



STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE

Review Report of the Committee on the Ministry of Defence, National Security and Immigration 2015 Annual Report



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Chair's Foreword

I am pleased to present the review Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence on the *Ministry of Defence, National Security and Immigration 2015 Annual Report*.

The Standing Committee is established under Section 109(2)(e) of the Standing Orders (SO) of the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji.

The purpose of the review was to scrutinise the *Ministry of Defence, National Security and Immigration 2015 Annual Report* specifically on the department's operations and administration.

The Ministry of Defence, National Security and Immigration (or "the Ministry ") has embarked on reforming the National Security Sector and manage global arrangements, defending national security interests and maintaining Fiji's contribution to global peace.

The task of strengthening the National Security Apparatus is critical at a time when threats to the nation will continue to grow. The rise in radicalisation of extremist groups and greater instability globally to the threat of terrorism, transnational crimes and rise of pandemics, asylum seekers and Climate Change has made the world uncertain.

As part of its new strategic direction the Ministry will devote resources and policy support mechanisms to improve the defence and security sectors. This is part of improving Fiji's sustainable development, expanding economic growth, protecting the country's borders and enhancing the quality of life for Fiji citizens and visitors to our shores.

The Committee commends the good work of the Ministry and achievements reported in its 2015 Annual Report. While applauding the achievements of the service, the Committee had identified some opportunities for improvements. These are outlined in the report.

I take this opportunity to thank the Honourable Minister and Permanent Secretary including all staff for a job well done and their dedication to national service.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, I submit this report to the Parliament.



Hon. Netani Rika
Chairperson

List of Acronyms

EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FPF	Fiji Police Force
LO	Legal Officer
NIA	National Intelligence Agency
NSC	National Security Council
NSDRC	National Security and Defence Review Committee
NSS	National Security Strategy
RFMF	Republic of Fiji Military Forces
SAR	Search and Rescue
SO	Standing Orders
SDG(s)	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
UN	United Nations

Introduction

The Committee had gone through the Annual Report and identified key areas that need to be assessed and these included the Ministry budgetary allocation, policies, programs and projects of 2015, human resource development and the overall administration.

On 18th October 2017 the Ministry Executives made a presentation to the Committee on the operations and administration of the Ministry in 2015.

In summary, the information for this report was obtained through:

1. A thorough assessment by the Standing Committee on the Ministry of Defence, National Security and Immigration 2015 Annual Report.
2. An oral presentation by the Ministry executive management.

The content of the Ministry of Defence, National Security and Immigration 2015 Annual Report are listed below:

- 1) Introduction.
- 2) Ministry's Achievements for 2015.
- 3) Challenges.
- 4) Budgetary Constraints.
- 5) Strategic Direction and the Way Forward.

The Report is divided into three parts:

- I) **Part One** covers the Findings of the report to Parliament
- II) **Part Two** focuses on the Committee recommendations
- III) **Part Three** covers the Conclusion.

Part One

Findings

The Committee's findings are outlined below:

1. The Ministry has been instrumental in the enhancement of the Search and Rescue (SAR) machinery in Fiji. This includes the revision of the SAR Manual which is being coordinated by a working group comprising of representatives from various respondent agencies. The SAR Manual is divided into three classes which includes:
 - i) Aeronautical SAR,
 - ii) Maritime SAR,
 - iii) Land SAR.
2. In cases of SAR Mission there are minor challenges in terms of approving funds in emergency operations. In addition the committee noted that Fiji has not ratified the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR) 1979.
3. The Ministry informed the Committee that it has insufficient office space for frontline customer service. The Committee also noted the need for proper record keeping of the Ministry files and information.
4. The Department of Immigration faces human resource challenges in terms of lack of manpower at our borders. The increased international traffic at Fiji's main international gateway - Nadi Airport, and the impending expansion of Nausori Airport will put pressure on the Department in terms of providing frontline immigration services in terms of its manpower.
5. The Ministry has highlighted delays in timely responses from the Solicitor General's Office in regards to the drafting and vetting of legislation, particularly international conventions pertaining to Defence. The Committee agrees that this process needs to be streamlined and is suggesting that the Ministry requires Legal Officer to deal with relevant domestic and international legislation on Defence and Immigration. This would assist in the streamlining of the process and ensure that important laws and international conventions are efficiently and effectively adopted.

6. The Committee noted that a budget of \$100,000 was allocated for Fiji Day Celebrations in 2015. According to the Ministry, the actual amounts spent for 2015 was \$145,317.65 and \$45,317.65 was sourced from Head 50. For the year 2016 the approved budget was \$100,000 and the actual expenditure was \$161,358.43 with additional expenses for the Rio Celebration which was sourced from Head 50. For the 2017 Fiji Day Celebration which was held in Nadi, the budget amount was \$150,000 and the actual expenditure was \$450,000 and the balance of \$300,000 was sourced as virement from Head 50.

Part Two

Recommendations

1. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be part of future annual corporate plans and annual reports.
2. To increase the budget allocation for search and rescue (SAR) given it covers Aeronautical SAR, Maritime SAR and Land SAR. In addition the Ministry should consider flexible means in the approval of funds in emergency operations at the request of line agencies.
3. Digitalization of administrative and registry files through information technology and communications systems. Smart use of current office space through innovation to boost customer service.
4. Strategic human resources planning and management to address staffing needs at the frontlines of border control.
5. Dedicated Legal Officer to be stationed at the line ministry to provide legal advice and initial vetting of legislations.
6. The trend of virement for this allocation shows that the Ministry budget for Fiji Day Celebration needs to be increased and pegged on actual expenditures.
7. Due to Fiji's COP 23 Presidency it is imperative that the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR), 1979 is to be ratified. This will align Governments call to accept climate refugees, persons with no state and issues of statelessness as part of its obligation to the Paris Agreement.

Gender Analysis

The Parliament of Fiji Standing Orders 110 (2) requires the Committee to give full consideration to the principle of gender equality so as to ensure all matters are considered with regard to the impact and benefit on both men and women.

The Ministry of Defence, National Security and Immigration have reasonable number of women occupying senior and supervisory roles within the ministry.

A gender analysis of the ministry is important to determine the gender footprint within the work place.¹

¹ Gender breakdown of the Ministry as attached in the Appendix.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Committee noted that the Ministry has made some initiatives in progressing the SDGs. The SDGs relevant to the ministry are:

SDG No. 1 No Poverty

The Ministry was instrumental in provision of papers that directly addressed the status of poverty in Fiji. These were accomplished via the gathering of raw data through the assistance of agencies that looks after poverty alleviation, monitoring of Fiji's economy and the analysis of the data collection to project and make recommendations on the way forward for Government in addressing poverty issues. The Department of Immigration facilitates investor permits and related immigration matters for foreign investment in the country. The Department's role thus creates a conducive environment for economic growth and confidence where more employment opportunities are created to reduce poverty.

SDG No.13 Climate Action

The Ministry of Defence whilst responsible for the security of the nation will also facilitate Fiji's role as one of the first countries in the world that will accept people as climate refugees into the country to give them refugee status for Pacific island countries that can be submerged completely underwater due to the effects of climate change.²

SDG No. 16

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

² Statement by the Attorney General on 2nd November, 2017
<http://www.fbc.com.fj/fiji/56213/fiji-will-accept-refugees;-ag>

Part Three

Conclusion

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence has fulfilled its mandate approved by Parliament which was to examine the Ministry of Defence, National Security and Immigration 2015 Annual Report. The Committee has conducted its review and formulated the findings with regard to the Ministry's performance in 2015.

The Committee report is bi-partisan and contributions from both sides have provided the final report.

The recommendations highlight areas of concern which include the Ministry's budgetary allocation in terms of operations and administration.

The key areas highlighted by the Committee in its findings would improve the overall performance of the Ministry in the future.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

VERBATIM REPORTS

**Verbatim Notes
of the Standing Committee on
Foreign Affairs & Defence**

Submittees:

1. Ministry of Defence & National Security
2. Department of Immigration

Wednesday, 18th October, 2017

VERBATIM NOTES OF MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE , HELD IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM (EAST WING), PARLIAMENT PRECINCTS, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, ON WEDNESDAY 18TH OCTOBER, 2017 AT 2:37 P.M.

- Submittees:** 1. Ministry of Defence and National Security
2. Department of Immigration

In Attendance:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| 1. Lt. Col. Ilai Moceica | : | Deputy Secretary |
| 2. Ms. Silina Cama | : | Acting Director National Security |
| 3. Ms. Litia Saumaka | : | Acting Director Immigration |
| 4. Ms. Nanise Buruso | : | Senior Immigration Officer |
| 5. Mr. Ifereimi Dakunikuila | : | Senior Immigration Officer |
| 6. Ms. Sainitiki Ravuso | : | Acting Principal Intelligence & Assessment |
| 7. Ms. Arieta Rokobera | : | Acting Senior Accounts Officer |
| 8. Mr. Jioji Washington | : | Acting Principal Admin Security Forces |
| 9. Ms. Maria Nabuli | : | Acting Senior Admin Officer |
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MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we have with us this afternoon the team from the Ministry of Defence, National Security, as well as the Department of Immigration. Leading the team is the Deputy Secretary, Lieutenant Colonel Moceica, and accompanying him are Ms. Silina Cama; Ms. Litia Saumaka; Ms. Nanise Buruso; Mr. Ifereimi Dakunikuila; Ms. Sainitiki Ravuso; Ms. Arieta Rokobera; Mr. Joji Washington and Ms. Maria Nabuli.

I take this opportunity to welcome you DS and your team this afternoon and we are grateful for your attendance.

What we propose to do is, we will give you the floor straight after this to make your submission and presentation, after which there will be a question and answer time from Members of the Standing Committee. When the official part is over then at least we can discuss some other issues around the table, which are unofficial obviously.

With those few words, once again thank you for your attendance this afternoon and we look forward to your presentation and probably some questions just to clarify a few things before we have our afternoon tea.

With those few words, I now give the floor to you Deputy Secretary.

LT. COL. I. MOCEICA.- Honourable Chair, and Honourable Members of the forum. good afternoon. On behalf of the team, I thank Honourable Chair and Members of the forum for providing us a space to be here this afternoon.

Further, Sir, I would like to apologise on behalf of our PS who is away on an engagement. He is engaged in the COP 23 activity, so unfortunately he is unable to be here and also the Director Immigration is on duty tour overseas.

Sir, this afternoon my presentation will be covered under the following scope. We will basically touch on a very broad base overview, roles and responsibilities of the Ministry, organisational structure, 2015 Ministry outputs, achievements, challenges and the way forward.

Sir, as it is understood to the forum, under the responsibility of the Ministry or the Minister for Defence and National Security, the laws that govern the work of the Ministry covers in total the ambit of eight laws or rules and regulations:

- The Police Act (Cap 85);
- Public Order Act (Cap 20);
- Public Safety Act (Cap 19);
- Republic of Fiji Military Forces Act (Cap 81);
- Security Industry Decree 2010;
- Immigration Act 2003 and Regulations;
- Passport Act 2003 and Regulations; and
- Citizens Decree 2009 and Regulations.

Further, Chair, the functions of the Permanent Secretary is subject to Section 127 (3), (7), and (8) of the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji. The Permanent Secretary has the following functions, with the functions well clear, as articulated in the Constitution.

Chair, to the next page are the roles and responsibilities for the Ministry of Defence. A key role, as you understand, is the maintenance of peace and stability in Fiji and it is delivered through the formulation, implementation and review of policy initiatives, programme and projects on matters of national security, public order and defence.

In addition to that, Mr. Chair, the Fiji National Security System is managed in the Ministry as well and it is delivered through coordination of all National Security and Defence Council meetings, along with the subservient National and Departmental meetings. You understand, Sir, the provision of security and intelligence advice to Government leaders and key security stakeholders.

The provision of strategic guidance for Fiji's peacekeeping missions is where key stakeholders within the Ministry itself, giving intelligence advice on the security which practically covers the nation and also the security maritime challenges that we have. The Ministry also administers search and rescue operations and coordination of the national events that we do have.

The provision of strategic guidance on national peacekeeping missions under the UN and non-UN mission as you are well familiar with Chair and this is a welcome to our foreign policy focus, in order that we continue to elevate the leverage in our peacekeeping mission is the officer of the Fiji Permanent representative of the United Nation.

In addition, the Ministry is also responsible for immigration matters. This is delivered through the provision of immigration services such as processing and issuance of passports, citizenships, visas and permits and enforcement of Fiji Immigration Laws through identification, detention and deportation of illegal immigrants.

Sir, the Ministry's roles and responsibilities are implemented through the various division within the Ministry Headquarters and the Department of Immigration.

The Ministry is well assisted by other Government agencies and this is something that augurs well with the Ministry because we lack the expertise in these areas and we are supported well by these development partners, other stakeholders within the jurisdiction of Government, and also in the corporate sectors.

Sir, the organisational structure as presented in 2015 is the Ministry's old structure.

I shall touch on the 2015 Ministry's Output and this is consistent with the Annual Corporate Plan. We had generated the 2015 Annual Report, focusing on deliverables which we had articulated 17 outputs in total.

Sir, these outputs covered deliverables that the Ministry attended, with a total 17 outputs. For example:

1. Portfolio leadership;
2. Implementation of projects and conduct of National Events;
3. Review of Immigration, National Security and Defence Sector;
4. Effective and Efficient management of National Security Environment;
5. Security intelligence advice on terrorism;
6. Consultation and enactment of legal framework to counter terrorism;
7. Develop the National Counter Terrorism Plan;
8. Strategically phase- the establishment of National Intelligence Agency;
9. Enhance global integration and international relations;
10. Review of all existing and development of new bilateral and multilateral immigration, security, defence agreements and arrangements;
11. Review of existing immigration laws and effectively enforced;
12. Assist defence and security forces in their capability planning;
13. Review and improve the Ministry's service delivery;
14. Effective Implementation of training and development for all officers;
15. Poverty Reduction;
16. Ensuring environmental sustainability; and
17. Synchronising gender mainstreaming in the Ministry's Policies.

Sir, we are proud to mention that the focus on the above deliverables were consistently monitored by the Implementation Coordination Office (ICO). During the reporting period, the Ministry were rated 81.22 percent in the first quarter; 84.64 percent in the second quarter and 91.81 percent in the third quarter. Unfortunately, we were not able to go to the full length of the fourth quarter for obvious reasons.

