



STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

**REPORT ON THE PETITION FOR TLTB TO REVIEW THE DISTRIBUTION OF LEASE
TO PERSONAL ACCOUNTS AND THE LAND RENT PREMISED ON UNIMPROVED
CAPITAL VALUE**



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI
Parliamentary Paper No. 101 of 2016

February 2017

Published and Printed by the Department of Legislature, Parliament House, SUVA

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CHAIR'S FOREWORD

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs I wish to report the following pertaining to the Petition for 'TLTB to review the distribution of Lease to Personal Accounts and the Land Rent Premised on Unimproved Capital Value'.

Following consultations with TLTB and the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs and upon deliberations, the Committee was satisfied with the systems and functions that have been implemented and decided that no further action was necessary in relation to this Petition.

I thank the Hon Members involved in the production of this report and also the Parliamentary Staff who assisted.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'L. Eden', is written over a dotted line.

HON. LORNA EDEN
CHAIRPERSON

LIST OF ACRONYMS:

SO	Standing Orders of Parliament of the Republic of Fiji
TLTB	iTaukei Land Trust Board

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

On Thursday 14th May 2015, the Honourable Ratu Suliano Matanitobua presented a Petition for Parliament to instruct TLTB to stop and review the effects of lease distribution to personal accounts and introduce a new lease structure which reflects the open market rates and prices based on improvements (development and economic activity) on the land area.

The Petition was referred to the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs for deliberation on the issue and to report back at a later sitting.

The Petition is signed by approximately 446 members of the public from all over Fiji.

1.2 The Standing Committee on Economic Affairs

The Committee is a standing committee of the Fijian Parliament and was established under Standing Order 109(2) (a) of the Standing Orders (SO) of the Parliament of Fiji.

The Committee currently comprises the following members:

- Hon. Lorna Eden (Chairperson)
- Hon. Vijay Nath (Deputy Chairperson)
- Hon. Dr. Brij Lal (Member)
- Hon. Viliame Gavoka (Member)
- Hon. Prem Singh (Member)

The previous Committee that initially engaged in deliberations and drafting of the report comprised of the following members:

- Hon. Balmindar Singh (Chair)
- Hon. Prem Singh (Deputy Chair)
- Hon. Sanjit Patel (Member) Hon. Alvick Maharaj (Alternate Member)
- Hon. Dr. Brij Lal (Member)
- Hon. Viliame Gavoka (Member)

The Committee is mandated to examine matters pertinent to the Petition in accordance with SO 110(1) (d) and report back to Parliament.

2.0 CONCLUSION

Following consultations with TLTB and the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, the Committee by majority vote was satisfied with the functions and processes performed by TLTB and no further action is necessary in relation to the Petition.

APPENDICES

**WRITTEN SUBMISSION BY İTAUKEI LAND TRUST BOARD
(TLTB)**



iTaukei Land, Our Heritage, Our Future



SUBMISSION TO PARLIAMENT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

MONDAY 22ND JUNE 2015 AT 2.30PM

The iTaukei Land Trust Board (TLTB) provide the following responses to the questions posed by the Parliament Standing Committee on Economic Affairs relating to the Petition put forward for Parliament to consider - i.e. **"To review the distribution of lease monies currently being distributed to individual Landowners bank accounts and the land rent premised on Unimproved Capital Value (UCV)"**

QUESTION 1. "EQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF LEASE MONIES"

Whether the Effects of Equal lease distribution to personal accounts be reviewed or not?

- A (i) The policy decision for equal distribution of lease monies was introduced by Government via the amendment of the "Native Land (Leases & Licenses) (Amendment) Regulations 2010. This was to be effective from 1st January 2011.
- A (ii) TLTB could not implement the policy straight away as there was some logistical arrangements that needed to be in place prior to it being implemented that included the following:
- The digitalization of the Register of all iTaukei Landowners or Vola ni Kawa Bula (VKB);
 - The updating of the Vola ni Kawa Bula – deleting of all iTaukei deaths and registration of iTaukei new births;
 - Upgrading of all TLTB IT System and IT infrastructure to handle the processing of lease monies from 4,500 distribution units (Yavusa, Mataqali & Tokatoka) to 300,000 individual landowner accounts.
 - Revision of its trust policy and procedures to cater from the different categories of issues that needed to be dealt with under the equal rent distribution mode;
 - Liaison with the various inter related agencies (MTA, TAB, TLFC, Banks & Financial institutions);
 - Awareness to various stakeholders

- TLTB needed additional resources and funds to ensure policy was implemented smoothly to meet its objectives.

