

# APPENDICES



## **Appendix One**

**Written Response by the Ministry of Women,  
Children and Poverty Alleviation**



## MINISTRY OF WOMEN, CHILDREN AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION

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11<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Honorable Viam Pillay  
CHAIRPERSON  
PARLIAMENT STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS  
Republic of Fiji

Dear Chairperson,

**RE: Request for Clarification on Issues relating to the Ministry of Women, Children & Poverty Alleviation 2017-2018 Annual Report**

We wish to thank the Standing Committee on Social Affairs for allowing the Ministry of Women, Children & Poverty Alleviation to respond to queries from the Committee regarding the review of the Ministry's 2017-2018 Annual Report.

We also wish to thank you giving the Ministry and additional week to respond to the queries considering the current situation creating challenges in accessing all the information, especially for those working from home. Nonetheless, we are happy to submit the responses in the attachment below, with responses in blue font.

You may contact me for any further clarifications required on email [jennifer.poole@govnet.gov.fj](mailto:jennifer.poole@govnet.gov.fj) or mobile 9991184.

Thank you

**Jennifer Poole (Ms)**  
Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Women, Children & Poverty Alleviation

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## QUESTIONS

1. Provide sex disaggregated data on the number of people who benefited from the Disability Allowance in the 2017-2018 financial year and the eligibility criteria to qualify for this scheme.

### 2017/2018 Financial Year DAS recipients

Total : 2133	Males - 1002	Females - 1131
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### Eligibility Criteria:

An applicant is eligible for Disability Allowance if he/she:

- a. Is a Fiji Citizen and resident in Fiji;
- b. Continues to live in Fiji during the receipt of the Disability Allowance;
- c. If a recipient of either Poverty Benefit Scheme (PBS) or Care and Protection Scheme (CPS), if assessed under the Disability Allowance Scheme and qualifies for allowance, will be assisted with \$90 per month for the person with disabilities assessed only. (Refer to Annex III for the different scenarios)
- d. a maximum of 2 persons with disabilities in a family can be assisted;
- e. Is not under detention or imprisonment;
- f. Is not receiving care in residential care institutions subsidized by the government;
- g. Is certified by an authorized Medical Assessor to be permanently disabled (100%) as per the definition in the Workers Compensation Act and also in line with international best practice;
- h. To be in need of constant attendance from others in his/her daily life

(Source : SOP for Allowance for Persons with Disabilities)

2. What monitoring mechanisms did the Ministry have in place to ensure that assistance provided to the 80,283 recipients under the Home CARE program was effectively utilised according to the intended purpose of the assistance?

The Home CARE Program like the Help for Home Program had several stakeholders participating in the Program. The role of the MWCPA was to register clients after they were verified to be meeting the criteria. Payments were facilitated by Vodafone after funds were released by MOE and it was the role of MOE to conduct the monitoring and home visits to ensure that funds were utilized according to its intended purpose.

3. Provide a breakdown of how the \$300,000 allocation in the 2017 – 2018 Budget for the Renovation of State Homes for the Elderly was utilized.



This allocation was utilized as part of the consultation phase towards the scoping, concept and design of the renovations to the 3 State Homes for Older Persons. This was an activity that was facilitated with the Construction Implementation Unit under the Ministry of Economy. Government Tenders were respectively advertised to secure interested parties towards this activity. Stages of construction are assessed by a technical expert and approved by CIU and funds released by MoE.

4. How does the Ministry partner with other stakeholders in advancing efforts to eliminate violence against women and children in Fiji?

The Ministry who has the legislated (under DoSW) responsibility to safeguard the protection of children in Fiji has been working in partnership with Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSO's) through the years to provide a network of services and safe homes for women and children who have been victims of violence and abuse. Training and awareness programs have been part of the DoSW annual activities to inform and empower communities on their responsibility to protect and keep our children safe.

The Department for Women uses the following avenues and methods in advancing efforts to eliminate violence against women and children:

**EVAW Taskforce:**

At National level, the EVAW Taskforce included various Stakeholder's drawn from government and non-government organizations. The overall goal of the Task Force is to enhance support to national level efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women. A taskforce managed to achieve milestone including the development of the Fiji National Service Delivery Protocol for responding to cases of gender based violence.

**Fiji National Service Delivery - Protocol for Responding to Cases of Gender Based Violence:**

- In finalizing the Fiji National Service Delivery Protocol, the Ministry after the national validation held a one on one discussion with stakeholders and service providers (CSO's) to clearly highlight and validate services provided in responding to cases of gender based violence.
- The service providers ( includes Ministry of Health and Medical Services, Fiji Police Force, Judicial Department, Ministry of iTaukei Affairs. Legal Aid Commission, Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, Medical Services Pacific, Empower Pacific, Homes of Hope, and The Salvation Army) therefore should respond to cases of GBV reported as soon as possible. However, regardless of circumstances surrounding accessibility, as soon as an incident is of violence has been reported

there should be immediate steps taken to make sure care and treatment are provided as quickly as possible.

#### **Working with Government Ministries:**

- The Ministry work with the Gender Focal Point identified from various government Ministry (including Office of the Prime Minister, Fiji Police Force, Ministry of Public Enterprise, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Lands, Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Civil Services, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Employment, Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, Ministry of Rural Maritime and Development) in progressing the implementation of the Fiji National Gender Policy including the elimination of violence against women and children.
- Identified focal officers attended training on gender based violence with the objectives of having an understanding on the issues and with mapping way forward for implementation at various departments.

#### **Working at Community Level:**

- The Ministry works with Stakeholders (including the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, Fiji Police Force, Legal Aid Commission, Ministry of Education through NASAAC) to create awareness through training community members to understand the issues of gender based violence, how they can respond to cases and also mapping ways to prevent it from happening.
  - In 2017 – 2018 FY, 11 trainings were undertaken at community level recording a total of 341 (145 male, 196, female) people reached through the GBV awareness undertaken.
5. Inform the committee on the challenges associated with the implementation of the Zero Tolerance Violence Free Community national program and its success.

#### **Success:**

- Communities that were in remote locations or difficult to reach were visited and made aware of the need to become actively involved in ending violence against women and girls and reporting incidents:
- Stakeholders were able to reach rural communities with the messages; and communities were able to access the health and social services and information provided by stakeholders due to the socio-economic nature of the ZTVFC



implementation plan. This includes access to information on Gender Based Violence (GBV), access to justice, information to empowered people to report cases of GBV to relevant authority and share information;

- The communities were part of the decision making in committing to endeavor and undertake the plan program for the ZTVFC implementation.

