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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

**REVIEW REPORT ON THE MINISTRY OF I-TAUKEI AFFAIRS 2014  
ANNUAL REPORT**



**PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI**  
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## CHAIR'S FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the review Report of the Social Affairs Standing Committee on the Ministry of I-Taukei Affairs' 2014 Annual Report.

The Standing Committee on Social Affairs is a standing committee which was established under Section 109(2) (b) of the Standing Orders (SO) of the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji. The Social Affairs Standing Committee is mandated to examine matters related to health, education, social services, labour, culture, media and their administration.

The purpose of the review was to scrutinize the Ministry of I-Taukei Affairs 2014 Annual Report with regards to its performance based on its key targeted output areas outlined in their Annual Corporate Plan. Specifically on the Ministry's budgetary allocation, available human resources, organization structure, administration, policies and programs of the year.

The Social Affairs Standing Committee has conducted its review on the Ministry of I-Taukei Affairs 2014 Annual Report in accordance with the Ministry's key performance indicators stipulated in the 2014 Annual Report.

The review exercise was possible after a round of consultation was conducted with the Ministry. The Committee acknowledges the Ministry's efforts in providing detail information and responded well to some of the issues raised by the Committee during its meeting. The Committee raised few issues in the report and also recommended some of the ways that the Ministry could adopt to support and further improves its service delivery in the future.

Overall, the Committee commended the Ministry's performance in 2014 which they had achieved about 95.68 percent of its targeted output and utilized about 94 percent of its total budget allocation.

Finally, I wish to extend my thanks to the Honourable Members and the Secretariat team who were involved in the production of this bipartisan report: my Committee colleagues Hon. Salote Radrodro (Deputy Chairperson), Hon. Veena Bhatnagar (Member), Hon. Anare Vadei (Member) and Hon. Mohammed M. A. Dean.

I also wish to acknowledge the valuable contribution of the alternate members who sat during the Committee meetings and on the compilation of this report.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, I commend this report to the Parliament.



Hon Viam Pillay  
Chairman of the Social Affairs Standing Committee

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

ABS	-	Access Benefits Sharing
ACP	-	Annual Corporate Plan
CSD	-	Corporate Service Division
NEC	-	National Employment Center
NGOs	-	Non-Government Organizations
NTROC	-	National iTaukei Resource Owners Committee
OHS	-	Organizational Health and Safety
RDSSSED	-	Roadmap for Democracy, Socio and Sustainable Development
TILFC	-	iTaukei Land and Fisheries Commission
VKB	-	Vola Ni Kawa Bula

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Standing Committee on Social Affairs has conducted a review of the Annual Report of the Ministry of I-Taukei Affairs for the year 2014, and recommends that Parliament takes note of its report.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Annual Report of the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs for 2014 was tabled in Parliament during the August meeting in 2015 and referred to the Standing Committee for Social Affairs, for its scrutiny.

Standing Orders 109(2) (b) allows Standing Committee on Social Affairs to look into matters related to health, education, social services, labour, culture and media.

Standing Orders 110(1)(c) 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.*

## **FUNCTIONS OF THE MINISTRY**

The Committee noted that the primary role of the Ministry is to improve the wellbeing and governance of the i-Taukei people; a role entrusted to the Ministry to deliver on behalf of government through the ministerial assignment delegated by the Hon. Prime Minister under Section 91(3), 91(4), 92(3) (a) and 92(3) (c) of the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji.

In addition, it provides the link with other i-Taukei Institutions which includes the iTaukei Affairs Board that directly manages the administration and affairs of the fourteen (14) Provincial Offices as stipulated under the iTaukei Affairs Act (Cap 120). Its core business was to develop, implement and monitor policies and programs for the good governance and well-being of the iTaukei.

The Ministry was administering legislations on the iTaukei Affairs Act (Cap 120), iTaukei Lands Act (Cap 133), iTaukei Lands Trust Act (Cap 134), iTaukei Development Fund Act (Cap 121) and iTaukei Trust Fund Act 2004..

The Corporate Service Division (CSD) was in charged with developing and implementing the Ministry's key objectives for achieving responsible corporate governance that is well grounded on the Public Service Code of Conduct.

The Ministry was also responsible with the resolution of disputes regarding land ownership, fishing rights and customary chiefly positions. The Ministry involved in the preservation of the iTaukei language and culture. It also provide policy advice and development on commercial, economic, social and environment matters that affect the well-being and good governance of the iTaukei .

## **ISSUES RAISED**

### **DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

The Committee noted that the report does not fully capture the details of issues raised by the public to the Ministry. These are disputes of lands, fishing grounds and customary leadership T titles.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. The committee recommends that future reports present a detail breakdown of issues in figures that are resolved, unresolved and the pending issues that are with the Ministry with its justification.

