

[VERBATIM REPORT]

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE, LAW & HUMAN RIGHTS

ANNUAL REPORTS

1. **Office of the Prime Minister 2016-2017 Annual Report**
2. **Office of the Prime Minister 2017-2018 Annual Report**

INSTITUTION: **Office of the Prime Minister**

VENUE: **Big Committee Room (East Wing)**

DATE: **Friday, 28th February, 2020**

VERBATIM NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE, LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS HELD AT THE BIG COMMITTEE ROOM (EAST WING), PARLIAMENT PRECINCTS, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, ON FRIDAY, 28TH FEBRUARY, 2020 AT 9.45 A.M.

Interviewee/Submittee: Office of the Prime Minister

In Attendance

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|---|--|
| 1. | Ms. Amelia Komaisavai | - | Chief Research and Policy Officer |
| 2. | Mr. Moape Rokosuka | - | Head of Finance and Administration |
| 3. | Mr. Martin Nabola | - | Principal Research and Policy Officer |
| 4. | Mr. Jacob Karutake | - | Senior Administrative Officer (Development Projects) |
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MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, Submittee, members of the media, the Secretariat Team, dear viewers, ladies and gentlemen; a very good morning to you all and it is a pleasure to welcome everyone to today's session, especially the viewers who are watching this session from the comfort of their homes.

For your information, pursuant to Standing Order 111 of the Standing Orders of Parliament, all Committee Meetings are to be opened to the public. Therefore, please, note that this hearing is open to the public and media, and it is also being aired live on television in the Parliament Channel via Walesi Platform, the Parliament social media platform and website.

For any sensitive information concerning this inquiry that cannot be disclosed in public, it can be provided to the Committee either in private or in writing. However, please be advised that pursuant to Standing Order 111, there are only few specific circumstances that allow for non-disclosure and these include:

- National security matters;
- Third party confidential information;
- Personal and human resources matters; and
- Deliberation and development of Committee recommendations and reports.

At the outset, I wish to remind Honourable Members and witnesses that all questions to be asked are to be addressed through the Chairman. This is a Parliamentary inquiry and all information gathered is covered under the Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act.

In terms of the protocol of this Committee Hearing, please be advised that movement within the Committee Room will be restricted, there will be no use of mobile phones and all mobile phones are to be on silent mode while the Meeting is in progress. For the media personnel, all interviews are to be conducted outside the Committee Room after the session.

Now I would like to actually introduce my team.

(Introduction of Honourable Members and the Secretariat by Mr. Chairman).

Without any further delay, I would now like to give the opportunity for the submittee to introduce themselves and the Report that is before us and provide a brief on the Office of Prime Minister before we can go into the submission proper. Thank you.

MS. A. KOMAISAVAI.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I would like to thank this Parliamentary Committee for inviting the Office of the Prime Minister to this oral submission, for an opportunity to deliberate on the Annual Reports that were submitted before the Committee. First, I would like to introduce the Panel that is before you this morning.

(Introduction of the OPM Team by Ms. A. Komaisavai)

First, we would like to inform the Committee that all Annual Reports of the Government Ministries are submitted through Cabinet Office. That was one of the questions that was raised, along with these Annual Reports. We would like to start off by informing the Committee that all Annual Reports of Government are submitted through Cabinet, and that includes the Office of the Prime Minister's Annual Reports.

In terms of the Annual Reports that are before the Committee this morning, all those period of review, we acknowledge the questions that have been raised pertaining to these Annual Reports. We understand that the questions focus on the Small Grants Scheme of the Office of the Prime Minister, the Open Door Policy, the public relation activities that were currently happening during this period and also during 2016 and 2017 Annual Reports, and your questions pertaining to the monitoring of our Small Grants Schemes.

Later on, in the 2017 and 2018 Annual Reports, there were questions pertaining to some functions of the Units within the Office of the Prime Minister that dealt with the Open Door Policy, a climate change awareness question was also raised, and the role of the Office of the Prime Minister in terms of the oversight and monitoring of the National Development Plan (NDP).

