



MINISTRY OF FORESTRY

**HON. OSEA NAIQAMU
MINISTER FOR FORESTRY**

Venue: Parliament

Date: 5th – 8th August, 2019

WRITTEN QUESTION – 147/2019

Hon. Peceli Vosanibola to ask the Minister for Forestry – Can the Minister update Parliament on the status to date (numbers, species and location) of trees planted since the announcement of the 4 million trees initiative which was launched by H.E. the President on 8 January 2019.

WRITTEN RESPONSE:

Introduction

As part of Fiji's ongoing efforts to address climate change, protect our environment and rich biodiversity, and contribute to Fiji's sustainable socio-economic development, the Fijian Government has embarked on the planting of **4 Million Trees in 4 Years (4MT4Y)** initiative.

The initiative is more than just putting a seed in the ground – it is helping people and nature work together and thrive in a sustainable manner.

The global community has had to grapple with the onslaught of climate change at least in the past two decades. Deforestation has now emerged as a major contributor to this climate crisis.

Fiji's report on the National Action Plan to Combat Desertification/Land Degradation and to Mitigate Drought (2007), state that the direct causes of land degradation in Fiji were as follows:-

- Deforestation
- Unsustainable Logging
- Intensive sloping land cultivation
- Intensive flat land cultivation
- Commercial livestock farming
- Reclamation of freshwater swamps
- Reclamation of mangrove swamps
- Ad Hoc Urban development

There is an urgent need to strike a balance between engaging in socio-economic activities to meet current needs and wants, and investing in replenishing our forest resources to sustain Fiji's future. The 4MT4Y initiative is critical to achieving this balance.

Objective

The 4MT4Y initiative aims to mitigate climate change, greenhouse gas emissions, land degradation, loss of biodiversity while creating socio-economic opportunities, food security and contribute to enhancing the forest sector's contribution to Fiji's Gross Domestic Product.

The initiative is aligned to Fiji's 5-Year and 20-Year National Development Plan and to the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. Some specific development targets that the initiative will help achieve include:

- i. Access to clean and safe water in adequate quantities -100% by 2036 (SDG 6.1)
- ii. Access to clean and safe water in adequate quantities, rural -100% by 2036 (SDG 6.1)
- iii. Access to clean and safe water in adequate quantities, urban - 100% by 2021 (SDG 6.1)
- iv. Renewable energy share in electricity generation - 100% by 2036 (SDG 7.2)
- v. Renewable energy share in total energy consumption - 25% by 2031 (SDG 7.2)
- vi. Food sourced domestically compared to total food available (42% by 2021)
- vii. Incidence of Poverty, National - 20% by 2026 (SDG 1.2)
- viii. Incidence of Poverty, Rural - 32% by 2026 (SDG 1.2)
- ix. Reduction in Greenhouse gas emissions from 2013 baseline (NDC target) - 30% by 2031 (SDG 13.2)

- x. Forest area under long term conservation – 16 sites by 2036 (SDG 15.1)

Planting Strategy & Cost

The anticipated cost for the initiative is approximately \$12,199,714 over four years. This amounts to about \$3 Million per year. The initiative involves the planting of various types of trees that include timber trees which could significantly expand Fiji’s plantation trees to cater for our timber demands; indigenous species to replenish our natural forests and to avoid them being depleted; fruit and ornamental trees; and non-wood species like bamboo and candlenut trees, among others. The estimated targets are as follows:

	Tree Type	Number of Seedlings	Land required for 4 years
1.	Pine	800,000	720.07
2.	Mahogany	800,000	2877.7
3.	Teak	800,000	720.07
4.	Indigenous	300,000	1,079
5.	Fruiting Trees	300,000	1,079
6.	Fuel wood	600,000	540
7.	Sandalwood	400,000	360.04

The total land area required for this replanting is 7,375 ha. The planting strategy is based on each division having equal share of planting material. Besides, some of the division would have more land to plant than others and

they can take on more to offset some of the smaller divisions like the Eastern Division.

