



# PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

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## MINUTES

of Proceedings of Parliament at Suva on Monday, Twentieth day of November,  
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. Viliame Gavoka, Hon. Faiyaz Koya and Hon. Sanjay Kirpal.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Leader of the Government in Parliament the Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau moved that the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Friday, 15 September 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, those seated in the gallery and those watching the live proceedings on television and the internet.

Hon. Speaker informed all Honourable Members on the following –

- (a) the Emoluments Committee would table its report at a later sitting; and
- (b) the Business Committee unanimously agreed, for the purposes of ensuring meaningful and efficient use of Parliamentary time, debates on all Committee Reports listed for the sitting week would have time limitations.

## 6. PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND CERTAIN DOCUMENTS

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

### (a) Standing Committee on Social Affairs

- (i) Fiji Airports – 2021 Annual Report;
- (ii) Consumer Council of Fiji – Annual Report 2019 – 2020;
- (iii) Ministry of Housing and Community Development – Annual Report 2018 – 2019; and
- (iv) Tavua Town Council – Annual Report for the Year Ended 2016.

### (b) Standing Committee on Economic Affairs

- (i) Asset Fiji PTE Limited – Annual Report 2016 – 2019;
- (ii) Reserve Bank of Fiji Insurance – Annual Report 2022;
- (iii) Tourism Fiji – Annual Report 2015;
- (iv) Tourism Fiji – Annual Report 2016 1st January – 31st July;
- (v) Tourism Fiji – Annual Report August 2016 – July 2017;
- (vi) Tourism Fiji – Annual Report August 2017 – July 2018;
- (vii) Ministry of Sugar Industry – 2019 – 2020 Annual Report;
- (viii) Sugar Industry Tribunal – Annual Report 2017;
- (ix) Sugar Industry Tribunal – Annual Report 2018;
- (x) Fiji Sugar Corporation – Annual Report 2021;
- (xi) Fiji Sugar Corporation – Annual Report 2022; and
- (xii) Fiji Sugar Corporation – Annual Report 2023.

- (c) The Hon. Speaker informed Honourable Members that the Fourth Quarter Appropriation Statement – Actual Expenditure from 1 May 2023 – 31 July 2023, was for information only and would not be referred to any Standing Committee.

## 7. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

### Standing Committee on Social Affairs

- (a) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs the Hon. Alitia Bainivalu tabled the consolidated review of Levuka Town Council Annual Report 2014 and 2015.

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 would be initiated at a future sitting. The motion was seconded and agreed to unanimously.

- (b) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs the Hon. Alitia Bainivalu tabled the annual review of Fiji National Provident Fund Annual Report 2022.

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.

8. MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

- (a) The Minister for Fisheries and Forestry the Hon. Kalaveti Ravu delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Leader of the Opposition the Hon. Inia Seruiratu subsequently responded.
- (b) The Minister for iTaukei Affairs and Culture, Heritage and Arts the Hon. Ifereimi Vasu delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Jone Usamate subsequently responded.

9. QUESTIONS

**Oral Questions**

- 146/2023 Hon. Alvick Maharaj asked the Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations – Can the Minister inform Parliament whether the Ministry has undertaken any survey or study to ascertain which industry sectors are affected the most and consequently, whether any policy initiative has been put in place to address the skills shortages by the private sector.
- 147/2023 Hon. Alitia Banivalu asked the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Climate Change, Environment, Civil Service, Information, Public Enterprises and Veteran Affairs – Can the Prime Minister update Parliament on the signing of the High Seas Treaty (BBNJ) under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
- 148/2023 Hon. Jone Usamate asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics – The official CPI has been stated to be 4.2% in 2022 and below 2% in 2023. Can the Deputy Prime Minister clarify the inflation level.
- 149/2023 Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna asked the Minister for Women, Children and Social Protection – Can the Minister update Parliament on the monitoring mechanism in place on the implementation of the poverty alleviation programme to ensure that Government investment covers the targeted beneficiaries.
- 150/2023 Hon. Alipate Tuicolo asked the Minister for Education – Can the Minister inform Parliament on how the Ministry is addressing the problem of early school dropouts and truancy amongst primary and secondary school students.