**Challenges:**

- Competing community priorities which prolonged the programme implementation;
  - Lack of commitment from communities especially in preventing violence. Often the Government programme was seen as providing awareness and responding to cases of gender based violence happening at community level rather than building systems to prevent violence against women and girls;
  - Full commitment of community members to the programme especially during training sessions.
6. Where are the locations of each of the emergency shelters in Fiji for survivors of gender based violence and sexual assault, and their capacity and emergency numbers?

**Safe Shelter Accommodation:**

Emergency and temporary shelter services are available in some parts of Fiji for survivors of gender based violence. This includes the following:

- The Salvation Army – a charitable organization operating emergency shelter services known as the Family Care Centres for women and children survivors of GBV.

[Note: Address to remain confidential to safeguard survivors of Domestic Violence]

- Shelters and Family Centres are located in:
  - Lautoka Family Care Centre located at 160 VM Pillay Road, Riffle Range with capacity of 7 women. Phone contact: 8904018 ;
  - Suva Family Care Centre located at 21 Spring Street, Toorak, with capacity of 7 women , Phone : 9981949;
  - Labasa Family Care Center located at 22 James Madhvan with capacity of 6 women. Phone: 8919100.

- The Homes of Hope (HoH) provides a live in programme. HoP is located at Wailoku. A charitable organization working with young single mothers (under 26 years old) and their children (below the age of 3 years) and girls (12 years old and above) who are survivors of, or vulnerable to, commercial sexual exploitation, sexual violence, trafficking and other forms of GBV. The long term emergency GBV shelter program offers a three pronged approach to helping women and as follows:
  - Residential care- a shelter stay for period of 18months depending on individual case plan;
  - Restoration Program – including counselling, bible study, healthy parenting, personal care and others;
  - Re-integration program – upon completion of the program, mothers and children and girls are helped to return to their communities transitioning to a safe environment with frequent follow up undertaken;
  - The capacity of the Home of Hope total 20 individuals. Their emergency phone numbers are 7772877 and 7772680
- Other shelters are working to set up which includes Fiji Women's Crisis Centre and other non-government Organizations.
- In March this year, Soroptomist International handed over to Government a fully furnished building at Natabua, Lautoka that will serve as the first state owned GBV shelter. The Ministry is in the process of securing an organisation to run it (the EOI was called and is being assessed).

7. What is the new approach to addressing violence against women and children considering the increasing number over the years?

The new approach to addressing violence against women and children is the development of the Fiji National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls because the root cause of violence is gender inequality. The Ministry is taking a whole of government, whole of population, evidence based, measurable, inclusive and funded five year plan with an emphasis on stopping violence before it starts. The National action Plan is envisioned to include key settings for prevention, an explanations on why violence against women happen in Fiji, key strategies to prevent violence against women, stakeholders roles and responsibilities, costed implementation plan, and the national communication strategy.

8. In which communities has the Ministry initiated the male advocacy network (man up) campaign and inform us of the challenges encountered in the implementation of this



activity. Are there plans to engage male Members of Parliament to participate in this campaign and to champion the elimination of violence against women and girls?

- The Ministry's Male Advocacy Program began in 2015. The main objective of the program is capacity strengthening through gender sensitization training of the male members of the Gate Keepers Committees of those communities that have declared themselves violence free after undergoing a 10-phased process of the Zero Tolerance Violence Free Programme.
- To build a pool of gender sensitized male community leaders in communities, towns, settlements and villages who will be able to provide the 'right' information to other men within their groups of influence. And to build a pool of male leaders who can be further trained to provide initial counselling to male perpetrators of violence within their communities by utilizing the concept of buddy system.
- Communities included the Zero Tolerance Violence Free Community (ZTVFC) that have been declared violence free communities and identified person/personnel had undertaken male advocacy training as follows:

<u>Division:</u>	<u>Locations:</u>
Western Division	[Lautoka] Koroipita , Seniyaya Sett, Dreketi Sett; [Nadi] Navakai Sett, Nagado Village, Korobebe Village, [Ba] Natalacake village, Koronubu Sett, Clopcott Sett, Tauvegavega Sett, Nasolo Village, Natawarau Sett, [Tavua] Vatutavui Village, Vanuakula Village, Waikubukubu village, Nadelei Village, Nasomo Sett, Reservori Sett. [Rakiraki] Namuaimada village, Naivuvuni village, Vatukacevaceva village, Malake village, [Sigatoka] Volivoli village, Nabila village, Tuibeirata village, Vatukarasa Village,
Central Division	[Navua] Vunaniu village, Lapanoni Sett, Naitata Sett, Sett, Nabukavesi viilage, [Korovou] Nasau village, Nasaibitu village, Veinuqa village, [Nausori] Waikete village, Nakaile village, [Suva] Navesi II [Naitasiri] Waikalou village, Vunidawa village, Naitauvoli village, Viria village, Navatukia village

Northern Division	[Macuata] Nabouono Village, Namoli village [Savusavu] Vunivesi village, Savudrodro village, Yasawa village, [Bua] Nawailevu village
Eastern Division	[Lomaiviti] Nadevo Sett, Vatukalo village, [Kadavu] Tavuki village, Rakiraki village

- There are other community personnel to be trained.
- The Community Male advocacy programs consist of 3 days training for communities organized by Ministry officials and the technical Gender Based Violence training is provided by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre.

#### **Challenges Encountered:**

- Discriminatory socio-cultural norms and gender stereotypes: Violence against women and girls is largely accepted as a norm in most communities. The social stigmatization of gender-based violence survivors by family members, authorities, service providers, and police or other law enforcement actors can prevent women and girls from reporting cases of abuse.
- Existing inequalities compounded by religious and cultural beliefs and practices: Violence against women is largely perpetrated by men and stems from the inequalities that exist between men and women. These inequalities are compounded by religious and cultural beliefs and practices; and are so institutionalized that initial work on violence against women have struggled to make inroads while experiencing backlash and resistance from various angle.
- Lack of commitment to human rights and empowerment: Commitment and dedication by putting women before men, meaning men advocating for the fair treatment of women. So, any effort to engage men should actively promote women's empowerment and in no way undermine women's human rights.
- Work on engaging men and boys for gender equality is anchored in the belief that men and boys need to take responsibility for change, and to question their power and how this influences their actions and words at the personal, interpersonal and societal level.

#### **Plans to Engage Male Members of Parliament:**

- The Ministry would like to see that issues of gender based violence is advocated for at all levels. The Ministry in 2016 had initially started to work with the office



of Parliament in creating awareness on the issue of gender based violence through Policy Dialogue on the National Gender Policy.

