



Ministry of Foreign Affairs



2018-2019

ANNUAL REPORT

Parliamentary Paper Number 39 of 2021



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PM Bainimarama at the opening of the Fiji Consulate General and Trade Commission Office in Sydney, Australia.



OUR VISION

A Stronger and Prosperous Fiji through Excellence in Foreign Service

OUR MISSION

To advance Fiji's interests through the Effective Formulation and Implementation of its Foreign Policy

OUR VALUES

- **Accountability**
- **Honesty**
- **Commitment**
- **Loyalty**
- **Courtesy**
- **Professionalism**
- **Integrity**
- **Transparency**

ABOUT THE REPORT

This Annual Report has been prepared according to the Financial Regulations within the Fijian Civil Service. It details the Ministry of Foreign Affairs performance(s) and commitment(s) in the focus areas highlighting robust leadership during the 2018-2019 financial year. The data included in this Annual Report speaks to this.

In Summary, this Annual Report includes the following:

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Organisational Structure;
- The Seven (7) Divisional Key Performance Indicators (KPI), Outcomes and Outputs; and
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Achievements and Results aligned to the Corporate Plan for the 2018/2019 financial year.



PM Bainimarama presents a gift to NZ Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern following their bilateral meeting at the GPH in Suva.



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

REFERRAL LETTER FROM PERMANENT SECRETARY

Date: 25 March 2021

Honourable Josia Voreqe Bainimarama
Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji and Minister for Foreign Affairs
Office of the Prime Minister
Government Building
Suva.

Dear Sir,

In accordance with the Financial Management Act of 2004, I hereby submit the 2018-2019 Annual Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for your information and presentation to Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Yogesh J. Karan'.

Yogesh J. Karan
Acting Permanent Secretary



FOREWORD: PERMANENT SECRETARY

The Annual Report (2018-2019) highlights the achievements of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its work in creating opportunities for the people of Fiji through its Foreign Policy initiatives.

Global Leadership is a cornerstone of Fiji's strategic priorities and 2018-2019 was particularly pleasing for the Ministry as Fiji became the first Pacific Small Island Developing State (PSIDS) to not only become a member of the Human Rights Council (HRC), but also secured the HRC Vice Presidency. A space previously occupied by powerhouse nations, Fiji can indeed be proud of this unprecedented achievement. The Ministry was engaged in several High-Level Meetings both at home and abroad and we were privileged to host many successful events. These included two Royal Visits that of which were the Duke and Duchess of Sussex and the Crown Prince of Norway.

Our work in upholding Fiji's vested interests in Trade and Tourism brought the world to Fiji complementing our status as the hub of the Pacific. The visits by leaders from the Oceania region, including the Australian Prime Minister, Honourable Scott Morrison, from our largest tourism market demonstrates the value of Fiji's hub status.

Fiji's leadership role in highlighting the very real existential threat of climate change was further boosted by a special visit from the United Nations Secretary General, His Excellency Antonio Guterres. During his visit, UNSG Guterres addressed members of parliament declaring, "Fiji's strong traditions of community and social responsibility, and its ***“symbiotic relationship” with its surroundings, has made its people “natural global leaders on climate and the environment.”***

As we close the chapter on another challenging, yet deeply satisfying year, I wish to acknowledge the Senior Management Team and dedicated staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs serving at headquarters and across our foreign missions. Together we thank the Honorable Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs for his leadership and guidance.

As the Acting Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it is my honour to commend to you the Ministry's Annual Report for the 2018-2019 financial year.



Yogesh J. Karan
Acting Permanent Secretary



ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Hon. PM	Honourable Prime Minister
Hon. MFA	Honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
CAPP	Climate Action Pacific Partnership
PFSO	Principal Foreign Service Officer
SFSO	Senior Foreign Service Officer
FSO	Foreign Service Officer
FFA	Forum Fisheries Agency
WCPFC	Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
BBNJ	Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction
ISA	International Seabed Authority
MACC	Maritime Affairs Coordinating Committee
PSIDS	Pacific Small Islands Developing States
DINFO	Department of Information
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
WFP	World Food Programme
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
IRENA	International Renewable Energy Agency
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission in Africa
ISO	International Sugar Organisation
AU	African Union
PIDF	Pacific Islands Development Forum
RAD	Roving Ambassador's Division
PIF	Pacific Islands Forum
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
MSG	Melanesian Spearhead Group
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
FMIS	Financial Management Information System

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM



Ambassador Ioane Naivalurua
Permanent Secretary



Esala Nayasi
Deputy Secretary - Policy



Arieta Moceica
Deputy Secretary - Operations



Peter Emberson
Director Multilateral Affairs



Solo Momoivalu
Director AAMEER



Amalaini Kuruvakadua
Director Asia



Alanieta Blakelock
A/Director Oceania



Jonetani Tagivetaua
Chief of Protocol

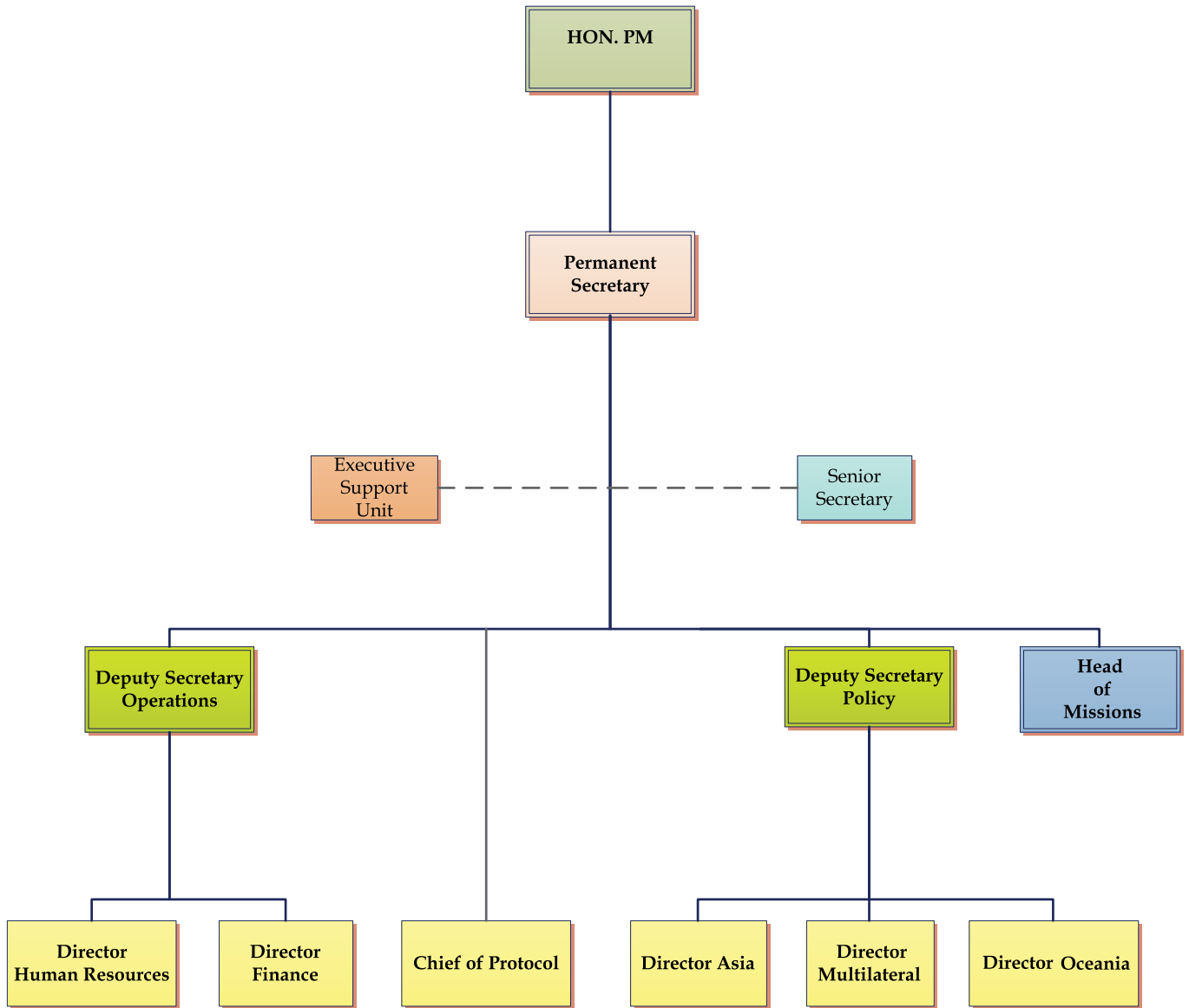


Josefa Tuima
Director Finance



Manjula Shah
Director Corporate Services

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE 2018-2019





PM Bainimarama delivering a statement to leaders at COP24 in Katowice, Poland.