We have provided some very detailed responses to the questions raised by the Committee and we are happy to answer related questions in this session, Sir. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Madam, for that brief on the Annual Reports of OPM. What we will do is, I shall now allow Honourable Members to ask specific questions and you can respond to them. We will start with Honourable Ratu Suliano Matanitobua.

HON. RATU S. MATANITOBUA.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman. I thank the staff from the OPM. My question is on the funds being allocated for Rotuma Island. Has all the 2016 projects on Rotuma Island been completed?

MS. A. KOMAISAVAI.- Thank you, Sir. On the Rotuma Subvention Fund, for the period under review, we have listed the projects that have been implemented through this Fund.

The Rotuma Subvention Fund is actually focused on the development projects for the Rotuman community. I think listed there are the projects that have been implemented so far, which is mainly on water, farm roads, as well as freight and administrative costs that we have also included as part of the expenses that we have utilised the Rotuma Subvention Fund on. I would like to emphasise that the Rotuma Subvention Fund is really focused on development projects.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you for that answer, Madam. Any supplementary questions. Yes, Honourable Ratu Suliano.

HON. RATU S. MATANITOBUA.- Honourable Chairman, through you, do we have a number in terms of projects to be done in Rotuma per year, given the budget that you have?

MR. J. KARUTAKE.- Thank you very much, Sir. Yes, we have allocated development fund for Rotuma and, yes, there is a certain amount of budget allocated for the Island. So it depends on the number of projects that are submitted to our Office but we work according to the allocation. Once the funding is completed, then that completes the process of facilitating those projects.

Every year, we fund quite a number of development projects for Rotuma under that allocation. We utilise the fund that is allocated. We work closely with the Council of Rotuma and the District Officer Rotuma. They are the ones who identify those small projects that benefit the community on Rotuma Island and they submit to our Office for funding consideration.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you for that answer, Sir. Honourable Dr. Govind, you have the floor now.

HON. DR. S.R. GOVIND.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman. Madam, thank you for giving us a brief overview of the contents of the Report.

Honourable Chairman, I would like to ask about the Small Grants Scheme. How are the projects identified? If the project relates to a specific Ministry's activity, how is it coordinated with that particular Ministry?

First, how are the projects identified for funding and if that project falls under the specific mandate of a Ministry, how is it coordinated with that particular Ministry to avoid any overlap?

MS. A. KOMAISAVAI.- Projects are identified through the needs that have been identified by the community, which is then raised to the OPM. These are needs of the community which are development at community and village level. When it comes to the OPM, the Ministry is consulted to avoid any duplication of assistance that is going out.

The Ministry has its own targeted projects for the period. Normally, what the community had come to ask for the OPM does not fall into the targetted projects that have already been allocated by the Ministries. So, those are some of the criteria that we have identified to pick the projects that we are going to implement for that financial year.

When it comes to us and when it is approved internally, it is coordinated back to the Ministry ,facilitated by the OPM to implement and it goes through the normal process of Government in terms of tender and implementation by the line Ministries.

HON. DR. S.R. GOVIND.- A supplementary question, Mr. Chairman, how is the community made aware of the availability of the grant? How do you communicate, to make them aware of the balance available? It is there a particular application forms or how do they do their project proposal before it is send to the OPM?

MS. A. KOMAISAVAI.- I think they are made aware of that through the OPM, on the availability of this Small Grant Scheme. It is a budget allocation annually. It is announced during budget time that this fund is available at the OPM for project development of the community.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Member, that is the allocation given to all Prime Ministers ever since Independence. It is always done when the Honourable Prime Minister goes out for his outreach programme and he actually communicates with community members.

The community can come up with any request to the Prime Minister. The OPM then actually reviews the request and if it has to do with any relevant Ministry, it is passed on to the relevant Ministry, or OPM takes on board itself.

Honourable Mosese Bulitavu, you have the floor.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Through you, Mr. Chairman, just a follow up to that question and probably, to make it clearer to the people or communities on how to access this fund, do they write straight to the Prime Minister or they wait for the Prime Minister to come to the area and they tell him, "Please, we want one bridge", or they need to come to Suva or how do people get into applying for this grant? What is common for all the applications that come through? How do people get to benefit from this grant?

