

# **[VERBATIM REPORT]**

## **MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS**

### **AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT**

**Performance Audit Report on Coordination of Actions on Eliminations  
of Violence Against Women (PP No. 129 of 2019)**

**ENTITIES:** Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation  
Fiji Police Force

**VENUE:** Big Committee Room

**DATE:** Wednesday, 5th February, 2020

**VERBATIM NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS HELD AT THE BIG COMMITTEE ROOM (WEST WING), PARLIAMENT PRECINCTS, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS ON WEDNESDAY, 5TH FEBRUARY, 2020 AT 12.54 P.M.**

**Interviewee/Submittee: Joint Submission by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation the Fiji Police Force**

In Attendance:

Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation

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|------------------------------|---------------------|
| (1) Ms. Jennifer Poole       | Permanent Secretary |
| (2) Mrs. Selai C. Korovusere | Director            |

Fiji Police Force

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|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (1) Mr. Aporosa Lutunauga | Senior Superintendent of Police    |
| (2) Ms. Eseta Lewabeci    | Assistant Superintendent of Police |
| (3) Ms. Paulini Rasila    | Senior Research Officer            |

Office of the Auditor-General

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| (1) Mr. Kuruwara Tunisalevu | Director of Audit |
| (2) Mr. Sitiveni Naivota    | Auditor           |
| (3) Ms. Maratina Cirikisuva | Auditor           |
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MR. CHAIRMAN.- I welcome all Honourable Members, members of the public who are watching and the media to today's Committee enquiry on Performance Audit Report for Coordination of Action on Elimination of Violence Against Women.

I also take this opportunity to welcome the officials, witness from the Fiji Police Force team, Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation officials and the Office of the Auditor-General who have agreed to appear before today's Committee hearing on the Audit Report that is before us. The special Committee enquiry on the Performance Audit Report for Co-ordination of Action on Elimination of Violence Against Women was established by resolution of Parliament when it was referred to the Public Accounts Committee on Wednesday, 4th September, 2019. It is part of the core meeting responsibility to gather information from the relevant stakeholders regarding the Findings of the Audit Report. The purpose of the enquiry is:

- (1) To allow witness to present and produce relevant documents, information in line with the Finding in its Audit Report;
- (2) To allow the Committee to ask question specified related to each Department's function as far as Audit Report is concerned;
- (3) To allow the witness to respond to the Committee's question; and
- (4) To provide important information that will assist the Committee in the formulation of this report to Parliament particularly on our findings with the recommendation that we will debate on.

It is expected that the end of this enquiry the Committee will be:

- (1) Better inform on the current status and functions of each relevant stakeholders towards the Coordination of Action on Elimination of Violence Against Women;
- (2) Knowledgeable of the legislative policy, framework that are in place to address one of the major social issues in Fiji;
- (3) Able to understand the process on how the framework has been implemented;
- (4) Able to understand on the capacity of the law enforcers and how they can effectively carry out their monitoring and policing roles;
- (5) Able to understand the records of programmes and activities that are initiated to address the issue; and
- (6) Able to understand the monitoring and reporting arguments undertaken towards the Elimination of Violence Against Women by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation.

Please be advised that this meeting is open to public, media and also be aided live on the Parliament Channel and social media through Parliamentary *Facebook* page. So for any sensitive information concerning this enquiry that cannot be disclose in public this can be provided to Committee either in private or in writing.

At the outset, I wish to remind Honourable Members and our witness that all questions asked is to be addressed through the Chairman. This Parliamentary enquiry and all information gathered is covered under the Parliamentary powers and Privilege Act. With these words I would like my Honourable Members to actually introduce themselves to our submittees starting from Honourable Vijendra Prakash.

(Introduction of Honourable Members, Secretariat and officials from the Office of the Auditor-General)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- For the interest of the viewer's I will be taking everyone through the Report itself so that everyone watching us would know what the Report is all about and what this inquiry is all about. So, without further delay, Performance Audit on Coordination of Action Plan for Elimination of Violence Against Women (Parliamentary Paper No. 129 of 2019).

Gender Equality is one of the major social issues in the world especially in the developing countries like Fiji where violence against women continue to increase over the years. This is evidence but the daily media report and the NGOs research papers and thus needs to be addressed at all levels. Gender Equality and Women Development is one of the priority outcomes of the State. It is embedded in the new National Development Plan, roadmap for democracy and sustainable socio-economic development 2010-2014.

The 2013 Constitution including the National Strategic Human Resource Plan 211-2015 hence the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation outputs as per the Annual Corporate Plan to align with the State priorities. Fiji made this commitment in the Beijing platform for the Action 1995 which addresses the objectives of the empowerment of all women.

The implementation of this platform is the sovereign responsibility of each State. This has resulted in the implementation of the Fiji's first Fiji Women Action Plan 1999-2008 which set at a blueprint to integrate women and gender concern and promote gender equality in the development process. As in the most developed countries women and children are the most

vulnerable in Fiji where women comprise 90 percent of the victims of gender based violence. Because of the emerging issues on violence against women the 2<sup>nd</sup> Women Action Plan 2010-2019 was formulated in collaboration with development partners and community based organisations in 2009.

There are five thematic areas that are addressed under the 2<sup>nd</sup> Women Action of which elimination of violence against women is one of the concern in Fiji's Women Plan of Action. This Performance Audit Report provides an assessment on the efficiency and effectiveness of Ministry of Women and relevant stakeholders in administering the Action Plan on Elimination of Violence Against Women as the areas of concern identified in the Women Plan of Action.

The focus of assessment was on the coordination of action by the Department of Women in conjunction with relevant stakeholders on the elimination of violence against women. The objective of the audit was to assess whether the implementation of Women Plan of Action in particular with area on elimination of violence against women is effective by examining;

- (1) The existing legal and policy framework aimed at eliminating violence against women and children within the Ministry of Women and with stakeholders;
- (2) The process by which the framework has been implemented; and
- (3) The monitoring and reporting agreement over the implementation of framework and where the improvement can be demonstrated.

The audit examined the existing legal and policy framework, records of activities, monitoring and reporting agreements undertaken toward the elimination of violence against women by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation in coordination with the stakeholders for the years 2014-2017 in Fiji. That was the brief on the Auditor-General's Report. Now, what we will do is, we will go through each key finding that Auditor-General has picked on. After that, we will allow the submittees to give their response to each of those findings. Following that, if there is any supplementary questions, our members can ask your supplementary questions.

Without any further delay, we will just straight away go into the submission. With Key Finding No. 1 and it goes as, despite the existence of relevant provision in the Constitution enactment of various legislation in addressing gender based violence, there are several challenges in effecting them. These include factors such as legislation being under neutral whereby victims of gender based violence can be disadvantaged, problem at implementation level and minimal use of legislation by women themselves. The first recommendation by OAG to Department of Women:

- Dialogue with civil society organisation, NGOs and women rights organisations is strengthened to ensure that legislative reform is conducted in more integrated and comprehensive manner.
- Prevention programmes are focussed on the prevention of cohesive control and emotional violence as well as physical and sexual physical in additional rights of women and girls should be actively promoted.
- Awareness and prevention programmes are delivered in such a manner that deliberately changes the way of thinking for both men and women.
- More attention is given to targeting isolated and vulnerable communities where various research findings have shown that women and girls to be at a greater risk

- Women effective awareness program especially on the rights and the various laws and services available to women are implemented at a targeted high risk areas continued to collaboration with civil society organisation, NGOs, Women Right organisations and other bodies in order to provide sufficient awareness to women to exercise their rights under the laws when victimised and to unlearn old beliefs that perpetrators domestic violence such as acceptance of violence from husband and other beliefs.

Now, we will give the floor to Ministry of Women if they can respond to those bullet points.

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you Mr. Chairman. If I may, and responding to the recommendations of the Office of the Auditor-General on the key findings. First, perhaps on bullet point 1 in the dialogue with civil society organisations, NGOs and Women Rights organisation and also on the bullet point onto continue collaboration with civil society organisations.

The National Women Machinery with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation has, for the last two years established a minister's forum that brings together civil society organisation, national women organisations and faith based organisations to look at perhaps not only, our programmes, our policies and the work around the legislations on the Elimination of Violence Against of Women and Girls but on all other programmes that the National Women's Machinery implements.

And such as you have mentioned Mr. Chairman, with the women's plan of action especially on the year 2010 – 2019, women's plan of action under the 5 thematic areas that you had highlighted, we also had the establishment of the inter-sector committees which were known as task forces.

In this year's taskforce, it also consisted of not only government agencies, but also our stakeholders, as civil society organisations and NGOs that played a few role in the implementation of programmes for the elimination of violence against women and girls.

On prevention programmes focussing on prevention or cohesive control and perhaps on this point, I will also speak on the awareness and prevention programmes to be delivered in such a manner that deliberately challenges patriarchy and also the unlearning of all beliefs that perpetuates domestic violence on these three bullet points towards the second half of our calendar year, 2019, the National Women's Machinery. Again, in strong collaboration with civil society organisations, NGOs and faith based organisations, we have embarked on the process of actually developing Fiji's Prevention National Action Plan on preventing violence against women and girls.

In these deliberations that we have with NGOs, civil society organisations and faith based organisations, a key component of the outcome documents that came out of the first consultation that we had with these organisations actually focused on looking at the prevention of cohesive control, emotional violence and identifying the different types of violence that women actually encountered. Perhaps, one of the key components of our findings and consultations was the fact that the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, with our stakeholders embarked on an evidence-based process, working on issues that we had a data on.

On the awareness and prevention programmes, this is all in-built into the National Action Plan on the prevention of violence against women and girls. The key component of the National Action Plan is the communications campaign and the strategy also focuses on how we deliver and conduct awareness on the prevention programme. On that same note, on prevention and linking it to the bullet point to unlearn old beliefs that perpetuate domestic violence, also as part of our prevention campaign, we have strategically identified key ministries within Government whom the National Women's Machinery will work with, and I know this has come out clearly in one of the ministerial press conferences which featured our Honourable Minister, the Honourable Minister for Health and Medical Services, the Honourable Minister for Youth and Sports and the Honourable Minister for Education, focusing on also changing social norms.

In our other activities that the National Women's Machinery has undertaken, we have also strategically formed a partnership with the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs, particularly the *iTaukei* Affairs Board, working with the Board in trying to promote again the evidence based on the fact that looking at the prevalence of violence against women in Fiji, and the statistics actually show that *iTaukei* community are the highest perpetrators as far as violence against women is concerned. We have embarked on the strategic partnership with the *iTaukei* Affairs Board to work with the communities in the rural areas.

Also in communicating our programmes on Equality and ending Violence Against Women (EVAW) and also under prevention reaching out to the remotest communities. I know the Honourable Members are aware that the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation has the REACH Project which actually works with key stakeholders and key partners in taking out awareness programmes to the remote of the remotest areas. Of course in these programmes that we take out to the remote communities, we speak on the issue of violence against women and girls, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you for that response, Madam. Honourable Members if there is any supplementary question?

HON. J.N. NAND.- Mr. Chairman, through you, you mentioned something about taskforce that has been formulated and established. Can you just give us a background or backdrop of how this taskforce operate? What is the line of operation? Thank you.

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you, Honourable Member. As the Chairman had mentioned, our Women's Plan of Action which has now come to the end of its term, the 2010 – 2019 Women's Plan of Action.

We had five thematic areas and each thematic area actually had an inter-agency committee or a taskforce. The taskforce consisted of key government agencies that were key players either in the area of elimination of violence against women or formal sector employment, access to services or women and the law in the five thematic areas that we worked with. The requirement of the taskforce was, first there was a terms of reference and the taskforce would meet on a periodic basis to first provide updates on the programmes and activities that they implemented. If I am talking about EVAW then around the area of elimination of violence against women and girls. If I could focus on the EVO Task force. For example, we had agencies like the Fiji Police Force, our civil society organisations and NGOs like the Fiji Women's Crises Centre, Medical Services Pacific and Empower Pacific so

whenever we had this taskforce meetings, the stakeholders would provide updates and we would also have sub-committees that would look at key areas that need to be developed. For example, again under the EVAW Taskforce, we had a sub-committee that looked at developing capacity building programmes or materials around the area of gender-based violence. A sub-committee that looked at coming up with shelter standards of safe homes for survivors.

Also, as one of our key perhaps outcomes or outputs of this taskforce, thank you P.S, was the production of the Fiji Service Delivery Protocol which is actually standard operating procedures for service providers in the area of violence against women and girls that provided them, the referral pathways and what procedures they had to undertake if they were the first responders to a case of violence against women and girls. I must mention that this is also a process that we are looking to review and the Ministry would like to strengthen perhaps the participation of the work of these taskforces under the new strategic direction that the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, the national women's machinery is embarking on now. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Kepa, you have the floor.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Thank you, Chair. My question to the Director is on bullet points 4 and 5. It is on targeting of isolated and vulnerable communities which are at greatest risk and more effective awareness programmes at the targeted high-risk areas.

What factors according to your research contribute to these vulnerable communities and which awareness programmes are most effective in the high-risk areas?

I noted that you mentioned *iTaukei* communities especially so can you just respond to that please. Thank you, Chair.

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- *Vinaka vakalevu* Honourable Member. As I mentioned, one of the key activities that we have identified to perhaps bring the Honourable forum up to par with what the national women's machinery has implemented around the area of question from the Honourable Member. The collaboration with the *iTaukei* Affairs Board just happened recently, if I could say towards the middle of 2019. Again, as I had earlier mentioned, evidence-based. We have actually produced and presented through the Honourable Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation statistics which actually shows that the *iTaukei* community are the highest perpetrators when it comes to the elimination of violence against women and girls. We have started on activities where we worked with the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs, we have brought in our civil society organisation's first. One exercise we have done was to work with them in the possible review on one of their training manuals that the *iTaukei* Affairs Board takes out to the *iTaukei* community for women which is on the *Nai Ketekete ni Marama*. We have in collaboration with the *iTaukei* Affairs Board where we have taken to them the possibility of making the training manual more empowering for women and that was an exercise that we are successfully undertaken. We are well aware that the *iTaukei* Affairs Board has taken the recommendation not only of the national women machinery but of the civil society organisations and Faith base organisations that we had worked in collaboration with in the review of this programme.

