

PARLIAMENT

NEWSLETTER

2022 Parliament Quarterly Newsletter

Issue No. 1 : January - March

NEXT PARLIAMENT SITTING

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SPEAKER ACKNOWLEDGES COMMITMENT BY DONORS DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE FPSP PHASE 3



Group Photo after the signing ceremony (left to right); H.E John Feakes, the Australian High Commission, H.E Charlotte Darlow, the New Zealand High Commission and Speaker H.E Hon. Ratu Epeli Nailatikau with the Resident Representative, UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji, Mr Levan Bouadze

he Fijian Parliament and the United Nations Development Programme ('UNDP') with support from the Governments of Australia and New Zealand launched the third phase of the Fiji Parliament Support Project ('FPSP').

During the launch at the Grand Pacific Hotel, the Speaker of Parliament H.E Hon. Ratu Epeli Nailatikau acknowledged the commitment, support and contribution of the donors into Phase 3 of the FPSP.

"Your generous support will help us accomplish our goal of institutional strengthening and continuing our work of enhancing parliamentary democracy in Fiji."

H.E Hon. Nailatikau emphasised the outreach of the project and its impact in empowering Fijian citizens.

"The impact of your kind contribution towards Phase Three of the Project goes beyond the institution of Parliament. It is also helping Fiji in its desire to be a nation of informed, inclusive and empowered citizens," Hon. Ratu Epeli said.

The Speaker also highlighted the transformation and successful outcomes of the Fiji governance system since Phase 1 of the Project.

"The support and contribution of our development partners have become important and was critical as we reestablished parliamentary democracy in 2014."

"The FPSP, through the stewardship of the UNDP has provided much needed technical assistance, capacity

development and infrastructure to the Parliament, its staff and MPs that reflect international standards and best practices for a modern Parliament," Hon. Ratu Epeli said.

The Resident Representative, UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji, Mr Levan Bouadze also mentioned the importance of this initiative not only in Fiji but the Pacific Region.

"As a result of this transformation and these initiatives, the Fijian Parliament has become a beacon of capacity building for many Parliaments in the Pacific region. It is also globally recognised for its work on the SDGs, through forums such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union's annual conferences," said Mr Bouadze.

He said that the UNDP Pacific Office is assured that the Fijian Parliament will utilise the support to take its transformation to the next level in the next parliamentary cycle and phase of the project.

"Our conviction is grounded into the Fijian Parliament's commitment to become a modern and democratic Parliament that is relevant to changing times. We have witnessed this commitment in a pronounced manner during the last two terms, but also very recently, during the last two years of the pandemic."

"We are also thankful to the Governments of New Zealand and of Australia for funding the FPSP Phase 3. We look forward to continuing to work together to accompany the Fiji Parliament on its journey," said Mr Bouadze.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS ON THE HERITAGE AND INVESTMENT FIJI BILLS

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Members of the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights with members of the public at the Deed of Cession site in Levuka as part of their site visit and public consultation on the Heritage Bill.

he Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights ('Standing Committee') conducted public consultations around the country on the Heritage Bill 2021 (Bill No. 3 of 2021) and the Investment Fiji Bill 2022 (Bill No. 5 of 2022).

In January, the Committee began their consultations in Levuka on the Heritage Bill and then moved to the Northern and Western Divisions in February for the Investment Fiji Bill and the Heritage Bill.

According to the Chairperson of the Standing Committee, Hon. Alvick Maharaj, the public consultation and site visits would greatly assist the Standing Committee in putting together its report that would be tabled in the April Sitting of Parliament.

"For possible world heritage sites in the Northern Division, the Standing Committee visited the Yaduataba Island, the sanctuary of Fiji's crested iguana, the Nagigi Naag Mandir in Labasa and the Floating Island in Kurukuru, Lagalaga, about 55km from Labasa. The Standing Committee also conducted site visits at the Waisali Forest Reserve in Savusavu and the Tagimoucia lake in Taveuni."

"Public consultations were also held with business communities and youth groups, as we believe that we have existing potential investors and future potential investors in the Northern Division," Hon. Maharaj said.

The Vice-Chairperson of the Seaqaqa District Advisory Council, Mr Prakash Chandra said the visit by the Standing Committee was an educational one as it helped them better understand the Bills that are currently being discussed in Parliament.

"This is the first time we are having this meeting in Dagau, Seaqaqa and it has been an educational programme for us all. Once both Bills are passed, the people of Vanua Levu will greatly benefit as tourists will be



Members of the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights at Yaduataba Island, the sanctuary of Fiji's crested iguana.

coming to the North, the companies and small businesses will benefit together with the shopkeepers, taxi drivers and bus companies," Mr Chandra said.