“(1) After deduction of any sums in accordance with section 14 of the Act, the balance of any monies received by the Board by way of rents and premiums in respect of native land, including any monies received by the Board but not yet distributed at date of commencement of the Native Land Trust (Leases and Licences) (Amendment) Regulations 2010, shall be distributed by the Board to all the living members of the proprietary unit, in equal proportion.”;

A (iii) The above amendment provided that for all lease monies received by the Board, it was to deduct its 10% poundage, whatever remained was to be equally distributed to all living members of a proprietary unit (Yavusa, Mataqali or Tokatoka) as registered in the VKB;

A (iv) The distribution of lease monies is carried out in the following manner;

- 100 percent rent paid by tenant to TLTB;
- TLTB deducts its 10% poundage for administration purpose. The balance (90%) is available for equal distribution to all living members of the LOU;
- Should the Land Owning Unit [LOU] members agree that they wish to assign their lease monies for a common project that benefit them – the option is available under section 14 (3) (e) of the TLT Act;
 - *With the consent of the Fijian owners whether given before or after 4 December 1970 which consent shall operate as an assignment of rents irrevocable until the total amount is paid, any amount due and unpaid in connection with any scheme approved by the Minister for the benefit of the iTaukei [Fijian] owners.”*
- The balance of lease monies (after poundage & assignment) can then be distributed to all LOU members;

A (v) The distribution of lease monies at TLTB is aligned to the ownership of iTaukei land. If land is owned at Yavusa level, then all living members of the Yavusa needs to equally share lease monies received from all leases on Yavusa owned land. The same applies for the Mataqali & Tokatoka.

B (1) Benefits of Equal Rent Distribution;

- i. Ensures that all individual members of a landowning Unit registered in the VKB gets a fair share of rent from their land.
- ii. Distributing lease monies individually will assist solve internal arguments/disputes within LOU that some members get their share while others do not. This policy will

eliminate discrimination and encourages Equality in sharing of resources and wealth within the LOU;

- iii. Provided each and every member of the LOU direct access to the proceeds from their land holdings rights, which some did not have, prior to the equal distribution decree.
- iv. Enhances greater accountability within the LOU level and individual members are empowered to think for themselves on how best they can best utilize their lease monies;
- v. Enhances good leadership within LOUs. The TY [Turaga ni Yavusa], TM [Turaga ni Mataqali] and TT [Turaga I Taukei] now realize that they need to step up on their roles. If they provide good leadership, have a clear vision and keep their members together, individual members can consider assigning their lease monies for certain projects that contributes towards the common good for all iTaukei members within the LOU;
- vi. Encourages LOUs and individual LOUs into a culture of savings and investments rather than consumption only as experienced with most LOU members;
- vii. Assists LOU members to contribute to growth of small businesses and micro enterprises if they think of establishing them from lease monies received;
- viii. Good for tracking of LOU member records at all levels – as opening of bank accounts will force members to have TIN numbers – Government has a better view from a planning and budgeting perspective. This record keeping will contribute to a national database for the iTaukei.
- ix. It encourages landowning units to make their unused and unutilized land available for leasing. The more leases an LOU has, the more lease monies they can get – rather than leaving land idle;
- x. Encourages LOU to provide their land and assist in growing the economy;
- xi. Timely updating of VKB records
- xii. Equal distribution will create more economic activities with individuals now looking at buying shares, investments and just a general spending by the I Taukei in Fiji
- xiii. Equal distribution will increase construction, will increase the purchase of properties and undoubtedly increase activity in the real estate industry.
- xiv. Equal distribution will push the I Taukei race into a level playing field with other Fijians in terms purchasing power. Empowerment and Accountable...Also get the iTaukei to think outside the four corners of their communities;

- xv. New registered iTaukei members will benefit a lot from this initiative as their shares are kept and invested by the Board till they reach 14 years – the age where they can open bank accounts before their shares are given to them. This can be good seed capital for them or assist in their higher education and other useful purposes.

