure on the allocations according to the requests. What happens is that, some of these applicants, after we have gone through the whole process and they inform us that they are not able to build their house, or they have moved, especially in PAP, or the applicant has died, because for PAP, it is only for a certain age, I think it is 65 years and above that are eligible for PAP.

As in Rural Housing, some of them in the last minute tell us that they do not want a house. These are some of the challenges that we face that result in the small balances of fund that you see in the delivery of our programmes. Honourable Member, I trust that we have answered your question.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Madam Chairperson, and thank you to the team for the presentation this afternoon.

My question is on Rural Housing: as you will appreciate, this happened after 2015 but again the question is relevant in terms of Rural Housing. How have you assisted those rural areas that were affected by *TC Winston*, bearing in mind that the Government assistance is very small and even right now, they are still living in, if I might say, “very OHS-breach kind of houses”. What kind of assistance can they be given or how can you help them?

I notice your allocation is very small but then your vision and mission is very ambitious, which is all right but I think Government should give you some more money but let us get back to the question which is: how have you assisted the *TC Winston*-affected areas, particularly those that are still in the very health hazard, even risky-housing accommodation right now?

MR. S. TALE.- Thank you, Honourable Member, we will be very frank with your question. As of now, there are two very separate programmes implemented by Government. The assistance to *TC Winston* as being handled by the Ministry of Social Welfare and Women; the programme of Rural Housing Assistance is a stand-alone programme that is not in any way related to the *TC Winston* Assistance Programme.

However, the only assistance that we have provided in this disaster-related issues is trying to ensure that the houses that would be built under the Rural Housing Programme are able to withstand cyclones in whatever category they maybe.

An example is this, just before *TC Winston* affected Fiji, we constructed three rural housing-assisted programmes in Vuma, Ovalau.

Vuma Village in Ovalau was one of the <sup>24</sup>Worst affected areas in Ovalau but fortunately with all the destruction that *TC Winston* incurred on Ovalau, our three rural housing programmes still stand today. That is the only assistance that we are providing in terms of Disaster Relief and Mitigation, thank you, Madam Chairperson.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- This is just a supplementary question on that: do you have any data, looking at the budgetary allocation for the Social Welfare Housing Assistance, on an annual basis, how many people would you be able to assist in all the divisions, in terms of housing assistance?

MR. S. TALE.- Madam Chairperson, I know it is a very small percentage but at the most, we assist two PAP (Poverty Alleviation Projects) per division, and it is a very small allocation. That is basically taken out of our Rural Housing Assistance. Of course, we would certainly be happy if there is a separate allocation for Poverty Alleviation Assistance.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Yes, because the funds were with the Department of Social Welfare before it went to the Commissioners, so basically a lot of people come to us for assistance and we just refer them to the relevant authorities, especially the Commissioners in all the Divisions.

That is why I wanted to know how many families are we able to actually assist because I know there is much more demand. Do you think that you want to lobby for more funding towards this service?

MR. S. TALE.- It is a good point, Madam Chairperson, and we will certainly consider this in our submissions for the new budget.

MADAM CHAIRPERSON.- *Vinaka*, thank you.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Madam Chairperson, I think this is a follow-up to my earlier questions on Page 8. You have your primary roles and responsibilities but I am glad you have added on “Disaster Management” on your slide, so that makes it six.

How do you prioritize or allocate your funding to the divisions, and maybe this is more for the Commissioner, how do they prioritize programmes in the division? For example, for the Eastern Division under their PSI Programmes, I notice that all those projects are in Lomaiviti, and yet, I tell you right now in Vanuabalavu, there are still no waiting sheds.

People have to come and wait under the dilo tree, coconut trees, sometimes there are no waiting areas for them to wait. So how do they prioritize these kinds of projects? Like this one, this is just focused on that and this was in 2015, we are now in 2018, and there has been no waiting shed in that place for as long as I can remember, so how can that become a priority?

Also if those issues are brought forward, brought forward by whom, in terms of enlightening the Commissioner on the priority? I note that you have district advisory councillors, what do you have in maritime islands? Is it through the provincial or *tikina* councils, and if it is through the *tikina*, do those people also get this kind of advisory council enhanced?

