



STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

REVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 01ST JANUARY TO 31ST JULY, 2016



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CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD



I am pleased to present the review report on the Department of Forestry for the period 01st January – 31st July, 2016.

The Committee's oversight function is to scrutinise government departments with responsibility within the committee's mandate and make recommendations relating to any aspect of functioning, administration, legislation or proposed legislative program, budget, rationalisation, restructuring and policy formulation as legislated under the Parliament Standing Orders.

In the deliberations stage, the Committee focused on the overall operations of the Ministry including its functions and strategic objectives for the six months for the period 01st January – 31st July 2016. This period of review was a challenging one for the Department of Forestry as it functioned on its own under the Ministry of Fisheries and Forestry.

Even more despite TC Winston, the Department of Forestry focused on key areas and outcomes that stood out during the period of review which was aligned to Government's manifesto. It was worthy to note and highlight two (2) of these key areas of focus under the Department's Strategic Priority Areas; i) Reducing Climate Change and ii) Provision of affordable housing to Fijians through our Pine Maritime Project.

The Department of Forestry during the period of review, realigned its goals and plans to better its services thus embarked in Streamlining its systems and processes to better service the Fijians.

The Committee wishes to commend the Permanent Secretary and Staff for their positive contributions towards the compilation of this report.

Last but not the least, I wish to extend my appreciation to all the Honourable Members of the Committee namely Hon. Jale Sigarara, Hon. Alexander O'Connor, Hon. Mitieli Bulanauca, Hon. Jese Saukuru and the Secretariat Staff for the successful compilation of this bipartisan report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sanjay Kirpal', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Hon. Sanjay Kirpal
Chairperson.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACIAR	Australian Centre for International Agriculture Research
ANR	Assisted Natural Regeneration
DLT	Distributed Ledger Technology
EIA	Environment Impact Assessment
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
FFHCOP	Fiji Forest Harvesting Code of Practice
FNU	Fiji National University
FRL	Forest Reference Level
INBAR	International Bamboo & Rattan Organization
ITTA	International Tropical Timber Agreement
LOU	Land Owning Unit
NFI	National Forest Inventory
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SCARF	Seed Capital Revolving Fund
SESA	Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SIS	Safeguard Information System
SMART	Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Timelines
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community

RECOMMENDATION

The Standing Committee on Natural Resources has conducted a review of the Department of Forestry Report for the period 01st January – 31st July 2016 and recommends that Parliament take note of its report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Department of Forestry Annual Report for the period 01st January – July 31st 2016 was referred to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources on Monday 07th June, 2021 during that Parliament sitting.

The committee proceeded with its mandatory function legislated under Standing Order 109(2) (c) which allows the Standing Committee on Natural Resources to examine matters related to forestry, agriculture, mining, environment, fisheries, water and marine services.

Standing Orders 110(1)(c) further authorizes the Standing Committee to *scrutinize the government departments with responsibility within the committee's subject area, including by investigating, inquiring into, and making recommendations relating to any aspect of such a department's administration, legislation or proposed legislative program, budget, rationalization, restructuring, functioning, organization, structure and policy formulation.*

A standing committee must report to parliament any other matter referred to or initiated by the committee, as soon as it has completed its considerations and deliberations as stipulated under SO 121 (1) (b).

The members proceeded in deliberating the Department of Forestry Annual Report by asking questions, the written responses of which were collated and presented in this report. Together with the other pertinent issues relating to the operations of the Department, forms the basis of this report to be presented to parliament for endorsement.

1.1 PROCEDURE AND PROGRAM

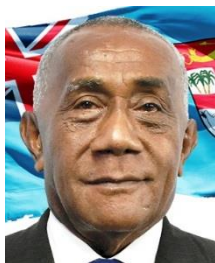
Due to COVID 19 Protocols mandated by the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, the Committee met virtually as per the Committee's work plan. Furthermore, the Members adhered to the directive issued by Hon. Speaker to meet virtually for health and safety reasons during this Pandemic.