On the achievements, the Ministry was proud to have delivered effectively the following:

- Establishment of the National Security and Defence Review Secretariat to develop the National Security Strategy.
- Three MOUs and MOAs signed with Indonesian National Narcotics Board; Nauru Police and Lithuania;
- MSG Leaders on the Humanitarian Emergency Response Coordination and Lahatoro Declaration;
- *Operation Grapple* -- pay out to surviving ex-servicemen and their dependents;
- Coordination of the Job Evaluation Exercise for the Fiji Police Force;
- Approval and construction of six welfare homes for the families of the fallen heroes of the 2000 upheaval;
- Signing of MOU between the Department of Immigration and the Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations (NEC);
- Recognition for outstanding Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) award for Government Ministries and Departments Category;
- Department of Immigration was awarded the Fiji Business Excellence Award achievement at the Sheraton, Denarau; and
- 2015 Immigration Annual Award Night held at the Relax Resort, Nadi.

Sir, those achievement mentioned obviously came with challenges and if I may be allowed to highlight those challenges that we faced way back in 2005 and the implementation in subsequent years:

- Set-up of interim secretariat to administer the implementation of the National Security Strategy;
- Not able to predict the occurrence of search and rescue incidents;
- Lack of manpower to deliver the services required;
- Lack of technological advancement and innovations (modern system);
- Insufficient office space for customer service and registry for shortage of files;
- Need for a dedicated training unit and appropriate training space;
- Delay of timely responses from SG's office; and
- Budget Constraints.

As a way forward that will look at mitigating the challenges that we have encountered, we are focused on the following:

- Public awareness and consultations on matters significant to the Ministry's functions to all Fijians both locally and abroad, and that is one of the functions that we had been addressing innovatively;
- Strengthening of the Office of the NSDR Secretariat;
- Development of two White Papers which have been submitted to SGO and are still in draft forms;
- The Ministry intends to procure publication and equipment to enhance the SAR (Search and Rescue) Mechanism;
- Explore opportunities for assistance from donor agencies, in terms of acquisition of advance technology, office equipment and capacity building;
- Establishment of a dedicated training unit and space;
- Need for dedicated legal expert within the Ministry; and
- Consideration of additional budgetary allocation for unplanned activities, especially with national events.

Sir, to conclude and to speak with all modesty, that practically covers the summary of the report that is presented here this afternoon.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you very much Deputy Secretary for the presentation and now we have come to the question and answer session and before that, I would like to convey our appreciation. Looking at the organisational structure, it has now changed because this Committee raised the issue of where was the RFMF and the COMPOL - the Commander of the RFMF in your last Annual Report? And now it has appeared, it is meaningful. They come under the Ministry of Defence and they are there Commander RFMF and Commissioner of Police, so this makes everything holistic, and thank you for that.

Honourable Members, it is question time so just raise your hand if you want to ask a question. Honourable Howard Politini.

HON. H.R.T. POLITINI.- Thank you Mr Chairman and Deputy PS for that comprehensive presentation.

I was interested in one part of the Annual Report here under the National Intelligence Agency, and I believe it is an agency that is reporting the security situation on the ground back to the Minister and the PM. But also for me, it was a bit of a grey area when you came to poverty reduction.

As you are all aware, we are currently in line with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and I believe it comes under SDG 1, which is no poverty.

What are the strategies in place in terms of your work in reducing poverty? But from what I have read here, it is just collecting data from relevant agencies and I believe that one of the agencies could be the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation, so, I would like you to enlighten our Committee on this part. Thank you.

LT. COL. I. MOCEICA.- Thank you. If I may explain and respond to the Honourable Member. The Ministry contributes to poverty reduction through the announcement of the 2015 Budget when Government announced the removal of the minimum investment requirement of \$50,000 to zero.

The Department of Immigration is using investors permit to foreigners who are eligible to obtain the necessary permits. In that regard, Sir, that provides incentive for foreign investors to invest in Fiji and that essentially creates employment opportunities, depending on where the Government focuses in providing those incentives to areas in Fiji, and more importantly, providing security and stability in Fiji as a whole.

It practically gives confidence to investors to come and invest in Fiji and to contribute essentially in a wider scope to the economic spin of the country, the economic spin off to those who can be provided opportunities for work; living and generating income to those who do the work better; specialisation, like the Poverty Monitoring Unit, contributing towards the rural development; looking at the poverty threshold to those out in the community that are met and that essentially is what the Ministry is providing under the focus of the Department of Immigration, reducing that threshold for the investment, and also the security and stability of the nation. Thank you, Sir.

HON. H.R.T. POLITINI.- This is something I would recommend in your next Annual Report, probably to be specific on how are you people reducing poverty. That is good, you have just enlightened us on reducing the threshold in terms of foreign investors.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Tui Namosi.

HON. RATU S. MATANITOBUA.- Honourable Chair, through you, I thank the Deputy Secretary and the team. How does the National Intelligence Agency function in the Ministry?

LT. COL. I. MOCEICA.- If I may respond to the question, currently as you may have understood, initially, we had the Fiji Intelligence Service and subsequently to the changes of government, we saw the demise of that agency. That was not the priority focus in the change of Government and that was placed on the back burner until that was agreed to by the Security and the Defence Council for NSS.

The NSS, like what is covered in the report is under review now and they have established a secretariat and with that there are four White Papers that will be developed in the Ministry and one of which is the Intelligence White Paper, which practically and broadly covers the functions and the mandate of the intelligence agency for Government.

In the meantime, Sir, we do have a National Assessment Division which currently engages in intelligence gathering work and they provide advice to senior Government leadership on the work in that space.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Howard Politini.

HON. H.R.T. POLITINI.- I think I just picked this up as you were reading through in terms of your challenges. I think the question is, first of all we are an island community, surrounded by vast ocean and I picked up this one in terms of the Search and Rescue mechanisms. The question is, how many naval vessels do you have in active service, just in case a major maritime disaster occurs out in the ocean? What is there to respond to this? Thank you.

LT. COL. I. MOCEICA.- We do have one operation right now and the bilateral agreement that we have in complementing the gaps that we do have in focusing on our maritime security space, we engage with New Zealand. As we understand, *HMNZS Hawea* was here for the last six months and with the senior military leadership, they are in talks with their Australia and New Zealand counterparts to have this come on board.

Sir, for your information, with our bilateral engagement, we have been provided allowances for surveillance to fly within our waters and also support from other small island Pacific countries, with the capabilities to support the work of our search and rescue operations.

More importantly with the technology that we have nowadays, the RCO, the Rescue Operation Centre, which is in place at the naval division, they have practically improved the coverage of our sea space and working in tandem with Vodafone and Digicel in trying to locate specifically should there be hazards in terms of mobilising these resources.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Bulitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, through you Chair and thank you DS for the presentation. Just a question, whether the challenges you have, coupled with this 2015 Annual Report, are they the current challenges that are faced in the Ministry at the moment?

LT. COL. I. MOCEICA.- With the challenges that we face from 2015, we are progressively working on these and there have been positive inclinations in support of these challenges through the works that have been done by different sectors.

The National Security Strategy has been an element that we look forward to, to strengthen the Ministry. It practically strengthens the Ministry in the way it is mandated to conduct its role in defence and national security in the sea space, land space, and more importantly in supporting our peacekeeping operations policy with both the UN and non-UN missions. More importantly Sir, the manpower that we lack, this will also be addressed by the National Security Strategy, in terms of the manpower that is required in this new organisation.

With the search and rescue, we have been talking in tandem with the Navy in our support for them and recently, they acquired a software that is required by them to increase, improve and enhance the visibility of their work, more importantly in the sea space coverage.

With the technological advancement; e-passport, that is one area that we are looking forward to and the systems, as you may be aware are currently progressively worked out with the improvement of our international airport, and that is something that the Department of Immigration has been working tirelessly in trying to improve and modernise the systems that we have, in hastening the processes through our border controls. More importantly, because of the vast threats in transnational crimes, that is one of the areas of our focus, which we have improved those technologies in our borders.

So, that basically are some of the challenges that we face and now with the delay of time responses from SG, we understand that they do have their core responsibilities and deliverables such as these reforms that are taking place in Government, looking at improving businesses processes.

Lastly, Sir, with the budget, one classical example was relocating or having the celebrations done in Nadi where close to \$4.5 million was given and sourced from within the Budget Ministry in looking at relocating the national event and reaching out to Fijians.

We understand that as a Ministry, it is Government's investment in people and we look at the propensity of that dollar spent, the \$4.5 million changing hands with all the people that benefited from that, an agreed investment for Government. Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Tui Namosi.

HON. RATU S. MATANITOBUA.- (inaudible)... in the RFMF and Fiji Police Force defence and security planning? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

LT. COL. I. MOCEICA.- Mr. Chairman, I have spent 30 years in the military and have been spending a lot of time out in the Middle-East, sometimes I have hearing problems, can the Honourable Member repeat his question?

HON. RATU S. MATANITOBUA.- Thank you, Mr Chairman, does the Ministry assist the RFMF and the Fiji Police Force in the defence and security planning?

LT. COL. I. MOCEICA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the support and assistance the ministry is providing to both institutions is to support them through their bilateral and we understand they do have expert in those specialisation in terms of operational planning. However, what the Government is currently doing, or what the Ministry is currently doing is to work on the Defence White Paper. The Defence White Paper is one of the critical policy documents of defence and national security that supports the work of both institutions.

In terms of capability development with the resources that need to be used are practically covered within and the framework of the Defence White Paper.

Sir, as I had alluded to, the Defence White Paper and the Police White Paper are currently in its draft form and it is with the CEO for review. These are the two papers that formulates the policy for Police planning, and I understand this is the contribution of the Ministry in providing guidance and direction to the two institutions. Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Deputy Secretary, the question is, what is the current status of the Arms Trade Treaty? I believe this is one of the issues that is being currently discussed.

MR. J. WASHINGTON.- Thank you Mr. Chairman, currently we have forwarded a Draft Cabinet Paper to the Office of the Solicitor General for Fiji to review its position. The current position is abstention and we have conducted a few workshops in Fiji with the inclusion of the RFMF senior officers. So, after going through those workshops, they have agreed in principle for Fiji to endorse, so it was just the RFMF that had made its reservations on some of the provisions in the Article.

So, that has been cleared and we have forwarded the paper to Office of the SG and we are just awaiting the clearance from that office, then we will proceed to Cabinet. Once Cabinet endorses that, we might need to deposit the instruments as soon as possible. Thank you Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. As we now discuss the 2015 Annual Report probably we will get out of that box and just a few questions. Like in 2015, the Ministry of Defence and Immigration were in the same Ministry. Now that the Department of Immigration has moved to the Office of the Prime Minister and we know the proper connection with the Ministry of Defence and Immigration.

Now, that you have been moved to the Office of the Prime Minister, what are the challenges, in security issues, in connecting to the Department of Immigration?

LT. COL. I. MOCEICA.- Mr. Chairman, thank you for the question. Obviously as you will understand and obviously be well familiar with are the security challenges that we have. We are trying to mitigate those security challenges because of the de-linkages, if I may say. We have established an intelligence community within Fiji and we get our stakeholders from the border security, including Customs, FRCS, Immigration, Fisheries and the Military Police.

Sir, this intelligence security network practically covers and overlaps, and complements the gaps that we have in those areas and this was one of the concerns that we have addressed; the security in our borders and the capacity building in that regard. In terms of transnational crime, it is addressed through that.

In the last financial year, the Department of Intelligence from Australia came to conduct a five-day workshop, likewise, the security agency from New Zealand came to conduct that workshop, spearheading the focus in complementing security gaps in the area, in trying to cover those spaces, which include the maritime space as well as land space in the threat that we anticipate. *Vinaka* Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Bulitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, just to follow up on your question in regards to the Department of Immigration, now they are under the Office of the Prime Minister, given the shift in the structure, given that the organisational structure that we currently have in the 2015 Annual Report, I think nearly 50 percent of the whole structure has now been reduced in strength, moving to the Office of the Prime Minister.

In regards to coordination and implementation of joint programmes or other policies that do cross through both ministries, how are we coping with that - the Department of Immigration?

MS. L. DAUMAKA.- Thank you Mr. Chairman. For us in the Department of Immigration, we moved across to the Office of the Prime Minister in September 2016 and we feel that our role is more aligned to the Ministry of Defence and National Security, being one of the security stakeholders, and we are trying our very best to meet up to the expectation of the office of the Prime Minister, but we normally refer to the Ministry of Defence if we need assistance as our mother ministry before. Thank you.

HON. RATU S. MATANITOBUA.- *Vinaka*, Honourable Chair. I thank DS, as a military man like you, the Fiji Police Force and the RFMF comes under the same ministry. Last

three years, three Annual Reports have come to us from the Fiji Police Force. My question is, why is the RFMF not submitting any Annual Report until today?

LT. COL. I. MOCEICA.- Honourable Chair, if I may respond to the Honourable Member's question. I practically take on the back foot on this report. I understand that when I was at RFMF Strategic Headquarters, this was one of the challenges that we faced in getting submissions from the subordinate elements, but Sir, I can get back on that once I get the information in regards to the question that is posed this afternoon. Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, DS. Just for your information I have shed some information to your Minister this morning. So, he is working on it.

LT. COL. I. MOCEICA.- Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Well, the Government is more focussed on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and one of the goals that are being enforced is the gender analysis, and even in Parliament, in every report we do, there is a special sub-heading on gender analysis. So, just an open question, how do you fare with that in your ministry?

LT. COL. I. MOCEICA.- Honourable Chair, thank you for the question. The Ministry has a gender mainstreaming policy developed in 2015 and this has been implemented across our Ministry, including the consideration of women participation in meetings and overseas training and that is something that is well-embraced within the Ministry.

The Ministry of Defence is currently working on a gender policy which will lead to gender mainstreaming and ensuring the gender sensitization is also promoted within the draft gender policy that will consider women, peace and security which top contributing countries are expected to promote under a certain UN Resolution, Sir.

In addition, stats are required to have national election plans for women, peace and security and several UN Security Council Resolutions will inform the development of gender policies and these include Resolution 1325 and other subsequent resolution: protection against sexual violence; women in peacekeeping, ending in punitive gender advisers; and strengthening women's role in all stages of conflict.

Bi-annually, we do have members of the Ministry invited to the Australian National University to participate specifically in this area and that has been welcomed by the ministry, ministry representation to this forum, and also the RFMF.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Still on the SDGs. there are 17 SDGs. When we were perusing your 2015 Annual Report, we had also looked at the 17 SDGs and we were focussing on SDG 16, which is peace, justice and strong institutions, and I believe that it augurs well with your Ministry.