MS. A. KOMAISAVAI.- Right now, the application process for this particular grant is through formal correspondence to the OPM. They write to the OPM and there is a Unit that actually processes those applications.

The other avenue, as the Honourable Chairman has alluded to earlier on, is through the Prime Minister himself, who goes down to the community level through which they submit their request to him, it is brought back to the Office and the request is actually processed and facilitated by the Development Co-operation Unit.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- To follow up on that, my question is whether this Unit in the OPM is centralised to other Divisions or not? Most of the communities in other Divisions come right to Suva for follow up. Sometimes they do call us, trying to follow up with the OPM. So whether there are plans to centralise those services to the various Divisions or is there already a kiosk for that?

MS. A. KOMAISAVAI.- The Unit that looks after the projects have various established network with Divisional Commissioners. That is how they are facilitating project implementation. They network with the Divisional Commissioner, to the Provincial Administrators and they also have established or good network with the Rokos in terms of facilitating project implementation.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Just for clarification, is Government Services Centre (GSC) also part of this network because I believe people go to the GSC to lodge their complaints? If you can actually elaborate on that as well, please.

MR. J. KARUTAKE.- Yes, we coordinate these requests and projects. We work closely with the Commissioners and PAs and District Officers (DOs). We have copies of the OPM Small Grant Scheme Applications with the Commissioners, PAs and DOs. So, that is one avenue, where they come to the DO and the DO will assess. If they can fund it from their Ministry, they go ahead, but if they think that it should come to the OPM they will forward it to the Prime Minister addressed to our Permanent Secretary. So, yes we work closely with all those agencies - the PAs, DOs and Commissioners.

All project applications are with them. Also, through that body that was mentioned by Mr. Chairman, we also provide all the information that is needed in terms of that information to be disseminated to the public.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Rohit Sharma, you have the floor.

HON. R.R. SHARMA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I will go on the 2017-2018 Annual Report. Could the Committee be provided with an update on how the Private Office has dealt with the Honourable Prime Minister's Open Door Policy, if you refer to page 11 under Private Office on the 2017-2018 Annual Report?

MS. A. KOMAISAVAI.- Thank you. The OPM as, so far, established a Client Services Unit. This Unit entirely deals with complaints and referrals from members of the public who visit the OPM. There are seven staff in this Unit, who look after the complaints of people coming in on a daily basis. Complaints and referrals are escalated from the Clients Services Unit to the Private Office to handle those referrals and making appointment with the Prime Minister.

In terms of complicated issues, the Client Services Unit calls for the presence of stakeholders to address complaints from the members of the public and that ranges from investment, land issues, development issues, et cetera.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you again. Mr. Chairman, my question is on the Small Business Grant because I was referring to page 18 of the 2016 Annual Report.

If you look at the distribution per Division graph on the top left corner, from 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 and in 2012, the Eastern Division had the highest. My question is, whether the Unit makes an assessment in terms of the equal distribution of those projects, or was projects only known to the Eastern Division at that time and the rest of the Divisions were not aware of them?

Suddenly, for the Northern Division, if you see the blue there, in 2015 it came up slowly. My question is, whether the requests that were coming in was dependent on how people knew about the Grant?

MR. J. KARUTAKE.- Thank you, Sir. In terms of projects to be submitted for approval, our priorities are water and education. We work closely with all agencies to ensure that, as mentioned by Ms. Komaisavai, to ensure that there is no double dipping. So, the priority here is water and education.

If you look at the graph, I agree that there might be differences in the allocation of the projects to the Divisions but as has been mentioned earlier, those are the two priority areas - water and education.

It depends on the applications that come to us and also with the advice from our Office on the ones that need to be submitted for funding consideration.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Mosese Bulitavu. We do note that the Honourable Prime Minister is one of the Prime Ministers, who has been doing a lot of community visits all around Fiji. What are some of the views and opinions that receives once the Prime Minister has visited a particular community or settlement?