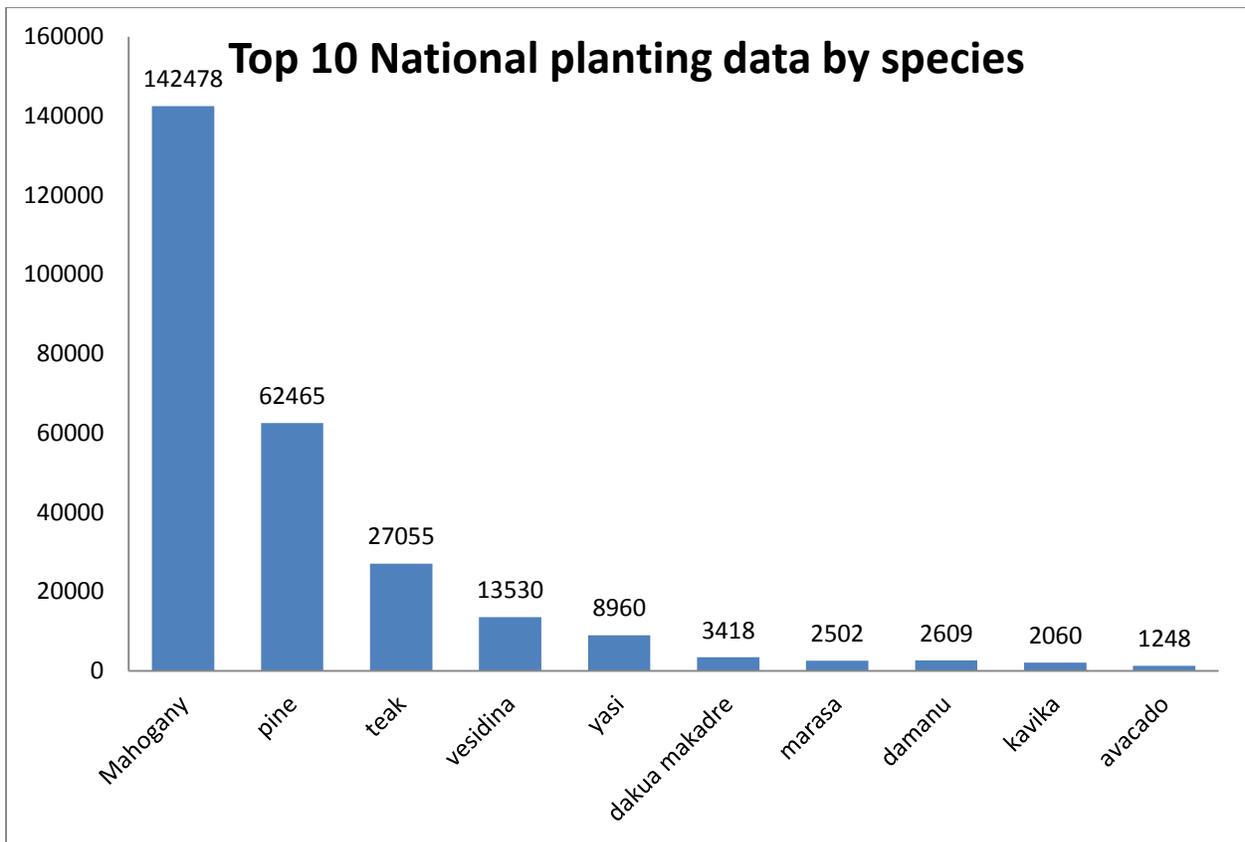
The planting material will be sourced from the state, community and commercial nurseries. Communities are seen as the potential contributors to the production of the required number of seedlings.

Update of the 4MT4Y

The Four Million Trees in Four Years (4MT4Y) initiative has to-date seen the planting of approximately 402,087 trees since His Excellency the President launched the initiative in January 2019.

Division	Seedling Planted	Area (ha)
Northern	117,016	295.93
Western	99,069	245.40
Central Eastern	68,930	239.67
Fiji Pine Trust	115,908	101.00
Ministry of Agriculture	1,164	n/a
TOTAL	402,087	882.00

