

PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI



PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

DAILY HANSARD

THURSDAY, 5TH SEPTEMBER, 2019

[CORRECTED COPY]

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Oral Questions

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Written Questions

1. Recipients of 2016 Seedlings – Government of India (Q/No. 230/2019)
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THURSDAY, 5TH SEPTEMBER, 2019

The Parliament met at 9.32 a.m. pursuant to adjournment.

HONOURABLE SPEAKER took the Chair and read the Prayer.

PRESENT

All Honourable Members were present, except the Honourable Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts; the Honourable Professor B.C. Prasad; the Honourable L.S. Qereqeretabua; and the Honourable Lt. Col. P. Tikoduadua.

MINUTES

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

That the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Wednesday, 4th September, 2019 as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- Honourable Speaker, Sir, I beg to second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, Parliament will now vote on the motion.

The Question is:

That the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Wednesday, 4th September, 2019 as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

Does any Member oppose the motion?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

HON. SPEAKER.- As no Member opposes the motion, the motion is agreed to unanimously.

Motion agreed to.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, I welcome all Honourable Members to today's sitting of Parliament.

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

Parliamentary Privileges Committee - Extension of Time for Privilege Matter

Honourable Members, at this juncture I wish to advise Honourable Members that I received a request from the Privileges Committee for extension of time to allow the Committee to continue with its deliberations over the privilege matter, and also to finalise its Report.

I am satisfied with the justification furnished by the Committee, therefore I am allowing the Privileges Committee to table its Report in Parliament on Friday morning, 6th September, 2019, that is, tomorrow. Thank you, Honourable Members.

We will now proceed to the next Item on the Order Paper. Honourable Members, I have been advised that there are no reports for presentation today.

PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, I call on the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, the Honourable Alvick Maharaj. You have the floor, Sir.

Review Report of the Office of the Auditor-General 2018 Annual Report - Standing Committee on Public Accounts Committee

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- Honourable Speaker, this Report follows the Review of the Office of the Auditor-General 2018 Annual Report.

The Office of the Auditor-General (OAG) provides a critical role in auditing the public accounts of the State, the control of public money and public property of the State, and all transactions with or concerning public or public property of the State, in accordance with Section 151 of the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji.

The Audit Act 1969 further specifies the powers of the Auditor-General to audit the Whole of Government Financial Statements and Reports of all entities of Government. It also empowers the Auditor-General to conduct performance audit of Government entities to assure Parliament that the entities are achieving its objectives effectively and economically in compliance with the relevant legislation.

The Office of the Auditor-General major highlights for the 2017–2018 financial year which also needs improvements in moving forward are as outlined below:

1. Out of the 192 accounts submitted for audit as at 31st July, 2018, 76 Accounts received have been audited and a total of 104 accounts is still being looked into.
2. A budget allocation in the 2018-2019 financial year was provided to establish an office in the West.
3. Approved Job Evaluation Exercise (JEE). The Office pays Annual Performance rewards based on assessments using the Annual Performance Assessment developed by the Office to recognise staff contribution to the overall OAG's annual outputs.
4. Enhancement of its media awareness and outreach through its revamped website, stakeholder's consultation, newsletters, format of the Report of the Auditor-General to Parliament that is aligned to the National/State Audit Offices in Australia and New Zealand.

In addition, with effect from 1st August, 2017, a separate Budget Head was allocated for Independent Bodies, which included the Office where there was a change in funding from Standard Expenditure Groups (SEGs) to a one-line Budget. This is in line with section 37A of the Financial Management (Budget Amendment) Act 2017, ensuring that all independent offices may independently and effectively exercise its powers and performs its functions and duties.

There are four Committee recommendations in this Report which propose ways on how to address the issues identified. Over the course of the report inquiry with the OAG, the Audit Office also shared their audit experiences for the respective Government entities.

The Committee acknowledges the continuous support and collaboration between the Office of the Auditor-General throughout the scrutiny of this Report and other audit reports that were referred to the Committee.

I wish to extend my appreciation to all the Honourable Members of the Committee who were part of the successful compilation of this bipartisan Report namely; the Honourable Joseph Nand, Honourable Vijendra Prakash, Honourable Aseri Radrodoro and Honourable Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu.

Further, pursuant to Standing Order 115(5), Honourable Adi Litia Qionibaravi stood in as an Alternate Member to Honourable Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu and Honourable Mikaele Leawere, who stood in as an Alternate Member to Honourable Aseri Radrodoro.

On behalf of the Committee, I also extend my appreciation to the Secretariat staff for their continued support.

With those few words, I now commend the Report to Parliament.

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

(Report handed to the Secretary-General)

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- Mr Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 121(5), I hereby move a motion, without notice, that:

A debate on the content of the Report is initiated at a future sitting.

HON. J.N. NAND.- Honourable Speaker Sir, I beg to second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, Parliament will now vote.

Question put.

The Question is:

That a debate on the content of the Report is initiated at a future sitting.

Does any Member oppose?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

HON. SPEAKER.- As no Member opposes, the motion is agreed to unanimously.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, the following Ministers have given notice to make Ministerial Statements under Standing Order 40, the:

1. Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Disaster Management and Meteorological Services; and
2. Minister for Fisheries.

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

I now call on the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Disaster Management and Meteorological Services, the Honourable Jone Usamate, to deliver his statement. You have the floor, Sir.

Disaster Risk Reduction and Preparedness

HON. J. USAMATE.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Prime Minister, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, fellow Members of Parliament and members of the public; my Ministerial Statement today is on Disaster Risk Reduction and Preparedness, and this is an issue that I wish to speak on, basically because of two things.

One, we are now in the stage that we are into preparations leading up to the starting of the cyclone seasons which begins in the month of November.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, on 20th February, 2016, the resilience of the Fijian people was tested when *TC Winston* made landfall, bringing with it destructive rainfall and winds.

TC Winston affected approximately 540,000 people. It destroyed entire communities with 44 people losing their lives. *TC Winston* did not discriminate - the rich, the poor, rural and urban dwellers and all Fijians who were in the destructive path of *TC Winston* were affected.

Nevertheless, Fiji proved to the rest of the world that, we, as a nation, were indeed stronger than *TC Winston*. The Government-led response and recovery efforts, garnered support from all walks of life.

We, as a nation, just like the force of *TC Winston* rose up and stood side by side, regardless of race, religion and background, to build back better and to build a stronger Fiji. Fiji is still recovering from the aftermath of this Category 5 event, and we have learnt lessons since that fateful day of 20th February, 2016. Most importantly, the Government and all of us have learnt that by acting now we can save later.

While *TC Winston* was a destructive event, with associated loss of lives and loss of our hard one developments, it proved to be constructive and was a wakeup call to take action concerning the usually overlooked or neglected aspects of DRR for Fiji.

TC Winston gave us a window of opportunity to enhance Fiji's resilience to disasters, and the Government has learnt its lessons from *TC Winston*. We will ensure that actions are implemented so that those who lost their lives did not do so in vain.

We are taking action. The Fiji Government, in its last Cabinet meeting, has endorsed the National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy for 2018 to 2030. Lessons have been learnt and the time for action is now, and DRR is a priority for Fiji.

The adoption of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy showcases to the rest of the world that Fiji no longer views DRR as just a humanitarian issue, but as a development issue. We know that every one dollar invested in disaster mitigation saves Government an average of \$7 in response and

recovery. By acting now, we will save later.

A number of underlying disaster risk factors have increased our level of exposure and vulnerability to disasters. These include; increased number of people living in disaster-prone areas, environmental degradation, unsustainable development planning and rapid urbanisation.

The Policy outlines what Government will continue to build on, to ensure that a comprehensive and systematic approach to DRR helps achieve poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

The Policy also includes an approach to strengthen the way we integrate climate change adaptation and DRR, and it ensures that DRR is mainstreamed into all the legal and policy frameworks that we have in Fiji. These will be achieved through organised disaster risk governance, investing proactively in preparedness and reconstruction after a disaster using the Build Back Better (BBB) principle. It also ensures sharing of disaster risk information and contributing to sustainable development, poverty alleviation and building national resilience.

