



## OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

### RESPONSES TO ANNUAL REPORTS (JANUARY – JULY 2016); 2016-2017 & 2017-2018

#### ANNUAL REPORT 2016 (JANUARY – JULY)

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##### 1.0 Question:

In reference to page 17 of the AR 2016, please clarify the OPMs administration of the PM Small Grant Scheme (SGS) in terms of addressing SDG 1, which relates to reduction of poverty.

##### Response:

There are three (3) sectors where SGS funding is allocated to (i) education projects, (ii) village/settlement projects and (iii) other integrated projects. Our projects range from funding of school furniture and equipment, procurement of fiberglass boats, outboards engines, VSAT, water tanks, repair and maintenance to schools, construction of classrooms, library, ECE classroom block, ablution blocks, teacher's quarters, water project, resource centre and income generating projects. These are requests raised to the Prime Minister during the *talanoa* session with members of the communities especially in the rural and outer islands.

The funding of the 78 projects during this period contributed significantly to the SDG goal number 1 of reducing poverty amongst the community. Educational funded projects by the OPM which accounted for 44% of the total SGS funded projects provide provision for better teaching facilities that benefits the school children and enable the parents to utilise their income in other areas such as purchasing of school uniform, extension of their houses etc. Previously in the past, schools often organise school fundraising to fund these projects which is always an economic burden on the parents who are already living with very low income.

The funding of projects in the village/settlements such as women's resource centre, access roads, water project and electricity project also contributed to SDG goal 1.

The villagers through this assistance will be able to earn income from the sales of their handicrafts. Funding of infrastructure projects such as access roads, water supply and electricity also contributed to the improvement in the livelihood of the villagers hence reduction in poverty level.

In terms of funding other integrated projects such as procurement of fibreglass boats and construction of a mortuary in remote and outer islands, the villagers will be relieved from paying the transportation costs of their loved ones to a mortuary in the urban area hence more savings.

## **2.0 Question:**

In reference to page 18 of the AR 2016 (Jan-July), the committee seeks clarification on the Rotuma Subvention Fund, especially in regards to the \$150,000.00 allocated for Development.

## **Response:**

The \$150,000.00 was allocated for small development projects on Rotuma. The OPM works closely with the Council of Rotuma (COR) and the District Officer Rotuma in identifying community based projects that address the social and economic needs of the Rotuman Community.

A total of \$33,785.13 was utilised during this period and detail is as follows:

No	Name of Project	Cost
1	Renovation to Noatau Resource Centre	\$4,772.96
2	Servicing Freezers for COR	\$2,805.00
3	Water tanks for Ahau Community	\$3,383.76
4	Water tanks for Losa Community	\$4,511.68
5	Water tanks for Lopta Community	\$3,947.72
6	Servicing Freezer Containers	\$10,320.40
7	Farm road for Juju Community	\$1,298.81
8	Freight and other Administrative costs	\$2,744.80
Total		\$33,785.13

### 3.0 Question:

Can the Committee be provided an update of the status of the paper titled 'Status Update for the Mahogany Industry' and furthermore, what were the main findings of the OPM in respect to this? (refer to page 10)

### Response:

- i. The 2010-2011 Mahogany Industry Development Decree provides the mandate on the administration of the mahogany industry. The Mahogany Industry Council (MIC) was established to supervise and direct the maintenance and development of the mahogany industry in Fiji in particular oversight on the performance of Fiji Hardwood Corporation Ltd (FHCL) and Fiji Mahogany Trust (FMT)<sup>1</sup>.
- ii. The Prime Minister is the chairman of MIC, the Permanent Secretary to the Prime Minister, are normally updated and kept informed on the activities of the Mahogany Industry.
- iii. The Permanent Secretary was updated on progress made on the three main objectives of the Industry: (i) The Sustainability of the Industry; (ii) Return to the Landowners and (iii) Benefits for Fiji in terms of total exports and operation of the Fiji Hardwood Corporation Limited.
- iv. The update report highlights progress made during the reporting period (from 2014 to 2015), including log production, log sales, lease and stumpage payments to landowners and FHCL operation (such as profits before tax, Exports etc.)
- v. There were also emerging issues highlighted on the report, which had been addressed and implemented since then:
  - a) In 2017, we had incorporated lessons learnt from anomalies experience in the first cycle of license given in 2011/2012. This includes:
    - Reducing annual sales quota from 112,000m<sup>3</sup> to 80,000m<sup>3</sup>
    - Allow re-allocation of quota to another license holder or a standby group and
    - Selling of logs to the open market

<sup>1</sup> Government established Fiji Mahogany Trust in 2003 to coordinate aspirations of landowners who had leased their land for the mahogany plantations

- b) Landowners are now actively participating in the Mahogany Industry. Of the annual sales quota, landowners have an allocation of 5,000m<sup>3</sup>; and
- c) Monitoring of license holders, with submission of monthly reports to FHCL.

**4.0 Question:**

Clarification is sought on the reasons for the PRMCS Division's decline in consultation and talkback shows as referred to in page 11 of the AR 2016 (Jan – July).

**Response:**

It is evident from the trends that the number of consultations and talkback shows have declined over the years however this is due to a number of reasons:

- i. Strengthened stakeholder relationships therefore other agencies and ministries are now engaging directly with the people;
- ii. Change in focus as the political climate changes;
- iii. Interest of the people have changed therefore approaches change; and
- iv. Disastrous effects of TC Winston whereby the focus was on rehabilitation.

**5.0 Question:**

In reference to page 17 of the AR 2016 (Jan-July), in regards to Small Grant Schemes: what is the status of the 48 projects that were still in progress at the end of the period which the Annual Report is based on?

**Response:**

The 48 SGS projects that were reported in progress at the end of the 2016 (*Jan-July*) have all been completed. The OPM normally prioritises this projects (in progress) when it comes to the new financial year to ensure that they are completed and handed over accordingly. These are mainly construction projects that roll-over to the next financial year. Over the past years, the OPM does not have record of incomplete projects, all our SGS projects have been completed.

#### **6.0 Question:**

In reference to page 7 of the AR 2016 (Jan – July), specifically to the Private Office and the table specifying the activities and its numbers; clarification is sought on the 101 programs listed on the said table.

#### **Response:**

The Private Office prepared 101 programs for the Hon. Prime Minister's engagements from Jan-July 2016 as outlined below. These are programs for the Prime Ministers local engagements:

Month	Number of Programs
January	37
February	11
March	6
April	5
May	5
June	20
July	17
Total	101

#### **7.0 Question:**

In reference to page 5 of the AR 2016 (Jan – July), specifically on Pillar 10 of the Key Pillars of the OPM; clarification is sought on the activities, if any, that were carried out by the Office to support this pillar.

#### **Response:**

- i. The Office of the Prime Minister, has a weekly wellness program which is compulsory for all staff to participate. Activities for the wellness program include jogging, playing team sports such as volleyball and touch rugby. Apart from friendly games, competitions are held at times, between teams within the OPM. These are coordinated by the Welfare, Sports and Social committee.
- ii. Medical checks are conducted annually at the Ministry. Staff are provided with their health status updates including counseling and follow up check at the main hospital.
- iii. Additionally, serving of fruits and vegetables has been emphasized in refreshments and meals provided to clients and staff, attending meeting or engagements at the Agency.