### **GENDER ANALYSIS**

The Committee noted that the report mentioned cross cutting outcomes in terms of gender equality but there was no breakdown of gender within the Ministry.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

2. The committee recommends that future reports present a breakdown of gender equality and participation in the positions held within the Ministry.

The Committee noted the excessive costs involved in the maintenance of vehicles and the cost of fuel and oil in 2014, and was informed that during that year, the Ministry had 12 vehicles and two vehicles which were leased vehicles were returned and are yet to be replaced. It was noted that out of the two new leased vehicles, the remaining vehicles had been in use over the years.

**RECOMMENDATION**

3. That the Ministry have well trained transport officers to maintain a register daily in order to record pertinent issues about the use and replacement of the Ministry's fleet.
4. That the Ministry look into leasing arrangements for its fleet as an option if it is economical, so that the vehicles are regularly maintained and replaced.

**BUDGETARY ALLOCATION**

The Ministry agreed with the sentiments expressed by the Committee that there was a need to increase its budgetary allocation, to properly cater its scope of work that was to serve the 14 provinces in Fiji through its mandated roles and responsibilities. The Committee was informed that the Ministry's budgetary allocation had increased since 2013 and measures were being put in place to improve systems and processes that would enable them to work within their limited budget. In 2014, it was noted that the Ministry was allocated \$8,471, 957 and utilized about \$7,933,140 which was 94 percent of the total budget allocation.

**RECOMMENDATION**

5. That the Ministry budgetary allocation be increased to effectively support their functions and responsibilities.

**TARGETED OUTCOME AND MINISTRY'S OUTPUT**

In the view of the Ministry's targeted outcome and outputs for 2014, the Committee found that the Ministry had fully achieved its targeted output. The Standing Committee commended the work done by the Ministry in efficiently implementing its Annual Corporate Plan (ACP) for 2014.

The Committee was informed that some of the issues that caused hindrance to the Ministry's ACP implementation were the rugged terrains, inclement weather, landowning unit disputes,

election campaign and low attendance by landowning units during demarcation survey and village boundary discussions, these further leads to the delay of the implementation work programmes for villages in provincial level.

It was made aware that in 2014, the Ministry had achieved about 95.68 percent of its targeted output through its available resources.

Further, the Committee was informed that the Ministry also facilitates the government's land reform programme that was through the computerization of the VKB and to improve service delivery the computerization project was birthed in 2008. The Committee heard that scanning of the VKB was completed for three provinces and also ready for online services.

**RECOMMENDATION**

6. That in future the Ministry of I-Taukei Affairs to improve its Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 performance since the financial year has been changed.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

Suggestion was made for future financial reports to be output-based so that it was easy to identify areas which were lacking (maintaining and managing resources under the relevant budgetary allocations). The Ministry officials concurred with the suggestion and mentioned that they would discuss this with the Ministry of Finance and insert the details in terms of the breakdowns in each segment (SEG). The Committee noted that some of the key output areas that the Ministry administered were not budgeted. These include issues on Child Protection and Environment, and Climate Change Unit.

**RECOMMENDATION**

7. That future financial report from the Ministry provides details in the breakdown of allocated funds, expenditure and outputs under various budgetary segments.



## **CONCLUSION**

The Committee acknowledges the core function of the Ministry which is to improve the wellbeing and governance of the I-Taukei people. This was the Ministry's foremost responsibility.

The review of the Ministry's 2014 Annual Report was conducted in a very tactful and comprehensive manner. This would enable the Committee to submit to Parliament a more reliable and a cohesive report.

Recommendations are listed under every sub topic and the records of the consultation made with the Ministry are on the Appendix column of this report.

The Committee's main recommendation is that in future the Ministry to improve its services in the first and second quarter of the year which has been lacked in the past years. This is based from the changes that Government made recently on the announcement date of the National Budget (Financial Year). This would give time for the Ministry to plan ahead and also in implementing its ACP right from the beginning of the year.

**APPENDIX:VERBATIM REPORT ON THE SUBMISSION MADE BY THE MINISTRY OF I-TAUKEI AFFAIRS**

**VERBATIM REPORT OF INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS, HELD IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM (WEST WING), PARLIAMENT COMPLEX, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, ON WEDNESDAY, 28th OCTOBER, 2015 AT 10.00 A.M.**

**In Attendance**

**Ministry of i-Taukei Affairs**

Mr. S. Kaunisela - Permanent Secretary

Mr. T. Volau

Mrs. L. Kamakorewa

Mrs. F. Niumataiwalu

MR. CHAIRMAN.- We welcome you. We are looking forward for you, Sir, to take us along with the Annual Report, and also provide us with the information, as far as there is a petition, in regards to a land issue in Nadroga.

