

# MEMORANDUM

From: Permanent Secretary for Rural & Maritime Development and National Disaster Management Phone No: 3313400

To: Secretary-General to Parliament *DN Navesimalagi 29/06* File No: 3/6/11

Sub: **RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTION NO. 70/2016** Date: 28/06/16

*DL,  
Please for our  
reference &  
further  
action.*

**Attention:** Mr Joeli Ditoka

Your letter referenced PARL 6/14 on the above subject matter refers.

A copy of the ministerial response to this written question is attached for information and reference. Also, a copy has been handed over to the Hon. Minister for Rural & Maritime Development and National Disaster Management.

Respectfully submitted.



[J Bacau]  
for **Permanent Secretary for Rural & Maritime Development and National Disaster Management**

PARLIAMENT OF FIJI

29 JUN 2016

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## **HONOURABLE INIA SERUIRATU**

**MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, RURAL AND MARITIME DEVELOPMENT & NATIONAL DISASTER  
MANAGEMENT**

### ***RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTION NO. 70/2016***

04<sup>TH</sup> July, 2016

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#### ***MINISTER'S RESPONSE***

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#### **Salutation**

Madam Speaker

Honourable Members of the House

I rise to respond to a written question asked by the Hon. Mosese Bulitavu for me as Minister responsible for the National Disaster Management Office “to confirm that without the assistance by the Governments of Australia and New Zealand post-Cyclone Winston, the Fiji Government would not have been able to respond as quickly to the severely affected areas.”



Madam Speaker, let me now confirm that the Fijian Government has the resources and manpower to respond quickly to the severely affected areas, even without the assistance by the Governments of Australia and New Zealand, or any other countries for that matter.

Madam Speaker, from the outset, while Fiji was bracing itself for the onslaught of Winston, other countries, including Australia and New Zealand, were also taking interests in the development and movement of this hazard. Winston reached its peak intensity on 20 February with a wind speed of 230 km/h when making landfall in the country.

We are all aware, Madam Speaker, of the ferocity of Winston. It has inflicted extensive damage on the country, killing 44 people, damaged or destroyed a total of 40,000 homes, and significantly impacted approximately 350,000 people – roughly 40 percent of Fiji's population. The total damage caused by the storm is amounted to FJ\$2.98 billion. This is equivalent to US\$1.4 billion.

Madam Speaker, Winston is the strongest cyclone in the Southern Hemisphere ever recorded in history. Its devastating effect had prompted our counterparts and partners as well to offer their assistance and services freely.

Madam Speaker, the offer of assistance and services by the Governments of Australia and New Zealand was purely based on humanitarian grounds. It is also in line with the FRANZ Agreement whereby the Governments of Australia, New Zealand and France have committed themselves to "exchange information to ensure the best use of their assets and other resources for relief operations after cyclones and other natural disasters in the region." This agreement also applies to the South Pacific, including Fiji.

This was why, Madam Speaker, the French Government joined the Governments of Australia and New Zealand to assist the Fijian Government in the coordination of relief efforts three (3) days later.

Madam Speaker, as I have mentioned earlier, based on humanitarian grounds, other countries had subsequently pledged their support and offered their assistance either in-kind or in monetary. International and local agencies and organisations, and even individuals, had followed suite offering whatever they have to support the government in responding to the needs of the affected communities.



Madam Speaker, other countries that have also provided assistance and support, apart from Australia, New Zealand and France, are: (1) the Government of China which provided aid assistance worth US\$1.1m; (2) India supplied US\$1m as immediate assistance and also deployed a military aircraft C-17 Globemaster III carrying 40 tons of aid; (3) the Government of South Korea provided US\$50,000.00 and GIMCO Korea Limited donated US\$23,000.00; (4) the Asian Development Bank US\$2m; (5) the European Union gave US\$4.6m; (6) Vanuatu provided US\$90,000.00; (7) Indonesia US\$5m; (8) Solomon Island US\$600,000.00 and many more others included Singapore, the United States of America, Japan, Nauru, and Tokelau.

All this humanitarian assistance had been directed towards the post Winston operations.

Madam Speaker, let me make it clear that humanitarian assistance would always be made available and directed towards the recovery, restoration, reconstruction, and rehabilitation of a country ravaged by a crisis irrespective of political differences and preferences.

Our country, Madam Speaker, was indeed in a crisis after being ravaged by Winston – a Category 5 Cyclone. And the

humanitarian assistance received had greatly helped in saving lives, alleviating suffering, and maintaining and protecting human dignity in the aftermath of Winston, as well as to strengthen preparedness for any similar situations in the future.

Madam Speaker, containers of relief assistance from our friends are still being received and are distributed to affected areas at the same time.

The support provided by our allies, Madam Speaker, had complemented our resources and manpower very well in the timely distribution of food, water, and shelter to those who were badly affected. I am pleased to say that those who were badly affected are now recuperating well.

Perhaps, Madam Speaker, this would be the opportune time for me, as Minister responsible for the National Disaster Management Office, to extend the profound gratitude and appreciation of the Fijian Government to our counterparts for their assistance and support in the quick restoration of normalcy. I also wish to thank other agencies, organisations, and individuals – nationally and internationally – for their understanding and support. Thank you for your tremendous help.



I would like to reassure this House, Madam Speaker, that the Fijian Government has the resources and manpower to immediately respond to the needs of our people in an event of a disaster – regardless of its magnitude, even if outside assistance is not forthcoming. But, if assistance is offered freely, it should be gratefully received and fully utilised.

Madam Speaker, it is our collective duty – as overseers – to see that the safety and security of our people are taken care of, especially in a disastrous situation. The question asked by the Honourable Member should be least expected in this House.

Madam Speaker, thank you for your indulgence.

**-END-**