



STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

REPORT ON THE MINISTRY OF RURAL & MARITIME DEVELOPMENT & NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2014



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2014 Annual review of the Ministry of Rural & Maritime Development and National Disaster Management

Report of the Natural Resources Standing
Committee

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CHAIR'S FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the review of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources on the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management 2014 Annual Report.

The Standing Committee on Natural Resources is a Standing Committee established under Section 109 (2) (c) of the Standing Orders (SO) of the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji. The Committee is mandated to examine matters related to forestry, agriculture, mining, environment, fisheries, water and marine services.

The purpose of the review was to scrutinize the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management 2014 Annual Report specifically on the areas of administration, legislation, organization structure, financial management, functions and programs of 2014.

The Annual Report contains the coverage and work achieved by the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management in 2014. It is worth noting that the Ministry achieved an "Excellent" SFCCO performance rating of about 92% indicating timely implementation of targeted activities in accordance with the Ministry's 2014 Annual Corporate Plan. A significant contribution towards the Ministry achievement is the commitment of its Senior Leaders to ensure strong leadership and good governance are practised in everyday activities of the Ministry.

The four Divisional Commissioners are engaged in the management, coordination and implementation of all government funded projects within their respective division under the Integrated Rural Development Framework mechanism. They are also engaged in other line Ministries not physically represented in the Division.

The Ministry also coordinates all disaster risk management awareness programs through the National Disaster Management Office. The four Divisional Commissioners leads the disaster risk management programs and coordinates other agencies in the divisions before, during and after a disaster incident to ensure that assistance is distributed evenly within the divisions.

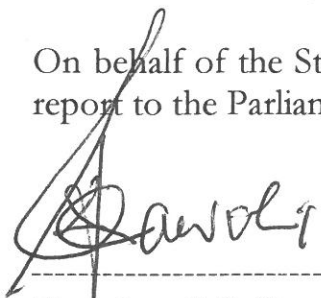
The findings of the review and the recommendations put forward by the Committee are intended to assist the Ministry's management and service

delivery to the rural and maritime population as well as building the resiliency to natural disasters.

The review exercise was made possible through consultations with the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management. The Committee had identified areas of concern that address challenges to ensure that the Ministry effectively delivers its mandate.

I wish to extend my appreciation to the Honourable Members and the Secretariat who were involved in the production of this bipartisan report. My Committee colleagues Hon. Ro Kiniviliame Kiliraki M (Deputy Chairperson), Hon. Alivereti Nabulivou (Member), Hon. Jiosefa Dulakiverata (Member), Hon. Samuela Vunivalu (Member).

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, I commend this report to the Parliament.



Hon. Joweli R. Cawaki
Chairperson

ACRONYMS

OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
DDBPS	Divisional Development Board Projects Scheme
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
RHAS	Rural Housing Assistance Scheme
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office
NCARS	Non - Cane Access Road Scheme
RHAS	Rural Housing Assistance Scheme
SHS	Self- Help Scheme

Ministry of Rural & Maritime Development and National Disaster Management

1.0 Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Natural Resources has conducted the annual review of the 2014 performance and current operations of the Ministry of Rural & Maritime Development and National Disaster Management and recommends that the House take note of its report and the Ministry to address its challenges progressively.

2.0 Introduction

The Standing Committee on Natural Resources was referred the 2014 Ministry of Rural & Maritime Development and National Disaster Management Annual Report for second reading on Tuesday 09th February, 2016. The Committee's responsibility was to scrutinise the 2014 Annual Report and make recommendations to Parliament under Standing Order 110 (c). The Committee's mandate under Standing Order 109 (c) is to look into matters relating to forestry, agriculture, mining, environment, fisheries, water and marine services.

The Ministry is mandated to manage and coordinate the implementation of Government Rural and Development Programs. To expedite this, the Ministry is responsible for the establishment of the Divisional and Provincial Development Boards, which are consultative and planning forum for development in the rural areas.

The Ministry through its four divisional Commissioners is mandated to manage and coordinate the implementation of government Rural Development Programs in their respective Divisional which includes:

1. **Self- Help Scheme (SHS)** – assistance is directed towards small infrastructural projects on a cost sharing basis (1/3 community and 2/3 government contribution);
2. **Divisional Development Board Projects Scheme (DDBPS)** – assistance is directed towards medium size fully funded infrastructural projects;
3. **Non – Cane Access Roads Scheme (NCARS)** – assisted is directed towards construction of new farm roads to open up areas that have potential for commercial afro- based activities;
4. **Rural Housing Assistance Scheme (RHAS)** – assistance is directed towards the provisions of affordable , durable and cyclone – resistant house to families in Fiji's rural areas;

- 5. Social Welfare Housing Scheme (SWHS)** – assistance is directed towards the provision of housing assistance on deserving Family Assistance recipients.