First, I will ask you to take us through the Annual Report and then we will break for tea, and after that we will proceed with the petition. I will now give you the floor.

MR. S. KAUNISELA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman and honourable Members. Before I start this morning, the team here at the front will be talking about the Ministry's 2014 Annual Report. The Chairman of the *iTaukei* Lands and Fisheries Commission will be answering to the queries later on.

First, I wish to thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee, to present to you our 2014 Annual Report. At the outset, I wish to highlight that the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs has continued to make significant progress in the delivery of services in 2014 towards improving the wellbeing and good governance of the *iTaukei* people.

On the strategic direction first of all, on page two of the Report, we have the Vision, Mission and the Values of the Ministry which I will not take you through in details of that.

On the Strategic Planning documents, the Ministry has put in place this Strategic Plan for 2015-2018, likewise the Annual Corporate Plan for 2015 and also it was in 2014, Divisional Business Plans and Individual Work plans for the individual staff.

On the main purpose, on page nine of the Ministry's 2014 Annual Report, I am sure it is quite clear that we are providing the link to other *iTaukei* institutions which includes the *iTaukei*

Affairs Board that directly manages the administration and affairs of the 14 Provincial Councils as stipulated under the *iTaukei* Affairs Act, (Cap. 120). Therefore, our core business is to develop, implement and monitor policies and programmes for the good governance and wellbeing of the *iTaukei*.

On the 2014 priority, Mr. Chairman and honourable Members, is to improve our service delivery and responsiveness through joint forums, planning with other stakeholders and we have improved training of our staff.

On the legislation, on page nine of the Annual Report, we have our responsibilities which are entrenched in the following legislations that have been listed there;

- a) *iTaukei* Affairs Act (Cap. 120);
- b) *iTaukei* Lands Act (Cap. 133);
- c) *iTaukei* Land Trust Act (Cap. 134)
- d) *iTaukei* Development Fund Act (Cap 121);
- e) *iTaukei* Trust Fund Act 2004, and also I might like to include as well
- f) Fisheries Act (Cap. 158).

On the major issues for 2014, Mr. Chairman and honourable Members, the rugged terrains and inclement weather, landowning units disputes, Election campaign and low attendance by landowning units to demarcation survey and village boundary discussions, this led to the delaying on the implementation work programmes for villages in some provinces. Well, of course, this required some reprioritising activities which is now taken in 2015.

On the performance and activities in 2014, the Ministry had a successful year in achieving most of the performance targets as detailed in Section 3 of the Annual Report. These targets are set at a challenging level in order to drive continued improvements.

On improving service delivery, the Ministry was proud to successfully host the Inaugural National *iTaukei* Resource Owners Committee Workshop at Nadave, and this Workshop led to greater understanding of and will pave the way and set the foundation on Access Benefits Sharing (ABS) procedures to ensure fair and equitable benefits arising from genetic resources for the communities.

More importantly, the introduction of the concept of Free Prior and Informed Consent to strengthen community and government partnership when pursuing developments in the provinces.

The Ministry also wants to engage in community consultation, roadshow process and collaborated with the Ministry of Maritime Services to develop new roadshow programmes that sets out the importance of considering our major stakeholder when making decisions about *iTaukei* matters.

The Ministry also continued commitment to volunteers, was reflected during the year when we recruited NEC volunteers to fast-track the computerisation of the *Vola Ni Kawa Bula*, which I must say is almost completed right now.

In partnership also with the local authorities, the Ministry continues to undertake safety drills organised by the Ministry's OHS Committee with our landlord and Fire Authority.

In terms of overall performance, the Ministry contributed to the delivery of service towards the nine targeted outcomes of the Roadmap for Democracy, Socio and Sustainable Development (RDSSED) achieving an excellent performance of 95.65 per cent for its Third Quarter.

The Outlook for the future over the next four years from 2014, the Ministry will concentrate on improving performance and accountability, particularly the new *iTaukei* Roadshow and public consultations which is currently underway, and this was spill over from 2014.

The implementation of best management practice to ensure operations are consistent and aligned to the RDSSED, and in compliance with all current legal instructions.

The strengthening of the Divisions Business Plan to also focus on the review and success, and carrying out of impact assessment on the Programmes, Projects and Policies that have been in place, and now the Ministry can make a difference to improving the Reporting and Monitoring Framework.