MR. S. TALE.- Thank you, Honourable Member, in answer to your question, we have our rural development processes and projects that come through that process when considered for funding. For *iTaukei* communities, they come through the *tikina*, the Provincial Development Boards and the Divisional



Development Boards. This is the process where projects are channeled through before they are considered for submission to the budget; that is for the *iTaukei* communities. Our main contacts are the *Turaga ni koros* whose allowances are paid through the Ministry of the *iTaukei* Affairs.

The same process goes for the DAC (District Advisory Councils) but these are for projects for other ethnicities, they go through the similar process, but under the DAC. These are the two avenues where programmes are submitted through before they are considered for submission through the budgetary process, thank you, Madam Chairperson.

MADAM CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you, Commissioner, Honourable Alvick Maharaj.

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- Madam Chairperson, through you, while talking about the Non-Cane Access Roads Scheme, I would like to actually get the views of the Ministry on road categories. We have seen over the years actually what happened there on the Cane-Access Roads with canes in them. Now people are actually moving towards the main cane access roads that were actually used to lead to their farms and now we have a settlement.

The expiring of leases and unforeseen circumstances have seen that the cane is no longer there. Now, when we actually try to go and get the category out of it, it is still stated as “Sugar Cane Access Road” without any sugar in these days. So, is the Ministry actually working on something in trying to change the category because if you go there, FSC says “No cane there, we can’t build the road”. If you go to the Ministry of Rural Development, then they say, “It is a cane access road, we can’t do it.” So, is there anything planned with regards to this?

MR. S. TALE.- Thank you, Honourable Member, for the very relevant question, if I may just enlighten the Committee on the process that was there before. In the former days, the Divisional Commissioners were responsible for the construction of roads. When the roads are constructed by the Divisional Commissioners, they are handed over to the Department of National Roads which takes care of the roads from there onwards. Unfortunately, that system is no more so what is it now? Really, we are at the mercy of the Fiji Roads Authority. When we provide them with complaints, they look at their inventories, if it is not in their inventory, they tell us, “It is not our road” so, that is where the buck stops.

As in farm roads, the similar situation where we construct farm roads, we handover to the Department of Works and they take care of all the maintenance and upgrading, eventually, to become a national road. But that is not happening anymore but it is an issue. We have our quarterly meetings with the Fiji Roads Authority and it is certainly an issue that we will take up with the Fiji Roads Authority when we next meet, thank you, Honourable Member.

MADAM CHAIRPERSON.- I was about to question what was the way forward, so basically you are in talks with the Fiji Roads Authority, and hopefully something good comes out of it, *vinaka*.

HON. A.T. VADEI.- Thank you, Madam Chairperson, can I refer you, Mr. Tale, to page 16 on the Table of PSIP Progress of 2015.

I find it very difficult to read. Please, can you clarify on the budgetary allocation, the actual expenditure and the physical status? It sounds confusing to me because in the first line “Koro District” budget of \$740,000, actually expenses was 84 percent; physical status, 65 percent Office; and 10 percent

Quarters; as well as the next one, and the next<sup>26</sup> one, till the last one. So, can you explain briefly, how do you read that?

MR. S. TALE.- Thank you, Honourable Member, yes, just an example, for Koro, the cost was about \$740,000, that is the total cost committed for Koro.

As at the end of 2015, the actual fund that had been utilized (payments made) was 84 percent; physical status, 65 percent. Yes, it is difficult to read but I assure you, Madam Chairperson and Honourable Members, that all these works have been fully completed.

Unfortunately for Koro, after having fully completed the works in early 2016, *TC Winston* decided to take it all away again and now we are starting anew with the whole District Office in Koro. As of now, he is operating from his residence because the whole Office was destroyed by *TC Winston*.

MADAM CHAIRPERSON.- So, Commissioner, Sir, when you are saying “physical status of the Office is 65 percent”, what I read into it is, the physical status is 65 percent complete. How do you read that, 65 percent; is it 65 percent complete or it is not 100 percent in completion? How do you read that?

