



PARLIAMENT NEWSLETTER

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PARLIAMENT COMMITTEE MEETING LIVE SESSIONS A MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENT



Submission to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts from the Ministry of Economy.

Parliament achieved another milestone by airing live the public submissions to the Standing Committees on the Parliament television channel on the Walesi platform and Parliament's website.

The first-ever live Committee sitting was during the submission by the Ministry of Economy to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts on the Report on Performance Audit of Preparedness for Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (Parliamentary Paper No. 63 of 2019) on Monday, 3rd February, 2020.

According to the Chairperson and Assistant Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations Hon. Alvick Maharaj, the Committee was fortunate to be the first to air live its public hearing.

"I am fortunate and glad to be given the opportunity to be here and be part of the first Committee of the Fijian Parliament to air live our public hearing since the launch of the system by the Honourable Speaker, His Excellency Ratu Epeli Nailatikau late last year."

"It is a mark of an era for the Fijian Parliament to introduce its Video Live Broadcasting System," Hon. Maharaj said.

The Acting Secretary-General to Parliament Mrs Viniana Namosimalua said that Parliament is required by the Constitution to conduct its

business in an open manner.

"This is a new service by the Parliament that allows members of the public to view discussions that are held by the Standing Committees on Bills, reports and documents that have been referred to them by the Parliament.

"These can be issues that affect the public and to which they can contribute when submissions are invited. This is being fulfilled by airing the Standing Committee meetings through the Parliament channel on the Walesi platform and also through our website.

"With the broadcast of Standing Committee meetings, there is now a wider coverage of viewers from all over the country and abroad, and that is what Parliament should be about, it is the House of the people and they should know what is happening in it," Mrs Namosimalua said.

The six Standing Committees of Parliament are responsible for examining Bills and subordinate legislation, scrutinise the Government Departments, consider petitions and papers, review international treaties and conventions ratified by the Government and monitor their implementation, and perform any other functions and duties according to the rules and resolution of Parliament.

The new broadcasting service is made possible

through the partnership between the Fijian Parliament and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) under the Fiji Parliament Support Programme funded by the governments of Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

Members of the public can watch the Committee live sessions on www.parliamentlive.gov.fj and the Parliament TV Channel on the Walesi platform, according to the Parliament Committees sitting schedule.



Member of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, Hon. Vijendra Prakash during the live Committee session.



Virtual meeting by the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs in May, 2020

"A Resilient Parliament responsive to the needs of the people and driven by the ideal of a better quality of life for all Fijians"

www.parliament.gov.fj

SOCIAL DISTANCING DURING PARLIAMENT SITTINGS



Attorney-General and Minister for Economy Hon. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum delivering the COVID-19 Response Budget in March.

It was an unusual Parliament sitting on Thursday, March 26, 2020 during the COVID-19 Response Budget announcement as some Members of Parliament were seated at the public gallery, due to the COVID-19 physical/social distancing measures.

Seating for Members of Parliament were rearranged during the COVID-19 Response Budget sitting in compliance with the COVID-19 physical/social distancing measures.

Speaker, His Excellency Hon. Ratu Epeli Nailatikau when convening the meeting, reemphasised the statement by the Hon. Prime Minister that Fiji is at war with the coronavirus.

"We cannot see our enemy but we must act as if the

enemy is in our midst at all times. In that regard, I am invoking my powers under Standing Order 20 to allow for the following:

(1) Alter the seating arrangement in Parliament so as to adhere to physical/social distancing of one to two metres and in doing so, you will note that some Members are seated in the public gallery; and

(2) The bar which demarcates the debating Chamber from the public gallery will remain open in all Parliament sittings for as long as COVID-19 remains a pandemic."

The Speaker added that the approval of finance and appropriations, whether it be an Annual Budget or a Supplementary Budget, is a fundamental role of any Legislature.



Government MPs who occupied the public gallery seats due to COVID-19 social distancing.



Opposition Members of Parliament.



