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## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE**

### **Review Report on the Amendments to the Framework Agreement of the Paris Declaration on the International Solar Alliance of 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015**



**PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI**  
**Parliamentary Paper No. 251 of 2020**

*December 2020*

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## Chairperson's Foreword

I am pleased to present the Review Report on the Amendments to the Framework Agreement of the Paris Declaration on the International Solar Alliance of 30th November 2015 ('Framework Agreement').

Climate change, pollution, resource depletion and environmental concerns are driving a shift to more sustainable forms of energy. Fiji through its National Determined Contribution (NDC) Implementation Roadmap 2017-2030 has articulated efforts to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of Climate Change.

The Governments of India and France established the International Solar Alliance (ISA) in 2015 at the margins of the 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP 21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris with collective aims to address key common challenges to scale up solar energy applications in line with the needs of member countries.

The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is a coalition of solar rich countries to address special energy needs and provides a platform to collaborate on addressing the identified gaps through a common, agreed approach.

The vision and mission of the ISA is to provide a dedicated platform for cooperation among solar resource rich countries where the global community, including bilateral and multilateral organisations, corporates, industry and other stakeholders, can make a positive contribution to assist and help achieve the common goals of increasing the use of solar energy in meeting the energy needs of prospective ISA member countries in a safe, convenient, affordable, equitable and sustainable manner.

Amendments to the Framework Agreement which was proposed in 2018 relate to:

- i. The expansion of membership to all *UN member countries*, as opposed to the original purpose of the ISA to restrict membership to *solar rich resource states which lie fully or partially between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn*.
- ii. The deletion of the term "partner country" from the Agreement.
- iii. Observers' status is made available to those whose applications are pending and organizations that can support the objective of the ISA.

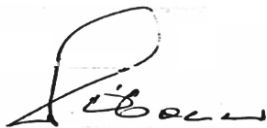
The Committee is of the view that the amendments reflect the significance of multilateralism and collective action for enhancing energy security and sustainable development, and to

improve access to energy in developing member countries which also provides opportunities for rich collaboration and exchanges on best practices with solar rich countries. The ISA can be the main vehicle for creating ideas on the implementation of SDG 7 (Renewable Energy) and also contributes to the attainment of various targets under other SDGs e.g. SDG 2 (No Hunger), SDG 13 (Climate Change), SDG 14 (Life below Water).

As such, the Committee recommends that Parliament accept the Amended Framework Agreement.

I take this opportunity to thank members of my Committee and the Secretariat for compiling this bipartisan report.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, I submit this report to the Parliament.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. O'Connor', is positioned above a horizontal line.

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**Hon. Alexander O'Connor**  
**Chairperson**

## Acronyms

<b>COP 21</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris, France
<b>COP 22</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Marrakesh, Morocco
<b>DOE</b>	Department of Energy
<b>EV</b>	Electronic Vehicles
<b>GCPV</b>	Grid Connected Photovoltaic (PV) Systems
<b>ISA</b>	International Solar Alliance
<b>ISC</b>	International Steering Committee of the ISA in New Delhi, India
<b>MOFA</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<b>MS Teams</b>	Microsoft Office 365 Teams Application
<b>OSG</b>	Office of the Solicitor-General
<b>PV</b>	Photovoltaic Systems
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SO</b>	Standing Orders
<b>USP</b>	University of the South Pacific

## **Recommendation**

The Committee recommends that Parliament accept the Amended Framework Agreement.

## **Introduction**

### **Background and Terms of Reference**

The Committee had its first virtual online meeting on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and reviewed the Treaty:

- Amendments to the Framework Agreement of the Paris Declaration on the International Solar Alliance of 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

From 15<sup>th</sup> September to 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020 stakeholders made virtual online submissions on the MS Office Teams application in Suva.

#### **The Report is divided into three parts:**

**Part One** - focuses on the Committee recommendations

**Part Two** - covers the Findings of the report to Parliament

**Part Three** -covers the Conclusion

### **Committee Remit and Composition**

Pursuant to Standing Order 109(2)(e) the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence is mandated to look into matters related to Fiji's relations with other countries, development aid, foreign direct investment, oversight of the military and relations with multi-lateral organisations.

#### **The members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence are as follows:**

Hon. Alexander O'Connor – Chairperson

Hon. Dr. Salik Govind - Deputy Chairperson

Hon. Selai Adimaitoga – Member

Hon. Anare Jale - Member

Hon. Pio Tikoduadua – Member

### **Procedure and Program**

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence commenced its deliberation on the 8<sup>th</sup> September to 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020 in the Parliament using the online MS Office Teams, also received a written and oral submissions from stakeholders with the following attendees:

- University of the South Pacific (USP)
- Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF)

- Department of Energy
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)
- Ministry of Defence, National Security and Policing (MODNSP)
- Office of the Solicitor-General



## Committee Deliberation and Analysis

### Committee Findings

The Committee's findings are outlined below:

#### 1. Non-Government Organisations

##### 1.1. Positives

- 1.1.1. The proposed amendments to the Amended Framework Agreement have no direct implications for Fiji.
- 1.1.2. The inclusion of Partner Organization including regional inter-governmental economic integration organizations will foster collaboration to help the ISA achieve its objectives.