2.0 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The substantive members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources are as follows:



Hon. Sanjay Kirpal
Chairperson



Hon. Jale Sigarara
Deputy Chairperson



Hon. Mitieli Bulanauca
Opposition Member



Hon. Alexander O'Connor
Government Member



Hon. Jese Saukuru
Opposition Member

3.0 THE DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY FOR THE PERIOD 1ST JANUARY – 31ST JULY, 2016.

3.1 MISSION AND VISION

Upon the initial stages of report deliberations, the Committee took note of the Department of Forestry Mission and Vision as highlighted below;

MISSION: Improving Livelihood through SMART Policies on Sustainable Management of Forestry Resources

VISSION: Our Future Generation will inherit a Prosperous and Enhanced Forestry Sector

3.2 REVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF FOREST LEGISLATION & REGULATION

The Forest Bill 2016 [Bill No 13 of 2016] which is a review of the Forest Act 1991, was tabled in Parliament which was presented to the Natural Resources Standing Committee in 2016. The Bill is the outcome of several stakeholders' consultation with the view of revising the Forest Act 1992, as approved by Cabinet, to include recent developments within the Forest Sector in addition to supporting the full implementation of the Fiji Forest Policy 2007.

The Ministry also worked on reviewing two Forestry Regulations: (i) the Preservative Treatment Regulation 1992; (ii) the Forest Sawmills Regulation 1968 to ensure that they capture recent developments in the Sector.

3.3 THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY

- 3.3.1** The Department is responsible for the following:
 - 3.3.1.1** Implementation of the Fiji Forest Policy 2007;
 - 3.3.1.2** Administration and enforce Forest Legislation;
 - 3.3.1.3** Conservation, sustainable utilization and management of forest resources;
 - 3.3.1.4** Approval and issuance of forest related licenses;
 - 3.3.1.5** Provision of training, extension services and research; and
 - 3.3.1.6** Coordination with key stakeholders including forest resource owners.

3.4 STAFFING

The Ministry has a total of 237 staff of which 127 were established and 68 wage earners. A total of 42 project staff were employed by the Department to ensure the timely delivery of project outputs. The 237 staff did not include the 17 corporate and executive staff that were employed by the Ministry of Fisheries and Forestry.

4.0 FINDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee gathered its findings through parliament research papers as well as from the written responses from the Department of Forestry. The findings of the Committee included some of the Department of Forestry achievements and highlights;