Assistant Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment, Hon. Viam Pillay being screened by a health official before the COVID-19 Response Budget announcement.

PARLIAMENT OPEN DAY FOR TERTIARY STUDENTS TO MARK COMMONWEALTH DAY 2020



Students with Members of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, Hon. Vijendra Prakash, Hon. Aseri Radrodoro and Hon. Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu.

The 2020 Commonwealth Day theme focused on 'Delivering a Common Future: Connecting, Innovating, Transforming' which offers opportunities for the people, Parliaments, Governments and institutions of the Commonwealth to connect and work together at many levels through far-reaching and deep-rooted networks of friendship and goodwill.

For the Fijian Parliament, tertiary students within the greater Suva area were invited to tour Parliament to commemorate this special day, which is usually observed on the second Monday of March every year. Students of the Fiji National University, University of the South Pacific (USP) and University of Fiji turned up in numbers and were taken through a tour of Parliament, given a short presentation about Parliament, met with some Members of Parliament and also participated in Quizzes.

For Solomon Islands final year USP student, Sally Kura, the visit has broadened her knowledge about the Commonwealth and also the Fijian Parliament.

"Back at home, I have never visited our Parliament and it's a privilege to visit this august House in Fiji. While visiting the Chamber, I noticed that Members of Parliament sit close to each other across the room, as compared to what I see on television."

University of the South Pacific student Sanjeshni Prasad was full of praise for her visit to Parliament and said that all the departments within Parliament was explained very well.

"We participated in lots of quizzes which helped us to better understand Parliament and the Commonwealth. I learnt how countries are grouped together within the Commonwealth and how they assist each other financially, especially during natural disasters."

For University of Fiji law student, Viliame Koroinivalu, the visit has helped him to learn more about the history of the Fijian Parliament and getting to meet some Members of Parliament.



Tertiary students collecting Parliament educational materials on display.

"For me, a highlight of my visit was meeting with some Members of Parliament. I also read about gender equality on the Commonwealth pamphlet, which caught my attention as we just celebrated International Women's Day."

A member of the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights also gave a brief explanation about their role and urged students to study hard and aspire to become good citizens of our country.



Group photo at the main entrance after the Parliament tour.

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY RELATIONS & PROTOCOL: JANUARY – MARCH, 2020

COURTESY CALLS TO THE SPEAKER OF THE FIJIAN PARLIAMENT

DELEGATE NAME	NO. OF DELEGATE(S)	DATE	COUNTRY/ INSTITUTION
Singapore Non-Resident High Commissioner to Fiji – Mr Verghese Mathews	1	21/01/20	Singapore
Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Fiji, Tokyo, Japan - H.E. Isikeli U. Mataitoga	1	22/01/20	Embassy of the Republic of Fiji -Tokyo, Japan
French Polynesia delegation	10	12/02/20	French Polynesia
UNOCHA Under-Secretary-General & Emergency Relief Coordinator for the Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Mr Mark Lowcock	4	24/02/20	United Nations
Japan's Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs - Mr NAKAYAMA Norihiro	4	26/02/20	Japan
Fiji Programme Manager for International IDEA - Mr Adhy Aman	1	27/02/20	IDEA-Fiji
Newly Appointed Ambassador of the United States of America to Fiji - H.E. Joseph J. Cella	1	04/03/20	Embassy of USA

OVERSEAS MEETINGS FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT: JANUARY – MARCH, 2020

CONFERENCE	COUNTRY	DATES	DELEGATION
25th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of Commonwealth [CSPOC]	Canada	6/01/2020 -10/01/2020	1. H.E. Ratu Epeli Nailatikau 2. Mrs Viniana Namosimalua 3. Mr Sefanaia Tudonu 4. Mrs Salesini Prasad
28th Annual Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum [APPF]	Australia	13/01/2020 -16/01/2020	1. H.E. Ratu Epeli Nailatikau 2. Mr Sefanaia Tudonu
Sustainable Economic Development (SED) Workshop	Malta	28/01/2020 -01/02/2020	1. H.E. Ratu Epeli Nailatikau 2. Mr Josua Namoce
Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Pacific Region	Niue	25/02/2020 -27/02/2020	1. Hon. Veena Bhatnagar 2. Mrs Kalo Galuvakadua