So, we are looking forward, probably in your next Annual Report that you will include some of those relevant SDGs that are relevant to your Ministry because we view SDG16 as one of the top for the Ministry of Defence and Immigration because of your role as defence, you need to maintain the peace and justice and have strong institutions as well.

So, those are the few things that we will be looking at in your future Annual Reports - the 17th SDGs, which one is quite relevant and prioritise accordingly. Honourable Member, is there any other question?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Mr. Chair, just one of the challenges I think was highlighted by the Deputy Secretary, probably it is just to be part of our findings and recommendations of our report because the Ministry deals with a lot of legislation, probably not only the Ministry of Defence but there are other Ministries too seek legal opinion and also await for other amendments in legislation, pending approval or for legal recommendations by the Office of the Solicitor-General.

The need for some kind of independent legal expertise to be stationed at the line ministry, to provide the initial vetting of those legislations. Probably I think that is part of the way forward too. Yes, we will also agree and that is an immediate need by the Ministry and that could be part of the recommendation.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Bulitavu; do you have any comment, DS?

LT. COL. I. MOCEICA.- Honourable Chair, I would like to again thank you for the point that has been raised and that is one of the areas that is in need right now because everything is being done within the ministry. I understand across all ministries, it has to go for clearance and legal vetting through Office of the SG. If we do have the capacity within and that will hasten the process - the lengthy and tedious process of going through the clearance.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- For information, we will include that in our report. If there is no other question DS and your team or is there any other issue that we need to know, where we probably we can assist you in?

LT. COL. I. MOCEICA.- Mr. Chair, thank you again for this afternoon and again on behalf of the ministry and the team who are here today, I would like to sincerely thank you for providing us the space and accepting the responses that we have provided - our response to the Annual Report of the Ministry for 2015. And with those words, we would like to again thank you for this afternoon session. *Vinaka saka.*

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, DS. On behalf of the Honourable Members and the Secretariat, we take this opportunity to convey our appreciation. We have not felt so secure like this afternoon, so we thank you for that.

So, we appreciate DS, we know that this is your first time here and you did well - thank you for that. We also look forward to more meetings in the future and to the staff from the Immigration, despite being under the Office of the Prime Minister, you have made it your effort to be present this afternoon and we thank you for that. Also, convey our appreciation to your Director. Finally, our appreciation for the last Independence Celebration, you did well, even though we heard that most sugarcane farmers in Nadi were probably a bit confused after hearing those big guns been fired.

Despite the weather being hot and humid, you did well in organising the Fiji Day Celebrations and we look forward to the Remembrance Day that is coming up and I believe you have planned well for that.

So, please convey our appreciation to the staff in the ministry, both Defence and Immigration, and wish you all the best in your endeavours and we look forward for more encounters in the future when discussing your Annual Reports and in other meetings as well.

So, with those few words once again, *vinaka vakalevu* and convey our appreciation to the Honourable Minister as well.

The Committee Interview adjourned at 326 p.m.

**Verbatim Notes
of the Standing Committee on
Foreign Affairs & Defence**

Submittee: Naval Division

Wednesday, 8th November, 2017

VERBATIM NOTES OF MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE, HELD IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM (EAST WING), PARLIAMENT PRECINCTS, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, ON WEDNESDAY 8TH NOVEMBER, 2017 AT 11.42 A.M.

Submittee : NAVAL DIVISION

In Attendance:

- 1) Mr. Marika Vosawale (Senior Communications Officer)
- 2) Mr. Timoci Natuva (Operations Officer)
- 3) Mr. Joseva Tunidau (Director Maritime Surveillance)

MR. CHAIRMAN. - Honourable Members, with us this morning is the team from the Naval Division.

(Introduction of submittees by Honourable Chairman)

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, I take this wonderful opportunity to welcome you here this morning. Thank you for responding to our humble invitation and we look forward to your presentation. After the presentation, there will be a question and answer session for the Honourable Members just to clarify a few issues and probably some questions in regards to the Naval Division as a whole. So with no further ado, I now give the floor to Mr. Vosawale.

MR. M. VOSAWALE. - *Vinaka vakalevu.* Mr. Chairman. On behalf of the Commander Navy who is not here at the moment as he is away overseas with the Commander RFMF, we thank you for the welcoming words this morning. We are so happy to be here, to clarify some of the questions with regard to the Search and Rescue (SAR).

Those questions that were put forward to us, for our submission, we prepared some of the write-up, we will not be doing any power-point submission but we will be reading from the text that we have. Maybe I will ask my team to pass around copies of our submission.

Mr. Chairman with me this morning is my Operation Officer for the Navy, Lt. Commander Natuva and also Lt Tunidau, who is in charge of the Maritime Surveillance Centre, the Director Surveillance Centre.

Without further ado, I will continue with the submission this morning with the introduction.

Introduction

Fiji is a maritime nation with its population spread across its 300 islands in approximately 1.3 million square kilometres of ocean and this can make communication or coordination difficult at times. Therefore, we need to recognise that we face some significant challenges, given our remote location and our responsibility over extremely large sea areas.

As the maritime component of the RFMF, the Republic of Fiji Navy is poised to support any maritime SAR operation in Fiji. This is one of our core roles which defines our existence, that is, to provide SAR support and services.

The Fiji Navy, which is responsible for the functions of the RCC Suva, coordinates Class 2 SAR Activity within Fiji's SAR Region (Fiji SRR). This includes all SAR operations associated with:

- Distressed person or surface vessel out at sea; and
- Activated distress beacons (EPIRB and PLB).

Legally Binding Instruments

These are some of the legally binding instruments that we have. Although Fiji is yet to sign and ratify the International Convention on Maritime SAR, 1979, there are other international treaties which Fiji has acceded to. These treaties have legally binding responsibilities regarding SAR that we are obligated to fulfil and the following conventions summarises a few of them:

- Convention on the High Seas, 1958: Fiji acceded to the treaty on 27th March, 1971, with the responsibility of every coastal State shall promote the establishment and maintenance of an adequate SAR service regarding safety on and over sea.
- International Convention on Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974: Acceded to the treaty on 4th March, 1983, which contains arrangement for distress communication; arrangement of SAR coordination; establishment of SAR facilities; adequate means of locating and rescuing persons in distress; make information available for the SAR organisation, and passenger vessels SAR co-operation plans.
- The United Nation Convention on the Law of the Sea; Fiji signed and ratified on 10th December 1982 which states that every State shall require the master for the ship flying its flag, insofar as he can do so without serious danger to the ship and crew or the passengers:
 - to render assistance to any person found at sea in danger of being lost; and
 - to proceed with all possible speed to the rescue of persons in distress, if informed of their need of assistance, insofar as such action may reasonably be expected of him.

Fiji Navy Challenges in SAR

For mass rescue operations, it is pretty well understood that this will require greater coordination and communication efforts amongst our stakeholders and may require regional response in that regard. This may involve aircrafts, merchant vessels, cruise liners, et cetera which can make a more effective contribution to SAR operations and help with the evacuation of crew and passengers from vessels in distress. However, a vital component to consider is the

quality and capability of life-saving equipment on board vessels, these merchant vessels if they are better prepared and equipped to support such operations.

Our SAR data indicates that a significant percentage of boating fatalities and incidents in Fiji is a result of local small boat operations failing to adhere to safety regulations that are being enforced. Apart from this, some operators have limited basic boating safety knowledge and would not know what to do in pressing situations since they are inexperienced.

Availability of air assets to support a SAR is also a challenge. There are very limited and spread-out SAR assets actually available locally and in some emergency cases, it is simply not possible to provide any assistance. Acquiring the support of such assets locally are usually outside of our control, therefore, at times we have to coordinate with our regional partners and seek aerial support from their military aircrafts.

Consistency of support from other stakeholders regarding requested information sometimes pose a challenge to us. Since lives are at risk, accurate information is vital and must be provided in advance. During a SAR event, it is the responsibility of all involved to ensure that information is not only reliable but kept current as well.

Future of SAR Plan

In 2009, a team headed by the Ministry of Defence was established to review and amend the Fiji SAR Manual dated 1992. As a result of the manual review, a draft SAR Act was proposed for submission to Parliament with the objectives of:

- Implementing the State's obligation under the Conventions;
- Establishing the SAR Council;
- Establishment of SAR agencies; and
- To provide for national SAR services.

The revised Fiji SAR Manual, which will give operational to the provisions of the Act was tested during a national SAR exercise in 2015 and a table top exercise in 2016. It is a plan that a revised SAR Manual will be endorsed by the Minister when the SAR Act is passed by Parliament.

Once the SAR Act is passed and SAR Manual endorsed, the next phase will see the establishment of the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC). The JRCC will be responsible for all land, air and maritime SAR operations. Therefore, this initiative will provide a more holistic and more coordinated response efforts during any incident.

The Fiji Navy is also pursuing the acquisition of the latest SAR drift modelling software tool called SARMAP. The SARMAP provides rapid predictions of the movement of drifting objects and missing persons at sea. The SARMAP includes the ability to deploy SAR Units with search patterns and calculated Probability of Containment (POC), Probability of Detection (POD) and Probability of Success (POS).

The Navy is presently shifting its focus on improving regional and national collaboration and coordination to strengthen SAR in Fiji and across the region. Our inclusion in the PACSAR Steering Committee, which includes Australia, Fiji, France and New Zealand and the United States, will allow us to build relationships and set the best practice SAR techniques. Recently, the Fiji Navy has also started to strengthen relationships and linkages with the New Zealand RCC. This capacity building initiative will allow us to work collectively

and collaboratively in order to deliver objectives within the national SAR interests and plans. We will be able to share initiatives, processes knowledge to enhance our capabilities.

Lessons learnt in 2015

1. Recognising that the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) could serve as an additional resource to support maritime SAR. After identifying on the VMS system which fishing vessel is closest to a particular search and rescue area, the Navy will contact the fishing vessel agent to seek their assistance in responding to such incident.
2. Some “emergency” situation turned out to be false alarms, but regardless, each activation must be responded to and investigated. Such responses divert resources, attention and efforts to the wrong purposes.
3. Bilateral agreements between organisation are important and are the basis for our collaborative approach to any SAR operation in Fiji. This will includes shared information and resources to enhance our coordination and response efforts.
4. Regular training and exercises such as the national SAR exercise in 2015 and a table top exercise in 2016 are important with lessons learned from such exercises are important to share with others and improving our processes and functional systems. There is a real benefit in training and being prepared to respond.

Conclusion

To conclude Honourable Chairman, since taking over the role and responsibility of SAR. Operations from the Department of Marine in 1989, the Fiji Navy has coordinated dozens of life-saving rescue missions. Today, the Navy is satisfied about its collective focus on how it is utilising its resources more efficiently and maximising its capacities to help scale-up SAR preparedness and response initiatives with other agencies in Fiji.

Sir, that concludes our submission this morning in response to those questions that were raised to Commander Navy last week. *Vinaka saka.*

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you very much for the presentation this morning and you have clarified a few grey areas to the Committee. Now it is time for questions and answers. Honourable Members, and if you have any questions to pose, just signal the need to do so. Honourable Howard Politini.

HON. H.R.T. POLITINI.- Thank you Sir, that was a comprehensive presentation and thank you for highlighting the challenges that you face in the Navy. The question here is, first of all, how many Navy vessels do you have that are sea- worthy? If you can just clarify that one first.

MR. M. VOSAWALE.- I will leave it to our Operations Officer to answer that question.

MR. T. NATUVA.- Good morning Chairman, Sir, in response to the question, at the moment, we have four patrol boats, there are two ‘L-class’ patrol boats, *RFNS Levuka* and *RFNS Lautoka* and also *RFNS Kula* and *RFNS Kikau*. *RFNS Kikau* is currently undergoing

refit in Australia. It is due to return to Fiji in January or February next year. *RFNS Kula* is the current fully operational ship at the moment and *RFNS Levuka* and *RFNS Lautoka* are undergoing a process of refurbishing and making them operational again because we have had them for the last 40 years so they are quite old. But at the moment, we have *RFNS Kula* as the only operational ship.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Is there any other question? Honourable Howard.

HON. H.R.T. POLITINI.- Thank you. This has got to do with your SAR in terms of the timeframe that it takes between when a major call from a distant vessel before an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) is activated. What is your timeframe between that moment until the time you respond to the distress crew?

MR. J. TUNIDAU.- All right. We have a system, we have a duty ship is in place and the ship is always on a two hours' notice for sea. But with regards to the maydays, it depends, with regards to yachts, if they send out an EPIRB, at the moment, it goes through to New Zealand or Australia and they inform us. That will probably take on average, it is normally instant, so within four, five hours after they send out a mayday for yachts on normal communication, we will be able to receive that. So we are able to react within that timeframe, so on average maybe within six to eight hours, depending on how the information reaches us.

However, with regards to small boats or the incidents that we encounter on a regular basis, it can take from 12 hours to 24 hours and on occasion up to 48 hours before the Fiji Navy actually knows that an incident has occurred, because the issue now, the current system that is in place since the SAR Manual has not been fully implemented, the system is, that will go to the Police, from the Police they will inform us. So for the Fiji Navy, it will depend on when that information reaches us. So it varies, it is not always the same.

HON. H.R.T. POLITINI.- Thank you. I think I must commend the team, the Navy because of this bilateral agreement that you have, because a lot of time when a vessel goes down, you just mentioned that it takes a maximum round of almost 24 hours, your response time. Then you can also locate if there are other vessels within the vicinity that can attend to the distress vessel.

Now, I am just thinking if a vessel is sinking and you guys are waiting for the genuinity of the location of the vessel, its latitude and longitude, before you guys go to it. But if you guys are able to locate a vessel within that vicinity, because that is part of the treaty. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Just for your information, Honourable Howard, they are in the same trade as you. Honourable Ratu Suliano?

HON. RATU S. MATANITOBUA.- What is the Fiji Navy SAR budget, do you have a budget for a year? Is it sufficient or do you need more? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. M. VOSAWALE.- Thank you very much. That was one of the challenges that I wanted to raise with the Committee. At the moment, the budget is not with us for SAR. The budget it with the Ministry. So, our allocation for SAR is with the Ministry of Defence. So in case of any SAR mission, the timeframe is a challenge to us to go and operate, especially for acquiring surveillance, it takes time again to ask the Ministry as the fund is with them. If it is with us, at the same time we can just negotiate with one of the surveillance firms, then we can

continue with our SAR. So that is one of the challenges. Thank you very Honourable. I think it is about \$200,000.

