



STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Consolidated Review Report of the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs 2017-2019 and 2019-2022 Annual Report



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Table of Contents

CHAIRPERSON’S FOREWORD	3
ACRONYM	4
COMMITTEE REMIT AND MEMBERS	5
1. INTRODUCTION	6
1.1. Committee Procedures	6
2. COMMITTEE DELIBERATION AND ANALYSIS	7
MINISTRY OF ITAUKEI AFFAIRS	7
3. COMMITTEE KEY FINDINGS.....	8
4. COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS.....	9
5. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND GENDER ANALYSIS.....	10
6. CONCLUSION.....	11
COMMITTEE MEMBERS’ SIGNATURE	12
ANNEXURE.....	12

CHAIRPERSON’S FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the Standing Committee on Social Affairs report on *the Consolidated Review of The Ministry of Itaukei Affairs 2017-2019 and 2019-2022 Annual Report*.

The review highlighted some of the ministry's ongoing projects, such as the digitalization of the VKB registration, including iTaukei’s residing abroad and the continuation of the Cultural Revitalization Programs.

The Committee noted that the Ministry is strategically looking at ways to address its challenges. Firstly, the preservation and management of cultural registers which consists of managing land and customary titles, records and reinforcing partnerships by validating iTaukei Data for Development.

Secondly, the cultural and Heritage involves Safeguarding iTaukei Language, Cultural Awareness, Advocacy and Environmental Sustainability. The concerns of Climate Vulnerability for iTaukei communities especially those in the coastal and maritime areas are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

The Committee commends the Ministry’s revised Strategic Plan 2025-2030, which provides a strategic pathway to align with the values, teachings and development of the iTaukei communities.

I would like to sincerely thank the Permanent Secretary and the Acting Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs and their officials for their valuable contributions to this review process.

Finally, I would like to thank the Hon. Members of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Hon. Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure, Hon. Alipate Tuicolo, Hon. Viam Pillay, and Hon. Parveen Bala, for their valuable input and support. I would also like to thank Hon. Ketan Lal for the assistance rendered on several occasions as an alternate standing committee member.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, I commend this report to Parliament.



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Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu
Chairperson

ACRONYM

Acronym	
CATD	Centre For Appropriate Technology & Development
MP	Member of Parliament
SO	Standing Order
TAB	iTaukei Affairs Board
TLTB	iTaukei Land Trust Board
TTFB	iTaukei Trust Fund Board
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VKB	Vola Ni Kawa Bula

COMMITTEE REMIT AND MEMBERS

The Standing Committee on Social Affairs (**‘Committee’**) is established under Section 70 of the Constitution and SO 109. The Committee’s mandate and functions are provided under SO 109 (2) and 110 (1) (a)-(d) & (f). The Committee consists of the following members:



Chairperson

Government Member



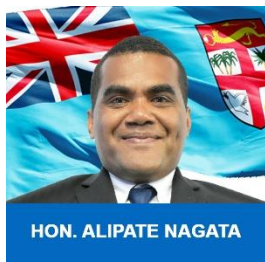
Deputy Chairperson

Government Member



Member

Opposition Member



Member

Government Member



Member

Opposition Member

1. INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of iTaukei Affairs 2017 to 2019 Annual Report was tabled in Parliament on 27 March 2023, and 2019- 2022 Annual Report was tabled on 12 July 2024; both reports were referred to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs.

Standing Orders 109 (2)(b) allows the Standing Committee on Social Affairs to examine matters related to health, education, social services, labor, aviation, culture, and media.

1.1. Committee Procedures

Deliberations on the Consolidated Reports began in November 2024. The Committee read through the reports and prepared clarifications on key issues of interest, which were then sent to the Ministry.

The Committee held a Public Submission with the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs on 25th March 2025.

Upon receipt of all relevant information on the committee's queries, it was subsequently endorsed on 25th April 2025.

The Committee received the responses from the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, which can be viewed at the following link <https://www.parliament.gov.fj/committees/standing-committee-on-social-affairs/>

2. COMMITTEE DELIBERATION AND ANALYSIS

MINISTRY OF ITAUKEI AFFAIRS

2.1 Background

The Ministry is responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring government programs focused on the Good Governance and well-being of the Itaukei people. The ministry aims to align itself with its mandated role, which evolves to environmental changes by providing policy advice and implementing policies and programmes to expedite sustainable development.

The Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, Culture, Heritage and Arts is the government agency that administers programs and services provided by the following divisions.

- a) Executive Support
- b) iTaukei Lands and Fisheries Commission
- c) iTaukei Lands Appeals Tribunal
- d) iTaukei Institute of Language and Culture
- e) Development Services Division
- f) Corporate Services Division.

The Ministry's governing legislation is as follows.

- a) iTaukei Affairs Act 1944
- b) iTaukei Lands Act 1905
- c) iTaukei Development Fund Act 1965
- d) iTaukei Trust Fund Act 2004.

3. KEY FINDINGS

Below are the key findings that the committee compiled through its deliberations.

1. Registration of the VKB Services in the Fijian Diaspora

The Committee noted that the Ministry has conducted its VKB registration services for the iTaukei living in the UK, USA and Australia.

2. Vacant Chiefly and other Leadership Positions

The Committee noted that the Ministry is in the process of filling the remaining vacant chiefly positions in some provinces.

3. Realignment of Village Boundaries:

The Committee noted that a task force is looking into the realignment of village boundaries.

4. Review of Policies:

The Committee noted that the Ministry is currently reviewing the Village guideline policy.

5. Environmental Sustainability - Resettlement of Villages

The Committee noted that 45 villages are planned for resettlement to address climate vulnerability. Nabavatu is one of the villages that has undergone this process.

6. Nadave Curriculum

The Committee noted that the Ministry is exploring ways to improve the leadership curriculum in Nadave and address the lack of leadership and management in villages and communities.

7. Cultural Mapping and Cultural Revitalization Program: The Cultural Mapping commenced in 2004 across the provinces of Serua and Namosi. This comprehensive mapping exercise, initiated in 2003, culminated in 2020, successfully documenting 1,172 villages spanning the fourteen provinces of Fiji.

8. Leadership Training: The Committee noted that the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs facilitated leadership training, which has been completed in seven provinces so far. The training is designed to empower and develop the leadership skills of hereditary chiefly titles.

9. Levuka World Heritage Project: The Committee noted that of the 22 residential properties earmarked for restoration and upgrade, only 10 will be assisted with the funds available.

4. COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends the following:

1. The Ministry must continue and extend the VKB registration process to other countries where our iTaukei communities are residing.
2. The Ministry must fill in the remaining vacant chiefly positions through the established guidelines and processes.
3. The Ministry of iTaukei Affairs to work closely with relevant Ministries on the realignment of all Village boundaries to be consistent so that they have access to all the services in the respective provinces.
4. The Ministry must prioritize and work with other Ministries and stakeholders on the resettlement of the villages.
5. The Ministry must review the Nadave Leadership curriculum to ensure that it meets the current leadership training needs.
6. The Ministry must extend the Leadership training to the remaining provinces.
7. The Ministry of iTaukei Affairs through the Department of Heritage and Arts must provide funding for the restoration of all residential properties within the Levuka World Heritage Site under UNESCO.

5. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND GENDER ANALYSIS:

The Ministry of iTaukei Affairs has been actively incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its policy framework and strategic planning to ensure that the development of iTaukei communities align with global sustainability standards while respecting and promoting the cultural heritage and socio-economic well-being of the iTaukei people.

The Ministry of iTaukei Affairs contributes to Fiji's national SDG implementation by aligning its policies with the national SDG framework. The Ministry ensures that the needs and aspirations of iTaukei communities are reflected in the country's broader SDG strategy, particularly in areas such as poverty reduction (SDG 1), quality education (SDG 4), Gender Equality (SDG 5) and climate action (SDG 13).

In terms of SDG 5 (Gender Equality) the Ministry engages women from villages in leadership training and in some provinces.

The Ministry has been working to uphold SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality) by focusing on social inclusion and cultural preservation. This includes safeguarding iTaukei customs, language, and traditional governance systems through numerous programmes that are facilitated by iTaukei Language and Culture Division. The Reviving, documenting and maintaining Traditional Knowledge and Expression of Culture, facilitating the preservation of iTaukei folklore and traditional skills through the identification of Living Human Treasurers and as well as the Cultural Mapping Program.

