



MINISTER'S RESPONSE TO QUESTION 75/2024

Wednesday 22 May 2024

Parliament Chambers

9.30am

Suva

***HON ILIESA VANAWALU TO ASK THE MINISTER FOR
ITAUKEI AFFAIRS AND CULTURE, HERITAGE AND
ARTS – “CAN THE MINISTER UPDATE PARLIAMENT ON
HOW MANY VILLAGES AND SETTLEMENTS HAVE
UTILIZED THE VILLAGE BEAUTIFICATION AND
IMPROVEMENT FUND SCHEME.”***

HON MINISTER'S RESPONSE

1. ***MR SPEAKER***, I SUBMIT MY RESPOSE TO HONOURABLE VANAWALU'S QUESTION.
2. BY WAY OF INFORMATION, THE VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT SCHEME (VIS) WAS INITIATED BY THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT IN 2001 AND WAS AN

ACTIVITY UNDER THE BLUEPRINT PROGRAM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIGENOUS FIJIANS AND ROTUMANS.

3. THE SCHEME HAS BEEN REVIVED FOR THE 2023-2024 FINANCIAL YEAR. A SUM OF \$2 MILLION WAS PROVIDED IN THE BUDGET FOR THIS PURPOSE.

MR SPEAKER, THE FOCUS OF THE SCHEME IS TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE FOR THE PHYSICAL BEAUTIFICATION AND GENERAL IMPROVEMENT OF THE LIVING STANDARDS OF INDIGENOUS FIJIANS AND ROTUMANS RESIDING IN THE VILLAGES. ITAUKEI VILLAGES HAVE FOR LONG BEEN LACKING BASIC INFRASTRUCTURAL NEEDS LIKE COMMUNAL FACILITIES, PROPER DRAINAGE, AS WELL AS CLEAN AND USER-FRIENDLY SANITATION.

MR SPEAKER

4. THE VIS AIMS TO IMPROVE THESE THROUGH ASSISTANCE UNDER THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS WITH $\frac{1}{4}$ CONTRIBUTION FROM THE COMMUNITIES. THE COMPONENTS OF THE SCHEME ARE:

4.1 MULTIPURPOSE HALL/EVACUATION CENTRE ASSISTANCE;

4.2 VILLAGE BEAUTIFICATION; AND

4.3 VILLAGE SANITATION.

5. THE CRITERIA FOR SELECTION FOR THE DIFFERENT CATEGORIES ARE:

5.1 HIGH RISK AREAS – THIS COVERED AREAS THAT WERE PRONE TO DISASTERS AND DISEASE OUTBREAKS LIKE LEPTOSPIROSIS, TYPHOID, DENGUE, AND DIARRHEA.

5.2 REMOTELY LOCATED AREAS – THIS IS TO CARE FOR THE REMOTE RURAL

COMMUNITIES THAT WERE OFTEN NEGLECTED AND NEEDED SUCH DEVELOPMENT FOR THE WELFARE OF THEIR PEOPLE.

5.3 COMPLETE APPLICATIONS – THE REQUIRED INFORMATION FOR ALL CATEGORIES NEEDED TO BE FULFILLED AS SET OUT IN THE APPLICATION FORMS, INCLUSIVE OF PLANS AND COSTS.

5.4 VILLAGES CLOSE TO HOTELS – THIS IS TO UP THE BEAUTIFICATION OF VILLAGES IN CLOSE PROXIMITY OF HOTELS TO FACILITATE VISITATION AND ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMS TO BE ORGANIZED.

6. MR SPEAKER

TABLE 1 SETS OUT THE TOTAL APPLICATIONS FOR EACH OF THE COMPONENTS.

| TABLE 1: VIS APPLICATION FOR SUPPORT | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------|------------------------|-------|
| Province | Multipurpose Hall/ Evacuation Centre | Village Sanitation | Village Beautification | Total |
| Ba | 5 | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| Bua | 3 | 4 | 2 | 9 |
| Cakaudrove | 3 | 2 | 2 | 7 |
| Kadavu | 4 | 2 | 1 | 7 |
| Lau | 7 | 2 | 1 | 10 |
| Lomaiviti | 5 | 0 | 4 | 9 |
| Macuata | 11 | 1 | 2 | 14 |
| Nadroga | 1 | | | |
| Navosa | | 3 | 0 | 4 |
| Naitasiri | 17 | 11 | 19 | 47 |
| Namosi | 3 | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| Ra | 20 | 23 | 8 | 51 |
| Rewa | 12 | 15 | 8 | 35 |
| Rotuma | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Serua | 10 | 8 | 10 | 23 |
| Tailevu | 15 | 19 | 15 | 49 |
| Total | 116 | 91 | 76 | 283 |

MR SPEAKER

7. AS SET OUT IN TABLE 1, THE APPLICATIONS BY SPECIFIC COMPONENT ARE:

7.1 MULTIPURPOSE HALL/EVACUATION CENTRE (MPH/EC)

THERE WERE 116 APPLICATIONS FOR THIS COMPONENT INCLUDING 52 NEW CONSTRUCTIONS, 62 FOR PARTIALLY COMPLETED, 1 FOR A DISPENSARY, AND 1 FOR THE EXTENSION OF A PERSONAL HOME. OF THESE, 10 APPLICATIONS WERE APPROVED AS SET OUT IN TABLE 2 BY DIVISION AND BY ACTUAL VILLAGE LOCATION.