The Ministry also engages in other ancillary services behalf of the other line Ministries not physically represented in the Divisions. This includes the administration of:

1. Birth, Death and Marriages
2. Trading business licences
3. Liquor licences
4. Government Pool & Government Rented Quarters
5. Pension and Ex- Serviceman Fund
6. Fishing Permits

The Ministry has the overall responsibility to effect National Disaster, Management Strategy as required by the National Disaster Management Act 1998 encompassing prevention, mitigation, preparedness, emergency operations, relief and rehabilitation.

The Development Services Division monitors and evaluate capital programmes including planning, implementation and monitoring of Rural Housing projects, the Poverty Alleviation Project and Housing Rehabilitation programme.

The Corporate Services Division whilst providing support services to other Divisions in the ministry also ensures that the application of Best Human Resource Management practices are on line with equal employment opportunities, OHS and environmental initiatives.

The approved Ministry staff established is 438 (226 Established Officers and 102 Government Wage Earners).

3.0 Gender Analysis

The participation of women in Rural and Maritime Development was not specifically stated in the Ministry's 2014 Annual Report however, the participation of women is encouraged and visible. Women are considered as the mainstays of our rural and maritime communities in that they actively contributed to the social and economic progression from the household to the national level.

In the Ministry the gender composition depends on qualification and merit whereby there is no discrimination along gender basis. The selection of candidates is based on open merit recruitment.

The active involvement and participation of women in a male dominant workforce and decision making is encouraged. The women should be respected in deciding their choices of career path irrespective of their gender.

1.0 Committee Procedure

The Natural Resources Committee met on Wednesday 05th of October, 2016 to review the annual report of the Ministry of Rural & Maritime Development and National Disaster Management. The Committee received submission from the Deputy Secretary Operations and Director Corporate Services on the Ministry's Annual Performance for 2014.

2.0 Committee Members

The members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources:

1. Hon. Joweli Cawaki, Chair, Assistant Minister for Rural & Maritime Development & National Disaster Management
2. Hon. Ro. Kiniviliame Kiliraki, Deputy Chair, Opposition MP
3. Hon. Alivereti Nabulivou, Government MP
4. Hon. Jiosefa Dulakiverata, Opposition MP
5. Hon. Samuela Vunivalu, Government MP

3.0 Evidences and Advice Received

3.1 The Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management Senior Officials was called in by the Committee to present its views on its 2014 Annual Report on Wednesday 05th October, 2016.

3.2 Copy of the verbatim is attached hereof as an appendix.

Committee's deliberation

Committee Findings

1.0 Roles and Responsibilities of the Ministry

The Ministry is mandated to manage and coordinate the implementation of Government Rural Development Programs.

The Ministry's Vision to be "A World Class Development Organisation Empowering Fiji's Rural Sector" together with the Ministry's Mission for "Building the Integrated Rural Development Framework for Productive, Progressive, Safe and Resilient Communities in Fiji " is aimed at supporting Government overall Vision to create "A Better Fiji for All".

In line with these directions, the Ministry is responsible for implementing the following rural and maritime development programmes:

- 1.0.1 Self – Help Scheme:** assistance is directed towards all infrastructure projects on a cost sharing basis (1/3 community and 2/3 government contribution”;
- 1.0.2 Divisional Development Board Projects Scheme:** Assistance is directed towards medium size fully funded infrastructural projects;
- 1.0.3 Non - cane Access Roads Scheme:** assistance is directed towards construction of new farm roads to put up acres that have potential for commercial agro-based activities.
- 1.0.4 Rural Housing Assistance Scheme:** assistance is directed towards the provision of affordable, durable and cyclone- resistant houses to families in Fiji's rural areas;
- 1.0.5 Social Welfare Housing Assistance:** assistance is directed towards the provision of housing assistance on deserving Family Assistance recipients.

Whilst the four divisions focus on the coordination and implementation of government funded projects in rural areas, they also engage in other ancillary services on behalf of other line Ministries not physically represented in the Division. This includes the administration of:

- 1.0.5.1** Births, Death and Marriages
- 1.0.5.2** Trading Business Licenses
- 1.0.5.3** Liquor licences

- 1.0.5.4** Government Pool & Government Rented Quarters
- 1.0.5.5** Pension and Ex-Serviceman Fund
- 1.0.5.6** Fishing Permits
- 1.0.5.7** Public Procession Permits

In addition, the Ministry has the overall responsibility to effect national disaster management strategy as required by the National Disaster Management Act of 1998 encompassing prevention, mitigation, emergency operations relief and rehabilitation.

The Development Services Division monitors and evaluates capital programmes including planning, implementation and monitoring of Rural Housing projects, the Poverty Alleviation Project and Housing Rehabilitation programme.