Given that many iTaukei communities are located in coastal and rural areas vulnerable to climate change, the Ministry strongly emphasizes SDG 13 (Climate Action). It is involved in initiatives to build resilience to natural disasters and climate change impacts, such as through sustainable land management, protection of biodiversity, and disaster preparedness programs. The Ministry also supports communities in adapting traditional knowledge and engaged with other stakeholders such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Forestry, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Division to provide policies and programmes that able to strengthen Community Resilience to Climate Change as well as Resource Management. In line with SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs emphasizes the participation of iTaukei communities in decision-making processes. The Ministry works to empower iTaukei people through education, advocacy, and governance reforms that allow them to play an active role in local and national development. This includes strengthening the leadership structures within iTaukei communities through its leadership programme, Vanua visits and filling of chiefly positions.

The Ministry collaborates with iTaukei Institutions namely TLTB, TTFB, TAB , CATD and

various national agencies, NGOs, and international organizations to achieve the SDGs as well as the mandated role of improving wellbeing and governance of the iTaukei.

By aligning policies with the SDGs, focusing on economic, social, and environmental sustainability, and promoting inclusive development, the Ministry contributes to building a more sustainable, resilient, and equitable future for the iTaukei people, while preserving their unique cultural heritage.

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6. CONCLUSION

Overall, the committee is satisfied with the operations of the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs for the period under review. It is our hope that the Ministry notes the issues we have discussed in our report and implements relevant recommendations for the improvement of its functions.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS' SIGNATURE

We, the Members of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, hereby agree with the contents of this report:

Committee Member	E-Signature
Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu Chairperson	
Hon. Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure Deputy Chairperson	
Hon. Alipate Tuicolo Member	
Hon. Viam Pillay Member	
Hon. Parveen Bala Member	
Date: 25 th April 2025	

ANNEXURE

Published evidence

Written evidence, transcripts, and supporting documents can be viewed on the Parliament website at the following link: <https://www.parliament.gov.fj/committees/standing-committee-on-social-affairs/>

[VERBATIM REPORT]

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS

MINISTRY OF iTAUKEI AFFAIRS ANNUAL REPORT

SUBMITTEE: **Ministry of iTaukei Affairs**

VENUE: **Big Committee Room, Parliament**

DATE: **Wednesday, 26th March, 2025**

VERBATIM REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS HELD AT THE BIG COMMITTEE ROOM, EAST WING, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, ON WEDNESDAY, 26TH MARCH, 2025, AT 2.15 P.M.

Interviewee/Submittee: (1) **Ministry of iTaukei Affairs**
 (2) **iTaukei Affairs Board**

In Attendance:

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------|---|--|
| 1. | Mr. Pita Tagicakiverata | - | Permanent Secretary /CEO iTaukei Affairs Board |
| 2. | Mr. Paula Tuione | - | Director Development |
| 3. | Mr. Emosi Caniogo | - | Director iTaukei Language and Culture |
| 4. | Mr. Mosese Nakoroi | - | DOPS |
| 5. | Mr. Kitone Vesikula | - | PAO Taukei Lands and Fisheries Commission |
| 6. | Mr. Josefa Toganivalu | - | Deputy CEO, iTaukei Affairs Board |
| 7. | Mr. Savenaca Nalagi | - | PAO, LSU |
-

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, members of the media and the public, the Secretariat, viewers, ladies and gentlemen; a very good afternoon to you all. It is my absolute pleasure to welcome everyone, especially to the viewers who are watching this session. I am privileged to Chair this meeting of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, which is being aired live on Parliament Channel through the *Walesi* platform and livestreamed through Parliament's *Facebook* page.

For information purpose, pursuant to Parliament Standing Order 111, it mandates that all Committee meetings are to be open to the public. Therefore, this meeting is open to the public and the media, and will also be aired live, as I had mentioned earlier.

For any sensitive information regarding this submission that cannot be disclosed in public. This can be provided to the committee, either in private or in writing. However, please be advised that, pursuant to Standing Order 111, there are only few specific circumstances that allows for non-disclosure, and this includes;

- national security matters;
- third party confidential information;
- personnel human resources matters; and
- Committee deliberation and development of Committees' recommendations of the report ahead of us.

This is a parliamentary sitting, and all information gathered should cover under the parliamentary power and privileges. However, please bear in mind that we do not condone slander or libel of any sort. Any information brought before this committee should be based on facts. In terms of protocol of this committee meeting, please minimize the usage of mobile phones and all mobile phones to be on silent mode while the meeting is in progress. I wish to also remind our members and our guests this afternoon that all questions asked got to be addressed through the chair. I would also like at this time to introduce members of this committee, I will ask our members to introduce themselves.

(Introduction of Committee Members)

MR. CHAIRMAN.-The Committee will be hearing submissions from the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs and the iTaukei Affairs Board. The Committee welcomes the Permanent Secretary and his team. The submissions are in the relation to the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs 2017 to 2019 and 2019 to 2022 Annual Reports, and the

iTaukei Affairs Board 2015 to 2022 Annual Reports. I now invite the PS and his team to introduce themselves, and then begin with the presentation straight away, and after which there will be a question and answer session. Please also note that if there is any question from the Members of the Committee, they may interject, or we will wait till the end of your presentation to ask our question.

On that note, due to time limitation, I may ask PS to keep the presentation brief as possible, so that the two responses in front of us are well covered throughout this public submission.

(Introduction of representatives from the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs)

MR. P. TAGICAKIREWA.- Mr. Chairman, I will now go straight to the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs Annual Report 2017 to 2019 and 2019 to 2022 while Mr. Josefa Toganivalu will cover the iTaukei Affairs Board Annual Report.

Question No. 1:

Performance and achievements.

(a) What were the major achievements of the Ministry during these reported years?

Mr. Chairman, one of the ongoing need of the diaspora is for us to bring our services to them, and in that regard, we have taken our services overseas through road shows conducted in England targeting sons and daughters of Fiji serving in the British Armed Forces, as well as those residing in the United States of America and Australia. One of the services of the ministry that has become very popular is the Vola Ni Kawa Bula (VKB), the registration of children in the *Vola Ni Kawa Bula*. In regards to VKB registration, a total of 13,728 new registration to the *Vola Ni Kawa Bula* and 407 traditional titles were filled with 24 village boundaries demarcated and gazetted. These are local entrants and traditional titles that were filled.

(b) How did the Ministry's initiatives contribute to the well-being and governance of the iTaukei community.

Mr. Chairman, as you have mentioned, I will be very brief, because the answers are there before the Committee Members. One is through preservation and management of cultural registers, the other is through cultural and heritage as a safeguard of iTaukei language. This is an ongoing task for us.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Mr. Chairman, with your permission, may I intervene. We are talking about management of land and customary titles and records, filling of vacant, chiefly titles. Maybe this is the best time, if you may update us on or highlight on the recent ruling by the High Court on the Tui Nadi title.

MR. P. TAGICAKIREWA.- As we speak, we are meeting the Solicitor-General on the next steps to be taken. After this meeting, this afternoon, we will have a clear picture of what needs to be taken, and we will follow those steps that we will discuss.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Mr. Chairman through you, I just want to declare my interest. There has been issues about the *Marama na Tui Ba* title, can you update us on that.

MR. P. TAGICAKIREWA.- Mr. Chairman through you, we have covered eight provinces so far. Ba is one of the few remaining provinces that we will cover during the year.

On environmental sustainability, we are addressing climate vulnerability and also resettlement issues. This is an ongoing challenge for the ministry, but we have started our outreach to the informal sector in the informal

settlement, we have started with Wailea and Nanuku last week, and based on the data we will gather, we will suggest policy issues, and policy development in coordination with our ministry before we take it to Cabinet.

On policy advice, we have implemented policies to address the needs of iTaukei population.

Question No. 2:

(a) What were the main challenges faced by the Ministry during the reported years?

One of the main challenges we faced was that of resource allocation. This has been an ongoing issue in terms of funding our programmes, and we are grateful that we have been given some leeway in terms of funding to access and also cover our programmes last year, this year, and hopefully in the new budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I may intervene, just an issue of concern. When we look at question two, when you talk about municipalities, the urban village, if I talk about urban village, the locality, where they are based and what we are trying to receive clarification on is what is the Ministry's plan with urban villages?

MR. P. TAGICAKIREWA.- Firstly, there is a realignment of boundaries. Taskforce going on right now in the ministry, headed by the Ministry of Rural Development, that committee has met three times already on realigning all the boundaries to be consistent - a provincial boundary, the local government boundary, the police boundary, the health boundary. But specifically for urban villages, we have responded to a Cabinet paper from the Ministry of Local Government to realign their boundaries so that they will have access to the services of the town council and city councils in the provinces.