MS. A. KOMAISAVAI.- Thank you. The views of the people normally ranges from needs in terms of development needs in the village and community level, right down to livelihood issues, land issues, so a wide range of things come to the Prime Minister when he is with the community. As I have said, it ranges from development, livelihood issues, even small income generating opportunities for the villagers and right down to education and health access for health centre needs,

and even water and right down to basic needs of water and electricity or power access. So it is mainly economic and development needs of the people right down to socio and livelihoods needs.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. We also note through the Annual Report that majority of the financial statements that are provided are qualified reports. What are some of the strategies that OPM has put in place, to ensure that for future reports, we actually get unqualified opinions by the Auditor-General?

MR. M. ROKOSUKA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Honourable Committee Members. Yes, we have noted that just recently, our report has been qualified. In terms of the qualification anomalies that have been found by the Auditor-General, I think we had only one issue, but we have put in measures in terms of how to improve our reporting and also the documents that should be available for audit, and we are hoping to improve on that in the current financial year.

There are measures being put in place in terms of the financial requirement - the use of funds in the Office, especially in the areas of documentation. That is an area that we have improved on in terms of how we prepare ourselves for the audit of the current financial year.

HON. R.R. SHARMA.- Through you, Mr. Chairman, as we all know that our Prime Minister is doing a great job regarding climate change. With regards to the OPM's role in assisting with the COP 23 Presidency, what is the level of consultation conducted during the reported period with the public, especially those who were at that time living in climate change affected areas?

MS. A. KOMAISAVAI.- Thank you, Sir. In our response during the COP 23 Presidency, we had actually advocated a very strong message out there that climate change action is for everyone. It is a responsibility for all, hence during the time that we were in the Presidency position, we were working very closely with NGOs and CSOs in carrying out climate change awareness and consultation to our communities.

As we have listed there, those are some of the communities that were visited by the NGOs during the time of COP23 Presidency. Also in 2017, we had conducted a National Climate Week in which consultation awareness was done to the community through the National Disaster Management Office and they worked closely with the Divisional Commissioners to visit some of the communities during the the National Climate Week that was held in 2017.

Apart from that, the NGOs as I have said, have come on board and actually did some consultations with the community in Vanua Levu and so as in the Central and Eastern Divisions during that week.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thanks for that response. With regards to SDGs and NDP, what role does OPM play when it comes to monitoring and implementing SDGs and NDP?

MS. A. KOMAISAVAI.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The OPM maintains its oversight role in the implementation of the NDP, oversight in terms of tracking the NDP indicators in consultation with the Ministry of Economy, who is the lead agency that is doing the monitoring of NDP.

As we speak, there is going to be a mid-term review of the NDP in which the OPM was consulted to be a part of. Basically the oversight role comes into play when we support the Honourable Prime Minister in terms of his engagement, his speeches and his response to the media. Those NDP targets are actually included into his engagement details in terms of speeches and responses.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Any further questions? Yes, Honourable Dr. Govind?

HON. DR. S. GOVIND.- Mr. Chairman, going back to what was said about the Honourable Prime Minister's very active leadership role on climate change, we see that, that role has not gone and the Honourable Prime Minister is still advocating climate change, both locally and abroad. Are there any definite plans currently, to continue that with activities in Fiji, his role in the climate change advocacy, now that he is not the President of COP 23, but he still carries that great leadership?

MS. A. KOMAISAVAI.- Thank you, Sir. Since his Presidency lapsed in 2018, the Honourable Prime Minister, as we all are aware, continues with the advocacy of climate change, not only as a President now, but as a leader and as an advocator in promoting climate change issues. He continues to advocate through Climate Summit in various conferences. He was invited as an Advocator for the Board of Climate Change, I think lately in France where he attended a Climate Summit and spoke to the world Leaders.

Locally, we are strengthening our climate change action through Government Ministries in terms of implementing climate change projects through various funds that we have established with development partners to implement climate change actions. So he is continuing to do his climate change advocacy locally and internationally as well, after his Presidency has lapsed.

