STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE

Consolidated Review Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 Annual Reports

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ACRONYMS

COVAX	COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access
FMIS	Financial Management Information System
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States

CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, I am pleased to present the Committee's Consolidated Review Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 Annual Reports. The Committee examined the Ministry's performance, strategic direction, financial management, governance arrangements, and contribution to Fiji's national development priorities during a period marked by unprecedented global events, including the COVID-19 pandemic, post-pandemic recovery efforts, evolving geopolitical dynamics, and a transition in Government. The Committee acknowledges the Ministry's critical role in promoting and protecting Fiji's interests internationally through diplomacy, regional cooperation, trade and investment engagement, climate advocacy, peace and security initiatives, and the provision of consular and protocol services.

The evidence presented to the Committee demonstrated the Ministry's resilience and adaptability in responding to significant external challenges. Despite disruptions caused by the pandemic, the Ministry continued to deliver essential diplomatic and consular services, facilitated the repatriation of Fijians stranded abroad, maintained Fiji's engagement with bilateral and multilateral partners, and secured international support that contributed to the nation's health, economic and development objectives. The Committee also notes Fiji's continued leadership within the Pacific region, including its contributions to the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, climate change advocacy, ocean governance, human rights, and regional cooperation initiatives. These efforts have enhanced Fiji's international profile and reinforced its reputation as a principled and constructive member of the international community.

During its deliberations, the Committee also identified several challenges and areas requiring continued attention. These include strengthening performance measurement and results-based reporting, improving oversight and coordination of international agreements and treaty obligations, enhancing the monitoring of overseas mission performance, addressing workforce vacancies and succession planning, strengthening financial management and asset oversight. The Committee believes that greater emphasis on measurable outcomes and transparent reporting will further strengthen accountability and assist Parliament in assessing the impact of Fiji's diplomatic engagements on national development priorities.

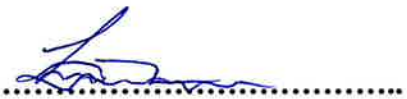
The Committee's findings, observations and recommendations are intended to support the Ministry in further improving its effectiveness, governance, and service delivery. The Committee trusts that the recommendations contained in this Report will assist the Ministry in strengthening institutional capability, enhancing accountability, and ensuring that Fiji's foreign policy continues to deliver tangible benefits for all Fijians.

The Committee further acknowledges that the Annual Reports under review relate to the 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 reporting periods and, consequently, some of the operational arrangements, administrative processes, policies and initiatives examined may have since changed, been strengthened or be in the process of improvement. This time lapse necessarily limits the extent to

which the Committee can make recommendations on matters that may already have been addressed or are currently being implemented. Accordingly, the Committee's recommendations should be considered in the context of the Ministry's current operating environment and are intended, where relevant, to reinforce ongoing improvements and address matters that remain outstanding.

On behalf of the Committee, I wish to thank the Permanent Secretary, management and staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade for their cooperation and assistance throughout the review process. I also extend my appreciation to my fellow Committee Members for their contributions in the preparation of this Report.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, I submit this Report to Parliament.



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Hon. Lenora QEREQERETABUA
Chairperson

1.0 Committee Remit and Composition

Under Standing Order 109(2)(e) the Committee is mandated to investigate matters related to Fiji's relations with other countries, development aid, foreign direct investment, oversight of the military, and relations with multi-lateral organisations. The members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence are as follows:



Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua
Chairperson
Deputy Speaker of Parliament
Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade



Hon. Rinesh Sharma
Deputy Chairperson



Hon. Ratu Isikeli Tuiwailevu
Member
Assistant Minister for iTaukei Affairs, Heritage and Arts



Hon. Penioni Ravunawa
Member
Assistant Minister for Health and Medical Services



Hon. Virendra Lal
Member



Hon. Taito Rokomatu
Member

1.1 Committee Secretariat Team

The Committee is supported by Parliament officers serving as the Committee Secretariat. These officers are appointed and delegated by the Secretary-General to Parliament by Standing Order 15(3)(i). The Secretariat officers are as follows:

- Ms. Tirisiane Logavatu – Senior Committee Clerk
- Mrs. Elesi Tabuyaqona - Deputy Committee Clerk

Committee contact details:

Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence
Parliament of the Republic of Fiji
Government Buildings, Suva, FIJI.
Phone: +679 3225600 / +679 8925210
Website: https://www.parliament.gov.fj/standing-committee-on-foreign-affairs-and-defence/