STANDING COMMITTEES OF PARLIAMENT JANUARY – MARCH, 2020

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

No. of Meetings	Annual Reports	Reports Tabled in Parliament	Site Visits
33	1. Reserve Bank of Fiji 2018-2019 Annual Report 2. Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism 2016-2017 Annual Report	1. Review Report on the Fiji Financial Intelligence Unit 2018 Annual Report	1. Tunalia JV Farm 2. Meeting with staff at Meiguniya Sector Office 3. Rarawai Mill 4. Lautoka Mill 5. South Pacific Fertilizers 6. Sugar Cane Growers Council 7. Sugar Cane Growers Fund 8. Meeting with Sugar Industry Tribunal 9. Meeting with Sugar Research Institute of Fiji and demo farm visit 10. Ministry of Sugar

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE

No. of Meetings	Annual Reports	Reports Tabled in Parliament	Site Visits	Treaties/ Conventions
30	Ministry of Defence and National Security Annual Report 2016-2017	1. Kigali Amendment To The Montreal Protocol On Substances That Deplete The Ozone Layer 2. 2011 Asia-Pacific Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications 3. Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions	1. Fiji Higher Education Commission	1. Treaty On The Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons 2. International Labour Organization- Violence And Harassment Convention 2019; 3. International Labour Organization-Protocol of 2002 To The Occupational Safety and Health Convention 1981

STANDING COMMITTEES OF PARLIAMENT JANUARY – MARCH, 2020

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS

No. of Meetings	Annual Reports	Reports Tabled in Parliament	Site Visits
36	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation 2017-2018 Annual Report 2. Ministry of iTaukei Affairs 2016-2017 Annual Report 3. Ministry of Youth and Sports 2017-2018 Annual Report 4. Fiji National Sports Council August 2017–July 2018 Annual Report 5. Fiji Museum 2015 Annual Report 6. Fiji Museum January – July 2016 Annual Report 7. Fiji Museum 2016/2017 Annual Report 8. National Fire Authority 2013 Annual Report 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of Fiji Higher Education Commission Annual Report for the year ended 31 July 2016 2. Review of Film Fiji Report for the Year ended 31 December 2014, Film Fiji Annual Report for the Year ended 31 December 2015 3. Review of the Fiji National University 2018 Annual Report 4. Review of Public Rental Board 2017 Annual Report 5. Review of the University of the South Pacific 2018 Annual Report 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Film Fiji Office 2. Fiji Higher Education Commission 3. University of the South Pacific 4. Fiji National University

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE, LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

No. of Meetings	Annual Reports	Reports Tabled in Parliament
38	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Electoral Commission 2018 Annual Report 2. Electoral Commission 2019 Annual Report 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review Report on the Department of Legislature Report 2016-2017 2. Review Report on the Office of the President Annual Report 2015 3. Review Report on the Office of the President Annual Report 2016-2017 4. Consolidated Review Report on the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption Annual Report 1 January – 31 July 2016 and the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption Annual Report 1 August 2016 – 31 July 2017

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

No. of Meetings	Audit Reports	Reports Tabled in Parliament	Site Visits
38	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Performance Audit on Management of Traffic Congestion 2. Office of the Auditor General – 2019 Annual Report 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of the 2016/2017 Audit Report on Statutory Authorities 2. Review of the 2016/2017 Audit Report on Government Commercial Companies and Commercial Statutory Authorities 3. Review of the Audit Report on Provincial Councils, Volume 1 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sigatoka Town Council 2. Ba Town Council 3. Rakiraki Town Council 4. Labasa Town Council 5. Airports Fiji Limited 6. Bua Provincial Councils



Members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence with senior officials of the Ministry of Defence and National Security and Fiji Police Force after their submission on certain treaties in January, 2020.