Honourable Members, on the divisional responsibility on page five to page six, very briefly the Ministry comprises of five major work units, namely; Corporate Services Division which is involved in the corporate governance, and that includes Finance and Accounting, Human Resource Management, Staff Establishment, Appointments, Board Meetings, Disciplinary Actions, Asset Management, Registry Function, Transport Management, Productivity, Research and Training Units and also Monitoring and Executive Support.

The second division is the Land and Fisheries Commission. This deals with dispute resolutions and dealing with traditional titles, land and fisheries boundaries et cetera, the administration of the *Vola ni Kawa Bula*, entries and deletions, awareness programmes and also the major projects that are also listed here. I may like to say very briefly the demarcation of *iTaukei* lands, surveying of demarcated *iTaukei* lands, demarcation of village boundaries and also the computerisation of the *Vola ni Kawa Bula*. These are major projects within this division.

On the *iTaukei* Lands Tribunal, this is also a very important unit within the Ministry and deals with the rulings over appeal cases or the challenges to the decision made by the Chairman of the Commission TILFC on land ownership, boundaries, fishing rights and customary chief titles.

On the next unit, the Institute of Language and Culture; this unit deals with preservation, protection and promotion of *iTaukei* language and culture and these comprises of some of the projects within one of which is very important to us, the cultural mapping exercise and that also includes the verification of the information on cultural mapping, the special revival unit, updating of monolingual dictionary, research and documentation of all *iTaukei* dialects in the 14 provinces, capturing of traditional events and cuttings of CDs to be sold, cultural awareness programmes including our weekly radio programme the *Noda Vosa* and also the translation of materials required or provided to us by other ministries and other organisations.

The last unit is the Development Services Division, it provides policy advice on commercial, economic social and environment matters that affect the wellbeing and good governance of the *iTaukei* communities. We also engage in consultation forum with Government agencies, financial institutions, civil society organisations, et cetera, to ensure that the interest of the *iTaukei* communities are considered in key policies issues and programmes that support the overall development. In addition to that Mr. Chairman, the division also deals with pressing issues that have arisen, one of them is child protection. The *vanua* issues, environment and climate change which also affects the *iTaukei* communities, drug eradication, HIV AIDS, et cetera.

Mr. Chairman, may I refer you to the organisational structure of the Ministry on page 11. You will note that we have used the slogan, perhaps we have coined the *iTaukei* institutional organisation structure. If you see the organisation structure on the far left, this is the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs, the Minister to the Permanent Secretary, the Deputy Secretary and right down to all the various units that I have just explained. When we talk about the *iTaukei* institution, we have included the TLTB, the *iTaukei* Affairs Board, the education institution at Nadave (CATD) and also the *iTaukei* Trust Fund. You will note that one of the work that we have tried to strengthen in 2014 is the coordination of all these *iTaukei* institutions so that we work together on all matters pertaining to the *iTaukei* people. That I must say, has worked out very positively on our side and we have managed to work in partnership from 2013 including 2014 and still going on as at today.

On the performance, according to the road map on page 12, I think it is listed there, that is our contribution to the road map as required under the current assessment period, and listed below are some of the achievements that we have attained during the period 2014 where we needed to satisfy the requirements under the road map. On service delivery, performance and direct outcome indicators on Table 1 and Table 2 on pages 13 and 14, Mr. Chairman, that clearly tabulates the achievements, our actuals in 2013, what we did in 2013, our set target for 2014

and the actual achievements against it, which is on page 13 and also on Table 12 on page 14. I hope that it is self-explanatory.

On performance highlights by the division, starts from page 15 to page 35. From page 15, again by units or by divisions, we have highlighted the various achievements attained by them during the year 2014. Most of them are in tabulated forms, that are there by the divisions. From page 15, it is the *iTaukei* Lands and Fisheries Commission; perhaps I would like to highlight the computerisation of VKB which is one of the major achievements of this division and also its management on the second paragraph. The VKB enquiries, that is normally directed to us, the dispute resolution on Table 4, Page 16, and also the achievements of the various projects within the division as I have already mentioned; the demarcation and the survey of village boundaries and the survey of *iTaukei* Lands. The customary titles that were confirmed between 2012 and 2014, you will see the table at the bottom of page 17, the comparative analysis and on page 18 the breakdown of customary titles by provinces, of which we have the records and also the number of leadership awareness and training that was conducted between 2012 and 2014. We have the ten data that we presented here.

Before I move on, Mr. Chairman, you will note that most of the tables, we have a listed ten data to actually demonstrate the achievements over the years and this is something that we have included in our reports from 2013 and again here in the 2014 report. It makes analysis or maybe presenting a clear picture of how the Ministry performed during any year.

