



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

MINUTES

of Proceedings of Parliament at Suva on Friday, Twenty-fourth 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. Jese Saukuru and Hon. Faiyaz Koya.

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 Thursday, 23 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 informed all Honourable Members on the request from the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights for extension of the tabling of the Heritage Bill 2023 and sought the indulgence of Parliament and which was agreed to unanimously.

Hon. Speaker also ruled on the points of order raised by the Deputy Prime Minister Hon. Prof. Biman Prasad and Hon. Sachida Nand. Hon. Speaker informed that he would deliver his ruling on the point of order by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition at a later sitting date.

6. PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND CERTAIN DOCUMENTS

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

(a) Standing Committee on Public Accounts

- (i) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – 2021–2022 Audit Report on Statutory Authorities Independent Bodies and Commissions;
- (ii) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – 2022 Audit Report on Infrastructure Sector;
- (iii) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – 2022 Audit Report on Economic Sector;
- (iv) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – 2022 Audit Report on Social Services Sector;
- (v) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – 2022 Audit Report on General Administration Sector;
- (vi) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Provincial Council Volume 5; and
- (vii) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Compliance Audit Report.

(b) Standing Committee on Economic Affairs

- (i) Reserve Bank of Fiji August – 2022–July 2023 Annual Report; and
- (ii) Sugar Cane Growers Council Annual Report 2021.

(c) Standing Committee on Social Affairs

Fiji National Provident Fund – Annual Report 2023.

(d) Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights

2022 General Election Joint Report by the Electoral Commission and Supervisor of Elections.

7. QUESTIONS

Oral Questions

195/2023 Hon. Vijay Nath asked the Minister for Fisheries and Forestry – Can the Minister inform Parliament if the distribution of the US\$60m among Forum Fisheries Committee members has been agreed upon.

- 196/2023 Hon. Alitia Bainivalu 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 update Parliament on Fiji’s Membership of the Assembly of the Global Development Network (GDN).
- 197/2023 Hon. Virendra Lal asked the Minister for Home Affairs and Immigration – Given the major increase in the trafficking and use of hard drugs in Fiji in recent months. Can the Minister inform Parliament what steps the Government is taking to address this issue.
- 198/2023 Hon. Jovesa Vocea 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 how the Ministry is empowering Co-operatives and promoting business sustainability.
- 199/2023 Hon. Alvick Maharaj asked the Minister for Housing and Local Government – Can the Minister update Parliament on the progress of the Savusavu, Levuka and Nakasi markets that were initiated by the previous Government.
- 200/2023 Hon. Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure asked the Minister for Education – Can the Minister update Parliament on the Education (Establishment and Registration of Schools) (Amendment) Regulations 2023.
- 201/2023 Hon. Hem Chand asked the Minister for Education – Prices of most items have increased due to increase in VAT and corporate tax. Can the Minister inform Parliament whether the Ministry is considering increasing the Free Education Grant and Boarding Grant to meet the increase in the cost of items.

The responses to the Oral and Supplementary Questions were provided by the respective Ministers. Oral Question 196/2023 was withdrawn by the Hon. Alitia Bainivalu.

8. END OF WEEK STATEMENTS

- (a) Hon. Ketan Lal delivered his End of Week Statement and the Minister for Women, Children and Social Protection the Hon. Lynda Tabuya subsequently responded.
- (b) Hon. Jone Usamate delivered his End of Week Statement and the Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport the Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau subsequently responded.
- (c) Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna delivered his End of Week Statement.
- (d) Hon. Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure delivered his End of Week Statement and the Minister for Home Affairs and Immigration the Hon. Pio Tikoduadua subsequently responded.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The Leader of the Government in Parliament the Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau moved that Parliament stands adjourned until Monday, 4 March 2024 at 10.00 a.m.

Motion seconded.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

Hon. Speaker thanked all Honourable Members for their contributions during the week, and informed Honourable Members on the upcoming prorogation of Parliament.

Hon. Speaker also reminded all Honourable Members that during prorogation, all Parliamentary business would be suspended and only the urgent and necessary business would be determined at the discretion of the Speaker.

Hon. Speaker wished all Honourable Members a Merry Christmas and Prosperous 2024, and declared Parliament adjourned until Monday, 4 March 2024 at 10.00 a.m.

Parliament adjourned at 12.20 p.m.

Speaker of Parliament

Secretary-General to Parliament

24th November, 2023.