Head of Mataqali for Bouwaqa where the Floating Island is located, Ms Akanisi Vinaka, thanked the Standing Committee for coming all the way to Lagalaga to shed light on the Heritage Bill.

"For a long time, we have been planning to develop the area where the Floating Island is located and today, we are happy to hear that the passing of the Bill will open the way to develop the area that will allow tourism to grow in the Northern Division," Ms Vinaka said.

Labasa businessman Mr Atiff Ali welcomed the Investment Fiji Bill and the Heritage Bill but he requested for the export and the local domestic supply to be looked into.

"Before, we focus on the foreign investors, what I would like to implore everyone, the Standing Committee Members, the corporate bodies such as Investment Fiji, to look into the matters pertaining to export and local domestic market supply. I am particularly speaking in terms of primary industry."

"On one hand, we welcome this Bill

but on the other hand, we would like to implore the Government, to look into the process that we believe has become bureaucratic," Mr Ali said.

For the Central and Western Divisions, the Standing Committee held public consultations with the communities in Kulukulu, Momi and Rakiraki. Site visits were held at the Garrick Rainforest in Navua, Sigatoka Sand Dunes, Momi Gun Site and the Vatukoula Gold Mine.

In Naitasiri, public consultation was held with the villagers of Nadakuni as they partly have the landowning rights for Sovi Basin, a proposed world heritage site.



Members of the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights at Yaduataba Island, the sanctuary of Fii's crested in Jana

PARLIAMENT FIJI POLICE **MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT**



Secretary-General to Parliament Mrs Jeanette Emberson and the Commissioner of Police Brigadier-General Sitiveni Qiliho during the signing of the Agreement.

Memorandum of Agreement Parliament. ('Agreement') was signed by the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji and the Fiji Police Force at the Fiji Police Force Headquarters on February 25th, 2022. The Agreement entails the provision of security services at the Parliament precincts.

The Agreement was signed by the Secretary-General to Parliament Mrs Jeanette Emberson and the Commissioner of Police Brigadier-General Sitiveni Qiliho whereby the Fiji Police Force will ensure the protection of the Hon. Speaker of Parliament and the Hon. Members of Parliament.

The Fiji Police Force will provide security and protection services within and around the Parliament precincts during Parliament sitting weeks, Parliamentary Standing Committee public consultations, site visits or meetings whether within or at a designated venue outside the Parliament precincts.

The Parties have entered into the Agreement with goodwill towards each other and primarily for the purpose of bridging the security gap for the



Secretary-General to Parliament Mrs Jeanette Emberson and the Commissioner of Police Brigadier-General Sitiveni Qiliho with the signed Agreement.

ACTS ENACTED IN JANUARY - MARCH 2022

NO.	ACTS			
01	Act No. 1 of 2022 – Liquor (Amendment) Act 2022			
02	Act No. 2 of 2022 – Tobacco Control (Amendment) Act 2022			
03	Act No. 3 of 2022 – Fiji National University (Amendment) Act 2022			
04	Act No. 4 of 2022 – Commission of Inquiry (Amendment) Act 2022			
05	Act No. 5 of 2022 – Revised 2021-2022 Appropriation Act 2022			
06	Act No. 6 of 2022 – Tax Administration (Revised Budget Amendment) Act 2022			
07	Act No. 7 of 2022 – Income Tax (Revised Budget Amendment) Act 2022			
08	Act No. 8 of 2022 – Value Added Tax (Revised Budget Amendment) Act 2022			
09	Act No. 9 of 2022 – Airport Departure Tax (Revised Budget Amendment) Act 2022			
10	Act No. 10 of 2022 – Environment and Climate Adaptation Levy (Revised Budget Amendment) Act 2022			
11	Act No. 11 of 2022 – Customs (Revised Budget Amendment) Act 2022			
12	Act No. 12 of 2022 – Customs Tariff (Revised Budget Amendment) Act 2022			
13	Act No. 13 of 2022 – Financial Management (Revised Budget Amendment) Act 2022			

