

3 September 2021

Hon. Alvick Maharaj
Chairperson
Standing Committee of Justice, Law
and Human Right
Parliament of the Republic of Fiji
P. O. Box 2352, Government Buildings
Suva

Dear Chair

CONTRIBUTION TO THE CLIMATE CHANGE BILL (BILL NO. 31 OF 2021)

On behalf of the Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport ('Ministry'), I am pleased to support the adoption of the Climate Change Bill ('Bill').

Around the world, climate change represents the most looming challenge to achieving sustainable development. As a forward-looking nation with outsized impact, Fiji, led by the Hon. Prime Minister has contributed to international efforts to combat the growing impacts of climate change.

At the outset, the Bill seeks to legislate net zero Greenhouse Gas emissions by 2050, and provide a clear approach to addressing and mitigating these impacts with a whole of Government approach.

Once adopted, the Bill would solidify Fiji's approach to climate change targets – particularly to trade, investment, tourism, transport and micro, small and medium enterprise development.

Through a number of initiatives, the Bill will allow the Ministry to align its objectives and programmes to ensure the realisation of the Bill. This includes, inter alia, harnessing trade agreements, incentivising appropriate investment mechanisms, and ensuring a greener recovery.

Trade

The Ministry is leading negotiations on the first ever **trade agreement** with sustainability at its core. The Agreement on Climate Change, Trade and Sustainability (ACCTS), is progressively negotiated by current parties: Costa Rica, Fiji, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway and Switzerland, with the aim of generating momentum towards developing wider, and globally agreed, solutions to environmental challenges. The ACCTS will put in place disciplines for trade in environmental goods, trade in environmental services, fossil fuel subsidies and eco-labelling.

The Bill will therefore provide the legal framework to give confidence to trading partners on Fiji's commitment to adaptation and mitigation measures. This further supports investment, development and uptake of green technologies and products that utilise renewable energy sources.

Investments

Fiji's focus on green technology and green manufacturing and other environment related investments will be strengthened under the ambit of the **Investment Policy Statement**, which sets the overall vision of the Fijian Government in terms of foreign direct and domestic investments.

Tourism

In addition, the **Fijian Tourism 2021** and its successor framework, has specific focus on greening the tourism sector, by encouraging investments in renewable energy and other environment initiatives.

The Bill provides an opportunity to harness new technologies, implement green recovery principles, and shift to policy and business practices that better balance the environmental, social and economic impacts of tourism. This includes initiatives such as the Savusavu Blue Town Model.

In this regard, the Bill should advocate for public private partnership to strengthen mechanisms for a green recovery.

Transport

The **transport sector** will play a significant role in making meaningful changes towards reaching our goals. The Ministry, in collaboration with the Ministry of Economy, will lead the Transport Decarbonisation Implementation Strategy to decarbonise the transport sector by 2050.

In addition to compiling information on fuel sales, the Ministry will also be responsible for estimating and compiling emissions and emissions reductions data in relation to the transport sector.

The Bill will further support the objectives of the **Pacific Blue Shipping Partnership (PBSP)** in implementing the decarbonisation of Fiji's Shipping Industry. Through this partnership, Fiji and the Republic of Marshall Islands are leading the Pacific commitment to net-zero carbon emissions from the shipping industry by 2050.

The Ministry is also working through the PBSP and the World Bank (including other partners), on a multi-country assessment of maritime connectivity and options for governance reform with the aim to decarbonise the Maritime sector.

In terms of climate mitigation, as per section 44 of the Bill, the Ministry will play a critical role in the Transport Decarbonisation Implementation Strategy. This strategy will provide a roadmap to achieving decarbonisation of the Land and Maritime transport sectors by 2050. This will also further emphasise Fiji's commitments as stated in the Low Emissions Development Strategy.

Standards

The Ministry is working with the Ministry of Economy and the Global Green Growth Institute on the Low Emissions Climate Resilient Development Programme, specifically on updating vehicle standards to align with updated fuel standards particularly for vehicle engine efficiency.

On 1 January 2021, the obligations in respect of the manufacture and import of unleaded petrol to reduce sulphur content to 10ppm came into force.

In addition, the Bill paves the way for the investment and development of climate resilient infrastructure. The **National Building Code** was established over 30 years and lacks the adaptability to climate change and the catastrophic natural disasters that the nation has experienced over the past 5 years. Therefore, the ongoing review and updating of provisions and standards within the National Building Code, will enable new buildings to be climate resilient and also environmentally friendly. The Ministry, through the Department of National Trade Measurement and Standards, will play a critical role in this review with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services.

Town Planning and Building Permits

In line with the review of the National Building Code, the Town Planning Act and Regulation of Building Permits Act will mirror the objectives of the Climate Change Bill. The Acts will be amended to ensure that all future buildings are modern, energy efficient and simply are green buildings.

MSMEs

Micro, Small, Medium and Enterprises (MSMEs) and Co-operatives are amongst the most vulnerable.

Therefore, through the Ministry's initiatives to encourage MSME development, such as Young Entrepreneurship Scheme, Integrated Human Resources Development, Co-operatives and Northern Development Programme, Fiji can pursue mechanisms through which climate resilience investments, products and businesses will be promoted.

The Ministry has partnered with the Ministry of Economy in implementing Fiji's first Parametric Micro Insurance Product. This will provide coverage to the participating Co-operatives in the event of natural disasters.

The Ministry will also play an important role in the National Ocean Policy Steering Committee and National Adaptation Plan Steering Committee to enable implementation of measures in the area of trade, tourism, transportation including maritime transport, standard and industry.

The Bill also ensures that our approach is data and evidence driven, and built on a strong policy framework as Fiji commits to and implements its ambitious climate change targets to meet our sustainable development goals and encourage a thriving economy.

The Ministry looks forward to proactively contributing towards the successful implementation of the Bill.

Yours sincerely



Shaheen Ali

Permanent Secretary for Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport