

# **[VERBATIM REPORT]**

## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE, LAW & HUMAN RIGHTS**

### **ANNUAL REPORT**

- 1. Fiji Corrections Service 2016-2017 Annual Report**

**INSTITUTION:** Fiji Corrections Service

**VENUE:** Big Committee Room (East Wing)

**DATE:** Thursday, 27th February, 2020

**VERBATIM NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE, LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS HELD AT THE BIG COMMITTEE ROOM, EAST WING, PARLIAMENT PRECINCTS, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, SUVA, ON THURSDAY, 27TH FEBRUARY, 2020 AT 9.31 A.M.**

**Interviewee/Submittee: Fiji Corrections Service**

In Attendance:

1. Mr. Francis Kean – Commissioner
2. Mr. Apakuki Qura – Deputy Commissioner
3. Mr. Rusiata Batiratu – Supervisor Corporate Service
4. Mr. Krishan Chettiar – Project Manager
5. Mr. Aisea Vucago – Lawyer
6. Ms. Salesia Racaca – Assistant Commissioner, Corporate Service
7. Ms. Helen Koi – Senior Accounts Officer
8. Ms. Rada Seruisavou – Lawyer
9. Mr. Samisoni Naba – Legal Officer

---

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Good morning everyone. On behalf of the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights, I would like to welcome each and every one of you who are present here this morning to appear before the Committee both, Honourable Members and the Team from the Fiji Corrections Service, along with the Secretariat.

On some housekeeping matters, for your information, pursuant to Standing Order 111, all Standing Committee meetings are to be open to the public, except in few circumstances which may include national security matters, third-party confidential information and personal or human resource matters, deliberations, as well as the development of the Committee's recommendation and reports.

The public hearing will be open to the public, media and is also be aired live on our Parliamentary Television Channel on the Walesi Platform, as well as on our social media platform, such as our website and *Facebook*. Any sensitive matter that is to be delivered to the Committee which cannot be disclosed to the general public can be given to us in writing or in private.

At the outset, I must remind all Honourable Members and our witnesses that all questions asked are to be addressed through the Chairperson. This is a Parliamentary inquiry and all information gathered are covered under the Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act in terms of the protocol of this Committee hearing.

Please, be advised that movement within the Committee room will be restricted, there will be no usage of mobile phones so all mobile phones are to be on silent mode while the meeting is in progress.

All interviews by the media personnel are to be conducted after the meeting and outside the Committee Room and not inside the Committee Room. Before we proceed any further, I would like to introduce my team.

(Introduction of Honourable Members of the Committee and the Secretariat by Mr. Chairman)

-----

Before we go into the submission proper, just for the information of the viewers, we request if you can introduce yourselves and then provide a brief on the Report itself so that the viewers know what we are dealing with today, after which will be followed by questions from Honourable Members. Thank you, and you may now have the floor.

COMMANDER F. KEAN.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Honourable Members. I thank you for the opening comments and the guideline that has been given to us this morning. Thank you sincerely for the words of welcome and the reception this morning.

(Introduction of FCS Team by Commander F. Kean)

Mr. Chairman, very briefly, the 2016-2017 Annual Report is self-explanatory in its content. However, we noted from the questions that was posed to us, we would like to identify few areas and I believe there is one administrative error. When we come to that particular question, we would like to address it because it will enlighten as to what the error is and what the correct figure should actually be in the Annual Report.

I know 2016 and 2017 has been some time that has gone past us, having started newly into the post then but it was an opportunity and year to settle down, to establish our bearings and our compasses as to where we want to take the Fiji Corrections Service to. From those early beginnings to where we are now, I personally believe and would like to thank the support of the Team that is here with me this morning, for the efforts and all the good work that they have put into place to bring us this far into where the Fiji Corrections Service is currently at the moment. I believe those are the opening comments from the Team and we are happy to take any further questions, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Commissioner, for that brief on the Report itself, very enlightening indeed. I do note you actually mentioned that, that was the time in 2016 when you actually joined the Fiji Corrections Service.

However, to start off, from 2016 to-date, what are some of the reforms and restructure that you have gone through, to actually improve the services at Fiji Corrections Service?