2.0 Background and Terms of Reference

2.1 Presentation of the Annual Report

2.1.1 The Speaker of Parliament referred the following Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) Annual Reports to the Committee for review:

No.	Annual Report	Date of Referral
1.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2019-2020 Annual Report	18 July 2025
2.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020-2021 Annual Report	18 July 2025
3.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2021-2022 Annual Report	13 March 2026
4.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2022-2023 Annual Report	17 July 2026

The referral was made pursuant to Standing Order 38(2), which mandates that all annual reports tabled in Parliament be referred to the relevant Standing Committee for scrutiny and report back to Parliament.

2.1.2 The Committee is responsible for reviewing matters concerning Fiji's international relations, development assistance, foreign direct investment, national security oversight, and engagement with multilateral organisations. Therefore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs role and responsibilities fall within the mandate of the Committee.

2.2 Procedure and Program

Public Submission

2.2.1 In relation to Standing Order 111(1), the Committee is committed to upholding public trust in Parliament, by ensuring that there is public participation and that all such participation is given due consideration. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade appeared before the Committee at a public hearing in Suva on 27 January 2026. The public submission was broadcast live on the Parliament Facebook page and aired on the Walesi Parliament Channel.

2.2.2 A summary of the submission is provided in a later part of this report, under the heading 'Committee's Deliberation and Analysis'. Copies of the verbatim report can be obtained from the online Appendices of the report, which can be accessed from the Parliament website: www.parliament.gov.fj

Site Visit

2.2.3 As part of its review of the MOFA annual reports, the Committee conducted a site visit to the Ministry's headquarters in Suva on 27 January 2026, immediately after the Ministry's public submission. The purpose of the visit was to provide Members with firsthand insight into the Ministry's operational environment, organisational structure, and key functional areas. During the visit, the Committee engaged with senior officials and staff, observed facilities and work processes, and sought clarification on systems and resources supporting the Ministry's mandate. This engagement assisted the Committee in contextualising the information presented in the Annual Reports and the public submission.

3.0 Committee Deliberation and Analysis

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This report presents a consolidated summary and analysis of the Ministry's Annual Reports for the financial years 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. It highlights key achievements, challenges, and provides recommendations for improvement to support the Ministry's mandate.

3.1.2 MOFA's core role is to conduct diplomacy and manage Fiji's international relations. The Ministry is responsible for implementing Fiji's foreign policy, maintaining and strengthening diplomatic relations, fostering cooperation with development partners, and promoting trade and economic engagement with other nations.

3.1.3 During the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 financial years under review, MOFA was under the portfolio responsibility of the Prime Minister and led by the Permanent Secretary of the Office of the Prime Minister. The Ministry operated through four (4) distinct departments, Operations, Protocol, Policy, and Missions, whose functions remained consistent across the two reporting years under consideration. Fiji's missions as at July 2019 included Fiji's Permanent Representative Offices to the UN in New York and Geneva, London, Abu Dhabi, Beijing, Tokyo, New Delhi, Jakarta, Canberra, Wellington and the Pacific Roving Ambassador based at the Ministry's Headquarters.

3.1.4 Across the 2021–2022 and 2022–2023 reporting periods, the Ministry organised its work around six strategic priorities: Global Leadership; Trade and Investment; Socio-Economic Development; Public Diplomacy; Peace and Security; and Human Rights and Democratic Values.

3.1.5 Operationally, the Ministry delivered its mandate through its Multilateral Affairs Bureau, Asia Bureau, Oceania Bureau, Protocol and Consular Services Division, Human Resources Division and Finance Division, supported by Fiji's overseas diplomatic missions. Its external-facing responsibilities included bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, regional cooperation, trade and investment diplomacy, climate and ocean advocacy, peace and security engagement, public diplomacy, protocol and consular services, and representation of Fiji in international and regional organisations.

3.1.6 The Protocol and Consular Division also administered diplomatic and consular arrangements, supported official and State visits, facilitated diplomatic clearances and credentials, provided services to Fiji's overseas missions and diplomatic missions accredited to Fiji, and facilitated assistance and repatriation of Fijian nationals overseas.

3.1.7 Fiji's missions as at July 2023 included Fiji's Permanent Representative Offices to the UN in New York and Geneva, Missions in London, Abu Dhabi, Beijing, Tokyo, New Delhi, Jakarta, Canberra, Wellington and the Pacific Roving Ambassador based at the Ministry's Headquarters.