7.2 **MR SPEAKER,** FOR VILLAGE BEAUTIFICATION

THERE WERE 76 VILLAGE APPLICATIONS WITH 46 FOR FOOTPATHS, 9 FOR DRAINAGE, 3 FOR RUBBISH DISPOSAL, 5 FOR SEAWALL/RIVERWALL

AND 13 FOR IMPROVING VILLAGE LANDSCAPING. OF THESE, 13 WERE APPROVED AS SET OUT IN TABLE 2 BY DIVISION AND ACTUAL LOCATION.

7.3 **MR SPEAKER,** ON THE VILLAGE SANITATION COMPONENT, 91 APPLICATIONS WERE RECEIVED, BEING MOSTLY FOR TOILET CONSTRUCTION FROM PIT AND WATER SEAL TOILETS TO FLUSH TOILETS. FOR PROPER HYGIENE, THIS NEEDS A GOOD WATER SUPPLY AND A PROPER SEPTIC TANK. THERE WERE 14 APPLICATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN WATER SUPPLY, WHILE ONE APPLICATION WAS FOR SEWER IMPROVEMENT FOR A SEPTIC TANK. THERE WERE 6 APPROVED SANITATION APPLICATIONS AS SET OUT IN TABLE 2, BOTH BY DIVISION AND ACTUAL VILLAGE LOCATION.

8. **VERIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT**

8.1 **MR SPEAKER,** THE VERIFICATION PROCESS WAS DONE AT HQ WITH VERIFICATION DONE WITH THE RESPECTIVE ROKO'S FOR THE PROVINCES.

8.2 IT WAS EVIDENT FROM MANY OF THE APPLICATIONS THAT THERE WAS A NEED FOR THIS SCOPE OF DEVELOPMENT TO IMPROVE THE STANDARD OF LIVING AT THE VILLAGE LEVEL.

8.3 **MAJOR ISSUES NOTED WERE:**

8.3.1 INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS. A TOTAL OF 173 APPLICATIONS DID NOT ADHERE TO THE REQUIREMENTS ON THE APPLICATION FORM. THE GATHERING OF THREE QUOTATIONS WAS THE MAIN CONTRIBUTOR AS MANY APPLICATIONS EITHER HAD ONLY ONE OR TWO QUOTATIONS. FOR SOME VILLAGES, THEY GATHERED QUOTES FROM HARDWARE SHOPS THAT WERE CONVENIENT TO THEM AND ARE REGULAR

SUPPLIERS IN THEIR AREA. OTHERS COULD NOT PROVIDE DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE CONCERNING THE ¼ CONTRIBUTION AND SOME HAVE MENTIONED THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION THROUGH THE TNK SUPPORT LETTER, OR LETTERS OF THEIR OWN.

8.3.2 NOT MUCH INFORMATION WAS PROVIDED BY THE APPLICANTS CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT REQUESTED.

8.3.3 THE SCOPE OF THE PROJECT WAS UNCLEAR.

8.3.4 TNK SUPPORT LETTERS WERE NOT OF MUCH ASSISTANCE.

8.3.5 INCOMPLETE MATERIAL LIST AND COSTING. OTHER EXPENSES LIKE TRANSPORTATION, FREIGHT, MEALS, LODGING, AND CARPENTER SALARY OR ALLOWANCES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED.

8.3.6 LACK OF STANDARD PLANS.

8.3.7 LACK OF PROPER ASSESSMENT ON THE GROUND.

8.4 A LIST OF POSSIBILITIES WERE THEN FORWARDED TO THE MANAGEMENT FOR THEIR ENDORSEMENT. ON THEIR APPROVAL, A SCOPING EXERCISE WAS CONDUCTED TO VERIFY HOW GENUINE THE PROJECTS WERE, THE VALIDITY OF THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS AND THE NECESSARY MANPOWER TO CARRY OUT THE PROJECT.

9. **MR SPEAKER**, ON FINALIZATION OF THE SCOPING PROCESS AND MANAGEMENT APPROVAL, THE PROJECTS WERE ENDORSED FOR THE PROGRAM.