- In 2018 (31 May – 2 June), a training on Gender Relations, Domestic Violence and Human Rights were undertaken targeting all members of parliament. Unfortunately only some members attended.
  - Addressing GBV requires a collaborative between government, non-government organisations and the communities. So it creates a need for concerted effort in educating communities, providing them with appropriate information and guidance on all aspects of life thereby, increasing a sense of responsibility among every member of the community, including the women, children, men and youths.
9. How is the Ministry collaborating with the Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts in the fight against violence against women and girls by promoting compulsory tertiary education for women and girls?
- In November 2017, the Ministry in partnership with the Ministry of Education and the Fiji Military Forces organized awareness programmes to identified schools Secondary and Primary Schools in Central Suva and Nausori. This is to educate them on issues of gender based violence, explore structural and systematic opportunities for the continued take-up of respectful relationship amongst boys and girls; and further deliver respectful relationship education that addresses the drivers of violence against women.
  - The Ministry is currently implementing a whole of Government and whole of community approach on the Gender Transformative Institutional Capacity development Programme and the development of the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against All Women and Girls that should lead to the review of policies and programmes and this includes the Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts and the whole Education sector.
10. With hard drugs entering the country and social issues on the rise, how has the Ministry proven that the 16 days of activism would be an activity to help eliminate violence against women and girls? Does the Ministry involve other stakeholders to successfully implement this campaign?

The 16 days of Activism is a 16 Days period (25th November – 10th December) of intensifying the call to end violence against women and children. The 2017, 16 Days of activism is a platform where the Ministry can involve various Stakeholders from the government, private sectors, corporate organizations, communities, development agencies, embassies, faith based organizations, youth groups, discipline forces and individuals in the

information campaign and activities. This is aim to solicit the commitment of public and private sector organizations and the discipline forces to create awareness on GBV and promote gender equality. It aims to encourage men and boys to develop greater respect and tolerance for women and girls. The Ministry in staging the 16 Days of Activism has made progress and has put violence against women in everyone's agenda.

Noting that drugs and alcohol can be a contributing factor to abuse and incidents of domestic violence and child abuse, the MWCPA works collaboratively with bodies such as the Substance Abuse Advisory Council (SAAC). Acting Director Child Services sits on this council and the chair MEHA is also on the NCCC chaired by MWCPA.

11. Does the Ministry maintain a database on sex workers in Fiji?

No. This is an under-researched area for the National Women's Machinery and is looking to work in partnership with stakeholders to develop this.

12. The new activity that was introduced under the Women and Health program to empower women and girls was the promotion of cloth reusable sanitary pads. Can the Ministry provide data on the use of these sanitary pads and how this is monitored? Explain the associated challenges and how they were addressed.

- The reusable sanitary pads project was an initiative under both the Women and Health programme and also the Women's Economic Empowerment programme. Whilst we were promoting long term safe, hygienic and cost effective solution to women and girls menstruation. An aspect of the programme was to support women to locally make these reusable items, empowering women to generate income.
- Implementation of this programme was undertaken as a pilot and was small in scale. It was carried out in collaboration with development partners such as the UNFPA and women's groups as in the Ba Women's Forum. The project was piloted to boarding schools in Ovalau (Delana Methodist in Levuka and to St. John's College in Cawaci).
- The Ministry now works collaboratively with a wide network of CSO's and specialized agencies to address the Sexual and Reproductive Health needs and issues faced by Fijian women. In line with this, the Ministry is now strengthening its coordination role and empowering officers at National, Divisional and District level (through training) to work in collaboration with development partners, NGOs, and CSOs for the implementation of such programmes and also with the focus of empowering women.



13. What is the Ministry doing to reduce the number of teenage pregnancies in the country?

The Ministry through its Child Services Unit (CSU) works in partnership with the MOE to conduct training and awareness programs in schools. In the communities and with FBOs and CSOs, there is working partnerships with organizations like Save the Children, Medical Services Pacific (MSP), EMPOWER to create awareness, training and counseling with parents, victims and community leaders

The establishment of the Child Helpline (free call 1325) and its direct link to support in Reproductive Health and family planning is one such way, child and teenage callers can confidentially access information on family planning.

Also, the Ministry is working in partnership with the UNFPA and the MHMS and has undertaken awareness on family planning to reduce the number of teenage pregnancy in the country. This is complimenting the work that the MHMS family planning services programme provided to couples and youth in relationships who wish to advance their education before starting a family. While the Ministry of Health provided this services at health facilities and nursing stations around Fiji, the Ministry do work with communities especially women's groups and with CSO partners, with the overall aim of empowering young women to access services and information to prevent unplanned pregnancies and unsafe abortions.

14. Page 41 of annual report –

- a) The Fiji Women's Federation's activity looks after the sewing project and women resource centers and ministerial forums. Provide a list of sewing machines that were distributed by the Fijian and Indian Governments in 2017-2018.

Whilst we are not able to provide the exact number of machines that were distributed during the period in question, it can be reported that the registered women's groups around the country were given an opportunity to request for sewing machines that were provided with the necessary sewing and machine repair trainings.

- b) Can the Ministry enlighten on how effective are the programs that were carried out in the women resource centers and how they were monitored?

The Resource Centre projects were aimed to provide the women with a specific space to conduct their empowerment programmes. This provided them with a dedicated safe space for their consultations and trainings and also a safe space for the storage of communal resources of the women.

- c) Are there any plans for rural and urban communities to undertake project work in sewing school uniforms?

In line with the distribution of sewing machines, women's groups were empowered through training to sew clothing for women and men including school uniforms. However, the market and the competition was something that the women had to deal with in order to make the project a success. To support the continuity of the resource centres project, the sewing machine project and the sewing trainings, the Ministry initiated the Rural Women's Fashion Show a component of the National Women's Expo to empower women that have been part of these projects to take their skills and knowledge to another level.

15. Explain the difference between a shadow and state CEDAW report. How does the ministry harness the gap between the two reports?

The CEDAW State Report provides replies to a list of issues provided by the country rapporteur and the pre-sessional working group. Ideally the report should be put together in a consultative manner that incorporates the input of all actors and is submitted to the CEDAW pre-sessional working group before the state review session. The UN CEDAW committee in ensuring that NGO concerns are also including in the list of issues provided by rapporteur, it provides an opportunity to national NGOs to also table its submission in the form of a Shadow Report to the pre-sessional working group. These issues are also provided to States to respond to.

16. On the ministerial forum as an activity to develop women from all walks of life, how has this encouraged participation from women in Fiji and are there plans in involving women in politics, in business, and other platforms?