The policy goal is aimed at fostering sustainable development and poverty alleviation through disaster risk governance and DRR measures. And to attain the policy goal, the following policy strategies have been established and framed around the DRR cycle. They include the following:

1. Mainstreaming of DRR - mainstreaming DRR into every level of governance arrangements, development initiatives and also in budget arrangements.
2. Governance – the system of institution, mechanisms, policies and legal frameworks and other arrangements to guide, coordinate and oversee DRR and related areas of policy will be strengthened and improved upon.
3. Financing and investment – sufficient proactive investment in DRR measures in annual Government Budgets.
4. Preparedness – strong process and coordination for preparedness are activated through structural and also non-structural measures.
5. Emergency response – well-coordinated humanitarian emergency response shall be executed.
6. Recovery and reconstruction – Build Back Better is going to be the theme of recovery and reconstruction.
7. Importance of knowledge and information – improved knowledge, improved information, improved attitudes and practices among people on how to respond to and reduce disaster risk.

These strategies have been further developed into a 122 action items, to ensure that it gains a place in each part of Government, in the private sector and also in our communities. By doing this, we overcome the silo mentality challenge and DRR will become everyone's responsibility because it needs to become part of everyone's responsibility. These 122 Action Items will also be monitored and reported against, to measure our progress.

The development of the Disaster Risk Reduction Policy has not been achieved through our efforts alone. We sincerely thank the Government of Japan, through the Japan International Co-operation

Agency (JICA), for their invaluable support with the provision of a JICA Disaster Risk Reduction Expert, who helped put the Policy together.

In recognising our efforts towards DRR, the Government of Japan (an example of a truly resilient nation to natural disasters) is committed through this Policy to assist the Fijian Government with a disaster loan facility. This loan facility will only be triggered when Government has made a declaration of a 'state of a natural disaster'.

Preconditions for the drawdown will include:

1. Sound macro-economic and public financial government by the Government of Fiji; and
2. Implementation of the Disaster Risk Reduction Policy in accordance with the policy action matrix on DRR by the Government of Fiji.

The loan will only be to cater for early recovery activities and not rehabilitation.

Government is committed to supporting the implementation of this Policy, and it is our belief that this will inspire actions at all levels of our country to build economic, social and environmental resilience which will, in turn, reduce poverty.

The endorsement of this Policy is also a great step for Fiji and the region, as being one of the first countries in the region to achieve Target E of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Fiji along with the 187 United Nations Member States, adopted the Sendai Framework in 2015, and the nation has been committed in progressing to meet the targets set out in this ambitious yet achievable global agenda. The Sendai Framework as an interpretive tool, is assisting the Fijian Government in understanding that disaster risk management is not a sector in, and of itself.

The Fijian Government has also adopted development agendas, such as that the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement, and there also have been opinions formed on the points of coalescence and tension that could impede coherence of these frameworks at the national level. Working together across the frameworks is common sense and solutions need to be linked for coordinated efforts to create efficiency.

However, power is at the centre of governance for DRR, development and climate change, as seen in the approval of separate global agreements on development, climate change and DRR (as seen in the SDGs, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework) in which the custodians of each agreement protect the own identity, mandate and resources, rather than creating a single agreement together.

The Sendai Framework against this backdrop, may be seen as an interpretive tool on how sector instruments, including those of a legally binding nature, can be read and implemented in order to manage disaster risk in the sectors that they regulate.

Given the Sendai Framework's cross-cutting nature and synergy with Climate change Adaptation, the Policy which is aligned to the Framework, allows for integration between Climate Change Adaptation and DRR this will provide the basis for sustainable development.

The UNDRR explains that sustainable development cannot be attained while disasters continue to undermine economic growth and social progress. I reiterate the words of the former United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki Moon, stressing that sustainable development begins with Sendai, and the Fiji Government believes that if we wish to achieve sustainable development, implementing the Sendai

Framework and achieving its targets fully will make it possible, and Fiji is already on track with meeting these targets.

Fiji's past progress in the disaster risk management space has changed from being reactive to being proactive and this has been noticed. This shift is reflected in the decrease in mortality in the case of some hazards where Fiji has been internationally recognised by the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) as a Sendai Target Champion in its successful efforts to reduce disaster mortality during *TC Winston* in early 2016, and its efforts to reduce casualties from one of the most powerful storms ever to hit the Pacific.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in adopting the Sendai Framework, there are certain targets that we will focus on, such as Target A – to substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2030, aiming to lower the average of mortalities per 100,000 global mortality rate in the decade 2020-2030, compared to the period 2005-2015.

This year, the Government of Fiji has again achieved Target E of the Framework with the endorsement of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we attempted to calculate the disaster-related mortality rate for Fiji as per 100,000 population. The rate weighted to the census population which is derived from the 2017 Census shows the mortality rate of approximately 5 percent for *TC Winston*, and around only 1 percent for other tropical cyclones, such as *TC Tomas* in 2012.

Target E under the Sendai Framework, is to substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020. We have now achieved this in the year 2019 with the Government passing this Policy.

We are on track to ensuring that our development gains are protected, and that we reduce drastically the number of lives that can be affected by disasters in the future.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, to reduce the risk of disaster, we will strengthen and enhance preventative measures. This is made possible through projects undertaken by my Ministry through the Fiji Meteorological Services.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are now currently working with the Korea Meteorological Administration to establish the Coastal Inundation Forecasting Demonstration Project (CIFDP), which focuses on developing an Integrated Coastal Inundation Demonstration Project.

This Project is facilitating the development of efficient forecasting and warning systems for coastal inundation based on robust science and observations along vulnerable coastal areas in Fiji.

In doing so, this Project will integrate cross-cutting scientific models into an open forecasting environment for the purpose of improving, expanding and developing the forecasting and warning systems for storm surges, hydrological response to heavy rainfall and tropical cyclone landfall on coastal areas and other phenomena, causing coastal inundation. This Project will become operational from December 2019.

The Flash Flood Guidance System (FFGS) is a Climate Risk Early Warning System (CREWS) initiative and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC). The Fiji Meteorological Services is working closely with the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and Hydrological Research Centre. This FFGS uses the best science of meteorology and hydrology to further improve the quality and lead-time for early warning of flash flooding.

The System will supplement existing systems from monitoring and early warning for flood in the Fiji Islands. It will provide guidance to the Fiji Meteorological Services' weather experts, to generate and issue operational flash flood forecasts and warnings with improved lead-time and sites' specific information. This Project is expected to become operational by January 2020.

Mr. Speaker, to conclude, DRR is a priority for Fiji and it is a priority for the Government, and it needs to become a priority for everyone in this country. We need to work together to ensure that we are always ready for disasters in whatever category it may form, and that there is less or minimal impact on the lives of the Fijian people. And the implementation of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy is a tool that will move us towards that particular goal and that particular battle.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister for his statement.

I now give the floor to the designate of the Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Jese Saukuru. You have the floor, Sir.

HON. J. SAUKURU.- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I rise to respond to the Ministerial Statement on the National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy, and wish to thank the Honourable Minister for the update and pronouncement which he made, although we do neither agree nor fully endorse some of the points raised by him.

Let me begin by making reference to the National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy which needs a review following the effects of climate change, resulting into super storms and further to that, to be inclusive of the strategies to protect and sustain our vulnerable communities on the brink of relocation. That makes it important that the processes involved must be inclusive, and not shun or defy traditional practices and procedures.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, Sir, if this Government was ever serious in its intent about the National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and related matters, it should have supported the motion by the Honourable Adi Litia Qionibaravi in the recent past, calling for funding for the development of churches and community halls in the vulnerable communities. That, unfortunately, was not the case because to them, politics took precedence over national interest.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, Sir, DRR is concerned with reducing the underlying factors that contribute to human vulnerability, defined as the, "systematic development and application of policies, strategies and practices to minimise vulnerabilities, hazards and the unfolding disaster impacts throughout the society in the broad context of sustainable development", as in the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR).

The draft Disaster Risk Reduction Policy is aligned to the Sendai Framework by ensuring consistency in the indicators and targets between the documents to streamline reporting and monitoring of implementation and achievement. The goal of the draft Disaster Risk Reduction Policy is to, "Foster Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction through Disaster Risk Reduction Measures."

The seven key strategies identified to achieve this goal, Mr. Speaker, Sir, are:

1. Strengthening governance;
2. Increasing financing and investment;
3. Strengthening mitigation and preparedness;
4. Effective and efficient emergency response;

5. Recovery and reconstruction; and
6. Knowledge and information.

The key areas that such a Policy is focused on are:

1. Infrastructure – most of the infrastructure were built without proper risk analysis. Fiji citizens must build an element of risk assessment into all our infrastructure.
2. Fund – this work will require special fund to help reduce, mitigate and transfer risks.
3. Information system – improving its information system.
4. To promote human development.
5. Public-Private sector partnership with the Government.
6. Building the resilience of communities.