COMMANDER F. KEAN.- Mr. Chairman and Honourable Members, I do not want to sound blissful in this forum. We have our strengths and weakness. We take on board the critics that come our way, to address the weaknesses that we have. Like in any organisation the, Fiji Corrections Service is not immune to critics, it is a learning opportunity for us and an opportunity to look at critics as a challenge and see it as an opportunity to improve our services.

I firmly believe that with the support of the Team that is here and all officers that we currently have in Fiji Corrections Service, I believe they have contributed immensely to the work that we are undertaking in the Fiji Corrections Service, the work that one man or woman cannot do alone, but it requires a team effort, working together collectively to achieve what we have.

Mr. Chairman, briefly on our Financial Report, I would like to say that we have an unqualified financial report and that is something that we hold dear to our heart, to exercise good governance, particularly when dealing with our procurement and finances. So I want to thank our Senior Accounts Officer and her team for the wonderful work that they have done in that regard.

-----

Also to my Project Manager, Mr. Chettiar, for the wonderful work that they have done in regards to ensuring that we keep within the processes of the Financial Act, the Financial Instructions, Procurement Regulations and most importantly, the Trade and Manufacturing Accounts (TMA) Policy.

Mr. Chairman, that is our brief. As I have said, I do not wish to sound blissful in this forum but like I said, in any organisation, we have our weaknesses, we have our strengths and we look at the critics of our weaknesses and opportunities as a challenge to improve the delivery of our services.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Commissioner. Now, the floor is open if Honourable Members have any clarification or question to make. Yes, Honourable Dr. Govind?

HON. DR. S. GOVIND.- Thank you, Commissioner, for your very brief overview. I have a question. I note that your vision is very positive and the vision is trying to effectively **rehabilitate** all inmates so that they become lawful abiding citizens of our nation. Can you please tell us how successful have you been over the years and what are some of the challenges you face in rehabilitating? Do you have any mechanisms to monitor your programmes of rehabilitation?

COMMANDER F. KEAN.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Honourable Govind. I have a piece of paper before me on our recidivism rate, our re-offending rate from 2009. I apologise, I did not bring any copies with me but I am happy to give our copy to the Honourable Members before we leave.

Our Director Rehabilitation is not with us this morning. They have gone to Sigatoka for the Nadroga/Navosa Provincial Council Meeting, as we want to engage the Provinces to help us in our rehabilitation efforts. She is down there this morning and I apologise for her absence here this morning.

Mr. Chairman and Honourable Members, the vision statement that we did, this was one of the changes that we brought about - relooking at our strategic direction as to where we are going, what are we really going to do when the change came about from one of containment to one of corrections.

We had changed our vision in 2016 and I thank the Team that is here with me for their contribution, also to the vision and our values. We also came up with a new motto of Accept and Restitution – Always Rehabilitation.

But as you look at the vision, Mr. Chairman and Honourable Members, it talks about returning our citizens back into civil society to contribute positively to our country, Fiji. I think that is a mighty statement and also a mighty challenge to the Fiji Corrections Service. The work of rehabilitation and re-integration of those under our care back into society is not an easy task. It is a mammoth task.

On Tuesday, we engaged the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church for them to come on board and partner with us in this process of rehabilitation and re-integration because we cannot do it alone.

I am thankful to the Methodist Church of Fiji, we have already signed an agreement with them. They will be helping us and I must commend the President of the Methodist Church of Fiji and all the Divisions in the Methodist Church that have come on board to help us in this regard. Also, to the seven Provinces that we have already signed an MOU with, to come and partner with us in this care network that we have in rehabilitating those under our care once they leave prison.

-----

Just to enlighten the Honourable Members, our strategy used to be in care. We only focussed on the rehabilitation of offenders of those under our care whilst they are under our supervision in prisons. When they leave the doors of prison, that is it, there is nothing else that the Fiji Corrections Service does.

However, we have changed that in 2016. We now have a strategy and one of our goals is through care. Through care means, we are now taking the rehabilitation and re-integration efforts of the FCS to the doorsteps of those who have left our care. So we have introduced a lot of programmes to help aid those who were under our care to live sustainable lives after they leave FCS.

We have the odd ones out that do re-offend. One of the things that we do in the first week, we call it the first day process or first week process, whereby for every person or prisoner who comes in, we must make a visit to their families. This is something new that we have started, when we continue to re-look at the gaps we have in our process. We visit their families to establish the identity or the reason why the offence was committed. That could give us some information or background as to how we can treat the particular offending behaviour.

We have invested a lot in psychologists. We used to have only one psychologist but now, we have seven and four Counsellors. I am glad to report to the Committee that we even sent four of our uniformed staff to do counselling diplomas; two are with USP and two are with APTC. They have all completed and they will be graduating in the first half of this year because it is important that we have personnel in uniform actually delivering on the rehabilitation programmes. Now, we have a lot of volunteers and I am very thankful to all the volunteers for volunteering of their resources, their time, to come in and help the FCS in the delivery of our rehabilitation programmes while they are under our care.

That is briefly, Honourable Dr. Govind, Honourable Chairman and Honourable Members, the response to that particular question.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, Honourable Dr. Govind.

HON. DR. S.R. GOVIND.- What percentage of prisoners per year go through this rehabilitation? What percentage of prisoners per year have the opportunity to go through the programme and are rehabilitated? That is one.

The second is whether the community where the prisoner comes from, actively participates in any of your programmes so that when they go back to the community, they are well-accepted there.

COMMANDER F. KEAN.- Thank you, Honourable Dr. Govind. Honourable Chairman and Honourable Members, regarding our rehabilitation programmes, what we have tried to do and something that we have newly introduced was that, we do our rehabilitation programmes in three-monthly blocks. So, three-month blocks there are rehabilitation programmes, one month of rest and recreation for our volunteers, our service providers and even our own staff, and then we look at those who are coming in - the new offending behaviours who are coming in.

We have a newly-formulated rehabilitation policy and my apologies for not bringing it this morning but I am happy to provide a copy to the Honourable Members, if they wish to have a copy. In that rehabilitation programme, it basically stipulates all the programmes that we deliver. We try our best, Honourable Members and Honourable Chairman, to cover all the prisoners who come under our care.

The programme in the rehabilitation policy basically looks after the medium to short-term prisoners. What we classify as short-term prisoners are those who come into prison for less than six months, so we do a lot of one-to-one counselling. We do a lot of character guidance, as well as inspirational guidance.

We have a lot of *talatala*, chaplains and pastors from the relevant religious denominations who come in, talk and do character guiding sessions with those under our care, those who are doing short-term. And one of things that we have done with short-term prisoners is that, we try not to contaminate them with the seasoned population in our prisons. We try to segregate them, not to contaminate them because contamination in our Corrections Centres is a threat. We try to address it to the best way possible we can, to avoid some of these first-time young offenders coming under our care. That is percentage-wise.

With the community, Honourable Dr. Govind, Honourable Chairman and Honourable Members, I am very thankful to all the communities that have come on board. Like I said, we have signed memorandum of undertakings with seven Provinces, including the Province of the Turaga Tui Namosi, Namosi Province, and seven other Provinces, including two religious organisations - the Methodist Church of Fiji and as I said on Tuesday, we have started the process with the Seventh-day Adventist Church because these are the two denominations with big numbers under our care. Our next one, as I said, we have got our team that has gone down to Nadroga/ Navosa, we want to engage them.

Recently, we have also identified red hotspots. This is where we go out during the evenings, during weekdays and also especially on Sundays in whatever church service whether it is a catholic denomination or other Christian denomination, and ask the priest or the *talatala* or chaplain for us to have a session with the congregation, just to highlight to them what we are doing in the FCS and the importance of the engagement of the community.

I wish to share with the Honourable Chairman and Honourable Members, the importance of reintegration, otherwise the work at FCS is futile. That is why we have changed our strategy from in-CARE (Community Action for the Rehabilitation of Ex-offenders) to through-CARE. We are taking our rehabilitation efforts to the doorstep of every prisoner under our care.

I know it is difficult at times. We have prisoners coming from the maritime islands and sometimes it is hard to go out to them, but we are trying to make an effort to reach out to them and to try and assist them.

The community plays a very important role. I thank you for that question, Honourable Dr. Salik Govind. Without the acceptance of the community, the rehabilitation processes that we are undertaking within our Fiji Corrections Service will come to naught. We need the community to engage. We need the community to accept their loved ones, those who have fallen on the wrong side of the law to be given another shot at life and be accepted back into our communities. *Vinaka*.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Commissioner, for deliberating on the question posed by Honourable Dr. Govind. Just a follow up question, you did actually mention about psychologist. What do you do with regards to mental health assessment of prisoners and how are they taken care of?

COMMANDER F. KEAN.- *Vinaka*, Honourable Chairman and Honourable Members. We have a few mental cases under our care. We are very fortunate to have our Senior Psychologist, who

-----  
spent close to 10 years at St. Giles Hospital. She brings with her that wealth of experience to the Fiji Corrections Service.

We recently had our psychologist go for three months attachment at the St. Giles Hospital. We are very thankful to the Superintendent at St. Giles Hospital for allowing this to happen, just to give our younger psychologist an understanding on how to treat mental patients, so we have them currently in our facilities.

For us, Honourable Chairman and Honourable Members, we have segregated cells that are padded because you know with mental patients, they can harm themselves. One of the things why it is padded is not for them to hurt their heads or hurt themselves, but this is something that we have recently introduced at our Suva Women's Prisons, the Lautoka Women's Prison, in both the Remand Centre and both the Convict Centres, just to try and protect those who come under our care.

I believe there is still work that needs to be undertaken into various regards but we are trying and doing our best to ensure the safety and the wellbeing of mental prisoners who do come under our care.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Commissioner. With any particular organisation or any service provider, like FCS, it is every important to have certain number of staff to actually ensure that the service that you have imposed in your mission and vision is gone through. What is your staffing rate or what is the ratio of staff to prisoners, if you can elaborate on that, please?

COMMANDER F. KEAN.- Honourable Chairman and Honourable Members, if you do not mind, I will ask my Assistant Commissioner Corporate Service to respond to that question.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you.

MS. S. RACACA.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman and Honourable Members. Currently our staff establishment sits on 963 and we have staff strength of 894. The ratio that we sit our staff in is, we have 1:4 prisoners - one custodial officer by four prisoners. So, as of now, we only have about 34 vacant positions.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Do you think that 1:4 ratio is good enough?

MS. S. RACACA.- That is the international standards, Sir, where we want to benchmark FCS to what is required on international standard – 1:4. As of 2016 to 2017, if you note in our responses, the ratio was 1:18.

COMMANDER F. KEAN.- Honourable Chairman, as you have heard from the Assistant Commissioner Corporate Service, may I just correct that, our current strength is 929 - 963 is the strength and what we have on the ground is 929. We have 34 vacancies, compared to what we had in 2000 when this Report was actually submitted. We have filled up a lot of vacancies in that regard.

In regards to the ratio, Mr. Chairman and Honourable Members, the ratio mentioned as 1:18, we had an incident in Lautoka in 2016. The reason we have reduced it to 1:4 is to look after our officers, protect them and to enable them do their duties responsibly.

It is a mammoth task. You have only two eyes and two ears and taking 18 prisoners out at one time is a difficult task and the risk escalates. Unfortunately, we had an escape in Lautoka in that particular year, we relooked at this and that is why we are trying to benchmark against the

-----  
international standards of 1:4 for the protection, safety and the well-being of our custodial officers.  
*Vinaka.*

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Sir, for that response. Honourable Members any other clarification or questions? The Honourable Ratu Suliano Matanitobua.

HON. RATU S. MATANITOBUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Through you, Mr. Chairman, I thank the Commissioner for their service, especially the relationship with Namosi Province. I had gone through your Report and I was very surprised with what is on page 21, about all those strikes, and I am very concerned.

This is 2016-2017 Report. With that in the Report, the issue of hunger strike leads to meal issues. Are there any other issue, apart from the meal issue Commissioner?

COMMANDER F. KEAN.- Thank you, Honourable Ratu Suliano. Mr. Chairman and Honourable Members, for hunger strike in particular, we treat this as a serious issue, a series concern that we try to address promptly in the best way possible. Sometimes, we have those under our care who are frustrated with some decisions that are made, they have had a decision that had gone against them in court and the various issues that come in play, but I want to reassure the Committee that we try our best to solve those problems at the earliest possible.

If the Officer in Charge cannot resolve it, it escalates to the supervisory level and if the supervisor cannot resolve it, it comes to our national headquarters where our Assistant Commissioner Corporate Service and my Deputy go out to the Correctional Centres to try and resolve such cases when they do arise.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you for that response.

HON. M.D BULITAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. *Vinaka vakalevu*, Commissioner, for your brief this morning and the team from Fiji Corrections Service. My question will be on the Mandela Rule and how has Fiji Corrections Service complied with the Mandela Rule and the steps and measures taken to improve our facilities to be in line with the Mandela Rule?

COMMISSIONER F. KEAN.- Thank you, Honourable Bulitavu. Yes, the Mandela Rules is the minimum standards for us at the Fiji Corrections Service to comply to. We had presented in Geneva in relation to our compliance and we were very fortunate to have a senior representative from the United Nations Development Programme, who came down to have a one-week workshop with our officers - men and women, particularly the Officers In-charge and the Supervisors, the front-end of the delivery of our service.

We are also very fortunate that the Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission came in to assist us with the workshop. We took this down to another level where some of our Duty Officers and Barrack Commanders attended this workshop, just to enlighten and give them the necessary tools to be aware that we have international obligations to comply with.

I believe from the assessment that we did with the Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission and UNDP out of the 120 Rules under the Mandela Rules, we are complying with 119, if I am correct, except one Rule that we are not complying with.

In relation to prison facilities, that is something we are trying to address. As you know in Suva, we recently demolished the old three-storey building that was there. It was a mammoth security



-----  
task for us in relocating the 400 prisoners from Suva to other various institutions and to demolish this building in one week.

We currently have a tender that is out, to hire the services of a Project Engineer to do the architectural design of a new Correctional Centre in Suva. We are looking at a 600 men capacity, so hopefully this will address some of the overcrowding issues that we are currently facing because Suva, Mr. Chairman and Honourable Members, is the biggest reception centre where first-timers come in and then we relocate them to the relevant Correctional Centres.

Honourable Bilitavu, as I have mentioned, we are trying our best to comply to all the Rules, except for one, and like I said in my opening statement, there are gaps at times and we try to address these gaps whenever they surface, to ensure that we deliver on our services.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you for that response, Commissioner.

HON. R.R. SHARMA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the Commissioner and his hardworking team. I have a question, Sir, with regards to the Budget of the Fiji Corrections Service and its implication on infrastructure. Can you clarify a few infrastructural development projects by the Fiji Corrections Service, specifically with reference to Page 37 of the Annual Report, concerning the projects listed in Number 7 and Number 10.

If you look at Number 7, the project listed is specified in the Annual Report as being completed. However, there is no mention of the actual contract cost.

As for the project listed in Number 10, it is noted that the funds appropriated or set aside for the project was not utilised. For this, it says, "Naboro Road upgrading and maintenance was not utilised."

COMMANDER F. KEAN.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman and the Honourable Member, I will let my Senior Accounts Officer respond to this particular question, *vinaka*.

MS. H. KOI.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Honourable Members. The first set of your question on the contract that is not listed in the table of the Annual Report, you will note in our line 6 and 7, it relates to just one - maintenance of staff quarters, which both of these projects fall under and our budget provision for that is \$500,000 which we had fully utilised for the year, hence the reason for the completed (100 percent) project.

As for your question on Number 10 - why it was not utilised, the funding was not utilised because the tender was called during the financial period. However, it was not awarded during the year and we also had a TAC Committee because the bidders that bid for that particular project had overbid for the project. According to our budget, we had a very minimal budget for that.

We had to request if it could be re-advertised and this was carried over to the new financial year. Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, Commissioner?

COMMANDER F. KEAN.- Mr. Chairman and Honourable Members, just adding on to what my Senior Accounts Officer had mentioned, in my opening comments, I had mentioned about an error in that particular page. Thank you, Honourable Member, for raising the question.

-----

The table that is in the Annual Report on Page 37 – Nos. 6 and 7, is basically one project. If you look at the column where the Budget is, it should only read \$500,000 instead of \$1 million in both rows. So the budget for the two projects in Numbers 6 and 7 - Maintenance of Staff Quarters, was only \$0.5 million instead of \$1 million.

As for Number 10, as was raised in the question, we did not manage to get a bid from those that had applied for the tender that would have met the budget that we had.

But I wish to inform you, Mr. Chairman and Honourable Members of the Committee that we had completed this project in the last financial year, this particular road in Naboro, from successfully having someone that bid well within the price that we wanted to do in relation to this particular project.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Mr. Commissioner, just a follow up question on that particular Naboro Road, after it was done up by that particular contractor, is it still an asset of FCS or has it been assigned to Fiji Roads Authority (FRA) for maintenance in future?

COMMANDER F. KEAN.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Honourable Members, it is a road that belongs to FCS. We look after the maintenance in actual fact, if you do have the chance to visit our Correctional Centre, we are most welcome to have the Honourable Members down. We would like to show you where this particular project is because this year, we also have funding to try and complete the rest of that road.

I was just speaking to the contractor this morning because he is a bit late in giving us the Performance Bond and I have got timelines to meet with the Government Tender Board, so we came in this morning for a meeting and I told him, “We need your Performance Bond quickly so that we can get the contract done and send it to SG’s Office for them to vet so we can start the project.” So the road belongs to the FCS.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you for that, Honourable Members any other questions?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Commissioner, in 2016 you came into the organisation, you made plenty changes and reforms, brought the institution to where it is now but there are few pending issues.

Probably, you have heard that this has come up on the floor of Parliament and my question is on psychologists, psychiatrists and what the Act says in terms of the establishment of the Parole Board, the timelines that are there and the rights of those who are awaiting the establishment. What is the progress so far in terms of establishing that and those who are awaiting a licence to be given by the Parole Board on the release and also on the conditions that will come through?

COMMANDER F. KEAN.- Thank you, Honourable Bulitavu. Yes, a very valid question. I am aware of this being raised in Parliament.

Currently, our Act is with the Solicitor-General’s Office. They are going through the review. I think we have been given feedback that they will give back the draft to us this week after their vetting. We have been doing this process for the last two to three years, so that is one of the critical errors that we have identified.

-----

The review of our Act and addressing the Parole Board in particular, the provisions are in our current Act. The members of the Parole Board are appointed by the Honourable Minister and not by the Commissioner.

In relation to the Commission on the Prerogative of Mercy or Mercy Commission, the Commission is already operating. I believe we had 11 prisoners who had requested for pardon and were released in 2019. They were successful in their application and now, they have left our care.

We visited them as part of our visiting, just to see that, that reintegration process is alright. As we speak, there is also another lot of applications on my table. Hopefully, it will leave my table by close of business tomorrow, to head off to the Prerogative of Mercy Commission. But in relation to the Parole Board, it is the prerogative of the Honourable Minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Commissioner. I do notice that your Office is a Constitutional Office. With regards to the referral letter, it is written to the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Finance and Public Enterprises. Could you highlight as to which Ministry do you actually fall under, how that is done and why not the Ministry of Defence?

COMMANDER F. KEAN.- Honourable Chairman, thank you very much. I thought you were going to get me into trouble.

Our Minister is the Honourable Minister for Economy, as you see the letter, where whom it is addressed to. He looks after our Ministry, we talk quite often in relation to the work that we are undertaking in the FCS and we are very grateful to the support from his Office in relation to the work that we undertake at the FCS.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Is it through the Ministry of Economy or the Ministry of Justice?

COMMANDER F. KEAN.- Yes, Ministry of Justice.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Because in the letter, it was not specified, whether the Ministry of Economy or Ministry of Justice.

COMMANDER F. KEAN.- I stand to be corrected, I do not think there is a Minister for Justice portfolio, it is the Attorney-General.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- It is the Minister responsible for ...

COMMANDER F. KEAN.- But he is responsible for justice, yes, so it is the Attorney-General who is our line Minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Alright, that makes sense. Any other question, Honourable Members?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Yes, probably another question or two, in terms of the budget allocation for the Commissioner (FCS), whether it is enough, given the reforms that you undertake and some of the things are probably in the pipeline, in your plans to fulfil your vision.

COMMANDER F. KEAN.- Thank you, Honourable Bulitavu, Honourable Chairman and Honourable Members. I guess the FCS, like any other Government Ministry or Department, we always want more but we are just grateful to what the Government gives us too at the end of the day, and we do our best with what they have given us.

-----

We have a few capital projects running at the moment. As I speak now, we have just refurbished the Maximum Corrections Centre in Naboro. We have introduced some new security features. Again, I extend an invitation to the Honourable Members, if you do have the time in your busy schedules and like to come and see this particular project, we offer this opportunity to you. Also, come and try some wonderful *rourou* that we normally cook at Naboro.

Our Medium Corrections Centre, we are doing a lot of stabilising works at the moment. It is a temporary fix because of the dangers of slip, to those of you who have been down to Naboro, it sits on a knoll and that is a project that is currently being undertaken.

If you go through Davuilevu at the Nasinu Cemetery, you will see a lot of work that we have done along the Davuilevu Road. The demand for cemeteries is always there and as you look at top of the hill, if you enter through Wainibuku Road, that is also another place that we are hoping to put in our budget submission for next year.

If you come to the Suva Cemetery, we are also doing civil works there. Again, to cater for the demand from Suva. Right now, for the Suva Cemetery, we are focusing on those who live within the Suva Central Business District (CBD).

Also, the Delainavesi to Navua corridor, we have had requests that actually come even from Wainadoi, to come and bury their loved ones in the Suva Cemetery. Although that is ongoing civil works, we are hopeful to complete that in this financial year.

The Suva Corrections Centre, as I mentioned, we have demolished the old building and our plan is to build a 600 men capacity for the Suva Prison to alleviate and address some of the overcrowding issues that we have.

Rehabilitation, the core of the work that we do in the FCS, we seriously want to positively restore lives. If I can give you an example, Honourable Members, it is amazing when you have parents that come to visit us.

We have Nasinu, as you know Nasinu is a dedicated correctional centre for young offenders. We have young offenders from 19 years to 25 years, who are first-time offenders, we send them to Nasinu Correctional Centres.

Also in Nasinu Correctional Centre, we have the elderly. As we speak, I have 10 bedridden prisoners. We actually do caregiving in our Correctional Centres where we bathe, feed and clothe those who are under our care. It is a mammoth task and I salute the officers and the men of the Fiji Corrections Service for the work that they undertake.

Nasinu Correctional Centre is for young offenders and we converted it recently to a vocational school. We have an instructor at the moment, who is teaching our young offenders technical skills for them to learn a skillset so that when they leave us, they do become financially sustainable.

We have a Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF) Fund. We use that to also help those who are under our care when they leave us, to support them. We have sent a few of them to school. Some have gone back to FNU to go and study, some have gone on to the Bible College to study.

One process that I would like to mention in particular, Honourable Chairman and Honourable Members, is Nasinu Correctional Centre, if I can use this as an example. What we are doing at the Nasinu Correctional Centre with our young kids was not an easy decision to make. We go through

-----

the necessary assessment process with our psychologist, our OCs, supervisors and parents. We put these kids, once they give their agreement and consent, through our Basic Recruit Training - 14 weeks of recruit training to instil some semblance of discipline in their lives.

After their 14 weeks, we send them to Monfort Boys Town School. We are thankful to the Brothers and Fathers at Monfort Boys Town School for agreeing to take on these kids. As we speak, we have had two already graduated from Monfort Boys Town School. We have one who is currently studying and I have one who is currently doing his recruit training.

So, at the end of that, those two who have graduated are currently working. You know, when we sit down with their parents and to see tears flowing down their eyes, it is very emotional, realising that we are giving their kids another shot at life and another lease of life. It is an amazing story. *Vinaka vakalevu.*

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Commissioner, for telling us that story. The Committee actually appreciates the fact that you are doing so much for the community in ensuring that the prisoners will not remain in prison for their entire life but they are actually given a second chance to improve and live a normal life like anyone else. I think, Honourable Dr. Govind, has a follow up question

HON. DR. S. GOVIND.- Commissioner, I can see that in regards to gender parity - SDG5, you are very well represented in your senior management from what I see this morning and I would like to thank you for that. But I would like to know overall in your staffing, what is your gender parity, or what step are you taking?

COMMISSIONER F. KEAN.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman and Honourable Members. I will ask my Assistant Commissioner Corporate Service to respond to that particular question.

MS. S. RACACA.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman and Honourable Members. For gender parity at FCS, we have two new Women's Correction Centres where we also recruit female officers to look after them. Majority of our female staff also work in Headquarters. We also have female staff come in as our psychologist and counsellors. So, we do man our gender balance when we do recruitment in FCS, especially in areas that we know they will excel in.

COMMISSIONER F. KEAN.- If I may add, Honourable Chairman and Honourable Members, we can give you the exact figures. We can furnish the Committee with the exact figures, if you wish.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you.

COMMISSIONER F. KEAN.- But generally speaking, it is a predominantly male working environment, it is just because of the needs of the business that we are in. We only have two female Correctional Centres and we have a few more civilian staff who work for us, predominantly as psychologists but we are happy to furnish the Committee with those figures. *Vinaka.*

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. While we are still discussing on the budget and staffing, what is the cost of actually keeping a prisoner in a prison per day? Do you have that numbers with you?

COMMANDER F. KEAN.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Honourable Members, I believe it is approximately \$52 per day. That is for the three meals that we provide to the prisoners on a daily

-----  
basis, having a shower, the uniforms, shaving blades to keep them clean, soap for health and hygiene, the laundry mat that we use with their beddings, so approximately \$52 per prisoner per day.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- The rehabilitation cost is part of this or it has a separate budget for that?

COMMANDER F. KEAN.- Mr. Chairman and Honourable Members, we have a separate budget for rehabilitation. We have allocations for Prisoner Stores and Prisoner rations.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. That is noted. Any other final round of questions.

HON. RATU S. MATANITOBUA.- Mr. Chairman, what is your total number of prisoners as we speak today?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Commissioner, you can provide a rough figure and you can provide the actual number later.

COMMANDER F. KEAN.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Honourable Members. As we speak today, our convicted prisoners is 1,934 and our remand prisoners is 608 and we have three detainees. These detainees normally come from the Ministry of Immigration. So, that is the numbers that we currently have under our care.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, that is well noted.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Commissioner, I have another question on the budget. Every time we get the Budget Estimate, we see the Fiji Police Force with an allocation of Job Evaluation increment on their pay rise. Also there are issues that have come up in terms of your officers who work very hard, I think more harder than the police officers. Is there any plan by the Commission for a job evaluation exercise on the officers and also a pay rise?

COMMANDER F. KEAN.- Thank you, Honourable Bulitavu. Mr. Chairman and Honourable Members, I do not want to get into trouble for this, but can I address this without public consumption, if that is possible?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You can give a written response to it.

COMMANDER F. KEAN.- I want to answer but not for public consumption, just for the consumption of the Honourable Members, if that is allowed.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- We are actually live on *television*. You can give your written response, it is alright with the Committee.

COMMANDER F. KEAN.- Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- So, can we have a final comment from the Fiji Correction Services?

COMMANDER F. KEAN.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Honourable Members. We would like to close by extending an invitation to the Committee. If you have the time in your busy schedule, we do not have any visitors in our Correction Services, apart from those who come and visit their loved ones. We invite you to come and visit some of our Corrections Services, just to see the work our officers (men and women), very hardworking, diligent and very consensus that they undertake on a daily basis.

---

It is not an easy task bringing about positive changes in the lives of a human being. It is a mammoth task and requires supernatural powers from our Almighty God in doing this work but I salute them for the work that they do undertake.

In relation to the Honourable Bulitavu's question, we have raised this before. We will continue to knock on the doors, that we be given the opportunity to have a review of the work that we undertake at the Fiji Corrections Service and the great work that our men and women are doing in delivering this very important service. We are hopeful that this door will be opened for us, in order to undertake that review and give reward where reward is due.

Again, I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman and Honourable Members, for the questions that you have posed to us today and we look forward to further consultations. We will provide that information that is required in relation to the statistics of our female staff, at the earliest time possible. Thank you once again. *Vinaka vakalevu.*

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Commissioner, for those words of wisdom towards the prisoners and the staff who are working under you. We definitely accept your invitation with regards to the visit to FCS. We will be going out for public consultations sometimes later in March, so that is the time we can allocate a slot to visit Fiji Corrections Service.

Without further ado, I will request Honourable Dr. Govind to give our final remarks before we end this session. Thank you.

(Vote of Thanks by Hon. Dr. S.R. Govind)

The Committee adjourned at 10.27 a.m.