The other component again I am going to say that it was the strategic engagement with the *iTaukei* Affairs Board in the celebration or the commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism from November to December, 2019 where we partnered with the *iTaukei* Affairs Board. The

iTaukei Affairs Board are coming up with a theme of a zero tolerance *itaukei* communities. This is an ongoing process that we will continue to undertake with the *iTaukei* Affairs Board working with them on how we can address this issue of the high prevalence of violence against women in the *itaukei* communities. *Vinaka*.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you Ma'am. Moving forward on the same key findings for Fiji Police Force there are five bullet points and I am reading it out.

- (1) The no drop policy for all offences against women and children's are dealt with in a systematic and in a consistent manner.
- (2) Police officers on the ground are re-skilled to respond to all cases of violence against women.
- (3) Police officers undergo legal, literacy training so that the various provisions in the legislation are fully understood.
- (4) Are more comprehensive and systematic approach for gender training are planned to include training and consultation of NGOs and other gender and women groups.
- (5) Necessary records are maintained for trainings and awareness carried out with a rapidly available for audit and other review.

So, Fiji Police Force you have the floor now.

MR. A. LUTUNAUGA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before I make my submission this afternoon, first and foremost I would like to convey the apologies of the Commissioner of Police and the Deputy Commissioner of Police who are away overseas on official engagement. However, we are privileged to be here before this Committee to present our submission in regards to the Performance Audit Reports on the Coordination of Actions on Elimination of Violence Against Women. Please allow me to proceed with my submission.

From the outset, Mr. Chairman, the Fiji Police Force would like to reassure and to state to this Committee that we have read the Report of the Office of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji and we have agreed and concurred with the recommendations made therein in response to the Police issues under this mandate. I would like reassure it is now being currently look at, at the Planning Division and we are trying to inculcate those recommendations in our new Strategic Plan which we are embarking on for the next five years and of course in our Annual Corporate Plan.

Mr. Chairman, on the first bullet point the "No Drop Policy" for all offences against women and children are dealt with in a systematic and consistent manner.

Mr. Chairman, the "No Drop Policy" and a zero tolerance approach exist within the working of the Fiji Police Force on any report lodged in line with the gender base violence, domestic violence or domestic violence restraining order violations and offences against children all these are dealt with on the frontline. The Frontline Supervisors are held accountable and ensuring all reports or complaints within the organisations are attended to and investigated in accordance to the legislations and policies.

Mr. Chairman, if and when violation do occur just like any other law enforcement agency in the region or in the world in the likes of maybe cases being unregistered or un-investigated reconciliation being prompted by officers, delays in the issue of DVRO and complaints in breach of "No Drop Policy" and instructions and in respect to this and other cases

these breaches are urgently dealt with through our Internal Affairs Division. We have our own Internal Affairs Division which is mandated to finalise investigation and take necessary causes of actions which include immediate suspension and interdiction of officers that are been implicated pending police tribunal or open court proceedings.

On the second bullet point Mr. Chairman, on the police officers on the ground are skilled to respond expeditiously and sensitively to all cases of violence against children and women. Mr. Chairman and Honourable Members of this Committee I would like to bring to your attention that there is a dedicated Sexual Offence Unit based at the Directorate of CID Headquarters as well as 5 Divisional Police Commanders Headquarters of the Fiji Police. These units are further decentralised to a police station across the country dedicated to investigation of sexual abuse and violation of women and children victim.

Officers in this units are trained and specialised to attend, investigate offences and complaints in the light of the offences that I have stated earlier. Mr. Chairman, the Fiji Police has also in partnership with the Fiji Women Crisis Centre conducted extensive trainings at all levels of the organisation on gender based violence and sexual offences.

The Fiji Police also partners with a number of repeatable training and stakeholders which includes agencies like UNDP, government ministries and department, civil societies, embassies and donor aid agencies offering training for its own staff and those in the communities.

On the next bullet point – Police officers undergo legal literacy training so that the various provisions in the legislations are fully understood. Mr. Chairman, the Fiji Police Academy continue to provide training on this legislations on the courses they provide annually. However, police officers also undergo legal literacy training and awareness in various ways. This ranges from the mandatory weekly station lectures around the country which is conducted on a weekly basis, command instructions issued by way of the force routine orders, this is a weekly routine orders that is generated from the Commissioner of Police and all instructions are contained therein.

The Fiji Police Force Command Group and Divisional Police Command Group briefs is done twice every week. It is through this platform and through this medium of communication that awareness is done on a legal literacy training for officers on the ground.

On the next bullet point Mr. Chairman, a more comprehensive and systematic approach for gender training, a plan to include training and consultations with NGOs and other gender and women's group. Mr. Chairman, as I have highlighted earlier the Fiji Police Force has also in partnership with the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre conducted extensive trainings at all level in regards to this question. The Fiji Police Force as I have also explained and highlighted earlier, partnered with a number of repeatable training and stakeholder agencies in offering for the staff and those in the community at large.

On necessary records are maintained for training and awareness carried out which are readily made available for audit and reviews, Mr. Chairman, the Fiji Police agrees with the Auditor-General's recommendation on this. A database or catalogue system needs to be developed both for or by the Fiji Police and also for national stakeholders agencies for this training which includes volume, number of officers train, communities, victims, violators,

household visited council, ongoing assessment, medical or professional referrals to be logged for better record keeping, references, audit and periodical reviews.

Though the Fiji Police Force conducts its monthly reporting and verification exercise through the Office of the Director of Planning, which also extends to the monitoring of our corporate key performance indicators. Two of which are dedicated to offences against women and children. Capturing data on whatever that has been conducted throughout the month or on a mock cohesive and real time system based platform dedicated to the subject areas such as No-Drop Policy, EVAW (Equality and Elimination of Violence Against Women), GWV, Child Abuse is very much desired. This will surely enhance our high level monitoring audits and reporting capabilities and however, I would like to reassure this Committee that this recommendation is definitely under our radar so to speak Mr. Chairman.

A national committee and dedicated taskforce exist in the chairmanship of Minister of Women and co-chairmanship of the Fiji Police Force and other partners' agencies. The Fiji Police would like to recommend a dedicated automated online web based portal which shall further compliment the work done by the many agencies linked under such a network.

Now, that the Online and Sexual Offence Registration legislations have been enacted and the Commission set up accordingly. These systems based intervention shall be for the betterment of all stakeholders agencies including the Fiji Police alleviating national interest compliance protocols and reporting as well Mr. Chairman.

For recording and audit purposes Mr. Chairman, the Fiji Police was engaged in training on Violence Against Women and other related topics including child welfare, child abuse, human rights, gender based violence and domestic violence and from 2017 to 2019, we have trained a total of 2,527 officers.

As far as the target audiences are concerned Mr. Chairman, the number of audiences that we were targeting, Basic Recruit Course, Constables Qualifying Course, Corporal's Qualifying Course, Sergeant's Qualifying Course, Inspector's Qualifying Course, Superintendent's Qualifying Course and Crime Investigator's Course. These are all courses where these violence against women and other related topics are taught at the Fiji Police Academy (FPA) and a total of:

- 2017 - 621
- 2018 - 1,090
- 2019 - 816

Apart from our training at FPA in 2019, seven senior police officers attended the Regional Training organised by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC) in collaboration with the Australian Federal Police on gender based violence. That is the end of my submission.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you for that response. Honourable Members, any supplementary questions?

HON. M.R. LEAWARE.- Thank you Mr. Chairman. I thank the officer for the enlightenment especially as far as what the police are doing and they have done it very well in terms of what has been alluded to in this presentation.

I just have clarifications that I need from the officer and that is, you mentioned something about training on no drop policy. How often are these trainings conducted and is this part of the curriculum at the FPA or other Special Constables are also included in these trainings?

MR. A. LUTUNAUGA.- Thank you, through you Mr. Chairman, yes, this training is included in the curriculum. Even right now, as I will be explaining in my later responses this no drop policies currently is under review. The reasons it is being under review, I will explain in my later submissions but definitely, yes, it has been taught at all levels, as I have stated earlier.

It is included in our force routine orders and the men are constantly being lectured on through the weekly lectures at every police stations which is conducted on every Wednesdays around the country.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, and now we will go on to key finding number 2. There is no specific policy developed for Elimination of Violence Against Women, however, this is incorporated as a section within the National Gender Policy which give the overarching direction for the elimination of violence against women.

Although this effort is acknowledged, the National Gender Policy has not been revised since its eruption in 2014. In addition, the no drop policy has not been reviewed since its establishment in 1995 and reaffirm in 2013. However, the Fiji Police Force has indicated that they have recently completed the review process with the revised policy still in its draft stage.

So the first recommendation, it goes for Ministry of Women is, that Ministry of Women should ensure that policies relating to Elimination of Violence Against Women are regularly reviewed in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our response to the review of policies, yes the National Gender Policy as mentioned, has been in place and endorsed by Cabinet since 2014. The National Women's machinery is currently undergoing its formulation of the new strategic plan to replace the now expired Women's Plan of Action and in looking at the review of policies around EVAW, there is no specific policy that actually focuses on elimination of violence against women and girls. But we have now, as I have mentioned, our documents and what has been developed by the EVAW Taskforce as the service delivery protocol, we are also looking at the formulation of the short standards in collaboration with our development partners and we have a draft submission on the formulation of the short standards. This will also undergo consultation, but under the strategic plan of action, the National Women's Machinery has, as I have mentioned in the earlier submission, undertaken quite strong consultation with our CSOs and our stakeholders in the review of some of our work. We have also reviewed the implementation of the 2010 to the 2019 Women's Plan of Action under the EVAW thematic desk, and in looking at doing theory of change for EVAW for our new strategic direction, we have identified where the need to, perhaps, review legislations to re-look at existing policies is a key component of the new strategic direction. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, any supplementary questions? If not, then the next one is actually directed towards Fiji Police Force (FPF) that they should finalise the revised No

Drop Policy without any further delay and ensure that Police officers are trained for its implementation. Your comment, Sir?

MR. A. LUTUNAUGA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The revised No Drop Policy has been drawn prior to the workings of the Family Law Act, the DVRO and EVAW, the National Gender Policy and now the National Committees and Taskforce and Commission. These frameworks and platforms incorporate a variety of frameworks and audit reporting and working of the UN-CEDAW and other women and child related Convention, Treaties and protocols here and abroad.

The review of the FPF- No Drop Policy was therefore, to assist thematically incorporate and reflect the frameworks I have just mentioned. Standards and compliances reporting and acquired deliverables, will be materialised through the operational and tactical level compliance of the FPF. Often, standards of compliance, quality and delivery are highly benchmarked, costly, time consuming, infrastructure led investments specialise and altruist based to name a few.

Mr. Chairman, the full compliance of the law of the workings of the No Drop Policy and that required under national or international Convention, protocols and compliances, what it is monitoring, is more than mere execution of the No Drop Policy, complaints or investigation per say. It is more of infrastructural changes, financial and human investments, and coordination structure will be much needed if we are to effectively execute the No Drop Policy. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Kepa, follow up question?

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a question on training. You mentioned that quite a bit, the kind of training and the frameworks that are there in the legislation. The No Drop Policy is always a very contentious issue, particularly in the media, where people bring it to our attention. You need very skilled officers for this, so what type of legal literacy training are they carrying out with them in order to bring about these skill sets that are needed for the Police when they go out to conduct?

MR. A. LUTUNAUGA.- Thank you. Mr. Chairman. In relation to response to the question posed to us this morning, the FPF has embarked partnership with various agencies, and this does not confine but include the Women's Crisis Centre, UNDP and the Human Rights Commission, in which we collaborate and they come and conduct training with us, in regards to the No Drop Policy and the rights of people in the communities.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Leawere follow up question?

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for clarification, I thought I did not hear UN Women, are they also part of the package?

MR. A. LUTUNAUGA.- Yes, Mr. Chair. They are also part of the delivery of training to the Fiji Police Force and I thank the Honourable Member.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. That is well-noted. If no further comments then we will go on to key finding number 3. It has been four years since the establishment of the National Gender Policy in 2014 which may not be sufficient to form strong coordination

initiatives to address the issues of violence against women. It is therefore pleasing to see that based on this evidence gathered during our audit, coordination exists in 4 out of 6 coordination initiatives outlined in the National Gender Policy regarding gender-based violence, however, there is still room for improvement with respect to the following initiatives.

- (1) Monitoring the effectiveness of no-drop policies in domestic violence cases in Fiji Police Force.
- (2) Analysing the effectiveness of Domestic Violence Act 2009 and ensuring continuing review of its provisions based on effectiveness of the implementation of law.

Given that the Service Delivery Protocol has just been finalised, its implementation cannot be assessed just as yet so, to the Ministry of Women, an inclusive and coordinated approach to review the evaluation of policies and regulations should be spearheaded by the Ministry of Women. What are your comments on that, Madam?

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you, Honourable Chair. Perhaps if I could just step back a bit and in all the recommendations that we have done, we acknowledge the recommendations that have been given by the Office of the Auditor-General. Again, on the implementation or the establishment of the National Gender Policy and the national women's machinery spearheading the coordination of review of policies and all other activities and programmes under the area of elimination of violence against women and girls.

The national women's machinery, I can confidently say has come out strongly in highlighting the fact that we intend and we are working in strong collaboration with our civil society organisations, NGOs, faith-based organisations and as I speak, a team of senior officials of the national women's machinery are currently working on the development of our new plan under the National Gender Policy and it is the intention of the national women's machinery to bring out this plan in consultation with our key stakeholders which and I must say that the new strategic direction of the national women's machinery under our Ministry will strongly look at how we work with our stakeholders in reviewing policies, possible review of legislations and what we work with. Thank you, Honourable Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you for that response. Is there a follow-up question? Honourable Prakash.

HON. V. PRAKASH.- Thank you very much, Chair, through you. I think it is very important as stated by the Madam Director, the evaluation that you have carried out. You have mentioned here that your outreach programme is able to go towards many civil society groups and faith-based organisations.

Can you comment on what is the success and response by the various faith groups which are very well-established in this country? How do they cooperate towards the success of maintaining non-violence against women and children? Thank you, Chair.

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Chair, as I had mentioned, we have embarked strongly on consultations with civil society organisations in the implementation of one of our programmes under the EVAW Desk which looks at zero tolerance, violence free communities. The national women's machinery actually identified the need to include faith-based organisations in the implementation of our programmes around the area of EVAW. So, what the Ministry has also embarked on, in our consultations with women

CSOs, NGOs and faith-based organisations, what we have actually done is to have first perhaps it may be a mapping exercise but to listen to these faith-based organisations so that they can tell us what they are doing around the area of addressing violence against women and girls and I can say that there is a lot that is being done by faith-based organisations and they are currently undertaking in assessing the impact which is an exercise that we are not embark on yet but knowing the impact of faith on our communities in Fiji I am quite certain that it has a lot of impact on that. But to have that formally done that is something we could look at, at national women machinery level. Thank you.

