

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

[Verbatim Report of Meeting]

HELD IN THE

COMMITTEE ROOM (EAST WING)

ON

TUESDAY, 24TH APRIL, 2018

VERBATIM NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS HELD AT THE BIG COMMITTEE ROOM (EAST WING), PARLIAMENT PRECINCTS, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS ON TUESDAY, 24TH APRIL, 2018 AT 9.30 A.M.

Interviewee/Submittee: **Fiji Corrections Service**

In Attendance:

1. Mr. F. Kean - Commissioner
2. Mr. S. Naucukidi. - SHQ
3. Mr. A. Toroca - Accounts Officer
4. Ms. H. Koi - Senior Accounts Officer

Ministry of Economy – Internal Auditor

Mr. Narayan Swamy

Office of the Auditor-General

- Mr. Moshin Ali - Director of Audit
Mr. Samuela Tupou - Senior Auditor

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Honourable Members, Official from the Ministry of Economy (MOE), Officials from the Office of the Auditor-General (OAG) and in particular, Resource Personnel and the Commissioner representing the Fiji Corrections Service; I bid a very warm welcome and good morning to you all. We are here to discuss the Audit Report of the General Administration Sector 2016 as per Parliamentary Audit Report tabled in Parliament this year.

We will be looking at the issues that we have raised in terms of written responses sent to the Fiji Corrections Service. Without further ado, I would like to invite the Commissioner, Mr. Kean, if you can very briefly introduce your team and then straightaway take us through the financials and written responses that you have provided for the Committee to be discussed today. Thank you.

MR. F. KEAN.- Deputy Chairperson and Honourable Members of the Public Accounts Committee, thank you sincerely for the kind words of welcome this morning. We thank you for giving us the opportunity this morning to come and present to this august Committee the findings of the Auditor-General's Office. We also stand ready this morning to respond to any questions that Honourable Members may have in relation to our audit accounts for the six months from January to July 2016.

Deputy Chairperson, I understand we have made the written submission to this Committee.

(Introduction of Officials by the Commissioner)

That is the team this morning from Fiji Corrections Service and we stand ready this morning, Honourable Deputy Chairperson, to respond to any questions or any elaborations that may be required by your good self and Members of the Committee, *vinaka*.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- I thank you, Mr. Kean, for your brief introductory remarks. Before we can move onto the written submission, perhaps if you can provide a brief background of Fiji Corrections Service and likewise, inform the Committee further on what are some of the changes that have taken place in order to improve the entity, to achieve more and that has probably reduced the audit issues as compared before.

I can see that there are only four audit issues, compared to a number of issues that were highlighted in the previous reports. So if you can just provide us with some feedback as to what were some of the positive changes that took place in Fiji Corrections Service that led to the reduction of these audit issues, together with a brief introduction and background of the Fiji Corrections Service as its operation stands now. And from there you can just take us straightaway to your written submission, thank you.

MR. F. KEAN.- Thank you, Honourable Deputy Chairperson and Honourable Members. The Fiji Corrections Service historically was established in Ovalau, 100 plus years ago at Cession. I might give your good self a copy of the intent of the Commissioner which highlights very brief and colourful background that has been undertaken by the Corrections Service from the Colonial era right up to our present day.

We currently have 50 in our Corrections Service around the country and we have commissioned few Corrections Centres as of late last year and early this year, particularly the Remand Centre in Lautoka and our Women's Corrections Centre in Lautoka which is the second Women's Corrections Centre in Fiji, and that has alleviated few of the overcrowding issues we usually face at our Suva Women's Corrections Centre which is the only Women's Corrections Centre at that time. So, this has helped us in that regard and we are thankful to Government for the funding that had been provided for the construction of these two new complexes.

Several other projects have also been implemented, particularly the establishment of our Emergency Control Unit and our Canine, our Dog Handling personnel down at Lautoka, so we have that capability now down in the Western Division to cover that area which is a big Division for us.

We also have a new block for our supervisors down in the Western Division to take into consideration the growing infrastructure. Similarly, the increase in statistics of our prisoners coming into our Corrections Centre.

We have also recently commissioned a new Dining Kitchen and a Multipurpose Hall down at the Ba Corrections Centre. These were apparently damaged during *TC Winston*. Again, we are thankful for the funding that was provided to enable us to construct the new state of the art dining facility and multipurpose hall that is normally used for rehabilitation training programmes for prisoners, those who are under our care, and also for staff.

To cut our long story short, Deputy Chairperson and Honourable Members, since coming into our office in March 2016, soon thereafter there was an announcement of the change in the Government financial year. It was a bit of running around challenge, but a challenge that was not unachievable.

I am thankful to the team that we have here. I have a new team with me at Fiji Corrections Service - Ms. Koi and Mr. Toroca. I think in the short time that we have been together, we have acknowledges the comments that you have made this morning, Deputy Chairperson, we thankful for that and that is credit to the good work that Ms. Koi and Mr. Toroca have taken on board and mostly importantly ensured that the men and women under their supervision deliver on this very important component of the work that we undertake in the Fiji Corrections Service.

Yes, I agree with you, Deputy Chairperson and Honourable Members. We have made some turnaround. There are still some areas that we need to improve on but again, I am very thankful to the work that has been undertaken by Helen and Aporosa to minimise the number of audit queries that normally come up during the annual auditing of our accounts.

Basically, Deputy Chairperson and Honourable Members, we have done a lot of training, particularly with members of our Accounts Team. This includes the team members who normally work under the Six Small Business Units that make up our Trade and Manufacturing Account (TMA) that basically operate out of our Naboro Corrections Centre and one at our Suva Women's Corrections Centre.

We have introduced good governance practices and very basic/simple business practices to ensure that we cut down on wastages, abuse and ensure that we have to return to Government what is supposed to be returned at the end of our financial year, particularly for our TMA.

You can see in the report, Deputy Chairperson and Honourable Members, it is small but I believe it is a very important contribution that the TMA of the Fiji Corrections Service made to the Government coffers. I believe it was a big turnaround for the simple hundred thousand plus that was made in 2015 to the sixth months window or the financial year where we managed to contribute back to Government \$365,000 plus.

Again, I am thankful to Ms. Koi, Mr. Toroca and the team at our Accounts Section and also at our TMA Unit down at Naboro for their diligence, honesty and most importantly in exercising good governance and also in adhering to some of the financial procedures in the Finance Act, the Financial Instructions, the TMA Policy and also the Procurement Regulations. *Vinaka*.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you. Honourable Members, any supplementary questions to the introductory remarks that the Commissioner has stated. So if there is any supplementary questions to that or any interest shown about the general work of the Fiji Corrections Service?

