

PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS

REPORT ON ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE iTAUKEI TRUST FUND BOARD, 2017



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CHAIR'S FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the report of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs on the annual review of the iTaukei Trust Fund Board for the year ended 31st December 2017.

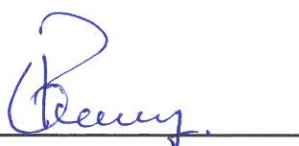
This review was made on the 2017 Annual Report of the iTaukei Trust Fund Board and was done in accordance with Standing Order 109(2)(b) which mandates the committee to look into issues related to health, education, social services, labour, culture and media.

The review looked at nine key areas covering the period from January to December 2017, conducted into: The Fund's administration; structure; budgetary allocation; programmes offered; policies; challenges; highlights; priorities for the coming years; and its implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Committee is generally satisfied with the operations and activities of the iTaukei Trust Fund Board and is of the view that it has fulfilled its legislated objectives in 2017. We commend it for the various projects undertaken on language, culture and heritage in the course of the year to foster advancement of the indigenous Fijians and Rotumans.

Finally, I thank the Acting Chief Executive Officer of the iTaukei Trust Fund Board and his staff for their assistance in this inquiry. I also wish to thank my Committee colleagues and Committee staff for their contributions and support.

I commend this report to Parliament.



Hon. Viam Pillay

Chairman

LIST OF ACRONYMS

- TTFB - iTaukei Trust Fund Board
- SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals

RECOMMENDATION:

The Standing Committee on Social Affairs has conducted a review of the Annual Report of the iTaukei Trust Fund Board for 2017 and recommends that Parliament takes note of its report.

INTRODUCTION

The 2017 Annual Report of the iTaukei Trust Fund Board was tabled in Parliament during the November 2018 meeting and referred to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, for its scrutiny.

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

Standing Orders 110(1)(c) authorises the Standing Committee to *scrutinise 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, rationalisation, restructuring, functioning, organisation, structure and policy formulation.*

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The substantive members of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs are:

- Hon. Viam Pillay (Chairperson)
- Hon. George Vegenathan (Deputy Chairperson)
- Hon. Alipate Nagata (Member)
- Hon. Salote Radrodoro (Member)
- Hon. Dr Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu (Member)

During the Standing Committee's meetings, the following alternate membership arose pursuant to Standing Order 115(5):

- Hon. Simione Rasova
- Hon. Mikaele Leawere

CORE BUSINESS OF THE iTAUKEI TRUST FUND BOARD

The Committee noted that the core business of the Fund is to enhance, enrich and promote the quality of life, culture, leadership, entrepreneurial knowledge and skills of iTaukei and Rotumans.

ISSUES RAISED

CAPACITY BUILDING OF STAFF

With the establishment of the tertiary education programs and support, heritage and curatorial knowledge and skills, community empowerment programs and volatility of Investment, the Fund will need to build Human Resources capacity in order to fulfill its objectives. Presently, there are only seven staff in the Trust Fund managing its \$116,646,175 total asset.

On a positive note, during the evidence session with officials from TTFB, the committee was assured that the iTaukei Trust Fund Board's Strategic Plan 2019-2023 will address the shortfalls in Human Resource capacity through the following measures:

- Organisational capabilities/functions against growth;
- Training and development; and
- Succession plan for critical roles.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Fund continue to build its Human Resource capacity in order to fulfil its legislated objectives.

DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL RESOURCES TO ENHANCE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

The committee noted that there is a shortage of specialised skills in language and heritage areas in Fiji. As such, the Fund's objective is to support iTaukei and Rotuman students for tertiary learning to address these shortages as well as for teaching and learning more broadly.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Fund increase its awareness campaign and training programmes with the *iTaukei* and Rotuman communities at the *Vanua* and national level in order to promote and safeguard their language, culture and heritage.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

One of the challenges the Fund faces is in terms of investment opportunities, that is, to meet its legislative mandates. During the evidence session with officials from TTFB, the committee was informed that there is a need to review the iTaukei Trust Fund Act 2004 with respect to some provisions relating to the Trustee Act 1948 which was last amended in 1966.