HON. J.N. KUMAR. Which means that you are suggesting to the Committee that that could be one of the recommendations for us to recommend to Parliament?

MR. M. VOSAWALE.- Yes, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Bulitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you Honourable Chairman. Just a question, given that we have only one operational boat at the moment, probably we will be facing challenges in monitoring our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), can you just inform the Committee on how the Fiji Navy is policing Fiji's EEZ at the moment and the programme that they have?

MR. J. TUNIDAU.- Thank you Sir, for your question. As you are aware, *HMNZS Hawea* is with us for nine months and we had alternate the programme where most of the time, we draw out our programme to coordinate with *HMNZS Hawea* on where they go.

With regards to, monitoring of the EEZ, as was mentioned in our submission, we have recently upgraded our Fiji Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre and we now have software in addition to the Vessel Monitoring System. We have also acquired Enhancement Image System(EIS) capability through satellite that we can see vessels that come into our EEZ.

So that in itself is a force multiplier and it has assisted us immensely in regards to raising our maritime awareness to vessels that come into our EEZ. So we can be sitting in the Operation Room in Walu Bay and we know how many yachts are in Fulaga, or how many yachts are coming through to Vanua Balavu. So that system that was opened by the Minister of Defence in July this year, that has actually helped us in bridging the gap in regards to the vessels that we have, so at the moment we are coping.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. I was listening to the Minister of Fisheries on Sunday and he was talking about that, every fishing boat that comes and fish, they know - the country, the name of the vessel, probably because of that technology, so it is greatly helping in your duties. Honourable Kumar.

HON. J.N. KUMAR- Thank you, through you again. This is concerning the ratification of the International Convention on Maritime 1979, I think this is really a need; is that so?

MR. M. VOSAWALE.- About SAR?

HON. J.N. KUMAR.- Yes.

MR. M. VOSAWALE.- Yes, I think that is one of the main conventions that we have to ratify, we have not ratified with regards to SAR. Chair, that is one of the recommendations that we can put through to look into, if they can ratify the SAR Convention, it is long overdue.

HON. J.N. KUMAR.- Yes, that is very important.

HON. H.R.T. HOWARD.- I think this issue that VMS or Vessel Monitoring System you guys have adopted; are you using it now? Because I remember in one incident, I think it was back in the '90s before you guys got this software involved, there was an issue on board

MV SOFI. I think the Captain was relieved of his duty after that incident. They were facing rough weather, I think just close to the Nasilai Passage and the EPURB fell on the bridge wheel and it activated, and then one of the naval vessels (this was back in the late '90s) and they thought *MV SOFI* had gone down somewhere there. But I guess because they did not have this technology, you guys could have seen whether they have strayed in case of an emergency, and when they went there, they finally met the vessel sailing towards Suva.

MR. M. VOSAWALE.- I think the VMS transponder is normally on most of the fishing vessels, the merchant vessels, I think they should be having an EIS. So with that incident, any EPURB that is activated at sea, we can straightway pick it up from the hub operations, and we also can pick up if the EPURB is activated and we can also see the position and it can be activated and seen on the EIS. They can have all the data - about that vessel and all the information regarding that vessel.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- All right Members, any other question? Honourable Politini.

HON. H.R.T. POLITINI. - Thank you Sir, just on your vessels, what is their service time in terms of the hours? It is probably an operational question.

MR. T. NATUVA. - For the *RFMS Kula*, the initial life was seven years and we have had half-life refit and the life extension programme so we have extended to around 14 years. *RFMS Kikau* is currently in Australia, going through the life extension and it will give it additionally five to ten years. If we do enough maintenance on the ship, conduct regular PMS, we will be able to extend.

As it is, like *RFMS Kula*, we have been managing it for a while, it is still out there and it is still doing speeds up to 80, 90 knots. So it depends on how we look after the ship. If we look after the ship well we can extend, keep it operational, even if they have reached their full life term. So we will be doing that even for *RFMS Lautoka* and *RFMS Levuka* as well. Given the assets and the availability and funds that we were given, we have been managing.

MR. CHAIRMAN. - Honourable Kumar, I believe you also want to ask a question.

HON. J.N. KUMAR. - Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of your challenges is mass rescue operations, so currently what are some of those very important things that need to be done immediately now for these mass rescue operations? Please, if you could elaborate on that so that we can help you by recommending this to Parliament.

MR. J. TUNIDAU. - Mr. Chairman and Honourable Members, mass rescue operation is a big challenge. Say, for example, we have a cruise liner that requires SAR and its way out at sea. For this, we coordinate with our regional partners because it requires a more regional approach for this coordination because at the moment, we do not have the assets available too. So, we will need coordination with our regional partners in terms of the aircrafts and also the vessels that can respond to such incidents.

MR. T. NATUVA.- In addition to what Mr. Tunidau has mentioned, as we mentioned in our submission, we have improved our connection and talking with people from New Zealand RCC and also New Caledonia where he paid a visit a few months ago to help build that relationship if we need assistance.

Within Fiji, an area we believe that we should be working closely, given the limited assets that we have, that the Navy has, we will need to be coordinating with local shipping

companies, private sectors and we need to be coordinating with GSS on a regular basis. We need to talk and if we require the availability of their vessels if incidents occur, so that is an area we will need to work on, build the relationship within Fiji and support from overseas as well. Thank you.

HON. J.N. KUMAR. - While we are still on the topic, whose responsibility is it to go and check those equipment on these vessels that are being used in Fiji, especially life jackets, et cetera?

MR. T. NATUVA. - It is the responsibility of the Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji (MSAF).

HON. J.N. KUMAR. - Do you work closely with them since the nature of your work is as they are - operational? Do you work very closely with them in terms of checking, monitoring and so forth, especially with what they have?

MR. T. NATUVA. - They are the regulatory body, so we, the Fiji Navy, do not have anything else to do with that, even the enforcement duties we are not empowered to. We provide advice when we meet up with ships, but we do not have the enforcement power to do it, but as you mentioned, we need to work closely with our community.

HON. J.N. KUMAR. - The reason why I asked that because it is stated here the capability of life saving equipment which is very important. Thank you.

HON. RATU. S. MATANITOBUA.- Do you need more ships?

MR. M. VOSAWALE. - *Vinaka*. One of the challenges too that we have at the moment is the vast area and scope that we have to cover and the size of the total boats that we have. Currently, the Navy is working into acquiring better and maybe bigger patrol boats. We are working on that at the moment and maybe later on we will ask the Government for funds to fund those vessels.

HON. RATU. S. MATANITOBUA.- (Inaudible)

MR. M. VOSAWALE. - He is out at the moment and the Commander Navy is in overseas looking for patrol boats.

HON. J. N. KUMAR. - *Vinaka*.

MR. T. NATUVA.- In addition in the context of SAR, regardless of the number of boats that we have, it is the individual, it is the boat operator, those who actually go out to sea need to take the initiative to be safety conscious. You may be aware that the Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji have been conducting training in the islands.

We were in Lau last week and they were training their boat operators in Class 6 and small boat operations. So those are good initiatives, to give them the knowledge that when you go out to sea, you have to have sufficient fuel, carry life jackets and enforce it.

We have noticed that most of the SAR that were unsuccessful were because we do not have the initial, the last known position is not accurate and some would go into the seas when there is very rough weather. So with vessels that have that lifesaving equipment like yachts that

we are able to contact them, those were the successful rescues. I think we should do the proactive part as well, in addition to that.

HON. J. N. KUMAR. - *Vinaka*.

HON. RATU. S. MATANITOBUA.- On your budget, you mentioned \$200,000, was it recent?

MR. M. VOSAWALE. - Thank you Honourable Member. That was the Budget that was submitted by the Ministry to the Ministry of Economy.

MR. M. VOSAWALE. - I am not in a position to answer that, but actually with our operation we have the budget, it has covered our fuel costs, it is covered under the Navy budget in regards to operation and that is all covered but with the SAR, I think it is outside of the budget for fuel and petrol.

HON. H.R.T. POLITINI. - Thank you. Just with your Vessel Monitoring System, say for example, you can pick up the identification of the vessel, its position, what happens if you have a fishing vessel entering from the Solomon Islands to fish in Fiji waters and goes back? How are you probably able to apprehend? Do you guys call the Solomon Navy or the Government to check this vessel?

MR. J. TUNIDAU.- For cases as such, yes, once we have identified a vessel that is conducting some suspicious activities within our EEZ, we have something that is called the Fishing Forum Agencies (FFA), which is based in the Solomon Islands.

Also, this VMS is theirs, so they monitor the whole fishing vessels in the Pacific region. They contact the responsible authority as well; they also track those vessels which are conducting specific activities within the region, even if it is from Solomon Island, they will contact the Solomon Islands authorities. They will conduct the search when the vessels arrive and verify all the documents on board.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- A few questions. I see that your bilateral relationship is well established and I believe the New Zealand vessel has gone back last week, whether it will come back or obviously the period of its attachment to the Fiji Navy.

MR. M. VOSAWALE.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman. As the officer had mentioned earlier that we were very fortunate to have the New Zealand ship *HMNZS Hawea* during this year to early this month. So as the Commander Navy had mentioned in one of the reports last week during the farewell for the vessel crew that we would be only too happy for the vessel to be here but it depends on the government whether it will allow the vessel to come back and help the Fiji Government in patrolling of the EEZ. Also, by that time too I think one of the second vessel, the *RFNS Kikau* will be in operation and can patrol our EEZ.

MR. T. NATUVA.- Sir, with regards to the patrolling of our EEZ, we have changed our tactics in the way we conduct our patrol. Before the current system, we just go out to sea and we go around, hoping to find something, but now our patrol is more intelligence-based, when we look around using the VMS system, we see the activities and we decide where it is located so our patrol actually just goes straight out to where it is. It is more targeted rather than patrolling the whole 1.3 million square kilometres. So it has improved the way we do business at the moment.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Howard.

HON. H.R.T. POLITINI.- Just before you mentioned that I was thinking because now we are moving across to smart technology, but in terms of illegal fishing activities and all that, they will be just be apprehended but through the use of the VMS technology.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Yes, now you are included in the PACSAR, how often do you meet?

MR. M. VOSAWALE.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is an annual event, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I heard your presentation this morning the importance of a national body especially for SAR because to have an operation room where everyone can be included because it is not only for SAR but for disaster time because we need the Navy, we need the Military probably we need the Fire because they are natural disasters and there are manmade disasters as well. I believe the previous government was discussing on this and then it continues but is yet to be activated because I believe there is a way forward for us, not only as SAR but for disasters as well.

There are the things that can happen now. What is happening around the world, you just cannot push it aside and say that Fiji is safe. Now no country in the world is safe anymore, so we have to be proactive in handling that and then probably this small office group can be activated in case a national disaster strikes us because it is not only natural disaster but manmade disaster as well.

MR. M. VOSAWALE.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman for the question. At the moment, the Ministry of Defence is working on the SAR Manual, to have a collective process in regards to national disasters and all those will include SAR. So it is still in the process of identifying those amendments, so firstly we are working on the SAR Act, then the Minister will endorse and will cover all those issues that maybe are related to your question, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Just a question, now we having the COP23 in Bonn and we have experienced the movement of refugees from Syria across to Europe, and thinking along that line, a time will come when we in the Pacific will experience climate change refugees.

It is not far away, I am thinking aloud now because I believe this is the time that we need to set plans and where refugees, which means a life and death situation and probably some small Pacific Islands and also here in Fiji from the small islands in the maritime. This is the reality, when their islands will submerge, they will just have to go somewhere to survive. Thinking along that line, do you have a forum that you discuss these issues?

MR. T. NATUVA.- Thank you Chairman, Sir. A few months ago I attended the Inaugural SW Pacific Maritime Forces Meeting. It was just the first meeting that they had and one of the issues that was brought up was climate change and refugees, so they had a discussion and they mentioned that. It was a very good forum, to come down and talk about issues, and one of the issues that was raised was on climate change. And as you had mentioned, some islands will be submerged and that in itself can be a security concern because you will have islands that will lose their territorial waters because they do not have their baseline to draw their territorial waters and EEZ will be redefined because as your coastline moves in, you will define and it will be an issue.

So that was a very good forum that those heads of maritime forces had a chance to sit down and talk among themselves in the South Pacific. It was the first one and after that meeting, they all concurred to have an annual meeting to discuss those very issues that were brought up during that meeting.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Just a comment that most small islands in the Pacific what they are doing now is up skilling their people. If something like that happens, let us say if New Zealand or Australia accept them, they will walk in with their skills, so they do not add on to unemployment issues.

So that is the way forward. What they are doing which is supported by NGOs and other nations and I believe that it is time now that we discuss these issues, even in your officer bracket, this is an issue that that will be a valid one to discuss. So with that, do you have any question, Honourable Kumar?

HON. J.N. KUMAR.- Thank you Mr Chairman. I was just looking at your future plan for SAR, and one of the Act that needs to be passed in the SAR Act. So in other words, from that time until to-date, this Act has not been passed, so do you want us to include this too as a recommendation to Parliament?

MR. M. VOSAWALE.- Yes, Madam.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Ratu do you have any other question?

HON. RATU. S. MATANITOBUA.- (Inaudible)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, it is under discussion. All right, I believe those are the questions and for your information, this Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, we look into conventions, and I believe the SAR Convention is already there. There are others – Arms Trade Treaty but I believe we are looking forward to next year because our next sitting next year is in February and then every month.

So, we are probably anticipating that there will be a lot of conventions coming in next year and I hope that the SAR will be one of them. And if you have any other issues in regards to other conventions, apart from SAR that you probably think that we can request to your Minister or the Parliament to look into it, we will do that. So we will wait for you if you have issues on the convention treaties.

I believe that is all we have this morning and I take this opportunity on behalf of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, we convey our appreciation for responding to our humble request for you to come and present. Now we have clarified a lot of things and as we look into the *2015 Ministry of Defence Annual Report* and what you have presented this morning will give us the opportunity to improve on our report in regards to SAR.

So with no further ado, once again thank you gentlemen for coming this morning. Lunch is provided, we can share and discuss things around the table, probably other questions that were not asked formally will be asked around the table. Once again, *vinaka vakalevu* and I wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

The Committee Interview adjourned at 12.30 p.m.