MR. S. TALE.- Madam Chairperson, when the Report was produced, it was at this level but I assure that it was 100 percent by the end of 2015.

MADAM CHAIRPERSON.- When the Report was compiled, it was 65 percent.

MR. S. TALE.- Yes.

MADAM CHAIRPERSON.- So, that 65 percent was basically the physical status at that point in time.

MR. S. TALE.- Yes.

MADAM CHAIRPERSON.- That means that it is 65 percent complete, but later on it was ....

MR. S. TALE.- Some of the cosmetics were left to be done as in the minor works, et cetera.

MADAM CHAIRPERSON.- It was completed later on.

MR. S. TALE.- It was completed, but taken away again by *TC Winston*.

MADAM CHAIRPERSON.- The same was for the Koro Shed?

MR. S. TALE.- Yes, Madam Chairperson.

MADAM CHAIRPERSON.- But at that point in time, it was 80 percent complete, later on it was 100 percent.

MR. S. TALE.- Yes.

MADAM CHAIRPERSON.- So, basically it is all 100 percent now?

MR. S. TALE.- It is all 100 percent, Madam Chairperson.

HON. A.T. VADEL.- To continue on from there, the Suspension Bridge in Levuka was budgeted for \$517,000 but the actual cost was \$107,000; actual expenses, 100 percent; physical status, 100 percent. Can you explain, I cannot comprehend those two figures and the action?

MR. S. TALE.- Thank you, Madam Chairperson and Honourable Member, yes, let me just clarify, when we request for budget, it is based on the costing and the costing that was provided to budget was \$517,000. I understand that the Suspension Bridge was undertaken by the Military and the actual cost came down to \$107,000, and that was savings for government. So, the actual expenditure here is \$107,000, and not \$517,000, thank you, Madam Chairperson.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Madam Chairperson, I am still on that allocation of funds for the project. How can you justify the virement of funds from one division to another when the project in the Division has been prioritized? For example, you move the money from Eastern to Northern, to go and complete the Kubulau District Office.

Again, you also moved the money from Eastern to go and complete the project in the Western Division.

I am trying to be balance that but I am from the maritime and looking at this Report, I do not know whether you have done a roadshow in the maritime areas.

MR. S. TALE.- Yes.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Yes, all right, the maritime in my view, has always not been looked after properly in terms of government services delivery.

Again here, when the Commissioners have prioritized their work then they decide to move it again. So, can you explain what happens to that kind of priority? If Kubulau was not properly budgeted, then why should you go and make the priority of one Division suffer just because that Division did not do their homework properly?

MR. S. TALE.- Thank you, Honourable Members and Madam Chairperson, yes, those are some of the challenges that we face, especially in the maritime areas. I know that a lot of the programmes in Kadavu, in the Eastern Division, maritime areas, have had to be vired to other projects because we were not able to find contractors that came forward to construct the projects in Kadavu, especially in these cases. That is the only reason we have had to vire, it is not because the other projects take precedence over the other project. It is only for the reason that we are not able to deliver those projects for reasons beyond our control.

If you are able to find contractors to construct those projects in the Eastern Division, we would have been very happy. Of course, the Eastern Division remains our priority due to the difficulties that we have but the challenge that we have is securing contractors, ferrying of equipment and all those issues. Those are the reasons, especially in the maritime areas, we have to move the funds to other areas where they can be utilized, thank you, Madam Chairperson.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Madam Chairperson, my apologies, I really cannot buy that explanation. If PBS can ferry their equipment, resources to Vanuabalavu to build the schools that have been mandated

to them through the New Zealand Government,<sup>28</sup> I really do not see any reason why your Ministry cannot fulfill the projects as prioritized by the Division.

HON. R.N. NADALO.- Thank you, Commissioner Central and the team, through you, Madam Chairperson, my first question is on page 11: there is a Table which shows the progress of summary of capital development projects. Would you like to explain the distribution of funds for these programmes in the Central Division by province?

