

**Parliament of the Republic of Fiji: 2018-2019 Annual Report – Responses to the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights**

1. Reference is made on page 10 and the Committee seeks clarification if there is any statistics available on the evaluation of performance and productivity of the committees work during the review process of Bills and Annual Report?

The table below briefly outlines the overall Committees' performance in relation to the review of Bills and Annual Reports. As outlined in the report and table below, 26 Bills were tabled, out of which, 23 Bills were enacted (pg. 25-26). From the 23 Bills that were enacted, 22 were passed under SO51, whilst 1 Bill (Appropriation Bill), progressed through the normal legislative process provided for under the Standing Orders. With respect to the Annual Reports, the overall performance for committees is measured at 73% with Committees tabling 38 reviewed reports from the 52 that were tabled by the respective Ministers pursuant to SO 38.

| <b>PERFORMANCE MEASURE</b>  | <b>DATA</b>   | <b>OUTPUT</b> |
|---|---|---------------|
| Number of Bills enacted   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 26 Bills</li><li>• 23 Enacted</li><li>• 22 passed under SO 51</li><li>• 1 under normal legislative process (Appropriation Bill)</li><li>• 3 Bills pending</li></ul> | 88.5%         |
| Number of Annual Reports tabled in Parliament – referred to Standing Committees | 52  | 73%           |
| Number of AR review reports tabled in Parliament                                | 38  |               |

2. The Committee seeks clarification on the benefits that has risen from the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as noted on page 11.

The Memorandum of Co-operation between the Parliament of Georgia and Fijian Parliament was signed on 7 March 2019, effectively only for one year, however, provisions imply that at the expiration date, the MOU shall continue in force upon agreement by both Parliaments. The MOC was mainly aimed at capacity building for parliamentary staff.

Funded by the Georgian Parliament, the Fijian Parliament was able to send a senior parliamentary staff, on a three months attachment from 15 May to 14 July, 2019.

**3. Reference is made to page 14 and the Committee seeks clarification on the budget allocated towards the development of ICT for the reported year and how has Parliament gone in respect to the ICT investment.**

| <b>ICT Broadcasting Project</b>                                     |   |                |   |
|---|---|----------------|---|
|   |   |                |   |
| UNDP (FPSP)   | Total funding assistance                            | \$960,078.01   | Supply of Cameras, Control Room equipment and training for ICT staff.     |
| Alignment of cameras in the Chambers and broadcasting of Committees | Total cost of the capital project                   | \$1,600,130.05 | Supply of Cameras, Control Room equipment and training for ICT staff.     |
| Fijian Parliament   | Total cost incurred (Operating/Capital Expenditure) | \$2,041,282.85 | Purchase of equipment, installations fees, room upgrade, cartage and tax. |

- (i) Main objective of the Broadcasting project was to have an independent Parliament Television that was controlled and managed by the Fijian Parliament, especially with respect to the broadcasting of Committee Public submissions.
- (ii) On the 19th of November 2019, the project was officially launched with the transition from FBC (Fiji Broadcasting Corporation) services to the Fijian Parliament Television services.
- (iii) Investment in this project enabled a more transparent oversight process taking Parliament to its people through the avenue of broadcasting. With the initial system in place and additional support from the UNDP (FPSP), the system was upgraded to cater for a Hybrid system with capabilities to host Hybrid Parliament Sitting, Hybrid Committee Public Hearing, Virtual Committee Public Hearings and Virtual Committee Deliberations complete with broadcasting on Parliament Television and livestream on the internet.