APPENDIX 2

SUBMISSION DOCUMENTS



PRESENTATION TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE

**Ministry of Defence, National Security
and Immigration**

18th October 2017





SCOPE

- Overview
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Organisation Structure
- 2015 Ministry Outputs
- Achievements
- Challenges
- Way Forward



OVERVIEW



- Under the assignment of responsibility for the Minister of Defence and National Security the laws that governs the work of the Ministry HQ and the Department of Immigration are specified and to name a few these laws include:
 - Police Act (Cap. 85)
 - Public Order Act (Cap. 20)
 - Public Safety Act (Cap. 19)
 - Republic of Fiji Military Forces Act (Cap. 81)
 - Security Industry Decree 2010
 - Immigration Act 2003 and Regulations;
 - Passport Act 2003 and Regulations;
 - Citizenship Decree 2009 and Regulations
- The functions of the Permanent Secretary is subject to Section 127 (3), (7) and (8) of the 2013 Constitution the Permanent Secretary has the following' functions-
 - responsible to the Minister for the efficient and economical management of the Ministry of Immigration, National Security & Defence;
 - have the authority to appoint, remove and institute disciplinary action against all staff of the Ministry with the agreement of the Minister of Immigration, National Security & Defence; and
 - terms and conditions of employment for its staff;

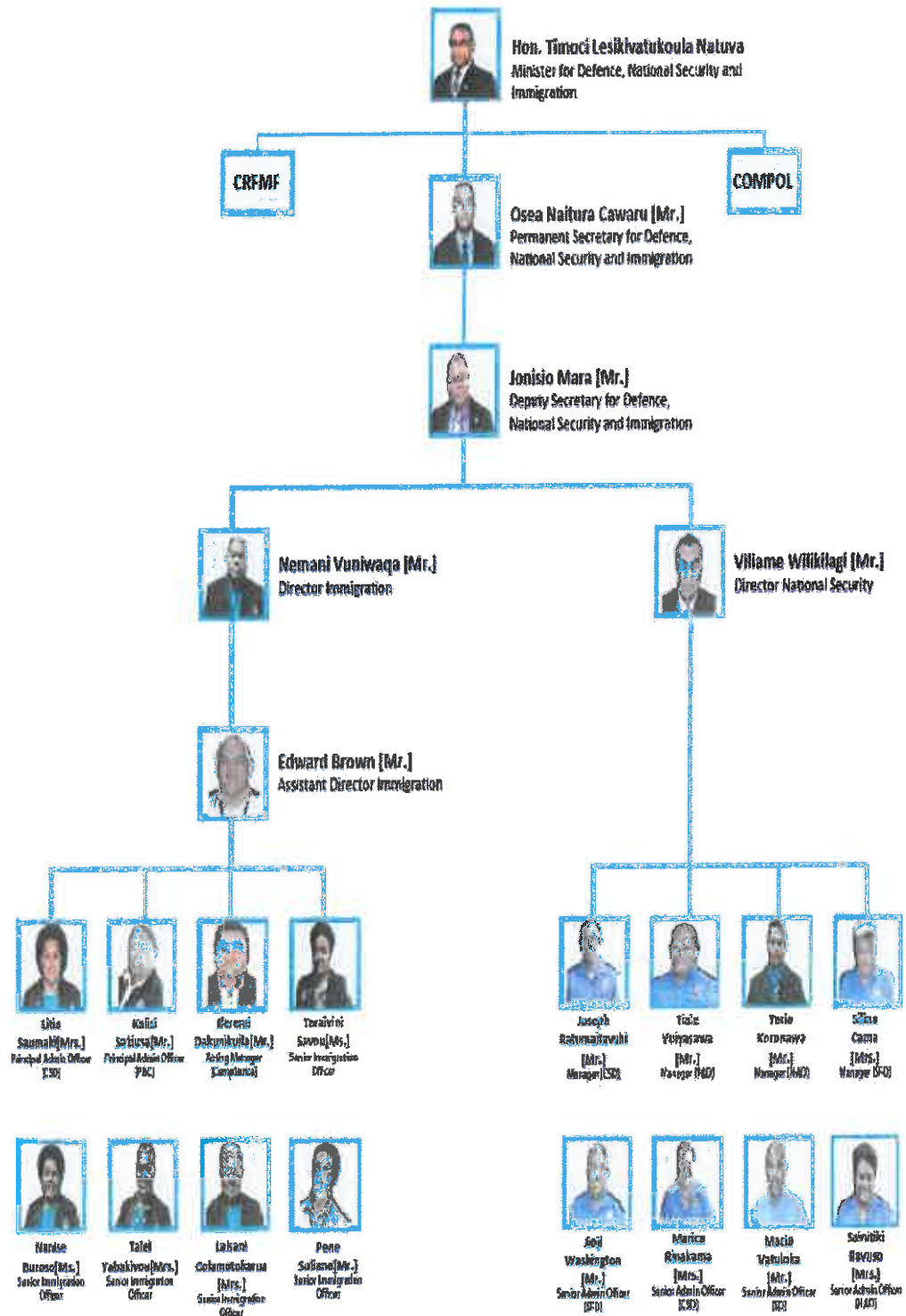


ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



- The Ministry of Defence, National Security and Immigration is responsible for the maintenance of peace and stability in Fiji. This is delivered through the formulation, implementation and review of policy initiatives, programmes and projects on matters of national security, public order and defence.
- The Ministry is also responsible for the effective and efficient management of Fiji's National Security Systems. These are delivered through the coordination of all National Security and Defence Council Meetings along with its subservient National and Departmental meetings; the provision of security and intelligence advice to Government leaders and key security stakeholders. The Ministry also administers search and rescue operations, and coordination of national events.
- The provision of strategic guidance for Fiji's peacekeeping missions is another important role of the Ministry, and this is administered through close liaison with the Office of Fiji's Permanent Representative to the United Nations (PRUN).
- In addition, the Ministry is also responsible for Immigration matters. This is delivered through the provision of Immigration Services such as processing and issuance of passports, citizenships, visas and permits; and enforcement of Fiji's Immigration Laws through identification, detention and deportation of illegal immigrants.
- The Ministry's roles and responsibilities are implemented through the various Divisions within the Ministry HQ and the Department of Immigration.
- The Ministry is well assisted by other Government departments, security stakeholders outside of its jurisdiction and our strategic development partners.

ORGANISATION STRUCTURE





2015 MINISTRY OUTPUTS



- The commissioned 2015 Annual Report focused on the deliverables as articulated in the 2015 Annual Corporate Plan which consisted of 17 outputs. These outputs covered deliverable that the Ministry attended as follows
 - 1) Portfolio Leadership, Policy Advice & Secretariat Support;
 - 2) Implementation of projects and conduct of National Events;
 - 3) Review of Immigration, National Security and Defence Sector;
 - 4) Effective and Efficient management of National Security Environment;
 - 5) Security Intelligence advice on terrorism;
 - 6) Consultation and enactment of legal framework to counter terrorism;
 - 7) Develop the National Counter Terrorism Plan;
 - 8) Strategically phase the establishment of the National Intelligence Agency;
 - 9) Enhance global integration and international relations;
 - 10) Review of all existing and development of new bilateral and multilateral immigration, security, defence agreements and arrangements;
 - 11) Review of existing Immigration laws and effectively enforced;
 - 12) Assist defence and security forces in their capability planning;
 - 13) Review and improve the Ministry's service delivery;
 - 14) Effective Implementation of training and development for all officers;
 - 15) Poverty Reduction;
 - 16) Ensuring environmental sustainability; and
 - 17) Synchronizing gender mainstreaming in Ministry's Policies.
- The Ministry focused on the above deliverables and was consistently monitored on its performance by the Implementation Coordinating Office (ICO). During the reporting period the Ministry were rated at 81.22%; 84.64% and 91.81% for the 1st to the 3rd Quarters of the fiscal year. There was no monitoring made from the forth quarter of 2015.



ACHIEVEMENTS

- Establishment of the National Security and Defence Review Secretariat to develop the National Security Strategy (NSS).
- Three (3) MOUs/MOAs signed with Indonesian National Narcotics Board; Nauru Police and Lithuania.
- MSG Leaders on the Humanitarian Emergency Response Coordination [HERCC] and Lakatoro Declaration.
- Operation Grapple - pay-out to surviving ex-servicemen and their dependents.
- Coordination of the job Evaluation Exercise for the Fiji Police Force.
- Approval and construction of Six Welfare Homes for the families of the fallen heroes of the 2000 upheaval.
- Signing of MOU between DOI and the Ministry of Employment, Productivity & Industrial Relations (NEC);
- Recognition for outstanding OHS award for government Ministry's and Departments category;
- DOI was awarded the FBEA Achievement Award at Sheraton, Denarau.
- 2015 Immigration Annual Awards Night held at the Relax Resort, Nadi.



CHALLENGES

- Setup of interim Secretariat to administer the Implementation of the National Security Strategy (NSS);
- Not able to predict the occurrence of the search and rescue incidents;
- Lack of man-power to deliver the service required;
- Lack of technological advancement and innovations [modern system];
- Insufficient office space for customer service and registry for storage of files;
- Need for a dedicated training unit and appropriate training space;
- Delay of timely responses from SG's office;
- Budget Constraint.



WAY FORWARD



- Public awareness and consultations on matters significant to the Ministry's functions to all Fijians both locally and abroad;
- Strengthening of the Office NSDR Secretariat;
- Development of White Papers - 2nd draft;
- The Ministry intends to procure publications and equipment to enhance the SAR mechanism;
- Explore opportunities for assistance from donor agencies in terms of acquisition of advance technology, office equipment and capacity building;
- Establishment of a dedicated training unit / space;
- Need for a dedicated Legal expertise;
- Consideration of additional budgetary allocations, eg. Unplanned activities, National Events



• **THANK YOU**



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND NATIONAL SECURITY

26 Gladstone Road, 2nd Floor, New Wing, Government Buildings, Suva. Post Office Box 2349, Government Buildings, Suva, FIJI.

Telephone: 3211754/3211706. Facsimile: 3317721/3300346

Email: defence@govnet.gov.fj. Email: inforhomeaff@govnet.gov.fj.



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND NATIONAL SECURITY **RESPONSE TO THE** **STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE** **REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON FIJI, NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA DEFENCE** **COOPERATION**

QUESTION NO.	AGENDA ISSUES	MINISTRY'S RESPONSE
1.	Fiji and New Zealand Defence Cooperation with regards to Search and Rescue (SAR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The acquisition of technology – SAR MAP software real time for determining drifts pattern.• Capacity building for Navy• Establishment of Fiji RCC• Assist SAR Materials for Awareness
2.	Joint Maritime Surveillance and Patrols of Fiji's Economic Exclusive Zone (EEZ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Signed Hawea Agreement on 02/11 – future engagements on Wasawasa II to patrol Fiji's EEZ in 2018 and beyond
3.	Maritime Flights and Surveillance of Fiji's EEZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Under the Niue Treaty Subsidiary Agreement (NTSA) which Fiji has yet to sign, Australia would contribute financially to charter flights to provide surveillance of Fiji's EEZ.
4.	Post Tropical Cyclone (TC) Winston bilateral cooperation on disaster management, response, recovery and reconstruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Australia is keen to fund the HADR warehouse at Black Rock costing around \$3M.• HADR equipment and hardware
5.	Fiji and Australia Defence Cooperation with regards to SAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There's no existing arrangement with Australia on SAR. However, Aust assistance towards NDMO is ongoing in terms of disaster management
6.	Australia Defence Force (ADF) Pacific Patrol Boat Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2020 – 2022 Patrol Boat Programme• Kikau undergoing refitting programme in Australia
7.	Fiji and Australia bilateral cooperation Post TC Winston on disaster management, response, recovery and reconstruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cooperation in terms rehab programme• Deployment of ADF to assist in reconstruction• Ration supplies and air support• Assist in Ops – disaster management
8.	Fiji, Australia and New Zealand law enforcement cooperation on fighting transnational crime and emerging new threats to the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• K-9 – Capacity building on K-9 handling at the border for Police and Customs• Capacity building for Scientific officers (Forensic Chem) for illicit drug analysis

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement of new precursor drugs for K -9 training • Information sharing • Sharing of case studies and trends
9.	Fiji, Australia and New Zealand Defence (Military) and Security (Police) Joint Training and Exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navy Training/staff College /War College in Aust under DCP • Staff College/Navy Training in NZ under MAP • Wasawasa Dua (I) EEZ Operations – Fiji Navy/NZ Navy. • Long Reach Joint Exercise between Australia and Fiji
10.	Sharing of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niue Treaty on IUU – sharing of data with Navy/fisheries
11.	Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EEZ patrol – Hawea has returned to NZ • One Patrol boat in operation • SAR Bill to be passed in Parliament • SAR Manual to be commissioned by Minister Awareness and Roadshow
12.	Lessons learnt from past experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAR Table top and full scale exercise - needs communication improvement for better coordination.
13.	Way Forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish SAR MOUs with Australia RCC, NZ RCC, New Caledonia RCC and Hawaii RCC (AFL to push this) • Establish Fiji RCC with the acquisition Technology - SAR MAP • Relocation of 3DP • Synchronized Communication with other 3 classes of SAR – Land, Maritime and Aeronautical • Empowerment of Turaga ni Koros Training package • Literacy – Pamphlets on safety in different Vernaculars

PERMANENT SECRETARY MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, NATIONAL SECURITY AND IMMIGRATION

SUBMISSION – Wednesday 18th October, 2017

QUESTIONS ON THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, NATIONAL SECURITY AND IMMIGRATION 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

Question 1:

- **Pillar 1-** Ensuring sustainable democracy, good and just governance.

How does the Ministry ensure sustainable democracy, good and just governance?

Question 2:

- **Pillar 3** – Effective, enlightened and accountable leadership
- **Targeted Outcome/RDSED** – To ensure peace and prosperity
- **Outcome Performance Indicator – No.4** –Operational framework for investigating all terrorist activities within Fiji in place by 2015, including establishment of National Intelligence Agency.
- **Output 8** – Strategically phase the establishment of the National Intelligence Agency

How does the National Intelligence Agency function?

Question 3:

- **Output 9-** Enhance Global Integration and International Relations

How does the Ministry of Defence demarcate its role with diplomatic roles of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?

Question 4:

- **Outcome Performance Indicator No.5-**Improved coordination of Defence, Security and Immigration relations to ensure global integration
- **Output 10** – Review of all existing and development of new bilateral and multilateral immigration, Security, Defence Agreements and Arrangements

How is Security and Defence connected to Immigration considering their needs and threats encountered daily at the borders?