The Corporate Services Division whilst providing support services to other Divisions in the Ministry also ensures that the application of best Human Resource Management practices are in line with equal employment opportunities, OHS and environmental initiatives.

The approved Ministry staff established is 328 (226 Established Officers & 102 Government Wage Earners).

2.0 Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December, 2014 Independent Audit Report – Office of the Auditor General.

2.1 Qualifications

- 2.1.1** A variance of \$3.6 million exists between the trust fund cash at bank recorded in the general ledger (\$7.7 million) and the trust fund liability account balance (\$4.1 million) contrary to section 58 (3) of the Finance Instructions 2010. In addition, the bank reconciliation for Provincial Development Trust Fund Account was not updated resulting in a variance of \$2,979,993 between the cash at bank balance and the cash balance recorded in the general ledger contrary to section 32 (6) of the Finance Instructions 2010. Therefore, the Trust Fund Account Statement of Receipts and Expenditure cannot be ascertained to be fairly stated.

2.1.2 The Board of Survey was in progress during the audit and as such the audit could not substantiate the Statement of Losses (other than money) contrary to section 49 (2) of Financial Instructions 2010.

2.1.3 Summary of Important Items in the Financial Statement

	2014 (\$)	2013 (\$)
Total Revenue	1,302,185	1,528,241
Total Operating Costs	10,292,804	8,447,225
Total Capital Expenditure	23,104,049	38,368,155
Total Expenditure	34,523,286	47,398,287
Trust Fund Account – Total Receipts	4,589,402	2,465,970
Trust Fund Account – Total Payments	3,033,073	2,356,035

3.0 Audit Opinion

In the Auditor's opinion, except for the matters referred in the qualification paragraphs above, the financial statements present fairly, in accordance with the accounting policies and the financial statements given the information required by the Financial Management Act 2004.

3.1 The Divisional Commissioners Role

3.1.1 Commissioner Central Division

The Division is headed by the Commissioner Central. It is assisted by the Divisional Planning Officer, Provincial Administrators and Support Staff. They coordinate and implement government funded projects in the provinces of Namosi, Naitasiri, Rewa, Serua and Tailevu through the existing consultative forums.

In addition, the Commissioner Central has the overall responsibility for managing disaster in an event of a natural disaster and also coordinates other agencies during and after a disaster.

The Division continued to promote equal opportunities of access to basic services through the implementation of the following programs:

- 3.1.1.1** Self- Help Scheme;
- 3.1.1.2** Non- Cane Access Roads;
- 3.1.1.3** Rural Housing Assistance Scheme;

- 3.1.1.4 Poverty Alleviation Housing Scheme;
- 3.1.1.5 Public Sector Investment Programme and
- 3.1.1.6 Ancillary Services.

3.1.2 Administration

- 3.1.2.1 The Division has a total of sixty two (62) staff, forty eight (48) Established and fourteen (14) Government Wage Earners stationed at the Divisional Headquarters in Nausori and in, Namosi, Rewa, Serua and Tailevu.

3.1.3 Assets

- 3.1.3.1 A total of eleven (11) vehicles and one (1) fibreglass boat were allocated to the Division to facilitate timely, effective and efficient delivery of service.

Additionally, offices in the Division are being equipped with basic equipment and furniture to ensure the constant discharge of duties. Obsolete items have been boarded and awaiting the decision from the Ministry of Finance for disposal.

3.1.4 Commissioner Eastern Division

- 3.1.4.1 The Division is headed by the Commissioner Eastern and assisted by the Divisional Planning Officer, Provincial Administrators and Support Staff for the coordination and implementation of government funded projects in the provinces of Lomaiviti, Lau, Kadavu and Rotuma through the existing consultative forums.

The Office continued to promote equal opportunities of access to basic services through the implementation of the following programmes:

- 3.1.4.2 Self- Help Scheme;
- 3.1.4.3 Non- Cane Access Roads;
- 3.1.2.3 Rural Housing Assistance Scheme;
- 3.1.2.4 Poverty Alleviation Housing Scheme;
- 3.1.2.5 Public Sector Investment Programme; and
- 3.1.2.6 Ancillary Services.

In addition, the Commissioner Eastern Division has the overall responsibility for disaster management. Disaster awareness and prepositioning of disaster kits was the message to the four (4) provinces as precautionary measures.

There have also been notable effects of the Climate Change affecting some islands. A team visited Waciwaci, Lakeba in Lau to undertake relocation assessment for the village school.

3.1.5 Administration

The Division has a total of thirty six (36) staff, twenty six (26) Established and ten (10) Government Wage Earners stationed at the Divisional Headquarters in Suva and in Lau, Lomaiviti, Kadavu and Rotuma.

3.1.4.4 Assets

A total of seven (7) vehicles and two fibreglass boats were allocated to the Division to facilitate timely and effective service delivery.

