



# PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

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## MINUTES

of Proceedings of Parliament at Suva on Monday, Fourth day of April, 2022

1. The House met at 9.30 a.m. pursuant to adjournment.

2. Hon. Speaker took the Chair and read the Prayer.

3. MEMBERS PRESENT

All Honourable Members were present except for the Hon. Adi Litia Qionibaravi, Hon. Salote Radrodro and Hon. Prof. Biman Prasad.

The Hon. Alvick Maharaj and Hon. Selai Adimaitoga joined the Parliament sitting virtually.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Leader of the Government in Parliament the Hon. Inia Seruiratu, moved that the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Friday, 25 March 2022 as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

Motion seconded.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

Hon. Speaker welcomed all Honourable Members to the sitting, those in the public gallery and those watching the live broadcast of the proceedings.

For the purposes of voting, the Hon. Speaker advised Honourable Members of the procedures that would be followed.

Hon. Speaker informed that Parliament had received two Public Accounts Committee publications from the Parliament of India – and copies were available in the Library for Members to peruse.

## 6. PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND CERTAIN DOCUMENTS

The following reports were tabled and referred accordingly –

- (a) Mid-Year Fiscal Statement From 1st August 2021 to 31st January 2022 was tabled and circulated for Honourable Members information only.
- (b) Standing Committee on Natural Resources
  - (i) Water Authority of Fiji – 2017 Annual Report; and
  - (ii) Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources – 2014 Annual Report.
- (c) Standing Committee on Social Affairs
  - (i) the 2016 to 2018 Annual Reports for the Fiji Roads Authority.

## 7. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

### (a) Standing Committee on Social Affairs

- (i) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs the Hon. Viam Pillay tabled the Committee's review report on the annual review of the Fiji Higher Education Commission for the period from August 2016 to July 2017.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs moved a motion without notice pursuant to Standing Order 121(5) that a debate on the content of the report is initiated at a future sitting. The motion was seconded and agreed to unanimously.

- (ii) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs the Hon. Viam Pillay tabled the Committee's review report on the annual review of the Fiji Ports Corporation Limited (FPCL) for 2018 and 2019.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs moved a motion without notice pursuant to Standing Order 121(5) that a debate on the content of the report is initiated at a future sitting. The motion was seconded and agreed to unanimously.

- (iii) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs the Hon. Viam Pillay tabled the Committee's review report on the of the Fiji National Sports Commission for the period from August 2019 to July 2020.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs moved a motion without notice pursuant to Standing Order 121(5) that a debate on the content of the report is initiated at a future sitting. The motion was seconded and agreed to unanimously.

(b) Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights

The Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights the Hon. Rohit Sharma tabled the Committee's review report on the Investment Fiji Bill 2022.

The Hon. Speaker advised all Honourable Members that pursuant to the resolution of Parliament on Thursday, 10 February 2022, the Standing Committee was to have tabled its report in the March sitting but with the deferral of the 7 to 11 March sitting, the Standing Committee has now tabled its report, and that the Bill was now ready to be debated and voted upon by Parliament in the course of the week.

8. MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Hon. Speaker informed all Honourable Members that there were no Ministerial Statements.

9. MOTION BY THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR ECONOMY, CIVIL SERVICE AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service, Communications, Housing and Community Development moved a motion pursuant to Standing Order 51 –

- (a) That the Value Added Tax (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2022 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- (b) That the Bill must pass through one stage at a single Sitting of Parliament;
- (c) That the Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament; and
- (d) That the Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament today (Monday, 4 April 2022), but that 1 hour be given to debate the Bill, with the right of reply given to him as the Member moving this motion.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Votes cast –

Yes	–	27 (including 2 acclamation)
No	–	17
Not Voted	–	6
Abstain	–	1

Motion agreed to.

10. MOTION BY THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR ECONOMY, CIVIL SERVICE AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service, Communications, Housing and Community Development moved a motion pursuant to Standing Order 51 –

- (a) That the Customs Tariff (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2022 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- (b) That the Bill must pass through one stage at a single Sitting of Parliament;
- (c) That the Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament; and
- (d) That the Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament today (Monday, 4 April 2022), but that 1 hour be given to debate the Bill, with the right of reply given to me as the Member moving this motion.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Votes cast –

Yes	–	27 (including 2 acclamation)
No	–	19
Not Voted	–	4
Abstain	–	1

Motion agreed to.

11. VALUE ADDED TAX (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 2022

The Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service, Communications, Housing and Community Development the Hon. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum moved a motion pursuant to the resolution of Parliament earlier in the day (Monday, 4 April 2022), that the Value Added Tax (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2022 be debated, voted upon and be passed.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

A Bill for an Act to amend the Value Added Tax Act 1991 (Bill No. 24 of 2022), enacted by the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji.

12. CUSTOMS TARIFF (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 2022

The Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service, Communications, Housing and Community Development the Hon. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum moved a motion pursuant to the resolution of Parliament earlier in the day (Monday, 4 April 2022), that the Customs Tariff (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2022 be debated, voted upon and be passed.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

A Bill for an Act to amend the Customs Tariff Act 1986 (Bill No. 25 of 2022), enacted by the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji.

13. QUESTIONS

51/2022 Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service, Communications, Housing and Community Development – Can the Minister inform Parliament of the Fiji Corrections Service policy that permits a serving inmate to participate in a national rugby sevens tournament.

52/2022 Hon. Alexander O'Connor asked the Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the precautionary and mitigation measures taken by the Ministry to prevent the introduction of the African swine fever to our shores.

53/2022 Hon. Jese Saukuru asked the Minister for Health and Medical Services – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the status of the damaged McGusty Building at the Lautoka Hospital.

54/2022 Hon. Dr Salik Govind asked the Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts, and Local Government – With the additional budgetary allocation of \$1.7m to increase the salaries of teachers who have upgraded their qualifications, can the Minister inform Parliament which subject-area teachers upgraded their qualification and how will this enhance the delivery of education in Fiji.

55/2022 Hon. Anare Jale asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service, Communications, Housing and Community Development – Can the Minister update Parliament on succession planning in the civil service to address leadership needs.

- 56/2022 Hon. Rohit Sharma asked the Minister for Defence, National Security and Policing, Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management – Can the Minister update Parliament on the utilisation of the budgetary allocation for Emergency Water Supplies.
- 57/2022 Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service, Communications, Housing and Community Development – Can the Minister update Parliament on the status of the review of the Fiji Micro Small and Medium Entities Credit Guarantee Scheme undertaken by the Reserve Bank of Fiji.
- 58/2022 Hon. Veena Bhatnagar asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service, Communications, Housing and Community Development – Can the Minister update Parliament on the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on the Fijian economy.

### **Written Questions**

- 59/2022 Hon. Anare Jale asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service, Communications, Housing and Community Development – Can the Minister provide a list to Parliament detailing the assistance in terms of loans and direct budget support from development partners in response to the COVID-19 pandemic since 2020 itemised by date, source and amount.
- 60/2022 Hon. Peceli Vosanibola asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service, Communications, Housing and Community Development – Can the Minister update Parliament on the reconstruction of the damaged Levuka Wharf.

The responses to the Oral and Supplementary Questions were provided by the respective Ministers. The responses to the Written Questions would be tabled at a later sitting date as permitted under Standing Order 45(3).

### 14. ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Speaker thanked all Honourable Members for their contributions and adjourned Parliament until Tuesday, 5 April 2022 at 9.30 a.m.

Parliament adjourned at 3.25 p.m.

### **Speaker of Parliament**

### **Secretary-General to Parliament**

4<sup>th</sup> April, 2022.