I just have a question to the OAG in the appropriation statement where it says that the initial budget was \$39,419,626 and out of that, \$22,558,173 resulted in the savings and the explanation given was that, this was solely because of the change in the financial year. As it stands we would still consider the total budget of the Fiji Corrections Service to be around \$39 million something. OAG?

AUDIT REP.- Thank you, Deputy Chairperson. Yes, the revised budget was \$39 million and as indicated in our Report, the saving was around \$22 million. So, \$39 million was initially given for the whole financial year and just because the financial year ended seven months, that was why the reason why we have....

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- So, this savings amount equates to the next financial year for their operations?

AUDIT REP.- No, that savings would ideally be returned to the MOE and then when the new financial year starts, they get the new budget.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you. Sir, if you can take us through the written responses now.

MR. F. KEAN.- Honourable Deputy Chairperson and Honourable Members, if it is approved by your good self, I will allow my Senior Accountant to take us through that, if it is all right?

...

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Yes.

MS. H. KOI.- Thank you, Sir.

For the Unsubstantiated Accounts Receivables, the Fiji Corrections Service adheres to the debtors aging report and confirms that all transactions are now transacted on cash basis. No sales are being made on credit now and all outstanding debtors are continuously being followed-up. No product purchased is released past the main gate whenever a purchase is done upon the producing of receipts and invoice to confirm the items in purchase and the quantity paid.

We have cleared these outstanding debtors through Journal Vouchers raised by payments made on the new financial year. In the beginning of the following year confirming our payments that have been received for which we have attached our copies of those vouchers.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Thank Honourable Members, any questions on that?

I have two questions of my own. The first one I would like to ask is, as I noted in the introductory remarks of the Commissioner that the services of Fiji Corrections Service are expanding now. So obviously there needs to be a financial link between all the officers who are out there. What is the accounting software or if there is an accounting software which the Fiji Corrections Service uses?

The second question is, I believe those debtors are tailor and joinery debtors as was mentioned in the Audit Report. If we can have some further explanation or examples of what sort of trade happens between these tailor and joinery enterprises.

MR. F. KEAN.-Thank you, Honourable Deputy Chairperson and Honourable Members. The software we use, I think, is joinery system in Government under the FMIS, and it is managed by ITC.

For the Joinery and Tailor Business Unit, we have the Joinery Business Unit in the Naboro Medium Correctional Centre and we also have two Tailor Business Units. Tailor 1 is down at the Naboro Medium Correctional Centre and Tailor 2 is at the Suva Women's Correctional Centre. So they are two small business units but they come under one, we just call them Tailor 1 and Tailor 2.

To address some of these issues, Honourable Deputy Chairperson and Honourable Members, what we have now implemented for those two Units is that, we must have 90 percent deposit upfront before we commence any work. So that is the new measure that we have put in place to address some of the issues we are facing with those two business units because we do not want to keep a lot of inventory which I now believe is a normal business practice. And again, we

should be smart in the way we conduct our business, to ensure that we can give the returns that is expected from us. So that is basically some of the measures we have put in place in relation to those two Business Units.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Sir, your buyers are garment factories or small and medium enterprises? What are these businesses?

MR. F. KEAN.- The small Business Units Honourable Deputy Chairperson and Honourable Members, is part and parcel of the rehabilitation programmes that we deliver in our Correctional Centres. The intent is to give the necessary skill sets to those under our care, so that when they do leave us they go back into some, sort of, profession.

We also have, as part of our early release scheme, job placements and we also have employment releases. We have had few of our prisoners formerly under our care, who have taken up work with United Apparel and some other tailoring companies.

We specifically place them out, depending on the opportunities that arise and we are thankful to our supervisors and officers-in-charge for going out to some of these business communities and securing some employment opportunities for some of those under our care.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you. Honourable Members?

HON. A.D. O'CONNOR.- Deputy Chairperson, thank you. Commander, what is your market for those products, I mean, your garment and your furniture, what is the actual market, is it only the prisons or you also market to garment entities?

MR. F. KEAN.- Thank you, Honourable O'Connor and Honourable Members. Yes, there is a lot of demand, particularly from the community and from some Civil Service organisations that want their *kala vata*.

For our Joinery, we do a lot of work for the churches. The chairs for churches are normally constructed by us. We have had a few demands from some schools, like RKS and QVS and we have constructed chairs and desks for the schools. So the demand is out there.

There are opportunities out there and that is an area that, we at Corrections, need to work on, just the marketing aspect of this, but those are just some of the areas that we actually provide our goods to and we have also sew our prison uniforms at our Tailor Shops in Naboro.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- It is good to note that the organisation is in a way trying to achieve its vision, that prison is not a place where you just keep the prisoners. You also have taken the responsibility of training them to enter the workforce and to get back to their normal lives as citizens of our country once they are released from prison.

Yes, I have seen for myself, I think, a truck which was engaged in the business of poultry, providing eggs, et cetera. I saw it was very busy on the road delivering poultry products. That shows that there is lot of trading activities going on and I thank you, Commissioner, for such incentives. We will move on to the next item.

15.A7 – Variances noted in TMA Cash at Bank.

MS. H. KOI.- Thank you, Sir. The variances in the TMA Cash at Bank is noted and rectified. Those variances were in relation to debtors payments made and dishonoured, hence not

reflecting in the bank statement as a credit. With the introduction of non-credit sales, cheques are not entertained as a mode of payment now, but all purchasing are made through cash for individual customers and not personal cheques.

Bank reconciliations are maintained monthly and pay-ins for all cash transactions are processed daily through the FMIS System and those are checked against the bank statements, ensuring that lodgements are also reflected daily.

The TMA Journal Voucher (JV) was raised to clear this TMA debtors which were received in the bank statement, but not adjusted in the FMIS. A copy of this JV is also attached. Thank you, Sir.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Honourable Members, any supplementary question on that?

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Thank you, just a supplementary question to this audit issue in regards to dishonoured cheques; about \$13,000 was identified during the audit. How has the Department strategised to improve on this so that there is no repetition of these cheques being paid to the Department and later found out to be dishonoured?