In the other divisions, it is quite clear, in the Western Division, you have a clear breakdown but not in the Central Division.

MR. S. TALE.- Honourable Member, the same process as we go through for Rural Development Process applies to all divisions where the projects are channeled through a development framework and the allocation of funds is done according to the projects that come through that process. We apologize that that is not very clear for the Central Division according to our Report but the process for the allocation and prioritizing of funds within the Ministry applies to all the Divisions, thank you, Honourable Member.

HON. A.T. VADEL.- Thank you, Madam Chairperson, my last question this afternoon: Mr. Tale, on page 51, the Ministry of Rural & Maritime Development - Statement of Loss for the Year, 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015: last paragraph says that the Ministry of Finance also approved the write-off of unverified account balances recorded in the General Ledger System which could not be unsubstantiated as records were no longer available. Can you explain or clarify those issues?

MR. S. TALE.- Thank you, Madam Chairperson and Honourable Members, we had already alluded to the fact that we provide ancillary services which include the provision of permits or licences and those who apply for permits and licences have to pay fees, but due to the nature of our work, when they cease to operate like a small canteen has ceased to operate, they do not tell us that they are no longer in operation, but in our books they still remain and the arrears continue to accumulate.

At the end of every year, we have to make our surveys on those businesses that are still in operation, those that have gone out of business and that is when we request for the write-off of revenues and all the funds that are incurred as a result of us not being able to recover the revenue for those businesses that have gone out of operations.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you, well explained.

HON. R.N. NADALO.- Madam Chairperson, through you, on Page 55, Mr. Commissioner, that reflects similar to the arrears shown in the Table.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Would you like him to repeat the question?

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- Just on Rural Housing Assistance Scheme, I believe there is a certain criteria by which assistance is actually given to people in the rural areas. We were just having a discussion, what if someone meets the criteria but if he or she lives in a peri-urban area, what do we have for them because this scheme is only for rural people. So, is there any kind of assistance through Poverty Alleviation or anything like that that is available to them?

MR. S. TALE.- Thank you, Honourable Member, as you rightly said, this is specifically for those in the rural communities but as for peri-urban areas, though they have access to other sources of assistance as in Housing Authority as of now, we focus on the rural areas.

MADAM CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you, we will allow another question.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Madam Chairperson, just on that question, we have noticed that these frequent rains have brought about flooding. I think the Director for National Disaster is aware of the case that I had raised with him, and there have been some lives lost in the seas. So, is it under your Ministry's responsibility or how do you work with the rural areas, rural settlements, rural villages, even in the maritime, in terms of the problem that is more to do with drainage, et cetera.

MR. S. TALE.- Honourable Member, this too is considered through our development process where drainage needed to be attended to.

Previously, we had the Drainage Boards that were responsible for drains, especially in the peri-urban areas and some rural communities.

Now, we have the Ministry of Waterways that will become responsible for this but the process still remains. It is identified by the *Turaga ni Koro*, district advisory councilors and channeled through. In cases where we do not have to wait for the *Tikina* council meetings, we have the District Offices and the Provincial Administrators and the Rokos that are responsible for looking at issues that needed urgent assistance, thank you, Madam Chairperson.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you very much, Honourable Members and thank you very much, Commissioner, Central.

Honourable Members, today we have with us the Commissioner of the Central Division, Mr. Setareki Tale; Director, NDMO, Mr. Anare Leweniqila; Director, Corporate Services, Madam Ana Tora; and Principal Administration Officer, Development, Madam Raijieli Bakewa. Thank you very much to all of you.

I know, Mr. Commissioner, Sir, the work you are doing needs a lot of planning, administration work, manpower and with the great challenges you face, I congratulate you on your achievements and I wish you a great 2018, with greater achievements.

Thank you very much for the answers, your time and your presentation, *vinaka vakalevu*.

MR. S. TALE.- Thank you, Madam Chairperson and Honourable Members, thank you for the opportunity to clarify issues in relation to our Annual Report 2015, *vinaka saka vakalevu*.

The Committee adjourned at 3.00 pm.

