



STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

REVIEW OF THE MINISTRY OF FISHERIES ANNUAL REPORT 2017 - 2018



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI
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CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD



I am pleased to present the review report on the Ministry of Fisheries 2017 – 2018 annual report.

The Committee's oversight function is to scrutinise government departments with responsibility within the committee's mandate and make recommendations relating to any aspect of functioning, administration, legislation or proposed legislative program, budget, rationalisation, restructuring and policy formulation as legislated under the Parliament Standing Orders.

In the deliberations stage, the Committee focused on the overall operations of the Ministry including its functions and strategic objectives, for 2017-2018.

The Committee wishes to commend the Ministry of Fisheries Officials for their hard work and support of the Committee during their site visit. Also the Committee would like to thank the Ministry Officials for their timely written response to the Committee.

The Committee has conducted the review of the Ministry of Fisheries 2017-2018 Annual Report and recommends that Parliament takes note of the recommendations highlighted in the committee's report.

Last but not the least, I wish to extend my appreciation to all the Honourable Members of the Committee who were part of the successful compilation of this bipartisan report namely Hon. Jale Sigarara, Hon. Alex O Connor, Hon. Mitieli Bulanauca, and Hon. Jese Saukuru

On behalf of the Committee, I also extend my appreciation to the Secretariat Staff for their timely support in the compilation and preparation of this report.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sanjay Kirpal', written over a horizontal line.

Hon. Sanjay Kirpal
Chairperson.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BDM	Beach-de-mer
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
EOI	Expression of Interest
FCMA	Fiji CITES Management Authority
GGP	Grant Assistance for Grass Roots Human Security Projects
IFMD	Inshore Fisheries Management Division
IUU	Illegal, Unreported, Unregulated
OFMD	Offshore Fisheries Management Division
PSMA	Port State Measures Agreement
PIFFA	Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PSC ACT	Public Service Act
SMART	Specific Measureable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community

RECOMMENDATION

The Standing Committee on Natural Resources has conducted a review of the Ministry of Fisheries Annual Report 2017-2018 and recommends that Parliament take note of its report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Fisheries 2017-2018 Annual Report was referred to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources on Tuesday 09th February, 2021 during the sitting of parliament.

The committee proceeded with its mandatory function legislated under Standing Order 109(2) (c) which allows the Standing Committee on Natural Resources to examine matters related to forestry, agriculture, mining, environment, fisheries, water and marine services.

Standing Orders 110(1)(c) further authorizes the Standing Committee to *scrutinize the government departments with responsibility within the committee's subject area, including by investigating, inquiring into, and making recommendations relating to any aspect of such a department's administration, legislation or proposed legislative program, budget, rationalization, restructuring, functioning, organization, structure and policy formulation.*

A standing committee must report to parliament any other matter referred to or initiated by the committee, as soon as it has completed its considerations and deliberations as stipulated under SO 121 (1) (b).

The members proceeded with its deliberations on the Ministry of Fisheries 2017-2018 Annual report by collecting evidences and collating information. Pertinent questions on issues relating to the operations of the Ministry in 2017-2018 were raised by the committee members which were then collated as committee findings to be presented to parliament for enactment




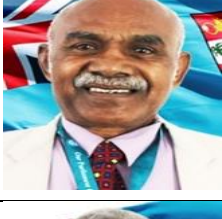

1.1 Procedure and Programs

The Committee met Face to Face in Parliament and deliberated on the 2017 – 2018 Annual Report of the Ministry of Fisheries. Upon the reading stage, a few areas of interest were identified by way of questions which were sent to the Ministry seeking their response.

Evidences gathered by the Committee supported its deliberations and finalization of its report to be presented to Parliament. These are attached as Annexures for ease of reference.

2.0 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The substantive and alternate members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources are as follows:

Committee Member	
	Hon. Sanjay Kirpal Chairperson, Government Member
	Hon. Jale Sigarara Deputy Chairperson, Government Member
	Hon. Alexander O'Connor Government Member
	Hon. Mitieli Bulanauca Opposition Member
	Hon. Jese Saukuru Opposition Member

3.0 THE MINISTRY OF FISHERIES IN 2017-2018

The Committee took note of the Ministry of Fisheries 2017-2018 Mission and Vision as highlighted below:

Vision: A Sustainable Fisheries Sector for our Future Generation Based on the Blue Economy

Mission: To Drive Sustainable Fisheries Management, Economic Growth and to Improve Livelihood through SMART Fisheries Strategies

Values for 2017-2018:

Responsible: We will discharge our duties with accordingly

Resolute: We will discharge our duties with determination and be firm and fair in our decisions

Respectful: We will be sensitive to individual needs and the diversity of views

Resourceful: We will be practical creative, effective and efficient and maintain integrity in our daily work.