POLICY DIVISION

MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS BUREAU



Captions

01. PM Bainimarama delivers his remarks at the High Level Forum on South-South Cooperation on Climate Change at the China Pavilion in Katowice, Poland.
02. PM Bainimarama, Ambassador Solo Mara and PS Yogesh Karan at the 73rd Session of the UN General Assembly in New York, USA.
03. PM Bainimarama meets climate advocate and former Governor of California Mr. Arnold Schwarzenegger.
04. PS Yogesh Karan and Ambassador Amena Yauvoli at COP24 in Katowice, Poland.
05. PS Ioane Naivalurua addresses MOFA staff following Remembrance Day celebrations in Suva.
06. PM Bainimarama shares a light moment with senior defence officials following a wreath laying ceremony at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, USA.
07. Discussions continuing at COP 24 in Katowice, Poland with UNFCCC Executive Secretary Ms. Maria Espinosa.
08. ADB President Mr. Takehiko Nakao making a point during the ADB's governors meeting at the Sheraton Hotel in Nadi.
09. PM Bainimarama hands over the gavel to incoming COP 24 President, Mr Michal Kurtyka.



Executive Summary

Significant global developments impacting multilateralism occurred in 2018. The former United Nations (UN) Secretary General, Ghanaian Ambassador Kofi Annan, passed away peacefully leaving a vacuum in global and multilateral affairs. He was awarded the Nobel peace prize for his humanitarian work and pushed for UN reforms in an effort to rebuild an effective organization. Additionally, he brought the UN to the 21st century, leading concerted efforts against poverty, diseases, as well as peacekeeping efforts. Meanwhile, in the global political arena, the Trump Administration continued to harden its stance toward multilateral cooperation demonstrated by the United States withdrawal from the UN Human Rights Council and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The departure of a major superpower in these forums created an opportunity for others to capitalize with China leading the way in influencing the multilateral space.

Fiji also positioned to capitalize on these developments within the multilateral space. We successfully campaigned for membership of the UN Human Rights Council, becoming the 1st Pacific Small Island Developing State (PSIDS) to do so. In our tenure of membership for the term 2019-2021, Fiji resolves to voice the human rights priorities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the context of challenges unique to the region.

Fiji co-chaired with the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth Ministerial Meeting on Small States (CMMSS) at the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in London. Fiji utilized this forum to drive critical issues for small island states including climate change action. Through this process, the Commonwealth Leaders endorsed a Commonwealth Blue Charter committing to address ocean protection, conservation and economic development.


The 3rd Fiji-European Union Enhanced Political Dialogue convened in Suva following the second dialogue in Brussels in 2016. There are a number of cooperative agreements in place with the EU, in addition to other bilateral arrangements with its member states. These arrangements impact nearly every aspect of our national development.

Fiji addressed the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) advocating for issues affecting SIDS. As chair of the Pacific Small Islands Developing States (PSIDS) in New York, Fiji continues to lead and coordinate with counterparts within the region, for an international and legally binding treaty on Biodiversity beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ).

The Bureau worked with Fiji multilateral missions in New York, Brussels, London and Geneva to establish, maintain and strengthen Fiji's leadership of these global spaces. The Bureau facilitated logistical arrangements, prepared talking points, policy briefs, cabinet papers and undertook negotiations in the formal spaces whilst also convening various technical meetings, inter-agency meetings and stakeholder consultations.

As secretariat to two major committees, the Bureau worked with the relevant national agencies to ensure consistency, and efficiency in the implementation of Fiji's multilateral commitments.

In its secretariat role, for the Maritime Affairs Coordinating Committee (MACC), the Bureau submitted policy advice, convened quarterly meetings and discussions amongst national technical agencies, and also facilitated representation and negotiations in various regional and international oceans related meetings



including, ongoing negotiations on Maritime Boundaries, discussions on the extended continental shelf, the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) - Forum Fisheries Commission (FFC), the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Committee (WCPFC), the Council and Technical Committees of the International Seabed Authority (ISA), and the ongoing negotiations of the Treaty on Biodiversity beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ). As the National Liaison Office (NLO) for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Bureau facilitated the implementation of IAEA programmes in Fiji.

HIGHLIGHTS

Strategic Priority 1: Global Leadership

1. 25th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM)

Fiji has been a member of the Commonwealth since independence. Leaders of the Commonwealth countries meet every 2 years at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

In 2018, Fiji joined 52 other Heads of Commonwealth member states in London, to discuss how the Commonwealth can contribute to a future which is fairer, more sustainable, more secure and more prosperous.

Commonwealth Heads collectively committed to strengthening democratic institutions and building peace; promoting gender equality and inclusion; action on climate change and oceans; sustainable use of resources; commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention; preventing and countering violent extremism and human trafficking. Particularly important for Fiji, is the recognition of the threat of climate change on the world but in particular the existential threat to Small Island Developing States (SIDs), and the need for a paradigm shift to urgently facilitate pre and post resilience building.

The Commonwealth Blue Ocean Charter outlines the collective commitment of Commonwealth Heads to addressing common ocean challenges, and realizing the vision of the Agenda 2030, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 on Oceans.

2. Hosting the 2nd Climate Action Pacific Partnership Meeting (CAPPII)

Established under the COP23 Presidency in July 2017, CAPP is a coalition of Pacific stakeholders from various thematic and cross-cutting areas, supported by regional and international partners, joined by their commitment to accelerate climate action in the Pacific and support international efforts to achieve the emissions reduction target set by the Paris Agreement.

The CAPP creates a platform to exchange ideas, technologies, innovations, experiences and challenges among various sectors and stakeholders and to initiate, implement and accelerate climate action in the Pacific and provide inputs into the UNFCCC processes that raise the profile of Pacific issues and champion Pacific priorities.

The 2nd CAPP Meeting purposed to showcase and discuss the various opportunities and challenges in the Pacific in accelerating climate action; current issues in the Pacific, UNFCCC Talanoa Dialogue; and firm up the Pacific climate action plans for the thematic areas. – (i) Agriculture, forests and land use (ii) Ocean (iii) Water (iv) Health (v) Gender and climate justice (vi) Climate financing (vii) Low carbon development (viii) Integrating disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and sustainable development (ix) Decent work and just transition.



3. 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

The Prime Minister conveyed Fiji's statement at the plenary session of the UN General Assembly. In doing so, Fiji highlighted our support for multilateralism as seen in the past 40 years of our participation in UN Peacekeeping operations since 1978.

The Plenary was also appraised of Fiji's implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. As part of our commitment to democracy, Fiji's 2nd national elections took place in November resulting in the successful re-election of the current administration.

Fiji also highlighted key developments at the UNFCCC COP23 in particular the establishment of the Ocean Pathway Partnership launched at the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) 23, establishes the interaction of ocean ecology and climate change. The Prime Minister called on other world leaders to join Fiji and other climate change vulnerable nations in utilizing the Talanoa dialogue to raise ambitions for making National Determined Contributions (NDC) to target net zero greenhouse gas emission.

4. Negotiations on Treaty on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)

The Treaty on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction is currently under negotiation with the convening of the first Inter-Government Conference.

This treaty is envisaged to be the third implementing Agreement for the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The scope of this proposed Treaty will cover biodiversity issues beyond national jurisdiction with particular emphasis on Marine Genetic Resources, Area Based Management Tools (ABMTs), Environment Impact Assessment (EIA), and Transfer of Marine Technology (TMT)

The Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) is a prominent negotiating party at these negotiations, given our status as large ocean states, and the impact of this treaty on our maritime spaces. Fiji as PSIDS Chair is coordinating negotiations within the PSIDS membership. The negotiations are targeted to conclude in 2020.

5. Third Fiji-European Union Enhanced Political Dialogue

Under the Cotonou Agreement, three pillars guide the partnership and implementation:

- i. Development Cooperation;
- ii. Economic and Trade Cooperation; and
- iii. Political Dialogue.

The Political Dialogue is an important platform in the Agreement to update on the progress and challenges in relation to EU – Fiji relations.

The third political dialogue is a continuation of the High-Level Political Dialogue held in Brussels, Belgium in 2016. It is particularly important, as it will lay the groundwork for a new arrangement between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, and Fiji is a proud founding member of the ACP Group. Negotiations on a Post Cotonou Agreement started in May.

In the upcoming negotiations, Fiji will be pushing for an even greater focus on sustainable, resilient development, and space for accommodating developing and climate-vulnerable small island states, increasing regional trade and integration, and making development financing more accessible.

The new Agreement is tentatively scheduled for signing in 2020.

Strategic Priority 6: Human Rights and Democratic Values

6. Membership of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC)

The Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system made up of 47 States responsible for the promotion and protection of all human rights around the globe. Fiji became the first Small Island State from the Pacific to sit as a member of the Council, and to also take the position of Vice President.

Fiji vied for a seat in the Asia Pacific category alongside Philippines, India, Bahrain and Bangladesh. 18 new members were elected: Argentina, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Czech Republic, Denmark, Eritrea, Fiji, India, Italy, Philippines, Somalia, Togo, and Uruguay.

This Council presents opportunities for Fiji to voice issues concerning small island developing states.

7. Treaties

Fiji ratified, signed and acceded to the following treaties and conventions:

- i. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR);
- ii. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); and
- iii. Convention of 19 October 1996 on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Co-operation in Respect of Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Children.

