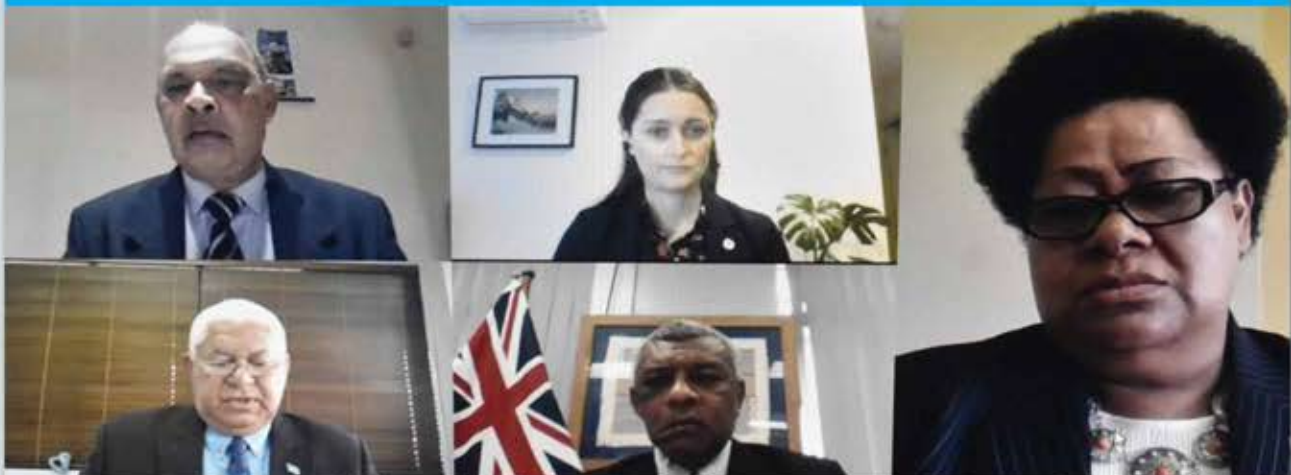




PARLIAMENT NEWSLETTER

2020 Parliament Quarterly Newsletter. Issue No. 2
April - June

PARLIAMENT EMBARKS ON VIRTUAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS



Ms Georgia Hinds, Regional Legal Adviser for the International Committee of the Red Cross presenting their submission to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence on the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of Children in Armed Conflict in June, 2020.

The Fijian Parliament has begun a new initiative by conducting virtual meetings for the six Parliamentary Standing Committees.

In adhering to the COVID-19 health directives and social distancing measures, the IT team of Parliament facilitated training and installation of relevant software to allow the Committees of Parliament to continue meeting through the use of online platforms.

According to the Acting Secretary-General to Parliament, Mrs Viniana Namosimalua, Committees are a vital part of the parliamentary machinery and it is very important that they continue to deliberate and make recommendations on Bills and reports before them.

"We've had to ensure that the Committee Members are well equipped and more importantly, that the infrastructure required in this arrangement is working well."

"Both Committee Members and secretariat have had the opportunity to be trained on the protocols of virtual meetings and of course, we have had to adjust a great deal, while at the same time ensuring that the Committee Mem-

bers will continue to effectively fulfil their roles in Parliament," Mrs Namosimalua said.

Chairperson for the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights, Hon. Alrick Maharaj highlighted that some Members have the opinion that this allows for more work to be done simultaneously.

"This new initiative has given us the opportunity to carry out our Constitutional role from any place and also attend to other matters, despite the COVID-19 restrictions. It is comfortable to operate and ensure that continuity of work is maintained."

Members of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs shared the same sentiments.

"Given that we are adjusting to the 'new normal' brought about by COVID-19, virtual meetings enable us to fulfil our mandate as elected MPs while also complying with the physical distancing measures put in place by the Government."

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence received virtual submissions on the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks 1981 (Madrid Agree-



Virtual meeting of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs in May, 2020.

ment); Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement (Madrid Protocol) (together known as the Madrid System); Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property; and Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. The Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights received virtual submissions on the Cybercrime Bill 2020.

Both Committees are expected to table their reports at a later sitting of Parliament. The other four Committees deliberated on reports and certain documents.

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SPEAKER'S RULING ON SUSPENSION



National Federation Party Members occupying three front seats on the Opposition side of the House, with the Government Members behind them.