How far we have been successful in these aspects of policy development and work at the grassroots level to put in place the necessary mechanisms, was tested during *TC Winston* and the other storms that followed after it. The results are in front of us, that three years on, we have not been able to rebuild the lives of the victims of *TC Winston*, which makes us a laughing stock in the world and illustrates the point that we neither have the capacity nor the resources for National Disaster Risk Reduction and as such, I alluded to at the beginning of my response a review of the pertinent policy.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order, order!

HON. J. SAUKURU.- Honourable Speaker, a lot of our people are still left behind because we do not have good disaster recovery plan. Thank you, Sir.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Member for his statement. I now call on the Minister for Fisheries, the Honourable Semi Koroilavesau, to deliver his statement. You have the floor, Sir.

Update on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Marine Managed Areas (MMAs)

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Honourable Speaker, Sir, I would like to address this august House on the progress of work undertaken by the Ministry of Fisheries in light of Fiji's commitment on the establishment of Marine Protected and Managed Areas.

Additionally, Honourable Speaker, this is a perfect opportunity to confirm our commitment towards the sustainable protection of our ocean resources prior to COP 25, which ties climate change and the importance of our ocean.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, the history of Fiji's 30 percent commitment is clear. In 2005, Fiji made a commitment to protect and manage 30 percent of Fiji's waters by 2020. This has been reiterated through the various commitments, such as the 2014 Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Meeting in Samoa and at the 2017 United National Oceans Conference in New York.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, apart from Fiji's 30 percent commitment on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Marine Managed Areas (MMAs), Fiji's pledge on our shared ocean is important and holds

great significance. Significant because the oceans and its resources have always been part of our identity, culture and tradition.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, far too often, we have heard in this august House the concerns of Honourable Members, concerns over unsustainable practices that are tied to development aspirations.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, I would like to reiterate that the FijiFirst Government is focussing all efforts to ensure a lasting protection of our ocean and its resources, not just for ourselves but for the future generations.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, the establishment of MPAs and MMAs dovetails to Fiji's UN Oceans commitment under the Sustainable Goal 14 - Life below Water. This will make certain that Fiji, as a sovereign State, will conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, the establishment of Marine Protected or Managed Areas is aimed at conserving biodiversity, to ensure that species habitat and ecosystem continue to flourish.

In saying that, Honourable Speaker, to achieve a sound scientific base, the Fisheries Research and Science Observer Team are mandated to undertake biological and socio-economic surveys. This activity provides the basis of understanding the status of stock within Fiji's fisheries waters. With an understanding of the current stock, more can be gathered on the ecological significance of interacting species.

In the last five years, four biologically significant areas have been gazetted MPAS. These include; the dive site in Wainiyabia, Serua; Wakaya Marine Reserve; Naiqoro Passage; and the Kiuva Marine Reserve.

In the last two decades, Honourable Speaker, more than 200 MMAs have been implemented by the Ministry and its partners through the Fiji Locally Managed Marine Area (FLMMA).

As earlier indicated, Honourable Speaker, the establishment of MPAs have always been part of our traditional practice. Through generations, with traditional '*tabu*', we have been able to practise in the coastal communities, the protection of vulnerable species and its ecosystem. The same practise have been supported through adoption of legislative provisions and gazette.

This progress, Honourable Speaker, allows customary fishing right owners to effectively protect their resources from poachers, and are able to take offenders to court.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, through our socio-economic survey, we are always mindful of the need to demarcate an area close to MPAs where customary fishing communities can access, for food source and livelihood. The benefit of MPAs and MMAs is that it provides for more than just protection.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, having a protected and managed area provides spill-over effect to the adjacent waters, which gives communities an opportunity to gain access to marine resources and source of income. This reiterates the significance of what can be achieved through proper management and support of the initiative.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, allow me to briefly highlight activities undertaken in the designation of community-based marine areas. Before progressing, Honourable Speaker, it is worth highlighting that MPAs and MMAs for inshore areas can only be finalised through an invitation from customary fishing

rights owners. Through the course of this important work, the Ministry of Fisheries worked closely with the coastal communities.

Over the last 17 years, 283 *qoliqolis* have had some level of stock assessment undertaken by Ministry of Fisheries and partner agencies.

Honourable Speaker, while this proves to be an expensive exercise, such research allows us to:

1. inform coastal communities of the different marine ecosystems and fish species that exist in their fishing grounds;
2. to investigate how best it can be managed; and
3. the economic and social value that managed and protected areas can provide to communities.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, this preferred platform of information sharing allows custodians and customary owners to complement their traditional knowledge with scientific information that the Ministry provides. This assists the communities in designating marine managed or protected areas, as well as making informed evaluations of the impacts of any proposed development activities on their respective fishing grounds.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, as we progress into the UN decade of Ocean Science, the Ministry of Fisheries has evolved its work to more robust in managing, sustaining and protecting Fiji's fisheries resources. Let me touch on climate change mitigation/reseeding and private partnerships.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, as part of our coastal fisheries strategy, we continue to progress in a holistic approach. The establishment of marine protected and managed areas are not left idle to regenerate.

Apart from organised surface patrols that address the issue of poaching, the Ministry of Fisheries through its climate change adaptation and mitigation initiative, have developed programmes to boost regeneration of all coastal areas, inclusive of MPAs and MMAs.

Honourable Speaker, through extensive research on aquaculture, we have been able to breed second generation species that are reseeded back to the wild. These species include; giant clams, beach-de-mer, pearl oysters and hard corals.

Under the reseeded programme, Honourable Speaker, we continue to encourage broad partnerships with the private sector and coastal communities. This ensures that a holistic approach is realised so that progress towards sustainability is achieved.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, in saying that, I would like to remind this august House that Fiji's EEZ is 1.29 million square kilometres. Our total coastal waters is a little over 2 percent of the overall area.

This means, Honourable Speaker, if Fiji is to fulfil the 30 percent commitment, we need to expand into large scale marine managed areas that encompass both, inshore and offshore waters. This is something that the Ministry of Fisheries as a single Ministry, cannot undertake alone.

To address this, Honourable Speaker, the Ministry of Fisheries have been actively working with line Government agencies and Non-Government partners to identify alternative options for large scale MPAs and MMAs.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, the Ministry is working closely with its partners through its Marine Protected Areas Technical Advisory Committee to identify low conflict, high biodiversity marine areas for protection and management. Three areas that have been identified and where consultation is either underway, or has been completed are the:

- Vatu-i-Ra Seascape;
- Great Sea Reef region or Cakaulevu; and
- Lau Seascape.

These three biologically significant areas will contribute to, at least, 4.2 percent towards the 30 percent commitment.

The fourth area, Honourable Speaker, is the Great Astrolabe Reef. This area will be explored further in the upcoming months by the Ministry of Fisheries, line agencies and partners, and would contribute to Fiji's commitment.

To conclude, Honourable Speaker, Sir, we still have some way to go. In saying that, I would like to reaffirm that the Ministry of Fisheries and its partners are working tirelessly, to ensure that we continue to work effectively towards the achievement of this goal.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, the identification of existing closed areas, sea mounts and navigational channels that exist outside our coastal areas are currently being considered. With the finalisation of this assessment, we would be close to achieving our 30 percent commitment by 2020.

This Government, Honourable Speaker, is geared at progressing Fiji's sustainable goals going forward. In doing so, we will not only address the concerns of all Fijians, but the concerns of our neighbours, who look to us for support.

I thank you, Honourable Speaker, Sir.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister for his statement. I now give the floor to the designate of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Simione Rasova. You have the floor, Sir.

HON. S.R. RASOVA.- *Bula vinaka*, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

I rise to thank and to also respond to the Ministerial Statement by the Honourable Minister for Fisheries on the issue of progress being undertaken by the Ministry of Fisheries in light of the Fiji's commitment on the establishment of Marine Protected and Managed Areas.

At the outset of my response, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to acknowledge that the survival and development of Fiji as a tropical and small island State is dependent heavily upon the ridge-to-reef agrobiodiversity bequeath to us by the Creator, and sustained by our successive generations through their traditional knowledge and wisdom as much as their compassion for nature and for future generations.