HON. DR. S. GOVIND.- Just a supplementary question; under your Small Grant projects, do you have some funds for climate change action at community level?

MS. A. KOMAISAVAI.- All projects of Government now are aligned to climate resilience, so when communities are approached for project development, we align it to the climate resilient needs of that particular community. If it is water tank, it is going to be a holistic water access in terms of just the water tank so that, sort of, guides our identification of project needs to the community as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. While we are actually dealing with the OPM, it is quite obvious that people tend to complain a lot to the Office of the Prime Minister. Even if they go to agencies, they will actually try to follow up with OPM to get a positive response. How does OPM actually deal with all those complaints that are brought before them?

MS. A. KOMAISAVAI.- Thank you. Internally, we have actually been strengthened in addressing those complicated, sensitive and big issues from the communities. We have strengthened in terms of having very senior people, like the Deputy Secretary, handle very big and sensitive issues that come to the Office, so from the Deputy Secretary level, right down to the Client Unit.

Normally, in the process, we call stakeholders in to meet and we talk about the issues and we resolve it through the stakeholders of Government. We even include the private sector to come in, as much as possible, to resolve the issue. So internally, we have strengthened the system that we have in place to actually address complicated issues that are coming in. That is, apart from the Client Unit Division, which handles all the daily complaints that come to the OPM.

Our Division, the Policy Division, we handle investors' complaints or if an investor comes in and has land issues, he could not invest or he cannot move in with his development because there is a land issue in place so some of the senior officers handle that right away.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Mosese Bulitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Honourable Chairman, before I come to the COP 23, the speeches and messages, let me go back to the Small Grants Scheme. There was a reduction from \$9 million to now about \$4 million in the current Budget. Can you confirm whether they are existing projects or only funding of the completion of ongoing projects?

MR. J. KARUTAKE.- Thank you, Sir. Yes, the projects that we have on hand, projects that are ongoing, especially construction projects and those are funded from the allocation of that \$4 million because they are projects done in phases or in stages. Some of those projects, we have to pay from this financial year so, yes, we are paying for those construction projects.

Most of it has been completed but there are also small scale projects that are included for funding in this financial year and that is what we have been doing now, utilising the funds for other small projects that are ongoing.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Has the reduction of that allocation affected the need in terms of the community asking for projects? Has OPM coped with the reduction, given that there are enough projects at hand?

MS. A. KOMAISAVAI.- We will say that we are prioritising projects now. We are strategising projects more than what we used to do before. Even though there is a reduction in funding, it does not affect the delivery because we are more like prioritising the projects.

As we have said earlier on, we are actually strengthening the respective Ministries by taking those projects back to them and implementing, instead of OPM, so their budget allocation has actually improved compared to ours in terms of taking up those projects.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- So basically what you are saying is, for example, if there is a water project, then it is best referred to the Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) rather than the OPM actually dealing with it.

MS. A. KOMAISAVAI.- That is correct, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Any other questions.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Through you again, Mr. Chairman, my question now is on the Executive Support Office. In terms of messages and the speeches of the Honourable Prime Minister, given that he delivered about 28 speeches in Bonn, Germany at COP 23 - the various keynote addresses, closing remarks, ground-breaking ceremonies and other high level panel discussions, my question is; who drafts those speeches? How much are they paid and how does the procedure works before that speech is delivered by the Honourable Prime Minister?

MS. A. KOMAISAVAI.- Thank you. I will speak from the role of the OPM in terms of drafting speeches for the Honourable Prime Minister. We have an Executive Support Services Unit that actually is our Vetting Unit. It vets all speeches for the Honourable Prime Minister, it vets responses, details that come out from the Ministries, and even vet talking points and speeches drafted internally by the Policy Division.

They also do a checklist of his engagements, which includes his overseas engagements. It is not only speeches, but the holistic engagements of the Honourable Prime Minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you for that question. Any other follow up questions, Honourable Members?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- My supplementary question, Mr. Chairman, given that there is an allocation in terms of communication that Qorvis was also paid at a million dollar per diem in terms of public relations because they are also part of the process of drafting those speeches, that was my concern.