NO.	ACTS			
14	Act No. 14 of 2022 – Employment Relations (Revised Budget Amendment) Act 2022			
15	Act No. 15 of 2022 - Citizenship of Fiji (Revised Budget Amendment) Act 2022			
16	Act No. 16 of 2022 – Surveyors (Revised Budget Amendment) Act 2022			
17	Act No. 17 of 2022 – Real Estate Agents (Revised Budget Amendment) Act 2022			
18	Act No. 18 of 2022 – Town Planning (Revised Budget Amendment) Act 2022			
19	Act No. 19 of 2022 – Lagilagi Housing Development Act 2022			
20	Act No. 20 of 2022 – Medical and Dental Practitioner (Revised Budget Amendment) Act 2022			
21	Act No. 21 of 2022 – Development of Informal Settlements Act 2022			
22	Act No. 22 of 2022 - Land Transport (Revised Budget Amendment) Act 2022			
23	Act No. 23 of 2022 – Value Added Tax (Amendment) (No. 2) Act 2022			
24	Act No. 24 of 2022 – Customs Tariff (Amendment) (No. 2) Act 2022			
25	Act No. 25 of 2022 – Investment Fiji Act 2022			

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY RELATIONS & PROTOCOL: JANUARY - MARCH 2022

Webinars/Meetings

NO.	INVITATION	COUNTRY/ HOST	DATE	DELEGATION
01	Powering Parliaments of the future, Parliamentary Services Conference 2022: Call for Papers	Parliament of Victoria, Australia	17 – 19 January	Mr Sefanaia Tudonu Mr Maika Lakeba Mr Abele Sakulu Ms Laisa Masirewa Ms Asha Kumar Ms Bale Dolokoto
02	Bureau of the OACPS Parliamentary Assembly: Preparatory meeting of the 7th Meeting of the Drafting Committee on the ACP-EU JPA Rules of Procedure	Brussels, Belgium	19 January	1. Hon. Alvick Maharaj
03	IPU - Nuclear disarmament and human security: Reducing nuclear risks and advancing nuclear disarmament to protect our common future	Geneva, Switzerland	19 January	Mr Jacob Abraham Susana Korovou
04	7th Meeting of the Drafting Committee of the ACP-EU JPA Rules of Procedures	Brussels, Belgium	22 January	1. Hon. Alvick Maharaj
05	Session 3 - Masterclass series for parliamentarians in the Pacific Parliamentary action to support a gender-sensitive economic recovery' in the Pacific	UNDP - Holiday Inn, Suva	25 January	1. Women MPs 2. SCCs
06	Bureau of the OACPS Parliamentary Assembly	Brussels, Belgium	01 February	1. Hon. Alvick Maharaj
07	Consultation meeting – Vanuatu Parliament and Fiji Parliament	Vanuatu	02 February	Mr Senitieli Wainiu Mr Abele Sakulu
08	Bureau of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly	Brussels, Belgium	03 February	1. Hon. Alvick Maharaj
09	Preparatory Meeting for the 8th Meeting of the Drafting Committee on the ACP-EU JPA Rules of Procedures	Brussels, Belgium	18 February	1. Hon. Alvick Maharaj
10	Launch of the South Pacific Astronomy Society of Enthusiasts (SPASE)	Small Committee Room, Parliament of Fiji, Suva, Fiji	22 February	1. H.E Ratu Epeli Nailatikau
11	Preparatory meeting of the 9th Meeting of the Drafting Committee on the ACP-EU JPA Rules of Procedure	Brussels, Belgium	01 March	1. Hon. Alvick Maharaj
12	9th Meeting of the Drafting Committee on the ACP-EU JPA Rules of Procedure	Brussels, Belgium	03 March	1. Hon. Alvick Maharaj
13	10th Meeting of the Drafting Committee on ACP-EU JPA Rules of Procedure	Brussels, Belgium	14 – 15 March	1. Hon. Alvick Maharaj
14	IPU – UN Women Parliamentary Meeting	New York, United States of America	15 – 16 March	Hon. Rosy Akbar Hon. Selai Adimaitoga
15	Special session on public engagement at the IPU Assembly IPU-UNDP Global Parliamentary Report 2022 on Public Engagement in the Work of Parliament (pre-recorded video)	Nusa Dua, Indonesia	22 March	1. H.E Ratu Epeli Nailatikau
16	Bureau of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly preparatory meeting of the 41st Session of the ACP-EU JPA	Strasbourg, France	21 March	1. Hon. Alvick Maharaj
17	ACP-EU JPA Conciliation Meeting – Urgent topic No 1: Threats to stability, security and democracy	Western and Sahelian Africa	22 March	1. Hon. Alvick Maharaj
18	ACP-EU JPA Conciliation Meeting – URGENT TOPIC - Enhancing the resilience of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) against climate change and natural disasters	Brussels, Belgium	23 March	1. Hon. Alvick Maharaj
19	CPA UK's Virtual Roundtable on Online Violence Against Women	London, United Kingdom	28 March	Hon. Veena Bhatnagar Hon. Selai Adimaitoga
20	60th Session of the OACPS Parliamentary Assembly	Strasbourg, France	29 – 31 March	1. Hon. Alvick Maharaj

