



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

MINUTES

of Proceedings of Parliament at Suva on Tuesday, Fourth day of April, 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. Semi Koroilavesau.

Virtual Attendance – Hon. Jovesa Vocea.

4. 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 Monday, 3 April 2023 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 of Parliament. He also welcomed another group of PL 100 students from the University of the South Pacific, those in the gallery and those watching the live broadcast and the live-streaming of the proceedings.

6. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

(a) Standing Committee on Economic Affairs

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs the Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna tabled the Review Report of the Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission 2018-2019 Annual Report.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic 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 Social Affairs

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs the Hon. Alitia Bainivalu tabled the annual review of the Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations 01 August 2016 – 31 July 2017 and 2017-2018 Annual Reports.

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.

(c) Standing Committee on Economic Affairs

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs the Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna tabled the Consolidated Review Report of the PAFCO 2018 and 2019 Annual Reports.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic 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.

7. MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

(a) The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics the Hon. Prof. Biman Prasad delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Parveen Bala subsequently responded.

(b) The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation the Hon. Viliame Gavoka delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Leader of the Opposition the Hon. Inia Seruiratu subsequently responded.

(c) The Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation the Hon. Lynda Tabuya delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Mosese Bulitavu subsequently responded.

- (d) The Minister for Health and Medical Services the Hon. Dr Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Penioni Ravunawa subsequently responded.

8. CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

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

9. 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 Auditor-General's Report on Compliance Audits Relating to COVID-19 Response' which was tabled on 31 August 2022.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

10. 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.

11. 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 'Consolidated Review Report of the Fiji Meat Industry Board 2015–2017 Annual Reports' which was tabled on 1 September 2022.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

12. 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 Office of the Auditor-General's 2021 Annual Report' which was tabled on 1 September 2022.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

13. QUESTIONS

Oral Questions

52/2023 Hon. Ioane Naivalurua asked the Minister for Public Works and Meteorological Services, and Transport – Can the Minister inform Parliament whether the infrastructure projects that were budgeted for the 2022-2023 financial year will be completed and what is the progress.

53/2023 Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu to ask the Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation – Can the Minister update Parliament on the Golden Homes in Lautoka.

54/2023 Hon. Parveen Bala asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice – Can the Minister update Parliament on the electoral system to be used in the proposed Municipal Elections.

55/2023 Hon. Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation – Can the Deputy Prime Minister update Parliament on the works currently being carried out on developing community-based tourism.

56/2023 Hon. Ketan Lal asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics – Can the Deputy Prime Minister inform Parliament if the 20 cents per litre fuel duty will be removed.

- 57/2023 Hon. Alitia Bainivalu asked the Minister for Agriculture and Waterways – Can the Minister update Parliament on the nature based seawalls project that has been agreed to between the Ministry and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Kiwa Initiative.
- 58/2023 Hon. Joseph Nand asked the Minister for Education – Can the Minister inform Parliament as to which guidelines does the Ministry use to make appointments.
- 59/2023 Hon. Jovesa Vocea asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics – Can the Deputy Prime Minister inform Parliament on the status of tax rebates provided to investors using Fiji as their location for film productions.

Written Questions

- 60/2023 Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna 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 of the cost of exclusive Government newspaper advertising in the Fiji Sun from 2014 to 2022 excluding advertising by Government commercial companies, statutory organisations and independent institutions that came by way of a directive.
- 61/2023 Hon. Jovesa Vocea to ask the Minister for Housing and Local Government – Can the Minister update Parliament on the following –
- (a) the budgetary allocation for each financial year from 2017-2018 to 2022-2023 Budgets for assistance to victims of house fires;
 - (b) the total number of victims of house fires assisted and the total amount of funds paid out towards this policy in each financial year and specific data on the tax dollar value per annum disbursed by the Ministry for these fire accidents – by name, date, locality (village or rural community centre), division, ethnicity and gender for the period January 2018 to 23 December 2022; and
 - (c) the Minister’s future plans for the Ministry for fire accident assistance.
- 62/2023 Hon. Jone Usamate asked the Minister for Public Works and Meteorological Services, and Transport – Can the Minister inform Parliament on a complete list of all grid extension projects that Government has paid to the EFL to complete from 2017 onwards –
- (a) the percentage of completion of each project;
 - (b) reasons for any delays; and
 - (c) how these delays are being addressed.

63/2023 Hon. Alvick Maharaj asked the Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation – Can the Minister update Parliament on the number of recipients that were assisted through the following programmes since inception until to date –

- (a) Disability allowance;
- (b) Care protection allowance;
- (c) Senior pension scheme;
- (d) Bus fare subsidy assistance;
- (e) Expanded food voucher for rural pregnant mothers; and
- (f) Poverty benefit scheme.

64/2023 Hon. Premila Kumar asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics – During the National budget, multiple tax benefits were announced to encourage the private sector investments for housing to increase both house stocks and rental homes in the market, can the Deputy Prime Minister update the Parliament on the following information –

- (a) The type of tax incentives and the number of investors who took advantage of the incentives in the last 5 years; and
- (b) What was the total cost of incentives given by the Government and the number of new house stocks and rental homes added to the market.

The Hon. Speaker informed Honourable Members that Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu had withdrawn his Oral Question 53/2023. The responses to the Oral and Supplementary Questions were provided by the respective Ministers.

The Hon. Prime Minister tabled his response to Written Question 60/2023 and the Hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance tabled his response to Written Question 64/2023. The responses to the rest of the Written Questions would be tabled by the respective Ministers pursuant to Standing Order 45(3).

14. ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Speaker thanked all Honourable Members for their contributions and adjourned Parliament until Wednesday, 5 April 2023 at 9.30 a.m.

Parliament adjourned at 8.56 p.m.

Speaker of Parliament

Secretary-General to Parliament

4th April, 2023.