C (1) CONCERNS FROM LOU MEMBERS

- i. TLTB has also received criticism from members of the various Landowning units on their outright rejection of the implementation of equal rent distribution policy. TLTB's position has been more of compliance and enlightenment of the many benefits individual members can derive from.
- ii. The equal distribution process on the other hand does impinge on the following that the LOU's will have no control over collectively:
- iii. Overseas members of the LOU no longer participate in village project contributions but will still be receiving a share of lease monies in their bank accounts;
- iv. The hierarchy or traditional position structures will be questioned as all will now be receiving equal share of lease rentals;
- v. Responsibilities in the village setting i.e. the hosting and catering of delegations to the village e.g. Government officials, Ngo's etc. is now a responsibility that is open to volunteers.
- vi. Land claims will see a marked increase by LOU's, along with disputes, boundary claims and VKB verifications to filter out those that do not belong through blood lines or through marriage.

QUESTION 2: - NEW LEASE STRUCTURE TO REFLECT OPEN MARKET RATES - Whether the new lease structure which reflects the open market rates be introduced or otherwise.

- (i) There are currently two legislations that govern the rent fixing mechanisms and market in Fiji.
 - a. **ALTA:** Regulated rent at 6% of the UCV – used for all Agriculture leases;
 - b. **TLTA:** Open market – operate within the forces of demand and supply – for non-agriculture leases
- (ii) TLTB is of the view that any fixing of rent mechanism to adopt open market rates. This needs to be introduced and legislated. This to also apply to rental assessment as market valuation is already adopting open market rates. For rent reassessment on iTaukei leases, the open market rate is adopted for non-agriculture lease with the exception of some state leases and some old iTaukei leases where rent is pegged at 6% of UCV.
- (iii) Government is recognising the **inequitable rent return under ALTA** and is subsidising rent of 5% to 10% of UCV and distributes to the landowners under the Committee of Better Utilisation of Land (CBUL) programme. This has actually encouraged a lot of iTaukei landowners to renew agricultural land leases;

- (iv) Regulated rent under ALTA is outdated and needs to be reviewed. The prevailing rent fixing method worldwide is Open Market.
- (v) There is another method of rent fixing known as Productivity Method. This is a sophisticated method where it requires a lot of information on production and products and the variable factors.
- (vi) TLTB had proposed through the Land Reform submission in 2010 that all rent to be based on **Open Market**. That will require amendment of ALTA. Further TLTB has also proposed for a simple legislation to govern iTaukei land and its administration under TLTA.

QUESTION 3: Whether prices be based on improvements (development and economic activities) on the land?

- (i) The petition is talking about prices. Whether it is a Sale or Price, this is best determined by the market. If the price of a property exchanging hands between a willing seller and a willing buyer, then this has been the current property market valuation in Fiji.
- (ii) If the petition is about rental assessment, then the current practice of "Unimproved Capital Value" is used.
- (iii) If rental reassessment on "Improved Value" is considered, then all developments on the property are factored in at the time of reassessment. This may also discourage tenants who have worked hard to develop and invest on their property.
- (iv) There are several interests that determines Prices whether it is **sale** or **rent**; lessee's interest, improvements on and to the land, business goodwill (if it is commercial), potential for highest and best use (HBU).
- (v) Again, price based on UCV may be seen by most as "not fair" as it does not account for the value of improvements.

QUESTION 4. OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS

What are other views from TLTB on specific distribution of land leases which would help the Committee to move forward with the petition?

- (i) TLTB has just started implementing the Equal rent distribution effective from May 2015. The policy needs to be given time for LOU members to fully realise its benefits to landowners as individuals and also to the nation as a whole in terms of spin offs if proper information and awareness programmes are given to landowners in a timely manner. The equal distribution is an opportunity for the LOU's to manage their funds – on assignment as an LOU or as individuals through forums of Financial Literacy;

- (ii) TLTB is proposing, for some time now, for the review of TLTA as it is archaic and is hindering the good management of iTaukei land to facilitate development, fair and equitable return to the landowners and promote sustainable development (e.g. Sustainable Land Management, Sustainable Farm Management, Good and Modern Landuse Practices & the Green Growth Framework);
- X (iii) TLTA governs the present and future of the landowner's significant role has been recognized by most development stakeholders in Fiji. This role is not contained in the Land Use Decree-2010 which is primarily focussed on encouraging investment.
- (iv) TLTA review needs to be implemented holistically with other legislations such as Town Planning Act, Subdivision of Land Act, Local Government Act, etc.
- (v) TLTB suggests its submission made to the Land Reform Committee in 2010 be revisited so that the current TLTA legislation to be reviewed to take account of modern land management practices for holistic land reforms through a transparent and consultative process.