MR. F. KEAN.- Deputy Chairperson and Honourable Members, thank you for the supplementary question. One of the measures that we have put in place now is that all procurement must be made on a cash basis, apart from the big companies like we deal with some of the supermarkets where we sell our eggs to. There is a normal business practice where you give them time to pay, for example, 30 days but we are normally on their backs to ensure that they pay within the required timeframe. But for all staff and other personnel who come in to purchase any items from our small Business Units, we demand cash and we no longer take cheques from them.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- I thank you Commissioner. We note that there is a shift in paradigm in terms of the operations of the Fiji Corrections Service and I am referring in particular to the trading that now occurs and there seems to be a lot of trading. Has this demand also led to the increase in having resource personnel, especially financial people who can also look into this or as it stands, there are sufficient officers in the Fiji Corrections Service who can look after this business operations of the organisation?

MR. F. KEAN.- Honourable Deputy Chairperson and Honourable Members, I do not know whether my Senior Accountant or my Accountant will agree with me. I know they keep pushing me for more staff but I keep telling them, "I think we have adequate staff."

What we have done, Deputy Chairperson and Honourable Members, as part of the good governance practice, we have employed in the small Business Units some of our personnel who have financial background, like those having Diploma in Accounting or Diploma in Business, so we have put them into the six Business Units so that they can be our first point of contact and they will also monitor the conduct of those small businesses. So, that has helped us in some way.

Our current staff, we have an Assistant Accountant in Labasa who looks after the North and also one in the Western Office, who also looks after Western Division. So, having all that I think at the moment we only have two accountants here, always begging me for one additional staff so that is something for us to think about over the next couple of months before the end of the financial year before we can consider recruiting another Finance staff. But all in all, I think we have managed with the resources that we currently have.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Sir, we have heard that there are more business activities happening here. How about the Western Division, what are some of the business operations within the FCS occurring there?

MR. F. KEAN.- Thank you, Honourable Deputy Chairperson and Honourable Members. We do not have any business units down in the Western Division or up in the Northern Division. The only and I would not say business, but we have a bakery down at the Lautoka Corrections Centre. For the bakery, we have a Corrections staff and most of the other personnel who are working there are those who are under our care, again, it is another opportunity for learning a bit of trade of how to bake. Hopefully, they can secure a job in some of the bakeries out in the country. So, that is the only business activity that we have in the Western Division but in the North, we do not have any.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Deputy Chairperson, just on the dishonoured cheques, I have not seen anything on the explanation given. Have those cheque amounts that were considered as dishonoured, being recovered from the respective debtors?

MS. H. KOI.- Thank you, Sir. Yes, we have been working closely with the OAG and we have cleared the outstanding debtors' dishonoured cheques that were reflecting in those years and the new financial year.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- OAG, if I can take you to the Management Comments, mentioned there in the last sentence regarding dishonoured cheques are the comments from FCS that says, and I quote:

“...only one cheque that was actually dishonoured is chq number 775864 - \$4,884.00. The other dishonoured cheques highlighted cannot be confirmed whether it is a cheque or receipt serial numbers.”

What is the scenario of that now? Is that what it is?

AUDIT REP.- Thank you, Deputy Chairperson. If you look at our Table 15A.10, I think that is the description that we got from the Department, for reconciliation which appears to be dishonoured cheques. So, we took it as it is a dishonoured cheque.

However, as the Senior Accountant has said, they have worked towards clearing those cheques and we will be happy to follow in the current audit which we are doing just to confirm whether it was rightfully a dishonoured cheque and has been correctly cleared.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- We can move on to the next issue.

MS. H. KOI.- 15.A8 - Lack of Guidelines on Operation of Prisoners Trust Fund Account; This lack of Guideline has been attended to and rectified. The Prisoners Trust Fund Account was established to cater for cash held by inmates during process for admission. Inmates who have cash to the sum of \$25 and above are deposited into our Trust Account. This is payable back to the inmate upon discharge.

The Fiji Corrections Service has been through many changes in roles and functions which is correlating well with the Guideline and standard operations of this Trust Fund. The new role

known as correction from the original containment, has seen the FCS introduce other inmates funds namely:

1. Job Placement;
2. Sugar Cane Harvesting;
3. Commercial Wages (TMA);
4. Art Gallery; and
5. Prisoners Cash.

The Guideline was reviewed and a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been drafted for the change of this current process and Guideline, and the FMIS has already been restructured, paving the way for this new SOP to be implemented.

Names of inmates have also been identified to match these funds that has been lodged into this Trust Fund.

We attach confirmation on the FMIS new allocations of the Trust Funds. The new SOP that was signed and identified listing inmates who are the beneficiaries of these funds which is attached as Annex C. Thank you, Sir.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- The share of proceeds from the sales, some of the things that are mentioned there - Art Gallery, proceeds like Sugar Cane Harvesting, et cetera, are still the same – 60:40 percent ratio?

MS. H. KOI.- Yes, Sir.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Just a question out of interest on the Sugar Cane Harvesting Agreement, is it still continuing?

MR. F. KEAN.- Honourable Deputy Chairperson and Honourable Members, yes, we have an MOU with the Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC) and also with the Ministry of Sugar for the engagement of those who are under our care in cane harvesting and that normally happens during the cane harvesting season from June to December.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Because there were a lot of positive feedbacks in regards to this initiative, so it is good to note that it is still continuing. It has been quite a relief in those areas where this harvesting was taking place, especially in terms of finding labour as it was a very good solution, and it is good to note that it is still continuing.

Honourable Members, any questions?

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- A clarification on the new roles that have been taken on by the Fiji Corrections Service, like job placement. Can we just get clarifications and descriptions on how this job placements are currently being handled by the Department?

MR. F. KEAN.- Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Deputy Chairperson and Honourable Members, we have several but a few programmes are under our early release scheme:

1. Job Placement;
2. Employment release;
3. Community release;

4. Short term release; and
5. Weekend release.

For Employment Release, we have some of those under our care who were employed before and maybe because of their wrong choice, they ended up on the wrong side of the law. However, the expertise and the relationship that they have with particular companies are amicable. There is an opportunity that the particular company wants this particular person, who has the necessary skill sets to be engaged. So when he reaches the time of his sentence where he is eligible to be released on such schemes through the Office-in-Charge, through the necessary administrative process, they send their application through the Supervisor which comes up to the Commissioner's Office and then the Commissioner sends it down to the Allocation Board which is chaired by the Deputy Commissioner and they do their necessary deliberations.

These reports normally involve a report by our psychologist, and also by the assessment that is done by the Officer-in-Charge and also the relevant personnel under our rehabilitation unit before that application is sent to the Allocation Board. So once the Allocation Board makes the decision and we see that all the supporting documents are in order, the person is normally released to go and engage in employment. *Vinaka*.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you. We can move on to the last response, Madam.