HON. V. PRAKASH.- Mr. Chairman, another supplementary question. It is indeed we have seen that the women organisations are well established and they have got various stakeholders working with them unfortunate males do not have such organised group. But how you are able to reach especially those offenders who continued to do this activity of violence against women. Maybe if you or the Fiji Police Force should be able to give answer because normally we have seen that there is a repeated violence of course to the vulnerable members of our community. So you are making the outreach programme and you are also reaching those offenders who are normally doing this or any male organisation we do not have.

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you, Honourable Member. I must acknowledge that work has been undertaken perhaps by some Government agencies or even Non-Government Organisations that are out there that work with men. But for the national women's machinery level as I had mentioned on evidence based we are working with the fact that it has proven that women are the survivors and victims of gender base violence in the nation. And that is what we are currently working with and that is not to say that we have not looked at how we will work or can work with perpetrators. I believe that I also mentioned that the national women's machinery or Government has embarked on the development of Fiji's National Action Plan on the Prevention of Elimination of Violence Against Women and one of the key component of this is looking at changing social norms and looking at addressing the root cause of violence against women and girls and of course I can say that, that will also be a key feature on how we work with men and boys changing social norms in our community. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Nand, your question please.

HON. J.N. NAND.- Mr. Chairman, through you it is very assuring that we have a lots of programmes. Are they able to take those programmes to remote and rural areas especially on violence against women? Is there any action plan or how are you able to address that? Can you throw some light on that?

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you. If I could perhaps give you more insight into the action plan on the Prevention of Violence Against Women and girls. Another key components of this action plan is to actually go into consultation. Now we are looking at a coordinated effort, we are looking at the whole of Government and a whole population approach. We have also identified key sectors that we can undertake consultation with on how we can actually implement the prevention plan on violence against women and girls. We are now working on listening or undertaking consultation on how we can take this out to communities like looking at the different sectors on education in health and these are the key findings that we hope that will actually help us put together the plan that can help us to reach the remote communities. And of course this is not an exercise that the national women's machinery will undertake on its own like I said it is the whole of Government and whole population approach. Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you for those questions and responses. Now on that same key findings, the Office of the Auditor-General actually believe that Fiji Police Force should conduct awareness and trainings on the provisions of the Domestic Violence Act 2009 and subsequently monitor and evaluate its effectiveness as per the National Gender Policy. So can we have the comments from the Fiji Police Force.

MR. A. LUTUNAUGA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Fiji Police Force would like to once again reiterate to our recommendations earlier on, on the needs for a dedicated, automated, online web based portal. The absence of the national database or cross agency widely coordinated central system of record keeping on training, awareness, advocacy and compliance becomes difficult. This negates the ability for a cohesive, monitoring and evaluation platform for measurements of return as far as National Gender Policy is concern because we firmly believe that we are all stakeholders, all government agencies, civil societies, churches, the *vanua* all should be the champions of creating awareness as far as the domestic violence is concerned.

In addition to this Mr. Chairman, Fiji Police continually engages its workforce on in-house, outsource and donor aid based training, development awareness advocacy works throughout the year. There are huge varieties of this upskilling and empowerment initiatives. These are initiated throughout the year by the training, operations and community policing. A large number of community, government and civil society agencies, faith based organisation, women and youth group, child welfare education in our visitation to schools, sporting clubs, municipal and community policing carnivals, traditional and communal advisory setups are all involved in this programmes. This is where we take out this awareness and training of members of the community on the provisions of the Domestic Violence Act.

Nonetheless the onus is to capture this many initiatives on a cohesive and coordinated platform and record keeping upon which the workings of policies and documents of EAW along with other social data on suicide, gender based assault, abuse, violations of DVRO, homicides, missing persons of women and children, domestic dispute, child welfare can be catalogued and used for stakeholders in various capacities. This again Mr. Chairman, as I have stated earlier and I would like to reassure this Committee that it is also under our radar.

The working of the Domestic Violence Act 2009 and the associated service delivery protocol is a cross-sectorial and a cohesive centralised framework. However, Mr. Chairman, this requires human interventions from all parties involved like staffing, training and development, dedicated sections and units, infrastructure developments, investments in regards to safe house, detention and holding centres sustainable growth, enforcement and monitoring capacities, outreach and advocacies and research. That is well coordinated, catalogued on a digitised online platform to secure measure of implementation assessment, monitoring and review of the National Gender Policies and our legislations. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you Sir for that explanation. Honourable Members any supplementary question.

HON. V. PRAKASH.- Thank you Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much I think our police force was recognised for its national and international duties. There is a lot of good things we have seen in our police force then, the address things that we see. I have got two questions here.

- (1) Are you looking forward for a time or a year when there is a zero violence against women and children in your police force?

Your community policing, it was one of the most successful thing few years back. There were community policing who were visiting people, they were conducting meetings, they had a relationship with the community. They were able to know if anything wrong is about to happen and before damage was done they used to have control over that.

- (2) What is the success of your community policing now?

We have seen both in urban and rural areas your community policing were really an asset to this nation. Even the crimes that were committed during that time, before the crime was committed we know that the police is already there. What we have seen is a drastic drop in the engagement of community policing which used to be happening that when it started. They had separate members in charge of different areas. They had a special place in each of the police stations where people could freely go and discuss matters of importance. There was a community visiting taking place which really helped this nation and now we can see crime is increasing rapidly. Even the residents do not know that in their neighbourhood, there are serious things happening. What is the success of your community policing now and also, are you going to see a year where there is no such crimes committed by the officers that are in charge of looking after the nation, because you have done so many good things. As I have already said, you are internationally recognised for the best duties that you are carrying.

MR. A. LUTUNAUGA.- Thank you Mr. Chairman, on the first question on zero reduction which if I may correctly rephrase it. This is in regards to the complaint against police on violence on women and children. While the Fiji Police Force is just like any other law enforcement organisation in the world, however, we would like to be in a perfect situation. We can never be at any perfect situation, but we do endeavour and put in place processes and systems to ensure that we are working harder on that and try to reduce the number of complaint against police, specifically on crimes against children and crimes against women where we, the Fiji Police are perpetrators; not only on criminal cases, but on the implementation of the gender based violence laws and legislations.

We have systems and processes in place through our Internal Affairs Division and we conduct our monthly and quarterly monitoring and verification of our divisions and all police units. This is done to ensure that all these issues in regards to complaint against police and for that matter; police brutality is brought in within our scope and responsive measures are taken into place.

Some decisions have been taken which is very harsh on the officers, but these are taken in view of the organisation as a whole to try to portray the organisation to be while we cannot achieve the 100 percent success rate, we do endeavour to reduce it and we are continuing to make progress in this particular offence.

On the second one on community policing, if I may be jumping the gun here, while we are addressing this submission on the other questions, but, please, if I may respond to that. We have a very challenging environment now. That is the biggest challenge; not only in the Fiji

Police Force face, the criminal and security environment is evolving at a pace and a rate which is faster than anything that we have encountered in the last 30 years.

There are new categories of human beings that are coming up in our environment which needs a specific type of policing in order to address the challenging issues that arises out of these criminals evolving landscape. But we, the Fiji Police, as rightfully stated by the Mr. Chairman, that the community policing is the number one strategy for the Fiji Police Force. It was being, however, to some, we do admit that at some years, it went down because of some internal rearrangement of functions and portfolios within the force.

We have now re-visited, revamped and re-ignited the sector of community policing and we have developed a local concept or model in community policing and that is called “*Duavata* Community Policing”. The *Duavata* Community Policing that we had before was similar to that used in Japan. Now, we have an evolved one which is locally and it may take years, in order to grow and let the structures to fall in place. *Duavata* means a platform, coming together on a common platform.

In Fijian, ‘*vata*’ means a platform where everyone comes together on that same platform. If I may express this acronym, *Duavata*, *D.U.A.V.A.T.A*, means, D-drawing, U-unity, A-amongst, V-various, A-agencies, T-through, A-acceptance. That is the meaning of *Duavata* Community Policing. It is drawing unity amongst various agencies through acceptance that crime is everyone’s responsibility, it is not only the Police responsibility. So we are now putting in place structures in the community policing, we have re-enacted the Director of Community Policing, and under our re-structure, which I will be speaking on later, we are now going to empower the Community Post again back to its, could I say, glory days. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Sir, for that explanation. Honourable Nand, supplementary question?

HON. J.N. NAND.- Yes, Mr. Chairman through you. Firstly, I want to thank you and the Force for engaging schools in creating awareness. For future are there any other programmes or any other ways you want to address these issues, just coming to schools and are there any new programmes for creating awareness in schools?

MR. A. LUTUNAUGA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have these programmes already out there under the *Duavata* Community Policing. We have Police in religions programme, we have Police in villages programme, we have Police in schools programme and we have Police in business communities programme. However, through these some new ones that are coming through, are some of the concepts that we are doing now, the initiatives, is to “Catch Them No” concept. This is the concept that is now currently being undertaken in Veiraisi in Nadera, as you know, that is an informal settlement and one of our red spot areas. But I would like to bring to the information of this Honourable Forum that through this Programme, we have managed to liaise with the business communities, create training and then provide employment, and now we are on the third batch of 50 youths who are to be employed at the local supermarkets around the area, between the Suva/Nausori corridor. Those are some new ones.

The other ones, we are now going back into, “Knowing your Neighbour” concept. Now we are pushing out and rolling out those initiatives through our new *Duavata* Community

Policing. But as I have stated, it is not the role of the Police alone, but all agencies and we are working in setting up MOUs with relevant stakeholders to assist us in these fights as far as crime against women and children are concerned.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Yes, Honourable Kepa?

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Mr. Chairman, through you. First of all, I would like to thank the Police for their presentation today. We have a very good relationship with Wainibokasi through the Duavata policing that you are doing, however, we missed the Lokia because that has been taken and we hope that it will be replaced. My question to the Superintendent this afternoon is: You have given us a lot of food for thought in terms of what the Police have been doing and what they are planning to do in the future, what about data? How do you go about your data collection and where can we get that information on the different policies that you have already been doing and what you hope to do in the future in terms of the data that you have collected in which you are basing your future policies?

MR. A. LUTUNAUGA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is this the data in regards to crime or the data in regards to the policies and ...?

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Data in terms of the elimination violence against women and your Child Protection Policy, anything to do with this area. Where can we get the data from and how good is your data?

MR. A. LUTUNAUGA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will be able to provide that. At the end of the presentation, we will be submitting a segregated data on offences against women and children, and in regards to policies, we will be very much glad to submit it to this Honourable Forum at a later date. We will be submitting the crime statistics, but the number of policies data, will be submitted at a later date.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- That is well noted. Coming back to the presentation, on Key Finding No. 4 - Absence of review of Fiji's legislative compliance with the Convention of Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) provisions, however, the Ministry of Women has confirmed that Fiji's current situation and preparation of the CEDAW States Report that is follow-up reports Beijing Platform for action, review reports and the country gender assessment will constitute the most suitable review process.

Now a question to the Ministry of Women would be that they should actually ensure that efforts are coordinated with stakeholders such NGOs and CSOs to conduct reviews on Fiji's legislative compliance to CEDAW provisions. Based on the most appropriate indicators similar to the one used in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) Review Report. What are your views on that Madam?

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you, Honourable Chair. The Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation acknowledges the recommendation of the OAG. If I could take us back to when Fiji defended its last report in 2018. There was a state report and there was also a shadow report. It was during the process of Fiji's defence before the UN CEDAW Committee where the Government through the leadership of our current Honourable Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation actually formed the first consultation process in Geneva with our CSOs and because we identified the strong need, in order to meet the

requirements of the articles of the Convention, the Government could not implement this alone and we had to work in close collaboration and consultation with CSOs, NGOs and other key stakeholders.

After the 2018 defence of the CEDAW Report in Geneva, we moved on to the 62nd session of the commission of the status of women. Again, we held consultations with a very big group of CSOs representatives. This actually saw the start of the national women's machinery work in close collaboration with our CSOs, NGOs and faith-based organisations. Our P.S will be happy to present to this august forum the Review Report of the Beijing Platform plus 25 review report for Fiji, an exercise that we undertook and worked again in close collaboration with our CSOs, NGOs and as such, all the work of the national women's machinery that we now undertake, is in consultation with our women's organisations and I would also like to mention that under some of our key activities in our new strategic directions, we are actually getting the CSOs to be a part of the implementation of the projects and the activities of the national women's machinery. *Vinaka.*

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Is there any follow-up questions? If not then we will move on to Key Finding No. 5. Strategic objectives of the international action plan place more emphasis on preventative and proactive measures where women's plan of action had more focus on reactive measures in terms of responding to victims of gender-based violence, therefore there was a weak alignment between strategic objectives and the action plans due to the lack of effort by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation in undertaking research work on the root cause of violence against women. Therefore, the OAG recommends that the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation should ensure that;

- (a) Plans for the development of the next women's plan of action are properly aligned to the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action.
- (b) Strategic objectives in the women's plan of action documents clearly capture what the action plan purports to reflect.

What are the comments from the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, please?

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you, Honourable Chair and that acknowledgement of the recommendations of the OAG. The National Women's Machinery is currently doing that at the moment with the development of its new strategic direction and in identifying our five thematic areas for the new plan of action. The National Women's Machinery is actually undertaking the theory of change concept in developing identifying outcomes, outputs, key performance indicators and of course not only the Unit within the National Women's Machinery that is responsible for its implementation but all other stakeholders as well. And on that note I must confirm here that in developing the new strategic direction, yes, we are aligning it to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. We are also aligning it to the Beijing Platform for Actions and have undertaken, develop and now publishing our Beijing +25 country review report and also of course aligning it to this Strategic Development Goals. And our new strategic plan is now five years which means in the next 10 years before intending to realise 2030 agenda in the next five years the National Women's Machinery should have clear indication on how far we are going into realising that.

