



MINISTRY OF FORESTRY

**HON. OSEA NAIQAMU
MINISTER FOR FORESTRY**

Venue: Parliament

Date: Monday 17th February, 2020

WRITTEN QUESTION – 09/2020

Hon. Peceli Vosanibola to ask the Minister for Forestry – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the quantum of standing stock of pine trees, how much of this stock will be harvested over the next five years and replanting efforts to ensure sustainability of the Pine Industry.

Written Response:

The Pine Industry first started in the early 1960s as a division within the then Department of Forestry and was known as Fiji Pine Scheme. Its major objective was to address environmental issues on degraded lands on the western side of Viti Levu. Such land areas were usually exposed to wildfires, soil and wind erosion and could not be cultivated for agricultural production. With inputs from the Australian and New Zealand governments, a number of species were planted and researched, which included *Acacia*, *Eucalypts* and *Pine*. Pine was found to be the most successful species which kicked off establishment of a large scale industrial plantation.

In 1976, the Fiji Pine Scheme was commissioned to Fiji Pine Commission under the Fiji Pine Commission Act. It was one of the first government owned entities to be corporatized in 1991 to become Fiji Pine Limited (FPL) under the Fiji Pine Decree 1990.

FPL's major role is to undertake reforestation of its leased area and also supply pine logs to its subsidiaries, Tropik Wood Industries Limited and Tropik Wood Products Limited. It utilizes forest based companies from its six (6) forest areas as contractors to undertake its roles in nursery, planting, plantation maintenance and harvesting. These forest based companies are business companies of landowners in their respective forests. FPL has its own Research, Environment, GIS, Forest Fire Protection and Forest Inventory departments within its Operations division. FPL plantations are Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Forest Management certified since 2013.

FPL's source of revenue is through log sales to its subsidiaries, Tropik Wood Industries Limited and Tropik Wood Products Limited.

Fiji Pine Limited's forest had become unsustainable due to neglect in planting in the 90's and early 2000. Many years had zero planting operations. Nursery facilities were neglected to a state where it had bush all around. Forest stock records were not kept and updated properly. Records did not reflect what was physically there on the ground.

Since 2011, the new Management of FPL Group carried out an enormous task of reviewing the state of forest resources and getting records corrected to reflect the true state of the industry's sustainability.

The results of the review was alarming and necessitated immediate remedial actions. This enormous task included the development of proper systems, reestablishment of nurseries and implementation of qualitative planting practices. The Company currently has nurseries at Ra, Lololo, Uto (Nadi), Nabou and Bua and in the process of establishing a nursery in Seaqaqa.

It is important to note that due to neglect in planting prior to 2011, Fiji Pine Limited faced further challenges of overgrown bush (other species like rain tree African tulips) that had to be cleared at substantial costs to the Company to make land ready for pine planting. Through this enormous work carried out since 2011, the Pine Industry has returned to sustainability.

The internationally recognized FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification assures that Fiji Pine Limited practices responsible forestry which includes forest sustainability, social responsibility, environment protection, worker rights, landowner rights, protection of old heritage sites, protection of habitats of animals, etc.

Since 2011, restocking has been done as follows:

2011	-	1,062.20 hectares
2012	-	2,941.40 hectares
2013	-	2,210.70 hectares
2014	-	1,635.00 hectares
2015	-	1,461.30 hectares
2016	-	2,478.94 hectares
2017	-	1,340.47 hectares
2018	-	2,624.78 hectares
2019	-	1,735.33 hectares

Currently FPL has stocked almost all plantable areas and is now preparing (clearing) new areas for further restocking. Harvesting is kept maximum at 40% of restocking. A total of \$11.5m was spent (invested) in forest silviculture operations since 2011. Added to that, the FPL has made a commitment to plant 2.5 million Pine seedlings annually as their commitment to the 30 million trees in 15 years” initiative of the Fiji Government.