HON. P.K.BALA.- While we are talking about municipal councils, the villages that are within towns and cities, and the *mataqali* who has learned within the towns and cities, but resides outside town boundary. Before they had the privilege of voting in the municipal election, but in the recent amendment, that Right had been taken away. What was the reason?

MR. P. TAGICAKIREWA.- Mr. Chairman, your guess is as good as mine. We have no idea of the reasons that led to that decision.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- PS, you may continue.

MR. P. TAGICAKIREWA.- The empowerment of iTaukei institutions, we have targeted poverty, equality and inequality and access to services. On environment sustainability, one of the perennial issues that iTaukei communities face; we are addressing climate vulnerability and again, resettlement issues.

HON. V. PILLAY.- Mr. Chairman, through you, in regards to resettlement, as PS mentioned, how many communities or villages has been identified that needs resettlement, what is the progress, and whether funding is available for that?

MR. P. TAGICAKIREWA.- Mr. Chairman, if I may, through you, the work on the settlement is led by the Ministry of Environment. To the best of my recollection, we had 45 villages on the list, and the funding is sourced from the climate trust fund that is with the climate change unit. And so far, to the best of my recollection, that trust fund has been used to resettle Nabavatu Village.

Question No. 3:

Policy implementation

(a) What new policies were introduced and how effective were they?

We developed policy papers over the years between 2017 to 2022 and so far we have developed 17 policies, 15 in 2022-2020 and 10 in 2021. These are policies targeting good governance and well-being of the iTaukei.

Question No. 4:

Community Development –

(a) What programmes were implemented to support community development?

(b) How did these programmes impact the iTaukei communities?

I will ask my Director Development to respond to that question.

MR. P. TUIONE.- Through you Mr. Chairman, honourable Members, as being stated in the narrative on community development targets, more on the leadership of our communities, looking to how we can improve our training, on leadership, also on cultural mapping and also on revitalization efforts to improve these areas of development. It also looks into how we can improve certain curriculum that will improve our leadership, as has been registered in the narrative, that is typically in leadership and management. Succession plans are in place on how we can improve in that regard, looking to the challenges that are out there in our communities, but we see that our future leaders has to be capacitated and empowered so they can improve their leadership in the future. And I think, stated in the narrative that Nadave is one of our institutions that are leading this role, and we believe that our future leaders and the future people in the communities will be capacitated and trained in this institution.

MR. P. TAGICAKIREWA.-

Question No. 5:

What proactive approaches to sustainable development has the Ministry embarked on in order to create more resilient iTaukei communities to climate change? Again, I will ask the Director Development to respond to that.

MR. P. TUIONE.- Through you Mr. Chairman and honourable Members, the Ministry has taken steps to address climate change. Very importantly, in how we can promote sustainability, sustainable development through national resource owners committee. Committees have been tasked and assigned to look into these areas in which 14 provinces are part of this Committee, their respective representative from these provinces, looking to how we can focus more on how we can have sustainable development and take into consideration the climate change issues. We also look into how we can carry out awareness, advocacy and how we can socialise very important policies that really address how we can conserve, conservation policies looking into climate change.

In this regard, Mr. Chairman, the Ministry also carries out the role as secretary to these committees and in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and relevant stakeholders in trying to look into this very important, critical issue. There are some pending policies that are in place, but we are continuing to work with our conservation officers.

We hope that the honourable Minister for Environment will give them the leeway that they can be part of this team of policy issues, and also facilitate and assist in areas of improving the Environment Impact Assessment out in the field. Additionally, the Ministry adopted the integrated approach for sustainable development. It provides policy support, role of government ensuring proactive climate resilience initiatives, and achieve focus outcomes on iTaukei communities.

MR. P. TAGICAKIREWA.- I will ask the Director iTaukei Language, Institute of iTaukei Language and Culture to respond to Questions Six to Nine.

MR. E. CANIOGO.-

Question No. 6:

Cultural preservation.

(a) There has been efforts to preserve and promote iTaukei culture and language and traditions. This is on the period in question, we are working together with the other cultural agencies to promote and save the culture and traditions of the iTaukei. Lately, we have been discussing the culture mapping programme, which was highlighted by Director Development. We have completed the culture mapping of the 1,172 villages all over Fiji. This has been collated, and we are into the second phase of the culture mapping programme. We are currently doing the data management programme, and part of it is the culture verification programme which is funded by the Government. That is the data veracity phase of the programme. We covered the period in question. We have covered mostly in Namosi and Serua for the culture revitalization, verification and they have been migrated to the new A Traditional Knowledge & Expression of Culture Management Information System database.

(b) Were there any specific projects or initiatives focused on cultural preservation? As I have alluded earlier, we have already done Namosi province and Serua. They have been migrated to the culture database, and the digital preservation is now one of our main programme in the division.

HON. A.N. TUICOLO.- Through you, Mr. Chairman, I have a question. With the safeguarding of iTaukei language, is there any assistance available to those interested in doing research and publication, and preservation of their own dialects?

MR. E. CANIOGO.- Mr Chairman, through you, the division or the unit of the Institute have the library that is available with information that have already been researched along the language and culture issues, topics. We are open during the official hours, and we are also receiving a lot of researchers from universities and schools around Fiji.

Question No. 7:

Cultural Awareness and Advocacy

(a) How does the *Noda Vosa* programme, social media articles, and *Lialiaci* Publications contribute to the promotion and preservation of iTaukei Language and Culture?

Mr. Chairman, through you, the *Noda Vosa* Programme continues until to date, and it has been seen that is one of the most successful programme because it is covering the wider communities in Fiji, including those in the rural areas.

In terms of social media, the team is now creating reels and short video clips for our children around Fiji. The students and children around Fiji.

On community engagement, the team is also engaged in culture awareness around Fiji, in the villages and also the rural and also the informal settlements around the urban areas.

Social media articles we have analysed covers a wide range of communities; iTaukei communities around Fiji and also the diaspora. For the *Lialiaci* Publication we have improved the publication from being published in English, we are now publishing it in a dual lingual, *Na vosa vaka Viti kei na vosa vaka Peritania*.

(b) We also do pre and post programme surveys. This is in particularly the cultural revitalization. We have revitalized, for the period in question, we have conducted nine workshops around Fiji to revitalize artifacts, and conducted nine visitations around Fiji to check on the sustainable practices of people around Fiji with their artifacts. We always do feedbacks and evaluations, and we have seen that it is one of the most important parts of our work, the cultural revitalisation. So far, we have revitalized more than 41 elements in our five domains in UNESCO.

(c) What specific educational audio resources has the iTaukei Institute of Language and Culture developed in response to the Ministry of Education's request, and how do these resources support the understanding of *Vosa Vaka Viti* among students? How effective has this been?

We have been having several meetings with the curriculum advisory services, and we were providing the team with education, audios and information for them to conduct the awareness through educational radio programme for *Vosa Vaka Viti*.

Question No. 8:

As I alluded earlier, we have revitalized nine elements in the culture revitalization programme. One of the most important issue we have identified is the living human treasures. *Qo saka o ira na radau*. It is very important for us, because we have some of the living human treasures. Some of them have passed on without transmitting the knowledge that they have. We are currently working on improving their records and working on a living home treasure database.

Question No. 9:

What types of Cultural Revitalisation Programmes were undertaken in the years under review?

In the years under review, we have conducted revitalization on two; *meke vakavanua*, traditional *meke ni yaqona* and we have six mostly on artifacts. Those are the areas where we have completed during the period in question.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Director, may I just ask a question on what we have discussed so far. In terms of understanding the importance of this revitalization, how successful are these programmes from the perspective of the Ministry?

MR. E. CANIOGO.- Mr. Chairman, through you, we have done our revision to check on the sustainable practice of the artifacts and the elements that have been revitalized. So, far we can see that it has been 90 percent success. When I say 90 percent success, one of the elements that we revitalized, people are not practising anymore for those nine that was revitalized during that period.

MR. P. TAGICAKIREWA.-

Question No. 10:

Financial Management.

(a) How did the Ministry manage its budget and financial resources in the reported years?

Through strategic allocations and enhancing the well-being and governance of the iTaukei communities. In 2018 to 2019 financial year, the Ministry was allocated a total of \$15.8 million from the \$13.2 million allocated for 2017 to 2018. Over the reported years, it was noted that the budget provision fluctuates with a reduced budget of \$14.1 million in 2020-2021 from \$15.4 million in 2019-2020. This further reduced in 2021-2022 of \$13.8 million as a result of the post COVID-19 adjustment.

(b) Were there any notable financial challenges or successes?

The Ministry faced challenges relating to staff shortages and high turnover which impacted on its financial and accounting responsibilities. However, funding was secured to create positions and improve staff retention.

