



# PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

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## MINUTES

of Proceedings of Parliament at Suva on Monday, Twenty-seventh day of March, 2023

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. Sanjay Kirpal.

4. ADMINISTRATION OF OATH OR AFFIRMATION

Virendra Lal took the Oath of Office for Members of Parliament and the Oath of Allegiance and delivered his maiden speech.

5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Leader of the Government in Parliament the Hon. Lynda Tabuya, moved that the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Friday, 17 February 2023 as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

Motion seconded.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

6. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

Hon. Speaker welcomed all Honourable Members to the sitting of Parliament. He also welcomed those in the gallery and all those watching the live broadcast and the live-streaming of the proceedings from home, offices and electronic devices.

Hon. Speaker also informed the Honourable Members that approval had been granted to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence to table its report on the Cybercrime treaty at a later date.

Hon. Speaker also informed all Honourable Members that after receiving advice and clarification from the Privileges Committee, his office would now proceed with the processing of the resignation of the Leader of the Opposition the Hon. Josaia Bainimarama.

## 7. PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND CERTAIN DOCUMENTS

The following reports were tabled and referred accordingly to the appropriate Standing Committees –

### (a) Standing Committee on Social Affairs

- (i) Public Rental Board – 2020 Annual Report;
- (ii) Fiji Public Trustee Corporation Pte Limited – Annual Report 2020;
- (iii) Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation – Annual Report for the Financial Period 1st August 2019 – 31st July 2020;
- (iv) Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation – Annual Report for the Financial Period 1st August 2020 – 31st July 2021; and
- (v) Ministry of iTaukei Affairs – Annual Report 2017-2019.

### (b) Standing Committee on Natural Resources

- (i) Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources – Annual Report August 2019 – July 2020.

### (c) Standing Committee on Economic Affairs

- (i) Reserve Bank of Fiji – August 2021 – July 2022 Report; and
- (ii) Fiji Meat Industry Board – Annual Report 2018.

### (d) Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights

- (i) Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption – Annual Report 1 August 2017 – 31 July 2018.

### (e) Standing Committee on Public Accounts

- (i) Report of the Auditor-General – Republic of Fiji – Report on Special Investigation.

Hon. Speaker informed Honourable Members that the Mid-Year Fiscal Statement – Actual Expenditure 1 August 2022 to 31 January 2023 papers is for information only and would not be referred to any Standing Committee.

8. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence the Hon. Viliame Naupoto tabled the Review Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (FAD) on the Fiji Police Force Annual Report from August 2018 – July 2019.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence 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.

9. MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

10. CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

Hon. Speaker informed all Honourable Members that there were no Bills for consideration.

11. MOTION BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts the Hon. Esrom Immanuel moved that Parliament debates the 'Review of the 2018–2019 and 2019–2020 Audit Reports on Municipal Councils' which was tabled on 29 August 2022.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

12. MOTION BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs the Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna moved that Parliament debates the 'Review Report of the Accident Compensation Commission Fiji 2018 Annual Report' which was tabled on 29 August 2022.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

13. MOTION BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE, LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights the Hon. Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure moved that Parliament debates the 'Review of the Office of the Prime Minister and Department of Immigration 2018-2019 Annual Report' which was tabled on 29 August 2022.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

14. SUSPENSION MOTION BY THE LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT

The Leader of the Government in Parliament the Hon. Lynda Tabuya moved under Standing Order 6 that so much of Standing Order 23(1) be suspended to allow the House to sit beyond 4.30 p.m. to complete the remaining items listed on the Order Paper.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

15. MOTION BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs the Hon. Alitia Bainivalu moved that Parliament debates the 'Review of the Fiji Public Trustee Corporation Pte Limited 2019 and 2018 Annual Report' which was tabled on 30 August 2022.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

16. QUESTIONS

**Oral Questions**

1/2023 Hon. Jone Usamate asked the Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the Government's plan for the Land Bank and whether it will be maintained or removed.

2/2023 Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-operatives, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications – Can the Deputy Prime Minister update Parliament on Fiji's ongoing negotiations on the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework.

3/2023 Hon. Ketan Lal asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics – Can the Minister update Parliament on the current inflation rate and its effect.

4/2023 Hon. Alitia Bainivalu asked the Minister for Rural and Maritime Development, and Disaster Management – Can the Minister update Parliament on the humanitarian and disaster relief assistance provided to New Zealand and Vanuatu after the recent severe tropical cyclones.

5/2023 Hon. Parveen Bala asked the Minister for Multi-Ethnic Affairs and Sugar Industry – Can the Minister inform Parliament what price will farmers get per tonne of sugar cane in the next season.

6/2023 Hon. Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure asked the Minister for Housing and Local Government – Can the Minister update Parliament on the informal settlements that will be upgraded under the Informal Settlement Upgrade Programme in the 2022-2023 financial year.

7/2023 Hon. Penioni Ravunawa asked the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Climate Change, Environment, Civil Service, Information, Public Enterprises and Veteran Affairs – Can the Prime Minister inform Parliament on the positive outcomes of the 'Our Ocean Conference' in Panama.

8/2023 Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna to ask the Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation – Can the Minister update Parliament on the benefits for social welfare and pension recipients from Fiji Care Insurance.

## Written Questions

- 9/2023 Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua asked the Minister for Home Affairs and Immigration –
- (a) Can the Minister update Parliament on the remuneration, allowances and all entitlements of former RFMF Commanders from the years January 2005 to 16 September 2021; and
  - (b) The rate of return of RFMF Annual Reports for the period January 2005 to 16 September 2021 as per legal requirement(s) then and now, for tabling in Parliament.
- 10/2023 Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua asked the Minister for Home Affairs and Immigration –
- (a) Who can hold a Fiji diplomatic passport and who qualifies to have an official Fiji passport and who authorises the issuance of such passports;
  - (b) How many Fiji diplomatic passports were issued from 5 December 2006 to 23 December 2022 – to whom and for what purposes;
  - (c) How many Fiji official passports were issued from 5 December 2006 to 23 December 2022 – to whom and for what purposes;
  - (d) How many former Cabinet Ministers and other persons who were issued a Fiji diplomatic or official passport from the period 5 December 2006 to 23 December 2022 have surrendered the same after relinquishing the office they held and how many have not;
  - (e) How many of the Executive Civil Servants who have been suspended or sent on leave with or without pay or have any form of investigations currently in process, presently hold Fiji diplomatic or official passports, and when will they return the same to the official authority;
  - (f) How many Fiji diplomatic and official passports issued from 5 December 2006 to 23 December 2022 have been reported as destroyed, stolen or missing; and
  - (g) What action (if any) under the current law does the Department of Immigration intend to take upon the retrieval of Fiji diplomatic and official passports from persons who no longer qualify to use the same for travel or identification purpose.

The responses to the Oral and Supplementary Questions were provided by the respective Ministers. Pursuant to Standing Order 45(6), Oral Question 8/2023 had lapsed.

17. ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Speaker thanked all Honourable Members for their contributions and adjourned Parliament until Wednesday, 29 March 2023 at 9.30 a.m.

Parliament adjourned at 8.27 p.m.

**Speaker of Parliament**

**Secretary-General to Parliament**

27<sup>th</sup> March, 2023.