- 151/2023 Hon. Ilesia Vanawalu asked the Minister for iTaukei Affairs and Culture, Heritage and Arts – Can the Minister update Parliament on specific criteria and requirements in place that needs to be adhered to by chiefs representing any Fijian province to qualify for membership within the Great Council of Chiefs.
- 152/2023 Hon. Joseph Nand asked the Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the measures being used to address the issue of transportation between the mainland and the outer islands.
- 153/2023 Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua asked the Minister for Health and Medical Services – Can the Minister update Parliament on the development of a 100 bed hospital via the Indian Government Grant.

### **Written Questions**

- 154/2023 Hon. Hem Chand asked the Minister for Education – Can the Minister update Parliament with a full costing and a list of the outcomes of the Education Summit that was recently organised in Nadi.
- 155/2023 Hon. Naisa Tuinaceva asked 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.
- 156/2023 Hon. Hem Chand asked the Minister for Women, Children and Social Protection – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the number of senior citizens currently receiving an allowance of \$125 and \$115 respectively.
- 157/2023 Hon. Naisa Tuinaceva asked the Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the following –
- (a) details of the number of complaints received through the LTA 582 text free platform; and
  - (b) the breakdown on the nature of complains and the number of issues already addressed from the period January to September 2023.
- 158/2023 Hon. Alvick Maharaj asked the Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the number of Road accident fatalities from January 2023 till 31 October 2023.
- 159/2023 Hon. Jovesa Vocea asked the Minister for Health and Medical Services – Can the Minister update Parliament as to how many

intakes have graduated from the MBBS programme that were sponsored by Toppers Scholarship from 2014 to 2022 –

- (a) how many were absorbed into the Civil Service and are currently serving in the country;
- (b) how many of them have migrated overseas; and
- (c) how many have joined the private sector or have gone into private practice.

The responses to the Oral and Supplementary Questions were provided by the respective Ministers. The response to Written Question 159/2023 would be submitted by the respective Minister in accordance with Standing Order 45(3). The following Ministers tabled their written responses –

- (a) Minister for Education – Written Question 154/2023;
- (b) Minister for Agriculture and Waterways – Written Question 155/2023;
- (c) Minister for Women, Children and Social Protection – Written Question 156/2023; and
- (d) Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport – Written Questions 157/2023 and 158/2023.

#### 10. CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

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

#### 11. SUSPENSION MOTION BY THE LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT

The Leader of the Government in Parliament the Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau moved under Standing Order 6 that so much of Standing Order 23(1) be suspended so as 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.

#### 12. MOTIONS FOR DEBATE

- (a) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs the Hon. Alitia Bainivalu moved that Parliament debates the 'Review of the iTaukei Trust Fund Board Annual Report 2020' which was tabled on 30 March 2023.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

- (b) 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 Parliament of the Republic of Fiji Annual Report 2017–2018' which was tabled on 3 April 2023.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

- (c) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs the Hon. Alitia Bainivalu moved that Parliament debates the 'Review of the Fiji Airports Annual Report 2020' which was tabled on 3 April 2023.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

- (d) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs the Hon. Alitia Bainivalu moved that Parliament debates the 'Review of the Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations 1 August 2016–31 July 2017 and 2017–2018 Annual Report' which was tabled on 4 April 2023.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

- (e) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs the Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna moved that Parliament debates the 'Review Report of the Fijian

Competition and Consumer Commission 2018–2019 Annual Report' which was tabled on 4 April 2023.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. Speaker thanked all Honourable Members for their contributions and adjourned Parliament until Tuesday, 21 November 2023 at 9.30 a.m.

Parliament adjourned at 6.13 p.m.

**Speaker of Parliament**

**Secretary-General to Parliament**

20<sup>th</sup> November, 2023.