Under the thematic area of the Elimination of Violence Against Women and looking at recommendations of the Office of the Auditor-General the key outcome areas under EVAW is

looking at prevention and again I reiterate the comments that I had earlier done on the formulation of Fiji's National Action Plan on prevention. We are also looking at strengthening service delivery. I had also mentioned the publication and the rollout of awareness on our service delivery protocol. And also a key component of our EVAW desk is on evidence base data collection and a lot of strategies that we have come up with under the plan strategies for the prevention action plan is actually based on evidence of reports that have been published on the area of elimination of violence against women and girls. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Key finding No. 6. The Policy and Research Unit within the Department of Women depend on the research carried out by civil society organisation and Non-Government Organisation for further development and implementation of women's programmes. They have not engaged or conducted any proper research to gauge the true root cause of violence that women faces. Therefore there can be a risk that the conclusion drawn from the research findings could lead to ineffective measures and programmes implemented given the change in time. What the Committee would like to know actually:

- (1) How the Department of Women are strengthening its policies and research unit?; and
- (2) How they are properly demarking the work so that research work is separate and distinct from the monitoring and evaluation functions of the Department?

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that the Report of the Office of the Auditor-General the National Women's Machinery had actually undergone the re-organisation of its structure. As we speak in this august forum today the re-organisation of work for the National Women's Machinery is as such as recommended by the Office of the Auditor-General. We have strengthened our Research and Policy Unit. Previously the Research and Policy Units of the National Women's Machinery focus a lot on the implementation of our Conventions on the international commitments that Fiji was a party to and gathering all these data, all these information's in preparing reports of Government that has been strengthened. And again under our strategic direction especially research on data collection is the key area that we work with.

In our new strategic direction we have the research and development component and one of the key component is publishing the statistics of women in Fiji. Looking at where women are in the difference sectors in Fiji and actually strengthening the collation of data not only within the National Women's Machinery but across Government and with our stakeholders.

On the monitoring and evaluation components of the department, that is now a separate unit within the national women's machinery. We have a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Unit which will not only look at the monitoring and implementation of our programmes but also at the operations of the national women's machinery. As I now can confirm that the recommendation of the Office of the Auditor-General is well in place in the national women's machinery. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. We will move onto Key Finding No. 7. Indicators for the achievement of target 5.2 of SDG5 revealed that the provision and availability of the data is important. However, given the multiple agencies in Fiji's context, there is no single responsible agency for coordinating and collating data. However, there is a clear correlation between the programmes and the projects outlined in the NDP to the activities in the Women

Plan of Action (WPA). Can the Department of Women tell us would they strengthen its coordinating data collection and collating strategies in collaboration with relevant stakeholders such as the Fiji Police Force and other stakeholders?

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you Mr. Chairman, on the collection and collation of data as far as the SDG goals and all the activities of the national women's machinery is concern, again our new strategic direction under our Research and Development programmes is an area that we are looking to strengthen. There is a number of gender assessment that has been implemented or has been done in Fiji under our component again of research and development. The new strategic direction is that we have obtained Cabinet approval for government to undertake a Country Gender Assessment which at this time will be led by government through the national women's machinery. So, that is an exercise that the Ministry is looking to strengthen. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. The Honourable Leawere.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Thank you Mr. Chairman, and thank you Director for your response. I just want to find out more about your Research Unit in terms of collecting and collating data is concern. How well equipped is your Research Unit in terms of getting your data to the department? This is in terms of finance and human resources. Thank you.

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you Honourable Member. In our 2019-2020 budget for the national women's machinery we were given an additional funding for our Research and Development Unit which actually would support the work of our Research and Policy Unit within the national women's machinery. The strategy that the national women's machinery is currently undertaking as far as research and data collection in concern, the national women's machinery is embarking on partnership and collaboration with our development partners in key areas that we would like to undertake our research work in.

As we speak the national women's machinery has been able to secure funding through development partners and the additional funding in our budget for key areas and one is the Country Gender Assessment. We also intend to undertake a research on the economic cost of violence against women in Fiji. Thank you Sir.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Mr. Chairman, in terms of the additional allocation that has been given for Research which is welcomed used. My question is again on the Research probably with the previous issue, this is for you to gauge or tell us what really is the root cause of violence that women face? Can you update us on what your research finding are on that? Thank you.

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you Honourable Member, going back to how we had carried out consultations for the development of Fiji's National Action Plan on the Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls and as I had mentioned we had to go through a lot of strong consultation with our civil society organisations and NGOs, faith based organisations. So what we worked with in order to identify the root cause was to base it on research that has already been undertaken and this was really research and data that has been collected by non-government organisations that work around the area of violence against women and girls.

So, in coming up with an outcomes document that would lead to the launch and start of the work on the consultation of developing Fiji's prevention action plan, we worked with data

that was already available on research work that was carried out by the Fiji Women Rights Movement (FWRM) on research work that was carried out by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre on data collection that was done by the Fiji Police Force. The Medical Services Pacific, Empower Pacific, all the organisations that could present us with research data in identifying the root cause as in the need to change the social norms of our nation, linking it to patriarchy that was how we identified the root cause of that, so it was evidence based on research work that was already undertaken.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, Honourable Kepa.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- One last question on that particular issue Mr. Chairman. This is very important information that you are giving us Director, particularly when you mentioned that it is the *iTaukei* communities that the perpetrator and most affected in terms of this violence. Is there any plan, as we have provincial council meetings coming up shortly. Right now, they have *Tikina* Council meetings which are held prior to the Provincial Council meetings. Is there any plan from the Ministry and perhaps via the police as well to inform us as to where you are, in terms of your research and what way, as a community, should be doing in terms of your findings?

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you Honourable Member. As I had also mentioned that the National Women's Machinery embarked on this strategic partnership with the *iTaukei* Affairs Board given that this partnership, perhaps I could say, was cemented when we worked in collaboration with the *iTaukei* Affairs Board during the 16 days of Activism.

As for a plan, if I could, perhaps say that it is work in progress which is something that we intend to continue consultations with the *iTaukei* Affairs Board, but on the statistics that was presented to the last meeting of the *Roko Tui* and the Senior Assistant *Roko Tui*, the Honourable Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation actually presented statistics on findings of research that has already been published. We are happy to share that statistics with the Honourable Members, if you so wish, Madam.

But, we intend to continue and strengthen our work with the *iTaukei* Affairs Board and I can also mention here that in the discussions of the *Roko Tui* and the Senior Assistant *Roko*, the Honourable Minister has actually challenged the Board in how this issue can be brought to the agenda of the Provincial Council meetings.

HON. J.N. NAND.- Mr. Chairman, through you, you have mentioned earlier on that you are quite into evidence based data collection. Can you elaborate further on this and what are some of the challenges faced?

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you Honourable Member. Data collection is an area that we are looking to strengthen and I had mentioned the intention to carry out when it has already has Cabinet approval for the conduct of a country gender assessment.

When I am talking about evidence based, if I could go back to how we had come up with the outcomes document for the action plan on Prevention of Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls. In coming up with the strategies and in the consultations and the groups that we brought together for the consultation and coming up with the outcomes document, we had to link it to research, we had to link it to data that was already published that we could say that it was proven, that statistics would show, and that was what evidence based means, Honourable Member.

So we were not coming up with strategies that we felt that we could implement but we actually came out with strategies that were based on data that was already produced and available and that could justify the strategies that we came up with. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Moving further on:

Key Finding No. 8: In considering the changes over time, the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation was able to properly transit between the two women plan of action. We acknowledge this achievement, however, please advise what were the challenges and how was the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation enabled to overcome this?

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you. One of the key challenges, Honourable Members, in the implementation of our action plan was the lack of consultation and collaboration and one area, as I have continuously mentioned in my submission that we have strengthened. As we move into the new strategic direction for the implementation of National Gender Policy and the new plan for the Women's Plan of Action, which we will need to rename. That is how we intend to work and under what I had mentioned under the theory of change, identifying the outcomes, the outputs, the key performance indicators and the key players as who are responsible for implementing this and again this is not something that the National Women's Machinery will develop and call our own, but it is linked to the National Gender Policy and it is a national plan of action we also intend to take this out to our stakeholders for their input into the plan. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Key Finding No. 9 - The Department of Women has successfully transitioned, over the years since 1960s, from being a section within the Government, looking after women interests to Department of Women within the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation in 2009. The Department has continued to pursue its role as primary advisors to Government on public policies that affect women. The Committee again acknowledges this achievement as above. Was this policy decision or was this aligned to Fiji to the international benchmarks, legislation, Convention etcetera which resulted in the creation of Department of Women?

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.-Thank you Mr. Chairman. As this august House is well aware that Fiji is a party to the Convention of Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women and also to the implementation of the Beijing platform for action which needs one of its key areas of concerns, is the establishment of a National Women's Machinery and I would understand that in the establishment of National Women's Machinery or a body within Government, it would have to come through the normal consultation process and the endorsement of Cabinet which would service in now the National Women's Machinery as it is.

In re-looking at its role from its transition, we have now moved and we have aligned ourselves to what we are mandated to do, which is the primary policy advisers on women's empowerment issues and gender development in the nation, and this is an area that we have actually taken on board and our activities and programmes under the new strategic direction of National Women's Machinery is aligned to that role.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Any supplementary question to that? If no supplementary question, we will move further on.

Key Finding No. 10: Included in the general role of the Fiji Police Force (FPF) in providing safety and security to all people of Fiji. Also, it is the Force's role in combatting and dealing with violence against women. This role of the Force is clearly set out in the Domestic Violence Act. Once again, we acknowledge this achievement. With the Act now in place, please advise, what is the main role of the Force in providing safety to all the Fijians especially dealing with violence against women and children. Thank you.

MR. A. LUTUNAUGA.- The Honourable Chair, the Force is mandated by law in the Constitution, a subsequent Police Act along with other legislations in the likes of Family Law Act, Domestic Violence Act, the UN International Conventions which Fiji has ratified inclusive of other policy instruments both national and in-house that warrants this institution to be the driver and in other cases key stakeholder in the arrangement of EAW, child abuse and exploitation.

The functions of the Force as stipulated under section 5 of the Police Act, Cap 85 applies to the function not only bracketed to these propositions of domestic violence, gender-based violence, EAW, child abuse and others but across all spheres of maintenance of law and order, peace, investigation, prevention and detection of crimes and abuses. This equates to the Force being involved in any in-house as well as stakeholder initiatives that works in line of training and development, empowerment, awareness and advocacy work of fellow Government and stakeholder agencies in our quest regarding EAW and children.

Some of these activities in these areas include visiting residences, places of confinements example welfare houses, evacuation centres, this is during disasters where we specifically put in women officers in these evacuation centres, age care centres and juvenile centres to name a few and talking to families for not resorting to and being aware of violence, abuse, neglect, torture, exploitation and harassments through our community policing *Duavata* initiatives. Increased police presence and participation in all relative programmes, initiatives in regards to elimination of violence against women, conduct awareness in communities, schools and faith-based centres through the media on domestic violence and domestic violence restraining order related matters and of course increased enforcement and early detection through police helpline or call centres. Thank you, Honourable Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Prakash, a supplementary question.

HON. V. PRAKASH.- Chair, thank you very much. Chair, through you. I think the investment from the taxpayers fund with the previous budget increase in the Fiji Police Force, increase in the size of vehicle fleet and also we have seen very nice new motor bikes.

Do these factors also try to ensure public safety and other crimes that are coming, are you able to reduce that with this investment that the Government of the day has done? Does it help you a lot or are we still at the same level in terms of crime rate?

MR. A. LUTUNAUGA.- Thank you, Chair. Through the Chair, thank you to the Honourable Member. In regards to your question, yes we are indeed grateful to the Government for providing the necessary increased budget provision for the Force. Not only this, in terms of our restructure that is in place but also the provisions of our mobility and capability which has enabled the Force to move forward and deliver the services that are expected by the people, however, in relation to the effects, of course, yes, it has indeed made implications and that

could be in some form reflected in the crime statistics in terms of reduction in crime rate last year by four per cent.

These are some of the areas that we could say has had a positive impact on the organisation as a whole. Also, it has been able to equip the officers with the right equipment in order to carry out the duties and we are forever grateful to the Government for always supporting us in terms of the logistics, the capabilities and our equipment as far as delivering of service outputs are concerned.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, Honourable Leawere.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Thank you, Honourable Chair. SSP Lutunauga, you said something about officers being equipped in terms of carrying out their duties. I was just wondering if you could enlighten this forum in terms of the insurance cover. Are they also covered in that area when they carried out their duties? Thank you.

MR. A. LUTUNAUGA.- Yes, Mr. Chairman, the Police Officers are also covered.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, that is well noted. Going forward I actually request Honourable Leawere to take us through key finding No. 11 and the recommendation from the Office of the Auditor-General.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Thank you through you, Mr. Chairman, while the Fiji Police Force has developed its strategic plan for the duration of four years, the Ministry of Women at the time of its audit did not have a strategic plan. The Ministry however has now formulise a three year strategic plan for the year 2019 to 2022 and the recommendation is the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation should tailor make the National Strategic Plan to meet the needs and objectives of their Department through the development of a strategic plan for the Ministry itself which will be cascaded to the ACP and onto gender-based violence. What are your views on that? Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- The Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, please.

MS. J. POOLE.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are indeed developing a strategic plan for the Department of Women. This week we have Senior Officers engage in working through the theory of change and it will be linked to the key Convention and national plans. Thank you.

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Going back to the Recommendations of the Office of the Auditor-General if I may Honourable Members. The Annual Report, the planning and accountability framework of Government actually requires that we are aligned first to the National Development Plan of Government which the Ministry formulating its strategic plan as mentioned by the Honourable Member. And I am well aware that the Ministry is quite up-to-date in the submission of its Annual Report that the latest being the 2017-2018 and the current outstanding is the 2018-2019 Annual Report for that fiscal year. And how aligning this, our work plan as in the planning process for Government, we now work with costed operational plans which needs to ensure that we are aligned to the priorities of Government and also align to our allocated Budgets. So I must confirm that our planning process within the Ministry is well in place. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, for that response. Now, will give the floor to Honourable Nand to take us through key finding No. 12, please.

HON. J.N. NAND.- Mr. Chairman, through you. I see that the Committee has received apologies from leading agencies in publishing their Annual Corporate Plans (ACP) and we have noticed that there was a delay in their preparation and endorsement of this Report for the year 2017-2018 and one of the Auditor-General's recommendation is that the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation should develop an Annual Corporate Plan for the Ministry and Business Plan for the Department of Women in a timely manner. Can you please respond to this why there was a delay?

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you, Honourable Member. I believe I have just responded to that question, thank you very much.

HON. J.N. NAND.- Well noted thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Going further on to Key Finding No. 13 if Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa can actually ask her question.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Mr. Chairman, non-establishment of the Executive Gender Management team and National Advisory Committee as the adoption of the WPA in 2009 and the recommendations the Department of Women through EVAW Taskforce should establish the Executive Gender Management team and the National Advisory Committee. Please comment.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Can the Ministry respond to that recommendation, please.

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you Honourable Member. On the establishment of the Taskforce I understand I have already elaborated on the EVAW Taskforce under thematic areas, under the Women's Plan of Action 2010 to 2019. If I could go back to my submission on the new strategic direction of the national women's machinery again in the formulation of the process for the development of the National Action Plan on Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls. The national women's machinery has established an advisory and technical working group for the development of Fiji's Action Plan on Prevention of Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Also we are well aware of the planning process for the development of our strategic plan on the need to strengthen our coordination and the work of the taskforces under our thematic areas and also under the thematic area of the EVAW taskforce. If I could again highlight the key thematic areas under our new strategic direction which is on the institutional capacity development initiative which looks at strengthening gender main streaming across government.

One of the strategies in the implementation of this thematic area is the establishment of Gender Main Streaming Action Groups within government agencies for the formulation and development of gender main streaming action plans within various government ministries and department. Either coming up with the new strategy or using already existing infrastructure within government ministries. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you Director. I believe that also covers the Key Finding No. 14 as well. So, we will request the Honourable Prakash if he can take us through Key Finding No. 15 please.

HON. V. PRAKASH.- Thank you Mr. Chairman. Key Finding No. 15 – The Management of Financial Resources is compromised by the absence of budget proposals and the non-maintenance of expenditure listings for the EVAW vote for the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation. The Department of Women should ensure that all budget proposals are properly kept and maintained. This is the recommendation from the office of the Auditor-General and also that WPA desk officer should maintain an expenditure listing/ledger for the EVAW thematic area, and the remaining thematic areas for that matter. What is your comment regarding the recommendation from the OAG? Thank you Mr. Chairman.

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you Mr. Chairman and Honourable Member. The national women's machinery acknowledges the recommendations of the Office of the Auditor-General and under the budget allocation to the national women's machinery for the Women's Plan of Action is that we were given a budget for the whole implementation of the activities under the WPA. We acknowledge the recommendation of the OAG on the need to be specific in how we allocate budget, separate budget for the different thematic areas under the WPA and the need to maintain the expenditure records on how this is utilised across with the financial year.

Also under our activities for the national women's machinery we also have other activities that are EVAW focused and this has separate budgets lines and they are maintained as well. If I could also speak on the areas of budget proposals perhaps not only under the national women's machinery but again under our institutional capacity development initiative under our strategic direction, is the establishment of the gender mainstreaming action groups.

We are also embarking on an exercise with strong collaboration where the Ministry of Economy is actually taking the lead with the Asia Development Bank in doing gender response of planning and budgeting. We are hoping that in the new budget cycle there will be more commitment from government agencies on the component of women's empowerment and gender development. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you madam for that response and covering Key Finding No. 15 and Key Finding No. 16 as well. Moving forward, now, we will go on to the second section of this report which is implementation and monitoring of activities on Elimination of Violence Against Women, key finding number 17. The percentage of female victim of sexual offences compared to male victims has been consecutively rising between 2014 to 2017. The most alarming fact is that the largest number of victims of rape, abduction of person under 18 years of age and indecent assault were minor girls.

The number of cases recorded for indecently insulting or annoying any person from 2014 to 2017 decreased by 80 percent. However, the maximum number 85 percent for the said crime were women. The number of violence cases reported to Fiji Police Force is low compared to other agencies that collects the same data on violence against women.

There are two sections to this; the first one is the Fiji Police Force should ensure adequate police manpower to effectively control and increasing incidents of crime including crime against women. The second recommendation by the Auditor-General's Office was, Fiji

Police Force should strengthen the method of conducting community awareness regarding incident on violence against women. Can we have the response from Fiji Police Force, please?

MR. A. LUTUNGA.- Thank you Mr. Chairman. Certainly, there has been a shift and increase of percentage of women and children in criminal data and these are attributed to the changes in legislations on women and cell related cases. These new and revised laws has brought about increased commitment of enforcement and monitoring by law enforcement and advocacy agencies.

Mr. Chairman, in relation to the adequate police manpower, the Fiji Police has incorporated as I have stated earlier a Cabinet approved 5 year restructure and reform that will enable the increase of staff that will in turn entice better this position of manpower to the many demand related area such as frontline operations and investigations.

The new structure Mr. Chairman, will have a specialised section which is called Family Protection Unit in all the 35 police stations across the country. This unit will see the merging of the current Sexual Offence Unit and the Juvenile Bureau to specifically address crime against women and children from the frontline.

Mr. Chairman, to this effect, we are on phase 2 of the restructure. On the Fiji Police Force should strengthen the method of conducting community awareness regarding incidences of violence against women. I believe Mr. Chairman, as I have alluded to in my earlier submission, this was done through the *Duavata* Community Policing and the acronym which I have shared with you. This is the new model that we have adopted that it is a vehicle from where we will launch the fight against women and children.

The elimination of violence against women and children Mr. Chairman, Fiji Police would like to suggest that it is the responsibility of every Fijian, thank you.

HON. V. PRAKASH.- Mr. Chairman, a supplementary question, please. Thank you very much Mr Chairman, through you, yes, indeed, the recommendation by the Auditor-General is very timely and I think is very honest. We do hear that you are suggesting that there is a restructure going on. The restructure and the crime should not be delayed. The restructure should be readily implemented so that the comments made by the Auditor-General is taken seriously, because it is important. You have been mentioning, yes, we agree, it is the responsibility of everyone to try and see that we are able to control these crimes especially on vulnerable members of our community. And it is indeed a very sad thing to hear in the news and also to hear in our newspapers on daily and weekly basis where we see such shameful crimes committed. And that we do not know how much of that may have been committed but, yet not reported. I still stress that we need to glory days back of community policing where there was a relationship between the community members and also with one of the most strongest and safest members of our community; the Fiji Police Force.

We had a very strong relationship and this relationship was, before the crime could be committed, there was prevention and then the community police used to really intervene. There was confidence where public used to come and try and meet the Officer In-Charge of that community and try and tell. I think it is a very timely and very important findings from the Auditor-General that needs to be really...we cannot delay to try and see that it is not implemented, plus the number of police force which have increased through the Government's input. I think a large number of new recruits are coming with very well equipped. The answer

should be that this type of crime should be addressed and it should not continue to re-appear. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you Honourable Prakash for those comments.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Mr. Chairman, can I just ask question of the two, because it is afternoon and I have not heard anything on National Development Plan (NDP) or the SDGs. How are you aligning your priorities in terms of the SDGs that are there for us to look at in terms of the NDP in your plans? Can you comment on that now or maybe you can comment on it later and then we will ask the Director also to comment on the Ministry of Women's aligning the NDP with SDGs?

MR. CHAIRMAN.-Thank you for that question, Madam. I think we will give some moments for them to actually come back to us with regards to those answers. We will come back to our key findings and under general business you can talk about those. Honourable Leawere, if you can take us through?

HON. M.R. LEAWARE.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Key Finding No. 18: On the review of the National Domestic Violence Helpline statistics and sharing this report compiled by Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, noted that there is a lack of urgency by relevant stakeholders in responding to domestic violence incidents. The recommendations have two folds and they are:

- (1) Fiji Police Force should identify gaps on the legislations right into domestic violence and consult lead agency on the gaps between the actual works against Domestic Violence Framework;
- (2) The Department of Women should ensure proper maintenance and upkeep of records pertaining to violence against women.

MR. CHAIRMAN.-Thank you, we can have the comments from FPF, please.

MR. A. LUTUNAUGA.- Thank you Honourable Member through Mr. Chairman. Compliance to current legislations comes the ability of Fiji Police and its associated stakeholder agencies like, Judiciary, Courts, Welfare, Corrections, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Women, Ministry of Labour to name a few, to cohesively voice on the current legislation apparatus, this includes the gap areas to a modern workable and compliant framework. The FPF works closely with the Office of the DPP, the Solicitor General's Office under the law reform, the Ministry of Women National Taskforce, Department of Welfare on the agenda of gaps to the current domestic, gender and labour based legislations. Much of these compliance and standards are related to policies, infrastructures, timeliness, reporting and monitoring frameworks and service deliveries.

The FPF is currently drawing up and revising the Fiji Police Act, that will enable these gap areas to be plucked in a more coordinated manner. The apparent demand of change from the international communities, legal and Court system is upon the ability of the FPF to improve upon its enforcement and reporting capabilities. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you for that response. Department of Women, please?

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you Mr. Chairman. Can I please request that the question to the National Women's Machinery is repeated please?

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Thank you, through you Mr. Chairman. The Department of Women should ensure proper maintenance and upkeep of records pertaining to violence against women, your comments on that?

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you Honourable Member. I understand that my colleague from the FPF has already highlighted how some of the records on violence against women and girls is maintained by different agencies. Even though the National Women's Machinery does not maintain this database as it is maintained by the different agencies that is mentioned by the FPF. Under the new strategic direction, again this is an area that we look to strengthen on perhaps, the sharing of data and information around the area of violence against women particularly in meeting our ability to come up with good policy advice for good decision-making around violence against women and girls. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you for that response. I will request Honourable Nand to take us through Key Finding No. 19, please.

HON. J.N. NAND.- Thank you, Honourable Chair, through you. One of the key findings, it says that the assessment of relevant efficiency. That means the effectiveness, inclusiveness and sustainability of the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation's Zero Tolerance Violence Free Communities (ZTVFC) were noted through the delays in hiring external evaluators to undertake the evaluation of this project.

Also, it has been noted that the Ministry did not review the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to assess the effectiveness of the accountability of the costs pertaining to each phase of the ZTVFC project and as a result, records pertaining to the identifications, commitment and declaration phases of each project engaged to ZTVFC were generally lacking with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation.

Some of the recommendations from the OAG are to undertake an evaluation to strengthen its internal processes and ensure proper maintenance and upkeep of the records pertaining to violence against women. The Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation in collaboration with relevant stakeholders should ensure that SOPs are reviewed from time-to-time. Can you please elaborate more on SOPs, how you will develop it and how it is standardised? Thank you, Honourable Chair.

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you, Honourable Chair and thank you, Honourable Member. We note the recommendation of the OAG. As we speak, I am happy to report that the evaluation of our ZTVFC programme has been completed. It is an exercise that the national women's machinery undertook in collaboration with UN Women and the findings of the evaluation will be used by the national women's machinery for the improvement of our work and this work has really been incorporated into the prevention framework on the National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls so that is a project that has already been undertaken, Honourable Member. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you for that response. Key finding number 20, it is on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and the Fiji Police Force that expired in December, 2018 and is yet to be

renewed. Before we get comments from the two agencies, can the OAG comment on this. According to them, the review process must identify the gaps between operational works against the MOU between the Fiji Police Force. What does the OAG mean by that? Which gaps are you talking about?

AUDIT REP.- It is the MOU between the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and the Fiji Police Force. It expired in December, 2018 and is yet to be renewed.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, our clarification is that it is clearly stated that the review process must identify the gaps between the operational work against the MOU. Were there any gaps that were noted by the OAG before coming up with that recommendation?

AUDIT REP.- On the report, on paragraph 4.4.13 because the MOU has come to an end, we are recommending that a review be done. It is a requirement of the MOU that there should be a review conducted in the third quarter. Both parties shall share the outcomes of the review for further enhancement of the partnership so, Sir, we are just asking them to review their MOU and actually get it signed again and validate it. Can the agency actually identify what has been done with regards to the MOU?

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will speak for the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and our colleagues from the Fiji Police Force. The review of the MOU is going to be looked at but I must also mention here that a lot of processes I understand would have been in the MOU is well captured in the service delivery protocol in the work that the Fiji Police Force is supposed to undertake. I am going to draw our attention back if I could to the new strategic direction in the institutional capacity development for initiative where the Fiji Police Force is also one of our targeted agencies and we are looking to improve these processes as we have mentioned that whole of Government approach. Perhaps there are may not be a need to have this MOU as it is now well captured in the service delivery protocol and what we intend to do under the new strategic direction. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you for that explanation. Moving forward, we move on to our third section performance review and reporting of the activities of EVAW. We will request Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa to take us through key finding No. 21, please.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Key Finding No. 21 – Department of Women is yet to develop a comprehensive annual monitoring and the evaluation plan for monitoring the impact of EVAW Programmes. The amount budgeted for the implementation of the Women's Plan of Action for the years 2014 to 2016 and 2017 were not fully utilised which resulted in a savings amounting to \$858,634.56 such savings could have been used for improving the monitoring process. And the recommendations from the Office of the Auditor-General is that the Department of Women should appropriately plan and budget the monitoring and evaluation activities for the EVAW thematic area as well as the other thematic areas. And a comment from the Department of Women, please.

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you, Honourable Member. The recommendation and finding of the Office of the Auditor-General is well noted and I must confirm that in the years after 2016 and 2017 we had fully utilised all our Budget under the Women's Plan of Action particularly in the area of the elimination of violence against women and girls. And in the monitoring and the evaluation component of our work this is the area as I have already mentioned we have strengthen within the re-organisation of the structure of the National

Women's Machinery and the new strategic plan for the Ministry on the area of women's empowerment in gender development has a monitoring and evaluation framework component. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. We request Honourable Prakash to take us through Key Finding No. 22, please.

HON. V. PRAKASH.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, through you. The establishment of the monitoring framework which include the Ministry of Women Executive team and National Women Advisory Council did not eventuate however the Department of Women has established a draft monitoring and evaluation framework which is now strengthen through the annual planning process that is through the costed operational plan and its strategic plan. The recommendation from the Office of the Auditor-General is that the Department of Women should ensure that a monitoring and evaluation framework is developed to guide staff in carrying out the monitoring and evaluation activity. Can we have the comment from you, Madam Director.

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you, Honourable Member, I believe I have just commented on the strengthening of the monitoring and evaluation (MAE) component of the National Women's Machinery and also our new strategic plan that we are currently developing. I must also mention that within the whole Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, this is a process that has been strengthen. We now get monthly updates from our Corporate Division which gives us expenditure reports on how we are spending our funds under the leadership of our Permanent Secretary, the senior management meetings that are now done on a timely basis to monitor the activities that are undertaken through the departments. Definitely the national women's machinery or the Department of Women is always under scrutiny on how we utilise our budget and monitor the implementation of our programmes. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. On Key Finding Nos. 23, 24 and 25 are basically on the delay on the financial reports and Fiji states Report on CEDAW. Can the Department of Women comment on what are the proactive approach they have taken to ensures that these Reports are submitted on time? Along with that if you can elaborate how you are thinking of strengthening the collaboration with NGOs on the issues regarding Violence Against Women?

