



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

MINUTES

of Proceedings of Parliament at Suva on Wednesday, Twenty-second 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 and Hon. Mosese 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 Tuesday, 21 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.

Hon. Speaker also welcomed the students from the University of South Queensland, University of the Sunshine Coast and Curtin University in Perth and their accompanying officials.

6. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

(a) Standing Committee on Natural Resources

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources the Hon. Inia Seruiratu tabled the annual review of the Ministry of Agriculture 2018-2019 Annual Report.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources 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 Economic Affairs

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs the Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna tabled the consolidated review report of the Fiji Financial Intelligence Unit (FFIU) 2021/2022 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 would be initiated at a future sitting. The motion was seconded and agreed to unanimously.

(c) 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 National Fire Authority Report for the 7 months period ended 31 July 2016.

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 Public Rental Board 2020 Annual Report.

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.

7. 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 Leader of the Opposition the Hon. Inia Seruiratu subsequently responded.

- (b) The Minister for Health and Medical Services the Hon. Dr Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Penioni Ravunawa subsequently responded.
- (c) The Minister for iTaukei Affairs and Culture, Heritage and Arts the Hon. Ifereimi Vasu delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Ratu Josaia Niudamu subsequently responded.
- (d) The Minister for Education the Hon. Aseri Radrodro delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Hem Chand subsequently responded.
- (e) The Minister for Youth and Sports the Hon. Jese Saukuru delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Ioane Naivalurua subsequently responded.
- (f) The Minister for Agriculture and Waterways the Hon. Vatimi Rayalu delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Sachida Nand subsequently responded.

8. QUESTIONS

Oral Questions

- 172/2023 Hon. Naisa Tuinaceva to ask the Minister for Women, Children and Social Protection – There are some reports that have linked the increase in sexual related crimes to pornography. Can the Minister inform Parliament if there are plans to ban or regulate pornographic sites in Fiji.
- 173/2023 Hon. Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure asked the Minister for Women, Children and Social Protection – Can the Minister update Parliament on the changes to the Bus Fare Programme as announced in the 2023–2024 budget.
- 174/2023 Hon. Alipate Tuicolo asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-operatives, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications – Can the Deputy Prime Minister inform Parliament on the Government’s plans to assist farmers in the rural communities by establishing roadside stalls to help them sell their farm produce.
- 175/2023 Hon. Alitia Bainivalu asked the Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations – Can the Minister update Parliament on the Agreement between the Ministry and the Volunteer Service Abroad of New Zealand.
- 176/2023 Hon. Taito Rokomatu asked the Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport – Can the Minister inform Parliament what policies are in place when bus companies stop service delivery to the public for any particular route.

- 177/2023 Hon. Esrom Immanuel asked the Minister for Housing and Local Government – Can the Minister update Parliament on whether the Town and City Councils will be given the authority to process and issue Business Licences under their municipality.
- 178/2023 Hon. Sachida Nand to ask the Minister for Agriculture and Waterways – In the 2023-2024 budget, the dairy industry was allocated \$5million. Can the Minister update Parliament on how has the budget been utilised and what activities are being funded.
- 179/2023 Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua asked the Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations – Can the Minister update Parliament on Labour Reforms consistent to the ideals and principles of the labour law as required and set out by the International Labour Organisation.

Written Questions

- 180/2023 Hon. Naisa Tuinaceva asked the Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport – Can the Minister update Parliament on the following –
- (a) how many Traffic Infringement Notices were issued within the last 10 months to PSV related offences; and
 - (b) how many PSV Driver license were placed on warning, final warning, suspended or cancelled because of being habitual offenders within the last 10 months.
- 181/2023 Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu asked the Minister for Agriculture and Waterways – Can the Minister update Parliament on the following –
- (a) how many farm roads were constructed and completed in the past eight years i.e. 2014 to 2022 by Province; and
 - (b) how many farm roads are earmarked to be constructed in the current financial year by Province.
- 182/2023 Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua asked the Minister for Home Affairs and Immigration – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the following –
- (a) the number of reports received by the Fiji Police on alleged acts of sacrilege and the breakdown of the same by year and division for the period 2007 to 2022;
 - (b) the number of persons who were charged for committing the alleged acts of sacrilege and presented to any Court of law in the period 2007 to 2022 and the breakdown of the same by year and division;
 - (c) the number of charged persons who were successfully convicted and sentenced for committing acts of sacrilege in the period 2007 to 2022 and the breakdown of the same by year and division;