3.1.7 Commissioner Western Division

3.1.7.1 The Division is headed by the Commissioner Western and assisted by the Divisional planning Officer, Provincial Administrators and Support projects on the provinces of Ba, Nadroga/Navosa, and Ra through the implementation of the integrated Rural Development Framework and existing consultative and planning forums.

The Office continued to promote equal opportunities of access to basic services through the implementation of the program:

- 3.1.7.1.1 Self- Help Scheme;
- 3.1.7.1.2 Non- Cane Access Roads;
- 3.1.7.1.3 Rural Housing Assistance Scheme;
- 3.1.7.1.4 Poverty Alleviation Housing Scheme;
- 3.1.7.1.5 Public Sector Investment Programme; and
- 3.1.7.1.6 Ancillary Services.

In addition, the Commissioner Western Division has the overall responsibility for disaster management. Disaster awareness and

prepositioning of disaster kits was the message to the four provinces as precautionary measures.

3.1.8 Administration

3.1.8.1 The Division has a total of sixty nine (69) staff, forty seven (47) Established and twenty two (22) Government Wage Earners stationed at the Divisional Headquarters in Lautoka and at the Provincial and District Offices in Nadroga/Navosa, Ba, Ra, Keiyasi, Tavua, Nadarivatu and Rakiraki.

3.1.9 Assets

3.1.9.1 A total of twenty one (21) vehicles were allocated to the Division to facilitate timely and effective service delivery.

3.1.9.2 Additionally, offices in the divisions are being equipped with basic equipment and furniture to facilitate the consistent discharge of duties. Obsolete items have been boarded and are awaiting the decision for the Ministry of Finance for disposal.

3.1.10 Commissioner Northern Division

3.1.10.1 The Division is headed by the Commissioner Northern and assisted by the Divisional Planning Officer, Provincial Administrators and Support Staff for the coordination and implementation of government funded projects in the provinces of Cakaudrove, Bua, and Macuata through the existing consultative and planning forums.

3.1.10.3 The Division continued to promote equal opportunities of access to basic services through the implementation of the following programmes:

- 3.1.10.4 Self- Help Scheme;
- 3.1.10.5 Non- Cane Access Roads;
- 3.1.10.6 Rural Housing Assistance Scheme;
- 3.1.10.7 Poverty Alleviation Housing Scheme;
- 3.1.10.8 Public Sector Investment Programme; and
- 3.1.10.9 Ancillary Services.

In addition, the Commissioner Northern has the overall responsibility for disaster management. Disaster awareness and prepositioning of disaster kits was the message to the four provinces as precautionary measures.

3.1.11 Administration

The Division has a total of fifty seven (57) staff, forty one (41) Established and sixteen (16) Government Wage Earners stationed at the Divisional Headquarters in Lautoka and in Savusavu, Nabouwalu, Taveuni, Tukavesi and Saqani.

3.1.12 Assets

A total of fifteen (15) vehicles were allocated to the Division to facilitate timely and effective service delivery.

Additionally, offices in the divisions are being equipped with basic equipment and furniture to facilitate the consistent discharge of duties. Obsolete items have been boarded and are awaiting the decision for the Ministry of Finance for disposal.

3.1.13 Emergency Water

The prolonged dry spell affecting most parts of Fiji that initiated from the end of the June has had visible and tangible effect on the water sources, agriculture and social sectors such as health and education services in the maritime and mainland areas. Two major issues caused by the prolonged dry spell are increase in burning cases as well as the drying up of the water sources.

Due to the dryness, an emergency water operation was activated on 31st July, 2014, and this operation was manned at the Divisional Emergency Operation Centre by the divisional office staff.

3.2 National Disaster Management Office (NDMO)

3.2.1 Significant Events

The National Disaster Management Office is responsible for national disaster management in Fiji where day to day functions of the disaster management organisations are managed and coordinated /conducted.

The main functions of the National Disaster Management Office are to:-

- 3.2.1.1** implement policies laid down by the Council and Cabinet;
- 3.2.1.2** advise the National Disaster Controller , the Council and other relevant bodies on disaster related matters;
- 3.2.1.3** initiate formulation of policies for development of disaster; management organisation and activities;
- 3.2.1.4** arrange meetings of the Council and its sub-committees, provide-Secretariat support and initiate follow-up action;
- 3.2.1.5** deal with disaster management related issues at the national leve;
- 3.2.1.6** initiate and co-ordinate the preparation for rehabilitation plans after national reviews
- 3.2.1.7** review disaster preparedness arrangements and carry out post-disaster reviews
- 3.2.1.8** co-ordinate disaster management training and public education ; and
- 3.2.1.9** perform any other functions as directed by the National Disaster Controller.