4.1 MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

4.1.1 The department’s major highlights and achievements is shown below;

<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The Forest Bill 2016 [Bill No. 13 of 2016], which is a review of the Forest Act 1992, was tabled in Parliament and also presented to the Natural Resource Standing Committee in 2016. The Bill is the outcome of several stakeholder consultations with the view of revising the 1992 Forest Act, as approved by Cabinet, to include recent developments within the Forest Sector in addition to supporting the full implementation of the Fiji Forest Policy 2007.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The Ministry also worked on reviewing two forestry regulations, the Preservative Treatment Regulation 1992 and the Forest Sawmills Regulation 1968, to ensure that they capture recent developments in the Sector.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Fiji has a total of 1.2 million hectares of forest area, of which natural (indigenous) forests comprises 82.1%, Pine comprises 7.2%, Mahogany comprises 5.7% and Mangrove comprises 5.0%. Northern division has the most forest areas covering 40.6% of total forest area, followed by Central/Eastern division with 30.8% and Western division with 28.6%.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● National log production from January-July 2016 stood at 225,011 m³, of which Pine was 172,473.2 m³ (76.7%), Mahogany was 27,017.1 m³ (12.0%) and Native species was 25,520.8 m³ (11.3%).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● A total of 44 sawmill licenses were issued during January-July 2016.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● A total of 106 sawmills existed in Fiji during this period in which 31 (29.2%) were static sawmills while 75 (70.8%) were portable sawmills. 44 were licensed and 62 were unlicensed (non-operational).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Under the Forest (Preservative Treatment) Regulations 1996, only 16 treatment plants were licensed during this period while 7 plants were unlicensed (non-operational), in which 2 have closed down namely Global Import and Export in the Western division and Lumber Processors in Northern division. 3 new treatment plants Taiwan Timbers, Timber Utilisation Division and Narocake Pine Scheme have been installed this year which are located in Gau Island.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Total export value of forest products in the 7-month period totaled to \$38.6 million. The 2 major export commodities were pine chips and sawn timber which generated total export revenue of \$35.4 million and comprises 91.6% of total exports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annual Licenses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Total annual logging licenses (right licenses) issued during this period was 319 of which 128 (40.1%) was issued from Central/Eastern Division, 64 (20.1%) from Western Division and 127 (39.8%) from the Northern Division. ➤ New licenses issued was 120, of which 47 (39.2%) was issued from Central/Eastern Division, 22 (18.3%) was issued from Western Division and 51 (42.5%) was issued from Northern Division. ➤ A total of 199 licenses were renewed of which 81 (40.7%) was from Central/Eastern Division, 42 (21.1%) from Western Division and 76 (38.2%) from Northern Division. ➤ 114 licenses were operational in Jan-Jul 2016.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Timber Processing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 44 sawmills were licensed to operate during this period with a total sawmill log intake capacity of 45,526.68 m³. ➤ Out of the 26 treatment plants, 16 treatment plants were licensed to operate in the country during the 7-month period while others were unlicensed and 2 plants closed down. ➤ A total of 20 kilns were visited during this period. Of these, 15 were operational, 1 was non-operational and 4 under re-construction.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The National Forest Inventory (NFI) Statistics Report was drafted using the findings from the 2007 NFI. A draft has been prepared and proper analysis is currently being done before the Report will be published in the next financial year for public use.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Permanent Sample Plots project has been ongoing since its inception in 2009 and has completed 4 out of the 7 activities based on its Public Sector Investment Program (PSIP). Two more activities are left to be carried out to achieve its objective which is to ascertain the annual allowable cut for Fiji's natural forest. The ongoing activity is the measurement of PSP plots. There were a total of 17 plots measured; 7 plots for Viti Levu whilst 10 plots for Vanua Levu.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establishment of REDD+ unit - In January 2016, six staff were engaged in the REDD+ Unit. Three officers (Project Officer, Executive Officer and Driver) and three consultants were funded by the FCPF grant (Technical Advisor / Team Leader, Communication Knowledge

<p>Management Specialist and MRV Specialist). The REDD+ unit office was set up in the Management Services Division, Colo-i-Suva and was completed and opened to use.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengthen (Monitoring, Reporting and Verifying) MRV and Safeguards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA), Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), Resettlement Policy/Process Framework (PF) And Safeguard Information System (SIS) for Fiji REDD+ Readiness consultancy was developed. ➤ Activities undergoing procurement process include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establishment of a Forest Reference Level (FRL) for forest land and development of a system for Monitoring, Reporting and Verifying (MRV) carbon emission reductions from forests in Fiji consultancy; ○ Digitising of Forest Cover Change; and ○ Methodology of Forest Cover Change detection 2007 – 2012.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● REDD+ Project in Drawa. One working group meeting was conducted and one workshop (organised by Live and Learn) on the REDD+ Steering Committee members to review REDD+ Project in Drawa. All recommendations discussed had been forwarded to Live and Learn for their necessary actions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FBC “4 The Record” an hour-long television program successfully aired on Sunday 14 February 2016 advocating for the Fiji REDD+ Program and featuring officials from Forestry, iTaukei Affairs and Nature Fiji MareqetiViti (NFMV).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A Lecture was conducted at USP on forest management and ecosystem functions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The REDD+ Safeguard working group reviewed the USP SESA consultancy proposal. The Final SESA consultancy work proposal was received and forwarded to World Bank for contract preparation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Emalu pilot site REDD+ lease offer was accepted by the Department of Lands and Request of waiver of Tender for lease offer payment was submitted to Fiji Procurement Office for processing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● National Land use planning guidelines workshop was conducted. The workshop was attended by various sectors and agencies to provide their expertise towards the finalisation of the drafted guidelines. It was ensured that the Fiji land use planning process complies with various national and international requirements and expectations. This includes the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) principles, the inclusion of gender issues, the consideration of climate change impacts, and supporting the implementation of Fiji’s Green Growth Framework. The Emalu REDD+ pilot site land use planning was a case study presented during the workshop.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sustainable Forest Management Training & Awareness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) is the process of managing forest to achieve one or more specified objectives of management with regards to the production of continuous flow of desired forest products and services without undue undesirable effects on the physical and

social environment. It ensures that forest resources are preserved to meet the needs of future generations.