3.2 Committee Findings

2019-2020 and 2020-2021 Annual Reports

Strategic and operational performance

3.2.1 The Committee noted that the Ministry continued to implement its strategic priorities under the 2018–2022 Strategic Plan, which focused on global leadership, trade and investment, socio-economic development, public diplomacy, peace and security, and human rights and democratic values.

3.2.2 The Committee acknowledged that the Ministry's programmes and activities were aligned with the National Development Plan and Fiji's broader development priorities. However, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 significantly affected the implementation of planned activities and required the Ministry to shift its focus from global leadership towards socio-economic diplomacy, crisis response and national recovery. Virtual diplomacy and remote working arrangements were adopted to maintain essential diplomatic and consular functions.

3.2.3 The Committee recognised the Ministry's efforts to realign its priorities to facilitate access to medical supplies, vaccines and development assistance while maintaining Fiji's diplomatic engagements during international border closures and travel restrictions. The Committee further noted that the pandemic highlighted the importance of strengthening institutional preparedness, operational flexibility and business continuity arrangements to ensure the effective implementation of Fiji's foreign policy during periods of global disruption.

Diplomatic and international engagement

3.2.4 Despite the disruption caused by the pandemic, the Committee acknowledged that Fiji maintained its bilateral, regional and multilateral engagements, including its Presidency of the Human Rights Council, vaccine diplomacy, support for the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway for COVID-19 and engagement with development partners.

Overseas Missions

3.2.5 The Committee noted that Government decisions during the pandemic resulted in the closure of overseas Missions; Seoul, Kuala Lumpur, Washington, Brussels and Port Moresby. The Ministry advised that diplomatic relations and services continued through alternative accreditation arrangements and engagement by Headquarters and other Missions. The Committee also noted concerns regarding the condition of Government-owned properties overseas and the financial implications associated with deferred maintenance and renovations.

Financial management

3.2.6 The Ministry's budget decreased from $36.918 million in 2019–2020 to $32.692 million in 2020–2021, with utilisation rates of 91 per cent and 86 per cent, respectively. The Committee noted that COVID-19 restrictions, reduced programme activities, suspension of capital projects and whole-of-government expenditure control measures contributed to the variances.

Financial controls and accountability

3.2.7 The Committee noted weaknesses relating to supporting documentation and delays in financial reporting from overseas Missions. The Ministry advised that measures have since been undertaken to strengthen its Finance Division and improve financial reporting and documentation through the implementation the new Government Financial Management System.

Human resources and gender representations

3.2.8 The Committee noted that the Ministry's approved establishment decreased from 146 positions in 2019–2020 to 121 positions in 2020–2021, largely because of whole-of-government budget control measures. The Committee also observed that male officers outnumbered female officers during both reporting periods and noted that women represented 8 per cent of leadership positions in 2020-2021.

Consular services and emergency preparedness

3.2.9 The Committee acknowledged the significant increase in demand for consular services during the pandemic, particularly for repatriation and emergency assistance to Fijians overseas. The experience highlighted the importance of stronger contingency planning, documented procedures, effective inter-agency coordination and appropriate mechanisms to respond to future emergencies involving Fijian nationals abroad.

Treaties and international obligations

3.2.10 The Committee noted that Fiji acceded to five treaties during 2019–2020 namely the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, ILO – Violence and Harassment Convention 2019, ILO Protocol of 2002 to the Occupational Safety and Health Convention 1981, International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

In 2020-2021, Fiji acceded to two treaties which were Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of children in armed conflict, and Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

However, implementation information for some treaties remained outstanding from the responsible line agencies. The Committee therefore noted the importance of strengthening

coordination and monitoring between the Ministry and implementing agencies to ensure that Fiji's international obligations are effectively tracked and reported.

Annual reporting and performance measurement

3.2.11 The Committee found that the Annual Reports did not sufficiently demonstrate the Ministry's strategic direction, measurable annual targets and outcomes. During the hearing, concerns were raised regarding the largely narrative nature of the reports and the need for a clearer reporting structure to facilitate effective parliamentary scrutiny. The Ministry acknowledged these concerns and advised that it had begun examining reporting approaches used by other countries.