"Honourable Members, as you may be aware the Registrar of Political Parties has issued a Notice pursuant to section 19 of the Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, Funding and Disclosures) Act 2013. The Notice clearly states that the Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA) is suspended with immediate effect on 26 May 2020 for a period of 60 days.

I now advise Honourable Members that subsequent to the suspension of the SODELPA by the Registrar of Political Parties, I have legal advice on the impact this will have on the Honourable Members concerned.

1. The suspension of the registration of a political party has the effect of suspending that political party and all its Members from all Parliament sittings, including from all Committees of Parliament.

2. This means that any such suspended political party

and all its Members cannot participate in Parliament or in any of the Committees of Parliament.

3. Furthermore, the political party or any of its Members cannot be entitled to any remuneration or allowances from Parliament for the duration of the suspension.

4. During the period of suspension, Members of Parliament of the SODELPA party including caucus staff are not permitted to access the Parliament premises.

The Members concerned have been duly informed and that they are suspended from Parliament for 60 days, with effect from 26 May 2020.

The suspension will be reviewed once the status of the political party is determined by the Registrar of Political Parties.

Thank you Honourable Members."



Chamber Orderly Kitione Bete assisting Members of Parliament.



Prayer time at the beginning of the Parliament sitting in May, 2020.



Opposition MP Hon. Pio Tikoduadua during debates in May, 2020.

IPU SUPPORTS PARLIAMENTS DURING PANDEMIC



Members of Parliament practise social distancing during Parliament sitting in September, 2020.

During the COVID-19 global health emergency, Parliaments have a vital role to play in supporting national efforts to stem the pandemic and in mobilizing the resources to implement the health measures recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO). They are also key in legislating to mitigate the effects of the ensuing economic crisis and protecting the livelihoods of the populations that they represent.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has reached out to Speakers of its Member Parliaments encouraging efforts they are taking to contribute to the efforts to stem the COVID-19 pandemic. In the interests of sharing parliamentary practice and facilitating inter-parliamentary communica-

tion, the IPU called on its Members to communicate what actions they are taking to legislate for the crisis as well as how they are using technology to continue to function in a time of confinement and social distancing.

The IPU also called on its Member Parliaments to join WHO's life-saving campaign on social distancing and hand hygiene using the hashtag #SafeHands. Many parliaments started amplifying the message through social media and outreach efforts to their populations. For example, the Timor Leste Parliament, in partnership with UNDP, has published a video on basic health hygiene, as has the UK Parliament.

The IPU, in a statement said that during a time of crisis such as the current one, some authorities are tempted to bypass democratic practices and parliaments in the name of expediency. The IPU will continue to support parliaments in promoting political dialogue and ensuring the continuity of democratic practices.



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy For everyone

130
years of
empowering
parliamentarians

NEW SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION (CPA) APPOINTED



The Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) has appointed a new Secretary-General for the Association. Stephen Twigg will become the CPA Secretary-General of one of the oldest established organisations in the Commonwealth. The CPA, founded in 1911, is a membership association and parliamentary wing of the Commonwealth, which brings together Commonwealth Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff, who are united by a community of interest, respect for the rule of law and individual rights and freedoms, and by the pursuit of the positive ideals of parliamentary democracy. The CPA membership is made up of CPA Branches in 180 Commonwealth Parliaments and Legislatures at national, state, provincial and territorial levels and it offers a vast opportunity for Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff to collaborate on issues of mutual interest and to share good practice.

The CPA Executive Committee approved the new CPA Secretary-General Elect, acting in the capacity of the General Assembly, as mandated by the 64th General Assembly held in Kampala, Uganda on 28

September 2019. The CPA Executive Committee is made up of representatives from the nine regions of the CPA: Africa; Asia; Australia; British Islands and Mediterranean; Canada; Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic; India; Pacific; South-East Asia.

The new CPA Secretary-General is due to take up his appointment from 1 August 2020 for a fixed term of four years. The CPA Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg is a former UK Parliamentarian, who was elected to the Parliament of the United Kingdom as a Member of Parliament from 1997 to 2005 (Enfield Southgate) and from 2010 to 2019 (Liverpool West Derby). During his parliamentary career, he held several senior positions including Chairperson of the International Development Select Committee, Minister for Schools and a range of Shadow Front Bench roles.