It is rather tragic and unfortunate that the same has not been the case in the recent past, where excesses committed against and upon our land and water systems by way of:

1. over-harvesting of marine resources;
2. damages caused to the marine food chain by release of toxic waste and toxic materials;
3. dumping of foreign articles and objects, threatening marine life and local environment;
4. deep seabed mining; and

5. damages and exploitation of fishing areas caused during exploration on the seabed and beneath seabed minerals.

These have caused substantial damages to our marine life, water systems and seabed, which remain to be mitigated. As the loyal Opposition for the people of Fiji, SODELPA views this step as an act of mitigation and restoration, tightening up with its policies of sustainable development of natural resources for food security and meaningful job creation out the process of sustainable development contributing to economic growth.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, keeping that in mind and making reference to a study conducted and a paper published by the University of the South Pacific and Fiji Environment Law Association titled, “*Towards an Effective Legal Framework in Maritime Protected Areas in Fiji*”, a policy and law development paper now available at the USP Bookshop, the following three key issues were raised in relation to what the Honourable Minister had just pronounced by way of his Ministerial Statement which were:

1. Fiji’s locally-managed maritime areas’ approach of establishing *taboo* areas as one of its fisheries management tools;
2. the use of section 9 of the Fisheries Act 1942 (as amended) that enabled MPAs to be created via ministerial decision and regulations, is not unprecedented; and
3. that granting of foreshore or wet leases pursuant to the Stand Lands Act.

That being so, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Opposition would like to put it on record with a sense of appreciation and recognition, the works of the FJ Movement and other stakeholders with this movement to organise the imposition of regular *taboo* upon our traditional fishing grounds and varied nature of delicious, yet depleting species of fish and other marine life.

In relation to the second point raised by the paper, I am alluding in relation to this Ministerial Statement which is the innovation and application of section 9 of Fisheries Act (as amended), that the exercise of ministerial powers to create or regulate MPAs, our experience in the recent past leaves much to be desired, given this number of issues. Let me tie that up, then I speak on the third point given, the time constraints.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Opposition is further aggrieved at the grant of foreshore leases or what is being referred to as “wet leases”. I think we would be kidding ourselves if we are not honest enough to look around as we tour the country, on numerous examples of how the grant of these wet leases have damaged our environment, affecting the marine areas and threatening marine life.

These are two very important points raised in that paper, given the Ministerial Statement made here this morning which brings into light two pertinent issues which are:

- The respect, recognition and enhancement of the rights of the resource owners as was the intent of the Qoliqoli Bill and now compromised by the removal of the entrenched legislation under our previous Constitutions.
- The dreaded prospect of environmental exploitation and avenue for the loot of marine resources which is and may be caused under the guise of research and exploration, or economic development and investment.

(Honourable Member interjected)

HON. S.R. RASOVA.- *Wawa, wawa!* (Wait, wait!)

That makes sanitization by the relevant authorities and implementation of various laws and regulations important to an act and measure of enforcement rather than just lip-service by way of Ministerial Statements in the House.

Mr. Speaker Sir, with that short and succinct response, I hope that the message from this side of the House is clear to the Government side which needs to do which is not doing, to protect our marine areas and marine life, compromising SDG 1 – No Poverty. Thank you, Mr. Speaker Sir.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, I thank you for your statement but try to keep to the time. We will move on.

Honourable Members, I have been informed that there are no Bills for consideration today. I have also been advised that there are no Motions for debate today.

Honourable Members, when we resume we will start with the final Agenda Item for today which is Questions. So, we will take refreshment break now and refreshments will be served in the Big Committee Room. We resume in half an hour's time.

The Parliament adjourned at 10.25 a.m.

The Parliament resumed at 11.00 a.m.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, for the first Oral Question for today, I give the floor to the Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa to ask her question. You have the floor, Madam.

QUESTIONS

Oral Questions

Policies and Measures – Crafts for Air and Sea Rescue (Question No. 222/2019)

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

Can the Honourable Minister for Defence, National Security and Foreign Affairs inform Parliament on the policies and measures in place to ensure that crafts used for air and sea rescue have the highest safety features to ensure successful rescue operations?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU (Minister for Defence, National Security and Foreign Affairs).- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. First, I need to thank the Honourable Member for this question this morning. This is a very, very important issue.

As all Honourable Members of this august House would agree that welfare, safety and well-being of every citizen of any country is of paramount importance and, of course, the role that various organisations are tasked with search and rescue operations and, of course, my Ministry being the Ministry responsible takes this very, very seriously.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, let me say that search and rescue operations in Fiji are guided by the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search Rescue Manual (IAMSAR).

For Fiji, Mr. Speaker, Sir, let me give some background. The last Search and Rescue Manual that we had dates back to 1982 but thankfully in 2012, Cabinet approved the review of that Manual because of the obvious changes that have taken place and most importantly, to bring the agencies together, particularly the land component, maritime component and, of course, the air component of search and rescue operations. So we had the Manual in 1982. In 2012, we proceeded with the review and in that review, we first looked at the Manual itself and the Bill as well.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, let me say again in responding to the question that in April this year, I launched the new Manual in Lautoka as Minister responsible and, of course, we had Turaga-ni-Koros because this is not only at Government level, it goes right down to community level as well. The Western Division was fortunate that their Turaga-ni-Koros became part of this launching because they have also been given kits to assist them if search and rescue operations are mobilised within their respective areas.

Again, as I have stated, Mr. Speaker, Sir, in terms of the policies and measures in place, I think we are very familiar with land transport and the role that LTA plays. We have roadworthiness test for vehicles, and it is the same, Mr. Speaker, Sir, for air and maritime operations as well.

Let me go into the details. For the air component, Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I have stated, our Search and Rescue Manual is consistent with the relevant international conventions to which Fiji is a party to,

and supplemented with legal and informative frameworks that we have between organisations involved with search and rescue.

So with the air component, it has been developed with due regard to the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and, of course, in the maritime component, it is consistent with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). And these organisations do come to Fiji to audit and make assessment on our capabilities. Most recently last year, we had the maritime assessment and, of course, we are looking forward again to the next round of assessment that will take place next year.

Particularly, with the air component, Mr. Speaker, Sir, Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji (CAAF) is the agency responsible for conducting this airworthiness test. It is very technical but let me just very briefly say, for the benefit of the House, that it involves two main components.

One is about assessing the flight operations, which is about the fly ability and air worthiness of the aircraft. Like I said, CAAF then registers and it is the regulatory authority or has regulatory oversight over all aircrafts that are flying in Fiji and those that are involved in search and rescue operations as well.

For maritime vessels, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have the Ship Registration Act 2013 and we have the Maritime (Fiji Small Craft Code) Regulations 2014, which regulates all vessels that are operating within the Fiji waters.

Those are the two regulatory bodies that have oversight over the safety – the seaworthiness and airworthiness aligned to international organisations that we are a party to.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, that is the brief response at this stage. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister. Honourable Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu, you have the floor.

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, a supplementary question and I thank the Honourable Minister for his reply. We also thank him for that information on the Manual that has been launched in Lautoka.

But given that and the latest incident that happened in Vanua Levu on the helicopter and the mention of this airworthiness as part of the Manual, this first light and last light policy, does it apply here to the aircrafts that go on this kind of rescue mission because that one there was a medivac one? It landed in Taveuni when it was almost dark. Lights have just come on, thank you to the Government, in Labasa, but this happened just before that. Whether this Manual cover the flight operations of those that have cost the Government a lot of money? Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. A quick response to the Honourable Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu's question is, before aircrafts fly they request for a flight plan and, of course, clearance to be allocated the flight plan. So, the authorities responsible take into consideration all the factors related to that, so the flight was given the clearance to fly.

Unfortunately, there was a mishap but let me just say at this stage that it is still under investigation. I sought guidance from the authorities this morning and all that they mentioned to me and all I can mention in this august House is, we have a Government-appointed Accident Investigator, Mr. Andrew McGregor, who is full into the investigations and there are things that probably will be highlighted in his report, and we will leave it at that. But again, there was a flight request, together with a flight plan that

was allocated and there was approval for the flight to take place but accidents do happen, unfortunately. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister. Honourable Niko Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Honourable Speaker, we have what is known as the 1979 Search and Rescue Convention and the ratification of that allows Government to be monitored in accordance with international standards. My understanding is that, Fiji has not ratified that Convention. Can the Honourable Minister explain the reason why?