Members of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts with Deputy Secretary Primary/Secondary Education, Mr Timoci Bure after their submission on the Report on Performance Audit on Effectiveness of Institutional Framework for Preventing Corruption (PP No. 152 of 2019).



Members of the Fiji Insurance Brokers Association presenting their submission on the Reserve Bank of Fiji Insurance 2018 Annual Report to the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs in January, 2020.

COMMITTEES AT WORK



Standing Committee on Public Accounts with senior officials of the Ministry of Economy and Office of the Auditor-General after the Ministry's submission in February, 2020.



Standing Committee on Economic Affairs at the Rarawai Mill in Ba as part of their site visit on the 50 sugar-related reports referred to the Committee in March, 2020.



UNDP Pacific official Rusiate Ratuniyata presenting to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence on the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer in January, 2020.



Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights with Vini-vau residents in Labasa, after their public consultation on the Adoption Bill in January, 2020.



Standing Committee on Social Affairs with senior officials of the University of the South Pacific during their site visit to the campus in January, 2020, as part of the Committee's deliberations on the USP 2018 Annual Report.



Standing Committee on Economic Affairs with Reserve Bank of Fiji senior officials after their submission on the Reserve Bank of Fiji Insurance 2018 Annual Report in January, 2020.



Standing Committee on Public Accounts with Fiji Airports senior officials at the Nadi Airport in January, 2020, after the public hearing on the 2016-2017 Audit Report on Government Commercial Company and Commercial Statutory Authorities.



Members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence with the ILO Representative after their submission on the treaties in March, 2020.



Members of the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights at the Naduri Village Hall during the public consultation on the Adoption Bill in January, 2020.



Fiji National University Vice-Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey presenting their 2018 Annual Report to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs in January, 2020.

PARLIAMENT AT WORK



French Polynesia Members Delegation led by Mr Manuel TERAI, Delegate for International European and Pacific Affairs during a courtesy visit to the Speaker HE Ratu Epeli Nailatikau in the Small Committee Room before touring the Parliament Chamber in February, 2020.



Speaker HE Ratu Epeli Nailatikau with other Speakers during the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Small Branches Sustainable Economic Development Workshop in Valetta, Malta in January, 2020.



Opposition Members of Parliament with the New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern during her visit to the Opposition Office in February, 2020.



Speaker HE Ratu Epeli Nailatikau during the Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth held in Ottawa, Canada in January, 2020.



Speaker of Parliament, HE Ratu Epeli Nailatikau with the Ambassador of the United States, HE Joseph J. Cella in March, 2020.



Speaker HE Epeli Nailatikau with the UNOCHA Under-Secretary-General & Emergency Relief Coordinator for the Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Mr Mark Lowcock during his courtesy visit in February, 2020.



University students from Centre College, Kentucky, USA inside the Parliament Chamber during their visit in January, 2020.



Speaker HE Ratu Epeli Nailatikau with the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, HE Mr Nakayama Norihiro during his visit in February, 2020.



Speaker HE Ratu Epeli Nailatikau with the Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba, HE Carlos Manuel R. Logo in March, 2020.



Singapore's Non-Resident High Commissioner to Fiji H.E. Vergheze Mathews looking through the education materials on display outside the Parliament Chamber.

'PARLIAMENT BUS' OUTREACH PROGRAMME



'Parliament Bus' outreach programme at Arya - Bhawani Dayal Arya College in March, 2020.



The 'Parliament Bus' education outreach programme was launched in 2015 by the late Speaker Hon. Dr Jiko Luveni and has continued over the years. The programme aims to inform Fijians about the roles and functions of Parliament, works of Parliament and how Fijians can participate in the parliamentary processes. In March this year, the programme was conducted at Bhawani Dayal Arya College. It coincided with the Social Science Week organised by the Social Science Department of the College. Students and teachers all over Fiji can download Parliament educational resources on the Parliament website: <http://www.parliament.gov.fj/education/>