3.2.2 Significant Events

- 3.2.2.1** Establishment of a geospatial portal for disaster risk managements (GEO – DRM) in the server of Fiji Government and the enhancement of the capacity of government officers to operate the geo-DRM and make geospatial data processing for disaster risk reduction.
- 3.2.2.2** A flood table top exercise coordinated by NDMO and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) OF New Zealand was conducted in Labasa from 21st to 25th July, 2014 for flood prone areas of Labasa Town. This exercise was focused on the coordination of response agencies with the divisional emergency operation centres.
- 3.2.2.3** First Time, the two programmes, National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction for Disaster Risk Reduction and climate Change Adaptation were brought under the same forum for discussion with adopted outcomes at the end of the 4 day discussions.
- 3.2.2.4** Completion of the Bau Seawall Project under the Mitigation Fund
- 3.2.2.5** The Drought dry spell emergency operation from June to November where the provision of emergency water to all divisions stalled all capital projects for the Ministry due to prolonged dry spell.
- 3.2.2.6** Fiji's participation at the *2nd Prepcom for the 3rd World Conference for Disasters Risk Reduction (DRR)* HELD IN Geneva in November.

3.2.3 Development Services Division

- 3.2.3.1** The division continued to provide secretariat services to the Committee on Better Utilisation of Land (CBUL) and coordinated the payment of \$6.4 to the iTaukei Land Trust Boat for the renewal of leases.
- 3.2.3.2** The Rural Housing Unit (RHU) managed to serve a total of 305 clients through FNPF applications as follows:
- 3.2.3.3**

Division	No. of Clients
Central	151
Eastern	86
Western	43
Northern	25

3.2.3.4 The Rural Housing Unit (RHU) was engaged in the construction of the some Rural and Outer Islands projects within the four (4) divisions as follows:

Name of Project	Province
Latianara Primary Schoolteachers' Quarters	Serua
Latianara College Teachers Quarters	Serua
Tui Waimaro Residence	Tailevu
Viseisei Community Hall	Ba
Ravitaki Health Centre	Kadavu

4.0 Conclusion

The Ministry achieved a good Strategic Framework for Change Coordinating Office (SFCCO) performance rating averaging to 82 % for the 4 quarters indicating the timely implementation of its targeted activities for 2014.

5.0 Challenges Faced By the Ministry

- 5.0.1 Simplifying and re-engineering the administrative process without compromising good governance and accountability;
- 5.0.2 Office space and Accommodation in remote and isolated rural and maritime stations;
- 5.0.3 Staffing- Recruiting qualified and competent staff to do the job;
- 5.0.4 Training and Development;
- 5.0.5 Community Capacity Building;

- 5.0.6 Transportation;
- 5.0.7 Expedient work process to make an impact on these programs to benefit the targeted communities;
- 5.0.8 Work collectively with the other government agencies;
- 5.0.9 The NCAR, Non Cane Access Roads Scheme – Most contractors do not wish to carry out the road works in the outer islands. Thus has left many road works left undone;
- 5.0.10 Fiji Procurement Office requirements on the use of Government Contractors. Most of these contractors are not able to meet the demand of the Ministry and especially so in not having the materials right up to the project sites and
- 5.0.11 The Ministry have clients with 1/3 contributions but the budgetary provisions is not enough to cater for their 2/3 contributions from government. The government to increase its budgetary provision to meet the demand. This applies to the Ministry's Self Help and Rural Housing Programs.

APPENDIX

**VERBATIM NOTES OF MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES, HELD IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM (WEST WING)
PARLIAMENT COMPLEX, ON WEDNESDAY, 5TH OCTOBER, 2016 AT 10.08 A.M.**

**Submittee: Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development & National
Disaster Management**

In Attendance:

Ms Loata Vakacegu	-	Acting Deputy Secretary
Ms Mele Lacarua	-	Acting Director Corporate Services

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members of the Committee, we are fortunate this morning to have the Deputy Secretary, Mrs. Loata Vakacegu and the Director Corporate Services, Mrs. Mele Lacarua from the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management. To the two guests, this Committee on Natural Resources welcomes you to the Committee meeting.

This Committee has been given the Annual Report for the Ministry for 2014 and this morning we would like you to present to us about the report. For 2014, I understand the report is with you and the Committee will pose some questions at the end of your presentation.

DS and DCS, welcome to the Committee on Natural Resources this morning and we look forward to your presentation on the Ministry's Report for 2014. *Vinaka*.

MS L. VAKACEGU.- *Vinaka Vakalevu*, Chair and the Honourable Members of Parliament, first of all I would like to convey the Permanent Secretary's apology because of the other commitments of Government and I am sure you would understand the situation that the Ministry is in now.

Also, the PS could not make it here and I am sure you would understand the situation that the Ministry is in now.