Courtesy Calls

NO.	INVITATION	COUNTRY	DATE
01	Courtesy Call by the Croatian Ambassador to Fiji- H.E Betty Bernardica PAVELICH to H.E Ratu Epeli Nailatikau (Speaker of Parliament)	Croatia	31 January
02	Courtesy Call by the New Cuban Ambassador to Fiji, H.E Jose Manuel GALEGO Montano to H.E Ratu Epeli Nailatikau (Speaker of Parliament)	Cuba	21 February
03	Courtesy Call by the new EU Head of Political & Trade H.E Pirjo-Liisa HEIKKILA (Counsellor) to Mrs. Jeanette Emberson (Secretary General to Parliament)	European Union	28 February
04	Courtesy Call by the New Ambassador of France to Fiji -H.E Francois Xavier LEGER to H.E Ratu Epeli Nailatikau (Speaker of Parliament)	France	04 March
05	Courtesy Call by the New Non- Resident Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to Fiji, H.E Michael GOFFIN to H.E Ratu Epeli Nailatikau (Speaker of Parliament)	Belgium	15 March
06	Courtesy Call by the Non-Resident Ambassador designate for Brazil to Fiji and the Pacific H.E Mauricio LYRIO to H.E Ratu Epeli Nailatikau (Speaker of Parliament)	Brazil	23 March

STANDING COMMITTEES OF PARLIAMENT JANUARY - MARCH 2022

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE, LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

NO. OF MEETINGS	COMMITTEE REPORTS TABLED	PAPERS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE
54	Nil	1. Investment Fiji Bill 2022 (Bill No. 5 of 2022)

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

NO. OF MEETINGS	COMMITTEE REPORTS TABLED	PAPERS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE
23	1. Consolidated Review Report of the Fiji Commerce Commission	Nil
	2016-2017 and Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission	
	2017-2018	

STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

NO. OF MEETINGS	COMMITTEE REPORTS TABLED	PAPERS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE
24	Nil	Nil

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

NO. OF MEETINGS	COMMITTEE REPORTS TABLED	PAPERS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE
42	Review of the 2017-2018 Whole of Government Audit Reports (Consolidated Report) Review of the Office of the Auditor-General's 2020 Annual report and Assessing the Office of the Auditor-Generals — Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) Performance Management Framework (Consolidated Report) Review of the 2018-2019 Audit Report on Government Commercial Companies Statutory Authorities and other Entities and the 2018-2019 Audit Report on Statutory Authorities (Consolidated Report)	Nil

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS

NO. OF MEETINGS	COMMITTEE REPORTS TABLED	PAPERS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE
31	Nil	1. Ministry of Local Government, Housing and Environment 2016 Annual Report 2. Ministry of Local Government, Housing and Environment 2016-2017 Annual Report 3. Ministry of Local Government, Housing and Environment 2017-2018 Annual Report 4. Labasa Town Council Annual Report 2005 5. Labasa Town Council Annual Report 2013 6. Labasa Town Council Annual Report 2017 7. Sigatoka Town Council Annual Report 2019 8. Levuka Town Council Annual Report for the Year 2011 9. National Fire Authority Annual Report 2015



Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications, Hon. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum delivering the Revised 2021-2022 Budget in March 2022



Chamber attendant Kitione Bete distributing the Budget documents in March 2022.

COMMITTEES AT WORK



Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence meeting with the Department of Foreign Affairs Head of Pacific Office and Trade, Ewen McDonald on February 23rd, 2022.



Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, the Hon. Vijay Nath presents a Committee Report during Parliament sitting in February, 2022.



Members of the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights at the Momi Bay Battery Historical Park during the Heritage Bill consultation.



Members of the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights, at the Sigatoka Sand dunes during the Heritage Bill consultation.



Public Consultation by the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights at Seagaga on the Heritage Bill in February, 2022.



Members of the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights, at Vatukoula Gold Mine during the Heritage Bill consultation.



Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, the Hon. Jale Sigarara presents a Committee Report during Parliament sitting in February,



Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, the Hon. Alvick Maharaj presents a Committee Report during Parliament sitting in February, 2022.



Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Hon. Viam Pillay tabling the Review of the Fiji National University 2019 Annual Report in February, 2022.



Women of Nabaitavo Village attending the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights consultation on the Heritage Bill in March, 2022.

INTERNAL EVENTS

Speaker of Parliament H.E Hon. Ratu Epeli Nailatikau with women MP's and staff of Parliament during International Women's Day on March 8th.