On page 19, again on the Management and Preservation of Records, this is again another activity or project that is being done by the division as I have talked about the Land and Fisheries Commission. On 4.2, this is on the *iTaukei* Appeals Tribunal work, as tabulated under page 19 and likewise on page 20. You may be asking why there are only few cases, these are the cases that have been recorded after the Chairman of the *iTaukei* Lands and Fisheries Commission had made a decision, and to go back and attend to these cases by the Tribunal, they had to follow again another process of investigation before they actually come up to the decision during the year 2014.

Next is on the performance highlighted by division, is the *iTaukei* Language and Culture. I will not go into the details. I have also mentioned the Cultural Mapping data which is there, what they have done during the year from pages 23 and 24, the provinces that have been covered so far and also the provinces we covered in 2014.

Mr. Chairman, on page 25, is again an expansion or the explanation of the projects within, the Verification Exercise I had talked about, the Special Revival Unit and what we did in the various provinces in reviving some of the almost distinct customs and traditions by the *iTaukei* people which we attended to in 2014.

Mr. Chairman, on page 26, on the Development Services, again on the achievements on Policy Advice, not only that, but also on the publications, I had talked about, the Child Protection Programme, the *vanua* matters and also the environment and climate change.

As I have mentioned earlier, Mr. Chairman, one of the major highlights or major achievements in 2014 was the inauguration of the National *iTaukei* Resource Owners Committee (NTROC) and it is one of the committees that we are trying to look at in terms of conservation, preservation, resource management and also looking after all the resources belonging to the *iTaukei*. We are using here the Reef to Ridge Concept which is becoming a very popular concept that we are using now. It is also becoming a very popular Committee and we have about 14 representatives from each province and we also have a very good Terms of Reference that covers a wide range of work that the Committee will be assigned to, to look after in as far resource management.

Mr. Chairman, again on page 29 is the Corporate Services Division, which I am sure you are all familiar with the Corporate services matters in terms of managing our human resources and asset management, staff establishments, appointments that we made in 2014, including the board meetings that we serve as Secretariat and also as Chairman in some of these Boards, the Disciplinary Committees, our Registry functions on pages 30, 31 and 32 which is on our Transport Management and on pages 33 and 34 is the Productivity, Research and Training Unit or work that we do. This is again another new creation that we did in 2014, on productivity, research and training after the movement of the Scholarship Unit to TELS Board. We utilised the staff, we reorganised within to ensure we have some new activities that will assist us in the work that we do on productivity, research and also the normal training of our staff.

In addition to the new creation is the one on page 35 - Monitoring and Executive Support. This is one area that we have already implemented and has assisted in terms of monitoring, not only from within but also provision of documentation to prove that we have actually implemented our Annual Corporate Plan in 2014 through ICO, previously known as SFCCO and also from the Public Service Commission.

Lastly, Mr. Chairman, is on page 26, Table 28, that is our MTA Achievement versus Government Performance for the whole year. From page 38 to 40, is our Audited Annual Finance Report, audited by the Auditor General, which I hope is self-explanatory but we will be asking questions from the Members, should there one arising from our Financial Statements.

Mr. Chairman, in a nutshell, may I emphasize that the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs roles and responsibilities have changed significantly and broadened its scope of work since 2011, including this reporting period 2014. In fact, it has made inroads to reforming the Ministry during 2014. It has strived and we will continue to do so in the coming years to ensure that good governance and wellbeing of the *iTaukei* people is paramount and the safeguards in terms of policies and legislations are properly developed and implemented. This includes the

strengthening of partnership with our stakeholders, for example, the Ministries, the Provincial Council Offices, the Non-Government Organisations and communities in streamlining our internal processes, the Standard Operating Procedures and creating governing policies to enable to drive its work force and achieve set targets.

Mr. Chairman, at the end of 2014, the Ministry after all assessments by agencies, PSC and ICO (then SFCCO), the Ministry is proud of its achievements which stood at 95.68 per cent on the fourth quarter of 2014. The budget provided to the Ministry in 2014 was \$8,471,957 and it committed and \$7,933,140 was the actual expenditure by the end of the year 2014. There was no loss of revenue recorded during by the Ministry.

Mr. Chairman, I have gone through the Ministry's 2014 Annual Report, and I think I should end there and would be grateful to receive any questions from the floor, if there is any. Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you very much PS for taking us through the Annual Report. Now, I will allow the Honourable Members if they have any questions or clarifications.

HON. A.T.VADEI.- Mr. Chairman, I must first of all thank the Permanent Secretary for the presentation of the Annual Reports of the *iTaukei* Affairs this morning. There are few questions that I wish to raise this morning.