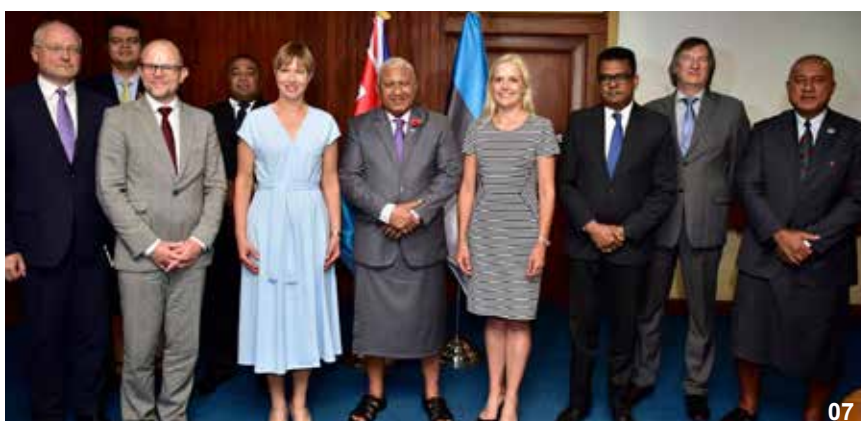


PM Bainimarama with members of Fiji's delegation and the Fijian diaspora in New York following the delivery of Fiji's country statement at the 73rd General Assembly of the United Nations.



His Royal Highness, Crown Prince Haakon Magnus of the Kingdom of Norway inspects the guard of honour at Nausori Airport.

AFRICA, AMERICAS, MIDDLE EAST, EUROPE AND RUSSIA (AAMEER) BUREAU



Captions

01. Ambassador Saad Abdulla Saad Al Mahmoud Al Shareef, the non resident Ambassador of Qatar to Fiji following his introductory call on the Prime Minister.
02. Following his presentation of credentials, Ambassador Shareef was accorded a quarter guard parade at Borron House.
03. Minister Seruiratu meets with Professor Robert Dussey, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and African Integration at the ACP Central Negotiating Group (CNG) meeting held in New York, USA.
04. His Royal Highness, Crown Prince Haakon Magnus of the Kingdom of Norway was accorded a traditional ceremony of welcome at the GPH in Suva.
05. Archbishop Martin Krebs of Germany following his courtesy call with H.E Jioji Konusi Konrote.
06. UAE Non-Resident Ambassador H.E Saleh Ahmed Alsuwaidi following the signing of the Cooperation Agreement between Fiji and the UAE.
07. Estonian President H.E Kersti Kaljulaid and her delegation following their meeting with PM Bainimarama.

Executive Summary

There were significant developments within the AAMEER region between 2018 to 2019.

In Africa, Zimbabwe held its first Presidential elections since independence, in which former President Robert Mugabe was not a candidate. Ethiopia finalised a peace deal with Eritrea that had been pending for eighteen years. The two countries fought a twelve-year long war that ended in 2000 with nearly eighty thousand dead.

In America, President Trump took a harder stance against Iran by withdrawing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action established during President Obamas tenure, and further reinstating sanctions. The Trump Administration ordered the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Syria immediately on the basis that they have won against ISIS. At the G-7 summit in Quebec, President Trump chastised G-7 leaders for their country's trade policies. In another historical milestone, President Trump travelled to Singapore to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un where a communique was signed by both leaders and declaration was made that "there is no longer a nuclear threat from North Korea".

In the Middle East, the war in Yemen was recognised by the United Nations as the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Palestinians in the disputed Gaza region held weekly protests in support of the declared right of Palestinian refugees to return to their ancestral homes in what is now Israel. The United States relocated its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. In Saudi Arabia, women were granted the right to drive after a decades long ban, and Jamal Khashoggi, a Saudi Arabian journalist for the Washington Post, was killed inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. The U.S. Senate passed a resolution holding Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman personally responsible for ordering the killing.

In Europe, Chancellor Angela Merkel was sworn in for her fourth term as chancellor of Germany. Vladimir Putin retained presidency of the Russian Federation for a new six-year term after successful elections. The G20 summit took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina in which the European Union attended as a full member and leaders adopted a declaration focusing on the future of work, infrastructure for development, a sustainable food future and gender equality.

These developments impacted on the work of the Bureau in providing advice to Management and key stakeholders, as well as consulting with Line Agencies on the implications on Fijian strategic priorities. In alignment with the Ministry's strategic priorities, the Bureau worked with the relevant missions in Addis Ababa, Abu Dhabi, London, and Washington D.C. to ensure that Fiji positioned to achieve its targets under specific key performance indicators for the relevant period.



UAE Non-Resident Ambassador H.E Saleh Ahmed Alsuwaidi and his delegation following the signing of the Cooperation Agreement between Fiji and the UAE. The Permanent Secretary for Economy Ms. Makereta Konrote signed the agreement on Fiji's behalf.



HIGHLIGHTS

Strategic Priority 1: Global Leadership

1. Chairmanship of the World Bank Small States Forum (2018 – 2020)

Fiji assumed the chairmanship of the World Bank's Small States Forum at the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Annual Meetings in Bali, Indonesia in 2018. Fiji will chair the Small States Forum for a term of two years, leading a group of 50 countries, central bank governors, World Bank Group Management and partner organisations from the Commonwealth Secretariat, UNDP and International Monetary Fund to address pressing development challenges and opportunities for small states.

Fiji pledged to continue its advocacy for climate action, accessible climate finance and oceans preservation. Significant priorities highlighted by Fiji include the difference in economies of scale which impacts countries access to finance. In addition, the current rules, procedures and arrangements of the World Bank disadvantage small states.

Fiji continues to utilize relevant multilateral platforms to advocate for the equitable access to finance and other issues affecting small states. Through the work of the relevant mission in Washington D.C. and the Permanent Mission of Fiji to the UN, Fiji is working closely with other small states, development partners and the World Bank to respond with greater agility and flexibility to open up flows for finance that can assist small states to climate proof economies.

In alignment with the Ministry's strategic *Objective 1* on Global Leadership, Fiji continues to utilize these multilateral platforms through its leadership, representation and participation. The Bureau worked closely with the relevant Missions in Washington D.C. and the Office of the Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, to support Ministry of Economy in the duration of their chairmanship.

2. Chair of the 73rd Plenary of the Boards of Governors of the World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund (IMF).


As chair of the Annual Board Meeting of Board of Governors of the World Bank Group, Minister for Economy, Mr. Aiyaz Sayed Khaiyum – on behalf of the Fijian Government, emphasised the need to recalibrate and revamp the development finance architecture to align with the rapid changes in our climate and the resulting effects on nation-states.

This chairmanship provided an important platform to highlight the unique vulnerabilities and needs of Small Island Developing States.

3. Establishment of World Bank Group Pacific Office – Suva

The World Bank opened its new office in Suva, which will serve as a regional hub for the development institution's work across the region. The opening of the new office follows the signing of the Establishment Agreement in 2017.

The establishment of the World Bank office in Suva augurs well for Fiji's hub status in the region and at international platforms. This will enable the World Bank Group's delivery of more than one billion Fiji dollars' worth of projects across six countries (Fiji, Nauru, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu) in a wide



range of sectors including transport, aviation, information and communications technology, education, disaster resilience, fisheries, health and education, among others.

Visibility and closer collaboration with stakeholders in the region will enable the World Bank Group to deliver strong development outcomes.

Strategic Priority 2 - Trade and Investment

4. Acquisition of Fiji Airways Boeing Airplanes.

The first of five brand new Fiji Airways Boeing 737 MAX 8 planes were officially handed over to the Fijian Government at the Boeing Factory in Seattle, Washington at the end of November 2018. The advanced energy efficient technology that comes with the plane contributes to the reduced carbon footprint of Fiji Airways and makes the Pacific Island region more accessible. With the addition of new and very efficient Boeing 737 MAX 8s, Fiji Airways will have one of the youngest fleets in the Asia Pacific.

Strategic Priority 3 - Socio Economic Development

5. Access to Additional World Bank Support for Fiji

Following the opening of the World Bank Group Pacific Office in Suva, Fiji is now eligible to access additional funding from the World Bank through the International Development Association (IDA), the World Bank Group's arm for supporting the world's most in-need countries, including funding for key regional development projects and to support the country in the event of a crisis.

The changes have come as a result of revisions to the World Bank's IDA 'Small Islands Economies Exception', which recognises the unique development challenges that Small Island Economies face primarily due to their vulnerability to natural disasters or long-term impact of climate change. Fiji will join fifteen other small island countries – including many other Pacific nations – that receive support through the Exception.


Fiji has been reclassified as a country eligible for funding from both IDA and the World Bank's International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), with preferential access to funds from IDA on the most concessional terms, as well as World Bank Group IBRD support on the most favourable terms available.

This development aligns with the Ministry's strategic priority on socio-economic development. Access to funding is an important component that will enable the facilitation and progress of socio-economic development in Fiji. The Bureau supports the Ministry of Economy in their position as focal point for World Bank related issues.

Strategic Priority 5 – Peace and Security

6. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) established

Following the opening of the World Bank Group Pacific Office in Suva, Fiji is now eligible to access additional funding from the World Bank through the International Development Association (IDA), the



World Bank Group's arm for supporting the world's most in-need countries, including funding for key regional development projects and to support the country in the event of a crisis.

i. Fiji-UK Defence Cooperation

A MOU in Defence Cooperation between Fiji and the UK was formalised. The MOU is envisaged to allow our defence personnel to train with one of the best equipped and prepared militaries in the world, and this will surely better prepare us when engaging in peacekeeping missions in volatile theatres around the globe.

ii. (US) Nevada National Guard

Fiji became the 76th country to join the American State's Partnership Program. The partnership is a wonderful tool for us to fulfill the vow that we made – that we will look after our people better all the time especially in times of their need. Adjutant General for the State of Nevada, Brigadier General William Burks says this provides them with an opportunity to work with Fiji on shared security and economic interest.

iii. MOU: Ship-Rider Agreement for Fiji and the US

The Ship-rider agreement signed between Ministry of Defence (Fiji) and the US counterparts allows Fijian defense and law enforcement officers to embark on U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Navy vessels to observe, protect, board and search vessels suspected of violating laws or regulations within their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) or on the high seas.