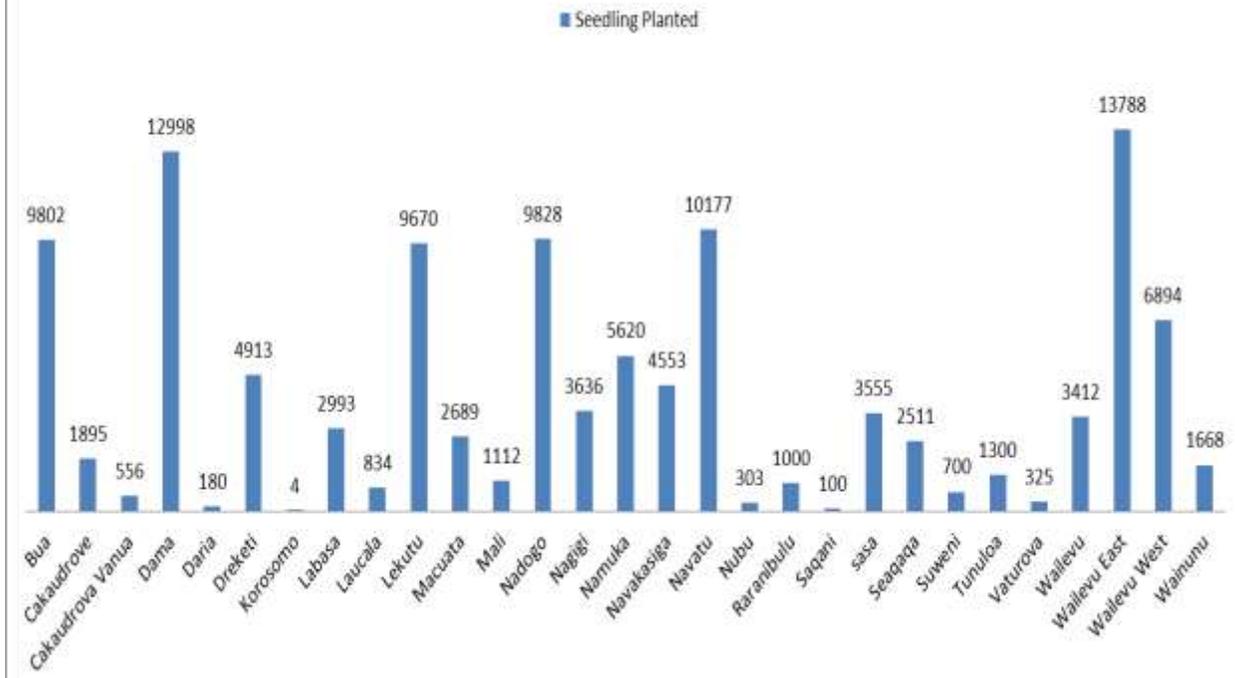
The 10 most common species planted include:



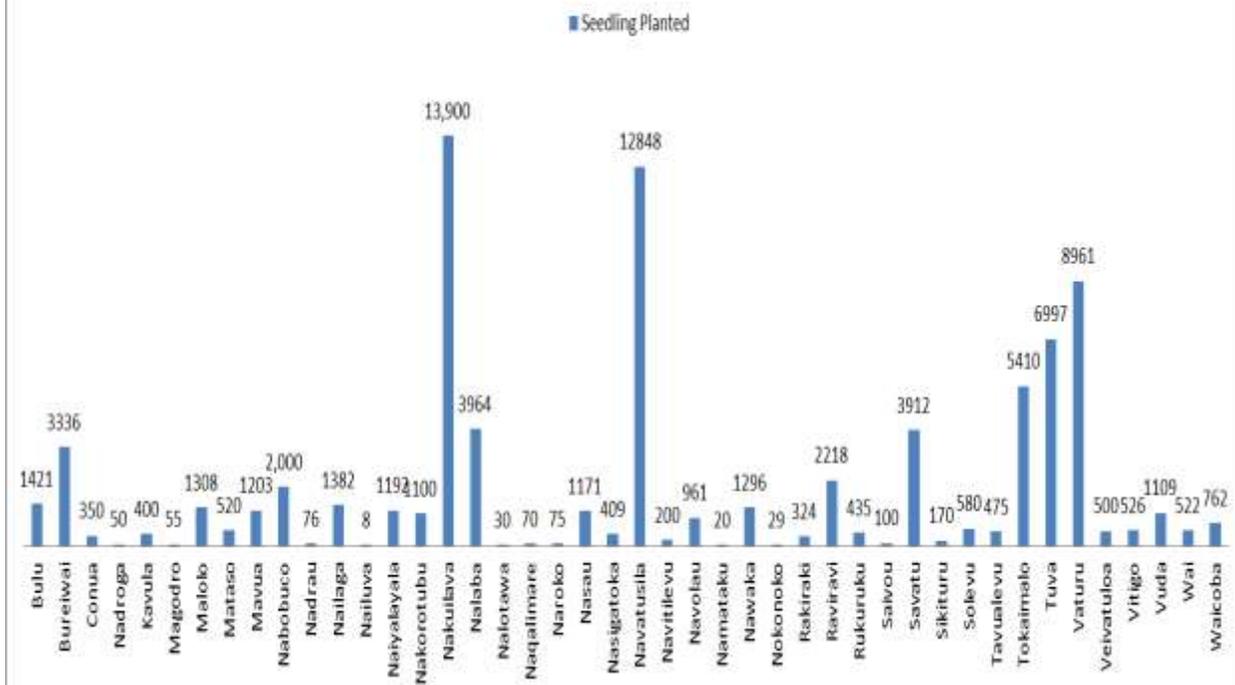
These trees are being planted with the support of various stakeholders and communities that have volunteered their land for tree planting. It is important to note that the tree-planting initiative does not affect the legal ownership of land.