ITAUKEI LAND TRUST BOARD
SUVA.
JUNE 2015

TLTB's Submission to Parliament Standing Committee on Economic Affairs

"Petition to Review the Distribution of Lease to Personal Accounts and the Land Rent Premised on Unimproved Capital Value"

Monday 22 June 2015



Outline :

1. Statutory Obligations of TLTB
2. TLTB Corporate Statements
3. TLTB's views on the following Questions:
 - i. **Whether effects of lease distribution to personal accounts be reviewed or not;**
 - ii. **Whether the new lease structure which reflects the open market rates be introduced or not;**
 - iii. **Whether prices be based on improvements (development and economic activities) on the land;**
 - iv. **Any other views on specific distribution of land leases which would help the Committee to move forward with the petition.**

4. Questions?

Statutory Obligations:

Section 4:

- The control of all native land shall be vested in the Board and such land shall be administered by the Board for the benefit of the Fijian owners.

Section 9:

- No native land shall be dealt with by way of lease or licence under the provision of this Act unless the Board is satisfied that the land proposed to be made the subject lease or licence is not being beneficially occupied by the Fijian owners, and is not likely during the currency of such lease or licence to be required by the Fijian owners for their use, maintenance or support.
- Facilitating socio economic growth.
- Facilitating government development programs and projects.
- Empowering Landowners through equal rent distribution.



iTaukei Land, Our Heritage, Our Future



Core Business, Vision, Slogan, Values:

CORE BUSINESS

Sustainable Development and Wealth Creation

VISION

Excellence in Land Management Services to meet the Expectations of all Stakeholders.

SLOGAN

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VALUES

Innovation, Transparency & Trust, Accountability, Unique Knowledgeable, Effectiveness & Efficiency, Integrity

Missions:

In the best interest of all TLTB Stakeholders we will:

1. Provide modern, competent estate management services;
2. Ensure the landowners receive a fair market value for their land and resources;
3. Promote economical, environmental, socially and culturally sustainable land use practices and uphold Sustainable Development Goals & other internal conventions;
4. Enhance Partnerships and Respond positively to International, Regional and Government programme & initiatives;
5. Provide the best financial services and investment opportunities for the sustainability, empowerment & Security of itaukei landowners;
6. Recruit, Train, Develop Talents and Recognise our people on their performance;
7. Adopt modern and appropriate technology, systems & practices;
8. Alignment and compliance with the 2013 Constitution and the Laws of Fiji;
9. Promote "good governance", "inclusiveness", "innovation" and "visibility" in all areas of operations; and
10. Promote equality of opportunities for all Fijians without discrimination & manage communication with Stakeholders.

QUESTION 1. "EQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF LEASE" Whether effects of lease distribution to personal accounts be reviewed or not?

(i) The policy decision for equal distribution of lease monies was introduced by Government via the amendment of the "Native Land (Leases & Licenses) (Amendment) Regulations 2010. This came into effect from 1st January 2011.

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- Liaison with the various inter related agencies (MTA, TAB, TLFC, Banks & Financial institutions;
- Awareness to various stakeholders
- TLTB needed additional resources and funds to ensure policy was implemented smoothly to meet its objectives.

Whether effects of lease distribution to personal accounts be reviewed or not? (Con't)

“(1) After deduction of any sums in accordance with section 14 of the Act, the balance of any monies received by the Board by way of rents and premiums in respect of native land, including any monies received by the Board but not yet distributed at date of commencement of the Native Land Trust (Leases and Licences) (Amendment) Regulations 2010, shall be distributed by the Board to all the living members of the proprietary unit, in equal proportion.”;

Whether the new lease structure which reflects the open market rates be introduced or not?

- (iii) The above amendment provided that for all lease monies received by the Board, it was to deduct its 10% poundage, whatever remained was to be equally distributed to all living members of a proprietary unit (Yavusa, Mataqali or Tokatoka) as registered in the VKB;
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- 100 percent rent paid by tenant to TLTB;
 - TLTB deducts its 10% poundage for administration purpose. The balance (90%) is available for equal distribution to all living members of the LOU;
 - Should the LOU members agree that they wish to assign their lease monies for a common project that benefit them – the option is available under section 14 (3) (e) of the Act;
 - The balance of lease monies (after poundage & assignment) can then be distributed to all LOU members;
- (v) The distribution of lease monies at TLTB is aligned to the ownership of iTaukei land. If land is owner at Yavusa level, then all living members of the Yavusa needs to equally share lease monies received from all leases on Yavusa owned land. The same applies for the Mataqali & Tokatoka.