Question 5:

Output 12- Assist defence and security forces in their capability planning?

How can the Ministry of Defence assist the Defence and Security Forces in their capability planning?

Question 6:

How can the Ministry assist the RFMF and the Fiji Police Force in their defence and security planning?

Question 7:

Pillar 8 – Reducing poverty to a negligible level by 2015

Output 15 – Poverty reduction

How does the Ministry of Defence get involved in poverty reduction?

Question 8:

Outcome Performance Indicator 9 – Ensure Environment Sustainability is achieved

How does the Ministry monitor and police environmental sustainability?

Question 9:

Are there any manpower challenges in the enforcement of environmental laws?

Question 10:

Output 17 – Synchronizing gender main-streaming in Ministry's policies

Does the Ministry of Defence have a policy on gender mainstreaming?

Question 11:

What are the examples of localised gender mainstreaming policies (examples)?

2015

SUMMARY ON ACTUAL BUDGET FOR 2015 FIJI DAY CELEBRATION		
	\$	\$
TOTAL BUDGET for the FIJI DAY		145,317.65
Less Approved Budget		100,000.00
Additional Budget (source from Head 50)		45,317.65

ACTUAL BUDGET FOR 2015 FIJI DAY CELEBRATION

CENTERS	\$	\$
APPROVED BUDGET		100,000.00
Ministry of Defence (National Stadium)	61,350.00	
GOVERNMENT HOUSE	15,000.00	
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION	5,750.00	
Commissioner Northern	10,000.00	
Commissioner Eastern (Levuka)	7,900.00	
HEAD 50 (Ministry of Economy)		45,317.65
RFMF	32,160.00	
FIJI POLICE	1,478.00	
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION	1,679.65	
Commissioner Western	10,000.00	
TOTAL ACTUAL BUDGET		\$145,317.65

2016

SUMMARY ON ACTUAL BUDGET FOR 2016 FIJI DAY CELEBRATION		
	\$	\$
TOTAL BUDGET for the FIJI DAY		161,358.43
Approved Budget	100,000.00	
Less RIO Celebration	19,312.00	
Less Balance available to Utilize for Fiji Day Celebration		80,688.00
Additional Budget (source from Head 50)		80,670.43

FIJI NAVY SUBMISSION ON SEARCH AND RESCUE

Introduction

Fiji is a maritime nation with its population spread across its 300 islands in approximately 1.3 million square kilometers of ocean and this can make communication or coordination difficult at times. Therefore, we need to recognize that we face some significant challenges given our remote location and our responsibility over extremely large sea area.

As the maritime component of the RFMF, the Republic of Fiji Navy is poised to support any maritime search and rescue operation in Fiji. This is one of our core roles which defines our existence – that is to provide search and rescue support and services.

The Fiji Navy which is responsible for the functions of RCC Suva, coordinates Class 2 Search and Rescue Activity within Fiji's Search and Rescue Region (Fiji SRR). This includes all SAR operations associated with:

- (a) Distressed person or surface vessel out at sea; and
- (b) Activated distress beacons (EPIRB and PLB)

Legally Binding Instruments

Although Fiji is yet to sign and ratify the International Convention on Maritime SAR, 1979, there are other international treaties which Fiji has acceded to. These treaties have legally binding responsibilities regarding Search and Rescue that we are obligated to fulfill and the following conventions summarizes a few of them.

Srl	International Treaty	Status	Responsibility
1	Convention on the High Seas, 1958	Fiji succeeded to the treaty on 27 March 1971	Every coastal state shall promote the establishment and maintenance of an adequate Search and Rescue service regarding safety on and over sea
2	International Convention on Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974	Acceded to the treaty on 04 Mar 1983	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Arrangements for distress communication- Arrangement of SAR coordination- Establishment of SAR facilities- Adequate means of locating and rescuing persons in distress- Make information available for the SAR organization- Passenger vessels SAR co-operation plans
3	The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea	Fiji signed and ratified convention on 10 December 1982	Every State shall require the master of a ship flying its flag, in so far as he can do so without serious danger to the

	(UNCLOS), 1982	Signed and ratified agreement for the implementation of Part XI on 29 July 1994	ship, the crew or the passengers: (a) to render assistance to any person found at sea in danger of being lost; (b) to proceed with all possible speed to the rescue of persons in distress, if informed of their need of assistance, in so far as such action may reasonably be expected of him
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Fiji Navy Challenges in SAR

1. For mass rescue operations, it is pretty well understood that this will require greater coordination and communication efforts amongst our stakeholder's and may require a regional response in that regard. This may involve aircrafts, merchant vessels, cruise liner's etc which can make a more effective contribution to SAR operations and help with the evacuation of crew and passengers from vessels in distress. However, a vital component to consider is the quality and capability of life-saving equipment on board these merchant vessels and if they are better prepared and equipped to support such operations.
2. Our SAR data indicates that a significant percentage of boating fatalities and incidents in Fiji is a result of local small boat operators failing to adhere to safety regulations that are being enforced. Apart from this some operators have limited basic boating safety knowledge and would not know what to do in pressing situations since they are inexperienced.
3. Availability of air assets to support a SAR response is also a challenge. There are very limited and spread-out SAR assets actually available locally and in some emergency cases it is simply not possible to provide any assistance. Acquiring the support of such assets locally are usually outside of our control therefore at times we have to coordinate with our regional partners and seek aerial support from their military aircrafts.
4. Consistency of support from other stakeholders regarding requested information sometimes pose a challenge to us. Since lives are at risk, accurate information is vital and must be provided in advance. During a SAR event, it is the responsibility of all involved to ensure that information is not only reliable but kept current as well.

Future of SAR Plan

1. In 2009 a team headed by the Ministry of Defense was established to review and amend the Fiji Search and Rescue Manual dated November 1992. As a result of the manual review, a draft SAR Act was proposed for submission to Parliament with the objective of:

- (i) implementing the State's obligations under the Conventions,
- (ii) establishing the SAR Council;
- (iii) establishment of search and rescue agencies; and
- (iv) to provide for national search and rescue services.

The revised Fiji SAR Manual which will give operational effect to the provisions of the Act was tested during a national SAR exercise in 2015 and a table top exercise in 2016. It is planned that the revised SAR Manual will be endorsed by the Minister when the SAR Act is passed by Parliament.

2. Once the SAR Act is passed and SAR Manual endorsed, the next phase will see the establishment of the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre. The JRCC will be responsible for all land, air and maritime SAR operations therefore this initiative will provide a more holistic and more coordinated response efforts during any incident.

3. The Fiji Navy is also pursuing the acquisition of the latest SAR drift modelling software tool called SARMAP. SARMAP provides rapid predictions of the movement of drifting objects and missing persons at sea. SARMAP includes the ability to deploy search & rescue units (SRUs) with search patterns and calculate probability of containment (POC), probability of detection (POD), and probability of success (POS).

4. The Navy is presently shifting its focus on improving regional and national collaboration and coordination to strengthen search and rescue (SAR) in Fiji and across the region. Our inclusion in PACSAR Steering Committee (which includes Australia, Fiji, France, New Zealand and the United States) will allow us build relationships and share the best practice search and rescue techniques. Recently, the Fiji Navy has also started to strengthen relationships and linkages with the New Zealand RCC. This capacity building initiative will allow us to work collectively and collaboratively in order to deliver objectives within the national SAR interests and plans. We will be able to share initiatives, processes and knowledge to enhance our capabilities.

Lessons learnt in 2015

1. Recognizing that the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) could serve as an additional resource to support maritime SAR. After identifying on the VMS system which fishing vessel is closest to a particular SAR area, the Navy will contact the fishing vessel agent to seek their assistance in responding to such incident.
2. Some "emergency" situations turn out to be "false alarms". But, regardless, each activation must be responded to and investigated. Such responses divert resources, attention and efforts to the wrong purposes.
3. Bilateral agreements between organizations are important and are the basis for our collaborative approach to any SAR Operation in Fiji. This will include shared information and resources to enhance our coordination and response efforts.
4. Regular training and exercises such as the national SAR exercise in 2015 and a table top exercise in 2016 are important with lessons learned from such exercises important to share with others and improving our processes and functional systems. There is a real benefit in training and being prepared to respond.

Conclusion

Since taking over the role and responsibility of Search and Rescue Operations from the Marine Department in 1989, the Fiji Navy has coordinated dozens of life-saving rescue missions. Today the Navy is satisfied about its collective focus on how it is utilizing its resources more efficiently and maximizing its capacities to help scale up SAR preparedness and response initiatives with other agencies in Fiji.

APPENDIX 3

RESEARCH BRIEFS ON INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE



International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR)

For Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs & Defence

The attached document is a shortened version of the 1979 *International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue*. This is the unofficial text (Annex 2) provided by the Center for International Law, National University of Singapore. The original official text (48 pages) is available digitally and can be provided to Committee Members on request. A summary is provided in Annex 1.

Background

The Convention, commonly referred to as “SAR Convention” was adopted on 27 April 1979.¹ Prior to this in 1948 an international conference in Geneva adopted a convention formally establishing the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organisation or IMCO. The organisation’s name was later changed to “International Maritime Organisation” or IMO. IMO is the UN’s specialised agency responsible for safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships. The SAR Convention was adopted to develop an international SAR plan so that “no no matter where an accident occurs, the rescue of persons in distress at sea will be co-ordinated by a SAR organization and, when necessary, by co-operation between neighbouring SAR organizations”. The Convention came into force on 22 June 1985 and is administered by the IMO.

Other conventions

Prior to the SAR Convention, other international treaties governing the assistance of marine vessels in distress were in place. One example is the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Seas (SOLAS). However, there were no international conventions that covered ‘search and rescue’ operations.

What the SAR Convention covers

Some of the items covered by the convention include, amongst others, that parties:

- are to ensure that arrangements are made for the provision of adequate SAR services in their coastal waters;
- are encouraged to enter into SAR agreements with neighbouring States involving the establishment of SAR regions, the pooling of facilities, establishment of common procedures, training and liaison visits;
- should take measures to expedite entry into their territorial waters of rescue units from other Parties and;
- establish preparatory measures, including the establishment of rescue co-ordination centres and subcentres.

The Convention also outlines operating procedures to be followed in the event of emergencies or alerts and during SAR operations. This includes the designation of an on-scene commander and his/her duties.

In line with the Convention, the IMO divided the world's oceans into 13 search and rescue areas, in each of which the countries concerned have delimited search and rescue regions for which they are responsible.

2 January 2018

Disclaimer

The Annexed information is provided for the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs & Defence in its ongoing review of the Ministry of Defence, National Security and Immigration 2015 Annual Report. Any views expressed in this paper do not reflect an official position of Research & Library Services or Parliament Secretariat. Research and Library Services shall not be liable for any errors or omissions, or for any loss or damage of any kind arising from its use, and may remove, vary or amend any information at any time without prior notice. Research and Library Services accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. Other sources should be consulted.

¹ International Maritime Organisation, 'International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR)' [http://www.imo.org/en/About/conventions/listofconventions/pages/international-convention-on-maritime-search-and-rescue-\(sar\).aspx](http://www.imo.org/en/About/conventions/listofconventions/pages/international-convention-on-maritime-search-and-rescue-(sar).aspx) [Accessed 10/11/17]

International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, 1979

Adoption: 27 April 1979 Entry into force: 22 June 1985

The main purpose of the Convention is to facilitate co-operation between Governments and between those participating in search and rescue (SAR) operations at sea by establishing an international SAR plan. Cooperation of this type is encouraged by SOLAS 1974, Parties to which undertake 'to ensure that any necessary arrangements are made for coast watching and for the rescue of persons in distress round its coasts. These arrangements should include the establishment, operation and maintenance of such maritime safety facilities as are deemed practicable and necessary'.

The technical requirements of the SAR Convention are contained in an Annex. Parties to the Convention are required to ensure that arrangements are made for the provision of adequate SAR services in their coastal waters.

Parties are encouraged to enter into SAR agreements with neighboring States involving the establishment of SAR regions, the pooling of facilities, establishment of common procedures, training and liaison visits. The Convention states that Parties should take measures to expedite entry into its territorial waters of rescue units from other Parties.

The Convention then goes on to establish preparatory measures which should be taken, including the establishment of rescue coordination centres and subcentres. It outlines operating procedures to be followed in the event of emergencies or alerts and during SAR operations. This includes the designation of an on-scene commander and his duties.

Parties to the Convention are required to establish ship reporting systems, under which ships report their position to a coast radio station. This enables the interval between the loss of contact with a vessel and the initiation of search operations to be reduced. It also helps to permit the rapid determination of vessels which may be called upon to provide assistance including medical help when required.

Source:

'Summary of IMO Conventions' Available online at: http://www.fd.unl.pt/docentes_docs/ma/wks_MA_17214.pdf
[Accessed 10/11/17]

1979 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE*

Adopted in Hamburg, Germany on 27 April 1979

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* **CIL Note:** The original text of this Convention is available at http://untreaty.un.org/unts/60001_120000/14/7/00026305.pdf. The CIL version of this Convention incorporates the amendments adopted by the following resolutions of the Maritime Safety Committee of the IMO: [MSC.70 \(69\)](#), adopted on 18 May 1998 (1998 Amendments) and [MSC.155 \(78\)](#), adopted on 20 May 2004 (2004 Amendments). The 1998 Amendments entered into force on 1 January 2000 and the 2004 Amendments entered into force on 1 July 2006.

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The Parties to the Convention.

Noting the great importance attached in several conventions to the rendering of assistance to persons in distress at sea and to the establishment by every coastal State of adequate and effective arrangements for coast watching and for search and rescue services,

Having considered Recommendation 40 adopted by the International Conference on Safety of Life at Sea, 1960, which recognizes the desirability of co-ordinating activities regarding safety on and over the sea among a number of inter-governmental organizations,

Desiring to develop and promote these activities by establishing an international maritime search and rescue plan responsible to the needs of maritime traffic for the rescue of persons in distress at sea,

Wishing to promote co-operation among search and rescue organizations around the world and among those participating in search and rescue operations at sea,

Have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE I – GENERAL OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE CONVENTION

The Parties undertake to adopt all legislative or other appropriate measures necessary to give full effect to the Convention and its Annex, which is an integral part of the Convention. Unless expressly provided otherwise, a reference to the Convention constitutes at the same time a reference to its Annex.