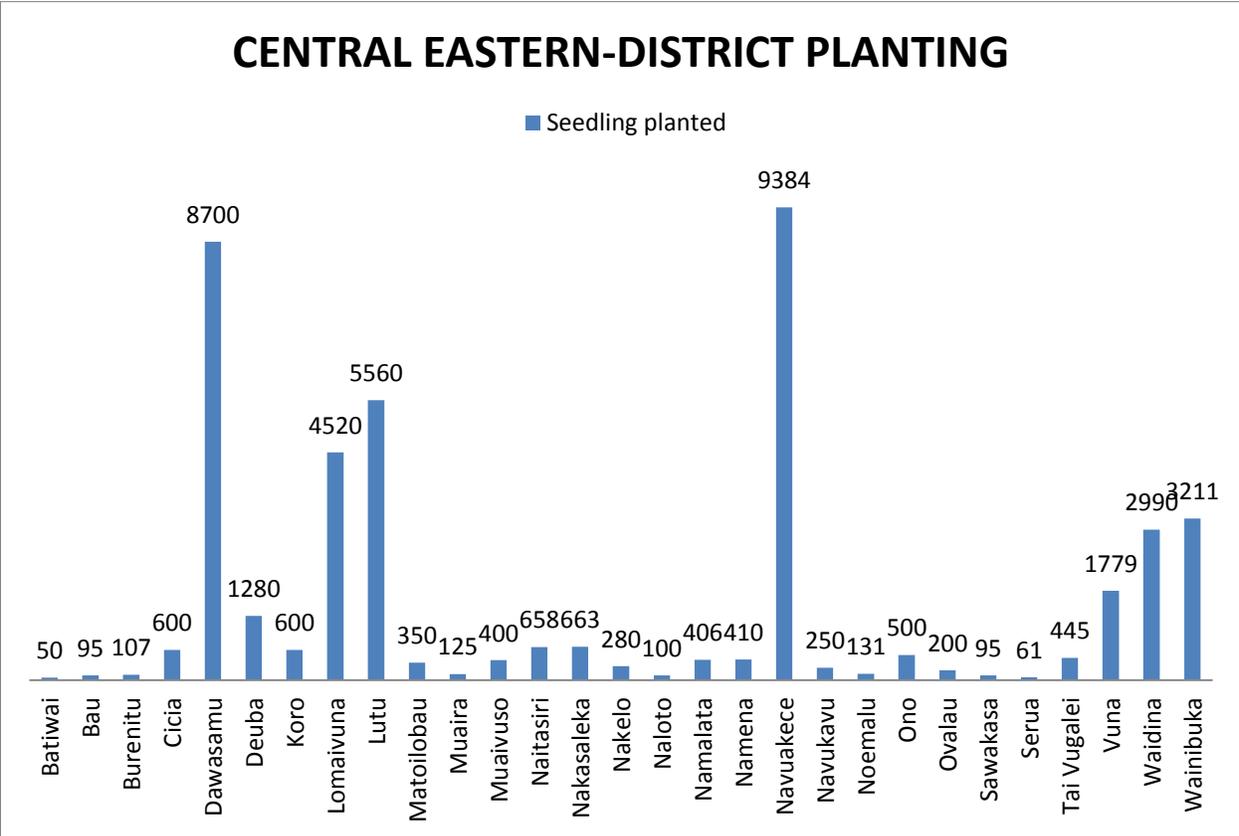
The number of seedlings planted in various district in the main divisions are as follows.