Whether the new lease structure which reflects the open market rates be introduced or not?

(v) Benefits of Equal Rent Distribution;

- Ensures that all individual members of a landowning Unit (LOU) registered in the VKB gets a fair share of rent from their land.
- Distributing lease monies individually will assist solve internal arguments/disputes within LOU that some members get their share while others do not. Cuts out discrimination and encourages Equality in sharing of resources and wealth within the LOU;
- Provided each and every member of the LOU direct access to the proceeds from their land holdings rights, which some did not have prior to the equal distribution decree.
- Enhances greater accountability within the LOU level and individual members gets more empowered to think for themselves on how best they can best utilize their lease monies on;



Whether the new lease structure which reflects the open market rates be introduced or not? Cont

(v) Benefits of Equal Rent Distribution continue;

- Enhances good leadership within LOUs. The TY, TM and TT now realize that they need to step up on their roles. If they provide good leadership, have a clear vision and keep their members together, individual members can consider assigning their lease monies for certain projects that contributes towards the common good for all itaukei members within the LOU;
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Whether the new lease structure which reflects the open market rates be introduced or not... Cont

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- It encourages landowning units to make their unused and unutilized land available for leasing. The more leases an LOU has, the more lease monies they can get – rather than leaving land idle;
- Encourages them to provide their land and assist in growing the economy;
- Timely updating of VKB records



**Whether the new lease structure which reflects the open market rates be introduced or not?
(Cont.)**

(v) Benefits of Equal Rent Distribution;

- Equal distribution will create more economic activities with individuals now looking at buying shares, investments and just a general spending by the I Tauakei's in Fiji
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- Equal distribution will push the I Tauakei race into a level playing field with other Fijians in terms purchasing power. Empowerment and Accountable...Also get itauakeis to think outside the four corners of their communities;
- New registered itauakei members have a lot to benefit from this initiative as their shares are kept and invested by the Board till they reach 14 years – the age where they can open bank accounts before their shares are given to them. This can be good seed capital for them or assist in their higher education and other useful purposes.

Whether the new lease structure which reflects the open market rates be introduced or not? (Con't)

(vi) Concerns from LOU Members;

- TLTB has also received criticism from members of the various Landowning units on their outright rejection of the implementation of equal rent distribution policy. TLTB's position has been more of compliance and enlightenment of the many benefits individual members can derive from.
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- Land claims will see a marked increase by LOU's, along with disputes, boundary claims and VKB verifications to filter out those that do not belong through blood lines or through marriage.

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- (iii) Government is recognising the **inequitable rent return under ALTA** and is subsidising rent of 5% to 10% of UCV and distributes to the landowners under the Committee of Better Utilisation of Land (CBUL) programme. This has actually encouraged a lot of iTaukei landowners to renew agricultural land leases;
- (iv) Regulated rent under ALTA is out dated and needs to be reviewed. The prevailing rent fixing method worldwide is Open Market.



NEW LEASE STRUCTURE TO REFLECT OPEN MARKET RATES – Whether the new lease structure which reflects the open market rates be introduced or otherwise

- (v) There is another method of rent fixing known as Productivity Method. This is a sophisticated method where it requires a lot of information on production and products and the variable factors.
- (vi) TLTB had proposed through the Land Reform submission in 2010 that all rent to be based on **Open Market**. That will require amendment of ALTA. Further TLTB has also proposed for a simple legislation to govern itaukei land and its administration under TLTA.

QUESTION 3: Whether prices be based on improvements (development and economic activities) on the land?

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- (v) Again, price based on UCV may be seen by most as "not fair" as it does not account for the value of improvements.



QUESTION 4: OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS What are other views from TLTB on specific distribution of land leases which would help the Committee to move forward with the petition?