MS. H. KOI.- 15.A9 – Expenditure recorded contrary to the Appropriation Provided; this has been noted and expenditure appropriation is carefully utilised according to its purpose.

The utilisation of funds was still appropriate from the FMIS perspective of budget SEG allocation. The two expenditures were allocated in the same SEG 4, known as the highest level utilisation in the Financial Management System. The highest level utilisation will not affect the Income and Expenditure Statement on the drawing up of the Balance Sheet. The under and over statement claimed at the lowest level is insignificant at the highest level to which it still maintains the Appropriation Act. However, as mentioned FCS has rectified the query and kept apprised with the Appropriation Act to its accounting process. Thank you, Sir.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Honourable Members, any questions?

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Commander Kean, thank all that you have briefed outlined to us regarding the(inaudible)... but the new areas that you are looking at, one thing that has, sort of, come into mind is, this may not generate income to our fellow inmates out there but again, trying to drive home that sense of ownership.

The individuals who are there hail from various Provinces around Fiji, especially sugarcane farming. We used to do this in the past, Honourable Deputy Chairperson. Again, we have been continuously addressed, Commander Kean, regarding how best can the prison services help. Various Provinces have interest in sugarcane farming because sugarcane is very important to us and as a country.

Again, to fully participate in it, there is always this big gap and the inmates have been providing this great source of labour. How can we see that it goes back to the inmates in terms of their position in the Provinces that they hail from?

The Provinces have been visiting the Institution, simply for the last so many years but I really do not know what sort of serious programmes they have in mind where the very people that

we are trying to help, will help the province but whether their provincial levy is taken care of or something of that nature. But, at least, they know they are taken care of by the various Provinces that they hail from. This is just a question in relation to these new areas that you are looking at. Thank you.

MR. F. KEAN.- Thank you, Honourable Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu. Deputy Chairperson and Honourable Members, we have changed the goals of the Fiji Corrections Service, particularly the third one.

We normally have three goals. The first two remains the same - security and safety, but the third one previously used to be in-care, we have now changed that to become full-care. We want to take care of those under our care to the doorsteps of every prisoner in Fiji and that is a mammoth task. I believe a wonderful strategy that runs in line with the vision of the Fiji Corrections Service and the mission of the Fiji Corrections Service is to restore lives.

One of the programmes we have introduced Honourable Members is *solesolevaki*. I believe that is something familiar with your good self and the Honourable Members. We currently have 15 inmates who are engaged in this and I am happy to report that we have one particular inmate, a former prisoner, who is in North, I think in Seaqaqa, who is actually engaged in sugarcane farming. So in *solesolevaki*, we – the prisoners and also Corrections staff, actually go out and help those prisoners to get started.

What we did Honourable Ratu Naiqama is we do not wait for them to be discharged. While they stay with us, we are already doing the *solesolevaki*. We go and engage the *vanua*, we engage the *lotu*, we engage the community leaders for a piece of land that is available to this particular person, particularly whatever province he comes from, hence, the *solesolevaki* starts.

We have a few success stories in relation to *solesolevaki*. We want the first 15 to actually consolidate before we include additional prisoners to come under this programme, to ensure that the programme is successful. I am happy to report, Honourable Ratu Naiqama, Honourable Members and the Deputy Chairperson that the success stories have resulted in some of the prisoners actually done some harvesting and are getting some money.

The intension for us is, through through-care strategy, most of the prisoners, particularly the *i-Taukei* who come out from the provincial centres, what we want to ensure is that they must go back to something. If they go back to nothing or zero, there is a high probability that they will come back under our care. That is one of the reasons why we have changed the strategy from in-care to through-care, not only that rehabilitation ends within the four corners of the prison ward but we are now taking that rehabilitation strategy out to the doorsteps of the individual homes of prisoners.

Before we used to take the prisoners out to their homes. Now, we have actually changed that. We actually get the family members to come down to prison when their loved ones are about to be discharged. On the day of the discharge they come down, we have the necessary senior personnel present to say a few words before they depart. We want to actually see the actual care from the other side and that is all part of the rehabilitation programme that we are spearheading at the moment, so we have stayed with this strategy.

We have the solution currently ongoing, but we will definitely try and look into getting more members, particularly from the Western Division into the sugarcane farming areas, Honourable Ratu Naiqama. Thank you.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Honourable Members, any questions?

I think some prisoners should be encouraged in grog farming because the price seems to be increasing day by day.

I thank you, Commissioner, for your indulgence in providing us as much information as we need. I was going over the written submission and was very well substantiated with the appendices, especially in providing documentary evidence in regards to the audit issues that were raised. We also take note of the many positive reforms that are currently occurring and hopefully, those reforms will continue to work out within the organisation.

We see that there has been lot of incentives in not only keeping the prisoners in the prison but also improving them as individuals on the outset, so that when they go back to the society they are more reformed and I thank the initiatives that have been ongoing so far.

On this note, I thank for your submission and for your presence, together with your Officials who are here with us and before we break for morning tea, we would like to hear some concluding remarks and then we will close the submission for today. Thank you.

MR. F. KEAN.- Thank you, Honourable Deputy Chairperson and Honourable Members. I would just like to acknowledge the support that we have from the OAG and also from the MOE in ensuring that they continue to monitor the work and counselling at FCS. We will endeavour and continue to ensure that we minimise on the number of audit queries that do come to this august forum.

We thank you so much again, Honourable Members, for the kind words that have been extended to the Fiji Corrections Service and this is all credit to the diligence of the men and women and the officers of the Fiji Corrections Service. Thank you, Sir.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Please do join us for morning tea. Thank you.

The Committee adjourned at 10.15 a.m.

The Committee resumed at 11.00 a.m.

Interviewee/Submittee: Fiji Police Force

In Attendance:

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | ACP Itendra Nair | - | Chief Admin Officer |
| 2. | SSP Francis Nagesa | - | Director, Human Resource Management |
| 3. | Ms. Manaini Mills | - | Senior Accounts Officer |
| 4. | Ms. Ashma Devi | - | Assistant Accounts Officer |

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Honourable Members, members of the media, representatives from the Ministry of Economy (MOE), Officials from the Office of the Auditor-General (OAG) and in particular, resource personnel who are present before us from the Fiji Police Force (FPF); a very good morning to you all.

The Team from the FPF are represented by the Chief Accounts Officer and we are here to discuss the Report of the Auditor-General year ended 31st July, 2016. There were altogether four Audit issues that we have sent to you and a written submission to be discussed before the Committee today. So without further ado, I would like to request the Chief Accounts Officer to introduce your Team and then from there give a very brief background of the FPF. We also take note of the fact that the Audit issues have gravely reduced and we are interested to know the strategies that FPF used, especially in terms of improving its financial position.