NOTHERN DIVISION, DISTRICT PLANTING



WESTERN DIVISION, DISTRICT PLANTING





In addition, the Ministry in partnership with various agencies have also planted around 74,200 mangrove seedlings in the provinces of Rewa and Tailevu as follows.

Mangrove Planting

Agency	Site	Province	Seedling Planted
Ministry of Economy	Nasese	Rewa	2,500
ITTO	Naivakacau	Tailevu	1,200
ITTO	Nasilai	Rewa	6,000
ITTO	Waicoka	Tailevu	5,000
National Youth & Sports	Nasese	Rewa	200
Queen Victoria School			7,000
Minister's Tour	Natila	Tailevu	4,000
ANZ	Nasese	Rewa	9,000
Ministry of Information	Nasese	Rewa	2,500
French Embassy	Nasese	Rewa	2,000
USP	Nasese	Rewa	300
FIJI AIRWAYS	Nasese	Rewa	10,000
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL	Nasese	Rewa	1,000
Forum Secretariat	Nasese	Rewa	4,000
INDIAN EMBASSY	Nasese	Rewa	3,000
ANZ	Waiqanake	Rewa	6,000
TOTAL. Comp	Waicoka	Tailevu	5,000
Vodafone	Nasese	Rewa	2,500
LDS	Nasese	Rewa	5000
ANZ	Nabaka	Rewa	4000
Total			74,200

The national tree-planting initiative is coordinated by the Ministry of Forestry and has seen the involvement of the President of the Republic of Fiji, the Honourable Prime Minister, the Minister for Forestry and other Ministers, the United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres and other high-level dignitaries including the Pacific Islands Leaders who attended the 2019 Pacific Islands Development Forum conference in Nadi. Organisations like the Fiji Development Bank, iTaukei Lands Trust Board and other agencies and sporting teams have also joined in the tree-planting initiative.

The tree-planting concept is also increasingly taken up by individuals and organisations in their private properties. This is highly appreciated and the Ministry wishes to request all those who have planted trees to also inform the Ministry in order to capture the number and types of trees that they have planted and to add these into the national database.

The Ministry has also identified 20 highly deforested areas throughout the country that the Ministry will plant on. These areas are approximately 37,282 ha and can cater for approximately more than 35 million trees. The Ministry will continue to encourage the public including villages and settlements, schools, individuals, private sector organisations, and the municipalities to plant in their respective areas. Essentially, the community planting will be additional to the trees that will be planted in the highly degraded areas.

The Ministry of Forestry is placing significant effort and resources into its research capabilities and is expanding its nurseries. Additionally, the Ministry will outsource the raising of seedlings especially for fruit and ornamental trees. The Ministry of Agriculture, for instance, has established fruit tree orchards as part of the national effort to provide food security. In addition, the Ministry of Forestry could help establish community nurseries with the active engagement of women and youth groups.

The Ministry aims to establish not less than 100 community nurseries throughout the country as a form of economic empowerment for the communities. Also, the Ministry will outsource the raising of timber trees to

reputable forest-based companies to ensure the country is able to produce high quality timber trees.

The Ministry is confident that, with the help of the public, Fiji will be able to plant more than a million trees each year. This will significantly benefit the environment and our biodiversity. It could help build climate-resilient communities; help offset carbon emissions and allow Fiji to trade in carbon.

The initiative could also see more eco-tourism activities that could cater for the increasing number of environment and climate-conscious visitors. Importantly, the initiative will ensure the sustainable management of Fiji's forests and natural resources while contributing to Fiji's socio-economic development.

Conclusion

The initiative to plant 4 million trees is an investment in our environment and future generations.

Fiji could also experience exponential growth in the level of returns from the millions of timber trees.

Additionally, Fiji is also positioned to harvest carbon benefits if we were to commit the millions of trees towards Fiji's Emission Reduction Program (ERP).

Furthermore, intangible values like environmental services by the trees need to be highlighted as well. They are important because they demonstrate the significance of trees in maintaining a stable and productive environment.

In summary, the 4MT4Y initiative aims to build climate resilient communities, enhance watershed area management, boost timber and other wood production, reduce degradation of forest areas, improve opportunities for carbon financing, biodiversity conservation, reduce soil erosion and siltation, support food security and improve agriculture production and practice. It is an investment that is worth pursuing at a grand scale.