Prior to his parliamentary career, Stephen Twigg studied Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Balliol College, Oxford University. He became the youngest President of the National Union of Students in 1990-92 and was then elected as a Local Councillor in the London Borough of Islington.

Source:



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY RELATIONS AND PROTOCOL: APRIL – JUNE, 2020

COURTESY CALL/ FAREWELL CALL ON SPEAKER

DELEGATE NAME	NO. OF DELEGATE(S)	DATE	COUNTRY/ INSTITUTION	DELEGATE NAME	NO. OF DELEGATE(S)	DATE	COUNTRY/ INSTITUTION
1. H.E. Michael Aroti, Nauru's High Commissioner to Fiji	1	04/06/20	Nauru	2. H.E. Ms Melanie Hopkins, Outgoing British High Commissioner to Fiji	1	25/06/20	United Kingdom

All overseas meetings for delegation has been deferred or cancelled as well as no incoming visit to the Fijian Parliament due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

STANDING COMMITTEES OF PARLIAMENT APRIL – JUNE, 2020

STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

No. of Meetings	Annual Reports		
08	1. Ministry of Agriculture 2014 Annual Report	2. Ministry of Agriculture 2015 Annual Report	3. Water Authority of Fiji 2016 Annual Report

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

No. of Meetings	Audit Reports	Reports tabled in Parliament
16	1. Report of the Auditor General – Audit Report on Provincial Councils – Volume 3 (referred on 25/05/20)	1. Consolidated Oversight Reports: 2010-2013 Whole of Government Audit (PP No. 56 of 2017) 2. Review Report on the Performance Audit of Preparedness on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (PP No. 06 of 2020) 3. Review on the Audit Report of the Municipal Councils for 2014-2017 (PP No. 31 of 2020) 4. Review of the Performance Audit Report on the Coordination of Actions on Elimination of Violence Against Women (PP No. 32 of 2020) 5. Review Report on the Performance Audit of the Effectiveness of Institutional Framework for Preventing Corruption (PP No. 33 of 2020)

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE, LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

No. of Meetings	Reports tabled in Parliament	
16	1. Office of the Prime Minister 2016 Annual Report (January – July) 3. Review of the Fijian Electoral Commission Annual Report 2016	2. Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission Annual Report 2016 4. Fiji Corrections Service (01 August 2016-31 July 2017) Annual Report

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE

No. of Meetings	Reports tabled in Parliament	Conventions and Treaties
11	1. Ministry of Defence and National Security – Annual Report 2016-2017. 2. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons 3. International Labour Organization- Violence And Harassment Convention 2019; 4. International Labour Organization-Protocol of 2002 to the Occupational Safety and Health Convention 1981	1. Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks 1981 (Madrid Agreement); 2. Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement (Madrid Protocol), (together known as the Madrid System); and 3. Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property 4. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS

No. of Meetings	Annual Reports	Reports Tabled in Parliament
14	1. Ministry of Youth and Sports 2017- 2018 Annual Report 2. Fiji National Sports Commission Aug 2017 – July 2018 3. Fiji Museum 2015 Annual Report 4. Fiji museum Jan – July 2016 Annual Report 5. Fiji Museum 2016 – 2017 Annual Report 6. National Fire Authority 2013 Annual Report 7. Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation 2017 – 2018 Annual Report	1. Review of the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs 2016 -2017 Annual Report