Fiji has an exclusive economic zone of around 1.3 million square kilometers. It is difficult to protect Fiji's sovereign rights for fishing and other economic activities over such a vast area of sea. The Ship-Rider program will give Fiji another tool to patrol and protect its sovereign waters. The Agreement will allow Fiji's law enforcement officers to work on U.S. Coast Guard and Navy vessels as "ship-riders." Missions include interdicting suspicious vessels potentially involved in illicit activities, such as illegal fishing and smuggling, including the trafficking of illegal drugs.

The Bureau in consultation with the Fiji Missions in London, and in Washington D.C. and the Ministry of Defence in Fiji facilitated the negotiation of these MOUs noting its importance in maritime border security for Fiji. The areas of cooperation covered under these MOUs would ensure that Fijian border security authorities are able to work in collaboration with its developed counterparts such as the UK or the US to protect our borders.

Strategic Priority 6 – Public Diplomacy

7. High Level Visits

i. Visit to Fiji by the Duke and Duchess of Sussex

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex visited Australia, Fiji, the Kingdom of Tonga and New Zealand as part of their first official tour. In Fiji, the Royals participated in various engagements including meeting a number of Fijian war veterans, some of whom served with the British Armed Forces. Links between the British Military and Fiji continue to this day with more than 1250 Fijians currently serving in the British Army.



The Royals visited the University of the South Pacific where they observed a cultural performance on the effects of climate change, before meeting with students. The Duke addressed the audience in his capacity as Commonwealth Youth Ambassador and afterwards travelled to Colo-i-Suva Forest Park, to launch Fiji's dedication to The Queen's Commonwealth Canopy where he unveiled a plaque to mark its dedication. He also planted an endangered native tree. The Duchess attended an event showcasing women's organisations including a UN Women's project, 'Markets for Change', which promotes women's empowerment in marketplaces throughout the Pacific.

On their final day in Fiji, the Duke and Duchess travelled to Nadi to unveil a new statue commemorating Sergeant Talaiasi Labalaba, a British-Fijian soldier who lost his life in the 1972 Battle of Mirbat. In the lead-up to the visit, the Bureau coordinated with the Fiji High Commission in London and the British High Commission in Suva to ensure that all logistical preparations and policy considerations are pre-positioned to effectively facilitate this visit.

ii. Visit of the Crown Prince of Norway

His Royal Highness, Crown Prince Haakon Magnus of the Kingdom of Norway is the first from Norway to visit Fiji on an official capacity. During this visit, His Royal Highness emphasised the need for the sustainable ocean management and practices to tackle the problems of overfishing and pollution. His Royal Highness addressed students and stakeholders at USP on the topic of ***"Partners across the Globe – An Ocean of Challenges & Opportunities"***. His visit to the University aimed to strengthen co-operations between Pacific Islands to battle mutual challenges on ensuring healthy oceans and fighting climate change.

The effects of climate change are felt in the Southern Hemisphere and in the Northern Hemisphere. Sea levels are rising and cyclones are occurring in the Pacific Islands more frequently than before, more coral reefs are dying. In the North, winters are getting shorter than before and glaciers are getting smaller. The ice in the North is melting which means it leads to the ocean coming up or the ocean rising all over the world.

Environment challenges can be tackled at different levels, both at the grass-root and at the government/national level.

Under the ***Pacific Islands - Norway Partnership for Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS)***, there is on-going collaboration between Norway and the PSIDS in areas of oceans and climate change, from policy, program and implementation.

iii. Visit of the Secretary General of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO)

The visit of the Secretary General of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Mr. Kitack Lim to Fiji strengthened relations between the IMO and national implementing agencies. Since assuming his new position in 2016, this visit was also Mr Lim's first trip to Fiji and other Pacific island countries. Mr. Lim is the first Secretary General of IMO to visit Fiji.

IMO is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for regulating shipping. It was established following an agreement at a UN conference held in Geneva in 1948. The IMO has 174 member states and three associate members.



UNSG Guterres with young Timoci Naulusala in Laucala Bay



Traditional dancers entertain guests at Indonesia's 73rd Independence day celebrations in Suva.

ASIA BUREAU



01



02



03



04



05



06



07

Captions

01. Attorney General and ADB 52nd Board of Governors Chair Mr. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum handing over the baton to Republic of Korea Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Nam-ki Hong for the 53rd ADB Conference.
02. Chinese Ambassador, Mr. Xian Bo at the celebrations of the Moon Festival in Suva.
03. Malaysian High Commissioner, Mr. Ilham Tuah Bin Illias following the presentation of his credentials to H.E Jioji Konusi Konrote.
04. PS Yogesh Karan and Japanese Ambassador Mr. Masahiro Omura following the Signing of Exchange of Notes between Fiji and Japan.
05. PM Bainimarama presents a gift to Vietnam's Prime Minister Hon. Nguyen Xuan Phuca after a bilateral meeting in New York.
06. PM Bainimarama with a participant at the Asia-Pacific Urban Forum in Penang, Malaysia.
07. India's High Commissioner Mr. Vishvas Supkal presenting a cheque to the Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism, Local Government, Housing and Community Development.



Executive Summary

The Ministry's Strategic Priorities formed the basis of the Asia Bureau's engagement with its key stakeholders throughout the 2018-2019 Financial Year.

The period was marked by significant events in East Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia. A number of countries of accreditations covered by our Overseas Mission's in these regions witnessed internal government transition coupled with national and regional (competing) priorities and challenges - political, economic, social and environmental in nature.

Despite the ongoing challenges, Fiji's successful completion of its general elections in 2018, and the continuity of the seating administration, provided the platform for Bureau's and MOFA's continued strategic implementation of its foreign policy with the targeted beneficiaries enjoying the (past years and) reported 2018-2019 year of consistent and committed engagement with the countries of accreditation managed through our Overseas Mission's in East, South and Southeast Asia, respectively.

This section of the 2018-2019 Annual Report seeks to capture and highlight these engagements successfully covered by the Asia Bureau.

HIGHLIGHTS

Strategic Priority 1: Global Leadership

1. 2nd Belt and Road Forum (BRF)

Renowned as one of the key global forums, Fiji's participation at the second Belt and Road Forum (BRF) is testament to her commitment in ensuring our leaders are well represented alongside some of the most powerful economies in the World. The second BRF for International Cooperation was held in Beijing from 25 to 27 April, 2019. Fiji was well represented by the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Community Development, Industry, Trade and Tourism; the Minister for Fisheries; and the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Rural and Maritime Development, Disaster Management and Meteorological Services. The forum, a major highlight of President Xi Jinping's vision to open China and the Chinese Economy to the World through improving regional cooperation and connectivity through land, sea and air, was a follow up conference to the first BRF that was held in May, 2017 in which the Prime Minister for Fiji was the only leader from the South Pacific to be invited to attend the forum.

2. China-Pacific Island Countries Agriculture Ministers' Meeting

In keeping with the Ministry's strategic role of fostering global leadership, the China-Pacific Island Countries Agriculture Ministers' Meeting was held in Nadi, Fiji on 29 March 2019 where His Excellency Mr. Han Changfu, Chinese Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs co-chaired the meeting with his Fijian Counterpart, Dr. Mahendra Reddy. This was a first such meeting held, bringing together Ministers for Agriculture from the Pacific in one forum. An outcome of the meeting saw the Ministers agree to the Nadi Declaration on Agriculture Cooperation between China and the Pacific. This declaration will pave the way for more active and enhanced cooperation between the Pacific countries and China.



3. 2019 International Seminar on the Achievements of the SDGs for Parliaments of Developing Countries

The Minister for Defence, National Security and Foreign Affairs Mr. Inia Seruiratu led a Parliamentary Delegation from Fiji to the 2019 International Seminar on the Achievements of the SDGs for Parliaments of Developing Countries. The Conference was held from 10 to 15 June, 2019 in Beijing. The Conference's two main sessions focused discussions on strengthening the Belt and Road cooperation; achieving common development; and working together for the intensive and meticulous implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative. Likewise, the Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Mrs. Mereseini Vuniwaqa visited South Korea from 13 to 15 September, 2018 to observe the community and institutional platforms of aged care in Korea. The Fiji Embassy in Korea facilitated this visit whereby the Minister also met with the Deputy Minister for Population Policy of the Republic of Korea who commended the delegation for taking on the role of increasing support for senior and elderly citizens.

4. Bangkok Climate Change Conference

The Bangkok Climate Change Conference (BCCC) was hosted by the Prime Minister from 1 to 4 September, 2018 in his capacity as the President of the COP 23. Discussion focused on the early completion of the Paris Agreement Rule Book. The Prime Minister also had several bilateral meetings on the margins of the Conference and was updated on the Fiji-Malaysia and Fiji-Thailand relations by Ambassador Kolinio Takali. He also met with Fiji's Honorary Consul-General in Thailand.