2021-2022 and 2022-2023 Annual Reports

Fiji Continued to Exercise Strong Regional and International Leadership

3.2.12 The Committee finds that the Ministry maintained an active and influential role in advancing Fiji's foreign policy interests through regional and multilateral engagement during both reporting periods. Fiji's leadership of the Pacific Islands Forum, support for the adoption and implementation of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, advocacy on climate change, ocean governance, nuclear disarmament and sustainable development elevated Fiji's diplomatic profile internationally. The successful facilitation of Kiribati's return to the Pacific Islands Forum and Fiji's stewardship of the Suva Agreement further demonstrated the Ministry's contribution to strengthening Pacific regionalism.

Foreign Policy Transition was Successfully Managed following the 2022 General Election

3.2.13 The Committee finds that the Ministry effectively managed the transition in foreign policy priorities following the change of Government in December 2022. The adoption of the pillars of Sovereignty, Security and Prosperity, together with the "Pacific Family First" approach and the "Ocean of Peace" concept, reflected a deliberate recalibration of Fiji's foreign relations while maintaining continuity in key diplomatic partnerships. The development of Fiji's first Foreign Policy White Paper is a significant institutional milestone that has potential to improve policy coherence and strategic planning.

Diplomatic Engagements Demonstrated Clear Development Benefits but Measurement Remains Limited

3.2.14 The Committee finds that the Ministry secured valuable development opportunities through bilateral and multilateral partnerships, including climate resilience initiatives, development assistance, labour mobility pathways, technical training opportunities, health partnerships, and economic cooperation arrangements. However, the Committee notes that reporting remains largely activity-based and does not consistently quantify the direct socio-economic impact of diplomatic engagements on national development outcomes. More outcome-based performance measures would strengthen future accountability and reporting.

Monitoring of International Agreements Requires Stronger Whole-of-Government Coordination

3.2.15 The Committee finds that while mechanisms exist to monitor the implementation of Memoranda of Understanding, bilateral agreements and development partnerships, responsibility is largely dispersed across line ministries and technical agencies. The Committee notes the existence of several outstanding agreements awaiting formalisation and observes that comprehensive reporting on the implementation status of agreements remains limited. Improved central monitoring would strengthen accountability for the delivery of international commitments.

Overseas Missions Remain Critical to the Delivery of Foreign Policy Objectives

3.2.16 The Committee finds that Fiji's overseas missions continue to play a pivotal role in advancing national interests, particularly in trade promotion, investment attraction, labour mobility, development cooperation, diaspora engagement and consular assistance. The Ministry's use of operational plans, monthly reporting and mission reviews provides a framework for performance monitoring. However, the Committee notes limited public reporting on mission-specific performance outcomes and considers that greater transparency in assessing mission effectiveness would be beneficial.

Financial Management Improved but Offshore Operations Continue to Present Risks

3.2.17 The Committee finds that the Ministry demonstrated improved budget execution, with budget utilisation increasing from 93 per cent in 2021–2022 to 98 per cent in 2022–2023. This improvement reflects the resumption of international engagement following the easing of pandemic restrictions and capital investments in government-owned overseas properties. However, the Committee notes that the Ministry continues to identify management of overseas mission finances as a significant challenge due to varying banking systems, exchange rate fluctuations, reporting delays and differing regulatory environments.

Internal Financial Controls Have Strengthened but further Digital Modernisation is Required

3.2.18 The Committee finds that the Ministry has strengthened internal audit processes through monthly compliance reviews and the implementation of the Financial Management Information System (FMIS). These measures have reportedly reduced the number of audit issues and improved financial reporting. However, the planned digital information-sharing platform remains incomplete and the Committee notes the importance of fully operationalising FMIS capabilities to support overseas mission management and financial oversight.

Significant Asset Write-Offs Highlight the Need for Continued Asset Management Improvements

3.2.19 The Committee notes with concern the substantial increase in asset write-offs from approximately $63,000 in 2021–2022 to over $944,000 in 2022–2023. While the Ministry advised that most write-offs were associated with obsolete, damaged or unserviceable assets identified during stock take exercises, the magnitude of the increase highlights the importance of maintaining accurate asset registers, timely asset replacement planning and proactive asset management practices.