STANDING COMMITTEES OF PARLIAMENT

APRIL – JUNE, 2020

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

No. of Meetings	Annual Reports	Reports Tabled in Parliament
17	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 44/2017 Sugar Cane Growers Fund – Annual Report for the Year Ended 31st December, 2009 45/2017 Sugar Cane Growers Fund – Annual Report for the Year Ended 31st December, 2010 46/2017 Sugar Cane Growers Fund – Annual Report for the Year Ended 31st December, 2011 47/2017 Sugar Cane Growers Fund – Annual Report for the Year Ended 31st December, 2012 48/2017 Sugar Cane Growers Fund – Annual Report for the Year Ended 31st December, 2013 49/2017 Sugar Cane Growers Fund – Annual Report for the Year Ended 31st December, 2014 46/2019 Sugar Cane Growers Fund – 2015 Annual Report 47/2019 Sugar Cane Growers Fund – 2016 Annual Report 139/2018 Sugar Cane Growers Fund – 2017 Annual Report 40/2017 Sugar Industry Tribunal – Annual Report for the Year Ending 31st December, 2011 41/2017 Sugar Industry Tribunal – Annual Report for the Year Ending 31st December, 2012 42/2017 Sugar Industry Tribunal – Annual Report for the Year Ending 31st December, 2013 43/2017 Sugar Industry Tribunal – Annual Report for the Year Ending 31st December, 2014 45/2019 Sugar Industry Tribunal – 2015 Annual Report 50/2017 Sugar Research Institute of Fiji – Annual Report 2008 51/2017 Sugar Research Institute of Fiji – Annual Report 2009 52/2017 Sugar Research Institute of Fiji – Annual Report 2010 53/2017 Sugar Research Institute of Fiji – Annual Report 2011 49/2018 Sugar Research Institute of Fiji – Annual Report 2012 50/2018 Sugar Research Institute of Fiji – 2013 Annual Report 51/2018 Sugar Research Institute of Fiji – 2014 Annual Report 52/2018 Sugar Research Institute of Fiji – 2015 Annual Report 25/2017 The Fiji Sugar Corporation Limited – Annual Report 2007 26/2017 The Fiji Sugar Corporation Limited – Annual Report 2008 27/2017 The Fiji Sugar Corporation Limited – Annual Report 2009 28/2017 The Fiji Sugar Corporation Limited – Annual Report 2010 29/2017 The Fiji Sugar Corporation Limited – Annual Report 2011 30/2017 The Fiji Sugar Corporation Limited – Annual Report 2012 31/2017 The Fiji Sugar Corporation Limited – Annual Report 2013 32/2017 Fiji Sugar Corporation – Annual Report 2014 33/2017 Fiji Sugar Corporation – Annual Report 2015 50/2019 Fiji Sugar Corporation – Annual Report 2016 51/2019 Fiji Sugar Corporation – Annual Report 2017 52/2019 Fiji Sugar Corporation – Annual Report 2018 53/2019 Sugar Cane Growers Council – Annual Report 2007 54/2019 Sugar Cane Growers Council – Annual Report 2008 55/2019 Sugar Cane Growers Council – Annual Report 2009 34/2017 Sugar Cane Growers Council – Annual Report 2010 35/2017 Sugar Cane Growers Council – Annual Report 2011 36/2017 Sugar Cane Growers Council – 2012 Annual Report 37/2017 Sugar Cane Growers Council – 2013 Annual Report 38/2017 Sugar Cane Growers Council – 2014 Annual Report 39/2017 Sugar Cane Growers Council – 2015 Annual Report 56/2019 Sugar Cane Growers Council – 2016 Annual Report 57/2019 Sugar Cane Growers Council – Annual Report 2017 87/2019 Reserve Bank of Fiji Insurance – Annual Report 2018 130/2019 Fiji Commerce Commission – Annual Report 2016-2017 160/2019 Investment Fiji – Annual Report 2016/2017 Fiji Financial Intelligence Unit 2018 Annual Report 86 of 2019 RBF Aug 2018- July 2019 Annual Report 161 of 2019 MITT 2016-2017 Annual Report 29 of 2020 Tourism Fiji Annual Report 2013 30 of 2020 Tourism Fiji Annual Report 2014 28 of 2020 MITT 2017-2018 Annual Report 62 of 2020 Energy Fiji Limited 2019 Annual Report 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the Reserve Bank of Fiji Insurance 2018 Annual Report Consolidated Report on the Review of Ministry of Sugar Industry 2012-2016 Annual Report

COMMITTEES AT WORK

VIRTUAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS BECAME THE NEW NORMAL SINCE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Members of the media and secretariat during the virtual committee meeting of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence in June, 2020.



Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence receiving virtual submission from the Solicitor-General's Office in June, 2020. Top (L-R) Senior officials from the Solicitor-General's Office, Chairperson Hon. Alexander O'Connor, Hon. Dr. Salik Govind. Bottom (L-R) Hon. Pio Tikoduadua, Hon. Selai Adimaitoga and secretariat.



Virtual committee meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts in May, 2020. Top (L-R) Chairperson Hon. Abvick Maharaj, Hon. Ro Teimumu Kepa. Bottom (L-R) Hon. Vijendra Prakash and Hon. Aseri Radrodrua.