- The SFM Training target for 2016 focuses on supporting the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA 2006) as well as supporting the Strategic Priority 4 of ITTO Action Plan 2013– 2018 which is to reduce deforestation and forest degradation and enhance the provision of environmental services.
- The focus was on the following areas:
 - Raising awareness and improving the understanding of ecosystem services, mangrove systems and coastal ecosystems amongst the Rewa and Tailevu Community;
 - Implementing an applied management action plans for the conservation of mangrove land and sustainable agricultural practices on sloping terrain;
 - Capacity building through the strengthening of village-based natural resources committee; and
 - Promoting alternative sustainable livelihoods through collaboration and technical support from the partnering agencies and organisations.

- The period Jan-Jul 2016 was a very challenging one given the massive destruction caused by Severe Tropical Cyclone Winston as most of the activity targets were disrupted and all field trials and seed sources were damaged affecting seed production, and resources were diverted to rehabilitation work.

- Establishment of Alternative Species Trial for *Pinus caribaea* – Drasa. This trial was established on logged-over Fiji Pine Ltd land in Drasa. The objective is to compare the growth performance of *Pinus caribaea* with potential alternative species. It includes *Eucalyptus clozeana*, *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, and *Pinus caribaea* as control.

- Growth Studies on *Aquilaria* sp. (Agarwood) - The block of Agarwood was established at Colo-I-Suva in April, 2015. Forty trees were planted. The objective is to study the growth dynamics of the species, and to establish a seed stand for seed production. Survival dropped to 87.5 % due to damages caused by TC Winston.

- Growth Studies on *C. inophyllum* (Dilo) - The objective of this study is to investigate the genetic variation and phenotypic characteristics of *C. inophyllum* in Pacific islands, and to use data for breeding populations that adapt well in various regional environments and future climate change. Three plots were established: site 1 (Vunimaqo) in May 2014, site 2 (Sigatoka Sand Dunes) in July, 2014, and site 3 (Mataso) in December, 2015. Sites 2 and 3 were written-off due to very high mortalities, and land dispute respectively. Twenty-one Dilo families from Japan and Fiji were included.

- **Forest Restoration Trial in Degraded Areas:**

- The objectives of this project is to establish a demonstration area for forest restoration in degraded areas, study performances of different species in the degraded site, and observe the response of plants to various forest restoration methods and silviculture treatments

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The design RCB is replicated 3 times in 14-tree row plots inter-planted with sandalwood and other species. It includes more than 600 trees of eleven native/exotic species. ➤ Two forest restoration systems were applied namely Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) and Framework Species Method (FSM). These were aimed at facilitating rapid canopy closure, shade out weeds (site “re-capture”) and to attract seed-dispersing animals (recruitment). ➤ Site 1 (Nanukuloa) which was established in March 2015 was destroyed by TC Winston and has been re-established. Site 2 (Yavuna) was established in July 2015.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mixed-Species Woodlot Trial: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The objective of the trial is to compare the growth performances of different species in a woodlot, and establish a demonstration plot for mixed species woodlots. ➤ Four valuable timber species are included namely: Teak (<i>Tectona grandis</i>), Mahogany (<i>Swietenia macrophylla</i> prov. Tela-Honduras), Siamese Rosewood (<i>Dalbergia cochinchensis</i>), and Queensland Maple (<i>Flindersia brayleana</i>). ➤ Site 1 (Colo-I-Suva) was established in March, 2015, and site 2 (Ba) in December, 2015.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sandalwood Spacing Trial - The objective is to establish a spacing trial for studying the effect of spacing on the growth of sandalwood, and for demonstration and seed production. Three spacing are compared: 3m x 3m, 4m x 4m, 6m x 3m. Site 1 (Kumi) was established in July, 2014, site 2 (Wainiyabia) in August, 2014, and site 3 (Colo-I-Suva) in December, 2014. ● The larger sandalwood and coffee (<i>Coffea arabica</i>) trees at Kumi were fruiting. When in full production this sandalwood stand will greatly raise the Forestry Department’s capacity to supply sandalwood in the coming years.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Seed Collection - TC Winston affected the achievement of seed collection targets for 2016. Only 43.6 kg seeds were collected of which 5.8kg [13%] were sandalwood seeds, and 37.8kg Native timber tree species [87%].
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Seed Processing and Sowing - A total of 3.78kg sandalwood and 13.4kg native species were processed and sown with 24,693 seeds and 29,695 seeds respectively.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Germination - A total of 9,864 germinants were produced during the year, and this included 5,922 sandalwood (13%), 2,652 native species (27%), and 1,290 exotic (13%).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A total of 6.0 kg <i>S. macrophylla</i> seeds were sold and distributed in 2016.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A total of 1,483 seedlings were distributed during the year (<i>details can be seen on pages 26-28 of the annual report</i>).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● S.yasi Clonal Seed Orchard (CSO)/Gene Conservation Area (GCA) - The objective is to establish a seed orchard for pure <i>S.yasi</i> seed, and for conserving genes of the natural population. Two sites namely Lodon and Vunimaqo have been established for this purpose.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Commodity Profiling of Priority Species - Under this activity twenty-five (25) tree species has been identified and necessary information collated for profiling the tree species, with the