Human Resource Pressures Present an Emerging Risk to Organisational Effectiveness

3.2.20 The Committee finds that staffing pressures increased during the reporting period, with vacancies rising from 14 positions in 2021–2022 to 26 positions in 2022–2023. Vacancies were particularly evident within policy functions, largely due to staff promotions and resignations. Although acting and temporary appointments assisted in maintaining service delivery, prolonged vacancies may affect institutional capacity, policy continuity and succession planning if not addressed in a timely manner.

Gender Parity Has Been Achieved in the Workforce but Not in Leadership

3.2.21 The Committee finds that the Ministry achieved equal overall workforce representation between women and men during the 2022–2023 reporting period. However, women occupied only 11 per cent of manager and director-level leadership positions, despite a modest improvement from the previous year. The Committee notes the Ministry's efforts to provide mentoring and leadership development opportunities but considers that sustained intervention will be required to improve women's representation in senior leadership roles.

Staff Development Programmes Support Capability Building but Training Needs Assessment Could Be Strengthened

3.2.22 The Committee finds that the Ministry maintained a strong commitment to workforce development through training, diplomatic education and international exposure opportunities. However, the Ministry acknowledged challenges in systematically identifying training needs across overseas missions. The Committee considers that a more structured competency framework would enable training investments to be more strategically aligned with Fiji's evolving foreign policy, trade and security priorities.

Fiji's Climate Diplomacy Continues to Deliver Strategic Benefits

3.2.23 The Committee finds that the Ministry has successfully positioned climate diplomacy as a central pillar of Fiji's international engagement. Fiji's advocacy at COP processes, promotion of ocean governance, support for climate finance mobilization and leadership among Small Island Developing States have strengthened the country's international standing and contributed to access to development partnerships. However, the Committee notes that climate finance data is not centrally reported by the Ministry, making it difficult to assess the precise value of diplomatic efforts in securing climate-related resources.

Fiji Has Played a Principled Leadership Role in Ocean Governance and Deep-Sea Mining

3.2.24 The Committee finds that Fiji has consistently demonstrated international leadership in marine conservation, maritime governance and precautionary approaches to deep-sea mining. Fiji's support for a moratorium on deep-sea mining, participation in international ocean negotiations and engagement in marine spatial planning underscore its commitment to safeguarding marine ecosystems while advancing sustainable ocean management principles.

Security Partnerships Have been Pursued Consistent with National Interests

3.2.25 The Committee finds that bilateral and regional security partnerships have been developed within established national policy frameworks and generally reflect Fiji's sovereignty, security priorities and commitment to regional peace. Defence cooperation with Australia, New Zealand, the United States and other partners have enhanced Fiji's disaster response, maritime security and peacekeeping capabilities while maintaining Fiji's independent foreign policy approach.

Consular Services Have Adapted Well to Increasing Demand

3.2.26 The Committee finds that the Ministry's consular and protocol services continued to expand in response to increased international mobility following the reopening of borders. Data presented in the annual reports indicates increasing demand for diplomatic clearances, apostilles, passports, one-way entries and consular assistance. The Committee acknowledges the Ministry's efforts to maintain service delivery despite limited resources and a dispersed global footprint.

3.2.27 Overall, the Committee finds that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs performed an important role in advancing Fiji's foreign policy interests during a period marked by post-pandemic recovery, changing geopolitical dynamics and a transition in Government. The Ministry demonstrated strong regional leadership, maintained productive diplomatic partnerships and contributed to Fiji's international standing. Nevertheless, ongoing challenges relating to performance measurement, financial oversight of overseas missions, workforce capacity, leadership diversity and implementation monitoring indicate areas where governance and reporting could be further strengthened to improve transparency, accountability and policy effectiveness.

3.3 Site Visit Summary

3.3.1 **Institutional capacity and diplomatic coverage**: The Committee observed that the Ministry manages an extensive range of bilateral, regional and multilateral responsibilities with relatively limited staffing resources in certain divisions. The responsibilities of the Roving Ambassador's Office highlighted the need to ensure that adequate resources are available to maintain effective diplomatic engagement across the Pacific.

3.3.2 **Financial sustainability of overseas representation**: The Committee noted the substantial costs associated with maintaining diplomatic missions overseas, including remuneration, accommodation, travel and operational expenditure. The Committee considers that the Ministry should continue strengthening its monitoring and evaluation arrangements to ensure that diplomatic expenditure delivers measurable outcomes for Fiji.

3.3.3 **Staff welfare and retention**: The Committee acknowledged the review of overseas posting allowances and employment conditions, particularly in response to increasing living costs in host countries. The Committee noted the importance of competitive employment conditions,

transparent human resource policies and effective retention strategies in maintaining a professional diplomatic service.

