



STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

REVIEW REPORT OF THE CONSOLIDATED 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019 MINISTRY OF FORESTRY ANNUAL REPORTS



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI
Parliamentary Paper No 91 of 2021

May 2022

Published and Printed by the Department of Legislature, Parliament House, SUVA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAIRPERSON’S FOREWORD3

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP5

LIST OF ACRONYMS6

RECOMMENDATION7

1.0 INTRODUCTION7

1.1 PROCEDURE AND PROGRAM7

2.0 ABOUT THE MINISTRY OF FORESTRY.....8

**2.1 REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF FORESTRY LEGISLATION AND
REGULATION8**

3.0 FINDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE9

4.0 COMMITTEE’S RECOMMENDATIONS.....11

5.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS12

5.1 GENDER EQUALITY ANALYSIS (SDG 5)12

6.0 CONCLUSION.....12

7.0 COMMITTEE MEMBERS SIGNATURE13

APPENDICES14

CHAIRPERSON’S FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the review report on the Ministry of Forestry Annual Report for 2016 – 2017, 2017 – 2018 and 2018 – 2019 which was tabled in Parliament on 07th June, 2021 and 02nd December, 2021 respectively during the Parliament sitting and referred to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources for scrutiny.

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.

First and foremost, I wish to commend the work done by the former Minister of Forestry, the late Hon. Osea Naiqamu for his leadership and guidance.

In the deliberations stage, the Committee focused on the overall operations of the Ministry including its roles and responsibilities and strategic objectives for the years under review.

The highlights for the year, 2016 – 2017 was the Department of Forestry transition into a single Ministry through Government’s decision to separate the Departments of Fisheries from Forests. This was necessary for the Ministry to focus more on opportunities available in each of the two resources based agencies to be able to contribute to the nation’s economic and social development.

The Committee also noted that the Forest Bill No: 13 of 2016 has not been passed by Parliament hence the Committee recommends that the above Bill be passed to allow for enactment. It further noted the lapse of the current internal policies, laws and regulations in place which needed to be reviewed by the Ministry from time to time.

The Committee noted the major achievements of the Ministry of Forestry during the periods under review even during challenging times.

Lastly, the Committee commended the Ministry of Forestry for the periods under review that it endeavored to ensuring equal participation in employment and capacity building for women particularly in Forestry technical training for both local and overseas. There was also an increase of women participation in both Employment and Training.

Moving forward, the Committee recommends for the Ministry to consider the Committee’s recommendations as highlighted in the report and the Ministry to continue to work towards its commitments and ensure that all its objectives and key targeted outputs are achieved in an effective and efficient manner.

The Committee wishes to commend the Permanent Secretary Mr. Pene Baleinabuli and the staff of the Ministry of Forestry for their contribution towards the final compilation of the Committee's report to Parliament.

I wish to take this time to also acknowledge the Commissioner Northern, the Officials from the Provincial Office in Bua and the stakeholders who assisted the Committee in every way during their three (3) days site visit to the North.

Last but not the least, I wish to extend my appreciation to all the Honourable Members of the Committee namely Hon. Jale Sigarara, Hon. Alexander O'Connor, Hon. Mitieli Bulanauca, Hon. Jese Saukuru and the Secretariat Staff for the successful compilation of this bipartisan report.



Hon. Sanjay Kirpal
Chairperson.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

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



Hon. Sanjay Kirpal
Chairperson



Hon. Jale Sigarara, Deputy Chairperson
Government Member



Hon. Alexander O'Connor,
Government Member



Hon. Mitieli Bulanauca
Opposition Member



Hon. Jese Saukuru
Opposition Member

LIST OF ACRONYMS

Abbreviations	Phrases
TC	Tropical Cyclone
REDD +	Reduce Emission from Deforestation and forest Degradation + signifies the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stock
MRV	Measuring Reporting Verification
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
NFI	National Forest Inventory
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
LKS	Lesser Known Species
DLT	Distributed Ledger Technology
HAR	Harvest Area Report
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
ITTO	International Tropic Timber Organization
PSP	Permanent Sample Plot
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization
RDF	Reforestation of Degraded Forests

RECOMMENDATION

The Standing Committee on Natural Resources has conducted a review of the Ministry of Forestry 2016-2017, 2017- 2018, 2018 - 2019 Annual Reports and recommends that Parliament take note of its report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Forestry Annual Report 2016 – 2017 was tabled in Parliament on 07th June, 2021. The Annual Reports for 2017 – 2018 and 2018 – 2019 was tabled in Parliament on 02nd December, 2021 during the Parliament sitting and referred to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources for scrutiny.

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 authorises the Standing Committee to *scrutinise 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, rationalisation, restructuring, functioning, organisation, 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).

1.1 PROCEDURE AND PROGRAM

The Committee met in Parliament and proceeded with its scrutiny and formulated questions which were sent to the Department of Forestry for their responses. The questions were basically on the challenges faced by the Department during the period under review, achievements, operational review, legislations in place, progress on the Department's initiatives. The Ministry's responses were received by the members and was incorporated into the committees report for final presentation to Parliament.

Furthermore, the Committee undertook a three (3) days site visit to the Northern Division and collected data from:

1. Forestry Sector: Waiqele Sawmill, Nazia Saw Mill and Tropik Pine Fiji Limited, Wairiki Mill.

2. Agriculture Sector: Research Station in Seaqaqa and Wainigata, Fiji Rice Mill in Dreketi, Korokadi Rice Irrigation Farm in Lekutu, Agro Marketing and Kava Exporter in Savusavu and Kava Farming in Navonu, Natewa
3. Mineral Resources – Xinfra Bauxite Mining and Rehabilitation in Dreketi.
4. Fisheries – J Hunter Pearl Farming, Savusavu
5. Montfort Boys Town and Copra Millers, Savusavu
6. Visit to Provincial Office in Nabouwalu on the development of the Nabouwalu Township.