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Member. Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will have to go back and confirm about that ratification but let me assure this august House that this is something that I am working on right now, on the ratification of a lot of Instruments that Fiji has already agreed to but we have not gone through the ratification process.

So I have got a team from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and because most of these involves defence as well, particularly on weapons, we are going through the ratification process for most of those and I think hopefully by the September Sitting, we will have more of this tabled before this august House. So, I just request that I go back and check on that particular ratification and then probably report back to the Honourable Member and, of course, to this august House. Thank you.

FRCS Business Reform Committee
(Question No. 223/2019)

HON. A.D. O'CONNOR asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Attorney General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications provide an update on the intention behind setting up of the FRCS Business Reform Committee?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications).- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank the Honourable Member for his question.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as announced in the Budget, we had said that we will put in place a Business Reform Committee. The reason why this Committee was put in place is that we felt, as policy makers, that a number of agencies in Government need to modernise themselves, not just in terms of the technology they use but also in terms of their approach to business itself and, in fact, their business processes.

Then, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we put in place a Business Reform Committee. We wrote to a number of organisations throughout Fiji, for example, the:

- Pharmacy Association;
- Fiji Commerce, Employers Federation;
- Fiji Institute of Accountants;
- Fiji Chamber of Commerce & Industry;
- Fiji Hotel and Tourism Association;
- Association of Banks;
- Fiji Retailers Association;

- Association of Architects;
- Fiji Institute of Engineers;
- Duavata Sustainable Tourism Collective;
- Fiji Van and Carriers Operators' Association;
- Women in Business; and various other organisations.

We wrote to them, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to send representatives. Some of them responded, some of them did not, but we also then approached individuals or organisations we thought that would actually give us a better cross-section of different businesses who would be able to also, through their association, tap into other people.

As highlighted, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have the:

- Head of Jacks Fiji who also is the Head of the Vision Group which is a publicly listed company;
- hardware companies;
- supermarket companies;
- shipping companies;
- a legal representative that also does submissions from the Fiji Law Society;
- Inbound Tourism Operators in the form of Pacific Destinations;
- Mr. John Samisoni from Hot Bread Kitchen;
- Mr. Justin Hunter from the Pearl Industry;
- representative from the restaurant segment;
- Construction Industry Council;
- two of our young business entrepreneurs - Winston Hill and Adelene Tutu;
- Tacirua Transport representing the bus companies; and, of course major retail outlets too.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, they have already had their meeting. The first meeting they had was last month and some of the key objectives that the Committee was to look at, amongst other things (they have not been given an exhausted list), was to:

- Review the tax and customs administration;
- Ensure smooth implementation of the VAT monitoring system;
- Improve FRCS stakeholder engagement strategies;
- Examine the effectiveness of trade and investment facilitation policies; and
- Build services to accommodate businesses of different sizes and sectors.

These are something that we are very keen on because at the moment when you go to FRCS, you will have one person over the counter (and this was highlighted in Parliament previously), who would probably deal with companies with gross turnover of \$5 million. The next person in the line, if someone is coming along who has a small business with a gross turnover of probably \$100,000 or \$300,000, so there is no actual specialisation and we want this Committee to look at that.

Indeed, what is really interesting, FRCS was an independent body. We just saw in the papers a few days ago obviously reacting to this Committee. They have said they are setting up a small business unit to be able to address the interest of small businesses but what is really interesting, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is that the Committee has already had about 277 issues they have highlighted. There had already been advertisements in the papers, calling for public submissions.

Out of the 277 issues, the top ranking issues that they highlighted is that about 13 percent of the respondents feel that the business unit issues needs to be addressed and these are the ones above

10 percent, BMS system - 12 percent needs to be addressed, 16 percent believe that FRCS customer service needs to improve. The other one that was on top is trade facilitation which needs to improve and also FRCS, the PR and the communication problems that they have needs to be also addressed, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

So this is the purpose behind the setting up of this Committee, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and we are told that they will soon give a report to us and we hope to then meet up with the FRCS Board, to be able to see how they can implement that. But we have already seen a lot of positive feedback from the setting up of this Committee.

I think there was probably a particular level of dissatisfaction by some people in the business community and for a lack of understanding by FRCS on some of their business processes, and hopefully this will, of course, create a much better business environment for them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister. Honourable Viliame Gavoka, you have the floor.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. We welcome the setting up of this Committee to try and reverse the downward trend under the FijiFirst stewardship in terms of Ease of Doing Business where Fiji dropped from 34 to 101 and that is during the FijiFirst administration.

I notice, Honourable Speaker, that there are 28 Committee Members. I may be wrong but I do not see a lot of exporters in the Committee because one of the ambit of the committee is to examine the effectiveness of trade.

Trade, Honourable Speaker, from our side is, we need to drive exports. We know that there is a huge deficit between import and export in this country.

HON. SPEAKER.- What is your question?

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- That is why, Honourable Speaker, we would like to ask Government if they can consider bringing in exporters into the Committee and in the process, help convince the Government that PACER Plus is good for Fiji in growing exports. Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Minister you have the floor.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think the Honourable Member's obsession with PACER Plus is probably not helping him to see through what I have just said.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the members of the Committee also have representatives from manufacturers. Majority of the exports we have, apart from agriculture, of course, is the manufacturing sector. So manufacturers are actually represented.

The Committee, of course, Mr. Speaker, Sir, has a mandate to be able to go and talk to anyone they like and as I have highlighted in this statistics here, that under trade and facilitation, they have already received a number of submissions regarding FRCS's ability to facilitate trade. And 9 percent of the respondents have said that they want that area to be improved. So, obviously, submissions have been made by exporters in that respect. And you can be rest assured that the concerns of the exporters will also be addressed, Mr. Speaker, Sir, thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister. Honourable Kuridrani, you have the floor.

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, a supplementary question to the Honourable Minister; I noticed in the composition of the Committee that has to do the review, the absence of the representation of Indigenous Business Council. I need to state that we need a holistic approach on all stakeholders to make a better review of this issue. So, is there any reason why the Indigenous Business Council has not been represented in the Committee?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Members obsession with ethnicity, of course, is well-known.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the reality of the matter is that, we wrote to all the key organisations in Fiji that have been working with FRCS. If the Honourable Member is going to start bringing in ethnic breakdown, we do not do that, but if he wants to also understand the businesses that people of all groups are involved in, I mean, they are. For example, small businesses are represented. We have representative from:

- Sustainable Tourism Collective;
- Van & Carriers Operators Association;
- Inbound Operators, et cetera.

I cannot understand what the Honourable Member's question is really targeting at. No one has been left out. Everyone who wants to make a submission, Mr. Speaker, Sir, has the ability to come and make submissions to this Committee.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Radrodro, you have the floor.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker, a supplementary question to the Honourable Minister. Now that you have taken your time to inform this House the working of this Committee, can you advise this august House whether you will present the report of the Committee to this House? Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, as highlighted earlier on, that the report of the Committee will be submitted to Government. We will work with the FRCS Board to see which areas of the recommendations need to be implemented and, indeed, should be implemented. Of course, the Committee's report will be made public.

As I also highlighted, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we want it to be some form of, if you like, a social contract between all taxpayers of Fiji and FRCS in respect of their monitoring of how they actually perform, viz-a-viz the taxpayers of Fiji.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister. Honourable Leader of the Opposition, you have the floor.

HON. MAJOR-GENERAL (RET'D) S.L. RABUKA.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I just caught on to what the Honourable Attorney-General and the Minister for Economy stated in his last response on all the taxpayers of Fiji. We normally highlight that those earning less than \$30,000 per annum were not paying tax. I would like to ask whether all the taxpayers include all those of us who pay VAT, et cetera, and how will they be represented - those who were not on the Pay as You Earn radar for taxes? Thank you, Sir.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I understand the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is asking whether the people who do not simply pay PAYE or those people who fall below the threshold, people other than that, how will they be represented?

Of course, we have representatives from small businesses, these are the people who pay VAT. Certain small businesses that are obviously exempt from paying VAT because of the size of their business, in terms of filing VAT returns.

