



OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

3 December, 2019

Hon. Alvick Avihikrit Maharaj
Chairperson
Standing Committee on Justice, Law & Human Rights
Parliament of Republic of Fiji
P O Box 2352
Government Buildings
Suva

Dear Hon. Assistant Minister,

Re: Clarifications on issues noted on the Office of the Prime Minister Annual Reports 2016 (Jan – July), 2016 – 2017 and 2017 - 2018

We kindly refer to the letter from the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji on the above mentioned subject dated 1 October, 2019.

Attached to this letter are the responses from the Office of the Prime Minister pertaining to the queries in the Annual Reports 2016 (Jan – July), 2016 – 2017 and 2017 – 2018.

Yours Sincerely,

Preece Ali (Ms.)
for Permanent Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister

1.0 Question:

Could the committee be provided an update on how Private Office has dealt with the Hon. Prime Minister's open door policy (please refer to page 11)?

Response:

Since the establishment of the Clients Services Unit (CSU) within the Office of the Prime Minister, Private Office (PO) refers members of the public's complaints to CSU for facilitation and capturing of their queries and issues on their database. The members of the public that come to PO are referred to the Private Secretary and the PSO's by the Hon. Prime Minister. These are members of the public who call the Prime Minister on his direct line or meet him at his engagements, thus raising their queries with him. Additionally, if members of the public who visit the CSU have any queries for PO, they are served via telephone and their queries are usually in regards to making appointments with the Hon. Prime Minister.

2.0 Question:

Clarification is sought on the types of speeches that the Executive Support Office facilitates for the Hon. Prime Minister (please refer to page 10)?

Response:

The Executive Support Office, is the vetting unit of the Office of the Prime Minister, thus all speeches, minutes and letters that are tabled before the Prime Minister through the Permanent Secretary is checked by the ESO team for spelling and grammar and also that content in the submissions are relevant and cohesive.

In responding to the request for clarification raised by the Committee, it must be noted that the Executive Support Office, ensures that all draft speeches (these include opening and closing remarks, keynote addresses, speeches at ground breaking ceremonies, interventions at high level panel discussions etc.) submitted to the speech drafters for the preparation of the Prime Minister's speech are checked and arranged in the format and order required. The Executive Support Team has a facilitative role in:

- i. Obtaining draft speeches/concept notes/information paper from the organizers of the event that the Prime Minister will speak at;

- ii. Formatting the draft speeches or requesting the Policy Division - OPM to prepare a draft speech from the concept notes/information paper provided;
- iii. Vetting and adding information to the drafts, which includes reaching out to the organizers of the event that the PM will speak at for more information or requesting our Policy Division to add further to the content of the initial drafts sent in by the organizers of the event;
- iv. Submit all draft speeches within the agreed timeline of 48 hours before delivery² to the speech drafters – QORVIS;
- v. Once the draft speech is submitted to the speech drafters, the team is on standby for any further information required by the speech drafters (these include weekends and if necessary late hours);
- vi. Once the final speech is received, the Executive Support Team, undertakes the final check and formatting and prepares reading and delivery copies for the Prime Minister’s digital paper and file;
- vii. In the event the Prime Minister speaks at a gathering with large iTaukei audience, the ESO team works closely with the Ministry of iTaukei Executive Support team in the translation of speeches to the iTaukei language;
- viii. The Executive Support Team also works closely with the Ministry of Information on the release to the media of the final speech delivered by the Honourable Prime Minister and when a teleprompter is required for delivery of the Prime Minister’s speech.

3.0 Question:

In regards to the OPM’s role in assisting with the COP 23 Presidency; how much consultation was conducted, during the reported period, with the public, especially those that were, at that time, currently living in climate change affected areas?

Response:

- i. Climate Change action is a responsibility for all. Government recognized non-state actors, such as NGOs, businesses and indigenous peoples’ organisations, as important actors in climate change governance and climate change action. During Fiji’s Presidency, we were advocating a strong message that “we need a grand-coalition of all actors - Parties and non-state actors.

² Delivery of speech by the PM at scheduled events

- ii. In September 2017, Fiji's first ever National Climate Change Week was held. During the week, climate awareness programs were hosted around the nation using the support of the Divisional Commissioners, Government Ministry, CSO/NGO's and institution.
- iii. Outreach conducted during Fiji's Presidency includes:
 - a. WWF hosted a program on food preservation, vegetable farming and fish spawning potential for both men and women – food security and alternative livelihoods, in Navotua Village, Yasawa.
 - b. Sustainable Seafood Summit by the Ministry of Fisheries, USP and WWF
 - c. Talanoa sessions in communities and with stakeholders to share Climate Witness stories (*Divisional Activities during the Climate Change Week*)
 - d. University of Fiji's, Awareness sessions – In June 2017, University of Fiji delivered presentations on COP 23 and Climate Awareness at several selected schools and local communities in the Western division.
 - e. Talanoa Treks and the Multiple Intelligence School, conducted awareness program in Nabalesere Village, Ra, with key learning outcomes on climate change and food security.
 - f. Exhibition and demonstrations on Moturiki Island, Wainaloka, Tokou and Nasinu village in Ovalau (*Divisional Activities during the Climate Change Week*)
 - g. Media tour funded by a philanthropic foundation. Six participating journalists from top-tier Europe, travelled to the islands of Vanua Levu, Viti Levu and Kadavu, visiting villages affected by rising sea levels, settlements affected by Tropical Cyclone Winston and some of the places where innovative solutions are being implemented to help better adapt to these challenges. Stories were published or broadcast in influential media such as Deutsche Welle and Radio France International.

**GENERAL QUESTIONS: ANNUAL REPORT 2016 (Jan – July); 2016 – 2017 and
2017-2018**

1.0 Question:

What is (and if there are any) the role of the OPM in overseeing and monitoring of the 5year -20year NDP and the SDGs?

Response:

- i. The monitoring of the NDP and SDG is currently undertaken by the Ministry of Economy, as it houses the focal points for both the NDP and the Sustainable Development Goals. It is also practical as it is the agency responsible for Government budget and finance.
- ii. The OPM maintains its oversight role to Government development plans and SDG through interventions and contribution to Policy vetting's, Policy reviews, National Committees and Sector assistance programs. In addition, the Office of the Prime Minister ensures that the aspiration of the NDP is included in bilateral discussions and overseas engagements of the Hon Prime Minister. Given government's many competing priorities, a number of initiatives in the NDP can be sourced through bilateral development cooperation in order to expedite implementation.
- iii. The OPM is planning to strengthen oversight of the National Development Plan. We are currently expanding our Policy Division with enhance capacity to allow provision of annual, sectoral progress updates on NDP deliverables. This will be done in coordination with the Ministry of Economy, in terms of budget utilization, project planning and implementation timelines.