The Ministerial forums provides a platform for women NGOs, CSOs, FBOs and National Women's organisations to have a dialogue with the Minister responsible. It also provides an opportunity for Government to create awareness on its programmes and activities for the empowerment of women and on gender equality. In its new strategic direction currently being developed, the Ministry has identified three key thematic areas and "Women in Leadership" as one of the cross cutting issues to be strengthened in all areas in the next five years.

17. Explain on the outcomes of the programmes monitored under the Poverty Monitoring Unit. How has this determined the future direction of the ministry?



In the Fiscal Year 2017-2018, the Poverty Monitoring Unit (PMU) PMU monitored a total of 18 Poverty Alleviation Programme across 8 Government Ministries and as per matrix below:

No	Name of Programme	Programme Implementer
1	National Women's Expo	MWCPA
2	Womens Extension Centres & Resource Centres	
3	NGO Grant	
4	Social Pension Scheme	
5	IGP	
6	Welfare Graduation Programme	
7	Rural Pregnant Mothers Food Voucher	
8	Solar Mama and Rocket Stove	
9	Sigatoka Valley Agriculture Development Programme	Ministry of Agriculture
10	Apiculture Industry Development Programme	
11	Free Education Programme (Yr 1-13)	Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts & Library Services and National Archives
12	Free Milk Programme (Yr 1)	
13	Grant to Self-Help Programme	Ministry of Rural & Maritime Development and National Disaster Management
14	Free Medicine Programme	Ministry of Health and Medical Services
15	Micro and Small Business Grants	Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism
16	Poverty Alleviation Programme	Fiji Correction Services
17	Yellow Ribbon Programme	
18	Other Rural Water Supply	Fiji Water Authority

The above Programmes were identified from the 2017-2018 National Budget Supplement and Budget Estimates linking to Governments Priority areas in the Social, Economic, Infrastructure and Governance Sectors. In addition, the PMU further consulted the Programme Implementers in relation to the Programme each Ministry administers before the actual process of Impact Assessment eventuates.

As Outcomes of the Monitored Programmes undertaken, the Unit had identified areas of improvement and recommendations to the line agencies. This included the following:

- Continuous monitoring of the programmes is crucial and needs to be strengthened from the relevant agencies. This is critical to gauge the impacts of the projects which has either improved the livelihoods of the beneficiaries' and ensuring the viability, sustainable growth and poverty reduction;
- With the relevant government's poverty alleviation programmes from the Agencies, the Unit has identified the need of beneficiaries taking ownership of

government's investment and this contributes to their development and empowerment of men, women and girls in their respective communities;

- Accuracy of Reporting: Proper and updated data maintenance is very important specifically for Programme Implementers (agencies) – ensuring agencies maintain and have an updated data especially when monitoring agencies. It was noted that records of data were not matching at Divisional and Head Quarters Level – this has been advised to the line agencies;
- There had been policy briefs consolidated by the Unit which articulates recommendations to relevant agencies on the review of projects and programmes and how these government investments have contributed towards the improvement on standard of living and livelihoods.

**Future directions of the Ministry:**

- The Poverty Monitoring Unit will be undertaking a review of its strategic direction in support of their mandatory role as policy advisor to Government on the Poverty Status in Fiji and also with the implementation of the Integrated National Poverty Alleviation Programmes (INPEP) from across government agencies. This enables the Unit to gauge the impact of government's intervention and investment throughout the country with the ultimate goal of alleviating poverty and leaving no one behind.
- Through possible networks and areas of collaborations with the government agencies, institutions and development partners, this will assist the Unit in reviewing its role through a more inclusive and consultative approach in addressing poverty across all sectors in government and at all levels of our society. This led to discussions within the Ministry to organize a poverty forum for gauging what work has been done and what more could be done is achieving SDG 1 – Reducing Poverty.
- This had led the Ministry through the coordination of the Unit, to host a National Poverty Forum, after series of brainstorming and discussions with Executive Management. This later eventuated in June 2019 through the leadership of the Hon. Minister and the Permanent Secretary, where we had organized a 2 day Workshop at the Novotel Hotel, with 97 participants from more than 15 agencies represented. This was possible through the support of UNDP, with the objective of providing a platform for views and ideas from relevant stakeholders for the Ministry to establish a National Coordinating Body on Poverty Alleviation;



- The Unit is in its preliminary phase of organizing a Re-Engineering Workshop with the aim of developing its strategic plan and also ensuring the capacity of my Officers are well intact in supporting our mandatory role as policy advisors to Government on the Poverty Status in Fiji.

18. What progress has been made in the construction of the Barefoot college?

With reference to the 28/0521 – 07/06/21 period report of the Sambhu Lal Construction Company, the Ministry's desk office has estimated a 75% completion of the whole project based on the analysis of the latest report and the April report. The report currently confirms a 90% completion of joinery and framing work. This is taking into consideration the undertaking of major project work which includes the relocation of the Nadogo Women's Resource Centre.

19. Poverty Reduction –

- a) Explain why the Poverty Reduction awareness campaign only eventuated in the Northern Division? Are there plans to host this campaign in other Divisions?

The Poverty Reduction Awareness Campaign "The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP) is an International Observance Day marked on the 10th of October to acknowledge the struggle and the efforts of those people living in poverty around the World including Fiji given it's signatory to UN Declaration. The Ministry through the Poverty Monitoring Unit coordinates this Event annually with the support of State and Non-State Actors, in our fight together to alleviate poverty by taking the services each stakeholder provides to the door steps of those people in the community identified to be the venue of this marked Event.

The venue of the Event is identified through consultation with the Divisional Commissioners and the Roko Tui's Office and also referring to the Household and Income Expenditure (HIES) 2013-2014 survey report -Provincial Poverty Level. While conducting consultation it was revealed through the HIES Report that the Northern Division- Macuata and Bua and the Western Division-Ra Province recorded the highest incidence of provincial poverty percentage. Further discussion, it was agreed that the Northern Division to be the venue of the 2017 IDEP given that we had to cancel the Saqani IDEP in 2016 due to the national drought.

Since 2010, the Poverty Monitoring Unit was located under the Office of the Prime Minister, it had commemorated the IDEP Events in the Civic Auditorium, Suva, Nabouwalu, Kubulau, Bua; Dreketi, Subrail Park in Labasa and Waiyevo, Taveuni

and Natewa District School, Cakaudrove for the Northern Division. The event has also been commemorated at Shirly Park in Lautoka and Ra for the Western Division and in the Eastern Division it has also been observed in Levuka, Ovalau. There is mass media campaign involved prior to the event and during the event. This include radio talk back show on the radio stations, documentaries of success stories and live broadcasting from the IDEP venue for the 3 days.