The Ministry is responsible for the formulation and implementation of policies that promote best practice (equating conservation and utilization) that will ensure a prosperous and enhanced Fisheries Sector.

The Committee noted and valued the efforts of the Ministry of Fisheries in establishing its Acts in place for the Ministry of Fisheries., to establish standards, maintain order within the Ministry's jurisdiction, resolve disputes in fishing rights and protecting liberties and rights of the people.

- Constitution of the Republic of Fiji 2013
- Financial Management Act 2004/2010
- Tax Administration Decree 2009
- Fiji Health & Safety at Work Act 1996
- Public Service Act 1999
- Act 2 of 2016 – Amendment to PSC Act
- Employment Relations Promulgations 2007 & Employment Relations (Amendment) Act 2016
- Fisheries Act (Cap 158)
- Marine Spaces Act (Cap 158A)
- Offshore Fisheries Management Act 2012

4.0 FINDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

Upon scrutiny, the Committee gathered its findings through parliament research papers, findings from the committee site visits as well as the written responses from the Ministry of Fisheries. The findings of the Committee included the Ministry of Fisheries achievements and highlights under the period of review.

4.1 MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

DIVISION	MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS
Offshore Fisheries Management Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The OFMD is the technical and advisory arm of the Ministry of Fisheries on matters relating to Fiji’s offshore sector. The division manages licensing, monitoring, control and surveillance, catch and activity reporting for vessels operating in Fiji offshore waters; • During the current fiscal year, a total of 42 Long line fishing licenses, 7 exploratory licenses and 25 authorizations to fish beyond Fiji fisheries waters were issued; • In addition, 1274 export and 267 import permits were issued from the Walu Bay and Lautoka offices respectively; • The division also issued 199 CITES permits for the fiscal year, prior to Department of Environment becoming the sole signatories, as per Fiji CITES Management Authority (FCMA) meeting resolutions of 10th January, 2018; • A major achievement for the Ministry was the unanimous decision in Parliament on July 13, 2018 to sign the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The PSMA is a tool aimed at eliminating IUU fishing through the development deployment of effective port State measures; • Development of the draft Offshore Pelagic Fisheries Mahimahi Management Plan. It is anticipated that the stakeholder consultations will take place in the next fiscal year before finalization of the draft plan; • The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) commenced on an in-country survey on Economic contribution of Tuna fisheries to the Fiji economy. This survey will help understand the value that this important regional resource brings to Fiji and will continue into the next fiscal year.
Inshore Fisheries Management Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the United Nations Oceans Conference in New York on 6th June, 2017, the Fiji Government made a commitment on “Delivering Improved Coastal Fisheries Management Services in Fiji”. During this fiscal year the Ministry commenced work towards the delivery of this commitment through the establishment of the IFMD. IFMD has been established to ensure the effective management and oversight of Fiji’s coastal fisheries through an improved system of coastal fisheries management;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry was also supported by two technical advisors funded by New Zealand Government through the New Zealand Aid Programme. The advisors both commenced work in February 2018, and were embedded within IFMD to support the establishment and the development of the new Division.
<p>Aquaculture Division</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Division activities targeted the production and distribution of freshwater and brackish water aquaculture species, together with extension advisory work, research and targeted trainings both local and overseas for both staff and farmers; • Freshwater Aquaculture Hatchery Production and Distribution:: • 488,580 Tilapia fries produced and distributed from the hatcheries; • 158,500 prawn post larvae produced and distributed from the hatcheries; • 14 farmers assisted under the Food Security 2017/ 2018 program – breakdown being 4 from the Central and West while there was 6 in the Northern Division; • Brackish water Hatchery Production & Distribution; • 647,129 brackish water shrimp post larvae produced & distributed from the hatchery; • 30,100 sandfish juveniles produced from Galoa hatchery and distributed to sea ranch sites for restocking of depleted sites; • In terms of looking into the future and developing plans for various commodities in the Aquaculture fisheries, the Ministry engaged stakeholders through a consultation forum to discuss the Draft Pearl Development Plan on October 23rd, 2017. This plan when completed was to meet the voluntary commitment made by the Fiji Government at the United Nations Oceans Conference in New York in June, 2017; • In addition, the first shrimp conference on the culturing of Penaid Prawns was held at Galoa Fisheries station on May 1, 2018. This brought together the existing and potential farmers as well as other stakeholders to discuss the issues of the industry and way forward. A follow up conference was held in Lomawai on 18 October 2018 but targeted only the Western Division farmers. <p>Four farmer trainings were conducted nationally, with one in each division. A total of 87 farmers participated at these regional trainings. These trainings are essentials to ensure that aquaculture farmers are equipped with accurate technical advice to support their farming activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Nadi/ Lautoka Aquaculture Cluster farmers group received assistance from collaboration partners, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community on May 2nd 2018. The cluster is made up of 10 tilapia freshwater farmers around the Nadi and Lautoka area and their level of operation ranges from semi commercial to commercial farming of tilapia. The farmers received donated items funded by New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade Aid Programme under the Sustainable Pacific Aquaculture development for food security and economic growth. The items donated included graders, nets, digital scales and scoop nets;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In May 2018, the Division embarked to develop the first ever National Strategy on Aquatic Biosecurity for Fiji in collaboration with SPC. A draft Strategy has been developed for further consultation in the New Year; • The Japanese Government, through the Embassy of Japan in Suva, approved a project for the provision of materials for tilapia seed production at Naduruloulou Research Station under the Grant Assistance for Grass Roots Human Security Projects (GGP); • During the fiscal year, the Ministry produced 1.5metric tonnes of seaweed against a target of 100MT. These harvests were from Naividamu village and Nakalou Women Seaweed farms in Macuata. The Ministry continued to assist communities in the establishment of seaweed nurseries and two (2) were established during the year in Serua and Malake islands against the target of four (4) for the year. In addition to this, it assisted 13 communities with materials and drying sheds.
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4.2 THE RESPONSES FROM THE MINISTRY OF FISHERIES