I now give the opportunity to the designated speaker to introduce your Team and from there, lead us through your submission. Thank you.

MR. I. NAIR.- Thank you, Sir, for those comments. The Deputy Chairperson of this august Committee, Honourable Members, senior civil servants who are present here, members of the media; a very good morning to all of you. The Commissioner of Fiji is unable to attend due to some official engagements and he has sent his best wishes and regards to this august Committee.

(Introduction of FPF Officials)

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- My apology I addressed you as an Accounts Officer, it should have been the Chief Admin Officer. I apologise for that misconception.

MR. I. NAIR.- We are here this morning to answer issues relating to the Auditor-General's Report for the year ending 31st July, 2016. The four issues highlighted are:

1. Irregularities in the Operating Trust Fund Account (TFA);
2. Revolving Fund Account (RFA);
3. Misallocation of Capital Purchase Appropriation; and
4. Anomalies noted in the Revenue

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Just before we move on to the actual issues, earlier on I had put forward a request.. I mentioned earlier that there has been a lot of improvements in terms of the Audit issues which are prevailing now and has greatly reduced. If I can get someone to advise us on what were your strategies or measures and the reforms that the FPF used to reduce those Audit issues and make it healthier with less issues. Thank you.

MR. I. NAIR.- Sir, thank you for those kind comments. In fact, what the organisation did was basically reorganised its Accounting Officers. We had formed Taskforce Teams and basically they are doing their own routine responsibilities and duties, while at the same time, they are tasked with looking at each and other issues that has been highlighted in our previous Auditor-General's Report. So the Taskforce Team is operating well and we have seen that.

Revolving Fund Account; Deputy Chairperson, what we have done is, we have taken assistance of certain technologies. Hence, all the things that we are doing now is more you can say in terms of, not any like structured one but more in terms of, and I will give you an example; some of the things that we were doing previously we were losing a lot of funds when someone leaves the organisation and because we are still very manual organisation in nature, unless and until we stop the funds going to his bank account it keeps on going on. There is a reaction time in terms of when you are dealing with physical documents and once a physical document reaches the desk, it has taken a lot of time.

What we have done is, we have used some sort of technologies, maybe just a simple text. If an officer has passed on, so I need to stop his salary. If I do not do that, then the salary gets pumped into his account and it will happen unless and until you stop. So what we basically do is, that is somehow advertised in our morning situation reports, I pick it up in the morning and I will just drop a *viber* message to all my Admin Officers; "So and so has passed on, please stop his salary", and that gets acted upon immediately rather than shuffling through the hard copies of the documents that we have.

Some of the prudence and wisdom that we have brought in, in financial management has basically seen some of the reductions in some of the issues that were previously raised.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- So I take note that every morning a situation report is given before the operation starts so that decisions can be made as to what financial measures will be taken to further improve the issues relating to the Force, and one of it is, if officers have passed or are leaving the workforce, et cetera. So this is a consistent practice now?

MR. I. NAIR.- Yes, this is a consistent practice that we are doing. A morning situation report will consist of the operations which has happened, plus some of the administration issues that I have spoken about, for example, if someone has passed on it is going to be reported there or someone has gone missing/absent without leave which is very common in some of the Disciplined Forces and his/her salary still gets pumped into his/her account, so we have to stop that and once he/she comes back then we will deal with him/her within our disciplinary procedures and then we go ahead and release his/her salary.

Those are some of the methods that we have looked at and we are also forecasting, like in terms of retirements. If retirements are happening, then it is forecasted. Once again, I come to this same example of stopping the salary and if you do not stop the salary, it gets pumped in. So looking at producing forecasts in terms of retirement for the whole year, then we take it from there and then as an officer nears his/her retirement we give all his/her leave and come the retirement date, we stop that. So that is another factor that we have inserted in some of the responsibilities that we undertake.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you, Mr. Nair, for those comments. From our previous submission with the Force there was a very prudent issue of disbursement of the retirement funds. We reached a deadlock and we were told that it is still in the process and that consisted of a Job Evaluation Exercise, retirement funds, et cetera, so there was a special allocation. What is the

update on that now because since it was unresolved the last time when the Force was here whereby they said that they will come back and provide us with more details on that?

MR. I. NAIR.- I am not actually aware in terms of the earlier group who had presented prior to this presentation, but I am aware of is the Job Evaluation Exercise which took place in the organisation. For that, we had basically reported to another august Committee of Parliament, I think it was chaired by Honourable Netani Rika. We had reported to him, they have made recommendations and it is an ongoing process we have appeared before them. It is not yet closed, I think, but we had reported to that Committee. I think the Committee deals with Foreign Affairs and Defence, if I am not mistaken.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Yes, there was a report that was tabled in Parliament and there were some recommendations. I believe the recommendations must have come to the Force and the line Ministry, and hopefully they will very seriously address whatever the recommendations are there. Nonetheless, you can proceed with the next issue, Sir. Thank you.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Supplementary question. On your examples regarding salary processing, can you just elaborate further on whether the Force is in charge of processing salaries or is it the MOE?

MR. I. NAIR.- Thank you, Sir, for your question. We normally process all those things but in terms of manual payments that we need to do, we will take assistance from them.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- The Officers in the Force, their salaries are processed at the Police Headquarters?

MR. I. NAIR.- ...(inaudible) ...by MOE but we are sort of the input source data provider, the information provider.

Moving on to the next issue, Irregularities in the Operating Trust Fund Accounts; the Team has completed 70 percent in verifying and reconciling the account and this account is backdated, some even to 2006. Once the tasking will be completed, all the misallocations that are within the TFA or RFA will be corrected through Journal Vouchers.

However, for adjustments that will require funds, et cetera, guidance will be sought from the MOE. The Team is expected to complete the tasking by end of June 2018. So this is work in progress and as reported in Table 20.3, I will refer to the first account number 863201. The description is VAT from Provision of Goods & Services, and the accumulative amount there was \$956,088.32.

We have identified through our Taskforce Team a total of \$643,881.55 is the balance. The work in progress for the Taskforce Team is \$312,206.78.

Account Number 861517 - 307 PD Police Service Credit Union reported \$748,208.86. We have identified \$73,531.32 and the balance or work in progress is \$674,677.54.

Account Number 861902 - 204 PD Deposit A/C Recoverable - \$85,245.69. We have identified \$35,011.77 and work in progress is \$50,233.92.