We have been asked to stand in for him and I would also like to state here that I will depend on the contribution of the Chair since he was also the Assistant Minister in 2014 and he is also aware that I just joined the Ministry this year in February but the Director Corporate Services for the Ministry was there in 2014 and is still with us.

We understand that the 2014 Annual Report is on the Parliament website which is readily accessible to all of us – to the public and also to the Members of Parliament.

As we go through the Report, we understand that the report is just to assess the performance of the Ministry against the 2014 Annual Corporate Plan. In the Annual Corporate

Ministry to achieve its vision of creating a world class development organisation? Thank you Honourable Chair.

MS. L. VAKACEGU.- Mr. Chair, I would like to first state that the Ministry has changed its vision.

The reason why we changed the vision is because now we are looking at the 2014 Report. We are into 2016 and within those years, we have seen that it is like an utopia, something that we aspire to, but we have tried to tone it down a bit and be realistic with the trend that we have seen in our performance.

So first is the resilient aspect of it because we want the Ministry to build up its performance on Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management and also working with the Climate Change Division in the Ministry of Economy because as it was, these two divisions are always working, going on a separate line or independently working. So, now we are trying to build up the co-ordination mechanism between the Disaster Management Office and the Climate Change Division.

The second bit of it is what I have said before, Mr. Chair, is getting the right people to do the job for us and be realistic with the outputs that we have set in the 2016. I can only speak for the 2016 Annual Corporate Plan now, and also we will be expected to report on the 2016 Annual Report.

So, the initiatives, Mr. Chair, is to be realistic with our achievements. Let us not say 'world class', if we are aspiring to get there, but somewhere we can achieve it along the line within the next 5 or 10 years.

Secondly, is to get the right people for the Ministry to perform and the processes that we have in place, because we believe in making the process with the right people we can achieve the goals that we have set in our Annual Corporate Plan for the following year.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Committee, any other question? Yes, Honourable Vunivalu.

HON. S.B. VUNIVALU.- My question this morning is: how does the Ministry ensure gender equality in its organisation? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MS. L. VAKACEGU.- As it has always been the practice and something that I have also observed in my last 20 or so years in the public service before I went out and came in again that this Ministry is always been led by males and I am glad to say that I was competently accepted to hold the Acting Deputy Secretary for the Ministry. Also, in the last week, I was holding the position of Acting Permanent Secretary, that is, I think that is the big shift in the Ministry towards gender equality.

In our ACPs for 2015 and 2016, one of the key outputs that we have in the Annual Corporate Plan is gender equality and recognition of the disabled community and that is how we want to build disparity in our work with communities.

For example, if the Disaster Management Office is going to look at a programmes (this is the experience that we have had from *TC Winston*), community halls or communal buildings, it has to be gender friendly and also disability friendly, having the kitchen for women to prepare food and also the wheelchair accessibility for buildings. Those are the little things that we are trying, not really little, but big things we are looking at to address the disparity in community, whether it is gender or disability for that sense.

HON. S.B. VUNIVALU.- I Just want to add on to that, Mr. Chair. Naturally, male and female are there. In terms of maternity leave, if a man is holding that position, there will be no maternity leave and when the lady goes on maternity leave, who will replace her?

MS. L. VAKACEGU.- I will ask the Director Corporate Services to respond.

MS. M. LACARUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chair. Right now in the ministry, through the Civil Service Reform, we are practising the Open Merit Recruitment System (OMRS). So, for maternity leave, we will have to get someone to act on the post. We send out expressions of interest to everyone in the ministry, whether it be male or female, if they meet the criteria that we have sent out, that is the next best person that we will choose. It does not depend on gender. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Kiliraki.

HON. RATU. K. KILIRAKI.- Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a clarification, what are the monitoring and reporting framework in place to review the systems and processes necessary to meet the desired outputs of the Ministry's Annual Corporate Plan, 2014?

MS. M. LACARUA.- Right now in the ministry, we have the four Divisional Commissioners offices, which have development planning cells and at the Ministry Headquarters, we have the development unit which has a monitoring and research unit. These are the divisions that carry out our monitoring on all the projects that we carry out and then in our corporate services, we have another unit which monitors the outputs of the ministry that are in our Annual Corporate Plans.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- We are looking at the Divisional level and also at the Headquarters level. Honourable Dulakiverata.

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Thank you ladies for your presentation. I just want some clarifications on the processes of Non Cane Access Scheme.

MS. L. VAKACEGU.- Thank you, Mr. Chair. The processes and the requests we receive for Non Cane Access Roads, say for an example, for areas or divisions that we have, the cane fields. The requests are directed or submitted to us by the Divisional Commissioners and District Officers in those divisions.

standard. When we have this rural housing clients coming, they can use these carpenters but at that carpenters' charge.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- *Vinaka* Members of the Committee. Any other question?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, Honourable Vunivalu

HON. S.B. VUNIVALU.- Sir, maybe you can answer this question.