2.0 ABOUT THE MINISTRY OF FORESTRY

The Ministry is a regulatory and service organization responsible for the national forestry sector through the following functions:

- Formulate and implement forest strategies and policies;
- Provide and administer the regulatory function under the respective Ministry's legislation and regulations;
- Monitor and evaluate current strategies, policies and deliverables;
- Develop and promote effective training, communication and awareness and extension advisory services;
- Strengthen community and industry networks and support frameworks;
- Maintain international bilateral and multilateral commitments and;
- Undertake applied research for sustainable forest resource management practices and product development.

2.1 Review and Development of Forest Legislations & Regulations

The Ministry continued to pursue the finalization and endorsement of the Forest Bill [Bill No. 13 of 2016], which is a review of the Forest Act 1992. The Bill is the outcome of a number of stakeholder consultations with a view of revising the 1992 Forest Act to include recent developments within the Forest Sector in addition to supporting the full implementation of the Fiji Forest Policy 2007. The Ministry continued work on reviewing two forestry regulations, the Forest (Preservative Treatment) Regulation 1992 and the Forest (Sawmills) Regulation 1968, to ensure that it captures recent developments in the sector.

3.0 FINDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

There were major achievements highlighted by the Ministry during the three (3) years period of review. Listed below are some of the highlights:

1) Native timber production was lower compared to previous years

The Committee noted that for 2016 – 2017 native timber production was 43,190.7 m³, 2017 – 2018 was 39,242.11 m³. The figures for 2018 – 2019 was not provided for by the Ministry.

2) Forest Export

In 2016 – 2017 Forest Export was \$33m, 2017 – 2018 Total Export was \$44m and in 2018 – 2019 Total Export was \$94.6 m. There was a significant rise in timber export particularly for pine chips and sawn timber. Therefore the Ministry needed to increase value added products. The Ministry could provide figures separately for each species such as Native, Pine and Mahogany.

3) There was a decline in major import commodities in sawn timber, plywood and cross arms from major countries of origin like New Zealand, China and Australia for the period under review.

4) Impact of TC Winston and Natural disasters on Pine performance

The Ministry focussed on housing rehabilitations in the Maritime Zones in the islands of Cicia, Gau and Kadavu that were greatly affected by TC Winston.

5) Education and Training

The Committee noted that Education and Training was one of the major highlights of the Ministry during the years under review. Trainings included Training of Forest Technicians, Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Training and Awareness, Forest Harvesting Training. The Fiji Forest Policy highlighted the need for comprehensive skills training for the forest industry to be able to improve knowledge on forest utilization, the Fiji Forest Harvesting Code of Practice and environment protection practices, log conversion, timber preservation, quality assurance and marketing, Forest Warden Training.

6) The Forest Policy

The Forest Policy is also mandated by the Ministry to train resource owners on the environmental requirements of the Fiji Forest Harvesting Code of Practice and any other environmental protection requirements stipulated in the management and harvesting licenses and, where possible, engaged these trained resource owners to monitor environmental standards. “The Forestry Department will have training courses conducted for forestry personnel and resource owners in all aspects of sustainable forest management, timber utilization principles and practices, log scaling, and protection of environmental values”. The Training Centre also worked on submitting documents to the Fiji Higher Education Commission to allow schools to be fully registered by the Fiji Higher Education Commission and this was expected to have been completed before the end of 2018.

7) Milling

The Ministry has made emphasis on the need to improve recovery rate for increase production and improved kiln dryers for better sawn timber quality for selling and marketing.

8) Financials

Consistently, the Ministry had not been addressing the matters described in the basis of qualified opinion by the Auditor General over the years under review.

4.0 COMMITTEE’S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW FROM 2016 – 2017, 2017-2018, AND 2018-2019.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Timely submission of Annual Reports. The Ministry to ensure that its Annual Reports are presented to Parliament within three (3) to five (5) months after the end of each Financial year.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Planted Forest Policy - The Committee recommends the Ministry to raise awareness and encourage the people to plant more trees.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Committee recommends that Annual Saw Milling licenses term be increased to a period of up to ten (10) years for those millers producing half a million super feet and above subject to compliance. For those producing less than half a million super feet, a period of up to five (5) years.

RECOMMENDATION 4

It is recommended that the Ministry of Forestry improves the process of issuance of licenses within a month.

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Committee recommends that the Ministry encourage landowners participation in the logging and saw milling operations

RECOMMENDATION 6

The Committee recommends that the Ministry should ensure that the Forest Bill is re – introduced to Parliament for enactment.

5.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

5.1 GENDER EQUALITY ANALYSIS – SDG 5

The Committee noted that there has been an increase in women participation in both Employment and Training.

Capacity Building provided the gender breakdown for the Forestry technical training as well as the local and overseas training attended.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The overall performance of the Ministry of Forestry for the years under review have been challenging and satisfactory with particular emphasis towards REDD+ and its benefit sharing in the area of carbon trading. Consideration should be directed to the stakeholders within the industry in the area of education and land utilisation to increase timber production.

7.0 COMMITTEE MEMBERS' SIGNATURE

We, the Members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, hereby agree with the contents of this report:

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

APPENDICES

Published written evidence

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

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