3.3.4 **Regional economic cooperation and food security**: The Committee observed opportunities for Fiji to strengthen regional trade and agricultural cooperation, particularly through initiatives aimed at improving food security and increasing access to Pacific markets. The Committee considers that greater coordination between the Ministry and relevant economic and agricultural agencies could support these initiatives.

3.3.5 **Diplomatic privileges and consular services**: The Committee recognised the importance of the Protocol and Consular Division in ensuring compliance with international diplomatic obligations and helping Fijian citizens overseas. The Committee noted the need for clear administrative procedures, effective coordination and appropriate oversight of diplomatic privileges and consular arrangements.

3.3.6 **Treaty coordination and parliamentary processes**: The Committee noted the importance of ensuring that international treaties are processed in accordance with Fiji's legislative and parliamentary requirements. The briefing reinforced the need for effective coordination between the Ministry and relevant government institutions to facilitate timely consideration of international agreements.

3.3.7 **Diversification of international partnerships:** The Committee acknowledged the Ministry's efforts to strengthen Fiji's relationships with traditional partners while expanding cooperation with countries across Asia, the Middle East and other regions. The Committee observed that these partnerships provide opportunities for development assistance, investment, trade, education and healthcare cooperation.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 Strengthen Performance Measurement and Results-Based Reporting

The Ministry should develop and report against clear, measurable performance indicators and targets for each strategic priority, with greater emphasis on outcomes and impacts rather than activities undertaken. Future annual reports should quantify the development, trade, investment, climate finance, labour mobility, and diplomatic outcomes achieved through Fiji's foreign engagements. *(reference 3.2.11, 3.2.14, 3.2.27)*

4.2 Improve Monitoring of Bilateral Agreements and International Commitments

The Ministry should establish a centralised whole-of-government monitoring framework for Memoranda of Understanding, bilateral agreements, treaties, and development partnerships to ensure commitments are implemented, regularly reviewed, and reported to Parliament. Attention should be given to tracking outstanding commitments and reporting implementation progress. *(reference 3.2.10, 3.2.15)*

4.3 Enhance Reporting on Overseas Mission Performance

The Ministry should strengthen the performance management framework for overseas missions and Heads of Mission by developing mission-specific performance indicators and publishing measurable outcomes relating to trade promotion, investment attraction, labour mobility, development assistance, diaspora engagement, and consular services. *(reference 3.2.5, 3.2.16)*

4.4. Address Workforce Vacancies and Succession Planning

The Ministry should prioritise filling long-standing vacancies, particularly within policy, diplomatic and specialist functions, and strengthen succession planning arrangements through structured talent management, mentoring, and leadership development programmes to ensure continuity of institutional knowledge. *(reference 3.2.20, 3.2.22. 3.2.27)*

4.5 Strengthen Diplomatic Capacity Building

The Ministry should establish a formal competency framework for Foreign Service Officers, Heads of Mission and support staff to identify skills gaps and ensure training programmes are strategically aligned to emerging foreign policy, trade, security, climate and economic diplomacy priorities. *(reference 3.2.22)*

4.6 Accelerate Digital Transformation of Ministry Operations

The Ministry should prioritise the full implementation and integration of digital management systems, including the Financial Management Information System (FMIS), electronic reporting mechanisms, secure information-sharing platforms and digital diplomacy tools, to improve efficiency, reporting accuracy and oversight of overseas missions. *(reference 3.2.2, 3.2.3, 3.2.18)*

4.7 **Strengthen Financial Oversight of Overseas Missions**

The Ministry should continue improving financial governance by strengthening internal audit functions, enhancing financial training for mission staff, reducing reporting delays, and ensuring consistent compliance with Government financial regulations across all overseas missions. *(reference 3.2.7, 3.2.17)*

4.8 **Improve Asset Management Practices**

Given the substantial value of asset write-offs recorded during the review period, the Ministry should strengthen asset lifecycle management through regular verification exercises, improved maintenance planning, enhanced asset registers and earlier replacement scheduling to minimise asset deterioration and future losses. *(reference 3.2.19)*

4.9 **Strengthen Fiji's Economic Diplomacy Framework**

The Ministry should work closely with relevant agencies to establish measurable targets for foreign direct investment, export market access, tourism promotion and labour mobility arrangements generated through diplomatic missions, with annual reporting on the economic returns derived from diplomatic engagements. *(reference 3.2.14, 3.2.16)*