- (d) the total number of cases still pending before the Judiciary pertaining to persons charged with committing alleged acts of sacrilege in the period 2007 to 2022; and
- (e) the total number of suspects and reports still under investigation pertaining to alleged acts of sacrilege in the period 2007 to 2022 and the breakdown of the same by year and division.

The responses to the Oral and Supplementary Questions were provided by the respective Ministers. The Hon. Speaker allowed the Hon. Manoa Kamikamica to respond to Oral Question 172/2023. Oral Question 178/2023 was dropped from the Order Paper as the relevant Minister had provided a response during his Ministerial Statement. The response to Written Question 182/2023 would be tabled at a later sitting of Parliament. The following Ministers tabled their written responses –

- (a) Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport – Written Question 180/2023; and
- (b) Minister for Agriculture and Waterways – Written Question 181/2023.

9. 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.

10. CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

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

11. MOTIONS FOR DEBATE

- (a) (A) The Hon. Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Climate Change, Environment, Civil Service, Information, Public Enterprises and Veteran Affairs the Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka moved that pursuant to section 13 of the Parliamentary Remunerations Act 2014, Parliament makes a determination to reduce the rates payable for Overseas Travelling Allowances of the following positions by amendments to Part B of the Schedule to the Parliamentary Remunerations Act 2014, as set out below –

- (i) Prime Minister
“9. Overseas Travelling Allowance – UNDP subsistence allowance plus 100%.”
- (ii) Cabinet Ministers
“8. Overseas Travelling Allowance – UNDP subsistence allowance plus 50%.”
- (iii) Assistant Ministers
“8. Overseas Travelling Allowance – UNDP subsistence allowance plus 25%.”
- (iv) Leader of the Opposition
“8. Overseas Travelling Allowance – UNDP subsistence allowance plus 50%.”
- (v) Members of Parliament (including Deputy Speaker, Government/Opposition Whip and Leader of the Government in Parliament and excluding the Prime Minister, Ministers, Speaker and the Leader of Opposition)
“6. Overseas Travelling Allowance – UNDP subsistence allowance plus 25%.”; and

(B) That this amendment to the Determination to take effect from 1 December 2023 until such time that the Emoluments Committee tables its report in Parliament and the subsequent debate and vote has taken place.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Votes Cast –		
Yes	–	28
Abstained	–	21
Not Voted	–	5

Motion agreed to.

- (b) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence the Hon. Viliame Naupoto moved that Parliament debates the ‘Review Report of the Ministry of Defence and National Security 2017–2018 Annual Report’ which was tabled on 14 July 2023.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

- (c) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources the Hon. Inia Seruiratu moved that Parliament debates the 'Consolidated Annual Review Report of the Ministry of Fisheries for the Years 2018–2019, 2019–2020 and 2020–2021' 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 Justice, Law and Human Rights the Hon. Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure moved that Parliament debates the 'Consolidated Review Report of the Ministry of Civil Service 2016, 2016–2017, 2017–2018 and 2018–2019 Annual Reports' 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 Social Affairs the Hon. Alitia Bainivalu moved that Parliament debates the 'Review of the Ministry of Youth and Sports Annual Report 2019–2020' which was tabled on 11 September 2023.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

- (f) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs the Hon. Alitia Bainivalu moved that Parliament debates the 'Review of the Fiji Sports Council 2017–2018 Annual Report' which was tabled on 11 September 2023.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. Speaker thanked all Honourable Members for their contributions and adjourned Parliament until Thursday, 23 November 2023 at 9.30 a.m.

Parliament adjourned at 8.57 p.m.

Speaker of Parliament

Secretary-General to Parliament

22nd November, 2023.