



STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Consolidated Report on the Review of Sugar industry Tribunal 2011-2015 Annual Report.



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Acronyms

GIS	Geographical Information System
MA	Master Awards

Chairperson's Foreword

The Standing Committee on Economic Affairs is pleased to report to Parliament, the consolidated review report of the Sugar Industry Tribunal 2011 – 2015 Annual Reports.

The Committee visited the Sugar Industry Tribunal Headquarters earlier this year to be able to better understand the functions and operations of the Tribunal. The Committee noted the number of disputes that were brought to the Industrial Commissioner and commends him for his unwavering commitment in ensuring that all disputes reported to his office are dealt with efficiently.

After scrutinizing the reports and understanding the functions and operations of the Tribunal, the Committee believes that a review of components of the Master Awards be considered where necessary.

Furthermore, the Committee agreed that the Annual Reports could be inclusive of a more comprehensive assessment of SIT's performance against its objectives as this would enable the Committee to analyze their performance more effectively.

Finally, I would like to thank our Committee Members who were part of the team that produced this report: - Deputy Chairperson Hon. Veena Bhatnagar, Hon. George Vegnathan, Hon. Inosi Kuridrani and Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau. I take this opportunity to thank Mr. Tim Brown of the Sugar Industry Tribunal and his team for their input during the Site Visit. I would also like to acknowledge and thank the Parliamentary Staff who have given us invaluable support.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, I commend the Consolidated Review Report on the Sugar Industry Tribunal 2011 – 2015 Annual Reports to Parliament.



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Chairperson – Hon. Vijay Nath

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Sugar Industry Tribunal (“SIT”) was established under the Sugar Industry Act Cap. 206.

Pursuant to the above-mentioned Act, the Tribunal is obliged to advise the Hon. Minister for Sugar about the extent to which the objects of the Act have been achieved in the period under review. These include promoting efficiency and development of the industry, coordinating activities of all sections of the industry and promoting goodwill and harmony between them, prescribing standards governing the mutual rights and obligations of the Corporation and growers, and to provide for the keeping of an official register of growers.

Further to the above, the Sugar Industry Tribunal is also responsible for encouraging and providing means for conciliation with a view to prevent and settle any disputes within the industry by amicable agreement. In cases where an agreement is not reached, the Tribunal must explore methods of settling disputes with maximum of expedition and minimum legal form and technicality.

Committee Remit and Composition

The Committee is made up of five (5) Members of Parliament, three (3) of which are Government members and two Opposition members. According to Section 109(2) (a) the Standing Committee is responsible to look into matters related to economic development, finance, banking and taxation.

2.0 Findings and Recommendations

1. The objectives of the Sugar Industry Tribunal are set out under Section 3 of the Sugar Industry Act 1984. The Committee recommends that the Annual Report be inclusive of a more comprehensive assessment of its performance against its objectives in a timely manner.
2. The Committee understands that the Master Awards is an important and essential instrument to have in place to ensure industrial stability in the Sugar Industry. The Committee understands the vulnerable and evolving situation of the sugar industry, therefore believes that a review of components of the MA be considered where necessary.
3. The Committee is aware of the significant role the Geographical Information System (GIS) has played in many developed countries to monitor the production and process of sugarcane and noted on the progress of its utilization in Fiji's Sugar Industry.
4. The Committee is aware that one of the many key functions of the Sugar Industry Tribunal is to hear and determine unresolved disputes brought to its attention. The Committee commends the Industrial Commissioner for his commitment towards resolving majority of the disputes.

3.0 Gender Analysis

The Committee appreciates the direct and indirect involvement and participation of females in the sugar industry whether it be as growers, joint partners or any other functional roles and contribution towards the stability, sustainability and development of the sugar industry.

Given that the sugar sector is predominantly male oriented, the Committee has been assured by the Tribunal that the policies and Master Awards are designed to be fair to all genders.

The Committee is of the view that there needs to be data collated to indicate the number of female farmers that register their disputes with the Tribunal.

4.0 Conclusion

To conclude, the Committee appreciates the overall performance of the Sugar Industry Tribunal, however, timely presentations of Annual Reports would assist the Committee in formulating relevant recommendations suitable for the current situation and the immediate future.

Members Signature



Hon. Vijay Nath (Chairperson)



Hon. Veena Bhatnagar (Deputy Chairperson)



Hon. George Vegnathan (Member)



Hon. Inosi Kuridrani (Member)



Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau (Member)