<p>assistance of TUD and USP-IAS. This Guide is aimed at promoting the key timber tree species to investors into the country who wish to know more about timber tree resources of Fiji.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Three Forest Health Assessments were conducted in 3 research trial plot sites, namely the Forest Restoration Trial in Yavuna, Sandalwood Spacing Trial in Kumi, and the S.yasi Gene Conservation Area at RKS (Lodoni).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Second-Rotation Logging - Nakavu NFMPP Site - The primary objective of the Natural Forest Management Pilot Project (NFMPP) at Nakavu is to develop management prescriptions for communally owned indigenous forests. The 300 ha area was divided into 12 compartments (25 ha) each and replicated under different logging intensities: conventional (CL), heavy (HL), medium (ML), light (LL) and Zero (ZL) logging. Selective logging commenced in August 1992 and was completed in June 1994.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Capital Project – Sandalwood Development Project (SDP) - A total of \$100,000 was allocated for Sandalwood Development Project for 2016. As at 31st July, 2016 the project utilisation rate was 39% with an overall achievement rate of 23% against the 2016 target. The low utilisation rate and overall achievement rate is closely related to the impact of TC Winston that struck Fiji in February the 20th and the ending of the 2016 fiscal year on 31st July.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sandalwood Seedling Production - The sandalwood seed and seedling target for 2016 was 25 kg seeds and 17, 500 seedlings respectively. However, at the end of July, 2016, a total of only 10 kg was procured, which were purchased from resource owners and seed sources such as Naiviqiri (Bua), Nagadoa (Bua), Tagaqe (Nadroga), Culanuku (Serua), Naboutini (Serua), Tiliva (Kadavu) village and others, for \$1,000.00 (\$100/kg). A total of 9,654 seedlings were raised in the nursery within this period, which also included wildings collected from Vunimaqo Sandalwood seed stands.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Field-Planting Program - The sandalwood field planting program involved assisting of interested communities, individuals and private stakeholders in planting sandalwood. Seedlings and technical advice were provided during the implementation program. The planting target for 2016 was 24 hectares. Seedlings used were raised in the SRD Nursery or purchased from private and community-based nurseries.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sandalwood Community-Based Nursery Assistance - A total of 8 nurseries were targeted for development in 2016 but only one was achieved. This sandalwood private nursery was set up in Votua Village, Bua.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Coco-wood Project was facilitated by ACIAR, in partnership with SPC and the Forestry Department. The Coco-wood project however ended its 3-year project in June this year (2016). A 2-day workshop was conducted to mark the “End of Project” and also conducted during the workshop was the handing over of the Lathe machine to the Forestry Department.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Research on the Effects of Resin Tapping on Timber Quality - This research aimed to study and compare the timber qualities between untapped and tapped pine. The results from the study

will assist industries, resources owners and also the general public that have special interest in Pine Resin Extraction and Pine timber as commercial product.