5. International Solar Alliance General Assembly

The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is a treaty-based inter-governmental organization comprising of an alliance of 121 countries. The alliance was initiated by India's Prime Minister, Narendra Modi in November 2015 and its primary objective is to work for the efficient exploitation of solar energy to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. The 1st General Assembly of the ISA was held in New Delhi from 2 to 5 October, 2018 and Fiji's delegation was led by the Permanent Secretary of the Office of the Prime Minister, Mr. Yogesh Karan. The meeting successfully established the foundation for global solar agenda and steered the process for member countries to harness solar energy to achieve energy access at affordable rates. Fiji as a founding member is one of the first fifteen countries to ratify the ISA Framework Agreement.

6. 5th Republic of Korea and Pacific Island Countries Senior Officials Meeting (ROK – PICs SOM)

The 5th Republic of Korea and Pacific Island Countries Senior Officials Meeting (ROK – PICs SOM) was held in Seoul from 22 to 25 October, 2018 where the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs led Fiji's delegation. The meeting discussed key areas of cooperation which included Climate Change, Fisheries, Maritime Affairs and Regional security. The Senior Officials noted the substantial efforts that have been made to implement the commitments in the fields of development, climate change and maritime and fisheries affairs as agreed in the ROK-PICs Foreign Ministers meeting held in 2017.



7. Our Oceans Conference

Fiji's delegation to the "Our Oceans Conference" (OOC) was led by the Minister of Fisheries, Mr. Semi Koroilavesau. The Conference was held in Bali, Indonesia from 29 to 30 October 2018. The six areas of action discussed throughout the conference included Climate Change, Marine Protected Areas, Sustainable fisheries, Marine pollution, Sustainable blue economy and Maritime security. OOC 2018 also focused on generating commitments from various countries and organizations towards actions that help maintain the sustainability of our oceans.

Strategic Priority 2: Trade and Investment

8. Launch of China Youth Travel Service (CYTS)

The China Youth Travel Service (CYTS), established in 1980 is one of the top travel and tour operators in China and is also one of the first tourism- listed companies in China with central large-scale financial holding group networks. On 27 November 2018, a Media Launch of a joint initiative to charter four Fiji Airways aircrafts to celebrate the Chinese New Year (January and February) in Fiji was announced in Beijing by CYTS in partnership with Tourism Fiji and Rosie Travels.

9. 6th Session of the Committee on Trade and Investment

Fiji's Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism officials attended the 6th Session of the Committee on Trade and Investment in Bangkok from 13 to 15 March, 2019. The Committee on Trade and Investment is one of the nine committees that make up the subsidiary structure of ESCAP. The following agenda were discussed: implications of rising protectionism, including trade wars, on regional trade and investment; navigating non-tariff measures towards sustainable development; promoting cross-border paperless trade in Asia and the Pacific; leveraging e-commerce for graduation of least developed countries; promoting sustainable investment and business; and engaging the business sector in promoting sustainable development. The Fiji delegation also met with the Trade, Investment and Innovation Division of the Committee to discuss the potential of Fiji joining the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement and the Framework Convention on Facilitating Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific.

Strategic Priority 3: Socio-Economic Development

10. Visit by His Excellency Mr. Li Xi, Party Secretary of the CPC Guangdong Provincial Committee

Mr. Li Xi member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and Party Secretary of the CPC Guangdong Provincial Committee visited Fiji from 12 to 15 September, 2018. The purpose of this visit was to enhance friendly cooperation in the areas of trade, investment and people to people exchanges between our two countries. During his visit, H.E Mr. Xi made a courtesy call to His Excellency the President; launched the newly renovated \$20 million Suva Civic Auditorium; launched the Marist Brothers High School \$8 million Rugby Field and Track; and gifted educational facilities worth \$100,000 to the school. The visit concluded with the signing of three MOUs:

- i. Renovation of the Squash Court of the President's State Premises;
- ii. Construction of the Valelevu Sports Facilities; and
- iii. MOU on Education.

11. Visit to China by Minister for Fisheries

The Minister for Fisheries visited China from 25 to 28 September, 2018 and met with the Chinese Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, Mr. Yu Kangzhen. The two Ministers discussed the development of the Fisheries Sector in Fiji. In addition, investment assistance from Chinese Investors including the proper construction of a Fishing Port in Fiji; provision of skipjack fish for processing at the Pacific Fishing Company (PAFCO); and assistance for aquaculture in Fiji for breeding of reef fishes, comprised the agenda. A MOU on Fisheries Cooperation was also signed between Fiji and the Hainan Provincial Government during this visit.

In response to an invitation from the Minister of Fisheries of Fiji, the Vice-Governor of the Hainan Province, Madam Fu Caixiang, with her five-member delegation visited Fiji from 2 to 4 November, 2018. The objectives of the visit included the following: discussions regarding the Implementation Plan of the MOU on Fisheries Cooperation which was signed in September 2018; identification of potential aquaculture project sites; discussions on the sister-province concept between Hainan Province and Ba Province; and signing of the Letter of Intent for the establishment of a sister-city arrangement between Sanya City and Nadi Town.

Strategic Priority 4: Public Diplomacy

12. China General Aviation Expo

One of the most effective strategies of promoting Fiji and its Trade, Investment and Tourism initiatives is the participation of the Fijian diaspora. The Fiji Embassy in China over the years has built capacity amongst the Fijian Diaspora, in particular Fijian students studying across China, as brand Ambassadors of Fiji in all Embassy engagements. Tourism Fiji and Fiji Airways now have offices in mainland China providing a good platform for joint cooperation in areas of our strength to promote Fiji. The first of such collaboration was in the margins of the China General Aviation Expo held in Hebei Province, where the services of our Fijian Diaspora were requested to promote Fiji as a tourism destination. The Fiji Embassy assisted Tourism Fiji in the Aviation Expo.

13. Kabbadi

High Commissioner Yogesh Punja met with the Director General of the Sports Authority of India (SAI) to introduce Kabaddi to Fijians. Kabaddi is a contact team sport played between two teams of seven players each, much like the sport "Touch Rugby". During their discussion, High Commissioner Punja highlighted the importance of the Indo-Fiji relationship and placed emphasis on strengthening our ties through Sports Diplomacy. Focus was directed towards the promotion of 7's Rugby in India and the promotion of Kabaddi in Fiji.

Strategic Priority 7: Advocacy, Communications and Awareness

14. Busan International Tourism Fair

The Fiji Embassy in South Korea participated in the Busan International Tourism Fair (BITF) that was held from 7 to 10 September, 2018 in Busan. BITF is regarded as one of the leading travel fairs in Korea and the 2018 exhibition saw a total of 42 countries represented by 101 international booths. The Fiji booth recorded over 1000 visitors during the four-day event and the Embassy used various promotional materials to enhance Fiji's presence at the event and encourage foreign visitors to Fiji.

15. World Trade Expo

Fiji's High Commission in New Delhi participated in the World Trade Expo (WTE) 2018, held from 29 to 30 October in Mumbai. The Expo offered an excellent opportunity for the Indian business community to take advantage of and extend their geographical reach by exploring opportunities in participating countries/regions. To maintain this momentum in Fiji-India relations and to enhance bilateral cooperation, the World Trade Expo provided Fiji the platform to showcase various opportunities in trade and investment available in Fiji; and provided the Indian business community a podium for interaction to gain more information as well as assistance in engaging and enhancing Fiji's trade with the participating countries/regions.

16. Beijing Expo

The 2019 Beijing Expo provided a platform where Fiji could leverage its potential to boost green economy as well as implement and explore a sustainable development model centering on "Live Green, Live Better". Through the promotion of Fiji-made goods and in view of the effort by the Ministry of Industry, Trade & Tourism to finalize the Free Trade Agreement with China, it is envisioned that this Expo will continue to provide an opportunity for Fiji to bring to a realization our effort to market Fiji globally as an ideal tourism destination. Fiji's participation at the Expo reflects its commitment to elevating Fiji and China's comprehensive strategic partnership of mutual respect and common development.

Strategic Priority 8: Leadership, Good Governance, Best Practices and Employment Standards

17. Meeting of Asia Heads of Missions

Heads of Missions ("HOMs") from the Asia Region met in Kuala Lumpur from 25 to 26 January 2019, to finalize a number of issues including the Asian regional strategy for 2019; the Asian regional priority for 2019 (work plan); and the Missions' resource plans. At the end of the meeting, the HOMs endorsed the draft regional strategies and priorities noting the key geopolitical challenges facing Asia and how these could continuously shape and inform the regional strategy. In keeping with this evolutionary process, HOMs acknowledged the need for Fijian diplomats to be on the cutting edge of an efficient and effective foreign service. Where they lack, HOMs endorsed that capacity building initiatives should be arranged with Headquarters and recommended that diplomats could be trained on the margins of future bureau meetings and that a training allocation should be set aside for this purpose.



PM Bainimarama inspecting guards while embarking onboard the Peace Ark in Suva.