- (iv) With the complete system in place, the Fijian Parliament was able to deliver its core business function and keep the people of Fiji informed amidst the national COVID-19 outbreak (2020-2021).
- (v) The same system now enables all Honourable Members to continue to execute their constitutional mandate wherever they are in the world as long as they have internet connectivity.
- (vi) A milestone achievement and legacy has been set for the Fijian Parliament (kindly refer to the attached *Hansard* report) –
  - (a) [Two-way virtual voice and video communication capability for Parliament - Parliament of the Republic of Fiji](#)
  - (b) [Broadcasting equipment to make Parliament work more accessible - Parliament of the Republic of Fiji](#)
  - (c) [Speaking Notes for His Excellency Hon. Speaker, Ratu Epeli Nailatikau during the IPU World e-Parliament Conference - Parliament of the Republic of Fiji](#)
  - (d) [Timely investments and innovation ensure Parliamentary business continuity amidst the COVID-19 pandemic - Parliament of the Republic of Fiji](#)

**4. Reference is made to page 15, and the Committee seeks clarification on the audit opinion of the financial statements whether it was “Qualified” or “Unqualified”.**

We are most pleased to confirm that the Audit Opinion of the Financial statement ending 31 July 2019 was an Unqualified Audit.

**5. Reference is made to page 16 in which the Committee noted that the statement on “other matters” does not correlate with the statement by the former Hon. Speaker on “Financial Prudence” on page 13. The Committee, therefore, seeks clarification on whether the “Financial Prudence” statement was done pre-audit or post audit period.**

The statement on “Other matters” as mentioned on page 16 was noted and improved immediately during the audit. The overall assessment of Financial Governance for this financial period were rated as follow;

- Control Environment – Generally effective
- Risk Assessment – Generally effective
- Control Activities – Effective
- Information and Communication Controls – Effective
- Monitoring Activities – Generally Effective

(Refer page 3 of the Draft Management Letter)

6. Reference is again made to question 5 above and the Committee seeks clarification on what measures have the department taken to address the issues noted on “Other Matters” by the Auditor General.

The weak internal controls areas as mentioned by the Auditors are as tabulated below –

| Areas of Weak Internal Control   | Identified Areas  | Measures Taken  |
|--|---|---|
| Not Issuing local purchase orders                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Airfares</li> <li>• Hire of Venues</li> <li>• Catering Services during Parliament sitting</li> <li>• Supply of Bula wear APPF Conference</li> <li>• Purchase of Plaque &amp; neck tie</li> </ul> | Local Purchase Orders are now issued for procurement.   |
| Not Obtaining Competitive Quotations                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Airfares</li> <li>• Hire of Venues</li> <li>• Catering Services during Parliament sitting</li> <li>• Supply of Bula wear APPF Conference</li> <li>• Purchase of Plaque &amp; necktie</li> </ul>  | Competitive quotation are obtain for procurement and should there be only one quotation, request is submitted to Secretary-General to waive the three quote requirement pursuant to regulation 29(3) of the Procurement Regulations 2010. |
| Tender not called for Procurement of Goods and services above \$50,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catering Services during Parliament sitting</li> <li>• MP’s Training</li> </ul>  | An Expression of Interest was advertised to tender the catering services.   |

7. Reference is made on page 29 and the Committee seeks clarification on the return on investment (ROI) on those international forums attended by staff and Members of Parliament and the status of implementation been done regarding the Back to Office Report (BTOR).

The process for BTOR submissions is being reviewed and strengthened. The ROI has been outstanding. The learnings from the staff and MPs attendance to the international

capacity building forums have been naturalised and implemented within the Fijian Parliament setting.

- i) Launch and implementation of Guidance Note on SDG for all Standing Committees – ‘Oversight of the Implementation of the SDG: Guidance Note for the Standing Committees of the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji’
- ii) Establishment of the Women MPs Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Fiji Group
- iii) Establishment of the Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) Fiji Group
- iv) Hon. Speaker’s Active Membership on the CPA Executive Committee
- v) Activation and monitoring of SDG questions asked in the House. These statistics are maintained and updated
- vi) The Fijian Parliament and the SDG – Self Assessment Report

**8. The Committee seeks clarification if there is anything in particular in the report that is dormant in relation to the current operation(s) of the department.**

No dormant issue to report at this point in time.

**-ENDS-**