Under the Act, the Fund is restricted from investing into two key line investments. Firstly, it cannot make an investment in any company that has not provided any dividends in the last five years. Secondly, under the Act, the Fund is not able to invest in companies that have negative social impacts on families and society.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Fund conduct training programmes for leadership and entrepreneurial knowledge and skills for resource owners to capitalise on investment opportunities.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The committee noted that the Fund's programmes in language, culture and heritage are aligned to the iTaukei Trust Fund Board Act mandates, aspects of which are aligned to the SDGs. In particular, the following work is carried out by the Fund to progress relevant SDGs:

Literacy projects and Publications (SDG 4 – Quality Education): The Fund mentors teachers through a literacy project to write relevant teaching resources which concurrently builds capacity for teachers.

In addition, TTFB supports the up skilling of teachers in the teaching of the Fijian language by paying for their tuition fees towards the Diploma in Pacific Vernacular – Fijian at USP.

Active Citizens program (SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities): The Active Citizens program promotes social leadership through its two facilitation modules namely; 'Social Action' and 'Social Entrepreneurship'. This project aims to empower people to take ownership of their entrepreneurship initiatives and achieve sustainability in their projects and communities.

GENDER ANALYSIS

Gender is a critical dimension to parliamentary scrutiny. Standing Order 110 (2) requires committees to consider gender equality and ensure that the impact on both men and women is explored in all matters.

The committee noted that recruitment, training and promotion of employees at the iTaukei Trust Fund Board is based on the Open Merit Recruitment System and this is reflected in its Human Resources policy.

CONCLUSION


The Standing Committee on Social Affairs noted that 2017 has been a good year for the Fund in terms of the fulfilment of its legislated objectives. We commend the Fund for the various projects on language, culture and heritage which were undertaken in the course of the year to foster advancement of the indigenous Fijians and Rotumans. The Investment portfolio remains healthy and is generating the needed revenue to support the Fund's operations.

The review of the iTaukei Trust Fund Board's 2017 Annual Report was conducted in a very tactful and comprehensive manner. After the review, the committee forwarded questions to the Fund on certain issues for further clarification.

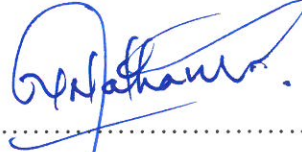
This has enabled the committee for Social Affairs to submit to Parliament a more reliable and a cohesive report.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS' SIGNATURE

We, the Members of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, agree with the contents of this report:



Hon. Viam Pillay
(Chairperson)



Hon. George Vegnathan
(Deputy Chairperson)



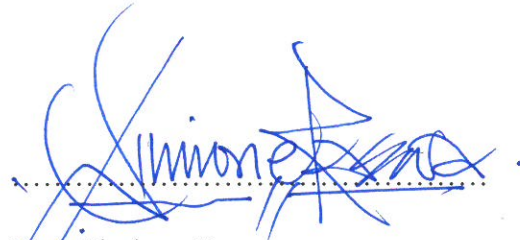
Hon. Alipate Nagata
(Member)



Hon. Salote Radrodro
(Member)



Hon. Dr Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu
(Member)



Hon. Simione Rasova
(Alternate Member)



Hon. Mikaele Leawere
(Alternate Member)

APPENDICES

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the Parliament website at the following link: <http://www.parliament.gov.fj/committees/standing-committee-on-social-affairs/>

Wednesday 30 January 2019

iTaukei Trust Fund Board

Aisake Taito, Acting Chief Executive Officer and **Mosese Seavula**, Investment Officer.

Published written evidence

Written evidence and supplementary information was received from the iTaukei Trust Fund Board and can be viewed on the Parliament website at the following link:
<http://www.parliament.gov.fj/committees/standing-committee-on-social-affairs/>