MS. A. KOMAISAVAI.- I think it is public knowledge that we have speech draft for Government but we will speak on what the OPM's role in drafting the Honourable Prime Minister's speeches in all engagements.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Sharma.

HON. R.R. SHARMA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Through you, looking at Pillar 10 of the key pillars of the OPM, it states, 'Improving health services and delivery'. Was there any type of activity carried out to support this Pillar?

MS. A. KOMAISAVAI.- Thank you. The activities that we have just noted down in our response are mainly the weekly wellness programme that we have every week and internally, we mainly serve very nutritious food and also internally in terms of the events engagement that we have inhouse.

In terms of community responsibility or community work, we have a social committee who led us into doing replanting of mangroves down at the My Suva Park. So, those are just a few of the community work that we have done as well as an organisation.

We have a social committee, who actually leads us and coordinated those activities for the organisation.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Dr. Govind, please.

HON. DR. S.R. GOVIND.- Through you, Mr. Chairman, just a supplementary question; I think your team should be congratulated for starting that wellness programme within your Office. In view of the rising incidents of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) such as heart, diabetes and stroke, I just want to know whether you have put some monitoring mechanisms to see whether that the staff in the OPM have become much more healthier, or those who are suffering from high blood pressure and diabetes, is it controlled now? It will be good to put that mechanism in place so that, that can become a role model for other Government Ministries.

I think we should be congratulating you for initiating something because it is people who just sit in the office, doing any exercise and not eating healthy food are the ones who suffer the most. So, that is a very good initiate and the Honourable Prime Minister should be congratulated for that. Is the Honourable Prime Minister also involved in that exercise?

MS. A. KOMAISAVAI.- Thank you. He does his exercise every week, apart from the staff.

Thank you, Sir, apart from our wellness programme we have an annual medical check that comes to the Office to do health check to all our staff. Last year, we also had a development partner from Korea, who went around every Ministry and also visited us to do a health check for all our staff.

So, those are some of the monitoring mechanisms that we have in place to actually monitor our health issues internally. Apart from that, our Human Resources monitors our sick leave and absenteeism from work in terms of sickness and that has always been highlighted to the Permanent Secretary or to the staff, in terms of regular sickness of a particular staff.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Any other question or clarification that Honourable Members would like to seek?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Any challenges that the OPM faces in terms of its duties, given that, that will be part of our Report and findings or whether there is no problem?

MR. M. ROKOSUKA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Honourable Members. Just talking from the corporate perspective, right now, we have enough staff in the office. We are still recruiting staff in the OPM but at this stage, I can confirm that we have enough staff to be able to carry out the operations of the Office.

We have tried to beef up some of our major Divisions in the Office, especially the Policy and Research, and also our Development Project and Planning Division. These are some of our key Divisions within the Office that we try to have enough staff, in order to carry out the operations. Since this is our core Division in the Ministry overall in terms of staffing, I can say that we have enough staff in the OPM to carry out our operations. *Vinaka.*

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. While we are still discussing, with regards to staff, would you like to elaborate on how OMRS is helping OPM with regards to capacity building?

MR. M. ROKOSUKA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the introduction of the OMRS helps a lot in terms of how we recruit and manage our staff at OPM. As you know, the criteria used in the OMRS which is called the Staff Criteria is very helpful in terms of identifying the best of the best, in order to be recruited within Divisions of the OPM. So, I commend the reform that has taken place, especially with the introduction of the OMRS, that we are now able to get the right staff and they are really performing well.

I can vouch here in terms of the people we are now recruiting at the OPM. I can say that we are recruiting the right people for the right job and they deliver well in terms of the area that they are being recruited in, in the Division. So, it is really working well with the OPM.