There is also plans in place to commemorate this Event in other Divisions together with the Ministry's other International Observance Days to minimize cost and a wider coverage to our communities.

In 2017, the IDEP was commemorated on the 04th -06th October, 201 at the Naduri District School, Macuata. There were a total of 13 villages and settlements in the District of Macuata which included villages in the interior and maritime islands participated in the 3 day Event. An average of 400 people from the various villages attended the Event per day for the 3 days. The PMU team also registered an average of 300 students and teachers per day for the 3 days. A total of 15 Primary Schools, 5 secondary schools and 3 ECE's participated in the 3 day IDEP Event.

- b) Is there any curriculum, such as life skills learning, for schools to undertake during this campaign?

The 3 day event showcases how living in poverty can affect everyone and anyone irrespective of gender, race, age or disability. This was revealed in how the Early Childhood Education, Primary Schools and Secondary Schools portrayed participation through various activities such as: oratory competitions; poems, songs and drama focusing on the theme: "Answering the Call of October 17 to end Poverty. A Path towards Inclusive and Peaceful Societies". A nearby secondary school band was involved in the opening march and this really recognize the curriculum offered in our Vocational Schools and students to participate in such events.

In addition, participants during the IDEP Event in Naduri were Government Ministries (14); Statutory Bodies (9), Non-Government Organization (NGO) (4); Higher Educational Institutions (2); Business Organizations (1); Financial Institutions(4) and Women's Group (4) participated in the IDEP Event. Furthermore, the Technical College of Fiji, provided cooking and sewing training and it was noted that interest students, members of the public were attracted to their booth. The Department of Women also conducted sewing machine training whereby members of the women's group who were assisted through the Sewing



Machine Programme under the Department of Women were able to learn and practice on how to fix part of the sewing machine when it breaks down.

Moreover, with the services taken to the doorsteps of those people living in the District of Macuata whose villages are mostly located along the Coastal Line and affected by Climate Change effects such as rise sea level. The PMU recorded the services provided by 3 Government Ministries not to mention other important stakeholders with the impact as follows:

- **Ministry of Justice**
  - a. issued 21 birth certificates and 5 marriage certificates;
  - b. registered 4 new births, 13 late births;
  - c. registered 21 marriage applications;
  - d. registered 5 marriage solemnized;
  - e. 6 required Justice of Peace services;
  - f. Total of 202 clients served
- **Ministry of Health and Medical Services**
  - a. 150 people attended doctors consultation;
  - b. 218 NCD Screening;
  - c. 77 Dental assistance- tooth extraction;
  - d. 234 Dietician services;
  - e. 178 reproductive health awareness
- **Ministry of Women, Children & Poverty Alleviation**
  - a. 63 people sought assistance in Poverty Benefit Scheme;
  - b. 29 people sought assistance in Social Pension Scheme;
  - c. 14 in Care and Protection Programme;
  - d. 21 in Bus Fare Concession;
  - e. 24 in Disability Allowance Scheme;
  - f. 1 Income Generating Project
  - g. 2 Poverty Alleviation Programme (Housing)

20. Page 53 of annual report - Enlighten the committee on the outcome of the job evaluation exercise that was undertaken. Has this reduced the vacant and acting positions within the Ministry?

The Job Evaluation exercise enabled the upgrading of Social Welfare positions to the current Status:

- a. Welfare Officer II – Band F: \$22,528.74 – \$26,283.53

- b. Welfare Officer I – Band G : \$28,605.45 - \$34,707.95
- c. Senior Welfare Officer – Band H: \$34,760.31 - \$40,553.70
- d. Principal Welfare Officer And Assistant Directors – Band I: \$43,293.63 - \$50,512.74
- e. Director Social Welfare – Band K: \$59,945.18 - \$69,963.05.

Also, The JE resulted in the cadres being remunerated in accordance with the volume and type of Social work that they do either at Field level or at Policy level. A Recruitment Plan has been developed to ensure that vacant positions are filled in a timely manner and Expression of Interest is also followed when there is a need to fill positions through acting appointments.

21. Explain the effectiveness of the REACH programme in providing access to services associated with social, economic and legal rights.

REACH has been the supportive structure of the Fijian Government in educating, informing citizens about their rights and responsibilities and the means to establishing a beneficial connection between the people, Government and Non-Governmental agencies.

#### **Quantitative Measurements:**

Given the 3 years trend implementations from the FY 2017-2018 to 2019-2020, REACH recorded an average of 99% budget utilization and an overall increase of total services delivered to 3390.74% compared to the initial services delivered in 2017, which clearly depicts that the programme is successful and is well positioned in Government to sustain itself post international donor support.

The activities of REACH in the past 3 years has drastically evolved, enabling the programme to cover 220 communities in 42 districts within 111 mission days in totality, excluding the weekends. The achievements associated with the KPI's determined the average achievements of over 142% participants were empowered with the social, economic and legal services provided by the integrated platform and an average of 154.71% services were delivered. This is a satisfactory performance, even with a reduced budget, the overall achievements continued to increase.

Please find below the 3 Year Budget Overview:

FY	Provision	Expenditure	% Utilization
2017 – 2018	\$116,450	115,841	99%
2018 – 2019	\$220,365	\$220,364	100%
2019 - 2020	\$150,000	\$146,600	100%



### **Analysis of Implementations:**

The budget overview depicts the 3 years performances. This is a straight forward analyzed data to provide a feedback on the budget performance and tracking the overall business operation practices. The analysis combines all the expenditures incurred to cover the insurance for the 3 Buses, operational costs such as allowances, fuel, travel and advertisements. Government continued to support the programme as indicated with the increased budgets however, with the economic downturn caused by the pandemic, the budget was reduced by 50%. Overall, matching against the achievements, the 99% average budget utilization has enabled the programme to cover 220 communities in 42 districts within 111 mission days in totality, excluding the weekends. This is a satisfactory performance, even with a reduced budget, the overall achievements continued to increase.

### **3 Years Snapshot of the Total Services delivered:**

Date	No. of District	No. of Communities	Participants				Services Delivered		
			Women	Men	Child	TOTAL	Women	Men	TOTAL
Aug 2017-Jul 2018	1	7	68	49	9	126	243	243	486
Aug 2018-Jul 2019	12	79	768	731	3,411	4,910	1,188	898	2,086
Aug 2019-Jul 2020	18	97	1,037	969	334	2,340	3,546	3,652	7,198
August 2020 – Jan 2021	11	37	1962	1384	973	4319	9866	6613	16,479
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>3835</b>	<b>3133</b>	<b>4727</b>	<b>11,695</b>	<b>14,843</b>	<b>11,406</b>	<b>26,249</b>

The figure above demonstrates an overview of the expansions of the achievements. Based on the data, the increase in participants and services is a clear indication that there is a great reach in the communities; increase involvement of stakeholders and also an increased knowledge about the programme and its advantage. Unforeseen circumstances such as Tropical cyclones and pandemic outbreaks enabled the team to make reflections, revamp the platform and develop consistent feedbacks that were critical to continue the implementations and also provide more value for money. Additionally, the quantitative impact of 3390.74% increase in the aggregate services delivered is a very satisfactory achievement.