Yes, everyone will be represented in that respect, but what I was talking about Mr. Speaker, Sir, is that the recommendations of the Committee need to be some general holistic recommendations that everyone can, sort of, hold up and when they do go to FRCS, they say, “These are the recommendations, it has been put forward to your Board. It says, for example, a basic thing, that you need to be able to treat us with courtesy. If you are going to require some information from us, you need to do it in a courteous and professional manner. You need to give things to us in writing. You simply cannot have people just ringing you up and you saying, “I am from FRCS, tell me how much your business is making?” Those are the kind of things, very basic issues that a lot of people get actually frightened of, and those are the kind of benchmarks that we do want.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister. We will move on to the third question for today, and I give the floor to the Honourable Ratu Suliano Matanitobua to ask his question.

Upgrading of Nursing Stations - Rural and Maritime Communities
(Question No. 224/2019)

HON. RATU S. MATANITOBUA asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Minister for Health and Medical Services update Parliament on the progress made in upgrading nursing stations in our rural and maritime communities?

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE (Minister for Health and Medical Services).- Thank you, Honourable Speaker, and I thank the Honourable Member for the question.

Honourable Speaker, we have three Divisional Hospitals, 2 specialist hospitals, 18 Subdivisional Hospitals, 84 Health Centres, 99 Nursing Stations and a mobile facility called the *MV Veivueti*; in total, 207 facilities all throughout the country that the Ministry of Health runs on behalf of Government.

Honourable Speaker, when I think about the question that the Honourable Member posed, I was thinking, how do we look at answering this talk about upgrading? But I want to answer it holistically because that is what this Government is doing in holistically upgrading all the Nursing Stations, including all the health facilities.

In terms of the facility in the last financial year 2018-2019, we did maintenance and upgrading of 38 Nursing Stations and I have a list here which I think is important that I read it out, so that we can all know.

There were 11 Nursing Stations in the maritime division:

- Nabasovi and Batiki Nursing Stations in Lomaiviti;
- Nalotu and Talaulia Nursing Stations in Kadavu; and

- Komo in Namuka-i-Lau and Nursing Stations in the Lau Group.

There were five Nursing Stations in the Rural Northern Division which includes, Kia and Naweni Nursing Stations.

There were 17 Nursing Stations in the Rural Western Division, majority being in the Yasawa Group, the:

- Yaqeta, Yanuya and Viwa Nursing Stations;
- Nukuilau and Wauosi Nursing Stations in the Navosa Highlands.

There were five Nursing Stations in the rural interior, in Narokorokoyawa and Dawasamu at the border of Tailevu North.

Honourable Speaker, we had completed 55 percent of the improvements and there is 45 percent left, and the budget allocation of more than \$600,000 was set aside for this. We have been told by the contractors and those who are doing it, including in some areas by our own Ministry of Health carpenters and workers that they will be able to complete this by the end of the year or early next year.

Honourable Speaker, the upgrading is also happening in terms of the scope of practice, what can be done within a nursing station. We want to be very clear that a Nursing Station has only these scope of practice. These are the limitations and beyond that they need to be able to refer on to the 99 Health Centres or the 18 Subdivisional Hospitals or the Divisional Hospitals which includes, that we do not approve women delivering in the Nursing Stations. Before, any woman can turn up to a Nursing Station and deliver.

The reason why we had done that, Honourable Speaker, is that, we want to ensure that the Health Centres or Subdivisional Hospitals or hospitals allocated for delivery have the appropriate doctors and midwives that are trained, and also all the facilities to be able to safely deliver women and also safely receive our children.

Honourable Speaker, in terms of equipment and pharmaceuticals, the equipment and pharmaceutical budget have continued to improve and there are three monthly supplies that goes to the Nursing Station.

In the past, FPBS used to actually take them themselves, but now they have outsourced it, so courier companies, such as CDP, help take these supplies to the Nursing Stations on the time that they are supposed to go there.

Honourable Speaker, we also have a mini holding space in Lautoka and hopefully soon in Labasa, where we can be able to also hold supplies.

In terms of staff, Honourable Speaker, a few years ago FNU upgraded the learning's of our nurses from a Diploma Level Course to now a Bachelors Level Course.

We also have nurse practitioners and we began to identify Nursing Stations that will be better suited and better served by a nurse practitioner and to give an example of a place that we are thinking to put a nurse practitioner soon in the next year or so, is Bouma in Taveuni because it serves quite a large population and also the geographical area in which it is located.

Honourable Speaker, before to have a Nursing Station, the place must have 500 Fijian citizens. For example there were three islands and they were 100 each, and then they had to find another island that had 200 to be able to have a nursing station.

The Honourable Prime Minister took that rule and put it aside and he said, "Any geographical dislocation is an opportunity for a Nursing Station", so we now follow that, and because of that we have opened Nursing Stations where we have not had a Nursing Stations before. I thank the Honourable Member for that question.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister. Honourable Matanitobua, you have the floor.

HON. RATU S. MATANITOBUA.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. There is a Nursing Station being promised by the Honourable Prime Minister in 2011 in Wainiyavu, Namosi, and we are still waiting. The land has been leased by the Government under the Ministry of Lands and we are waiting for the infrastructure - the Nursing Station. When?

(Honourable Members interjected)

HON. SPEAKER.- Do not forget me. Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- I thank the Honourable Member for that question. So it is a new Nursing Station?

We have done some work around Namosi. There is discussions already on that Nursing Station in Wainiyavu and in due course, that will happen.

Honourable Speaker, that goes again to the discussion that we had that we are now also looking at Nursing Stations that are needed because of geographical dislocation, irrespective of the population. Before, it had to be 500, now we actually have Nursing Stations in places where there are only 300 or 200 Fijians because of the geographical dislocation. But I thank the Honourable Member for that question. *Vinaka vakalevu.*

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Dr. Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu you have the floor.

HON. RATU DR. A.R. LALABALAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Speaker Sir, a supplementary question. In the maritime areas are all the Nursing Stations and Health Centres being equipped with their own mode of transportation, such as fibreglass boats, to cater for the areas where they serve? If not, what are the alternatives given for them?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Thank you, Honourable Member, for that question. Yes, we try to provide transportation for the Nursing Stations, especially the most geographically dislocated. I was up in Vanualevu, and Kioa has its own yacht, and the opportunity to be able to get across, together with the Tukavesi boat, that is able to serve Kioa and also Rabi Island. So, we try and make sure that in the geographically dislocated areas, we have the means for them to have transportation.

Currently, in Cicia Island this year, there was a transport that was taken across to them because the Medical Officer thought it might be useful for him to have a vehicle. So, that was taken across. In the Health Centres in Lau, we have never had a transport for one of the Health Centres, apart from the

Subdivisional Hospital in Lakeba and Vanuabalavu. But this has happened because of the need and also because the person on the ground has actually told us that he can better serve his community using that.

There are challenges, of course, because vehicles and marine vessels obviously can get bad, that need maintenance, they can sink and so the replacement might take a while but certainly, we try to ensure that those geographically located areas have a means of transportation or support from another area that can move across and bring patients, and actually bring staff when needed. *Vinaka.*

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister. We will move on to the fourth Oral Question for today, and I give the floor to the Honourable Selai Adimaitoga to ask her question. You have the floor, Madam.

Update on Workings and Plans of the Legal Aid Commission
(Question No. 225/2019)

HON. S. ADIMAITOGA asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications provide an update on the workings and plans of the Legal Aid Commission?

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

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Fiji is probably one of the only country in the world that has such a huge and strengthened position of its Legal Aid Commission built into the Constitution itself.

Section 118 of the Constitution actually creates the Legal Aid Commission within the constitutional mandate itself and, of course, as provided for under Section 13 and Section 14 of the Constitution where the rights of accused persons and the rights of detained persons does say quite specifically that you must give them legal aid access if they cannot have any other form of representation.

The other point, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is under Section 118 and Section 119 and in Section 118(9), there is a mandate upon Parliament to ensure that the Legal Aid Commission has sufficient funds to be able to carry out its functions effectively. So, Mr. Speaker Sir, it also gives the constitutional independence that the Legal Aid Commission does require.

Just very quickly, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Legal Aid Commission, in 2006, there were about three Legal Aid Commission Offices throughout Fiji. Today, we have locations of 19 Legal Aid Offices - two in Suva, Nasinu, Nausori, Korovou, Rakiraki, Tavua, Ba, Lautoka, Nadi, Sigatoka, Keiyasi, Navua, Labasa, Seaqaqa, Nabouwalu, Savusavu, Taveuni and Levuka and three more will be opened in 2020 in Kadavu, Rotuma and Vunidawa.

Just very quickly in terms of the work of the Legal Aid Commission, Mr. Speaker, Sir, since we have started funding them in a very substantial manner, they have extended their mandate to not only simply criminal matters but also now to civil matters and, of course, family law matters. For example, personal injuries, medical negligence, they also help people draft wills, transmission by death, record of death, small claims tribunal appeals, power of attorney, taking out probate, etcetera.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the interest of time, I will just very quickly go through this so that Honourable Members get a sense of the work of Legal Aid. In 2018, the breakdown of the advisory work that Legal Aid Commission gave in family law matters of 8,702 matters; criminal matters - 4,420; and civil matters

- 13,603. So we can see the very nature of Legal Aid services now changing quite significantly towards the civil areas.

In terms of the number of litigation cases, the matter before the courts, currently family law matters - 3,319; criminal matters - 9,967; and civil matters before the courts - 2,040, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are 111 lawyer positions within Legal Aid and non-lawyer positions - 113. One would say and, indeed, we say that the Legal Aid Commission is the largest law firm in all of Fiji.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, they carry out a number of different aspects of their work. They have an upgrade of the Case Management System, I am glad to say that they have participated fully with the Fiji Police Force in the First Hour Procedure.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, Sir, Fiji has ratified the United Nations Convention Against Torture (UNCAT) and as studies have shown, the first hour when the person is arrested, in particular for criminal matters, and there are sometimes civil matters, the most crucial time is the first hour. So they have been working very closely with the Fijian Police Force and, of course, the British Government have assisted us.

Unfortunately, the legal fraternity through the Fiji Law Society has not assisted at all, and they have now been part of the pilot project where they actually make themselves available when persons are arrested to be able to go and help them, and sit down with them when they are being questioned.

We have also very recently, Mr. Speaker, Sir, signed an MOU with the Pacific Islands Legal Aid providers where Fiji is being held as one of the role model organisations in the Pacific, and they hope to do a lot of work with them and, of course, learn from Fiji. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister. Honourable Niko Nawaikula, you have the floor.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. In asking this question, I declare my interest. But I wish to say that the rapid increase and expansion of the Legal Aid Commission is linked as well to the closure of many small time private practitioners.

I wish to ask the Honourable Minister if he can consider giving out briefs to these small time practitioners. We now have three law schools and many solicitors as well are without work. Possibly, there is merit where a civil action, the Legal Aid cannot act for both, the plaintiff and the defendant, so may be in some of the instances, please if they consider giving some briefs to the small time private practitioners.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Member. Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- I thank the Honourable Member for asking this question, Mr. Speaker, Sir. In fact, he hit the nail on the head. We really need to ensure that there are needs to be outsourcing.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member perhaps is not aware that Legal Aid over the past couple of years did start outsourcing, in fact, quite substantially. But unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I highlighted at the Pacific Legal Aid Officers Meeting in Natadola just a couple of weeks ago, we found that lot of the private practitioners to whom work was outsourced to, in fact, were charging very exorbitant rates. A lot of them were not turning up to court, a lot of them were getting adjournments and, Mr.

Speaker, Sir, we also find that there was a lot of compromise in respect of the manner in which they dealt with the clients. That is the precise reason why we need to outsource work.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, Sir, it has not been working. I did not bring the details but I did have the statistics with me. This is why Legal Aid now is trying to build Chinese walls.

What the Honourable Nawaikula has highlighted is absolutely right. For example, from low income families you could have the wife, the husband, they have a matrimonial dispute, they are going to divorce or there is a claim over the custodial rights of the child, both of them are actually entitled to Legal Aid because both of them are low income family members.

What Legal Aid was doing, they would actually outsource the work for one of them to a private practitioner and the other one, they would do in-house. Unfortunately, this has not been working. The practitioners to whom the work was being outsourced to, were not doing a good job.

They also found that some of them were actually giving very exorbitant claims, so they would claim they had been to court, but they did not. They would, for example, have five files and they would go to court at the same time, but they would claim that they went on different times. So the Legal Aid Commission obviously needs to rein that in.

I am quite happy that if Honourable Niko Nawaikula is actually willing to offer his services, he really should go and talk to Legal Aid. He can have a discussion with them, and if they find that he is honest in his dealings, that he has the right rates, I am sure they will probably want to engage him for those services. Thank you.

(Laughter)

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Salote Radrodro, you have the floor.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker and I thank the Honourable Attorney-General for that explanation. My point of interest is on the data that is being provided by Legal Aid Commission in regards to violence against women and children. Can the Honourable Minister advise the House when was the last Annual Report from the Legal Aid Commission being presented because that is a good source of information, particularly in statistics? Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

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

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- I do not have that information, Mr. Speaker, Sir, but I am quite happy to provide to her once I get it. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. We will move on.

Honourable Members, the next Oral Question, Question No. 226/2019 to be asked by the Honourable Inosi Kuridrani, I have agreed that this be carried over to the next session of Parliament as the Minister for Education is not here. So you can relax, Honourable Inosi Kuridrani, and we will move on to the next question.

For the sixth Oral Question for today, I give the floor to the Honourable Viam Pillay. You have the floor, Sir.

Review of the Coastal Legislation
(Question No. 227/2019)

HON. V. PILLAY asked the Government, upon notice:

Noting the importance of sustainable fisheries and the need to have a robust legislation, can the Honourable Minister for Fisheries inform Parliament of the Ministry's plans to review the current coastal legislation to support fisheries activities?

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU (Minister for Fisheries).- Thank you Honourable Speaker, Sir, and I thank the Honourable Member for the question .

Fish and fisheries activities are an integral part of society and make important contributions to economic and social health and well-being in our country. As such, proper management, including adequate regulation is a fundamental requirement for Fijians, especially for the fisheries sector and the aspirations of its people to be fully realised.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, fisheries legislation are critical for the management of our fisheries resources, as they provide a comprehensive range of duties and responsibilities, functions and powers to regulate and sustainably manage our coastal fisheries sector. An ideal legislation is based on modern standards and principles with the overriding aim to conserve and manage and develop Fiji's fisheries.

Honourable Speaker, all fisheries activities in Fiji are currently regulated under the Fisheries Act (Cap. 158) 1941 and the Offshore Fisheries Management Act 2012. From time to time, the Fisheries regulations are updated with the addition of new regulations that can further enhance the sustainable management of Fiji's fisheries. Bans can also be implemented for certain species via a regulation made pursuant to section 9 of the Fisheries Act 1941.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, realising that there are areas of improvement in the coastal legislation, work is currently underway to address provisions which include:

1. licence arrangement for inshore fisheries;
2. broader enforcements and surveillance;
3. protection of threatened species; and
4. review of penalties and charges.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, these are just some of the legal provisions that needed immediate review. With an outdated legislation, the Ministry will continue to reinforce and implement a comprehensive monitoring, control and surveillance strategy that will improve the collection of quality data of fish and increase exchange of information.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, this is an important part of operationalising the work of the Ministry of Fisheries and we are determined to see this through with the support of our line agencies and our stakeholders. Thank you, Honourable Speaker, Sir.

Honourable Speaker, just before I take my seat, I wanted to just correct a data that I presented to Parliament for the record as recorded in yesterday's sitting. Due to the continued interference by Honourable Members of the Opposition, especially the art and craft gallery at the back led by Honourable Tabuya and the soap opera led by Honourable Niko Nawaikula, I could not actually understand the question asked by Honourable Leawere. I could not hear it, Honourable Speaker.

In actual fact, he asked for tier and with the interference from the Opposition, I thought it was years. So, I wanted to just explain that.

There are four tiers of licence review within the coastal fisheries. Licence to fish - \$5.32; licence to fish with boats - \$10.64; inclusion of additional crew - \$12.02; and an additional boat towed behind the main boat - \$13.40.

There is no fisheries station in Legalega, but an agricultural station, Sir.

(Laughter)

HON. SPEAKER.- After that explanation, we will move on.

We will move on to the seventh Oral Question. You have been standing, Honourable Leawere. The seventh Oral Question for today is your question. You have the floor.

Foreign Film Production Companies' Compliance to Labour Laws
(Question No. 228/2019)

HON. M.R. LEAWARE asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Minister for Employment, Productivity, Industrial Relations, Youth and Sports inform Parliament on measures put in place by the Ministry to ensure that foreign film production companies comply with labour laws and standards when they employ Fijian citizens?