##### 1.2. Negatives

- 1.2.1. There were no implications highlighted herein.

##### 1.3. Proposals for Amendments/Considerations

- 1.3.1. Agreed to the recommendations.

#### 2. Higher Education Institutions

##### 2.1. Positives

- 2.1.1. This amendment will help open new technology transfer /funding avenues from global North to developing countries.
- 2.1.2. SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
- 2.1.3. Basic Affordable Service for urban and rural poor.
- 2.1.4. Reduce Energy Poverty.
- 2.1.5. Less pollutants that facilitates the preservation of Vaccines and Medicines.
- 2.1.6. Energy water nexus that facilitates water pumping and desalination.
- 2.1.7. Boost Industry jobs and employment creation.
- 2.1.8. De-carbonising energy systems.
- 2.1.9. Electronic Vehicles (EVs) and solar supporting source of electricity.
- 2.1.10. Electricity demand will significantly increase in future as EVs are introduced. Solar can help generate clean energy via: Rooftop Grid Connected Photovoltaic (PV) GCPV Systems.
- 2.1.11. Floating Solar PV
- 2.1.12. Pumped Hydro + Solar PV

##### 2.2. Negatives

- 1.1.1. There were no implications highlighted herein.

##### 1.2. Proposals for Amendments/Considerations

- 1.2.1. With ratification of proposed amendments, Fiji should actively seek solar project financing from ISA.

- 1.2.2. ISA should help enhance Research and Development Collaborations between Higher Education Institutions.

## **2. Government Ministries**

### **2.1. Positives**

- 2.1.1. The Amended Framework Agreement will allow Fiji better access to policy, financial, capacity building and technological assistance in terms of accessing renewable energy sources to meet national development targets.
- 2.1.2. Opening the ISA membership to States which are members of the United Nations will provide Fiji a bridge to other Governments, developers and independent power producers to invest in Fiji.
- 2.1.3. Ratifying the amended framework will provide furtherance to Fiji to continue establishing networks and develop synergies with ISA member countries and Partners to help achieve Fiji's efforts in a sustainable and targeted manner for the energy sector.
- 2.1.4. ISA provides opportunities for member countries to access their technical programs, which includes, scaling solar applications for agriculture use, scaling solar mini-grids, scaling rooftop solar, and scaling solar e-mobility and storage. More so, their three cross-cutting programs, which include, affordable finance, online information/communication platform, capacity-building, standardization and research.
- 2.1.5. Ratifying the amended Framework Agreement will additionally reinforce Fiji's commitment towards climate change and reiterate Fiji's demonstration of global climate change leadership.
- 2.1.6. The amendment would strengthen Fiji's position in accessing policy, financial, capacity building and technological assistance in terms of accessing renewable energy sources to meet national development goals.
- 2.1.7. Fiji being a former president of COP 23, we will support any initiative that is climate friendly which contributes to a clean and safe environment.
- 2.1.8. Removal of 'Partner Country' provides exclusive rights for member countries to the Paris Agreement to make informed decisions without being influenced.

- 2.1.9. The amendments reflect the significance of multilateralism and collective action for enhancing energy security and sustainable development, and to improve access to energy in developing member countries.
- 2.1.10. Expanding the membership of the ISA to all UN member states also provides opportunities for rich collaboration and exchanges on best practices with solar rich countries. The ISA can be the main vehicle for creating ideas on the implementation of SDG7 and also contributes to the attainment of various targets under other SDGs Eg. SDG2 (Food Security) , SDG 13 (climate change), SDG14 (Oceans) .
- 2.1.11. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7 on Affordable and clean energy emphasizes the global recognition of and the need for affordable and clean energy worldwide. Although access to electricity is increasing, as the population continues to grow so will the demand for cheap energy, and an economy reliant on fossil fuels is creating drastic changes to our climate.
- 2.1.12. Clean energy has cross cutting implications on the vision of the Agenda 2030 and other SDGs.
- 2.1.13. Investing in solar, wind and thermal power, improving energy productivity, and ensuring energy for all is vital if we are to achieve SDG 7 by 2030. Expanding infrastructure and upgrading technology to provide clean and more efficient energy in all countries will encourage growth and help the environment. For Fiji, this will enable us to reduce our net carbon emissions to zero as soon as possible.