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you Mr. Chairman. I believe I would not take up much of this forum's time on explaining how we are working to strengthen our collaboration with the CSOs, NGOs and faith based organisations as it is something that I have highlighted a number of times in my submissions but on the timely submission of the Fiji State Report for the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women we are noting the recommendation of the OAG and if I could perhaps take us back to how the national women's machinery has reorganised itself in the identification of now a specific officer that will look at how we are working to meet the requirements of Fiji being a party to this international conventions.

If I could mention here the Convention of Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and on the Beijing platform for action our re-organised structure now has one officer. This was the component of our Research and Development Unit but in separating this the research and development work of the national women's machinery will continue so we

have a dedicated officer that will look to ensure that Fiji meets its requirement under this Convention. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you very much for that comprehensive response with regards to the reports and the collaboration. Moving further on Gender Responsive, Budgeting/Mainstreaming. There are four questions to it along with the fifth question that was posed by the Honourable Kepa on SDGs. How the ministries are trying to work on the SDGs. So, we are running behind our schedule, we have another one submission at 3pm.

So, what we will do is I will ask all the five questions in one and will give time for the Ministry of Women to respond and then Fiji Police Force's response before winding-up this particular submission this afternoon. So, the questions are as follow;

- (1) Is public spending reaching both men and women? Who are the beneficiaries?
- (2) How effective is the resource allocation in meeting the needs of both men and women?
- (3) How effective is the budget implementation in achieving the overall gender goals?
- (4) Please provide the sex-disaggregated data for cases referred under Violence Against Women, Men, Boys and Girls?

So, whichever questions are relevant, you can answer as whole starting from the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation. Thank you.

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Thank you Mr. Chairman. Again not to take up the time as you had alluded to of this forum. I take us back to the new strategic direction of the national women's machinery under our institutional capacity development initiative. I know I had mentioned that we are working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Economy with the support from the Asian Development Bank in implementing Gender Responsive Planning Programme and Budgeting across Government and the establishment of the formulation under the same initiative of Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups which is required to come up with Gender Mainstreaming Action Plans on gender de-segregated data, it is a request that we, the National Women's Machinery has made known and I know as now component of the Fiji Bureau of Statistics work and we are happy to report that this was also something that was reflected in the reports that were coming out from the National Disaster Management Office of the current two disasters that we have had.

Yes, the Ministry is working in collaboration with using that whole of Government approach for obtaining gender de-segregated data and again I must say, Fiji Police Force is one of our key departments that we are looking to work with.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you and now we shall give the floor to Fiji Police Force to respond please.

MR. A. LUTUNAUGA.- Thank you Mr. Chairman. Unless funded by donor aid or Government, ministerial cross territorial funding, all funding through these programmes regardless of gender or child related are sourced from the mainstream budget of the Fiji Police as operational, community policing or training 3.11:13 activities. These are in turn to the accomplishment of all corporate (KPIs) Key Performance Indicators of the Fiji Police, two of which are directly pegged to the reduction of women and children related crimes, violence abuse, exploitation and harassment. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

MS. S. KOROVUSERE.- Sorry Mr. Chairman, I understand there were other components to the questions that came on the implementation of programmes and how it will impact both women and men. As also highlighted in the submissions that I have made, we work with the National Gender Policy and the National Gender Policy is just that, if we read through the National Gender Policy, it is not just focusses on women but on women, girls, men and boys, so our programmes in working with 3.12:08 government agencies, it will look at components where women are disadvantaged then that has to be addressed in the gender mainstreaming action plans from the various agencies in government.

On the alignment of our plans and the National Development Plan (NDP) to the SDG as question raised by Honourable Kepa, we understand that the NDP of Government, the 5 years and the 20 years NDP already incorporates the requirements of the SDG and we align this to our strategic plan and our annual plans.

As again, as I had mentioned in our submissions, the new strategic direction of the National Women's Machinery is closely aligning itself not only to the Convention that we work with but also to the Beijing Platform for Action and the SDG's not only Goal Number 5 but gender issues as cross cutting across all the SDGs. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you Director, Fiji Police Force.

MR. A. LUTUNAUGA.- My apologies Mr. Chairman, I would just like to add that at the end of this, we will be submitting the sex desegregated data for gender based violence for the past 8 years from 2012 to 2019. Whilst on that note, in regards to the Honourable Member's question, on SDG, our implementation. The Fiji Police falls under the SDG No. 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. This is cascaded down through the NDP and it, states the gender based violence which is one of the key indicators under law and security.

This is then articulated in our 2015 to 2019 strategic plan which basically comes to an end this year and we are going to implement another new 5 year strategic plan and then it is cascaded through to our Annual Corporate Plan and it is reflected in the KPIs that we are responsible to.

Two of those; reduction of crime against women by 10 percent and the reduction of crime against children by 10 percent. So it is within our plan in the structures.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, we will have the comments from Office of the Auditor-General with regards to the submission that was presented today.

AUDIT REP.- Thank you Mr. Chairman. It is quite encouraging and sounds very promising listening to the presentations, deliberations by the Ministry of Women and the Fiji Police Force because it is an important topic nationally.

We wish to emphasise that our audit processes, the next stage is to follow up on this audit. So that is after three to five years then we will come back to that. I will just refer back to the audited grants, it is like a summary, are in the beginning of the report so most of this that we discuss around are the satisfactory area, a lot of things are in working progress for being implemented. So, hopefully that with the follow up audits, we hope to look into its coming out to the stronger section, level of achievement. Also noted, something that will complement

our report, something that has come up strongly this afternoon is collaboration with the stakeholders. You have heard about the new initiative with iTaukei Affairs Board, the Ministry and faith based organisations. I think this is something that some stakeholders shy away from engaging with faith based organisations. The other one is the sporting fraternity, something that can assist with what Honourable Vijendra Prakash highlighted.

Secondly, I think collaboration and engagement are something that is also emphasised internationally especially for success of the implementation of SDGs, and it is proven. We got a gold medal with Ben Ryan, tattooed this on his arm “*Vei Lomani*”, that is engagement, collaboration, communication, that is proven. Data, as mentioned by the FPF, I think is a very strong issue that has been brought up. That is a challenge that we face, gathering information, because there is a saying that goes, “What gets measured, gets managed”. So if you cannot measure it then you cannot managed it. You also heard about the stronger monitoring and evaluation mechanism that is put in place, so I thank you Mr. Chairman. Those are few comments.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Those comments are really appreciated from OAG. Just a reminder to the agencies sitting here, please ensure that whatever is spoken today is adhered to, because there will be a follow up audit, and as you know that OAG are really catching up on all the backlogs they have, so the follow up audits will actually start coming in in a very timely manner from OAG, so it will reflect whatever is spoken today, whether it comes back in the follow up audit or still the same issues arise in the follow up audit report. Before we end we all request Honourable Nand to give vote of thank to the submittees over here.

HON. J.N. NAND.- Thank you very much Mr. Chairman, through you. On behalf of the Mr. Chairman, the Members of Standing Committee on the Public Accounts, the secretary team, *Hansard* and OAG, thank you very much to both the organisations for availing yourselves in a timely manner and responding to our questions and queries. It has been a very informative session and I hope our collaboration will continue in future and whatever recommendations have been highlighted and made by the AOG and Committee, I understand you will attend to it. My request to our Honourable Members to show our appreciation in a usual manner.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- We will now take a 15 minutes break.

The Committee adjourned at 3.19 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 3.30 p.m.

**Interviewee/Submittee: The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre**

In Attendance:

- |     |                    |                  |
|-----|--------------------|------------------|
| (1) | Ms. Shamima Ali    | Coordinator      |
| (2) | Ms. Mashnil Shinoy | Regional Manager |
| (3) | Ms. Miliiana Tarai | Manager Legal    |
| (4) | Ms. Stephanie Dunn | Legal Officer    |
| (5) | Ms. Lavenia Raisua | Legal Officer    |

Office of the Auditor-General

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|-----|-------------------------|----------|
| (1) | Mr. Kuruwara Tunisalevu | Director |
| (2) | Mr. Sitiveni Naivota    | Auditor  |
| (3) | Ms. Maratina Cirikisuva | Auditor  |

MR. CHAIRMAN.- On behalf of the Public Accounts Committee (The PAC) I welcome all Members who are present over here. Also, members of the public who are watching and the media to today's enquiry on the Report on Performance Audit on Coordination of Actions for Elimination of Violence Against Women. I take this opportunity to welcome the official witness who is present here from the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre and staff from the Office of the Auditor-General who have agreed to appear today for the hearing on the Audit Report that is before us.

The Special Committee enquiry on the Report on Performance Audit on Coordination of Actions for Elimination of Violence Against Women was established by resolution of Parliament when it was referred to the PAC on Wednesday, December 4th, 2019. It is part of our responsibility to gather information from the relevant stakeholders regarding the findings of the Audit Report. The purpose of the enquiry is:

- (1) To allow the witness to present and produce relevant documents, information in line with the findings in the Audit Report.
- (2) To allow the PAC to ask questions specifically related to each department's functions as far as the Audit Report is concerned.
- (3) To allow the witness to respond to questions by the PAC. It is expected that at the end of the enquiry, the PAC will be in a better informed position to report back to the Parliament, acknowledgement of the legislative and policy framework that are in place to understand the process on how the framework has been implemented.
- (4) Able to understand the capacity of the law enforcers and how they can effectively carry out their monitoring and policing roles.
- (5) Able to understand the records of programmes and activities that are initiated to address the social issues.

Please be advised that this meeting is open to public and media. It is being aired live on the Parliament channel. Also, on our social media platforms so for any sensitive information concerning this enquiry that cannot be disclosed in public, this can be provided to the PAC either in private or in writing. At the outset, I wish to remind Honourable Members and our witness that all the questions are to be addressed through the Chair.

Before we go into the submission proper, I would like to introduce my Members over here. On my far right, we have Honourable Vijendra Prakash, Government Member of Parliament (MP). We have Honourable Joseph Nand, Assistant Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts. He is also the Deputy Chair of the PAC. On my far left, we have Honourable Mikaele Leawere, who is sitting in for Honourable Aseri Radrodro today. He is an Opposition MP. We also have Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa, who is sitting in for Honourable Naiqama today and she is also an alternate Member of the PAC. Without further delay, I give the floor to the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre officials. Please introduce your team and commence the presentation. Thank you.

MS. L. RAISUA.- The Honourable Chair, Honourable Committee Members, the Secretariat, the staff of the OAG and the media. Honourable Chair, we take this opportune time to thank this Honourable Committee for extending an invitation to our organisation to appear before you to make submissions on the Auditor-General's performance enquiry audit report on a matter which is very close to our hearts. The Coordination of Actions for Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Honourable Chair and Members of the Committee, you will have before you our submissions which is in written form. I will briefly describe the work that is carried out by the Fiji Women Crisis Centre. The Fiji Women Crisis Centre (FWCC) is a human right organisation based on the principles as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), democracy and the rule of law and has been an existence for over 35 years.

The goal of the FWCC is to eliminate violence against women in Fiji and the Pacific to lobby for women's right in all spheres of society. FWCC implements this vision through an integrated and comprehensive programme designed to prevent and respond to violence by reducing individual and institutional tolerance of violence against women and increasing available and appropriate services for survivors, including access to justice.

The FWCC addresses the problem of violence against women using a human rights and development framework. This focus on human rights includes a feminist analysis of the problem and permeates all aspects of FWCC's work, recognising that the root causes of violence against women are unequal gender power relations, embedded in patriarchy and the lack of knowledge and belief in human rights.

Mr. Chairman and Honourable Committee Members, violence against women is a pandemic that is globally recognised as a political, social and health problem. It is a grave violation of human rights. In Fiji 64 percent of women who have been in an intimate partner relationship experienced physical or sexual violence or both by their husband or intimate partner in their lifetime. This is almost double the global average. Though efforts have shown an increase in the number of reported cases it still remains a crisis.

The FWCC has spent the past 35 years in the work towards the Elimination of Violence Against Women at the grassroots level and experience has shown that in order to understand EVAW one needs to recognise analyse and understand existing gender dynamics.

Fiji has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and has implemented the Women's Plan of Action with the thematic area on EVAW. The state obligations required by such international treaties and covenants need to

permeate through society at all levels starting from executive level to rural and maritime communities.

Bearing this in mind, Mr. Chairman, this submission will discuss the challenges raised in the Report of the Office of the Auditor-General and will highlight proposals from the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre's experiences that can constructively contribute towards the efforts in EVAW work that is being undertaken by the State.

Mr. Chairman and Honourable Committee Members, I now refer to Key Findings 1,2,3,4,10 and 17 in the Auditor-General's Report – Challenges in effecting legislations in addressing gender based violence.

A significant contributing factor in the lack of proper implementation of the Domestic Violence Act is the entrenched belief system. The lack of knowledge of laws and its application by all service providers in the legal system. Fiji has ratified CEDAW and therefore has undertaken not only to protect women from gender based violence but also to eradicate social and cultural norms which prevent women from accessing justice. Attitudinal changes and cultural norms can only be achieved through awareness and training. Gender, human rights and violence against women trainings in the Police Force as well as other legal entities so that the legislative provisions are understood and properly implemented because no matter how well a law may appear to set out a framework for equality the real test, Mr. Chairman, of the law is in its implementation.

#### Gender Neutral Legislation

The DVA is a gender-neutral legislation and does not specifically address the fact that survivors of gender based violence are mostly women.

A gender neutral approach does not take into account the gendered nature of violence against women. All data shows that most perpetrators are male and victims or survivors are female. Gender neutral laws do not recognise that while everyone is equal before the law, men and women do not have equal bargaining power and standing. It does not pay special attention to the unequal power relations between men and women and the existing attitudes in meting out justice.

Gender-neutral approaches may be responding more to male priorities than addressing women's needs. In reality, women find it more difficult to access the justice system because the laws and society fail to recognise the gendered nature of domestic violence. Mr. Chairman, FWCC acknowledges that survivors of gender-based violence can be men also however, as data throughout show most survivors are female and most domestic violence is perpetrated by men.

Mr. Chairman, I now move on Collaboration with Non-Government Organisations. Government through collaboration can draw on the wealth of on the wealth of experience from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) to enable pathways to effective legislative and institutional reforms. Fiji Mr. Chairman, has a robust feminist women's movement and with 35 years of work in EVAW, the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre is recognised nationally, regionally and internationally and should be utilised by the government.