ARTICLE II – OTHER TREATIES AND INTERPRETATION

(1) Nothing in the Convention shall prejudice the codification and development of the law of the sea by the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea convened pursuant to resolution 2750 (XXV) of the General Assembly of the United Nations nor the present or future claims and legal views of any State concerning the law of the sea and the nature and extent of coastal and flag State jurisdiction.

(2) No provision of the Convention shall be construed as prejudicing obligations or rights of vessels provided for in other international instruments.

ARTICLE III – AMENDMENTS

(1) The Convention may be amended by either of the procedures specified in paragraphs (2) and (3) hereinafter.

(2) Amendment after consideration within the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (hereinafter referred to as the Organization):

(a) Any amendment proposed by a Party and transmitted to the Secretary-General of the Organization (hereinafter referred to as the Secretary-General), or any amendment deemed necessary by the Secretary-General as a result of an amendment to a corresponding

provision of Annex 12 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, shall be circulated to all Members of the Organization and all Parties at least six months prior to its consideration by the Maritime Safety Committee of the Organization.

(b) Parties, whether or not Members of the Organization, shall be entitled to participate in the proceedings of the Maritime Safety Committee for the consideration and adoption of amendments.

(c) Amendments shall be adopted by a two-thirds majority of the Parties present and voting in the Maritime Safety Committee on condition that at least one third of the Parties shall be present at the time of adoption of the amendments.

(d) Amendments adopted in accordance with sub-paragraph (c) shall be communicated by the Secretary-General to all Parties for acceptance.

(e) An amendment to an Article or to paragraphs 2.1.4, 2.1.5, 2.1.7, 2.1.10, 3.1.2 or 3.1.3 of the Annex shall be deemed to have been accepted on the date on which the Secretary-General has received an instrument of acceptance from two thirds of the Parties.

(f) An amendment to the Annex other than to paragraphs 2.1.4, 2.1.5, 2.1.7, 2.1.10, 3.1.2 or 3.1.3 shall be deemed to have been accepted at the end of one year from the date on which it is communicated to the Parties for acceptance. However, if within such period of one year more than one third of the Parties notify the Secretary-General that they object to the amendment, it shall be deemed not to have been accepted.

(g) An amendment to an Article or to paragraphs 2.1.4, 2.1.5, 2.1.7, 2.1.10, 3.1.2 or 3.1.3 of the Annex shall enter into force:

(i) with respect to those Parties which have accepted it, six months after the date on which it is deemed to have been accepted;

(ii) with respect to those Parties which accept it after the condition mentioned in sub-paragraph (e) has been met and before the amendment enters into force, on the date of entry into force of the amendment;

(iii) with respect to those Parties which accept it after the date on which the amendment enters into force, 30 days after the deposit of an instrument of acceptance.

(h) An amendment to the Annex other than to paragraphs 2.1.4, 2.1.5, 2.1.7, 2.1.10, 3.1.2 or 3.1.3 shall enter into force with respect to all Parties, except those which have objected to the amendment under subparagraph (f) and which have not withdrawn such objections, six months after the date on which it is deemed to have been accepted. However, before the date set for entry into force, any Party may give notice to the Secretary-General that it exempts itself from giving effect to that amendment for a period not longer than one year from the date of its entry into force, or for such longer period as may be determined by a two-thirds majority of the Parties present and voting in the Maritime Safety Committee at the time of the adoption of the amendment.

(3) Amendment by a conference:

- (a) Upon the request of a Party concurred in by at least one third of the Parties, the Organization shall convene a conference of Parties to consider amendments to the Convention. Proposed amendments shall be circulated by the Secretary-General to all Parties at least six months prior to their consideration by the conference.
 - (b) Amendments shall be adopted by such a conference by a two-thirds majority of the Parties present and voting, on condition that at least one third of the Parties shall be present at the time of adoption of the amendment. Amendments so adopted shall be communicated by the Secretary-General to all Parties for acceptance.
 - (c) Unless the conference decides otherwise, the amendment shall be deemed to have been accepted and shall enter into force in accordance with the procedures specified in sub-paragraphs (2)(e), (2)(f), (2)(g), and (2)(h) respectively, provided that reference in sub-paragraph (2)(h) to the Maritime Safety Committee expanded in accordance with sub-paragraph (2)(b) shall be taken to mean reference to the conference.
- (4) Any declaration of acceptance of, or objection to, an amendment or any notice given under sub-paragraph (2)(h) shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary-General who shall inform all Parties of any such submission and the date of its receipt.
- (5) The Secretary-General shall inform States of any amendments which enter into force, together with the date on which each such amendment enters into force.

ARTICLE IV – SIGNATURE, RATIFICATION, ACCEPTANCE, APPROVAL AND ACCESSION

- (1) The Convention shall remain open for signature at the Headquarters of the Organization from 1 November 1979 until 31 October 1980 and shall thereafter remain open for accession. States may become Parties to the Convention by:
- (a) signature without reservation as to ratification, acceptance or approval; or
 - (b) signature subject to ratification, acceptance or approval, followed by ratification, acceptance or approval; or
 - (c) accession.
- (2) Ratification, acceptance, approval or accession shall be effected by the deposit of an instrument to that effect with the Secretary-General.
- (3) The Secretary-General shall inform States of any signature or of the deposit of any instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession and the date of its deposit.

ARTICLE V – ENTRY INTO FORCE

- (1) The Convention shall enter into force 12 months after the date on which 15 States have become Parties to it in accordance with Article IV.

(2) Entry into force for States which ratify, accept, approve or accede to the Convention in accordance with Article IV after the condition prescribed in paragraph (1) has been met and before the Convention enters into force, shall be on the date of entry into force of the Convention.

(3) Entry into force for States which ratify, accept, approve or accede to the convention after the date on which the Convention enters into force shall be 30 days after the date of deposit of an instrument in accordance with Article IV.

(4) Any instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession deposited after the date of entry into force of an amendment to the Convention in accordance with Article III shall apply to the Convention, as amended, and the Convention, as amended, shall enter into force for a State depositing such an instrument 30 days after the date of its deposit.

(5) The Secretary-General shall inform States of the date of entry into force of the Convention.

ARTICLE VI – DENUNCIATION

(1) The Convention may be denounced by any Party at any time after the expiry of five years from the date on which the Convention enters into force for that Party.

(2) Denunciation shall be effected by the deposit of an instrument of denunciation with the Secretary-General who shall notify States of any instrument of denunciation received and of the date of its receipt as well as the date on which such denunciation takes effect.

(3) A denunciation shall take effect one year, or such longer period as may be specified in the instrument of denunciation, after its receipt by the Secretary-General.

ARTICLE VII – DEPOSIT AND REGISTRATION

(1) The Convention shall be deposited with the Secretary-General who shall transmit certified true copies thereof to States.

(2) As soon as the Convention enters into force, the Secretary-General shall transmit the text thereof to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for registration and publication, in accordance with Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations.

ARTICLE VIII – LANGUAGES

The Convention is established in a single copy in the Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish languages, each text being equally authentic. Official translations in the Arabic, German and Italian languages shall be prepared and deposited with the signed original.

Done at Hamburg this twenty-seventh day of April one thousand nine hundred and seventy-nine.

In witness whereof the undersigned, being duly authorized by their respective Governments for that purpose, have signed the Convention.

ANNEX

CHAPTER 1 - TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

1.1 "Shall" is used in the Annex to indicate a provision, the uniform application of which by all Parties is required in the interest of safety of life at sea.

1.2 "Should" is used in the Annex to indicate a provision, the uniform application of which by all Parties is recommended in the interest of safety of life at sea.

1.3 The terms listed below are used in the Annex with the following meanings:

.1 "Search". An operation, normally co-ordinated by a rescue co-ordination centre or rescue sub-centre, using available personnel and facilities to locate persons in distress;

.2 "Rescue". An operation to retrieve persons in distress, provide for their initial medical or other needs, and deliver them to a place of safety;

.3 "Search and rescue service". The performance of distress monitoring, communication, co-ordination and search and rescue functions, including provision of medical advice, initial medical assistance, or medical evacuation, through the use of public and private resources including co-operating aircraft, vessels and other craft and installations;

.4 "Search and rescue region". An area of defined dimensions associated with a rescue co-ordination centre within which search and rescue services are provided;

.5 "Rescue co-ordination centre". A unit responsible for promoting efficient organization of search and rescue services and for co-ordinating the conduct of search and rescue operations within a search and rescue region;

.6 "Rescue sub-centre". A unit subordinate to a rescue co-ordination centre established to complement the latter according to particular provisions of the responsible authorities;

.7 "Search and rescue facility". Any mobile resource, including designated search and rescue units, used to conduct search and rescue operations;

.8 "Search and rescue unit". A unit composed of trained personnel and provided with equipment suitable for the expeditious conduct of search and rescue operations;

.9 "Alerting post". Any facility intended to serve as an intermediary between a person reporting an emergency and a rescue co-ordination centre or rescue sub-centre;

.10 "Emergency phase". A generic term meaning, as the case may be, uncertainty phase, alert phase or distress phase;

.11 "Uncertainty phase". A situation wherein uncertainty exists as to the safety of a person, a vessel or other craft;

.12 "Alert phase". A situation wherein apprehension exists as to the safety of a person, a vessel or other craft;

.13 "Distress phase". A situation wherein there is a reasonable certainty that a person, a vessel or other craft is threatened by grave and imminent danger and requires immediate assistance;

.14 "On-scene co-ordinator". A person designated to co-ordinate search and rescue operations within a specified area;

.15 "Secretary-General". The Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization".

CHAPTER 2 - ORGANIZATION AND CO-ORDINATION

2.1 Arrangements for provision and co-ordination of search and rescue services

2.1.1 Parties shall, as they are able to do so individually or in co-operation with other States and, as appropriate, with the Organization, participate in the development of search and rescue services to ensure that assistance is rendered to any person in distress at sea. On receiving information that any person is, or appears to be, in distress at sea, the responsible authorities of a Party shall take urgent steps to ensure that the necessary assistance is provided.

The notion of a person in distress at sea also includes persons in need of assistance who have found refuge on a coast in a remote location within an ocean area inaccessible to any rescue facility other than as provided for in the annex.

2.1.2 Parties shall, either individually or, if appropriate, in co-operation with other States, establish the following basic elements of a search and rescue service:

- .1 legal framework;
- .2 assignment of a responsible authority;
- .3 organisation of available resources;
- .4 communication facilities;
- .5 co-ordination and operational functions; and
- .6 processes to improve the service including planning, domestic and international co-operative relationships and training.

Parties shall, as far as practicable, follow relevant minimum standards and guidelines developed by the Organization.

2.1.3 To help ensure the provision of adequate shore-based communication infrastructure, efficient distress alert routing, and proper operational co-ordination to effectively support search and rescue services, Parties shall, individually or in co-operation with other States, ensure that sufficient search and rescue regions are established within each sea area in

accordance with paragraphs 2.1.4 and 2.1.5. Such regions should be contiguous and, as far as practicable, not overlap.

2.1.4 Each search and rescue region shall be established by agreement among Parties concerned. The Secretary-General shall be notified of such agreements.

2.1.5 In case agreement on the exact dimensions of a search and rescue region is not reached by the Parties concerned, those Parties shall use their best endeavours to reach agreement upon appropriate arrangements under which the equivalent overall co-ordination of search and rescue services is provided in the area. The Secretary-General shall be notified of such arrangements.

2.1.6 Agreement on the regions or arrangements referred to in paragraphs 2.1.4 and 2.1.5 shall be recorded by the Parties concerned, or in written plans accepted by the Parties.

2.1.7 The delimitation of search and rescue regions is not related to and shall not prejudice the delimitation of any boundary between States.

2.1.8 Parties should seek to promote consistency, where applicable, between their maritime and aeronautical search and rescue services while considering the establishment of maritime search and rescue regions which shall be established by agreement in accordance with paragraph 2.1.4 or the reaching of agreement upon appropriate arrangements in accordance with paragraph 2.1.5.

2.1.9 Parties having accepted responsibility to provide search and rescue services for a specified area shall use search and rescue units and other available facilities for providing assistance to a person who is, or appears to be, in distress at sea.

2.1.10 Parties shall ensure that assistance be provided to any person in distress at sea. They shall do so regardless of the nationality or status of such a person or the circumstances in which that person is found.

2.1.11 Parties shall forward to the Secretary-General information on their search and rescue service, including the:

- .1 national authority responsible for the maritime search and rescue services;
- .2 location of the established rescue co-ordination centres or other centres providing search and rescue co-ordination, for the search and rescue region or regions and communications therein;
- .3 limits of their search and rescue region or regions and the coverage provided by their shore based distress and safety communication facilities; and
- .4 principal types of available search and rescue units.

Parties shall with priority, update the information provided with respect to any alterations of importance. The Secretary-General shall transmit to all Parties the information received.

2.1.12 The Secretary-General shall notify all Parties of the agreements or arrangements referred to in paragraphs 2.1.4 and 2.1.5.

2.2 Development of national search and rescue services

2.2.1 Parties shall establish appropriate national procedures for overall development, co-ordination, and improvement of search and rescue services.

2.2.2 To support efficient search and rescue operations, Parties shall:

- .1 ensure the co-ordinated use of available facilities; and
- .2 establish close co-operation between services and organizations which may contribute

to improve the search and rescue service in areas such as operations, planning, training, exercises and research and development.

2.3 Establishment of rescue co-ordination centres and rescue sub-centres

2.3.1 To meet the requirements of paragraph 2.2, Parties shall individually or in co-operation with other States establish rescue co-ordination centres for their search and rescue services and such rescue sub-centres as they consider appropriate.

2.3.2 Each rescue co-ordination centre and rescue sub-centre, established in accordance with paragraph 2.3.1, shall arrange for the receipt of distress alerts originating from within its search and rescue region. Every such centre shall also arrange for communications with persons in distress, with search and rescue facilities, and with other rescue co-ordination centres or rescue sub-centres.

2.3.3 Each rescue co-ordination centre shall be operational on a 24-hour basis and be constantly staffed by trained personnel having a working knowledge of the English language.

2.4 Co-ordination with aeronautical services

2.4.1 Parties shall ensure the closest practicable co-ordination between maritime and aeronautical services so as to provide for the most effective and efficient search and rescue services in and over their search and rescue regions.

2.4.2 Whenever practicable, each Party should establish joint rescue co-ordination centres and rescue sub-centres to serve both maritime and aeronautical purposes.