HON. P.K. BALA (Minister for Employment, Productivity, Industrial Relations, Youth and Sports).- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, at the outset, allow me to reiterate Government's commitment that we will continue to ensure that all foreign companies setting up businesses in our country will have to comply with our labour laws, just like our locals.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is working closely with Film Fiji in ensuring compliance on our labour laws in relation to foreign film production companies in Fiji.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, to date, we have worked with 70 foreign film companies through Film Fiji from January to August 2019. Ministry staff, Mr. Speaker, Sir, had meetings and continued discussion on employment contracts and employment-related matters through Film Fiji, to ensure compliance to labour laws and better working conditions for all our workers.

For the 2018-2019 financial year, Mr. Speaker, Sir, Film Fiji has estimated a total of 113 productions, with an estimated 1,607 Fijians being employed on these productions.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the production houses have their own human resources team that manages the employment issues.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has been reviewing and had implemented compliance procedures and mechanisms for dealing with all types of labour-related complaints reported to the Ministry. This also includes employers that engage local workers for film production in Fiji.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Employment Relations Act 2007 has set out clear process under Schedule 4 and Schedule 6, in dealing with employment-related grievances and employment-related disputes.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the under section 19 of the Employment Relations Act 2007, it gives powers to the Labour Inspectors and Labour Officers to enter and inspect workplaces on which a worker is employed, or where there are reasons to believe that workers are employed. It also requires employers to produce any document or record which employers are required to keep under the Employment Relations Act 2007, including interview of workers and employers on a matter connected with employment.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the employers are required to keep this workers record and, ensure proper wages payments are made to workers under the Wages Regulations and National Minimum Wage.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1996, sets out clear OHS requirements for all employers in Fiji. This is to ensure that workers are protected when they enter the workforce with any employer in Fiji, including the foreign film production. Workers that have any complaints against their employer are free to lodge their complaint to the nearest Ministry of Employment Office for investigation.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, for the last financial year, 2018-2019, we have not received any labour non-compliant issues from anyone working with any foreign film production companies in Fiji. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister. Honourable Leawere, you have the floor.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I tend to disagree with the Honourable Minister in his response because there are workers who have been exploited by these foreign film companies, especially the one that was filming in Pacific Harbour.

The question I would like to pose to the Honourable Minister is; would the Honourable Minister highlight the necessary safeguards which are in place to protect Fijian workers from all forms of exploitation by foreign audio visual firms operating in Fiji. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. As I had mentioned in my response that has far as the Ministry is concerned, there has been no complaints received. But if there is any complaint lodged to the Honourable Minister's office in Serua...

(Laughter)

HON. P.K. BALA.- ...under what he is operating, I would suggest that the complainant should come and give his report to our office located at 4th Floor, Civic House. As far as I am concerned, there is no report reported to the Ministry. But if there is one, and I encourage if there is one, to come and report it. That is why our Ministry is there, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister.

We will move on to the eighth Oral Question for today. I give the floor to the Honourable Jale Sigarara to ask his question. You have the floor, Sir.

Forest Subsidies Programme
(Question No. 229/2019)

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

Can the Honourable Minister for Forestry update Parliament on the latest progress of its Forest Subsidies Programme, its benefits and has the Ministry undertaken an impact analysis on the programme?

HON. O. NAIQAMU (Minister for Forestry).- Thank you, Honourable Speaker, Sir, and I thank the Honourable Member for his question.

From the outset, Honourable Speaker, Sir, I am pleased to inform this august House that the Forest Subsidy Programme is part of the FijiFirst Government's economic empowerment to focus specifically on the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the forestry sector. This is a FijiFirst Government initiative that was rolled out in 2015.

Since 2015, Honourable Speaker, Sir, the Ministry of Forestry had assisted a total of 19 MSMEs, including timber processors and woodcarvers through the provision of tools worth \$150,000. Specifically, these tools help improve the designs and finishing of the wood products which have ultimately boosted both, the quality and the quantity of production for the MSMEs.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, these MSMEs earn an average income of \$1,800 each per month. This represents an increase of approximately 44 percent over their previous income when they did not have the value adding tools.

Collectively, Honourable Speaker, Sir, forest-based MSMEs that had been assisted through the subsidy earn a combined total of \$260,000 per annum. The Ministry estimates that the products from these MSMEs contribute up to 10 percent of the total timber and wood products sold locally and abroad.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, this increased income is putting more money into the pockets of ordinary Fijians. It is also helping create more employment opportunity. It is a significant return on investment.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, given the success of the Forest Subsidy Programme, the Ministry looks forward to strengthening its support to our forest stakeholders. Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER. – I thank the Honourable Minister. Honourable Mitieli Bulanauca, you have the floor.

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- I thank the Honourable Minister for the assistance that had been given to SMEs and particularly, value-adding. My question is, is there any assistance, particularly on activities for resource owners in the forest in harvesting, milling area and other value-adding process that might lead to export?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. O. NAIQAMU.- Honourable Speaker, I was talking to the MSMEs in forestry sector and the question is related to the contractual that has been offered by major companies, like sawmills and one of them is Fiji Pine Limited. In that case, contracts are issued and we assist the landowners through a subsidy with the Fiji Development Bank (FDB) where the Ministry of Forestry contributes one-third to

FDB and the rest is given by FDB through loan. That is available through FDB where resource owners can access.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Minister. Honourable Vosanibola, you have the floor.

HON. P.W. VOSANIBOLA.- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. My supplementary question is just in continuation to the original question which I think has not been fully answered. Has the Ministry undertaken an impact analysis on the programme?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. O. NAIQAMU.- Honourable Speaker, Sir, I have already mentioned that we have undertaken an impact assessment of all the assistance that we have given out and its impact to the community.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister.

Honourable Members, that ends the Oral Questions for today. We move on to the Written Questions. For the first Written Question for today, I call on the Honourable Ratu Suliano Matanitobua to ask his question. You have the floor, Sir.

Written Questions

Recipients of 2016 Seedlings – Government of India (Question No. 230/2019)

HON. RATU S. MATANITOBUA asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development, Waterways and Environment inform Parliament on the total number of recipients of the seedlings provided by the Government of India in 2016 by gender, age and province?

HON. DR. M. REDDY (Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development, Waterways and Environment).- Thank you. Honourable Speaker, Sir, I will table my response at a later sitting day as permitted under Standing 45(3). Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister. We move on to the second Written Question for today and I call on the Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa to ask her question. You have the floor, Madam.

Update – Vehicle Registration (Question No. 231/2019)

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

Can the Honourable Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Disaster Management and Meteorological Services provide to Parliament the total numbers of vehicles registered in the country today? These include:

- (a) Motorcycles;
- (b) Private, rental goods vehicles not exceeding 3.5 tonnes;

- (c) Taxis, Hire and Class 2;
- (d) Carriers, Minibuses and Class 2 and 3;
- (e) Omnibus and Class 2, 3 and 4;
- (f) Goods greater than 3.5 tonnes and Class 2;
- (g) Articulated greater than 10 tonnes and Class 2;
- (h) Tractors equal to or less than 3.5 tonnes;
- (i) Modified vehicles for disabled persons; and
- (j) Tractors greater than 3.5 tonnes, forklift, crane, construction machinery, bulldozers and loaders.

HON. J. USAMATE (Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Disaster Management and Meteorological Services).- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think this question should really have been worked on to get it a bit a clearer.

Let me point out, I do not know that the LTA registers goods greater than 3.5 tonnes. We register vehicles but not goods greater than 3.5 tonnes. We do not do that.

Another thing here that I had been asked to give is, articulated greater than 10 tonnes, what does that mean?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, within our ability to interpret this question, we will provide the response at a later day but I really think the question should be scrutinised much more better.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order, order!

I thank the Honourable Minister. Honourable Minister, just answer the questions as they are provided there.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- *Maleka, misi!*

(Laughter)

HON. SPEAKER.- Ignore the other side, Honourable Minister. Ignore the other side!

If you cannot answer the question, you just says so. That is all, but in a written form. Thank you.

Honourable Members we will now take adjournment for lunch which will be served in the Big Committee Room. I thank all Honourable Members for your contributions to today's sitting.

Parliament is now adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9.30. We adjourn.

The Parliament adjourned at 12.08 p.m.