This concern relates to villages in Nausori Highlight in Nadi and Toko village and Bavu, Yako and Nabila. These villages, like their town is Nadi but they belong to the Nadroga province. I think your mission is also regarding the rural areas but there are difficulties and you know, Sir, until now, in regards to this *Cyclone Winston*, the District Officer has referred everything to DO Namataku who is in Keiyasi, Navosa and Nadroga but their villages are just around the corner. Their town is Nadi – Yako and them. Maybe this is the time to discuss, Sir. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Administrative issue.

DS, I think when I was Divisional Commissioner, these are the villages that are close to Nadi. We had put a line from Bavu, which is in the province of Nadroga, to be serviced by Nadi and also Nausori Highlights rather than going to Keiyasi because it belongs to Navosa and to come down to Nadi. I am not sure if that still stands now because after 2 years I have been out of the West, I think the issue should have been raised with the Honourable Member because the Honourable Member is from Nadi. If the Ministry can check again on that, it is an administrative issue because from Bavu, Yako and some of the villages up in Nausori and Toko, and likewise for the villages that belong to the Ba province that are in the Valley Road, Rararua, Dreke, they are close to going to Sigatoka rather than going to Nadi. It is the ease of administration for our people.

MS. L. VAKACEGU.- Thank you Chair. That is something that we have been discussing in house. As you are aware, we have a new Permanent Secretary is also born and bred official in that Ministry, who is very much familiar with this re-drawing of boundaries for district and divisional areas.

So that is something that we were talking about and hopefully it will be applied. Just to give you an example, we have just had the Dada district office station completed. I am not sure whether it has been officially opened or not. What we are doing, we have looked at Namosi. So what we have actually done is to look at the number of villages, the population up in that area for Namosi, where the Dada District Office station has been stationed now.

The Permanent Secretary has made a decision to relocate the PA Namosi up to that Dada District Office because we have about 18,000 people living up there and they need the services of the Provincial Administrator Namosi up there than being based in Navua.

So I am just giving you one example. That is how we have looked at things and we have done the assessment on the ground and that will ultimately affect the re-location of services that we have in the Ministry out in the divisions. And that has been raised by the Assistant Minister, being the Former Commissioner Western. That is one of the moves that we have just done recently and we are thankful to Government for opening new district offices away from the main centres that we know, Namosi or maybe Navua and moving the senior officers up where the people are or the population is concentrated. Thank you.

HON. S.B. VUNIVALU.- Mr. Chair, I am bringing up this issue because of the *Turaga ni Koro*, they have complained to me that is why I am raising this issue today.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Provincially they belong to, like in Nausori Highlight, provincially it belongs to Navosa but administratively the work of Government can be administrated from the Nadi office, the DO Nadi.

It has been working when I was there rather than going to DO Navosa, administratively it has been looked after and likewise for Malolo, it is easy to come to Nadi then to go down to Sigatoka. Any other questions?

HON. A. NABULIVOU.- On service delivery - how does the Ministry evaluate the service delivery? It is very important, very important to this Government of Fiji-First. Service delivery, how do you evaluate?

How does the Ministry evaluate for effective and for the customers? Evaluate the Service delivery in the Ministry or its customers, providing effective.

MS. L. VAKACEGU.- Chair, we do not have the service excellence awards any more for the whole of the public service but the Ministry as of now, we do our monitoring evaluation reporting on quarterly basis and for customers that come into the Ministry, also we advocate this to the divisions, the front liners customer services that we provide, whether it is in the district office or in the divisional office that is very important to us. So what we have done, we have re-evaluated that and also done our training curriculum within the ministry to adjust our service delivery gaps.

We cannot say that we are perfect in that area, we still have gaps and we train our staff accordingly based on the reports that we receive, whether it is from the public themselves or as we all know the social media - *Facebook* and all that we have now that people do report on the services or counter report on the services that the Ministry provides.

Recently the Permanent Secretary has been very proactive in that area and even speaking directly to the District Officers and the Divisional Commissioners on the kind of reports that we receive in HQ on the feedback that we get from the public that we service.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Last question, Honourable Dulakiverata.

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Thank you Chair. Just a question to the two ladies; the OAG's Report on Qualification stated the bank's reconciliation for provincial development trust fund account was not updated, resulting in a variance of \$2,979,923 between the cash at bank balance and the cash balance recorded in the general ledger contrary to Section 32 (5) of the Finance Instruction 2010. What are the reasons why the bank reconciliations were not updated?

MS. M. LACARUA.- Thank you, Chair, yes we agree to this qualification. If you look at our Annual Report for 2015 that we are currently getting printed now, we managed to clear this qualification. This came about when the Government's Accounting System changed.