## **2.2. Negatives**

- 2.2.1. There were no implications highlighted herein.

## **Challenges**

The challenge is to build the capacity and technology for large scale use of solar power for domestic and industrial purposes.

The initial capital investment to establish solar power is substantial. Also the disposal of solar panels as per life span becomes an issue. Disposal options become a challenge, whilst other options look at wave and thermal energy technology.

## **Oral and Written Evidence Received**

The Committee received oral and written submissions from stakeholders and the public as listed in *Appendix A*.

## **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Analysis**

Expanding the membership of the ISA to all UN member states also provides opportunities for rich collaboration and exchanges on best practices with solar rich countries. The ISA can be the main vehicle for creating ideas on the implementation of SDG7 and also contributes to the attainment of various targets under other SDGs eg. SDG2 (Food Security), SDG 13 (Climate Change), SDG14 (Oceans)

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7 on Affordable and clean energy emphasizes the global recognition of and the need for affordable and clean energy worldwide. Although access to electricity is increasing, as the population continues to grow so will the demand for cheap energy, and an economy reliant on fossil fuels is creating drastic changes to our climate.

Clean energy has cross cutting implications on the vision of the Agenda 2030 and other SDGs.

Energy is the main contributor to climate change; it produces around 60 percent of greenhouse gases. More than 40 percent of the world's population—3 billion—rely on polluting and unhealthy fuels for cooking. As of 2015, more than 20 percent of power was generated through renewable sources. The renewable energy sector employed a record 10.3 million people in 2017.

Investing in solar, wind and thermal power, improving energy productivity, and ensuring energy for all is vital if we are to achieve SDG 7 by 2030. Expanding infrastructure and upgrading technology to provide clean and more efficient energy in all countries will encourage growth and help the environment. For Fiji, this will enable us to reduce our net carbon emissions to zero as soon as possible.

## **Gender Analysis**

The Amended Framework Agreement is a milestone in Fiji's broader global commitments to SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. In concurrence this dovetails with Fiji's International commitments to meeting SDG 5: Gender Equality and to ensure all genders receive affordable solar energy for all Fijians.

## **Conclusion**

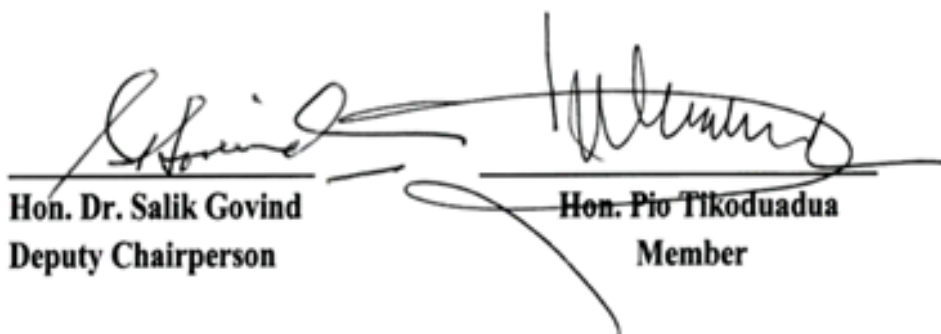
The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence has fulfilled its mandate approved by Parliament which is to review the Amendments to the Framework Agreement of the Paris Declaration on the International Solar Alliance of 30th November 2015.

## Members' Signature



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**Hon. Alexander O'Connor**  
**Chairperson**



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**Hon. Dr. Salik Govind**  
**Deputy Chairperson**

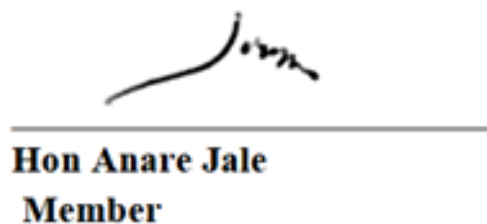
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**Hon. Pio Tikoduadua**  
**Member**



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**Hon. Selai Adimaitoga**  
**Member**



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**Hon Anare Jale**  
**Member**

## Appendices

All other written and transcribed evidences gathered during the public submissions and public consultations will be made accessible on the Parliament website on: <http://www.parliament.gov.fj/committees/standing-committee-on-foreign-affairs-and-defence/>

No	Date	Agency/Organisation	Written Evidence	Oral Evidence (Online MS Teams submission)
1.	15 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	The University of the South Pacific (USP)	✓	✓
2.	21 <sup>st</sup> September 2020	Department of Energy	✓	✓
3.		Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF)	✓	
4.	22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2020	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)	✓	✓
5.		Ministry of Defence, National Security and Policing (MODNSP)	✓	✓
6.	05 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	Office of the Solicitor-General	✓	✓