Courtesy call from the new Ambassador of France to Fiji, H.E Francois Xavier Leger to the Speaker of Parliament Hon. Ratu Epeli Nailatikau on March 4th.



Courtesy call from the new Non-Resident Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to Fiji, H.E Michael Goffin to the Speaker of Parliament on March 15th.



Courtesy call from the new Cuban Ambassador to Fiji, H.E Jose Manuel Galego Montano to the Speaker of Parliament Hon. Ratu Epeli Nailatikau on February 21.



Croatia to Fiji Her Excellency Ms. Betty Bernardica Pavelich to the Speaker of Parliament Hon. Ratu Epeli Nailatikau



Courtesy call from the Non-resident Ambassador of Secretary-General to Parliament, Mrs Jeanette Emberson Secretary-General to Parliament, Mrs Jeanette Emberson receives a courtesy call from the EU Head of Political & Trade, Ms Pirjo-Liisa HEIKKILA (Counsellor) in February,



with Hon. Ro Teimumu Kepa and Hon. Veena Bhatnagar during the International Women's Day celebration, March

OSEA NAIQAMU



November 2018.





Hon. Osea Naiqamu taking his oath of allegiance after H.E Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, Speaker of Parliament led the Fijian Parliament's i-reguregu delegation to the family of the being re-elected as a Member of Parliament on 26 late Hon. Osea Naiqamu, former Member of Parliament and former Minister for Forestry at his residence at Natabua, Lautoka in January

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The Fijian Parliament joined in the worldwide celebration for International Women's Day on March 8th, 2022.

To mark International Women's Day this year, the Fijian Parliament together with the Speaker of Parliament, H.E Hon. Ratu Epeli Nailatikau hosted a morning tea for women



Speaker of Parliament H.E Hon. Ratu Epeli Nailatikau with Hon. Ro Teimumu Kepa and Hon. Lenora Qeregeretabua in the cutting of the International Women's Day cake on March 8th, 2022.

Honourable Members of Parliament.

With this year's theme as, "Gender Equality Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow and Break the Bias", female Honourable Members of Parliament offered words of encouragement and support to all women in Fiji.



Women Members of Parliament with Parliament staff during International Women's Day.

This is an annual occasion designated for all women, families and friends to join together in raising awareness on the importance of promoting gender equality experience, equal opportunity and face no barriers in all aspects of their lives, whether it be going about their day to day lives with adequate needs in their communities, joining the work force or being able to showcase their abilities and reach their goals without facing any barriers. Our girls and women have a right to engage in civil society, vote in elections, be elected to Government office, serve on boards and make their voices heard in any process that will ultimately affect them, their families and their communities.

Hon. Rosy Sofia Akbar Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation

I would like to wish all women of Fiji a very happy
International Women's Day. I would like to encourage as many of you
(women) as possible who have been thinking about getting into politics
to try and get in this year because we really need you in Parliament.
Women look at power more as a responsibility so come in and make a
difference in Parliament.

Hon. Ro Teimumu Kepa Member of Parliament

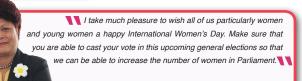
This International Women's Day, I would like to extend my sincere well wishes to all incredible women in Fiji and around the world, "Shine bright, not just for today but everyday". Wishing every woman a very happy International Women's Day. Personally I feel the most critical element in empowering women is for women to realise their full potential because your perception creates your reality and more often than not, we are reminded that at the end of the day, women will be forgotten if they forget to think about themselves.

Hon. Veena Bhatnagar Assistant Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation

Fiji needs more women in Parliament, after all we make up nearly 50% of our population but we cannot do it ourselves. To empower women's political participation in national decision making, why not support a woman who is running for public office. She will need the support of her family and the encouragement of her village and her community. She will need financial support because it is not cheap to run for public office. Women's political participation is a fundamental prerequisite for gender equality and genuine democracy.

Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua

Member of Parliament



Hon. Salote Radrodro Member of Parliament

One thing that I have noticed, it is the women and the youths who are the lifeline of any political party, so we are the ones who mobilise a political party. Imagine if we get to be the leaders of our nation, that will be just amazing. In Fiji, this is the best time or right time to have a female Prime Minister, whether it is from my party or any other party, so this is why we need more women to join. We are the ones who run the home, imagine if we run the nation, things would be much better and I urged us all (women) to come on board and be counted, be an active player, stop being a supporter, come on board and stand for politics.

SWEARING IN: NEW MPs





Swearing-in of new Members of Parliament, Hon. Howard Politini and Hon. Ratu Jone Seniloli in February, 2022.