Account number 861917 - 437 PD Improved Forestry - \$31,454.35. We have identified \$1,500 and work in progress is \$29,954.35.

In total, the accumulated amount was \$1,820,997.22. The amount identified from that was \$753,924.64 and whatever that has not been identified is \$1,067,072.59.

If you look at Table 20.4 - Overdrawn Operating Trust Fund Accounts, a total amount of \$25,980.05 was overdrawn in various TFA allocations. This anomaly has been identified since salary uploads and payments were made from incorrect account numbers and adjustments had been made to correct the misallocations.

Sir, this was a one-off case. The total balance had been cleared, as you can see in the last column which has the status, you will see all those amounts had already been identified, corrected and journalised.

I will now take us to the next issue.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- I am sorry for the interruption; OAG, what is status update on these adjustments which FPF has mentioned here?

AUDIT REP.- Thank you, Honourable Deputy Chairperson. As presented in Table 20.4, I think we can confirm that those had been taken care of, had already been cleared. However, as presented in the table before that, that is close to \$1 million which is still work in progress, and I think that would be a concern to us.

That is quite a substantial figure. It needs to be taken care of and we also take note of the deadline which they have presented, by 30th June. I think we will be happy to follow that in our next audit, if those would be cleared by that date.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you, you can move on to the next one.

MR. I. NAIR.- 20.5 - Revolving Fund Account (RFA); Sir, a similar exercise was undertaken as carried out for the TFA to clear the RFA for previous year's accumulative figures backdated to 2014. From this account, funds were given as accountable advances to officers who travel on duty to attend Court, investigations, et cetera. The verification Taskforce Team has also identified that there were misallocations within those RFA and TFA that will be corrected through Journal Vouchers and where funds will be required, guidance will be sought from MOE to clear the accumulative figures.

For your information, the closing balance in those accounts as at financial year ending 2017 was only \$30,405.30. The closing balance for 2016 was \$132,174.09 and comprised the following:

- 2016 -\$11,753.08;
- Carried forward balance from previous years - \$120,421.01, bringing to a total of \$132,174.09;
- Those identified which was cleared in 2017 - \$102,825.13 ; and
- Unidentified which is work in progress - \$17,595.88.

As I had reported earlier, currently the Taskforce Team is verifying this amount (\$17,595.88) of which, we have again identified \$7,033.37 so that basically leaves us with \$10,000 only and that was for the previous year's outstanding balances.

Moving on to paragraph (b); the RFA allocations for those respective allocations had debit balances of \$114,920.52 and \$432 respectively. Since the reconciliations were not provided for audit verification, the audit could not substantiate the correctness of the above balances. Those two allocations had zero balance and deactivated (inoperative) after consultation with FMIS and this is attached as Annexure I to our presentation this morning. Annexure I is basically showing a zero balance.

With your permission I will move on to 20.6 - Misallocation of Capital Purchase Appropriation; for your information, Sir, the budgetary fund was allocated in the capital and tender was awarded to a vendor that included both, the operating and capital procurements. For example, procurements for capital items were for baton, medals, Sam Brown belts and operating were for raincoats and file black. So it is just a mixture of operating and capital procurements which has occurred and this is the issue.

We agree with the Auditors' recommendations, however, this was a one-off case. We will ensure that the virement process will be followed to redeploy or separate funds to appropriate expenditure allocations before procurement and payments. The capital purchase will be made from SEG 9 capital allocation and operating expenditure from SEG 5.

With your permission, Sir, I will move to 20.7 - Anomalies noted in the Revenue; yes, we do agree with the Auditors' findings. For your information Sir, the various revenue collectors who were based at various Police Stations throughout the country are police officers who were performing additional work, apart from their core functions of policing.

However, for internal controls, the following instructions are given:

1. Police have Assistant Accounts Officers who are now based at various Divisional Police Commanders Offices, so we have decentralised this function. These Divisional Assistant Account Officers are instructed to conduct regular inspections on their Revenue Collectors, provide training, et cetera, including for the remote and maritime Stations. This will enable us, at the earliest, to detect any late banking lodgments or anomalies in the revenue collection and banking.

Furthermore, all Revenue Collectors are reminded again for the daily banking of revenue collected where the banking facilities are provided, except for the remote and maritime Police Stations, within the week. The Force Accountant has issued a directive in this regards which is attached to our presentation as Annexure II.

2. Taveuni Police Station: During verification of bank lodgments for the Station, it was discovered that there was irregular banking and some receipts were not accounted for. An investigation had been carried out by the Police Internal Affairs Department and the case is handed over to the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) for their sanction and further directive on this case. Sir, we are still awaiting for the decision or advice on this case.
3. Revenue VAT: We have noted the comments of the Auditor-General and whilst this was a one-off case, all efforts are undertaken to ensure that the money collected from Police Clearances, et cetera, are receipted to correct VAT and revenue allocations and accordingly, posted into FMIS General Ledgers. The VAT revenue collected is paid monthly to FRCA.

Sir, we appreciate the Audit findings and the recommendations contained therein are noted. However, we would be pleased to further clarify issues, if needed.

That is the end of my presentation this morning, Sir.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you, Mr. Nair for your presentation. Just a question out of interest, I am intrigued to know that there are additional income sources for the Force. I just wanted to know those sources that we are talking about here, the additional police work that happens.

MR. I. NAIR.- Some of the sources or the funds that we do generate, examples are:

1. Police Clearances: When people go into employment or migrate overseas they request for a Police Clearance which is facilitated by our Payment Records Office. There is a fees allocated to that and we collect that on behalf of the Government.
2. Fire Alarm Licences: Applicable in remote stations where farmers in particular, or someone has been issued with fire alarm, he has to pay an annual licence, so we collect money on that.
3. Committal Warrant: This is basically executed if someone has not paid his/her court fine or whatever the fine may be. It is added together with the warrant executing fees. Supposedly if he/she was driving a motor vehicle with defective tyre or exceeding speed limit and if the fine is \$50, there is an execution fees attached to that. Our officers will go and collect and receipt that, which is basically then put into the Government's Consolidated Account.

Those are some of the funds that we are collecting revenue on behalf of the Government.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- MOE, we believe in cases of certain revenue, for example, Police fines, there is a certain proportion that needs to go to the line agency which is LTA and certain proportion goes to the FPF. How does this process of collection works in terms of the financial allocation? It goes to the Consolidated Fund and from there, what happens?

