



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

MINUTES

of Proceedings of Parliament at Suva on Wednesday, Fifth 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 Tuesday, 4 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 those in the gallery and those watching the live broadcast and the live-streaming of the proceedings as well as another group of PL 100 students from the University of the South Pacific.

Hon. Speaker informed all Honourable Members on the tabling of written responses by the Minister for Home Affairs and Immigration the Hon. Pio Tikoduadua, to Written Questions 9/2023, 10/2023 and 29/2023.

He also informed all Honourable Members of the presence of the Health Officials to provide health screenings to Members.

6. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

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 Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation Annual Report for the Period of 1st August 2018 to 31st July 2019.

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.

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 Leader of the Opposition the Hon. Inia Seruiratu subsequently responded.
- (b) The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation the Hon. Viliame Gavoka delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Faiyaz Koya subsequently responded.
- (c) The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-operatives and Small and Medium Enterprises, and Communications the Hon. Manoa Kamikamica delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Jone Usamate subsequently responded.
- (d) The Minister for Rural and Maritime Development, and Disaster Management the Hon. Sakiasi Ditoka delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Leader of the Opposition the Hon. Inia Seruiratu subsequently responded.

8. CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

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

9. MOTION BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR TRADE, CO-OPERATIVES AND SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES, AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-operatives and Small and Medium Enterprises, and Communications the Hon. Manoa Kamikamica moved that Parliament –

- (a) supports the Forum Leaders desire to secure our Pacific Oceans future and condemns any action that will threaten it; and
- (b) calls on our partner Governments, including international agencies to ensure the protection of our oceans and its resources.

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 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 COVID-19 Compliance Audits – Management of Unemployment Benefits, Management of Concessional Loan Package to Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)' which was tabled on 1 September 2022.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

The Hon. Speaker informed all Honourable Members that Parliament had now completed debate on all the Committee Reports that were reinstated from the previous Parliamentary Term – there were a total of twenty-one [21] reports.

12. QUESTIONS

Oral Questions

- 65/2023 Hon. Aliko Bia asked the Minister for Housing and Local Government – Can the Minister inform Parliament on how Government is dealing with the formalisation of the 47 informal settlements that the previous Government had begun processing.
- 66/2023 Hon. Alitia Bainivalu asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics – Can the Deputy Prime Minister update Parliament on the one-off \$200 per child back to school support payment to all students from early childhood education (ECE) to Year 12.
- 67/2023 Hon. Alipate Tuicolo asked the Minister for iTaukei Affairs and Culture, Heritage and Arts – Can the Minister inform Parliament whether Government will continue with the equal distribution of lease money that was implemented by the previous Government.
- 68/2023 Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna asked the Minister for Agriculture and Waterways – Can the Minister update Parliament on the 16th Session of the Codex Committee North America and South West Pacific (CCNASWP) which met from 30 January to 3 February 2023.
- 69/2023 Hon. Sanjay Kirpal 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 what guideline was used in the recent appointments of Chairs of respective Government Statutory Boards.
- 70/2023 Hon. Jovesa Vocea asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-operatives and Small and Medium Enterprises, and Communications – Can the Deputy Prime Minister update Parliament on the Ministry's plans to incentivise rural communities and use mediums such as Cooperatives for encouraging entrepreneurship.
- 71/2023 Hon. Faiyaz Koya asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics – Can the Deputy Prime Minister confirm as to how many new planes Fiji Airways is planning to buy over the immediate future and what are the plans with regards to new routes.
- 72/2023 Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation – Can the Deputy Prime Minister update Parliament on the Code of Conduct for Tourism Providers.

Written Questions

- 73/2023 Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics – Can the Deputy Prime Minister inform Parliament on the name, fees, claims and entitlements for Board Directors of FRCS for the period 2014 to 23 December 2022.
- 74/2023 Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu 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 following –
- (a) How long was the firm Vatis Communications managing the social media platforms of various ministries’ through the Department of Information;
 - (b) What was the duration of every contract between the Department of Information and Vatis Communications;
 - (c) What was the monetary value of every contract between the Department of Information and Vatis Communications;
 - (d) Was the company Vatis Communications awarded the contract and formed before or after the publication of the first tender advertisement or expression of interest published (but not before the Tender or Expression of Interest officially closed);
 - (e) Whether or not the company complied with the Expression of Interest or Tender provision of being “highly experienced and motivated;
 - (f) Whether or not the two main personnel of Vatis Communications were closely connected to a political party and in charge of the party’s social media platforms; and
 - (g) The total amount of public funds paid to Vatis Communications by the Department of Information until the termination of their contract earlier this year.
- 75/2023 Hon. Jone Usamate asked the Minister for Public Works and Meteorological Services, and Transport – Can the Minister update Parliament on the list of all the projects under the various components of Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) Capital and Maintenance budget below to include –
- (a) the budget for each project;
 - (b) the amount committed and sent as per the end of Quarter 2 for the Financial Year 2022/2023;
 - (c) percentage completion of the work undertaken; and
 - (d) reasons for any delays and how WAF will be addressing problem areas to the following –
 - (i) Water sources and water treatment plant;
 - (ii) Water distribution;
 - (iii) Integrated water meter management;
 - (iv) Non-revenue water;

- (v) Water catchment management process;
- (vi) Wastewater treatment;
- (vii) Improvement and upgrade of wastewater distribution system;
- (viii) Rural water supply systems;
- (ix) Relocation of existing wastewater and water pipeline;
- (x) Electrical Upgrading works; and
- (xi) ICT Infrastructure upgrades.

76/2023 Hon. Alvick Maharaj asked the Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation – The Government funds the National Domestic Violence Helpline run by the Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre. Can the Minister update Parliament on the monthly statistics from 2019 till March 2023 on the nature of violence against women.

77/2023 Hon. Alvick Maharaj asked the Minister for Public Works and Meteorological Services, and Transport – Can the Minister update Parliament on the list of projects that were completed under the rural electrification programme since its inception until to date and the breakdown through divisions and the cost of individual projects.

The responses to the Oral and Supplementary Questions were provided by the respective Ministers.

The Hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance tabled his response to Written Question 73/2023, the Hon. Prime Minister tabled his response to Written Question 74/2023 and the Hon. Minister for Women tabled her response to Written Question 76/2023. The responses to the rest of the Written Questions would be tabled by the respective Ministers pursuant to Standing Order 45(3).

13. ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Speaker thanked all Honourable Members for their contributions and adjourned Parliament until Thursday, 6 April 2023 at 9.30 a.m.

Parliament adjourned at 7.55 p.m.

Speaker of Parliament

Secretary-General to Parliament

5th April, 2023.