OCEANIA BUREAU



Captions

01. PIF Leaders following their meeting with UNSG Guterres.
02. Australian Prime Minister, Mr. Scott Morrison and Mrs Morrison observing a minute of silence at the National War Memorial in Draiba.
03. Welcoming the Prime Minister of New Zealand to Fiji, Ms. Jacinda Ardern.
04. Samoan Prime Minister, Hon. Tuilaepa Lupesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi following his meeting with H.E Jioji Konusi Konrote.
05. NZ Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Winston Peters with Minister Seruiratu.
06. Kiribati Te Beretitenti, H.E Taneti Maamau with H.E Jioji Konusi Konrote.



Executive Summary

2018-2019 was a very full year for the Bureau. Within the wider Pacific region, Fiji continued to actively participate in the regional and sub-regional forums. Bilaterally, New Zealand's 'Pacific Reset' policy and Australia's 'Pacific Step Up' resulted in increased engagement with Fiji across various sectors.

Discussions have also begun on a renewed framework for Fiji-Australia bilateral relations known as the 'Vuvale Partnership'. The renewed framework of engagement is expected to build on the current bilateral relationship and take it to new heights.

A notable development as well for Fiji was the renewed sense of friendship with Papua New Guinea and Samoa which is a key component of the Bureau's Pacific Regional Strategy.

HIGHLIGHTS

Strategic Priority 1: Global Leadership

1. PIF Governance Meetings

The Pacific Islands Forum held their annual governance meetings for the year 2018-2019. The Leaders Summit was held in September 2018 in Nauru while the Forum Officials Committee (FOC) meeting and Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting (FFMM) were held in Samoa in August 2018. The Bureau lent policy as well as logistical support to aid in Fiji's engagement for all three governance meetings.

2. PIDF Leaders Summit

July 2019 saw the Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF) Leaders Summit being hosted in Fiji and the handover of the Chairmanship from Solomon Islands to Fiji. A number of outcomes from the Leaders Summit included the review of the PIDF Charter, the review of the draft PIDF Strategic Plan and the appointment of an interim Secretary General.

3. Signing of HCA between Fiji and SPC

In January 2019, Fiji signed the Host Country Agreement (HCA) with the Pacific Community (SPC). The signing of the HCA was an important achievement for the Roving Ambassador's Division and the Oceania Bureau as it had been a lengthy process due to a number of issues that required thorough consultations and negotiations.

4. High-Level Exchanges

An important indicator of the importance that a country places on a bilateral relationship involves the number of exchanges between the two, particularly at the political level. Throughout the course of 2018-2019, Fiji hosted a number of high-level visits from the Oceania region. These included Official visits by the Prime Minister of Australia-Hon. Scott Morrison, the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of New Zealand - Hon. Winston Peters, the Prime Minister of Samoa - Hon. Tuilaepa Malielegaoi, and the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Hon. Peter O'Neill. There were also a number of visits at the Ministerial level by Australian Ministers in this period.



5. Presentation of Credentials

In the 2018-2019 period, Roving Ambassador's agreement was accepted in Samoa where he was able to present his credentials in person. Furthermore, in December 2018, High Commissioner Luke Daunivalu presented his credentials as Fiji's Ambassador to Australia.

6. Support to Tonga following TC Gita

Fiji provided support to the Kingdom of Tonga following the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Gita. Tonga was devastated by Tropical Cyclone Gita which hit the islands in February 2019. TC Gita was the worst cyclone to hit Tonga in over 60 years. Roving Ambassador, H.E. Ratu Tui Cavuilati led a small delegation from Fiji to Tonga to assess the situation on the ground and affirm Fiji's support toward Tonga's recovery.

Strategic Priority 2: Trade and Investment

7. Fiji-New Zealand Relations

Work during this period continued to focus on leveraging the relationship between the New Zealand Government and the New Zealand-Fiji Business Council to secure trade and investment for Fiji. The New Zealand-Fiji Business Council annual general meeting was held in October 2018 in which the Minister for Pacific Peoples, Hon. Aupito William Sio spoke of the strengthened economic and political relationship between Fiji and New Zealand.

In November 2018, Fiji's High Commission in Wellington produced an excellent return on investment through its collective lobbying of Fiji and our Pacific Island neighbours when the New Zealand Government announced a contribution of NZD\$13.5million over a period of four years to support the Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Access (PHAMA) Plus programme. The joint New Zealand-Australia initiative will target select export products in Fiji and other Pacific Island countries to assist producers, processors and exporters improve their productivity, quality of production and capacity as well as meet export market biosecurity requirements. Agricultural, forestry, fishery and handicraft products are initial targets for support under this scheme.

8. PIDF/South-South Cooperation

The Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF) has been closely engaging with the UN Office of South-South Cooperation in efforts to further develop the South-South Cooperation linkages in the region. Pacific consultation on South-South Cooperation was held on 6-7 March 2019 and was attended by the Bureau. The consultations focused on the institutional arrangements and management of South-South and Triangular Cooperation, modalities to strengthen regional and sub-regional cooperation, multi-stakeholder partnerships to enhance South-South and Triangular Cooperation and approaches to sustainable development best practices and success stories. PIDF is in an opportune position to operate in this niche area of supporting countries' sustainable development aspirations through South-South and Triangular Cooperation.



9. MOU on Pacific Labour Scheme

In April 2019, Fiji, through Fiji's High Commissioner to Australia, H.E. Luke Daunivalu signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the Pacific Labour Scheme. The Pacific Labour Scheme will now allow Fijians to work for longer periods from 1-3 years as opposed to the 9 month work period under the Seasonal Workers Programme. The Pacific Labour Scheme will have a positive impact in providing more job opportunities for Fijian workers, potentially increasing the level of remittances from Australia into Fiji and thus contribute to overall economic growth. The Scheme will boost opportunities for semi and low-skilled Fijians to seek employment in tourism, age-care and agricultural sectors amongst other sectors in Australia.

10. Assistance towards vaccination programme

New Zealand provided assistance to Fiji to support efforts to combat the outbreak of the meningococcal disease. In August 2018, the New Zealand Government contributed NZD\$1million to the campaign and vaccination programme to immunize the most at risk populations, particularly those aged between 1-19 years old. The vaccination programme was rolled out by the Ministry of Health and Medical Services.

11. Commissioning of borehole project

A new borehole water project was commissioned at Kavanagasau Sanatan Dharm School in October 2018 by New Zealand High Commissioner to Fiji, H.E. Jonathan Curr. The new borehole system will enable students and teachers to have access to a regular supply of water daily. Under the High Commission Fund, FJD\$14,150 was provided to assist the school with the new borehole and electric pump that addresses their water needs and will also ensure proper sanitation and hygiene practices.

12. Recognized Seasonal Employer (RSE) Scheme

The New Zealand High Commission team has been lobbying the New Zealand Government for an increase in Fiji's CAP under the Recognized Seasonal Employer (RSE). The efforts of the High Commission team have successfully seen the RSE CAP increase by 1750 for 2019. RSE Employers have experienced growth over the years however such growth has been met with labor shortages. This is an opportunity in which Fiji can pursue to provide much needed labor for the horticulture and viticulture industries in New Zealand.

Strategic Priority 4: Public Diplomacy

13. Strengthening sports diplomacy

A public relations event was held at Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane in April 2019. As part of Australia's 'Step Up' foreign policy, the event hosted the Assistant Minister for International Development and the Pacific, Senator Hon. Anne Ruston and several prominent Fijian athletes. The occasion was purposed to renew commitment to strengthen sports diplomacy and Fiji-Australia people-to-people links under the Vuvale partnership.

Strategic Priority 5: Peace & Security

14. Defence cooperation

New Zealand and Fiji continued to strengthen the long-standing defence relationship through exchanges between the two Defence Ministries, bilateral defence talks, capacity building and training exercises. New Zealand has also been providing assistance on the Protective Security Policy.



PM Bainimarama during a bilateral meeting with his counterpart PM Morrison in Canberra, Australia.



PM Bainimarama delivering Fiji's national statement at the UN General Assembly in New York during its 73rd session.

PROTOCOL AND CONSULAR DIVISION



Chief Justice Anthony Gates, H.E Jioji Konusi Konrote and PM Bainimarama with High Commissioner of India to Fiji, Mr. Vishvas Sapkal during India's Republic Day celebrations in Suva.

The role of the Protocol and Consular Division is crucial in the promotion and advancement of Fiji's foreign policy priorities within the Diplomatic and Consular Missions both at Regional and International levels in order to enhance Fiji's global standing. The Protocol and Consular Division works in close collaboration with Regional and International Organisations hosted in Fiji, including with non-resident diplomatic missions accredited to Fiji based in Australia and New Zealand. The work is informed and guided by the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961), the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (1963) and Fiji's Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities Act (1971).


The timely provision of Protocol and Consular Services to all Fiji missions abroad, all resident and non-resident diplomatic missions and Honorary Consuls accredited to Fiji are the primary roles of the division of which the scope of work entails:

- i. Fiji Missions Abroad - 15 Missions;
- ii. Diplomatic Missions in Suva - 24 Missions;
- iii. Regional & International Organizations - 20 Missions;
- iv. Diplomatic Missions in NZ accredited to Fiji - 14 Missions;
- v. Diplomatic Missions in Australia accredited to Fiji - 43 Missions and
- vi. Honorary Consuls based in Suva - 18 HCs

In addition the division provides support to the Israeli and Singapore Ambassadors both operating from their respective capitals.

In 2018, the Division welcomed the appointment of its new Chief of Protocol, Mr. Jonetani Tagivetaua.

