



STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

REVIEW REPORT OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL REPORTS AUGUST 01ST 2016 – JULY 31ST 2017 AND AUGUST 01ST 2017 – JULY 31ST 2018.



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CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD



I am pleased to present the review report on the Ministry of Agriculture 2016 – 2017 and 2017 - 2018 annual reports.

The Committee is grateful to the Management and staff of the Ministry of Agriculture for their commitment and endless support of its stakeholders that enabled the Ministry to achieve its key mandated objectives for the periods under review.

The Committee noted that the Ministry had aligned to its relevant outcomes identified in the Government's 5 and 20 year National Development Plan, Ministry of Agriculture (MOA)'s 5 year Strategic Development Plan (2019-23), People's Charter for Change, Peace and Progress (PCCPP), Green Growth, National Climate Change Policy and National Adaptation Plans (NCCPNAP).

With the Vision of "A Modernized Agriculture Sector providing food and income security for all Fijians" and its Mission is "To excel in the provision of customer focused and market driven services in the agricultural sector", the Ministry embarked

The 2017/2018 financial year was a challenging one for the Ministry as they were still trying to recover from the devastating impact of TC, Tropical Cyclone Winston on Fiji's Agriculture sector.

This demands for rapid rehabilitation process which is highlighted in this 2016/2017 Annual Report will ensure achievement of the Ministry's mandated functions - quick economic recovery, food and income security, poverty alleviation and sustainable management of natural resources.

Irrespective of the limited resources and other constraints, the Committee noted that the staff of the Ministry have continued to improve their performance addressing issues affecting the development of the Sector whilst identifying and exploring opportunities that is available.

The Committee wishes to commend the Permanent Secretary for Agriculture and the Senior Officers of the Ministry for their contribution towards the final compilation of the Committee's report to Parliament.

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sanjay Kirpal", with a date "21" written to the right.

Hon. Sanjay Kirpal
Chairperson.

RECOMMENDATION

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

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Agriculture 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 Annual Reports was referred to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources on 02nd December, 2021 during the sitting of parliament.

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 authorizes the Standing Committee to *scrutinize 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, rationalization, restructuring, functioning, organization, 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).

The members proceeded with its deliberations on the Ministry of Agriculture 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 Annual reports by collecting evidences and collating information. Pertinent questions on issues relating to the operations of the Ministry in 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 were raised by the committee members which were then collated as committee findings to be presented to parliament for enactment

1.1 Procedure and Programs

The Committee met Face to Face in Parliament and deliberated on the 2016 - 2017 and 2017 - 2018 Annual Reports of the Ministry of Agriculture. Upon the reading stage, a few areas of interest were identified by the Committee by way of questions which were sent to the Ministry seeking their response.

Evidences gathered by the Committee supported its deliberations and finalization of its report to be presented to Parliament. These are attached as Annexures for ease of reference.

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.

The recommendations put forth by the Committee from this site visit will be submitted to the relevant Ministries and Departments for consideration.

2.0 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

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



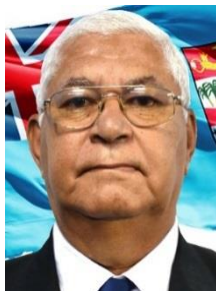
Hon. Sanjay Kirpal
Chairperson



Hon. Jale Sigarara
Deputy Chairperson



Hon. Mitieli Bulanauca
Opposition Member



Hon. Alexander O'Connor
Government Member



Hon. Jese Saukuru
Opposition Member

3.0 ABOUT THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

The Committee took note of the Ministry of Agriculture's activities for the years under review that were aligned to the following 5 Government's Key Pillars:

- Pillar 4: Enhancing Public Sector Effectiveness and Service Delivery.
- Pillar 5: Achieving Higher Economic Growth while ensuring sustainability.
- Pillar 6: Making more Land Available for productive and Social services.
- Pillar 7: Developing an Integrated Development Structure at the Divisional Level.
- Pillar 8: Reduce Poverty to a Negligible Level by 2015.

3.1 The functions of the Ministry of Agriculture include:

- To accelerate agricultural product diversification into crops and livestock products where competitive advantage has been identified.
- To facilitate private sector development.
- To promote food security.
- To ensure sustainable development in the non- sugar sector.

4.0 FINDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

4.1 With a slowly recovering economy like ours, a trade deficit would generally affect job creation and economic growth. This trade deficit simply means that we are spending more on imports than we make on exports, and under the rules of economic accounting we have to make up for the short fall through foreign borrowings and investments.

4.2 One of the basic weakness of the administrative budget is that it is principally focused on reducing expenditures rather than whether money has been spent. Having a favorable budget variance with actual expenses or costs that were less than budgeted may not actually show the reality of achieving what had been planned initially.

4.3 Internal controls of payroll expenses and management of inventory for trading activity were generally weak and if not addressed promptly may result in material misstatement and possible financial losses in the future

5.0 COMMITTEE’S RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Committee recommended that the Ministry must work harder in reducing the trade deficit that stood at FJ\$451m (232%) at the end of 2018.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Committee strongly recommends that the Ministry must endeavor to do Variance Analysis that will help Managers to budget smarter and more accurately and to monitor success and failure.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Committee recommends the prompt action by the Ministry in internal control of payroll expenses and management of inventory for Trading Activity

6.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

6.1 GENDER EQUALITY ANALYSIS – SDG 5

The Fiji Parliament Standing Orders considers gender equality and ensures that the impact on both men and women is exploited in all matters.” SO110 (2): Where a committee conducts an activity, it shall ensure that full consideration will be given to the principal of gender equality so as to ensure all matters are considered with regards to the impact and benefit on both men and women equally.


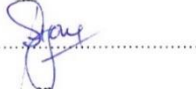


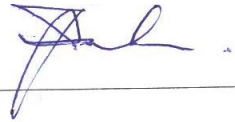
However, the committee noted that there was no clear breakdown of gender provided by the Ministry of Agriculture 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 Annual Reports.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The committee commends the Ministry of Agriculture through its achievements and initiatives in the 2016 – 2017 and 2017 – 2018 fiscal year.

8.0 COMMITTEE MEMBERS' E-SIGNATURE

The Members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, hereby agree with the contents of this report.

Members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources	E-Signature
Hon. Sanjay Kirpal, Chairperson	
Hon. Jale Sigarara, Deputy Chairperson	
Hon. Alexander O'Connor, Government Member	
Hon. Mitieli Bulanauca, Opposition Member	
Hon. Jese Saukuru, Opposition Member	

APPENDICES

Published written evidence

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

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