4.10 **Enhance Treaty Reporting and Compliance Monitoring**

The Ministry should work with the Office of the Solicitor-General and relevant line ministries to establish a comprehensive treaty implementation and reporting database that tracks Fiji's reporting obligations, implementation status, outstanding commitments and compliance requirements under international conventions and agreements. *(reference 3.2.10, 3.2.15)*

4.11 **Strengthen Consular Preparedness and Crisis Response**

The Ministry should develop a dedicated Consular Crisis Response and Diaspora Engagement Framework to improve preparedness for future emergencies, including natural disasters, pandemics, evacuations and repatriations involving Fijian citizens abroad. The Committee further recommends consideration of a dedicated contingency allocation for emergency consular operations. *(reference 3.2.3, 3.2.9, 3.2.26)*

4.12 **Improve Climate Finance Coordination and Reporting**

The Ministry should collaborate with relevant agencies to develop a consolidated reporting mechanism that tracks climate finance opportunities secured through diplomatic engagement, funds received, disbursement status and development outcomes achieved, to better demonstrate the value of Fiji's climate diplomacy efforts. *(reference 3.2.14, 3.2.23)*

4.13 **Continue Leadership on Ocean Governance and Climate Advocacy**

The Committee encourages the Ministry to continue its leadership role on climate action, ocean governance, marine protection, sustainable development, and nuclear disarmament within regional and international forums, while ensuring that international advocacy translates into tangible benefits for Fiji and the Pacific region. *(reference 3.2.12, 3.2.15, 3.2.24)*

4.14 **Strengthen Regional Diplomacy and Pacific Leadership**

The Ministry should continue to invest in Pacific regionalism, the implementation of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, the Ocean of Peace initiative, and mechanisms that strengthen collective Pacific representation in international forums. *(reference 3.2.12, 3.2.13)*

4.15 **Improve Annual Report Structure and Parliamentary Accountability**

The Ministry should revise the format of future annual reports to align more closely with best-practice public sector reporting standards by clearly presenting strategic objectives, performance indicators, targets, outcomes achieved, challenges encountered, expenditure against outputs, and future priorities. The Committee notes that this issue was also raised during the Ministry's appearance before the Committee. *(reference 3.2.11, 3.2.14, 3.2.17)*

5.0 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Committee finds that the operations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs contributed directly and indirectly to the achievement of Fiji's national development priorities and the United Nations SDGs. The Ministry's role as the lead agency for diplomacy, international cooperation, development partnerships, climate advocacy and regional engagement positioned it as a key facilitator rather than a direct service-delivery agency. Consequently, its contribution to the SDGs is primarily reflected through securing partnerships, financing, technical assistance, market access, climate support, capacity building, labour mobility opportunities and international advocacy.

5.1 SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing

The Ministry played a central role in securing international support during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through diplomatic engagements, Fiji became the first Pacific Island country to receive vaccines through the COVAX Facility and secured vaccine donations, personal protective equipment, medical supplies and technical assistance from Australia, India, China, Korea and international organisations. The Ministry also advocated for small island developing states within global health forums and supported the establishment of international health initiatives benefiting Pacific countries. The Committee finds that the Ministry's diplomatic efforts contributed significantly to Fiji's pandemic response and healthcare resilience during one of the most challenging public health crises in recent history.

5.2 SDG 4: Quality Education

The Ministry facilitated numerous international scholarships, training opportunities, professional exchanges and educational partnerships through bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Education agreements with India, Japan, Korea, China, Australia and New Zealand supported human capital development, while development partners funded educational infrastructure and school rehabilitation projects. The Committee notes that education remains a substantial area of benefit from Fiji's diplomatic relationships, although outcome data on scholarship beneficiaries and long-term workforce impacts could be strengthened.

5.3 SDG 5: Gender Equality

The Ministry actively supported international discussions on gender equality, women's leadership, gender-based violence and women's economic empowerment through its participation in UN platforms, Commonwealth forums and regional initiatives. Workforce gender parity was achieved by 2022–2023, with women comprising 50 per cent of the workforce. However, women occupied only 11 per cent of senior leadership positions. The Committee acknowledges progress toward workforce equality but considers that further efforts are required to increase women's representation in leadership and decision-making positions.