### **Achievements against the KPIs:**

Date	KPI's as per COP	Achievements	% Participants	% Services Delivered
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FY 17-18	-	7 Communities, 126 Participants & 486 services delivered	Baseline	Baseline
FY 18-19	100 Communities with 3000 participants & services delivered	79 Communities, 4910 Participants & 2086 Services Delivered	163.67% (Increase)	69.53% (Not Met)
FY 19-20	50 Communities with 1500 participants & 6000 services delivered	97 Communities, 2340 Participants & 7198 Services Delivered	156% (Increase)	119.96% (Increase)
FY 20-21	150 Communities with 4000 participants & 6000 services delivered	37 Communities, 4319 Services & 16,479 Services Delivered	108% (Increase)	274.65% (Increase)

The analysis of the achievements against the key performance indicator provides a clear representation of the gradual increase over the years. The achievements associated with the KPI's determined the average achievements of over 142% participants were empowered with the social, economic and legal services provided by the integrated platform and an average of 154.71% services were delivered. The clear representation of the average quantitative results depicts an increase in stakeholders, providing more services and also having successful implementation over the years. Additionally, the key performances strategies developed by the team, continuous identification of strengths, weaknesses and trends – gauging from the KPI's was also a factor to achieving great results. It can be concluded that the targets were achievable.

#### Qualitative Measurements:

- COUNTER FACTUAL ASSESSMENTS (CFA);

The CFA was Government driven, and was adopted since there were less concrete facts to measure the qualitative impact of the programme. The intervention strategy was done before and after REACH, and this was a pilot initiative since the inception of the programme in 2015. The analysis below is the consolidation of sample questions that reflects the categories of difficulties, the knowledge of the programme and accessibility access. This sample was incorporated from the most recent TC recovery work in February 2021, where the team implemented its mission in the district of Wainibuka. The factual assessments were gathered using the Pre-Assessment toolkit that was done 2 weeks prior to the actual implementations and the post assessments were done a week after the implementation.

#### a. PRE-MISSION ANALYSIS:

##### Assessment Areas:

A total of 12 pre-mission assessment evaluations were carried out in the 3 districts (Naloto, Nasautoka & Nayavu) of the Tailevu province. 3 assessment were carried out in each of the 4 villages (Nayavu, Nabouva, Naveicovatu & Naivicula) affected



by the recent Tropical Cyclone and flooding in the Wainibuka / Tailevu area. Majority of the villagers interviewed are female (58%) above the age of 36 years whereas the percentage of male interviewed is 33% as most of them were out in the farms during the day.

Challenges to Accessibility:

Cost of bus-fare from Nayavu to Korovou is approximately \$5 whereas to Suva is \$8. For most of these communities, 83% of the villagers access Gov't services on an occasional basis as the nearest government station Nayavu only accommodates 4 government station; Police, D.O's office, Agriculture & Ministry of Health. Other than that, villagers have to travel to Korovou / Suva to access the other Government services they require.

Knowledge on Rights of Persons Living with Disabilities:

However, knowledge about rights of people living with disabilities is limited in many of the communities as 50% of the response showed that persons living with disabilities were not involved in community decision making due to limited accessibility and inability to make sound decision.

Community Challenges:

The most prevalent issue post the TC Ana was food security, as most of the agricultural crops were destroyed during the flood. Many have been able to make use of products in the local canteens and stores but due to limited source of income with the current COVID-19 crisis, food security remains the reoccurring issue. Some of the other issues faced by the communities are market availability for agricultural produce, increase in single mothers, youth unemployment, lack of youth empowerment and economic development in the Wainibuka area. Women are actively involved in village committee in many of the villages as 77% of the response shows that many villages include women in their village committee and also have a say in their village women's group.

b. POST - MISSION ANALYSIS

Assessment Areas:

75% indicated that understanding about the REACH programme is to bring down Government / NGO services to meet the community needs, 17% indicated that they were satisfied with the REACH platform of delivering services whereas 8% indicated that they came to access the services and came to know of the REACH programme.

Challenges to Accessibility

Communication of information about the programme to the communities was effective as 66% indicated that they were looking forward to the programme. However, 34% indicated that only some communities were informed of the programme whereas the nearby settlements were not informed or were not aware of the fees / requirements / services provided by the Gov't & NGO agencies.

#### Knowledge on the programme & ratings of services

There were equal participation of different age group was evident during the programme as adults and youth came to access the services in the hall. Likewise, screening for eyes and ears were conducted in the Nayavu District School which was accessed by primary school students and teachers. Ratings of the services delivered by the Gov't & NGO agencies showed that 83% were satisfied with the services. However, 17% indicated that they were dissatisfied as they were not well-informed of the services/fees/requirements and also some of the services were depended on internet connectivity and were not well delivered.

#### Life Changing Experiences

Nevertheless, services delivered were above satisfactory as there were some life changing experience indicated by members of the community. Many were able to get a copy of their vola-ni-kawabula (VKB) and add their children into the mataqali VKB. Services from the Project Heaven provided examinations for ears and eyes and glasses updated with eye check-up. In Nayavu, a member of the community was able to get her social welfare application retrieved and activated. In Naveicovatu, through the National Council for People living with Disabilities, a connection was made with a family who had a child client with the down-syndrome disability and who had only been able to reach Kindergarten education locally. Through the programme, her parents came to know that there is a school for People with Down-Syndrome Disabilities. Her application has been approved and she will be starting school in April this year (2021). Through Fiji Revenue and Custom Services (FRCS), many were able to have their joint card and TIN letter created and processed.

#### Improvements

To encourage equal participation of people living with disabilities & women, 50% of the response indicated that there needs to be a talanoa / group session organize to allow people to openly raise questions to officers, 33% indicated there needs to be accessibility in the village to allow equal participation for people living with disabilities and 17% indicated that there needs to be training/ workshop on women empowerment and visual presentation during awareness.



22. The Fiji National Women's Expo is an event to assist women in showcasing talent and be in business by establishing potential markets. How have women seized this opportunity as an economical benefit in maintaining client-market relationship?