Question No. 11:

How does the Ministry implement its gender policy in the context of recruitment, training, hiring, promotion and capacity building?

On recruitment, the Ministry's recruitment, hiring and promotion is guided by the OMRS. It is a policy right across the service. It ensures that the process is fair, just, neutral and inclusive.

On capacity building, the Ministry on an annual basis compiled the training needs of officers and await the training officers from the Ministry of Civil Service as well as training funded by our stakeholders and partners.

Question No. 12:

Effective leadership within the community. How successful is leadership training?

In terms of encouraging effective leadership within the community, the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs and the iTaukei Trust Fund Board co-funded the 14-weeks Certificate III in Leadership Training which was attended by 90 participants from Tailevu, Rewa, Ba, Nadroga, and Serua.

Additionally, 118 leadership awareness programmes were held at the village, *tikina* and provincial levels with the goal of enhancing governance and leadership in the rural areas.

Question No. 13:

Future plans. What are the Ministry's strategic goals for the upcoming years?

Mr. Chairman, we have just launched our revised strategic development plan this year in Sabeto and it is aligned to the National Development Plan that was launched last year by the honourable Prime Minister, and that will be our guidance until 2030.

MR. P. TAGICAKIREWA.-

Question No. 14:

How is the Ministry incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals into its policy framework and strategic planning? I will ask Director Development, if he can touch on this question.

MR. P. TUIONE.- Mr. Chairman through you, the narration clearly stated the alignment of our planning document into the SDG framework looking on how to incorporate the importance of the planning to ensure that

development of iTaukei communities aligned to the global sustainable standards, respecting and promoting cultural heritage, socio-economic wellbeing of the iTaukei people. Some of the ways the Ministry have integrated the SDGs into their policies and strategies that is into the aligning of policies with the national SDG framework. The Ministry ensures that the needs and aspirations of iTaukei communities are reflected in the country's broader SDG strategy, particularly in areas such as poverty reduction (SDG1), quality education (SDG4) and climate action (SDG11).

Further to that Mr. Chairman, the Ministry has been working to ensure that SDG10 (Reduced Inequality) is upheld by focusing on social inclusion and cultural preservation. This includes safeguarding of the iTaukei customs, language and traditional governance systems. We are also looking into how communities are allocating courses in rural areas that are vulnerable to climate change are taken to consideration emphasizing on SDG13 on climate action.

In addition to that, Mr. Chairman, SDG16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs emphasizes on the participation of iTaukei communities in decision making processes. Through this, it provides empowerment, also create capacity in order for them to look into the challenges that are coming in and also the future challenges.

Collaboration with the other institutions such as TLTB, TTFB, TAB, CATD in Nadave and various national agencies, NGOs. We are trying to see how best we can work together to achieve those commitments in the SDGs that are already mentioned.

Last but not the least, Mr. Chairman, is focusing also on the economic, social and environmental sustainability and promoting inclusive development which enable the Ministry working towards how we can building a more sustainable, resilient and equitable future for the iTaukei people.

MR. P. TAGICAKIREWA.- Our last question, Mr. Chairman, when will the Ministry submit its outstanding annual reports? The annual report 2022 to 2023 has been submitted to Cabinet and tabled in Parliament at the last Parliament sitting.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you very much PS and team. Honourable Members, any supplementary questions before we go to the second submission that is in front of us this afternoon?

HON. P.K. BALA.- Mr. Chairman through you, we have heard and we have read in the Report, a very comprehensive Report I would say, but in real terms on the ground what we see is different from what the report says, especially the youths. What are some plans to retain the youths in the villages? I mean, most of the youths that we have seen and observe in informal settlements, unemployed, there is no employment. Is there any plan? Just last week, I was with a friend working at Vinod Patel, and he told me that the Ministry officials are now trying to find people who have left their villages (*koro*) and moved to urban centres. Is there any truth in it? So is there any plan or programme?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I believe that is all from the Committee. On that note, I thank the Permanent Secretary and your team for being here with us this afternoon. At this juncture, I would like to sincerely thank you for availing yourselves for this public hearing session. We thank you for your time and hope that you will avail yourselves for any further queries or clarification that the Committee may have on these annual reports. With those concluding remarks, I now close this public hearing session. *Vinaka saka vakalevu na nomudou yaco mai.*

The Committee adjourned at 3.45 p.m.