We encourage the government to continue with round table discussions and with that, there should be more open and frank discussions. It is important that the policymakers, lawmakers and the government take on board constructive criticism along with the accolades. FWCC recommends that at the government level, a scrutiny group for EAW and women's human rights be formed. The members of this group can be bi-partisan and include the EAW taskforce and experts like the FWCC to scrutinize every legislation, reform, programme or policy that addresses EAW.

The Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation/Department of Social Welfare should not take the lead on EAW but play a very integral role on EAW. The CSOs and NGOs have the expertise and programmes in place that are already yielding results. In addition, the MWCPA is involved in all spheres of women's development and does not specifically focus on EAW. The magnitude of their mandated work has caused unnecessary delays, which would in turn affect the progress and efficiency of EAW programmes, law, policies and response work.

Furthermore, the necessary qualifications might not be present. We would like to acknowledge that the current leadership of the MWCPA in the form of the Minister has been very conducive in promoting human rights and EAW.

Another challenger Mr. Chairman and Honourable Committee members is the leadership of relevant stakeholders. Recently, a Senior Court Judge while hearing a bail application made the comments that and I quote, "Ms. Shamima Ali does not support or agree with setting up a Men's Crisis Centre" and that again and I quote, "in some cases, husbands get frustrated and they kill their wives".

Unfortunately Mr. Chairman, the Judiciary has been silent on these comments. These comments were totally irresponsible because his comments on women's behaviour were verging on justifying men's violence against women. Furthermore, while FWCC works closely with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions the Director of Public Prosecution has made false written allegations against the head of FWCC and he has failed to respond after all allegations have been refuted. When leadership such as this exists Mr. Chairman, it is difficult for constructive collaboration to occur. We need progressive leadership if we are committed to ending violence against women.

In 2018, Mr. Chairman, the National Services Delivery Protocol (NSDP) was launched and all the relevant stakeholders undertook to have a survivor standard approach when dealing with survivors of gender based violence. However, FWCC still faces challenges with the other signatories stakeholders such as the Legal Aid Commission (LAC).

Assisting clients in following up on their cases or status of their applications with LAC has become a difficult task. There are numerous delays in processing the urgent application and briefing out of the conflict applications. A lot of emphasis is placed on their internal procedures rather than the urgent needs of the women for protection and remedies under the law. LAC is not responsive to women in emergencies and the delays caused have at times put women and children's lives in danger. Therefore, FWCC has had to step in to provide assistance.

Another challenge in Fiji Mr. Chairman and Committee Members, is inadequate funding provided for evil to MWCPA. In order to meet the deliverables of their programmes,

the MWCPA becomes desperate and looks for funding. These has resulted in acceptance of funds from donors who have their own agendas and the funds usually come with conditions.

A good example of these could be seen in projects such as gender based violence in disasters. In addition Mr. Chairman, another challenge is that international agencies such as UN agencies and other donor entities competing with each other and with other local CSOs and NGOs for 3.47:00 work while UN agencies and the international donor agencies can provide technical assistance, it is important that local experts are not overlooked.

FWCC's experience is that local experts are usually overlooked for outside experts consequently, local ideas are not considered and introductions of new programmes do not recognise the cultural and religious contexts which are nationally carried out. Here, we acknowledge the great initiative of this government to develop a National Action Plan for the prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls. It is indeed vital that this work is driven by Fiji and not international agencies.

Mr. Chairman and Honourable Committee Members, FWCC recommends that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) be drawn up between the MWCPA and international agencies to ensure that there are no duplication of programmes. That proper consultations are conducted and that funds and assistance response to the needs and development of the people of Fiji.

Mr. Chairman and the Honourable Committee Members, I now move on to problems at the implementation level. First, we will be addressing problems regarding training. The Fiji Police Force, Mr. Chairman, is a major stakeholder and they are usually one of the first point of contact for survivors of gender based violence. It has been recommended in the Auditor-General's Report that police recruit adequate manpower to effectively control the increasing incidence of crime including crimes against women.

Whilst this is commendable and increase in manpower is not the solution to combating violence against women. One of the major challenges Mr. Chairman, which FWCC has experienced, is that the police including new recruits lack the knowledge to deal with gender based violence cases. These has resulted in FWCC employing a police liaison officer to consistently follow up on complaints to ensure that the necessary actions are taken by the police.

Although the duties of the police officers are outlined in the (DVA) Domestic Violence Act, there is still to provide legal trainings in a very practical manner to the police officers on the implementation of the DVA. Essentially, a thorough understanding of gender violence against women, human rights and the relevant laws would better equip officers to handle Gender Based Violence (GBV) cases. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, there is a need for Police officers to undergo mandatory gender, human rights and violence against women trainings which are offered by EVAW experts, such as the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre. It is recommended the such trainings be conducted at their recruitment level of the Fiji Police Academy and should take a minimum of at least three days. However, it is best that these systematic trainings be conducted over a period of five days. All officer -qualifying courses should also include these trainings as before.

In addition, these trainings should be re-introduced into their academy's curriculum as a qualifying course, inclusive of a written exam as was the process before. It is important Mr.

Chairman, that Police officers understand the gendered nature of violence against women to be able to respond tentatively and effectively. Dated throughout shows that there is a high number of violence against women cases being reported to the Police as compared to other general crimes.

Mr. Chairman, I now move onto stakeholders at the implementation level. One of the challenges that FWCC faces is when the relevant stakeholders involved in EVAW do not understand the gender dynamics of GBV. Therefore, resulting in insensitive and sometimes potentially dangerous responses to survivors. A Senior Court Judge, while presiding over a rape case, commented that, “Girls also have human rights, but practically it is a stupid decision to go and drink with boys in the bushes, as the boys easily get sexually active when drunk.” Mr. Chairman, entrenched beliefs are hard to shift, however, ongoing trainings on gender, human rights and violence against women, can achieve attitudinal changes. FWCC recommends that the relevant stakeholders such as, Legal Aid, Judiciary, the Ministries and the Members of Parliament should undergo ongoing trainings by experts like, FWCC on gender, human rights and violence against women.

Mr. Chairman, I now move onto the recommendation by the OAG on community awareness training by Police. The FWCC does not agree with the recommendations that awareness and trainings on the Domestic Violence Act ought to be provided by the FPF as things stand at present. Practical difficulties with this recommendation includes lack of in-depth knowledge of the law on all forms of violence against women, a lack of understanding of the gendered nature of such violence and the gender insensitive contents of training materials. Understanding of the law ensures proper implementation and only then, can its effectiveness be evaluated. The OAG had also indicated in their recommendations on Key Finding 1, that the FPF need literacy training on various provisions of legislations as legal knowledge is an issue with them. Therefore, the FPF is not in a position to conduct trainings and evaluations on the Domestic Violence Act unless a cohort is specifically trained for this.

Currently, NGOs such as FWCC have prevention programmes in place, which includes Community Education and Trainings, which cover all forms of violence against women and girls as legal literacy. As part of its prevention work, FWCC and its branches conduct a lot of community awareness and workshops to a wide range of audiences around Fiji, including the maritime areas. From January, 2016 to June, 2019, FWCC and its branches conducted a total of 115 community workshops and 434 awareness raising session around Fiji and its maritime areas. Honourable Chair, 11, 473 women, 5,518 men and 19,011 children participated in this community awareness and workshops. The Domestic Violence Act was drafted by the Office of the Attorney-General while the Legal Aid Commission practices law on domestic violence on a daily basis. Therefore, it would be practical for trainings and awareness on the Domestic Violence Act to be carried out by State bodies such as the Office of the Attorney-General in conjunction with the Legal Aid Commission. However, Honourable Chair, without being gender sensitised, the contents and delivery of such awareness would not be fully effective. It should be noted that gender sensitisation trainings of such bodies can be done by experts in the EVAW such as FWCC.

Mr. Chairman, now I move on to the findings of the No Drop Policy. Honourable Chair, FWCC and its branches, between 2004 and 2018 have recorded a total of 240 complaints by women where police officers have failed to implement the No Drop Policy. On the contrary, some police officers have compelled women to reconcile with perpetrators or some police

officers failed to record complaints and investigate. Some of these cases have been highlighted in Appendix 2 of the OAG Report 2019.

Mr. Chairman, the No Drop Policy is an internal policy of the Fiji Police Force which affects everyone especially the work carried out by the FWCC. Whilst the Fiji Police Force has indicated that they have recently completed the review process with revised policy still in its draft stage, it is crucial for EVAW work that such a document contains input from relevant stakeholders and the EVAW Taskforce members. Unfortunately, FWCC and the EVAW Taskforce were not consulted in the revision of the No Drop Policy. Such consultations will offer strategies to address existing challenges in the implementation of the No Drop Policy and the review will be more meaningful.

Mr. Chairman, in order to have an effective and robust policy, there must be a monitoring and evaluation system in place. This should include maintaining of proper records, transparent complaints procedures and outcomes of complaints received. Despite the existence of the No Drop Policy since 1995, there has been a lack of systematic training given to police officers in recent years to ensure proper implementation of this policy. There is also a great need to train the police officers on policies such as the No Drop Policy as well as the Services Delivery Protocol. From collected data in Appendix 1, it is evident that the majority of victims of domestic violence-related killings are females rather than males. It is for this reason that police officers at the ground level must ensure that the No Drop Policy is systematically, sensitively and effectively enforced.

Honourable Chair, such a positive response from the police will boost women's confidence in the system of law enforcement. When survivors trust the system, they feel safer reporting domestic violence.

Honourable Chair, I now move on to the Key Findings 6 and 7 on research and data collection. Review of legislative compliance and research. The FWCC has conducted a national research in partnership with the Bureau of Statistics titled, 'Somebody's Life, Everybody's Business' on women's health and life experiences in Fiji for 2010 and 2011. It is a survey exploring the prevalence incidences and attitudes to intimate partner violence in Fiji.

Honourable Chair, the national research was conducted in accordance with the World Health Organisation methodology including standardised procedures and formats. By using the WHO methodology, FWCC followed the international best practice in the research design and implementation.

Consequently, the findings are robust and reliable with the most accurate estimates possible of the prevalence of violence against women. However, with this type of research design it is possible to identify statistically significant association between violence and various impacts described and to apply FWCC's many years of experience in interpreting the finds of the survey. Tentative plans are underway for FWCC to carry out a comparative study in 2021 with a partnership with the Department of Women and FBOS.

Mr; Chairman, the national survey has provided impetus and guidance to developing strategies and programmes and policies on EVAW and women's human rights and recognising and addressing the root causes of Violence Against Women for FWCC, other stakeholders and Government. We do not agree Mr. Chairman that the Ministry should drive this to find the root causes of violence against women. The global evidence based literature on EVAW has

already established the root cause of violence against women which has already been mentioned in this paper. FWCC should take the lead in partnership with Government and namely the MWCPA and FBOS and potential donors. For FWCC to lead this, using the same methodology as the as the last survey as a comparative study will indicate whether the last 10 years of work has had an impacted on prevalence rates. Moreover, that will be so essential on the work of EVAW.

### Data Collection

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Women needs to have mechanism in place where there are able to consistently and systematically source data. Statistics relating to violence against women can be requested from stakeholders such as FWCC, Fiji Police Force, Director of Public Prosecutions, Bureau of Statistics, Health and Judiciary. By creating and maintaining a hub as a data source, the Department of Women would be able to effectively monitor, evaluate and respond to progress, programmes and policy implementations.

### Key Findings 14 and 16 – EVAW Taskforce

Mr. Chairman, since the re-establishment of the EVAW Taskforce in 2013, there have been some positive outcomes namely the National Gender Policy, Service Delivery Protocol and National Domestic Violence Helpline and the review of the Zero Tolerance Communities and the announcement of the National Prevention Plan of Action.

However, Mr. Chairman, the inconsistent meeting of the EVAW Taskforce members is a challenge in the effort to achieve the goals within the annual work plan. As per the findings of the Office of the Auditor-General out of the 60 meetings that were planned, only 15 meetings eventuated.

In order to strengthen the policies and formulate action plans for effective implementation there needs to be a monitoring and evaluation process. This could be achieved through consistent EVAW meetings by the taskforce members. Meetings as such Mr. Chairman, are vital to identify what is working and challenges that needs to be improved.

The sustainability of the EVAW taskforce can be strengthened with regular meetings and having a head of a Government agency such as the Commissioner of Police or the Minister for Women as the Chair, will raise the profile of the taskforce and can be a good advocacy and lobbying strategy.

Mr. Chairman, I now come to the last part of our submission which is on Key Finding 18 – The National Domestic Violence Help Line 1560.

Mr. Chairman, the Fiji Women Crisis Centre operates the National Domestic Violence Helpline on behalf of the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation. This work was enabled by a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed between the Ministry of Women and the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre in September, 2016. The Domestic Violence Helpline was launched on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017 to coincide with the International Women's Day and the line because operational on the same day.

While the MOA has stipulated for reports to be submitted by FWCC, the reality was that it was impossible to provide any report between the periods from September 2016 to March

2017 on a line which was not yet operational. Nevertheless, Mr. Chairman, ever since the line became operational, the FWCC has been consistently submitting reports to the Ministry of Women on a monthly basis at the request of the Ministry as required by the agreement. This can be noted in the report of the office of the Auditor-General.

Providing sufficient funding and having contracts signed on a timely basis are also important in operating a toll free line that caters for women who are in a great need of a lifeline support. Mr. Chairman, one of the challenges that FWCC has experienced is funding. We have had to utilise centre funds to keep the helpline operational while we await the relevant ministries to sort out funding issues.

Mr. Chairman, to ensure that this service continue to be effective, there has to be a dedicated officer appointed by the Ministry with the relevant background knowledge on gender and well versed with the stipulations of the agreement. This appoint will allow a timely and efficient response to contract needs and requirements. With this being said, it is further recommended that timely contracts are signed before the next tranche is due and that adequate funding is made available on a timely basis. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you Madam for that presentation that you have done before the Public Accounts Committee. This presentation is firstly with regards to the audit report that is before us and how we can all combine together to combat violence against women and children. So, what the Committee is trying to do at the moment is audit this particular report and present back to the Parliament to see what is the best collaboration we can have between NGOs, government entities, ministries, agencies and especially the Parliament as well.

On that note I would like to thank the Fiji Women Crisis Centre who take us for a comprehensive presentation and training, I believe two years ago and I do believe that as time passes by and we have some more members. I would like to take this opportunity if such training can be provided to our new Honourable members as well to see how best parliamentarians can help FWCC to ensure that the violence against women and children are reduced in this particular country.