Virtual committee meeting of the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights in May 2020. Top (L-R) Hon. Mosese Bulitavu and Hon. Ratu Sukumo Matanitobua. Bottom (L-R) Chairperson Hon. Abvick Maharaj and Hon. Dr. Salik Govind.



Member of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, Hon. Ro Teimumu Kepa attending the virtual committee meeting from her residence in May, 2020.



Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights receiving virtual submission on the Cybercrime Bill 2020. Top (L-R) Ms. Salmieta Tamaniakirawamara from the United Kingdom, Chairperson Hon. Abvick Maharaj. Bottom (L-R) Hon. Dr. Salik Govind and Hon. Rohit Sharma.



Senior Committee Clerk, Iru Komaisarai going through the meeting papers online with members of the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights in May, 2020.



Virtual submission from the Republic of Fiji Military Forces to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence in June, 2020. Top (L-R) Chairperson Hon. Alexander O'Connor, Hon. Selai Adimaitoga and Hon. Pio Tikoduadua. Bottom (L-R) Commander RFMF Commander Viliame Naupoto and Hon. Dr. Salik Govind.



Virtual submission to the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights on the Cybercrime Bill in June, 2020. Top (L-R) Hon. Dr. Salik Govind, University of Fiji Acting Vice-Chancellor Dr. Shaista Shameem with a colleague from their Lautoka Office and Chairperson Hon. Abvick Maharaj. Bottom (L-R) University of Fiji senior staff from their Suva office and Hon. Rohit Sharma.



Virtual submission to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence. Top (L-R) Senior officials of the Fiji Intellectual Property Office, Chairperson Hon. Alexander O'Connor, Hon. Dr. Salik Govind. Bottom (L-R) Hon. Pio Tikoduadua, Hon. Selai Adimaitoga and secretariat.

SPEAKER'S GUESTS



Farewell call by the outgoing British High Commissioner, Her Excellency Ms Melanie Hopkins to the Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Ratu Epeli Nailankau in June, 2020.



Courtesy call by the High Commissioner of the Republic of Nauru Mr Michael Mathias to the Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Ratu Epeli Nailankau in June, 2020.

BEHIND THE SCENES



Assistant Minister for Health and Medical Services and Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, Hon. Alexander O'Connor with Parliament staff Susana Korovou in May, 2020.



Chamber Orderly Penjamini Valebuli and IT assistant Maurice Shute before Parliament sitting in May, 2020.



Government MP Hon. Sanjay Kirpal clarifying an item in the Order Paper with Chamber Orderly Kitione Bete.



Bills Officer Meloni Vuniwai organising papers on the Speaker's table before the beginning of Parliament sitting in May, 2020.



PC Vaseva Rokotiko during the Parliament sitting in May, 2020.



Sergeant-At-Arms Simeli Cinavou and Mace Bearer PC Roko Tuiwailevu before Parliament sitting in May, 2020.



Technician Sekope Toduaadua doing regular checks before Parliament sitting in May, 2020.



Sign language is an important feature during Parliament sitting. Staff from the Fiji Association of the Deaf during the live Parliament session in May, 2020.



Graphic Artist Taniela Nalaide inside the Control Room during Parliament sitting in May, 2020. The Control Room facilitates the live session aired on television, website and social media platforms.

PARLIAMENTARY STAFF HEALTH AND WELLNESS INITIATIVE



Shrutkeerri Devi, Shobana Rami and Salesini Prasad taking a walk around Albert Park as part of their afternoon exercise.



Ponipate Coalala, Avinesh Sharma and Penijamini Valebuli during the warm up before the afternoon games.

Providing effective and efficient services for Parliament and for Members of Parliament is key to the work of Parliament secretariat. Equally important is the health and wellness of staff. Having a healthy workforce is vital to ensuring productivity; business performance; staff morale; and employee engagement. The Workforce Sports and Social Committee of the Department of Legislature organises a one hour programme (organised games, exercises and activities) every Wednesday to ensure staff develop daily work-out habits to improve their general health and wellness.



Deputy Secretary-General Jeanette Emberson and Executive Assistant Loata Waganisau before their afternoon exercise.



Staff enjoying a game of soccer.