The Ministry of Fisheries responses are highlighted in the Annexures and can be accessed on the following link <http://www.parliament.gov.fj/committees/standing-committee-on-natural-resources/>.

5.0 COMMITTEE’S RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the current economic crisis the country is facing and the gross reduction in the Tourism dollar, the Committee strongly recommend the following:

1. The Formalization of Fiji’s Aquaculture Bill becoming a law.

This is to provide the necessary legal backing for enabling and managing sea cage industries and other multi-million aquaculture investments like sea cucumber, by overseas “smart partners”. For example such ventures, the Ministry’s own Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Teams, will both need to avail themselves of the Bill’s provisions to declare “Aquaculture Areas”, in order to ensure legal product is protected from freeloaders, and to help ensure no flow of illegal product through farm operations.

2. Encourage/ Increase and Support the establishment of Shrimp Farms to enhance family Livelihood and Economic Growth.

Private hatchery to supply semi-commercial and commercial farms (through initial assistance from MoF to fund supply seeds via donor partners).

Introduction of new grow-out production system of the tank method system. Finalizing the science before it is rolled out.

3. To Encourage/Increase and Support the establishment of Tilapia Farms to enhance food and nutrition security and family livelihood.

Empowering commercial/semi commercial farmers into tilapia farming for income generation and for consumption.

4. To Encourage/Increase and Support the establishment of Sandfish Farms to enhance Livelihood and Economic Growth

Public Private Partnership of Galoa station.

Fisheries Community based and pond culture of Sand fish farming concept.

Refurbishment of Galoa Hatchery.

Grow-out farming system through pen and ponds through the approved framework.

Processor and Exporter engagement through EOI for PPP.

5. The enforcement agencies should be more vigilant in enforcing the law concerning undersized fish and crustaceans.

6.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

6.1 GENDER EQUALITY ANALYSIS – SDG 5

The Fiji Parliament Standing Orders considers gender equality and ensures that the impact on both men and women is exploited in all matters.” SO110 (2): Where a committee conducts an activity, it shall ensure that full consideration will be given to the principal of gender equality so as to ensure all matters are considered with regards to the impact and benefit on both men and women equally.

Upon consulting the Ministry of Fisheries officials, the Committee was provided with a breakdown of gender balance in the Ministry which stood at 40 % Female and 60 % Male (ratio 2: 3).

However, the committee noted that there was no clear breakdown of gender provided in the annual report by the Ministry of Fisheries in 2017-2018.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The committee commends the Ministry of Fisheries through its achievements and initiatives in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

8.0 COMMITTEE MEMBERS' SIGNATURE

Members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources	E-Signature
Hon. Sanjay Kirpal, Chairperson	
Hon. Jale Sigarara, Deputy Chairperson	
Hon. Alexander O'Connor, Government Member	
Hon. Mitieli Bulanauca, Opposition Member	
Hon. Jese Saukuru, Alternate Opposition Member	

APPENDICES

Published written evidence

Written evidence and supplementary information was received from the Ministry of Fisheries and can be viewed on the Parliament website at the following link:

<http://www.parliament.gov.fj/committees/standing-committee-on-natural-resources/>