5.4 SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

The Ministry advanced economic growth through investment promotion, trade facilitation, labour mobility arrangements, tourism diplomacy and development partnerships. Diplomatic missions supported market access for Fijian products, attracted foreign investment and facilitated business missions. Labour mobility arrangements with Australia and New Zealand

provided significant economic opportunities for Fijian workers. The Committee finds that economic diplomacy increasingly contributes to national development but recommends stronger measurement of investment outcomes and economic returns generated through diplomatic engagements.

5.5 SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

The Ministry facilitated financing, infrastructure support, technological cooperation and international investment in areas including renewable energy, digital systems, transport infrastructure, fisheries and communications. Partnerships with development agencies and foreign governments contributed to post-disaster reconstruction, energy transition projects and institutional strengthening initiatives.

5.6 SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

The Ministry advocated for the interests of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in international forums and championed equitable access to climate finance, health support, development assistance and representation in global decision-making bodies. Fiji's leadership in multilateral institutions enhanced Pacific representation internationally. The Committee finds that Fiji's diplomatic advocacy has elevated the voice of vulnerable island states and contributed to addressing structural inequalities in international development systems.

5.7 SDG 13: Climate Action

Climate diplomacy emerged as one of the Ministry's most significant contributions throughout the reporting period. Fiji maintained leadership on climate change negotiations, advocated for climate finance, participated actively at COP26 and COP27, supported the 1.5°C target, advanced climate resilience partnerships and secured support for adaptation projects. Fiji also contributed to the development and implementation of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. The Committee finds that climate diplomacy is one of the strongest examples of the Ministry's contribution to national development and international leadership.

5.8 SDG 14: Life Below Water

The Ministry demonstrated significant leadership in ocean governance through support for marine conservation, sustainable fisheries management, maritime boundary protection, marine spatial planning and advocacy for a moratorium on deep-sea mining. Fiji actively promoted initiatives under the UN Ocean Conference, the Blue Pacific Strategy and international ocean governance frameworks. The Committee finds that SDG 14 represents one of Fiji's strongest areas of international influence and leadership, reinforcing Fiji's status as a global advocate for ocean sustainability.

5.9 SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

The Ministry contributed to peace, security and good governance through Fiji's participation in UN peacekeeping operations, human rights mechanisms, democratic governance initiatives, regional security cooperation, treaty implementation and international legal processes.

Fiji also maintained leadership roles in the UN Human Rights Council and actively promoted nuclear disarmament and peaceful regional cooperation. The Committee notes that Fiji's reputation as a responsible international actor continues to strengthen through its commitment to diplomacy, peacekeeping, human rights and democratic values.

6.0 Conclusion

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence concludes that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs played a critical role in advancing Fiji's foreign policy interests and safeguarding the nation's international standing during a period characterised by the COVID-19 pandemic, post-pandemic recovery, changing geopolitical dynamics, and a transition in Government. Across the reporting periods under review, the Ministry demonstrated resilience and adaptability by maintaining diplomatic engagement, facilitating international cooperation, supporting consular assistance and repatriation efforts, strengthening regional partnerships, and advancing Fiji's leadership on climate action, ocean governance, human rights, peace and security, and sustainable development. The Committee acknowledges the Ministry's contribution to securing development assistance, promoting trade and investment opportunities, and enhancing Fiji's influence in regional and multilateral forums.

The Committee notes that challenges remain in the areas of performance measurement, monitoring of international commitments, financial oversight of overseas missions, workforce capacity, asset management, and annual reporting. The Committee considers that stronger results-based reporting, enhanced whole-of-government coordination, continued digital modernisation, improved workforce planning, and more transparent assessment of overseas mission performance will strengthen accountability and support more effective delivery of Fiji's foreign policy objectives. The Committee trusts that the findings and recommendations contained in this Report will assist the Ministry in addressing these challenges and further enhancing its capacity to deliver outcomes that contribute to Fiji's national development priorities and international interests.

7.0 Committee Members' Signatures



Hon. Lenora QEREQERETABUA
Chairperson



Hon. Rinesh SHARMA
Deputy Chairperson



Hon. Ratu Isikeli TUIWAILEVU
Member



Hon. Penioni RAVUNAWA
Member



Hon. Virendra LAL
Member



Hon. Taito ROKOMATU
Member

8.0 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-foreign-affairs-and-defence/