Can I refer you to page 15 on *iTaukei* Lands Fisheries Commission – 4.1, the first line reads and I quote:

“... under the *iTaukei* Land Act in 1880.”

Have you changed that Native Land Commission to *iTaukei* Land?

MR. S. KAUNISELA.- Honourable Member, can I have your question again, please?

HON. A.T.VADEI.- What I am asking is the legislation, the *iTaukei* Land Act. You are referring to 1880, whether that has been changed from *iTaukei* Land Act instead of Native Land Act.

Stint 4

MR. S. KAUNISELA.- The answer is yes.

HON. A.T. VADEI.- I will just go through some of the queries that I have. On page 16, Table 3 – VKB Enquiries, you just mentioned the enquiries, how many have been resolved with those figures that you have mentioned there, from Ba – 391, Bua – 156, et cetera.



MR. T. VOLAU.- Mr Chairman, in regards to the question, we have here the data for the VKB enquiries, we do not have the data for those which had been resolved from those enquiries that were received at the *iTaukei* Land and Fisheries Commission. We might consider that point, in our next report to highlight the number of enquiries that were resolved.

HON. A.T. VADEI.- Mr. Chairman, just a point of interest on that and if it can be included in the submission for the 2015 Report. On page 18, Mr. Chairman, Table 7, I was quite interested in the number of TY and TM vacant positions not being filled. What is the projected estimate of the Ministry for 2015?

MR. S. KAUNISELA.- Mr Chairman, can I go back to the earlier question, on the VKB Enquiries. Maybe I would like to add that some of the enquiries might be very simple ones, such as, what should I bring for the registration; where should I be registering my child; what to do to delete and all those from the *Vola ni Kawa Bula*. I think that is all accumulated in the VKB Enquiries alone. Just to add to the response provided by the Chairman.

On the next question Honourable Member, right now we do not have any projections for 2015, but we work according to the writ or the norms or to the work of the communities on how they organise themselves in the various *mataqali*, *tokatoka* and *yavusa*. Sometimes they drag their discussions, and we cannot really anticipate how many is going to be filled in the 2015 period. However, we have been continuously advising them to fill those positions. That is the only thing we can do is to provide advice to actually fill those vacant titles.

Maybe perhaps I would like to enlighten the Honourable Members that we have been going through this process for the last many years, and we have seen in some cases that there is progress of about five, six and ten that are filled, on the other hand, it comes back to zero, because the title holders also have died and then there is no balance in that some are created while others expired also from the their titles. It is going very slowly, but we encourage them, as I said, we are actually working on a policy, maybe fast track the filling of vacant positions is to provide them with some sort of Standard Operating Procedures and also give them time frame on when a post should be filled from the day it becomes vacant. Then maybe that will then quicken the process because we have not given the timeframe. We are thinking of giving them the timeframe after all our advice and the very slow activities, in terms of filling the vacant positions on the ground at the community level.

HON. A.T. VADEI.- Mr Chairman, what I am worried about is legitimising some of the directives and authorities sent to the common people in the village, that is my main worry. Because every now and then there is a lot of misconception in the village community regarding some of the directives or authorities being dished down when the posts is not filled. Calling the meeting, getting the *solu* from the people, so legally what I am worried about is the collection of those *solu* and legitimising those meetings that it is a true record of what has been discussed by the people for the people.

My next question on page 25- Special Revival Unit, second line of that paragraph, and I quote, "...a flow on effect of the CMP to ensure that he unique". Perhaps it should read, "...the unique...".

Page 26 - I am quite happy about what has happened in Table 16: what has been done and the workshops. What I am worried about is the Intellectual Property Rights, has the Ministry been dealing

with the Intellectual Property Rights in regards to the language, traditional art, craft and dances. I believe this is targeting the market now, so how can we protect the traditional artefacts of these various islands and provinces.

MR. S. KAUNISELA.- Mr Chairman, maybe I should enlighten you on that question which is very good. First of all the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs in 2011 has come up with a draft then was a Decree on Traditional Knowledge and Expression of Interest (TKNEC), which I think covers everything that the Honourable Member is concerned about. Not only the concern of Honourable Member, but I think it is a concern of this Ministry and we would like to have that promulgated. The sooner it is promulgated the better for us.