MOE REP.- Thank you, Sir. All the funds are remitted to the MOE's Consolidated Fund Account.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Then from there, you do your allocation; how much goes to which agency?

MOE REP.- Yes.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.-If we are to raise issues, like audit issues relating to this, the MOE is also liable to provide justification to that as we speak?

MOE REP.- Yes.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you. Honourable Members, any questions?

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Deputy Chairperson, on awaiting advice from the DPP, any indication on how long have you been waiting for this advice?

MR. I. NAIR.- Thank you, Sir, for your question. I am advised by the Deputy Force Accountant that it was despatched to the Office of the DPP in March this year.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- So, it was March 2018.

I thank the representatives from the FPF. That was a precise and clear-cut explanation, of course, provided with certain documentary evidences. So, I take it that there will not be any other supplementary questions.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Deputy Chairperson, just a question regarding the Force's infrastructure, taking into account all your budget allocations and the spending that you have conducted in the first seven months of 2016. In terms of the facilities regarding holding cells and respective facilities all around Fiji, can you just enlighten the Committee on what FPF is doing in terms of complying with OHS Standards? Are there any plans to improve and better the holding cells around the country, especially the ones here at Government Buildings and CPS?

MR. I. NAIR.- Thank you, Sir, for the question. I looked at it and tried to answer that in terms of existing police stations versus our future police stations. The existing police stations that we have, in fact, whenever we have issues in terms of the cell, we attend to it and we repair because we are given a minor renovation budget of about \$250,000 a year. If there are some cases where repetitive requests are coming our way, then we vire funds from our savings to be able to do that.

In as far as the Government Buildings cells are concerned, we basically are the customers here because this is owned by Judicial Department. However, we work in consultation with them to be able to bring about renovations after certain escapes had been reported. So, we do work with them in terms of the cells here.

For Totogo Police Station, I do understand there were few escape cases after which we have rectified issues and we have brought up the infrastructure up to par in terms of OHS requirements, et cetera. So, it is sort of on a daily basis routine, if there are requests coming our way we do go but for the future police stations that are coming up, for example, Valelevu Police Station, et cetera, it is not only OHS compliance, it is also providing those human rights aspects in our future police stations.

HON. A.D. O'CONNOR.- Mr. Nair, I am just wanting to inquire and this is a pertinent question about your Lautoka Police Station. When are you likely to start the demolition and renovation of the old block?

MR. I. NAIR.-(inaudible)...which was brought down by *TC Winston*. We are basically working with the Construction Implementation Unit of the MOE. They have allocated certain funds in this year's budget and what we are doing is, it is a phased approach.

The first phase is in terms of consultation. The consultants have got in and they are looking at it. The second phase is where we will demolish the Police Station and as per approved plans, then we will then go ahead. So it is a phased approach.

In Phase 1, we are currently looking at the ground work and the consultation aspect of it. The second phase will be demolition and the third phase is basically the construction.

In terms of answering your question, we would want to do it as soon as possible but given the funds we are looking at, most probably within the next three to four years or so. For the current, as your good self maybe aware, we are operating quite fine with the old FNPF building which has been given to us and we are hopeful that we should be able to build the police station in the next say, three to four years.

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- I just seek some clarification regarding the time and the allocation of personnel in regards to the servicing of the Police Service Credit Union, it does not come under your direct budgeting within the Force but again, you have a lot of irregularities here, needing a lot of your manpower at times. Can the Committee be guided may be through the OAG and MOE as to why this is included in this list of irregularities?

MR. I. NAIR.- Thank you, Sir, for your question. I think you have rightly pointed out the fact that the Police Credit Union basically has its separate entity in terms of its functions and they operate entirely quite differently. What happens is, because the Credit Union receives members' deductions, the deductions are done by us and then uploaded into the Credit Union account and that is where these misallocations have come about. That is how it is basically being operated. We deduct on behalf of the members and dump it into the Credit Union account.

AUDIT REP.- Thank you, Honourable Member. With reference to Table 20.4, it is about Trust Fund Account. As Mr. Nair has pointed out, it is the deduction from the police officers who are members of the Credit Union, so the deductions are done by the Force Accounts Team and those funds are held in Trust and subsequently paid to the Credit Union. That is the reason why it is appearing in Table 20.4.

As far as the people who are managing the Credit Union itself, I think it is something which the Force would be in a better position to answer - the people who are responsible for managing the Credit Union as a functional unit. As far as the accounting bit is concerned, that is why it is appearing in the Table, deducted by the Force and has to be paid to the Credit Union.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- A supplementary question regarding this Credit Union; you identified some amounts from this listing of only about \$73,000. What we can take out from this is \$674,000 is still left to be paid to the Police Service Credit Union. This would mean that the respective police officers who have made the deductions are being deprived of their amount though. It is supposed to be paid to the Police Service Credit Union because it is still appearing in the Force's account.

MS. M. MILLS.- Thank you, Honourable Deputy Chairperson and Honourable Members. As for the amount that is still outstanding in this Trust Fund Account, there were some charges that are still in this allocation that needs to be journalised - the commissions, there were some new postings, like the sports deductions that went into this allocation, some payments, like the Public Rental Board, Fijian Holdings and Handy Finance deductions which were paid from this allocation and those need to be journalised.

The amount of \$68,973 that appears as credit under this allocation was due to the double loading by the MOE. The amount that is still outstanding there, they are charges from previous years, even though there is no outstanding payment to be made to the Fiji Police Credit Union. It is just in the lapse of authority on this.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- ...(inaudible)... paid out, but this is just the variances that came out in the system that still remains to be cross checked and verified?

MS. M. MILLS.- Yes, Sir.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you. Honourable Members, any other questions?

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- The FPF mentioned that they are currently in the manual system or you are currently linking yourself manually. Are there any plans to connect yourself through information technology, especially the seriousness of the work involved so that information are received on time?

MR. I. NAIR.- Thank you, Sir, for the question. As I speak, this morning we have launched a training in terms of our Human Resources Information System (HRIS). Basically, we are getting in a system so that we can be able to control many of those things that we have talked about which we are currently doing physically.

It is also a phased approach and the only thing would be then to make this integrated into our Financial Management Information System and then we should be a solid organisation in terms of managing our resources, et cetera.

As we speak, steps are being taken. We do not have any HRIS. I do not want to blame anyone for that but since I am there and my team, we have looked at it and we said we cannot be able to look at our organisation of 4,000 plus individual unless and until we get digitised and that is why we have started another process. Phase by phase we should address many things, getting our HRIS, making it integrated into the Financial Management Information System so that they are talking to each other, and many other things that we are doing physically will basically be taken care of.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Honourable Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu?