2.4.3 Whenever separate maritime and aeronautical rescue co-ordination centres or rescue sub-centres are established to serve the same area, the Party concerned shall ensure the closest practicable co-ordination between the centres or sub-centres.

2.4.4 Parties shall ensure as far as is possible the use of common procedures by search and rescue units established for maritime purposes and those established for aeronautical purposes.

2.5 Designation of search and rescue facilities

Parties shall identify all facilities able to participate in search and rescue operations, and may designate suitable facilities as search and rescue units.

2.6 Equipment of search and rescue units

2.6.1 Each search and rescue unit shall be provided with equipment appropriate to its task.

2.6.2 Containers and packages containing survival equipment for dropping to survivors should have the general nature of their contents indicated by markings in accordance with standards adopted by the Organization.

CHAPTER 3 - CO-OPERATION BETWEEN STATES

3.1 Co-operation between States

3.1.1 Parties shall co-ordinate their search and rescue organizations and should, whenever necessary, co-ordinate search and rescue operations with those of neighbouring States.

3.1.2 Unless otherwise agreed between the States concerned, a Party should authorize, subject to applicable national laws, rules and regulations, immediate entry into or over its territorial sea or territory of rescue units of other Parties solely for the purpose of searching for the position of maritime casualties and rescuing the survivors of such casualties. In such cases, search and rescue operations shall, as far as practicable, be co-ordinated by the appropriate rescue co-ordination centre of the Party which has authorized entry, or such other authority as has been designated by that Party.

3.1.3 Unless otherwise agreed between the States concerned, the authorities of a Party which wishes its rescue units to enter into or over the territorial sea or territory of another Party solely for the purpose of searching for the position of maritime casualties and rescuing the survivors of such casualties, shall transmit a request, giving full details of the projected mission and the need for it, to the rescue co-ordination centre of that other Party, or to such other authority as has been designated by that Party.

3.1.4 The responsible authorities of Parties shall:

- .1 immediately acknowledge the receipt of such a request; and
- .2 as soon as possible indicate the conditions, if any, under which the projected mission may be undertaken.

3.1.5 Parties should enter into agreements with neighbouring States setting forth the conditions for entry of each other's search and rescue units into or over their respective territorial sea or territory. These agreements should also provide for expediting entry of such units with the least possible formalities.

3.1.6 Each Party should authorize its rescue co-ordination centres:

- .1 to request from other rescue co-ordination centres such assistance, including vessels, aircraft, personnel or equipment, as may be needed;
- .2 to grant any necessary permission for the entry of such vessels, aircraft, personnel or equipment into or over its territorial sea or territory;
- .3 to make the necessary arrangements with the appropriate customs, immigration, health or other authorities with a view to expediting such entry; and
- .4 to make the necessary arrangements in co-operation with other RCCs to identify the most appropriate place(s) for disembarking persons found in distress at sea.

3.1.7 Each Party shall ensure that its rescue co-ordination centres provide, when requested, assistance to other rescue co-ordination centres, including assistance in the form of vessels, aircraft, personnel or equipment.

3.1.8 Parties should enter into agreements with other States, where appropriate, to strengthen search and rescue co-operation and co-ordination. Parties shall authorize their responsible authority to make operational plans and arrangements for search and rescue co-operation and co-ordination with responsible authorities of other States.

3.1.9 Parties shall co-ordinate and co-operate to ensure that masters of ships providing assistance by embarking persons in distress at sea are released from their obligations with minimum further deviation from the ships' intended voyage, provided that releasing the master of the ship from these obligations does not further endanger the safety of life at sea. The Party responsible for the search and rescue region in which such assistance is rendered shall exercise primary responsibility for ensuring such co-ordination and co-operation occurs, so that survivors assisted are disembarked from the assisting ship and delivered to a place of safety, taking into account the particular circumstances of the case and guidelines developed by the Organization. In these cases, the relevant Parties shall arrange for such disembarkation to be effected as soon as reasonably practicable.

CHAPTER 4 - OPERATING PROCEDURES

4.1 Preparatory measures

4.1.1 Each rescue co-ordination centre and rescue sub-centre shall have available up-to-date information especially concerning search and rescue facilities and available communications relevant to search and rescue operations in its area.

4.1.2 Each rescue co-ordination centre and rescue sub-centre should have ready access to information regarding the position, course, and speed of vessels within its area which may be able to provide assistance to persons, vessels or other craft in distress at sea, and regarding how to contact them. This information should either be kept in the rescue co-ordination centre, or be readily obtainable when necessary.

4.1.3 Each rescue co-ordination centre and rescue sub-centre shall have detailed plans of operation for the conduct of search and rescue operations. Where appropriate, these plans

shall be developed jointly with the representatives of those who may assist in providing, or who may benefit from, the search and rescue services.

4.1.4 Rescue co-ordination centres or sub-centres shall be kept informed of the state of preparedness of search and rescue units.

4.2 Information concerning emergencies

4.2.1 Parties, either individually or in co-operation with other States shall ensure that they are capable on a 24-hour basis of promptly and reliably receiving distress alerts from equipment used for this purpose within their search and rescue regions. Any alerting post receiving a distress alert shall:

- .1 immediately relay the alert to the appropriate rescue co-ordination centre or sub-centre, and then assist with search and rescue communications as appropriate; and
- .2 if practicable acknowledge the alert.

4.2.2 Parties shall, where appropriate, ensure that effective arrangements are in place for the registration of communication equipment and for responding to emergencies, to enable any rescue co-ordination centre or sub-centre to access pertinent registration information quickly.

4.2.3 Any authority or element of the search and rescue service having reason to believe that a person, a vessel or other craft is in a state of emergency shall forward as soon as possible all available information to the rescue co-ordination centre or rescue sub-centre concerned.

4.2.4 Rescue co-ordination centres and rescue sub-centres shall, immediately upon receipt of information concerning a person, a vessel, or other craft in a state of emergency, evaluate such information and determine the phase of emergency in accordance with paragraph 4.4, and the extent of operations required.

4.3 Initial action

Any search and rescue unit receiving information of a distress incident shall initially take immediate action if in the position to assist and shall, in any case without delay, notify the rescue co-ordination centre or rescue sub-centre in whose area the incident has occurred.

4.4 Emergency phases

To assist in determining the appropriate operating procedures, the following emergency phases shall be distinguished by the rescue co-ordination centre or sub-centre concerned:

.1 *Uncertainty phase:*

- .1.1 when a person has been reported as missing, or a vessel or other craft is overdue;
or

.1.2 when a person, a vessel or other craft has failed to make an expected position or safety report.

.2 Alert phase:

.2.1 when, following the uncertainty phase, attempts to establish contact with a person, a vessel or other craft have failed and inquiries addressed to other appropriate sources have been unsuccessful; or

.2.2 when information has been received indicating that the operating efficiency of a vessel or other craft is impaired, but not to the extent that a distress situation is likely.

.3 Distress phase:

.3.1 when positive information is received that a person, a vessel or other craft is in danger and in need of immediate assistance; or

.3.2 when, following the alert phase, further unsuccessful attempts to establish contact with a person, a vessel or other craft and more widespread unsuccessful inquiries point to the probability that a distress situation exists; or

.3.3 when information is received which indicates that the operating efficiency of a vessel or other craft has been impaired to the extent that a distress situation is likely.

4.5 Procedures to be followed by rescue co-ordination centres and rescue sub-centres during emergency phases

4.5.1 Upon the declaration of the uncertainty phase, the rescue co-ordination centre or rescue sub-centre, as appropriate, shall initiate inquiries to determine the safety of a person, a vessel or other craft, or shall declare the alert phase.

4.5.2 Upon the declaration of the alert phase, the rescue co-ordination centre or rescue sub-centre, as appropriate, shall extend the inquiries for the missing person, vessel or other craft, alert appropriate search and rescue services and initiate such action, as is necessary in the light of the circumstances of the particular case.

4.5.3 Upon the declaration of the distress phase, the rescue co-ordination centre or rescue sub-centre, as appropriate, shall proceed as prescribed in its plans of operation, as required by paragraph 4.1.

4.5.4 Initiation of search and rescue operations when the position of the search object is unknown.

In the event of an emergency phase being declared for a search object whose position is unknown, the following shall apply:

.1 when an emergency phase exists, a rescue co-ordination centre or rescue sub-centre shall, unless it is aware that other centres are taking action, assume responsibility for initiating suitable action and confer with other centres with the objective of designating one centre to assume responsibility;

.2 unless otherwise decided by agreement between the centres concerned, the centre to be designated shall be the centre responsible for the area in which the search object was according to its last reported position; and

.3 after the declaration of the distress phase, the centre co-ordinating the search and rescue operations shall, as appropriate, inform other centres of all the circumstances of the emergency and of all subsequent developments.

4.5.5 *Passing information to persons, vessels, or other craft for which an emergency phase has been declared*

Whenever possible, the rescue co-ordination centre or rescue sub-centre responsible for search and rescue operations shall forward to the person, a vessel or other craft for which an emergency phase has been declared, information on the search and rescue operations it has initiated.

4.6 Co-ordination when two or more Parties are involved

For search and rescue operations involving more than one Party, each Party shall take appropriate action in accordance with the plans of operation referred to in paragraph 4.1 when so requested by the rescue co-ordination centre of the region.

4.7 On-scene co-ordination of search and rescue activities

4.7.1 The activities of search and rescue units and other facilities engaged in search and rescue operations shall be co-ordinated on-scene to ensure the most effective results.

4.7.2 When multiple facilities are about to engage in search and rescue operations, and the rescue co-ordination centre or rescue sub-centre considers it necessary, the most capable person should be designated as on-scene co-ordinator as early as practicable and preferably before the facilities arrive within the specified area of operation. Specific responsibilities shall be assigned to the on-scene co-ordinator taking into account the apparent capabilities of the on-scene co-ordinator and operational requirements.

4.7.3 If there is no responsible rescue co-ordination centre or, for any reason, the responsible rescue co-ordination centre is unable to co-ordinate the search and rescue mission, the facilities involved should designate an on-scene co-ordinator by mutual agreement.

4.8 Termination and suspension of search and rescue operations

4.8.1 Search and rescue operations shall continue, when practicable, until all reasonable hope of rescuing survivors has passed.

4.8.2 The responsible rescue co-ordination centre or rescue sub-centre concerned shall normally decide when to discontinue search and rescue operations. If no such centre is involved in co-ordinating the operations, the on-scene co-ordinator may take this decision.

4.8.3 When a rescue co-ordination centre or rescue sub-centre considers, on the basis of reliable information that a search and rescue operation has been successful, or that the emergency no longer exists, it shall terminate the search and rescue operation and promptly so inform any authority, facility or service which has been activated or notified.

4.8.4 If a search and rescue operation on-scene becomes impracticable and the rescue co-ordination centre or rescue sub-centre concludes that survivors might still be alive, the centre may temporarily suspend the on-scene activities pending further developments, and shall promptly so inform any authority, facility or service which has been activated or notified. Information subsequently received shall be evaluated and search and rescue operations resumed when justified on the basis of such information.

4.8.5 The rescue co-ordination centre or rescue sub-centre concerned shall initiate the process of identifying the most appropriate place(s) for disembarking persons found in distress at sea. It shall inform the ship or ships and other relevant parties concerned thereof.

CHAPTER 5 - SHIP REPORTING SYSTEMS

5.1 General

5.1.1 Ship reporting systems may be established either individually by Parties or in co-operation with other States, where this is considered necessary, to facilitate search and rescue operations.

5.1.2 Parties contemplating the institution of a ship reporting system should take account of the relevant recommendations of the Organization. Parties should also consider whether existing reporting systems or other sources of ship position data can provide adequate information for the region, and seek to minimize unnecessary additional reports by ships, or the need for rescue co-ordination centres to check with multiple reporting systems to determine availability of ships to assist with search and rescue operations.

5.1.3 The ship reporting system should provide up-to-date information on the movements of vessels in order, in the event of a distress incident, to:

- .1 reduce the interval between the loss of contact with a vessel and the initiation of search and rescue operations in cases where no distress signal has been received;
- .2 permit rapid identification of vessels which may be called upon to provide assistance;
- .3 permit delineation of a search area of limited size in case the position of a person, a vessel or other craft in distress is unknown or uncertain; and
- .4 facilitate the provision of urgent medical assistance or advice.

5.2 Operational requirements

5.2.1 Ship reporting systems should satisfy the following requirements:

- .1 provision of information, including sailing plans and position reports, which would make it possible to determine the current and future positions of participating vessels;
- .2 maintenance of a shipping plot;
- .3 receipt of reports at appropriate intervals from participating vessels;
- .4 simplicity in system design and operation; and
- .5 use of internationally agreed standard ship reporting format and procedures.

5.3 Types of reports

5.3.1 A ship reporting system should incorporate the following types of ship reports in accordance with the recommendations of the Organization:

- .1 Sailing plan;
- .2 Position report; and
- .3 Final report.

5.4 Use of systems

5.4.1 Parties should encourage all vessels to report their position when travelling in areas where arrangements have been made to collect information on positions for search and rescue purposes.

5.4.2 Parties recording information on the position of vessels should disseminate, so far as practicable, such information to other States when so requested for search and rescue purposes.

<http://nmsa.gov.pg/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/SAR-Convention-1979-pdf.pdf>
[Accessed 10/11/17]

APPENDIX 4

SITE VISIT PHOTOS

**COMMITTEE SITE VISIT TO THE FIJI NAVAL BASE-STANLEY BROWN, HEADQUARTERS,
WALU BAY, SUVA**



Members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, Committee secretariat with Fiji Navy Commander Captain Humphrey Tawake and Fiji Navy Senior Officers.



Fiji Navy Commander Captain Tawake brief Members inside the Navy Operation Room.



Commander Navy Captain Tawake alongside with Navy personnel explaining the Aeronautical SAR, Maritime SAR and Land SAR on the smart use of technology to coordinate SAR in partnership with regional and international.



Fiji Navy Officer on watch in the Operations Room.



Fiji Navy vessels moored at the Stanley Brown Base.



Honourable Mosese Bulitavu and the Senior Committee Clerk at the Fiji Navy Headquarter.



Hon. Jilila Kumar pictured with her student Commander Captain Humphey Tawake.



Acting Chairperson Hon. Howard Politini pictured with Mr. Lenoa (SAR Consultant) and Naval Officer in the Fiji Navy Operations Room.