In fact we have already submitted to the Solicitor General's Office and fairly recently we have been talking with Madam Nazhat Shameem, the Ambassador in Brussels with regards to the comments that was made by World Intellectual Property Office in Geneva and they have also submitted comments on how we should rehash some of the sections or subsections of the TKNEC that has been around; the draft has been around since 2011. We are working on that and if I remember correctly, there was supposed to be two drafters on legislation from the Solicitor General's Office to go to Geneva and assist them in the finalisation of the draft. With that concern, I must also raise it here, Mr. Chairman that this is something that we have been trying from the past years to have promulgated. Having said that, we are working on other policies. Two, I have already mentioned is the Access Benefit Sharing (ABS) in terms of the protection of genetic resources extractions from our various forests which are used now most by researchers and those who are coming in and extracting the genes for experimenting and of course, for commercialisation of other products from those various genes and this is also our concern. We have in fact, put in place that ABS Platform which is now being circulated around the Government circles, and has also been known within the Pacific Region that Fiji has implemented its ABS Framework.

In addition to that, is the Free Prior Informed Consent, that is also a platform that we have already done a policy on. We would like to circulate that to all on the process of getting the consent from the people, because I think we now have different processes in terms of development of the land, in terms of extractions of genes, and in terms of anything that requires the consent of the communities, there need to be a process, and that is what we are trying to put into place now.

In addition to the concern that is raised here, Mr. Chairman, the Ministry is now also working towards registration of all researchers, NGOs, carriers and those who will be dealing directly or are intending to deal with the communities, we are going to issue very shortly a notice to get registered at the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs, and then get the consent from the *iTaukei* Affairs before they go down to the communities. However, they have to take the consent down to the *Roko Tui* who will then be the conduit to the communities. That is one of the safeguards, I must say on this particular concern that is raised by the honourable Member.

HON. A.T. VADEI.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My second last question on page 30 - Disciplinary Committee Meetings. What I found out that the case was not disposed-off before the completion. What I am worried about is the liability part, whether the officer who has resigned could return and seek liabilities on this issue. Can the Permanent Secretary advise us on what has been done on this issue?

MR. S. KAUNISELA.- Thank you for the question, honourable Member. As we have already disposed-off that particular issue, there is no liability to Government or to the Ministry, I must say.

HON. A.T. VADEI.- My last question, Mr. Chairman, regarding the two issues; Child Protection and Environment and Climate Change Unit, whether they have budget on these two issues?

MR. S. KAUNISELA.- Thank you very much, honourable Member. I am glad that you asked that question. The answer to that is, no. However, with the passion we have to take it out from the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs since it really affects the communities, we would very much be happy if the budget is provided on that. In fact, we have requested twice, but yet no budget has been provided. That does not really deter us from actually doing the work. We also have other sponsors that are working with us; UNICEF, and for Climate Change we are working with GIZ who is very much assisting us in all these concepts or all the initiatives that we do, and they backing us in terms of financial resources. Insofar as the budget by the Government, no, but that has been taken care of by our major partners and sponsors with whom we are working together right now.

HON. RATU S. NANOVO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To the Permanent Secretary and your team, I take this opportunity on behalf of our Chairman to thank the report that has been tabled to us this morning, which really shows that the work that you have been carrying out with your staff is really achieving targets that it was set out to achieve, and we do thank you once again for those achievements.

Just a few questions that I would like to raise with you. First is on the top of page 8 and I quote, "... The Ministry's continued commitment to volunteers was reflected last year during the recruitment of NEC volunteers to fast track the VKB Computerisation."

As we all know that this document is very important, and it is the talk of the town by the *iTaukei* population, and by allowing the volunteers to also take part in the fast-tracking of this work, can we be advised of all the processes involved just to ensure that the work that is targeted to be achieved here is achieved? Who oversees what is being done?

MR. S. KAUNISELA.- Thank you for the question, honourable Member and thank you once again for the comments earlier made. Mr. Chairman, in terms of the processes, what we have done is the design of the database was done by Yalamanchili Company, the Company that is now running the Government IT Services. However, in terms of the actual operation on the ground, the actual supervision of the database design when it started off is done by myself, the Chairman and Tomasi, who is also our IT Specialist. We are working together with them in terms of the design of the database, together with one of the Yalamanchili database designers. Then we move onto testing the system, and also the punching in of the data into the system. That is where the NEC staff comes in, as data entry operators. They do the data entry into the current system, and it is being supervised by senior staff members of the *iTaukei* Land and Fisheries Commission who are there with them all the time to check all the scanned documents, the inputs, and also the target set for each data entry operator on a daily basis.