9.1 TABLE 2 SETS OUT THE APPROVED PROJECTS FOR EACH COMPONENT AND THE ACTUAL LOCALITY OF THE PARTICIPATING GROUP BY DIVISION.

| TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF VIS 2023/2024 APPROVED PROJECTS | | |
|--|---|---|
| MULTIPURPOSE HALL / EVACUATION CENTRE | | |
| Northern | 1 | Nakorotiki, Wainunu, Bua - New construction |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| Western | 1 | Nakorokula, Rakiraki, Ra - Partly constructed (awaiting ¼ construction) |
| Eastern | 4 | Soso, Naceva, Kadavu - Partly constructed Muaninuku, Nabukelevu, Kadavu - New construction Nasesara, Moturiki, Lomaiviti - Painting of MPH/EC |
| Central | 4 | Matailobau, Matailobau, Naitasiri - Partly constructed Dakuni, Sawau, Rewa - Partly constructed. Soliyaga, Sawau, Rewa - Partly constructed. Vuci, Tokatoka, Tailevu - Partly constructed Nakavika, Wainikoroiluva, Namosi - New construction |
| VILLAGE BEAUTIFICATION | | |
| Northern | 3 | Vuya, Vuya, Bua - Footpath Vivili, Nasavusavu, Cakaudrove - Footpath Cawaro, Udu, Macuata - Footpath |
| Western | 1 | Nativi, Saivou, Ra - Drainage |
| Eastern | 2 | Levuka, Yale, Kadavu - Footpath Navuti, Moturiki, Lomaiviti - Seawall |
| Central | 7 | Nacokaika, Naitasiri, Naitasiri - IVL - Village Driveway Namuumua, Viria, Naitasiri - Footpath Waikalou, Soloira, Naitasiri - IVL - Purchase of brush cutters Nawaisomo, Raviravi, Rewa - IVL - Installation of solar streetlights Taulevu, Matailobau, Naitasiri - Footpath Namaqumaqua, Serua, Serua - Footpath Kiuva, Bau, Tailevu - Footpath |
| VILLAGE SANITATION | | |
| Northern | 2 | Yaroi, Nasavusavu, Cakaudrove - Toilet Construction Vuya, Vuya, Bua - Toilet Construction |
| Western | 2 | Yavulo, Nasigatoka, Nadroga Navosa - Toilet Construction Sawanivo, Lawaki, Ra - Toilet Construction |
| Eastern | 0 | |
| Central | 2 | Lutu Wainimala, Muaira - Toilet Construction Navolau, Viria, Naitasiri - Toilet Construction Wainimakutu, Naqarawai, Namosi - Toilet Construction |

9.2 IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE 10 MULTIPURPOSE HALL/EVACUATION CENTRES SELECTED WERE THE RESULT OF THEIR DILAPIDATED STATE AND THE GREAT DIFFICULTY THEY SUFFERED IN ACCOMMODATING THEIR VILLAGERS DURING PROLONGED ADVERSE WEATHER.

10. SET OUT IN ANNEX 1, BY DIVISION AND ACTUAL VILLAGE LOCATION, THE CURRENT STATUS OF ALL THESE COMPONENTS AND THEIR TOTAL COSTS FOR EACH AS OF 17 MAY 2024.

11. **MR SPEAKER**, IN BRIEF, THE NUMBER OF TOTAL VILLAGES IMPACTED UNDER THIS YEAR'S VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT SCHEME ARE:

- A. MULTIPURPOSE HALL/
EVACUATION CENTRE - 10
- B. VILLAGE BEAUTIFICATION - 13

C. VILLAGE SANITATION - 6
29 VILLAGES

THE DETAILS BY DIVISION AND LOCATIONS ARE SET OUT IN TABLE 2.

MR SPEAKER,

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE HOUSE, \$2 MILLION WAS RELEASED TO THE MINISTRY IN FEBRUARY 2024. OF THIS \$1.4 MILLION HAS BEEN COMMITTED AND THE MINISTRY IS IN THE PROCESS OF ACQUITTING \$1.1MILLION. THE REMAINING \$600,000 WILL BE RELEASED ON FULL ACQUITTAL OF THE RELEASED AMOUNT AND PROJECTS ARE ALREADY EARMARKED FOR THIS.

13. THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF LEARNINGS FROM THIS YEAR'S PROGRAM WITH A VIEW TO IMPROVE

ON NOTIFICATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF
PROPER SOPS FOR THE DIFFERENT AREAS

NEEDING SUPPORT. THERE IS ALSO A NEED FOR
INTERMINISTERIAL CONSULTATIVE
ARRANGEMENTS.

14. **MR SPEAKER,** THANK YOU FOR THE
OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE A RESPONSE TO THIS
QUESTION.
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