Many women artisans, through the Fiji National Women's Expo have received the Fijian Made license. The license brands artisans products as of suitable quality and this increased marketing opportunities for the women, enabling access to local and international markets. Women artisans and their products were exposed through the Expo event which established connections to new markets (either local or international (mostly with the Diaspora community). There is evidence that after the Expo, women continue to receive orders and operate businesses from their respective divisions with clients secured from the event. As an example, the Lawedua Women's group secured a contract with local in-bound transfers after the Expo and have been supplying baskets to them. Koto Matemosi, another artisan have secured local and diaspora markets and supplied items made out of Masi.

23. Page 59 of annual report – Provide a list of community outreach programmes conducted in the period under review.
24. Explain on the development of the welfare graduation scheme through which individuals have transitioned to income earning opportunities.

The Welfare Graduation Program is an exit strategy for the welfare recipients. Initially the Ministry with the National employment Centre and the National Centre for Small and Micro enterprise development focused on two options:

- Self- employment – income generating projects with NCSMED; or
- Formal employment- job placements with NEC

Recipients were identified according to:

- Existing skill and educational level of beneficiaries;
- Knowledge or experience in microenterprise
- their “will” to be given a project or according to their existing strength that could be capitalized on to enabling them to be taken of the welfare system.

All projects are initially aimed at providing recipients with hands on seeded training when they open their projects. Although they are to be taken off the Welfare Scheme after six months of support, this period is extended dependent on dates funds are disbursed and project start up. Often they remain in monitoring for a two year period. In the post care period they have an account with NCSMED that they can continue to negotiate regarding their balances or apply for small loans that are available with that organization according to continue with their income generating activities.

25. Is there a plan to graduate targeted social welfare recipients to employment?

The Welfare to Workfare was the renewed approach to the previous Income Generating Projects (IGP) under the Poverty Alleviation Program (PAP). In the new approach Welfare to Workfare (self-employment/ formal employment included:

- Welfare to workfare strategy (self-employment) - The self-employment strategy was facilitated through Income Generating Projects.
- Welfare-to-work hiring initiative (formal employment) - To secure formal employment the Ministry engage National Employment Centre.

Apart from self–employment strategies with regards to formal employment, the Ministry has been working in partnership (2011) with National Employment Center (NEC) to identify candidates that can be trained and absorbed in formal employment. Meanwhile, part of the field work conducted by welfare officers is to identify recipients who have some formal qualification and relevant work experience and refer them to possible organizations that could employ them.

26. Does the ministry include and involve faith based groups in the fight against violence on our women, girls and children?

The Ministry has been working with faith based organization including both at community and at national level. Organizations includes:

- Methodist Church of Fiji and the Methodist Women's Fellowship
- Assemblies of God and the Assemblies of God Women's Fellowship
- Catholic Church and the Catholic Women's League
- Anglican Church and the House of Sarah
- Seventh Day Adventist Church and the Dorcas Welfare Society
- The Fiji Muslim League and the Muslim Women's League
- The Sri Sanatan Dharam Pratidhi Shaba Fiji
- Revival Fellowship Fiji and the Revival Youth Fellowship

The involvement includes faith based groups participation in organized training, commemoration of 16 Days of Activism where faith based organization get to share the work they do in addressing violence against women and children especially girls. Also the further awareness of the issue to their various groups and settings.



27. Are there any plans to engage with faith based organisations and youth clubs to assist social welfare recipients in supplementing their income such, as through farming, back yard gardening, etc.?

The Ministry has engaged FBOs in the training of recipients with new skills that would enable them to enhance their earning capacity and improve their livelihoods. Such partnership is seen with the Muslim League Training Center in Makoi whereby women recipients undergo training in tailoring, farming, cooking and financial literacy. Field officers also work with communities, church and religious groups to solicit support for recipients in their areas so that they can become self-sufficient.

28. Financial Statements - We note that the auditor issued a qualified audit opinion on the accounts of the ministry for 2017-2018 on the two grounds provided. Inform the committee on whether the two issues have been rectified and measures put in place to ensure that these issues do not recur.

**Issue 1:**

Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation - Statement of Receipts and Expenditure includes Operating Grants and Transfers balance of \$89,639,571 which comprises of payments made for Social Pension Scheme of \$37,116,301, Poverty Benefit Scheme of \$40,102,286, and Food Vouchers for Rural Pregnant Mothers of \$966,152 and Child Protection Allowance of \$7,062,188. An unreconciled variance of \$8,802,261 exists between the General Ledger balance of \$85,246,927 and the amount released to bank of \$76,444,666 for the year ended 31 July 2018. **Issue was rectified only to payments made from other allocation otherwise all charges debited to the above programmes is inclusive of post payment mode and not only bank.**

Measures put in place:

- The Ministry is ensuring that RIE funding is readily available before the 1st week of each month and the Ministry is ensuring that respective programme budget is debited accordingly.
- Also to be noted that the Ministry is ensuring that all misposting are to be regularized on time when funding is available.

**Issue 2:**

Miss-postings in Travel and Communication expenditure by \$204,579 and Purchase of Goods and Services expenditure by \$735,010 resulted in overstatement of the respective operating expenditure. Moreover, miss postings in Operating Grants and Transfers expenditure resulted in understatement of the account by \$944,262 for the year ended 31 July 2018. The Ministry was unable to process the adjustment due to insufficient funds in

the respective Standard Expenditure. **The issue is rectified in respect of communications budget whereby payment made was voided and not presented to the bank.**

Measures put in place:

- The Ministry is ensuring that posting of a particular transaction is debited to the right allocations and virement application is raised if there is shortfall in any particular budget allocations.

29. Has the ministry strengthened internal controls over procurement and account reconciliations to avoid possible financial losses in future?

The Ministry has strengthened internal controls in terms of ensuring that all vouchers are duly checked, certified and stamp paid before payment is made. Solely an officer is appointed to be responsible for this task. Also, competitive quotes are obtained on requests costs over \$1,000.00 limit. All reconciliations are carried out on timely basis in accordance to MOE's timeline.