The year witnessed a number of the Asia region's Fiji Head of Missions presenting their credentials:

- 
- i. Ambassador Manasa Tagicakibau presented his Credentials to President Xi Jinping on 10 September 2018 at the Great Hall of the People. In welcoming Ambassador Tagicakibau, President Xi expressed his sincere greetings and good wishes to the Government and the people of Fiji; the latter also emphasized that China attaches great importance in developing relations with Fiji and is also willing to further enhance mutual political trust, deepen pragmatic cooperation and people-to-people exchanges, and strengthen coordination and cooperation in international affairs.
 - ii. Ambassador Peniana Lalabalavu formally presented her Letter of Credence to His Excellency Moon Jae in, President of the Republic of Korea on 26 December 2018 at the Presidential Palace (Blue House). In her address, Ambassador Lalabalavu reaffirmed Fiji's commitment to deepening bilateral relations with Korea.
 - iii. High Commissioner Kolinio Takali presented his Letter of Credence to His Majesty, the King of Thailand, Maha Vajiralongkorn at the Royal Palace in Thailand on Monday 10 December 2018.
 - iv. Ambassador Isikeli Mataitoga presented his Letters of Credence as High Commissioner of the Republic of Fiji, to His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah Ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddin Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam at Istana Nurullman Palace amidst a grand ceremony on Monday, 29 April 2019.

In Tokyo, the Fiji Embassy successfully commissioned Mr. Hiroki Miura as Fiji's Honorary Consul in Akita on 1 September 2018. Mr. Miura's appointment will cover the Tohoku Consular District, which consists of six large prefectures in the North-East of Japan.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Registration of Diplomats and Administering of Staff Privileges & Immunities

The Division facilitated 943 visa exemptions during the year for foreign diplomats and international public servants posted to Diplomatic Missions and International and Regional, Organizations in Fiji. Assistance and support was also rendered to Fijian diplomats at our various missions overseas.

A total of 868 applications for duty free purchases were received and facilitated in this financial year in strict compliance with the Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities (DPI) Act of 1971. The Division continues to thoroughly assess and scrutinize all duty free requests in close collaboration with Fiji Customs and Revenue Services.

Furthermore, the Division regularly liaises and provides advice to the diplomatic community in Suva on matters and policies relating to the DPI Act of 1971.

2. Accreditation of new Heads of Missions

The Division expedited and coordinated the presentation of credentials for 25 resident and non-resident Heads of Missions to His Excellency the President, courtesy calls on the Prime Minister, cabinet ministers and other members of parliament.

3. Protocol Facilitation

Of significance for 2019 was the historical and successful official visits of the UN Secretary General, the Crown Prince of Norway and the Prime Minister of Australia, Honourable Scott Morrison.

The three high-level visits was made possible through the collective efforts and coordination of the Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee comprising representatives from relevant government agencies.

In addition, the Division facilitated the visit of the President of Kiribati, Te Beretitenti His Excellency Mr Taneti Maamau, Governor General of Solomon, Sir Frank Kabui and Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, Honourable Henry Tuakeu Puna who all attended the University of the South Pacific Graduation where they were conferred the Honorary Award of the University of the South Pacific.



His Excellency William McDonald Soaki (right) of Solomon Islands following the presentation of his credentials.

HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION

The Human Resources Division is an internal support service that manages resources for the achievement of the Ministry's strategies. An important component of this requires ensuring compliance of governance obligations and continuous improvement of corporate policies, procedures and outcomes. The Division is responsible for facilitating key human resource management activities that involve HR planning, Asset Management, Recruitment and Selection, Contract Management, Reward and Recognition, Occupational Health and Safety, Corporate Social Responsibility, Training and Development, Information Management and Performance Management.

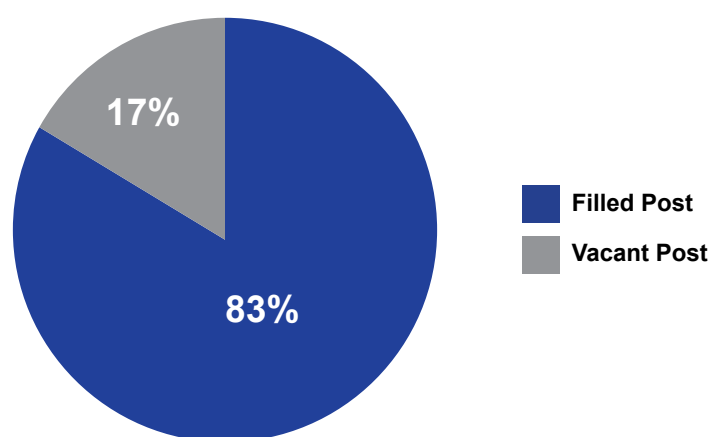
Some of the major activities for the 2018/2019 fiscal year included Fijian Civil Service Transition and Reform Implementation in terms of Job Evaluation Exercise, Implementation of the Discipline Guidelines, Open Merit based Recruitment and Selection Process.

Staff Establishment

1. Workforce Strength

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has an approved establishment of 158 from which 131 positions are substantively filled and 27 positions (Missions and HQ) vacant. The graph below illustrates the workforce strength for the Ministry during the year. Of its total establishment, 17% of the positions remained vacant in the 2018/2019 financial year.

2018-2019 MFA Workforce Strength

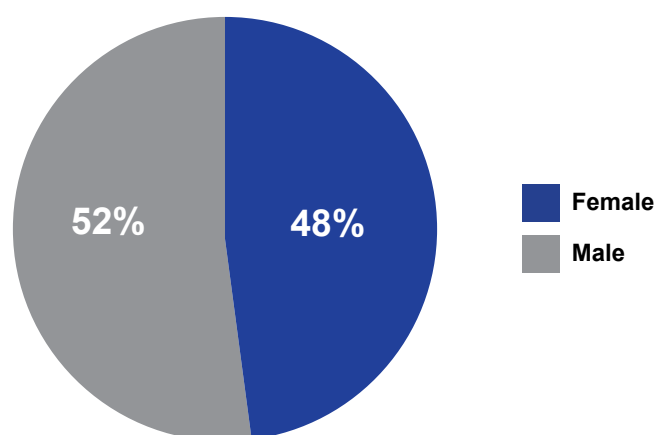


The Ministry strategizes to ensure that the service delivery to our diverse customers is not disrupted or compromised due to staff turnover or other workforce issues that are often faced in a typical workplace.

The table below illustrates the total number of staff employed by the Ministry at the end of the 2018/2019 Financial Year:

Division/ Mission	Gender		Vacant	Grand Total
	Female	Male		
Headquarters				
Executive Support Unit	6	3	3	12
Policy Research & Development Division	3	1	2	6
Corporate Service Division	7	10	2	19
Finance Division	8	4		12
Protocol Division	5	5	3	13
Multilateral Bureau	8	2	1	11
Asia Bureau	2	3	3	8
AAMEER Bureau	1	3		4
Oceania Bureau	3		2	5
Missions				
Abu Dhabi Mission		2	1	3
Addis Ababa Mission		2	1	3
Beijing Mission	1	3	1	5
Brazil Mission	1		3	4
Brussels		3	1	4
Canberra	1	3		4
Geneva	2	2		4
Jakarta	1	3		4
Kuala Lumpur	1	1	1	3
London	2	1	1	4
New Delhi	1	3		4
New York	2	2		4
Papua New Guinea		3		3
Roving Ambassador	2	1	2	5
Seoul	3	1		4
Tokyo	2	2		4
Washington		3		3
Wellington	1	2		3
Grand Total	63	68	27	158

2018-2019 MFA Gender Analysis



Of the 131 filled positions, the Ministry had a workforce that had been male dominated with 52% males to 48% females. The Ministry is an equal opportunity employer and committed to ensuring that initiatives and activities implemented have a good representation of both genders in the processing of vacant positions in future.

- **Recruitment & Selection**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs uses a fair and effective recruitment process governed by the principles set out in the Open Merit Recruitment and Selection (OMRS) Guidelines to employ the right people with the required skillset for each of its job vacancies. The table below illustrates the various recruitment and selection activities undertaken throughout the financial year:

No	Classification	Total
1	Acting Appointment	18
2	Extension of Acting Appointment	20
3	New Appointment	56
4	Extension of Contract	06
5	Renewal of Contract	11
6	End of Contract	06
7	End of Diplomatic Posting	06
8	Deemed Resignation	00
9	Resignation	10
10	Retirement	00
11	Termination	00
12	Leave without pay	02
	Total	135

In this financial year, there were no recorded cases of deemed resignations, retirements or termination of staff. It is noted that the Ministry made a very high number of new appointments during the 2018/2019 financial year due to the introduction of the National Development Plan where the Ministry realigned its 5-year plan, and based the operation plan outcomes accordingly with human resources.

- **Training & Development**

There were 46 learning and development opportunities availed to staff during this fiscal year including both local and overseas trainings. The Ministry has an ongoing commitment towards providing a range of shorter-term learning and development opportunities which is focused on specific capability development needs. The table below shows the types of training against number of staff attended.

No	Type of Training	Total
1	Overseas	09
2	Reform	04
3	In-house	13
4	Local	11
5	FNU/USP	09
	Total	46



The Ministry encourages staff to attend training programs that address competency gaps to ensure that they perform to the optimum. The workforce learning and growth shows the commitment of the Ministry towards its workforce investment which in turn leads to a high performance rate.

