



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

MINUTES

of Proceedings of Parliament at Suva on Tuesday, Twenty-first 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, Hon. Sanjay Kirpal, Hon. Alvick Maharaj and Hon. Moses Bulitavu.

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 Monday, 20 November 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.

6. MOTION BY THE LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT ON SITTING CALENDAR ADOPTION

The Leader of the Government in Parliament the Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau moved that Parliament adopts the sitting calendar for the year 2024.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

7. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

(a) Standing Committee on Social Affairs

- (i) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs the Hon. Alitia Bainivalu tabled the annual review of the consolidated Annual Report 2010-2018 of the Media Industry Development Authority of Fiji.

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.

- (ii) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs the Hon. Alitia Bainivalu tabled the annual review of the Ministry of Local Government Annual Report 2018-2019.

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

(b) 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 Ministry of Defence, National Security and Policing 2018-2019 Annual Report.

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

8. MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

- (a) The Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Climate Change, Environment, Civil Service, Information, Public Enterprises and Veteran Affairs the Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Jone Usamate subsequently responded.

- (b) The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-operatives, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications the Hon. Manoa Kamikamica delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Viliame Naupoto subsequently responded.
- (c) 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.
- (d) The Minister for Agriculture and Waterways the Hon. Vatimi Rayalu delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Sachida Nand subsequently responded.

9. QUESTIONS

Oral Questions

- 160/2023 Hon. Naisa Tuinaceva asked the Minister for Multi-Ethnic Affairs and Sugar Industry – The Ministry of iTaukei Affairs offers leadership training for iTaukei leaders. The training, packaged as the Sauvaki programme, assists them in their community leadership roles – Can the Minister inform Parliament if the Ministry has any plans to provide similar leadership training for other multi-ethnic groups.
- 161/2023 Hon. Ratu Isikeli Tuiwailevu asked the Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport – Can the Minister update Parliament on the status of issuance of PSV license.
- 162/2023 Hon. Jone Usamate to ask 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 Government policy is on international conflicts, and if Fiji is continuing its policy of ‘Friends to all and enemies to none’.
- 163/2023 Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu asked the Minister for Fisheries and Forestry – Can the Minister update Parliament on the 2023–2026 Strategic Action Plan Framework on Agriculture and Fisheries Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of China and Pacific Island Countries.
- 164/2023 Hon. Hem Chand asked the Minister for Education – Can the Minister inform Parliament if market employability survey is conducted before Government grant is allocated to training institutions.
- 165/2023 Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna asked the Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the total cost of the upgrading of the road from Queen Elizabeth Drive in Nasese to the National Stadium.

- 166/2023 Hon. Mosese Bilitavu to ask the Minister for Education – Can the Minister inform Parliament what the policy is with respect to the distribution of sanitary pads under the Menstrual Hygiene Management activity.
- 167/2023 Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua to ask the Minister for Agriculture and Waterways – Can the Minister update Parliament on some of the self-income generating agro-based projects that the Ministry is seeking to fund in its pursuit for agricultural diversification.

Written Questions

- 168/2023 Hon. Sachida Nand asked the Minister for Agriculture and Waterways – Can the Minister update Parliament on how many commercial vegetable farmers are in Fiji and what measures are being undertaken by the Ministry to assist farmers.
- 169/2023 Hon. Sachida Nand asked the Minister for Agriculture and Waterways – Can the Minister update Parliament on the following –
- (a) how many farmers have been assisted by the Ministry on a cost sharing basis in the last financial year;
 - (b) provide a breakdown on cost sharing in each commodity and division; and
 - (c) how many farmers are expected to be assisted by the Ministry on a cost sharing basis this financial year.
- 170/2023 Hon. Jovesa Vocea asked the Minister for Fisheries and Forestry – Can the Minister update Parliament on the following –
- (a) how many ice plants have been installed around the country in the last eight years from 2014 to 2022 by location; and
 - (b) how many will be installed this financial year by location.
- 171/2023 Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the following –
- (a) the total number of High Court Judges required by the Judiciary of Fiji and the breakdown of the same by locations;
 - (b) the total number of positions which are filled as of 30 September 2023 with respect to the vacancies created in the High Court of Fiji; and
 - (c) the total number of Judge (High Court of Fiji) positions which were vacant as of 30 September 2023.

