

SPEAKING NOTES FOR HON. OSEA NAIQAMU – ACTING MINISTER FOR RURAL MARITIME DEVELOPMENT, NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES

Hon. Ratu Suliano Matanitobua to ask the Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management and Meteorological Services – Can the Minister update the House on the development and plans of the Government for seawalls along the villages and settlements.

Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the question on the developments and plans of Government with regards to the construction of seawalls for villages and settlements.

Madam Speaker, Government is committed on constructing seawalls and river walls for villages and communities located along the major coastal areas and rivers. To support this commitment, Government has allocated \$2.5 million under the Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation programme to focus on the construction of seawalls and evacuation centers.

Madam Speaker, in addition to this programme the Ministry of Waterways also provides funding support for the construction of seawalls especially for villages and settlement located near irrigation schemes and also for those located along the major rivers and streams.

Madam Speaker, the need for better adaptation to climate change provides the general guidance on the processes involved and Governments emphasis on disaster risk reduction sets out the criteria for assistance for such adaptation measures.

Madam Speaker, the total value of projects registered with our divisional commissioner's office is estimated at around \$28 million dollars. This is an indication of the interest from communities for the construction of seawall however these requests are subject to the conduct of a vulnerability and environment impact assessment.

Madam Speaker, the conduct of such assessments are important to ensure that requests are risk screened, priority villages and settlements are identified, and that the approved design for seawalls addresses current risks and also minimises any unforeseen future risks.

Madam Speaker, for this financial year 2017/18 the Ministry is currently working on the Vabea village retaining wall project and the Solotavui village landfill and seawall project. Both projects are located in Kadavu and estimated to cost government around (\$1.0m) one million dollars. In addition to these projects government is committed to completing the Nakarabo village Seawall in Cakaudrove and Namara village seawall project in

Tailevu. These projects are estimated to cost government (\$70,000) seventy thousand dollars.

Madam Speaker, majority of the projects identified are still in the consultation and design stage and once this processes are completed will be placed on tender and funded accordingly by Government. These processes are to ensure durability and value for money once these projects are implemented.

Madam Speaker, for the next financial year 2018/19 the Ministry is working on the Ba Methodist High School protection project and the Nadaro village (Tailevu) river protection works project. The Ministry is working with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport (MoIT) on the designs.

Madam Speaker, seawalls requires good engineering practices and combined with traditional knowledge will ensure that such barriers can provide the much need coastal protection without impacting the natural environment. In some cases consideration will be given on having a combination of this hard infrastructure together with natural barriers such as the re-planting of mangroves and traditional tree species along coastal areas to ensure restoration of important ecosystems within these areas.

Madam Speaker, government will continue to work with other agencies that provided assistance with the construction of seawalls to ensure that those communities who require such infrastructure are assisted to ensure better coastal protection and long term sustainability.

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