



HON. VATIMI T.T.K RAYALU

Minister for Agriculture and Waterways

Date: 20th November 2023

Venue: Parliamentary Complex, Suva

Written Question 155/2023

Hon. Naisa Tuinaceva to ask the Minister for Agriculture and Waterways –
Can the Minister provide Parliament details on how many women are registered under the ***Women for Agriculture Programme*** as follows:

- (a) the age group;
 - (b) the farming sector they come under; and
 - (c) their performance status.
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The Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways in addressing Gender gaps in the Agriculture Sector and aligning with Fiji's 20-Year National Development Plan, formulated a 5-year Policy for Gender in Agriculture in Fiji (2022-2027). This ensures commitment towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5.

The Policy has four major objectives:

- i. Equality of access by women and men to the economic resources required for productive and resilient agriculture and markets;
- ii. Equality of access by women and men to the information, technology and training needed for secure livelihoods and healthy diets;

- iii. Equality of representation and participation in decision-making by women and men, for informed future agriculture planning and resourcing; and
- iv. Effective mainstreaming of gender perspectives in all programs through strengthened capacities resources and commitment in the agriculture ministries.

This policy is designed to integrate well with the Government's existing initiatives including Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting led by the Ministry of Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics and the Gender Transformative Institutional Capacity Development Initiative led by the National Machinery of Women – Ministry of Women. The Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways is one of the pilot Ministries under the Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting initiative.

In operationalising the Gender in Agriculture Policy, the Ministry has implemented various programs that support women's participation in the agriculture sector and these include but are not limited to, Vanilla, Coconut, Poultry Extension, Apiculture, Cocoa, Post-Harvest Losses and Women in Agriculture.

The Women in Agriculture Programme, previously known as the Cottage Industry Development Program [CIDP], started in 2006 as one of the Demand Driven Approach [DDA] initiatives. It was implemented in 2007 before it was taken up by the then Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation until 2012 when the program came back under the Ministry of Agriculture. In the 2016-2017 financial year, the current name was adopted with its primary objective which is to increase women's participation in the agriculture sector.

The Ministry through this program since the 2016-2017 financial year has supported 1060 women under the various age groups listed below:

- **24% young women (20-35yrs)**
- **55% adult women (36 -55yrs) and**
- **21% were (56 – 77yrs).**

Through the assistance provided to those women, a notable increase in production was recorded since 2016 on the following targeted commodities;

- Floriculture production had increased from 78 tonnes in 2016 to 6,406 tonnes in 2022. This growth reflects the positive impact of the Ministry's support towards the floriculture sector which enhanced women's participation.
- Masi production increased from 15 tonnes in 2016 to 121.7 tonnes in 2022.
- Voivoi production increased from 359.6 tonnes in 2016 to 1,790.7 tonnes in 2022.

These women have diversified into other activities which has significantly improved their socio-economic status. Out of the 1060 registered women farmers under this programme, some have been assisted in more than one activity and in different phases based on their progress.

- 424 women farmers assisted with agro-inputs and planting materials (Voivoi & Masi) have ventured into value-adding and are currently supplying to flea markets in the Central, Northern and Western Divisions;

- 636 have been registered with Fiji Arts Council and Ministry of Women, Children & Social Protection where they exhibit their work during the Divisional and National Women Expo;
- 265 have registered nurseries and are supplying to hotels, resorts and municipal markets with flowers for landscaping and beautification;
- 318 are currently supplying local florists, funeral homes and markets with cut flowers and leaves for various flower arrangements and bouquets.
- 159 are Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) operating road stall markets and rented spaces to support their families and also provide a means of employment to other family members lastly;
- 21 are nursery operators that have import licenses where they import exotic flowers from overseas.

In this financial year 2023-2024, the Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways has pioneered five (5) programmes on Gender Responsive Budget initiative as mentioned above in this statement.

Moreover, a sum of \$300K has been allocated where 200 women in 40 clusters have been identified and implementation is in progress according to the following activities;

- Supply of planting materials for voivoi, masi and flowers;
- Provision of tools and farming equipment such as brush cutter, wheelbarrow, hosepipe, watering cans and sylon shade; and
- Conduct field training.

In conclusion, the Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways fully supports the participation and empowerment of women who represent 14% of our farmers and recognize their contribution to the agriculture sector.

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