Nevertheless, I believe on page no. 4, I see one of the interviews where FWCC Coordinator who was part of the interview panels done by the Office of the Auditor-General. Madam, would you give a brief on what were some of the contents that you discussed on before this audit report was prepared? Because we see that FWCC as one of the stakeholders of this particular audit report. So, if you may.

MS. S. ALI.- Thank you very much Mr. Chairman for that. I hope that I can remember you know my hair is grey and I tend to forget things. What had happened at that point in time, I did not bring my notes from there but basically most of the things that have been reported in the OAG report, those were the comments that we have made and I can assure you those were the comments we made.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- So, you had full input with regards to this particular Audit Report.

MS. S. ALI.- Yes, there was nothing there that we wanted to challenge. That is how the interview took place.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you for that. Honourable Members if you have any pertaining matters with regards to the Audit Report and today's presentation you are more than welcomed to ask the submitters.

HON. V. PRAKASH.- Mr. Chairman, thank you, through you, I think today has been a very important day for the nation and the submitters that are here. We are discussing one of the most important and challenging thing that we all have to try and see that the vulnerable members of our community; the women and the children are protected.

We also recognised that the current Government's input and the amount of effort it has put in for the last many years in trying to see that for you all are able to control this because it is something that we all do not condone. We really want to see that our women are protected and they are taken care of. We need to appreciate at this point in time the efforts of FWCC and also the various stakeholders that have been taking positive role in trying to combat it.

We have government agencies, Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, the NGOs working together to be able to do that rather than undermining any of these agencies. It is a national problem and it has to stop. We have to try and see that and I think it would be also important to see that since most of these problems are caused by male and we cannot say all because some of the male are also being affected, like most of the females are the victims. Mr. Chairman, I would suggest that while we are talking about SDGs and gender balance, I think it would be a very appropriate time to say that if the organisers can have few males also working shoulder to shoulder, so that they are able to also generate energy and take your measures across to those people who are committing this. This is my observation and as a member of the governing team, we ensure that we are all against any sort of violence against women and children and also being a faith based organisation, we, the followers of Sanatan, we condemn all sorts of violence against our women and our children. They need to be protected. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

MS. S. ALI.- Mr. Chairman and Honourable Members of the Panel, if I may respond to the Honourable Vijendra Prakash. First of all, thank you very much for those comments, through you Mr. Chairman, the male advocacy, we have a very robust male advocacy programme because of the nature of the services we provide. It is not possible to have men counselling women, but we have a whole lot of men and male advocates who are working out in the communities and so on, and we have had very good results from them and throughout Fiji, so men are very much part of the work.

Because if we are saying that they are the problems, they are the perpetrators mostly then they had to be. They definitely are part of the solution also. Just to reassure you, that definitely we are working with men and they are very much part of that.

In terms of faith based organisations, I think, it is really laudable that everyone condemns violence against women. I think there is no one present in this room who would say that we accept it and we condone it that we do not condone it and for all of you sign agreement with that, but we can say that, but then that is why we emphasise so much, the dynamics around, learning about gender relations and so on.

Because these are things when we learn that, then what we are saying can carry a lot of weight behind it, if it come from an understanding. Sometimes, we condemn violence against women and in the next breathe, we say things like, women should dress better. They should

not talk back, they should recognise the culture of this country. When we say that, we are totally negating the first statement that we have made. There are those things that we need to also understand and then the first comment about undermining of other agencies, I think, and that is why we made the point in our submission, that either we should take criticism very positively and it is not about undermining, we have to say where the problems lie. I believe this is the best forum to do it where it is transparent and something can be done about it. Thank you very much for that.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa, you have the floor.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank FWCC for the presentation this afternoon, especially Shamima Ali, you are a household name in our country, and also is the FWCC. Having said that, I only wish we got this presentation earlier because there is so much in it that we would like to address, keeping in mind that we have just heard the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and FPF who made their presentations. And now, you are here and some of the issues that they brought up, you have also tried to address here. I am just looking at the No Drop Policy, which is a very contentious issue and you have addressed that here, where with the FPF it goes back to 1995, and I think they are in the process of review on it in which they are bringing in different types of trainings.

You have suggested here, that the FWCC undertakes that training and Mr. Chairman has said something about the MPs also having training. I think perhaps, it would be more acceptable if you were to do the training with us and with them, rather than just the FPF training, so that we are all on the same page, because one of the areas that they also spoke on, and I think it has been addressed through your presentation is that, the different agencies have their own data collection and different figures which are not shared by the different Ministries. I know you also have your own so, perhaps, in that forum, you might be able to give us all that information so that we are all on the same page rather than different figures are coming out from different Ministries, so that we have a better picture of what is actually happening on the ground in terms of the research and monitoring and evaluation that you are doing with your own policies. That is all I have to give at this stage.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa. Honourable Leawere, any comments with regards to the presentation?

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I note with appreciation, the submission made this afternoon, it was quite very comprehensive with a lot of issues that were highlighted here, were also mentioned by the two organisations who have made their presentation this afternoon. There is an issue here that I would like some clarifications on, on Page 8 of your presentation, in terms of the cultural contributions. The question that I would like to pose is: How are you going to get around this in terms of getting the cultural and religious contexts in terms of your submission? That is one area that I would like your clarifications on, Madam. The other issue is still on the same Page, the presentation that was made this afternoon was to include that in the curriculum of FPF, and I note with the interest here that the word is “collaboration”, may be that should be, “closer collaboration”, between the FWCC and the Ministry of Women as well as the FPF. How do you get around that, can you just elaborate on that, Madam?

MS. S. ALI.- Through you Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for those comments. The first one was about how do we get around religion and culture. For that we actually have

a module within the training and where we do address the issues of culture and religion. Over the last 35 years, from many, many questions and challenges, and being challenged over time, we have come to a place where we are able to answer those questions and the way we do it is in a very practical manner and talking about compassion, kindness, love and so on. It is really important that those of us who go out, we do understand the culture but we also know the negative part of culture.

Also, where culture and religious teachings are used to oppress women further and excuse violence against women. We have managed to do that and we are also working with the provincial councils and these things have come about because of the collaboration between the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and the FWCC. We have worked very well together over the past five or six years where the collaboration has been really good. We have been able to address those issues. We are getting less and less questions over culture and religion so that is under control. Then we come to the curriculum of the Fiji Police Force and some of the trainings that we have done.

The last one was last year, actually exactly one year this month. With the Force, one of the last trainings we had was with the Ministry for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation. It was funded by the UN Women and we conducted the training with the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation. That kind of collaboration can work very well and the problem is at the recruitment level. That is where a lot of problems lie with the new police officers. I have been told that it is in the curriculum and I have regular meetings, talks, phone calls and so on with the Commissioner of Police and the Deputy Commissioner of Police. But I have yet to see it and from what we can see is that the part where we used to have three days on gender violence against women and human rights. We have not done that for ages. We used to do that a lot but over the last 10 years, we have hardly been there to do that and they need that. That is still work in progress. We are still having conversations around that and we are hoping that we will be able to get back in and when it is in the curriculum while the Fiji Police Force, we believe that organisations like ours, the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission, we can all collaborate on the training that we deliver and what the Fiji Police Force needs is how to investigate this rather than teaching gender and things like that unless they do have a cohort of trained personnel who can deliver this throughout the Force.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Leawere, Honourable Nand.

HON. J.N. NAND.- Thank you, Chair, through you. First of all, I pay my respect to you, Madam. You have done so much for FWCC and I pay my homage to you. My question is that I understand you have employed police liaison officers. Do all the centres have that or is it centralised? Thank you.

MS. S. ALI.- This is a new programme just like if you see we have five legal officers now. From one, we have five now because we had to keep up with the laws and it is so much required now. With the police liaison officers, we have just started, I think it is two years now, we are now at the end of this phase of our programme. For the next programme and funding phase, we are going to include more for Vanua Levu, one for the Western Division then one each for Central Division and Eastern Division respectively. Unless, of course, things improve and things can improve. As things improve and get better in the Fiji Police Force and the Force is able to deal with this as is required by the women of this country then definitely we will phase that out.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Any further questions, Members.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- A further clarification through you, Chair. In terms of data collection and sharing, sometimes your data is it being used by the Force and the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation or maybe there is some collaboration between these two organisations and the FWCC. Thank you.

MS. S. ALI.- We do have it. This is administrative data but the national survey, the data in there, the prevalence rates and so on is being used widely by everybody. As you can see even in Parliament we hear that being used so the Ministry for Women, the Police and everyone uses that. In terms of data sharing definitely with the Ministry for Women but we actually obtain data from the Police for all our reports and et cetera to make comparisons but not the other way around.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Ma'am, would you actually elaborate how effective is the Call Centre?

MS. S. ALI.- The 1560 line?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes.

MS. S. ALI.- We think it is very effective. We have got Iri Raibuli who is looking after it and sometimes we are run out of our feet because we have only 12 Counsellors who are running the line. But it is effective in that because we are able to offer immediate emergency services. One of the things that we have to say when Counsellors are been called and there is immediate Police assistance required. The Police are very much aware of the helpline and the fact that it is a Government contracted helpline and sometimes we have to use it so then the response is quite quick. The whole referral pathway works pretty well particularly with the Police on that. If I may, Mr. Chairman, I think that is something that should be continued, it is toll-free and we have always run a 24 hour line which is not toll-free but we are getting many more calls on the toll-free line. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, Madam.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Just one question, Mr. Chairman to Ms. Ali about safe houses. How does that operate for women and children and where are they and how effective has it been? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MS. S. ALI.- Mr. Chairman, through you. Thank you for that question Honourable Ro Teimumu.

We have issues with shelters in Fiji and throughout the Pacific. We do have the Salvation Army shelters but not enough to cater for emergency accommodation. There are some others that are being run and we would not use them. We actually do not have national ethical standards established for that and we need that so that there are some ethics around providing shelter. So we actually use Salvation Army but more we try to evoke community responsible and that is why we do all the work. So we try to find people, families and et cetera where the survivor would be comfortable and try to place her there otherwise we fall back on certain hotels that we used and likely we are funded to be able to provide that but on emergency.

There is a problem with shelters because when we have shelters women do not go because they have got nowhere to go. So we also to compliment that we need to have alternative cheap housing for women who are abandoned, who have nowhere to go with their children and that is the conversation we are having with the Minister for Women and her staff.

The other thing is that the ethical standards are being developed through the EVAW Taskforce, Ministry for Women and the UN Women hopefully we will have that. The Fiji Women Crisis Centre we have got a shelter in Ba which are not running right now because we are waiting for the ethical standards for women. We have one in Labasa and one emergency shelter in Nadi we are waiting to start that in the next few months as soon as there is a draft ethical standards ready. We also have a Home for girls who are in Government's care. Girls who have been sexually abused in the Home and at 17 and 18 they are required to leave the Homes. So some of them have fallen onto the streets and have been further exploited, some we have been supporting for education and et cetera. But these Homes is going for those girls, young women who come to the end of their time in Government Homes so we will take them up and provide them with education and et cetera. But that is definitely within the next three months we should have those running.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Just another one and this might be the last question from my side. How much progress or how much FWCC has actually achieved in number of years in actually changing the mindset mostly about the men and the dominant and all those things. How much have you people achieved with regards to that?

MS. S. ALI.- Thank you very much Mr. Chairman, for that question. Most people ask us those questions and some people are very frustrated saying that you have been around for 35 years, what has changed, women are getting killed et cetera. If you look at history, if you look at this work the changes are only going to be incremental it is not going to happen just like that. It is slowly but surely.

I believe in Fiji. Fiji is way ahead of any other Pacific Island in terms of what we have achieved. The attitudes are changing because we look at the programmes now. When we first started in 1984 until now and really look at government has come on board whereas at that time it was not recognised as a development issue nor as a human rights issue et cetera.

We have programmes that we go into the communities and what is good is that we target certain communities, the data shows us where we should be targeting, where prevalent rates are higher et cetera and so we would target those but what is happening now is that over the last 10 years, 15 years we are been requested to go into areas and particularly into the villages and provinces et cetera to conduct this trainings. So, we do not do one and come away, one-off is not going to work. So, we go in and do the women than six months later we go and spend a week with the men and then six months later we bring them altogether and then we continue going in for a day or so doing focus group discussion, talking to the women, talking to men, talking to the children and then getting the feedback and we are finding the changes happening.

We are at the moment in the middle of our evaluation by our donors DFAT and NFAT and some of you might have been part of the people questioned so we are in the middle of that. Some of the things we did not realise is that they went and spoke to the people who have gone through this training in Vanualevu, Ba, Ra and places like that and the kind of feedback they

got, they themselves were quite amazed as how the changes have about when they talk to the women alone and where women are saying things like and I quote:

“...you know he gets me the firewood, all is ready for my cooking. I used to go and get that. He fetches the water, spending more time at home”.

The men are saying and I quote, “They are more relaxed, they have more family time and the *Turaga ni Koro* have reported that the incidents of violence has somewhat reduced and they hear less of that”.

So, there are some very nice stories that are coming out that really gives an indication to us to do our business the way that we have been doing that business. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you for that response. Any final comments Honourable Members? If there are none than we will ask the Honourable Kepa to give a vote of thanks before we conclude this particular submission today. Thank you.

HON. RO T.V. KEP A.- Thank you Mr. Chairman, on your behalf and on behalf of the Honourable Members and the secretariat from Parliament and the Office of the Auditor-General who are here today. I just like to thank Ms. Shamima Ali and her team for bringing your team here today and commend you for the work that you are doing. If anything was to happen to me the first place I would run to would be the Fiji Women Crisis Centre because I know that they will look after me.

So, I am sure many other women and you have been to our villages in Rewa and also villages across the country and we would like to thank you for the work that you are doing, changing our mindset and attitude is a generational thing, so far as you have said and I think the envy of the Pacific in how we are progressing on women’s issues and the Fiji Women Crisis Centre is a great part of this. I thank them again for their presentation today on behalf of Mr. Chairman and the Members who are here today. *Vinaka vakalevu.*

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Any final comments from the Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre.

MS. S. ALI.- Yes, we would like to thank all the Honourable Members and Mr. Chairman for giving us this opportunity. We feel very special and we feel that we are now being recognised for the work that we have done. So, thank you very much and I hope that we can continue working together and that we can do some more dialogues with the Members of Parliament. *Vinaka vakalevu.*

The Committee adjourned at 4.34 p.m.