- (i) TLTB has just started implementing the Equal rent distribution effective from May 2015. The policy needs to be given time for LOU members to fully realise its benefits to landowners as individuals and also to the nation as a whole in terms of spin offs if proper information and awareness programmes are given to landowners in a timely manner. The equal distribution is an opportunity for the LOU's to manage their funds – on assignment as an LOU or as individuals through forums of Financial Literacy;
- (ii) TLTB is proposing, for some time now, for the review of TLTA as it is archaic and is hindering the good management of iTaukei land to facilitate development, fair and equitable return to the landowners and promote sustainable development (e.g. Sustainable Land Management, Sustainable Farm Management, Good and Modern Landuse Practices & the Green Growth Framework);

QUESTION 4: OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS What are other views from TLTB on specific distribution of land leases which would help the Committee to move forward with the petition? (Con't)

- (iii) TLTA governs the present and future of the landowner's significant role has been recognized by most development stakeholders in Fiji. This role is not contained in the Land Use Decree 2010 which is primarily focussed on encouraging investment.
- (iv) TLTA review needs to be implemented holistically with other legislations such as Town Planning Act, Subdivision of Land Act, Local Government Act, etc.
- (v) TLTB suggests its submission made to the Land Reform Committee in 2010 be revisited so that the current TLTA legislation to be reviewed to take account of modern land management practices for holistic land reforms through a transparent and consultative process.



iTaukei Land, Our Heritage, Our Future



THANK YOU

QUESTIONS???



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

MINUTES OF THE 11th MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, EAST WING ON WEDNESDAY, 30th JUNE 2015 AT 02.30 P.M.

Members Present:

Hon. Balmindar Singh (Chairman)
Hon. Prem Singh (Deputy Chairman)
Hon. Dr Brij Lal
Hon. Alvrick Maharaj (Alternate Member for Hon. Sanjit Patel)

In Attendance:

Mr Selveen Deo

1.0 WELCOME

1.1 The Hon. Chairman welcomed the members to their meeting.

2.0 APOLIGIES

2.1 Apology was received from the following member.

- Hon. Viliame Gavoka
- Hon. Sanjit Patel

3.0 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

- 3.1 Hon. Dr Brij Lal moved that the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 27th May 2015 be confirmed.
- 3.2 Hon. Chair seconded the motion. Minutes duly confirmed.
- 3.3 Hon. Dr Brij Lal moved that the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd June be confirmed subject to amendments:
- "Ms Sereana" to read " Ms Sereana Cokanasiga"
 - "Mr Savenaca Cokanasiga" to read "Mr Savenaca Kaunisela"
- 3.4 Hon. Chair seconded the motion. Minutes duly confirmed.

4.0 MATTERS ARISING

- 4.1 Hon. Chair informed Hon. Prem Singh that since he was not present in previous two meetings, a motion was moved by Hon. Sanjit Patel to stop with the consultation process on Service Fee Petition and it was voted and decision was made that service fee petition be stood out.
- 4.1.1 Hon. Prem Singh was of the view that recommendations of the Committee will not be harmful to anyone. Committee had initially agreed on work plan and consultations were part of it and nothing would be lost by completing the consultation. He suggested that Committee should complete the process as bipartition approach and make recommendations to the Parliament irrespective of what the recommendations are.
- 4.1.2 Hon. Dr Brij Lal replied that of the 8 submissions only 2 were in favour and 6 are against and if we go out for consultation only workers will be talking in favour while hoteliers are against. Therefore even if Committee goes out, it will come to the same conclusion.
- 4.1.3 Hon. Prem Singh replied that it's not the conclusion that we are concerned about but it's the participatory process of the Committee and it's all up to Parliament to decide whether they accept the recommendations or not and as for the Committee to kill the petition at this stage depicts the purpose.
- 4.1.4 Hon. Chair replied that looking at the motion that was presented before the Committee and it was seconded, and looking at the Governments initiatives such as free education, free bus fare, 2% extra from employers contribution and other factors it was decided that no further consultation will take place and a report to be tabled to the Parliament.
- 4.1.5 Hon. Prem Singh was of the view that Committee has agreed on a work plan and consultation was part of it. So far Committee heard from those we invited and when we go for consultation, not only workers would come but also hoteliers and other would be there to give their opinions. This petition looks into a particular issue and it's in the best interest of the Committee to explore it to the fullest.
- 4.1.6 Hon. Chair replied that the Committee is moving forward and won't look back. The government embarked on initiatives where all sectors are benefitting and here only one sector is involved.
- 4.1.7 Hon. Prem Singh replied that it's the process that we are concerned about. This government initiatives could form part of the report in stating why we should not go ahead with it. Hon. Singh informed the Committee that Hon. Gavoka has provided a report which is to be part of the report.
- 4.2 Hon. Chair requested the secretariat if website advertisement and copies of all the letters be provided.