The entry into the VKB System is in about three folds. First, we scan the documents. The second process is, we separate the documents and enter each individual name into the database. So, one is the entry level, but then after the entry it goes to another group that will verify that the entry is correct. After verification, then it goes to the approval group, that will approve that the data entry operators have done the correct work, the verifiers have verified them properly, and now it is being approved. So, there are about three groups of people handling one entry at one point in time to make

sure that the data of every individual entry is correct. Right now they have already made inputs of all those that were scanned documents and they are now inputting new entries that were not scanned in the initial phase. So, by and large, the whole process of computerisation of data entry is almost completed, and we hope it should be completed before the end of this year, and also should be launched officially, if possible, before the end of this year or at the latest early next year after all those processes as I have said, entry, verification, approval and then it goes to the actual live database. So that is the whole process as we are doing now but as we started from July last year right up to-date, the whole process has been supervised by the three of us and I am Chairing the Steering Committee in every phase to check that the schedule of the database implementation is going according to what is being planned.

HON. RATU S.V. NANOVO.- The concern Mr. Chairman, was that there were few rumours that when they doing that some of the spelling of the names were not correct.

Secondly, on the Leadership and Awareness Training based on this annual report, there was no allocation for this training in 2015- page 19 and I quote, "The contents of the awareness programme are in the vernacular..."

MR. S. KAUNISELA.- Thank you for the question Honourable Member. I think you are referring to the Revamped Leadership Model that we are actually trialling out in the various provinces now with the *iTaukei* Affairs Board. Yes, for that particular training module, the revamped one has not been budgeted for in 2015, it was designed by *iTaukei* Trust Fund and we are just modelling it out in the various provinces. I think we have covered Kadavu and Ra so far, just to trial out the new training model but we call it the *Vuli ni Veiliutaki kei na Sauvaki ni Vanua* in the *iTaukei* vernacular.

HON. RATU S.V. NANOVO.- The last one Mr Chairman, I would like to take this opportunity too, to thank them for operating within their budget based on the accounts tabulated. In previous years, whenever the *iTaukei* Affairs comes up, there is always a deficit in the budget but now, there is no more deficit in this annual report, we want to thank you again for working within what was set out for you to work on.

MR. S. KAUNISELA.- Thank you, Honourable Member.

HON. B. SINGH.- Thank you Mr Chairman, first of all I would like to apologise for coming in late, I was running for another meeting. I thank the PS for your kind words this morning, words of wisdom. Just on the accounts: I was just concerned about the Income and Expenditure, if we look at the maintenance and operations - \$234,000. How many fleets do you have, PS?

MR. S. KAUNISELA.- I think Honourable Member, we have about 12 vehicles.

HON. B. SINGH.- What is the life of these vehicles, if I could ask?

MR. S. KAUNISELA.- Honourable Member, the ones that were bought outright previously, we still keep them despite, they are almost gone, but fairly recently, the ones on lease, we have returned two and that has not been replaced as yet. So that means we have less vehicles by two, right now.

HON. B. SINGH.- My concern is the huge amount spent on maintenance of vehicles. I am really concerned, if you look at it economically, it is better to have a replacement vehicle rather than maintaining the vehicle life and when you look at the life of the vehicle upon depreciation, by now it should have been replaced.

The second question is the purchases of goods and services. One of your core functions was on the scholarship which is being moved to TELS but looking at the purchase of goods and services, it still has increased. Can you explain the increase?

MR. S. KAUNISELA.- Mr. Chairman, let me go back to the replacement of the vehicles just to enlighten you. Yes, you correctly said, as I said the ones that were bought outright previously before the lease agreement came into place, those are the ones really that chews up a lot of our money in terms of repairs and maintenance. We have been keeping them but we cannot do much because of the community engagement that we have to do almost every week. In fact, we have retired two, already to Public Works because of the high maintenance cost, it has gone past the user date. In terms of hire purchases, yes, you said it right, Honourable Member, the function only has gone to TELS but we still keep the human resources part of it with us and we have deployed them within, creating new units to assist us which were not here before, as I had explained it earlier on:

1. Productivity and Training
2. Monitoring and Development Risk Team

I think part of that is:

1. Tension of the staff – keep it as it is
2. Rising cost in terms of goods and services that we buy to service us during the year.

HON. R.N. NADALO.- From the answers that they have been giving us on the accounts, can the Permanent Secretary brief us on the auditing of accounts of Provincial Offices, it is not in this report?

MR. S. KAUNISELA.- Thank you very much Honourable Member. I wish to enlighten the Committee that the annual report that is provided here is only for the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs. The audited accounts that the Honourable Member is asking for will appear in the

Annual Report of the *iTaukei* Affairs Board, which is now being finalised and all the details will be in that report.

HON. R.N. NADALO.- My other concern is the number of TY and TM positions that are currently vacant. I do hope that the Ministry will look into this because the number is still too high, I know your team is doing a great job and I thank the Permanent Secretary and his team for the report that they have forwarded us.

Vote of thanks – Honourable B. Singh.

**The Committee adjourned at 11.00 a.m.**