We have very capable and very young staff and they are really hardworking. So I salute the OMRS Guideline, which helped us to identify civil servants who are able to serve at the OPM. Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, just one question to the Policy Division. In the 2017-2018 Report if you see the pie-chart on the distribution of Analysed Sectorial Cabinet Papers, 24 percent for Economic, 35 percent for Socio-Economic and 41 percent on Governance, it shows the focus in terms of the policies within the Office which are coming to Cabinet. What is the main focus, whether the Cabinet Papers that are coming in are more focused on economic and strengthening our institution or socio-economic or you are trying to balance it out so that no one is left behind?

MS. A. KOMAISAVAI.- Thank you. So far, Cabinet submissions that are coming in are coming from various sectors - economic, socio-economic and infrastructure, building institution and it is going on to international treaties. So in terms of the three sectors, our role in those Cabinet submissions is really vetting and analysing Cabinet submissions.

But as you have said, we would like a balance of Cabinet submissions from different sectors. We do not only want to focus on economic, we would like to focus on the socio-economic sector to strengthen its policy in terms of its Cabinet submissions as well, but so far it is really dependent on Ministries' submissions. That is how we have actually put down the data in terms of what had come in.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- On that, while we are going to strike a balance or the right policy mix, how does the Ministry liaise with the Ministry of Economy on this policy mix and how does it affect the distribution of Budget in terms of fulfilling those policies and their allocation?

MR. M. NABOLA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to follow up on that supplementary question, the policies that do come to the OPM, the key component for us is ensuring that the Cabinet Papers that come in align to the strategic direction of Government and that direction is set by the National Development Plan (NDP).

As you all might recall that the NDP was taken through a massive consultation nationwide, so they represent the views, not just of the people but the policymakers in each part of Government and also the private sector and NGOs. So the Cabinet papers that come in, we check that the policies that they try to implement are aligned to the five-year and twenty-year development plan.

As mentioned earlier by Director Policy, that Plan is actually in its mid-term review for the first five years, so it is important that we continue to ensure that the direction, as you had mentioned, does not drift away. We have an objective of growing the Fijian economy and the NDP is the tool which we measure that. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you very much. Any final question from the Honourable Members?

HON. RATU S. MATANITOBUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, through you, on the number of development projects carried out in Rabi and Kioa, in 2016, how many projects did you implement in these two Villages?

MR. J. KARUTAKE.- Sir, in 2016, yes, we funded quite a number for projects for Rabi and Kioa. They are under their Rabi Subvention Fund and Kioa Development Fund.

MR. CHAIRMAN.-If you do not have that information available at this point in time, you can give that to us in writing.

Just another request for clarity sake, we actually see Secretary to Cabinet falling under the Permanent Secretary of OPM. You can also give this to us in writing at a later stage.

Now having the Secretary to Cabinet as Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Civil Service, how is Cabinet Office operated under this new restructure, whether it is in independent office on its own or where do we demarcate the operations of Cabinet Office? If it can be given to us in writing at a later stage for the information of the Committee.

MS. A. KOMAISAVAI.- It is noted, Sir.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Mr. Chairman, this is not a question but something that probably we request the OPM to facilitate to us. In terms of the Small Grants Projects, if a database could be developed in terms of Divisional level. This should be easy for those who have applied, awaiting the process and at what stage their application has reached to keep them informed, rather than them calling us or running to Suva and the cost and all that. If that could be established, that will ease plenty of things and also, probably if proper awareness is done so that communities know which kind of project they should request for. That is to remove all types of things that might come in that they do not miss the criteria and also for them to know that there is funding but for which specifics?

MR. J. KARUTAKE.- That is noted, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you and now we shall have the final comments from OPM.

MS. A. KOMAISAVAI.- Thank you Mr. Chairman, we thank the Committee for this opportunity to present our Annual Report and address related questions from your Committee. We will be submitting those two responses in writing; the two questions that you have alluded to lately in our meeting. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, we will now give the floor to Honourable Sharma to thank all the submittees who are here before the Committee.

(Vote of Thanks by Hon. R.R. Sharma)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you all, we will take a 15 minutes break now and the Committee will resume after 15 minutes. *Vinaka*.

The Committee adjourned at 10.37 a.m.