The responses to the Oral and Supplementary Questions were provided by the respective Ministers. The Hon. Speaker allowed the Hon. Aliko Bia to ask Oral Question 166/2023. Oral Questions 162/2023 and 167/2023 were dropped from the Order Paper as the relevant Ministers had provided responses during their Ministerial Statements. The following Ministers tabled their written responses –

- (a) Minister for Agriculture and Waterways – Written Questions 168/2023 and 169/2023;
- (b) Minister for Fisheries and Forestry – Written Question 170/2023; and
- (c) Attorney-General and Minister for Justice – Written Question 171/2023.

10. CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

- (a) The Hon. Attorney-General and Minister for Justice the Hon. Siromi Turaga moved a motion pursuant to Standing Order 51 –
 - (i) That the iTaukei Affairs (Amendment) Bill 2023 be considered by Parliament without delay;
 - (ii) That the Bill must pass through one stage at a single sitting of Parliament;
 - (iii) That the Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament; and
 - (iv) That the Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Thursday, 23 November 2023, but that 1 hour be given to debate the Bill, with the right of reply given to him as the member moving the motion.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Votes Cast –

Yes	–	28
No	–	22
Not Voted	–	4

Motion agreed to.

- (b) The Hon. Attorney-General and Minister for Justice the Hon. Siromi Turaga moved a motion pursuant to Standing Order 51 –
 - (i) That the Employment Relations (Amendment) Bill 2023 be considered by Parliament without delay;
 - (ii) That the Bill must pass through one stage at a single sitting of Parliament;
 - (iii) That the Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament; and
 - (iv) That the Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Thursday, 23 November 2023, but that 1 hour be given to debate the Bill, with the right of reply given to him as the member moving the motion.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Votes Cast –

Yes	–	28
No	–	21
Not Voted	–	5

Motion agreed to.

(c) The Hon. Attorney-General and Minister for Justice the Hon. Siromi Turaga moved a motion pursuant to Standing Order 51 –

- (i) That the Mahogany Industry Development (Amendment) Bill 2023 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- (ii) That the Bill must pass through one stage at a single sitting of Parliament;
- (iii) That the Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament; and
- (iv) That the Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Thursday, 23 November 2023, but that 1 hour be given to debate the Bill, with the right of reply given to him as the member moving the motion.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Votes Cast –

Yes	–	27
No	–	22
Not Voted	–	5

Motion agreed to.

(d) The Hon. Attorney-General and Minister for Justice the Hon. Siromi Turaga moved a motion pursuant to Standing Order 51 –

- (i) That the Local Government (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2023 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- (ii) That the Bill must pass through one stage at a single sitting of Parliament;
- (iii) That the Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament; and
- (iv) That the Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Thursday, 23 November 2023, but that 1 hour be given to debate the Bill, with the right of reply given to him as the member moving the motion.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Votes Cast –

Yes	–	28
No	–	22
Not Voted	–	4

Motion agreed to.

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 Economic Affairs the Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna moved that Parliament debates the ‘Consolidated Review Report of the Pacific Fishing Company Ltd 2018–2019 Annual Reports’ which was tabled on 4 April 2023.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

- (b) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs the Hon. Alitia Bainivalu moved that Parliament debates the ‘Review Report of the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation Annual Report for the period of 1st August 2018–31st July 2019’ which was tabled on 5 April 2023.

Motion seconded.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

- (c) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs the Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna moved that Parliament debates the 'Review Report of the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service 2018–2019 Annual Report' which was tabled on 14 July 2023.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

- (d) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs the Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna moved that Parliament debates the 'Consolidated Review Report of the Fiji Development Bank 2020/2021 Annual Report' which was tabled on 14 July 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 Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism 2018–2019 Annual Report' which was tabled on 14 July 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 Wednesday, 22 November 2023 at 9.30 a.m.

Parliament adjourned at 7.55 p.m.

Speaker of Parliament

Secretary-General to Parliament

21st November, 2023.