The Ministry has changed from various Heads, once it was in Head 5 with the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs, at another point in time it went to Head 18 with the Ministry of Multi-Ethnic Affairs and then it is now Head 15 where we are on our own.

With the FMIS transferring this trust fund accounts, most of the funds were left behind in the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs, some were left behind in Ministry of Multi-Ethnic Affairs and we were not able to clear this because it was all over the place, but at the end of last year we managed to write off all these outstanding amounts.

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Thank you. So, Mr. Chair, just a follow up to that, so the 2015 Account will reflect this.

MS. M. LACARUA.- The cleared one, Sir.

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Thank you.

HON. A. NABULIVOU.- Just to Ms. Lacarua, can you enlighten us about the Vatukoula Social Welfare Housing Scheme. We want to know what is the fund, what fund is used and to what purposes?

MS. M. LACARUA.- *Vinaka*, Chair. This year, we have about \$114,000 in our budget allocated especially for this 10 or 12 Vatukoula clients that we have.

Currently the Ministry, together with PM's Office are working on getting the houses built for this clients. Some of them have their houses, they had already started building and had it destroyed by *Tropical Cyclone Winston* again, but the Ministry is currently in consultation with FNPF and we will get their one third(1/3) contributions from FNPF directed into our accounts. Once we get that we will start building their houses but the funds for the building of the houses for those Vatukoula clients are with us in our budget this year.

HON. A. NABULIVOU.- Some of the rule housing scheme?

MS. M. LACARUA.- Yes, Sir.

HON. A. NABULIVOU.- Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- *Vinaka*.

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Mr. Chair, just a follow up to that question, where are these houses being built in their own villages, or in Vatukoula?

MS. M. LACARUA.- Thank you, Sir. It will be built in their own villages.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- *Vinaka*, Honourable Members of the Committee, I think we have covered all that needs to be asked to our guests this morning.

DS and Director, on behalf of the Committee, we thank you a lot for availing yourself for the review of the 2014 Annual Report for the Ministry. Is there anything else as last comments from DS?

MS. L. VAKACEGU.- Mr. Chair, I just like to convey a special request from the Permanent Secretary in regards to the programmes and the feedback that we get from the public at large. As we all know, this is a very critical Ministry for Government because it is a face of Government out there, especially to our rural people here as services of Government is still trying to reach out as far as it can.

What we have experienced from *Tropical Cyclone Winston* and some of you may also continue to hear that the Government is trying very hard to reach out as quickly as possible or as effective as it can to the affected communities of ours.

At the moment, the Ministry is working on a National Humanitarian Policy to better coordinate the accessibility of Government assistance whether it is during post-disaster or in disaster preparedness. So the specific request from the Permanent Secretary is, if we can all work together in terms of getting the Ministry to address the enquiries from the public or the gaps that the Ministry may have in addressing more effectively and efficiently the needs of our people out there. Thank you.

HON. A. NABULIVOU.- Just a last question.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- *Sa oti na taro*.

HON. A. NABULIVOU.- To add to that, you were mentioning about the second phase rehabilitation that the Ministry will engage with the Department of Social Welfare, am I correct? The second phase of the *TC Winston* rehabilitation works.

MS. M. LACARUA.- Yes, I have mentioned, Chair, on Monday we had met with the Ministry of Women, as you all know it has a new Minister now, that has a new direction for the rehab programme and from the Ministry's side, we are happy that the Divisional Commissioners will be able to work closely with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and Social Welfare in better coordinating the reach out to the people who still have to be assisted.

Like I said earlier, the Permanent Secretary has made a special request that whether it is housing, water (and I know the Honourable Dulikaverata had spoken to me once on the water to Naikawaga) which was again referred to us a few weeks ago. So those are the types of feedback that we would like from the Ministry to come up to us in terms of working collectively in achieving the goals of Government in reaching out as far as we can and is effective as we can to our own people out there in the rural areas.

Yes, phase two we will work with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Social Welfare Department and the Ministry of Economy Rehabilitation Unit, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- *Vinaka*, just to add on to that for the information of the Honourable Members the Rehabilitation for *TC Winston* was moved to the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and Social Welfare Department on the Help for Home.

The Ministry of Rural Development was not involved. Now I have talked to the new Minister during our session in Parliament last week because of the delay in the supply and the Minister had told me that she wants to meet the Divisional Commissioners. The best person to do the job is the Divisional Commissioners and the DOs. So it is now coming back to us, coming back to the Ministry so that is why this Ministry is engaging more again into the rehabilitation.

So on that note DS and Director, thank you for your presence today. What you have shared with us and the questions will be part of our report to Parliament on this 2014 Annual Report for the Ministry. *Vinaka vakalevu.*

The Committee Interview adjourned at 10.53 a.m.