- **Itto Project – Community Based Restoration & Sustainable Management Of Vulnerable Forests Of The Rewa Delta, Viti Levu** - This project is one of the Ministry’s internationally funded projects with the idea of sustainable management of coastal and mangrove forest. The project started in October 2015 with full consultation to all relevant stakeholders who are directly and indirectly involved in the implementation of this project. The project was supported by the University of the South Pacific, the Conservation International and the Secretariat of the Pacific Communities (*details can be seen on page 35 of the annual report*)

- **Colo-I-Suva Forest Park:**

- Colo-i-Suva (CIS) forest park is within the Colo-i-Suva forest reserves. The forest park on the three Mataqali land of Tuirara, Matanikorovatu and Naulukaroa shows the boundary for each of the Mataqali. The Park itself covers an area of approximately 92 ha which consist about 25% of the total reserve. It contains many tree species that are vital to the survival of certain fauna such as Vadra (*pandanus pyriformis*) tree.
- The birdlife in the park is of international importance. Of all the fifty-seven land birds in Fiji there are about 30 bird species found in the CIS Forest Park. Out of the 57 land birds 26 are found to be endemic whereas for CIS Forest Park there 17 endemic bird species found in the Park.
- CIS has also become a popular picnic spot for locals and tourists over the years. For the period Jan-Jul 2016, CIS were visited by a total of 25,619 visitors raking in a total revenue of \$59,601.00.

- The Department manages a total number of seventeen Forest Reserves and seven Nature Reserves covering a total forest area of 34,890.43 hectares. Other parks and reserves managed by other Environmental organisations cover a forest area of 17,004.5 hectares. The maintenance of Forest Reserves activities mainly included boundary maintenance and demarcation. Annual lease and compensation payments for all reserves amounted to \$66,426.14.

4.2 MEMBERS SELECTED QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY RESPONSE.

- 4.2.1** The selected questions and response is tabulated hereunder, note that the rest of the questions and it’s response from the Department is attached on the annexures;

No:	Formulated Questions by the Members of the Committee	Department of Forestry Written Responses
1	In relation to Sawmills in Fiji, can the Ministry explain the sudden increase of the unlicensed /non-operational sawmills from 34 in the 2015 Annual Report to 62 in the first six months in 2016.	The sudden increase in unlicensed sawmills was due to the need for rehabilitation operations in the aftermath of TC Winston. Those unlicensed sawmills were specifically used for housing rehabilitation. Under the Forest (Sawmill) Regulations 1968, a license will be required only for commercial operation of sawmills. Some sawmills were unlicensed due to owners not having secured log supply or not applying for a license by their choice.
2	Out of the 62 sawmills, how many were licensed and how many were not in operation?	The total sawmill list for the reporting period was 106 and the breakdown below; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 44 – licensed • 62 – unlicensed (11 unlicensed & not operational due to damage sustained during TC Winston, 17 unlicensed but operational for rehabilitation purposes, 34 portable sawmills non-operational and unlicensed due to non-compliance to licensing requirements or no longer viable to operate commercially. • The service life for portable sawmills is around 5 years beyond which they become uneconomical in terms of production versus servicing & maintenance.
3	The Committee wishes to know whether the 62 unlicensed/non-operational sawmills is one of the Ministry of Forestry challenges in achieving production targets. If yes, what is the Ministry doing to address the challenges?	Achieving production targets is not a requirement set by the Ministry and it is up to the individual saw miller based on their market demand and the capacity of each sawmill. The major challenge for the Ministry is improving the efficiency and effectiveness of timber processing and timber use in Fiji, contributing to the sustainable management of the country's forest resources. The Ministry addresses these challenges through its quarterly monitoring and provides technical advice, training and assistance to these sawmill operators in order to improve their recovery rates.