## **Appendix Two**

### **Supplementary Response**

## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

### **Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation 2017 – 2018 Annual Report**

#### **Supplementary Questions**

**Update us on the progress of consultations on the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls and by when it is expected to be developed and implemented. In addition to this, is there a specific policy within the Ministry which is aimed at addressing violence against our women and girls?**

- Fiji has a high prevalence of gender-based violence with almost two out of every three women have suffered physical or sexual violence in their lifetime. Women with disabilities and women with different sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions suffer a higher incidence and more serious forms of violence.
- In recognising its obligation and emphasis on violence prevention through the development of an evidence-based, cost-effective, whole of government, whole of society five-year National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violence Against All Women and Girls (NAP) (2021- 2026). The NAP is strategically aimed at stopping violence before it happens.
- The NAP will focus on the prevention of domestic violence / intimate partner violence and sexual violence against all women and girls. Data and evidence from Fiji show that these are the most common forms of violence against women and girls and must be urgently addressed.
- The key components of the NAP consultation includes the explanation of the reasons for the violence in Fiji, the key strategy to prevent VAWG in Fiji, the key settings to prevent VAWG in Fiji, the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders, the costed implementation plan and national communication strategy. The process of formulating the national action plan began in December 2019 and is expected to end in December 2021.
- The NAP and the National Consultative Process under the leadership of the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation on behalf of the Government of Fiji, in cooperation with the NAP technical working group consists of key ministries, civil society organisations, religious and women's rights organizations who provide a strategic and technical oversight.



- The national consultation process was officially launched by the Honourable Prime Minister on November 25, 2020 is expected to be carried out in three ways; High-level investigation results, together with existing evidence, will provide information for the development of NAP; involving different stakeholders in meaningful NAP development and providing advice, expertise and information, including stakeholders from often marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities, ethnic groups, and LGBTQI communities; strengthening relations with major stakeholders, and promote wider participation and ownership of PAN by different departments.
- The goal of the national consultation is to consult with at least 2,500 women, men and young people of different genders from 13 settings and sectors. These key sectors and settings include: education sector, universities, technical and vocational colleges, workplaces and businesses, sports and entertainment spaces, arts, health and social services, religious settings, media, advertising, entertainment, public spaces, transport, infrastructure, legal, justice and corrections, informal sector, disciplinary forces, traditional institutions and entities.
- The guidelines for the national consultation process consist of developing a series of consultation, promotion, reporting, and monitoring and communication tools for the nominated / selected coordinators of 13 key areas and departments, as well as to guide and prepare meetings.
- So far there have been 20 consultations across Fiji (3 out of 4 Divisions), with a total of 768 people (56 people with disabilities).
- With the COVID 19 adaptation to diversify consultation strategies, three counseling strategies have been identified, including (1) ongoing in-person consultation (following the COVID 19 protocol), (2) virtual consultation, and (3) national online survey. The online survey was launched on May 13 and received 225 responses from May 13 to June 9, including 8 people with disabilities.
- Regarding the current COVID 19, the technical working group agreed to hold virtual consultations at its June 17, 2021 meeting, with the purpose of facilitating settings and sectors to engage in the consultation process adhering to the COVID 19 measures targeting setting that have not yet participated including universities, art media, disciplinary force, public spaces, transportation.

- The objectives of the virtual consultation is to facilitate safe and robust consultation across the populace in accordance with the COVID 19 measures; use the use the Fiji National Action Plan platform to increase understanding of violence against women and girls and solutions to prevent violence; and to ensure Fiji's NAP is informed by the voices and opinions of Fijians in different settings and geographical locations.
- The goal of virtual consultation is to promote the safe and powerful consultation of the people of Fiji in accordance with the measures of COVID 19; use the Fiji National Action Plan platform to increase understanding of violence against women and girls and solutions to prevent violence; and to ensure Fiji's NAP Understand the voices and opinions of Fijians in different environments and geographic locations.
- The Ministry implements programmes and activities on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAW) as required under the component of Gender Based Violence in the Fiji National Gender Policy of 2014.

**2 We note that the Ministry is in the process of partnering with stakeholders to create a database of sex workers in Fiji. Specify the type of information that will be captured by this database and how this information will be used by the Ministry to address this issue in the country. Who are the stakeholders that the Ministry is working with to bring this database to fruition?**

- The 2014 National Gender Policy highlights as one of its strategies the need to promote an approach that is grounded in research, based on age and sex disaggregated data collection, and a gender analysis of roles and social relations of women and men. This will allow the Ministry to meet one of the policy objectives which is to "To provide policy makers and other key actors involved with human and social development, with guidelines for identifying and addressing gender concerns in order to inform public policy, including guidelines on the evaluation of the social division of labour."
- The Ministry has embarked on the development of evidence based planning and programming. This allows the Ministry to develop its activities based on prioritised areas of need and to undertake major research and consultations in partnership with key stakeholders. Therefore, in order for the Ministry to identify programmes to address the issues of sex workers, the evidence based planning and programming needs to be undertaken. Hence the need to have a Gender Database on the status of women in Fiji that will provide baseline information needed for the development of programmes of groups such as sex workers.



- With the development of this baseline information, the Ministry will then be able to further its work in coordination, consultation and policy advice in the area of work with sex workers.
- As work in this area is yet to commence, determining the information to be captured and the identification of the stakeholders to be involved is yet to be considered. As discussed earlier responses, this is an under-researched area that hinders on possible legislative breaches, on sexual and reproductive health and rights, economic empowerment and violence against women.

**3. Highlight the causes of delays to the timely construction of the Barefoot College and how will this College be utilized? By when is this College expected to be completed and operational? Did the Ministry engage the Construction and Implementation Unit of the Ministry of Economy during the construction phase of this project? In this regard, provide details of the relocation of the Nadogo Women's Resource Centre.**

- The construction of the Barefoot College was an outcome of consultations between the Fiji Government (MWCPA) and the Government of India (Barefoot College India) in 2013 on the return of the 10 rural women known as solar mamas from Solar Engineer Training in India in 2012. The partnership recognized that climate change projects play a great role in improving access to modern energy service to rural communities with direct impact.
- The Vision of the Fiji Barefoot Vocational Technical College is to empower rural women and their communities along a poverty alleviation development pathway through rural solar electrification. The project will create a low carbon development pathway that is conducive to international attention and findings. Also the project will reduce the current future contribution to climate change which bring communities much closer to energy independence and sustainability.
- The Ministry in its continuous consultations with the Construction and Implementation Unit (CIU) of the Ministry of Economy in 2018, agreed to engage Shri Singh and Associates as the Lead Consultant for the construction of the College. Periodic reports are submitted to the CIU for the preparation of the payment certificate at the completion of each phase of the construction.
- There are 14 phases of construction for the completion of the college. To date, we have completed 7 of the 14 phases. If there are delays to the construction of the college, this is attributed to the impact of Tropical Cyclones Yasa and Ana

that had devastating effects on Vanua Levu and cessation of work would have been due to the current COVID 19 pandemic.

- The relocation of the Nadogo Women's Resource Centre was identified before the construction of the college as the site was to sit where the resource centre was originally located. The understanding and agreement between the land owner, the women's group and the construction company, was that the Resource Centre for the Women had to be completed prior to work commencing on the Barefoot College.
-