5.0 COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

- 5.1 Hon. Chair informed Hon. Singh and Hon. Maharaj that submission was done by TLTB and Ministry of Itauke Affairs on the Petition to Review the distribution of Land lease to Personal Accounts.
- 5.2 Hon. Chair requested members to provide their views on going forward with the petition on Distribution of Land Lease on personal Accounts.
- 5.2.1 Hon. Prem Singh asked apart from two Government stakeholders, who else are we listening from, Land Owning units and Turaga Ni Mataqali.
- 5.2.2 Hon. Chair replied that Turaqa in Mataqali, Turaqa ni Yavosa, Tiuraqa ni Tokatoka and Provincial Administrators.
- 5.3 Hon. Prem Singh asked if there's going to be a consultation with these stakeholders.
- 5.3.1 Hon. Chair replied that it's up to the members to decide now if there's going to be consultations on this petition.
- 5.3.2 Hon. Prem Singh was of the view that people who are affected are Mataqalis members and others and many people are for the petition in the land owning unit.
- 5.3.3 Hon. Dr Brij Lal was of the view that from the submission it is clear that before only 4500 people in Fiji were receiving lease money and now over 300 000 people are getting that and most of the recipient were very happy as money goes to their account and for those under the age of 14 the money was kept in trust. In long run more than 300 000 people are getting the share of lease money and I am satisfied with the way lease is distributed as presented by two organisations. According to them people are happy with the current system and there are provision for special projects whereby they need write to TLTB so money can be allocated and I don't see any need for going any further with the consultation.
- 5.3.4 Hon. Prem Singh replied that just by the virtue of the petition, the signatories seems to be unhappy, may be procedurally or they don't understand so this is the reason some of these people need to be consulted.
- 5.3.5 Hon. Dr Brij Lal replied that these are the same people that report to TLTB and according to them they are happy with the current system.
- 5.3.6 Hon. Prem Singh replied that according to the petition, the Itauke people do not have equitable share of economic and commercial power with other communities. These are the things that petition that is to be dealt with and it's fine from the stakeholder's perspective as they are enforcing it but what about the people who submitted the petition.
- 5.3.7 Hon. Dr Brij Lal replied that his understanding that the issues that are raised in petition are taken to the TLTB board and Itauke Affairs and according to them generally people are happy with current system.
- 5.3.8 Hon. Prem Singh replied that he has slightly different view point as it's the Committees work to find out what people thinks of the petition and who knows they may agree with that.

- 5.3.9 Hon. Alvrik Maharaj said that he believes the petition is minority petition on its own as previously only 4500 people were receiving land lease money and now 300 000 so it speaks itself. Naturally speaking current system is benefiting the one third population and why should we wreck our head in getting up something that deprives one third population and go back and revert to policy which only benefits few people which is against the Government Policy. Hon. Maharaj moved a motion that Committee to go according to the recommendation of TLTB and Ministry of Itauke Affairs and suggested this petition stopped here.
- 5.3.10 Hon. Dr Brij Lal seconded by motion by stating that this two organisation has submitted their views and he is ~~conceived~~ that things are in order.
- 5.3.11 Hon. Prem Singh opposed the motion stating that Committee is killing the petition. The Committee should make an attempt to call people to this Committee Room to get at least views of people and we will lose nothing.
- 5.3.12 Hon. Chair replied that there's a motion on the floor and seconded, the motion would stand.
- 5.3.13 Hon. Prem Singh said he is amending the motion not to pre conclude this petition, we should at least give opportunity to people to give their views.
- 5.3.14 Hon. Chair replied that the motion will be defeated since there is no seconder to the motion by the motion which is already seconded.
- 5.3.15 Hon. Prem Sing said that this is the only Committee that has killed two petition pre maturely and this Committee seems to be working on partition approach, government on one side and opposition on other. We have no feelings for people who have sent this petition.
- 5.3.16 Hon. Chair replied that I do take your sentiments Hon. Singh but as you are aware we are all binded by Standing Orders and as motioned has been tabled, I accept the motion and close the debate on this basis.

6.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 6.1.1 There was no other business to be discussed.

7.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 7.1 As there was no other business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 04.00 p.m.

Signed,

.....
Hon. Balmindar Singh (Chairman)

.....
Mr Selveen Deo

Date: