



STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

REVIEW OF THE CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL REPORTS FOR MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE 2014 AND 2015



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CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD



I am pleased to present the report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources on the consolidated annual review of the Ministry of Agriculture 2014 and 2015 Annual Reports. In accordance with its established Annual Report review process, the Committee examines Annual Reports of agencies, in order to investigate, inquire into, and make recommendations relating to the agencies' administration, legislative or proposed legislative programme, budget, rationalisation, restructuring, functions, structure and policy formulation. As part of this process, the Committee raised questions and received written responses from the Ministry of Agriculture to gather additional information.

This review was made in accordance with Standing Order 109(2) (c) which mandates the committee to look into issues related to forestry, agriculture, mining, environment, fisheries, water and marine services.

The review looked at the Ministry's administration, structure; budgetary allocation; programmes and activities; policies; challenges and achievements for the year 2014 and 2015 and its implementation.

The vision for the Ministry is "To influence market forces through vibrant and sustainable agriculture activity that reduces poverty, reduces the risk of food insecurity and increases contribution to GDP".

It is worthy to note that the Ministry has captured that vision with a steady GDP growth from \$497m in 2013, \$500m in 2014 and \$542m in 2015. In the reporting years, there has been positive gains in all sectors of the Ministry with the exception of a very few.

One of Governments Initiative in the 2018/2019 Budget was to "Support initiatives for crop replanting, supplying agro-inputs, extension services and training for young farmers, relevant crop-oriented research and crop varieties, and better land use planning".

The Committee believes that the Ministry could place a greater emphasis on the cottage industry at both the community and village by level creating orchards.

At this juncture, I wish to thank the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Ritesh Dass and his staff for their assistance in this review process. I also extend my gratitude to my Committee colleagues namely: Hon. Jale Sigarara (Deputy Chairperson) and Hon. Alexander O'Connor.

I, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, commend the Review of the Consolidated Annual Reports for the Ministry of Agriculture 2014 and 2015 to parliament.

Hon. Sanjay Kirpal
Chairperson

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The substantive and alternate members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources are as follows:



Hon. Sanjay. Kirpal, Chairperson



Hon. Jale. Sigarara, Deputy Chairperson



Hon. Alexander O'Connor, Government Member

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACP	Annual Corporate Plan
AFS	Annual Financial Statement
BOS	Board of Survey
BTEC	Brucellosis & Tuberculosis Eradication Campaign
COP	Costed Operational Plan
DDA	Demand Driven Approach
DE	Director Crop Extension
DHRFI	Director Human Resources, Finance and Information Technology
DR	Director Crop Research
DRM	Disaster Relief Management
EP & S	Economic Planning and Statistics Division
HRFI	Human Resources, Finance, Information and Communication
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
NDP	National Development Plan
PCCPP	People's Chart for Change, Peace and Progress
PEPO	Principal Economic Planning Officer
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDP	Strategic Development Plan
UNFAO	United Nations Food Agriculture Organisation

RECOMMENDATION

The Standing Committee on Natural Resources has conducted a review of the Ministry of Agriculture 2014 and 2015 Annual Reports and recommends that Parliament take note of its report

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Agriculture 2014 and 2015 Annual Report was tabled in Parliament during the May 2020 Parliament sitting and referred to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources for scrutiny.

The committee proceeded with its mandatory function legislated under Standing Order 109(2) (c) which allows the Standing Committee on Natural Resources to examine matters related to forestry, agriculture, mining, environment, fisheries, water and marine services.

Standing Orders 110(1)(c) further 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.*

A standing committee must report to parliament any other matter referred to or initiated by the committee, as soon as it has completed its considerations and deliberations as stipulated under SO 121 (1) (b).

The committee proceeded with its scrutiny and formulated questions which were sent to the Ministry of Agriculture to response to. The questions were basically on the challenges faced by the Ministry during the period under review, achievements, operational review, legislations in place, progress on the Ministry's initiatives. The Ministry's responses were received by the members and was incorporated into the committees report for final presentation to parliament.

The functions of the Ministry of Agriculture as stipulated in both the annual reports for 2014 and 2015 is listed below:

- To accelerate agricultural product diversification into corps and livestock products where competitive advantages have been identified;
- To facilitate private sector development;
- To promote food security; and
- To ensure sustainable development into the non-sugar sector.

The year 2014 was very challenging for the Ministry considering the obstacles and constraints faced were resolved for improvement. The Ministry pursued its role and responsibilities towards promoting and achieving goals for quick economic recovery.

2.0 ABOUT THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

During the period under review, the committee was able to identify one of the highlights of the Ministry of Agriculture in 2015. This was when the Ministry of Agriculture focused on modernising agriculture which resulted in the successful delivery of its activities through the Ministry's achievement of Governments' vision for the agriculture sector and livelihood of the people. In 2014, the committee was aware that the Food Security Program under the Ministry of Agriculture was affected by the prolonged dry spell in the middle of the year and had its implication on planting as well as production.

The committee further noted that the Ministry's achievements was derived from the Ministry's Annual Corporate Plan for 2015 where it reflects progress and commitments to Government direction. The Ministry's Targeted Outcome was linked to the People's Charter for Change, Peace and Progress (PCPP) priorities and aligned to Government's 5 Key Pillars. To highlight a few major highlights of the Ministry of Agriculture in 2014, firstly, was the Agriculture (Crop & Livestock) GDP FJ\$500m from \$497m in 2013, the sector contributed 8% to National GDP in 2014 (*inclusive of growing sugarcane \$50.4m*). Secondly was the Agriculture (Crop & Livestock) Trade, Fiji earned \$180m from exports of Crop & Livestock commodities this year which is 16% of National Domestic Export.

On the Financial Highlights - Total Budget allocation totalled up to \$62.4m of which \$34.3m was allocated for Capital Programs while the Operating Costs totalled to \$28.1m.

The Land Water & Resource Management (LWRM) Division was allocated the highest share of the budget mainly to fund for the land drainage and flood protection programs followed by the Crop Extension Division where a large share of the budget was allocated for the Rice Revitalization, Food Security and Export Promotion Programs.

3.0 ISSUES RAISED

The committee noted the key challenges faced by the Ministry as highlighted in both annual reports for 2014 and 2015 and valued the work of the Ministry of Agriculture for successfully progressed through in implementing its initiatives and activities during the years under review.

The committee gathered researched information on some key issues highlighting the achievements of the Ministry, Financial position and Audit Opinion which should be considered by the Ministry in future as it embarks to improving its activities and programs.

The Ministry of Agriculture 2014 and 2015 achievement clearly stated in the Ministry's annual report. The details is tabulated under the written evidence received.

4.0 COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 RECOMMENDATION 1

The Committee noted that the 2014 and 2015 Annual Report of the Ministry of Agriculture did consider the implementation of the SDGs in all its service programs and services. The Committee recommends that :

- The Ministry to consider and report on the implementation of the relevant SDG's on its various programs and services.
- Report on the SDG's challenges faced during its implementation
- To consider incorporating all its activities and programs in line with the National Development Program.

4.2 RECOMMENDATION 2

The committee recommends that the Ministry focus on agriculture based economy during the pandemic period by saving on the import dollars by producing more local products.

4.3 RECOMMENDATION 3

The Ministry to review its legislations and policies annually in line with the government 5 Year and 20 Year National Development Plan (NDP).

4.4 RECOMMENDATION 4

The Ministry staff to undergo training on the SDG's and its implementation for capacity building of staff to enable a better understanding of issues relating to the Sustainable Development Goals and its linkages to the Ministry of Agriculture.

4.5 RECOMMENDATION 5

That future Annual Reports present a breakdown of gender equality and participation in the positions held within the Ministry.

4.6 RECOMMENDATION 6

The committee recommends that the Ministry to ensure that its organization structure is provided in all its future annual reports.

4.7 RECOMMENDATION 7

The committee recommends that the Ministry clearly identifies what is farm roads, cane roads and public access roads.

5.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

5.1 GENDER EQUALITY ANALYSIS – SDG 5

The committee, during its review of the 2014 and 2015 annual reports, noted that the Ministry's Targeted Outcome for the years under review was linked to the People's Charter for Change, Peace and Progress (PCPP) priorities. One of the Key Pillars that the Ministry committed itself to was Key Pillar 7 on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment and Rural Outer Island. The committee noted that the Ministry had ensured that women had equal access in agriculture development and that communities in the rural and outer islands had basic needs, improve living standards through agriculture development. Additionally the committee noted that three (3) female staff were distinctively positioned in the Executive hierarchy of the Ministry.

6.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the committee viewed that the Ministry's overall performance in 2014 and 2015 was satisfactory even with the limited resources in place. It was noted that those operational years, the Ministry had met challenges however, the challenges gave the staff an opportunity to promote and improve their service delivery.

The committee noted the dedication by all staff of the Ministry of Agriculture in both the years, 2014 and 2015 that had enabled the Ministry to implement its programs as budgeted for and more importantly in achieving its targets as bestowed to the Ministry by the Government.

With the many challenges and obstacles the Ministry faced in 2014, it embarked on a number of undertakings in 2015 as highlighted in Fiji's 2020 Agriculture Sector Policy Agenda which focused on a theme of "Modernising Agriculture".

The committee noted and appreciated the Ministry's commitment in achieving its SDG's and other UN and International conventional goals.

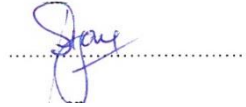
7.0 COMMITTEE MEMBERS' SIGNATURE

We, the Members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, hereby agree with the contents of this report:



Hon. Sanjay Kirpal

(Chairperson)



Hon. Jale Sigarara

(Deputy Chairperson)



Hon. Alexander O'Connor

(Member)

APPENDICES

Published written evidence

Written evidence and supplementary information was received from the Ministry of Agriculture and can be viewed on the Parliament website at the following link:

<http://www.parliament.gov.fj/committees/standing-committee-on-natural-resources/>