4	Can the Ministry provide the targets for its log production under the period shown	<p>Quantity / Target :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native Round Log Production: 30,000m³ • Pine : 100,000m³ • Mahogany : 1,000m³ <p>Total Log Volume Production: 131,000m³</p>
5	Can the Ministry consider various ways and means to reduce the importation of timber products?	<p>The increase in imports for the reporting period was mainly due to the huge timber demand after TC Winston. Most local sawmills were not in operation even though they were licensed due to power outages, damages to logging roads and bridges etc. In addition, the processing of timber takes time from harvesting to sawmilling right up to drying and treatment before being utilised. This process takes around 4 to 6 months and coupled with the lack of power supply the only available option was to import timber.</p> <p>Having said that, the Ministry has controls in place for importation of timber products that are also processed locally i.e. sawn timber, profile products, post/pole and plywood. All applications for these products require a letter from the local supplier confirming that they cannot supply before an import permit is issued.</p>
6	In view of what is happening in overseas countries regarding forest fires, the Committee wishes to know if there is any plan in place by the Ministry to address forest fires in Fiji	<p>In response to addressing forest fires in Fiji, the SPC Reforest Fiji Project, the SPC Land Resources Division, the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), Ministry of Forestry (MOF), the National Fire Authority (NFA), the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs and other partners are working towards increasing awareness of fire management and to develop a National Strategy for managing forest fires.</p> <p>This Strategy will align with the amendments to the Forest Act. Section 36, 37 and 38 of the proposed amendments have provisions for forest fires. Section 36 states that unless authorized by a license, no person shall light or cause to lit a fire in any forest including plantation forest. Section 38 states that any person who lights a fire in contravention of section 36 commits an offence and shall be liable upon conviction of</p>

		any damage caused by the fire notwithstanding any efforts they may have made to prevent such damage
7	Can the Ministry elaborate further on re-forestation of native species?	The Ministry conducts re-afforestation of native species as it is a part of the reforestation target. Native tree species is also part of Fiji's contribution towards the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development particularly the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15 which states 'Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss'. Reforestation will complement natural regeneration of indigenous species in Natural forests, while ensuring preservation of the genetic diversity of Fiji's indigenous tree species to maintain all endemic species.

5.0 COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Committee recommends that in an endeavour to increase the Ministry's contribution to GDP that the Ministry encourages Millers to achieve production targets set by the Ministry of Forestry.

2. For the purpose of protecting the environment, the Ministry is to ensure proper monitoring of river banks and other buffer zones during clear felling and selective logging.

3. **Added Legislations** – the Committee recommends that the Ministry of Forestry considers employing a Legal Officer who in consultation with the Desk Officer at the Office of the Solicitor General, will be responsible for reviewing and fast tracking of all Legislations for the Ministry, example Forest Bill No. 13 of 2016.

6.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

6.1 GENDER EQUALITY ANALYSIS – SDG 5

The Fiji Parliament Standing Orders to consider gender equality and ensure that the impact on both men and women is exploited in all matters.” SO110 (2): Where a committee conducts an activity, it shall ensure that full consideration will be given to the principal of gender equality so as to ensure all matters are considered with regards to the impact and benefit on both men and women equally.

However, the committee noted that there was no clear breakdown of gender provided by the Department of Forestry in its Annual report in 2016.


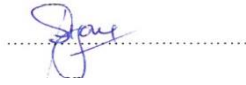


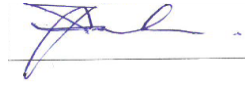
After consulting with the Department through the written questions raised by the Members, the data on gender was provided for by the Department and highlighted in the annexure.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The committee commends the Department of Forestry through its achievements and initiatives during its seven months annual performance for the period 01st January – July 31st 2016.

8.0 COMMITTEE MEMBERS' SIGNATURE

The substantive members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources have approved the use of their e-signatures on the table below.

Members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources	E-Signature
Hon. Sanjay Kirpal, Chairperson	
Hon. Jale Sigarara, Deputy Chairperson	
Hon. Alexander O'Connor, Government Member	
Hon. Mitieli Bulanauca, Opposition Member	
Hon. Jese Saukuru, Opposition Member	

APPENDICES

Published written evidence

Written evidence and supplementary information was received from the Department of Forestry and can be viewed on the Parliament website at the following link:

<http://www.parliament.gov.fj/committees/standing-committee-on-natural-resources/>