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Through you, Deputy Chairperson, I have a general question; is the FMIS not big enough to accommodate all that if that is still being manually done? I am not clear as to why you are still doing the manual part, is the FMIS not more accommodating in that area so as to be able to take up what you are still manually doing?

MR. I. NAIR.- Thank you for the question. What basically happens here is that FMIS is basically taking control of the financial aspects of things. The physical aspects that I am talking about is mostly the human resources aspect of things which is basically the shuffling of files. For an individual officer I may have a Personal File (PF) which goes through our desks and it is time consuming, et cetera. If a decision is made in terms of allowance, for example, if the officer is supposed to get a CID Allowance, an application is made, it comes through the Director Human Resources, he shuffles it through, the approvals are done and then it appears in our weekly publication which is known as the fourth routine order.

The fourth routine order is then taken over by the Accounts staff and then punch in that it has been approved with that particular allowance and I am talking about various, various allowances which the organisation has and then they are punched in. We could have facilitated this process if our HRIS was in place which is also a computerised system. Currently, this part is manual whilst this is digitised in the computer network. Once we have them in the HRIS and it is in place, then it is our responsibility to be able to integrate it.

We currently have the FMIS which is computerised but our human resources is still very much physical, shuffling of files, et cetera.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- I think the important thing that Honourable Ratu Lalabalavu is highlighting is modernising the system within the Force, especially in terms of the current way operations that are there.

We had a similar case with the Fiji Immigration Office and as a matter of fact, the OAG took some photos and put it in the report that the files are lying here and there and that was a notable issue itself, if the information gets missing. Likewise, I believe that storage and capacity must be the problem of the Force as well because as the years go by, cases keep on increasing and files need to be stored somewhere. This is a very prudent issue, we have to understand the fact that the resources are limited and the demand to keep the resources is increasing in this case, the files. What are some of the strategies that the MOE has come up with to address this issue, otherwise it will continue to be an issue for organisations like them?

MOE REP.- Thank you, Deputy Chairperson. I think going forward, the MOE will meet with the OAG and try to see the issue in a bigger picture, see how best we can address that in the best interest of Government.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Deputy Chairperson, just a supplementary question; that HRIS that you will have will be a standalone system for FPF only?

MR. I. NAIR.- Yes. May I just go further in terms of what we have been trying to do for some time to be able to get this; I think the Government is also looking at the whole of Government approach in terms of the database for civil servants. But for us as an organisation, we are quite huge and quite big. So with the Commissioner's authority that we have, we want to go into this because if not, then we will not be able to provide that service and there will be a lot of losses that we will encounter. This is the way forward for us that we have realised.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- The FPF getting the HRIS, is it because of the timely inputting for numeration purposes or because you need to have a timely input of data information on the person, which one is the matter that you have said?

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- I am sorry but these are most probably operational issues or questions rather than the audit issues. But the whole idea and the whole crux behind this is to understand the system of the FPF better from our own understanding. At the moment, if there is a case filed, it has to be referred to an officer, who will then go and physically look for the file and then provide the information. That is how things are at the moment. It is quite time consuming and that is similar to what they face at the Fiji Immigration Office.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Through you, Deputy Chairperson, regarding the new system that you will be adopting, will that be able to read each other with the current Government system? For example, if you are inputting into the HRIS, it should be directly impacting on the Government system - the FMIS or the payroll system. So will it be able to automatically get updated into the Government system or will it be able to read any updates that you are making, the changes or is it just the changes in there and then you have to manually make the changes again in that? How will it work?

MR. I. NAIR.- You have read it well. Thank you for the question, Sir.

I think as I have mentioned earlier when I was trying to explain, the first phase is for us to organise the HRIS, and then we have this, and then I said something about integrating them. So currently, this will be standalone, so it is a phased approach that the organisation on its own volition, is taking. In future to come, we should be able to make that integration, the integration of the two systems that we are talking about.

We have just started in terms of our Human Resource Information System. I think it is less than 50 that we have purchased, phase one approach in terms of the HRIS. I would not want to be overambitious in terms of what we are looking at but we realise the significance and the importance of this, and for us to be able to deal with it as soon as possible.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- My very last question and this probably might also impact on your HRIS. The new recruitment policy of the FPF and also the changing environment in terms of maintaining law and order in Fiji. Now, we have changing instances where social media has now come into play, the understanding by the FPF in terms of making sure that your role is on top of things, like the changing crimes or changing events that are happening. How does the FPF ensure that it is always one step ahead in terms of maintaining law and order in the country?

MR. I. NAIR.- I would not know whether I got the question correctly but thank you for the question, Sir. I think what you are looking at is in terms of our future recruitment, to ensure that whatever skill sets that we are bringing into the organisation, it matches with the emerging crime times, et cetera. Yes, I agree...

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- (Inaudible).

MR. I. NAIR.- Exactly. I totally agree with you on the question that you have brought up. As an organisation, we are also looking at the selection criteria and that is why we have introduced (from the previous recruitment drive that we are doing) one aspect and that is, all individuals entering the organisation must be computer literate, because that is the way forward for the organisation and many things are happening in that arena of computerisation whether that being networking, cybercrime, uploading of pornography, cyber space, et cetera. So the organisation is taking note of that and with the emerging crime times that we have coming our way, we are matching it with the skill sets of the officers who are going to join the organisation.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you. I believe that was the last question and I will resort to the earlier concluding remarks that I was making, I thank you Sir, for your presentation. Like I had mentioned earlier, a very clear cut precise and to the point explanations, very well answered, substantiated by the documentary evidence as noted in your annexure of the written response. We thank you for the work being done especially in terms of improving the financial position of the organisation. Hopefully, things will be more better in the financial years to come.

Without further ado, I would like to request if there are any concluding remarks you're your side before we end our session. Thank you.

MR. I. NAIR.- Thank you, Honourable Deputy Chairperson, for the kind remarks and thank you Honourable Members for listening to us this morning. This is your FPF and basically as custodians of Government finance which is basically given to us via annual budgets, we are there to ensure that we spend it well, we spend it within the regulations and that is basically what we are doing.

We have also noted as your good self has highlighted at the beginning of our presentation that we have been able to minimise the audit issues and we are hopeful that in time to come, we should be able to further minimise some of those misallocations and appropriations which are happening within the Force. We thank you once again, Honourable Deputy Chairperson and the Honourable Members for listening to our presentation this morning.

The Committee adjourned at 11.49 a.m.