The Division provides financial oversight and management of financial resources and guarantees that all expenditures and revenue collections are compliant with the budgetary provisions under the Finance Instructions, Finance Manual, and the Fiji Overseas Service Regulations (FOSR). The Division also ensures the effective implementation and upgrading of the Financial Management Information System (FMIS).





OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

Promoting Public Sector Accountability and Sustainability through our Audits



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File: 347

18 March 2021

The Honourable Josai Voreqe Bainimarama
The Minister for Foreign Affairs
GCC Complex
SUVA

Dear Honourable Bainimarama

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2019

The audited financial statements for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the year ended 31 July 2019 together with my audit report on them are enclosed.

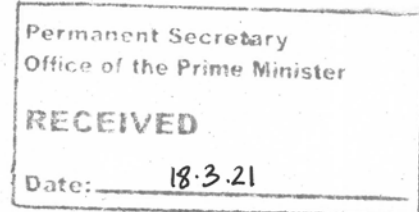
Particulars of the errors and omission arising from the audit have been forwarded to the management of the Ministry for necessary action.

Yours sincerely

Ajay Nand
AUDITOR-GENERAL

cc Mr. Yogesh Jitendra Karan, The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Encl.







MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2019



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2019**

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OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

Promoting Public Sector Accountability and Sustainability through our Audits



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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Minister for Foreign Affairs

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinion

I have audited the financial statements of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which comprise the Statement of Receipts and Expenditure, Appropriation Statement and Statement of Losses for the financial year ended 31 July 2019 and the notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In my opinion, except for the effects of the matters discussed in the Basis for Qualified Opinion paragraph, the accompanying financial statements of the Ministry are prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the Financial Management Act and Finance Instructions 2010.

Basis for Qualified Opinion

An unreconciled variance of \$3,587,846 exists between the FMIS general ledger balance of \$7,382,725 and the accumulated Overseas Mission's bank reconciliation balance of \$3,794,879. As such, I was unable to determine the accuracy of the total expenditure and total revenue amounting \$41,992,322 and \$339,160 respectively reflected in the Statement of Receipts and Expenditure for the year ended 31 July 2019.

The Ministry, in its effort to resolve the above variance has developed a new posting method in 2017 where each bank account is transacted to a corresponding general ledger account from 2017 onwards. The Ministry intends to work closely with the Ministry of Economy to rectify and adjust the unreconciled variance before the end of the 2021 financial year.

I have conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISA). My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of my report. I am independent of the Ministry in accordance with the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountant's *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (IESBA Code) together with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in Fiji and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements and the IESBA Code. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Emphasis of Matter

I draw attention to the following matter:

Internal controls over procurement of goods and services were generally found to be weak. This is in respect to Local Purchase Orders not raised; competitive quotes not obtained; no supporting documents attached to the payment voucher to substantiate the payment made; invoices not attached to payment vouchers; and invoices received before the purchase requisition minute was authorised. These internal control weaknesses, if not addressed promptly, may result in material misstatement and possible financial losses in the future.

My opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Other Matter

The Fiji Public Service (Diplomatic and Consular Services) Regulations 2005 is yet to be reviewed and aligned to the recent changes in legislations, regulations and international best practices concerning diplomatic and consular services.

Responsibilities of the management and those charged with governance for financial statements

The management are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the Financial Management Act and Finance Instructions 2010, and for such internal control as the management determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Ministry's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISA will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud and error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISA, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the management of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.


Ajay Nand
AUDITOR-GENERAL



Suva, Fiji
18 March 2021

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2019

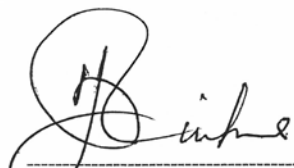
We certify that these financial statements:

- (a) fairly reflect the financial operations and performance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the year ended 31 July 2019; and
- (b) have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Financial Management Act, the Finance Instructions 2010 and Finance (Amendment) Instructions 2016.



Yogesh Jitendra Karan
Acting Permanent Secretary

Date: 15/02/21



Josefa Tuima
Director Finance

Date: 09/03/2021

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2019

	Notes	2019 (\$)	2018 (\$)
RECEIPTS			
State Revenue			
Operating Revenue		768	49,354
Total State Revenue		768	49,354
Agency Revenue			
Administration Fees & Miscellaneous Revenue		338,392	320,301
Total Agency Revenue		338,392	320,301
TOTAL RECEIPTS		339,160	369,655
EXPENDITURE			
Operating Expenditure			
Established Staff	3 (a)	14,680,296	13,386,287
Government Wage Earners		3,752,543	3,655,727
Travel & Communication		3,851,458	3,939,577
Maintenance & Operations	3 (b)	11,485,449	10,994,967
Purchase of Goods & Services	3 (c)	1,472,189	1,018,904
Operating Grants & Transfers	3 (d)	4,931,319	5,489,038
Special Expenditure	3 (e)	1,394,199	799,673
Total Operating Expenditure		41,567,453	39,284,173
Capital Expenditure			
Capital Construction		8,530	140,536
Capital Purchase		23,104	190,162
Total Capital Expenditure		31,634	330,698
Value Added Tax		393,235	781,730
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		41,992,322	40,396,601

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROPRIATION STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2019

SEG	Item	Budget Estimate (\$)	Appropriation Changes (\$) Note 5	Revised Estimate (\$) a	Actual Expenditure (\$) b	Carry Over (\$)	Lapsed Appropriation (\$) Note 4 (a-b)
	Operating Expenditure						
1	Established Staff	16,705,230	(683,467)	16,021,763	14,680,296	---	1,341,467
2	Government Wage Earners	4,260,072	166,057	4,426,129	3,752,543	---	673,586
3	Travel & Communication	3,192,301	665,231	3,857,532	3,851,458	---	6,074
4	Maintenance & Operations	11,373,791	138,267	11,512,058	11,485,449	---	26,609
5	Purchase of Goods & Services	1,505,643	(27,608)	1,478,035	1,472,189	---	5,846
6	Operating Grants & Transfers	5,239,206	(303,873)	4,935,333	4,931,319	---	4,014
7	Special Expenditure	1,364,411	32,393	1,396,804	1,394,199	---	2,605
	Total Operating Expenditure	43,640,654	(13,000)	43,627,654	41,567,453	---	2,060,201
	Capital Expenditure						
8	Capital Construction	1,300,000	---	1,300,000	8,530	---	1,291,470
9	Capital Purchase	310,000	13,000	323,000	23,104	---	299,896
	Total Capital Expenditure	1,610,000	13,000	1,623,000	31,634	---	1,591,366
13	Value Added Tax	1,714,146	---	1,714,146	393,235	---	1,320,911
	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	46,964,800	---	46,964,800	41,992,322	---	4,972,478



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

STATEMENT OF LOSSES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2019

Loss of Money

There was no loss of money recorded for the year ended 31 July 2019.

Loss of Revenue

There was no loss of revenue recorded for the year ended 31 July 2019.

Loss of Fixed Assets

There was no loss of fixed assets recorded for the year ended 31 July 2019. However, the following items worth \$103,197 were approved by the Permanent Secretary for Economy to be written off, following the Ministry's Board of Survey for the period ended 31 July 2019.

Fixed Assets Category	Amount (\$)
Motor Vehicle	53,906
Office Equipment	25,832
Furniture & Fittings	23,459
Total	103,197



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2019**

NOTE 1: REPORTING ENTITY

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs promotes Fijian interests in other nations and on the world stage. This includes a broad range of activities from providing consular services to Fijians living overseas to organising high level visits to Fiji.

The Ministry develops and carries out Fiji's foreign policy and manages Fiji's relationships with other nations and with multi-national and sub-regional organisations like the United Nations and the Melanesian Spearhead Group. The Ministry is focused on securing the maximum benefits for Fiji from these relationships.

NOTE 2: STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

(a) Basis of Accounting / Presentation

In accordance with Government accounting policies, the financial statements of the Ministry is prepared under the cash basis of accounting. All payments related to purchases of fixed assets have been expensed.

The financial statements are presented in accordance with the Financial Management Act and the requirements of Section 71 (1) of the Finance Instruction 2010 and the Finance (Amendment) Instructions 2016. The preparation and presentation of a Statement of Assets and Liabilities is not required under the current Government policies.

(b) Accounting for Value Added Tax (VAT)

All expenses and revenue are VAT exclusive. The Ministry on a monthly basis takes out VAT output on total money received for expenditure from Ministry of Economy. VAT input on the other hand is claimed on payments made to the suppliers and the sub-contractors for expenses incurred.

The VAT payment as per the Statement of Receipts and Expenditures relates to VAT input claimed on payments made to the suppliers and sub-contractors for expenses incurred and VAT payments to FRCS. Actual amount paid to FRCS during the year represent the difference between VAT Output and VAT Input.

(c) Comparative Figures

Where necessary, amounts relating to prior years have been reclassified to facilitate comparison and achieve consistency in disclosure with current year amounts.



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued...) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2019

(d) Revenue Recognition

Revenue is recognised when cash is actually received by the Ministry.

Administration Fees is charged by the Overseas Missions for providing services such as processing of passports and visas, birth certificates and police clearance. Administration fees is retained by the Ministry and the normal fees and charges are remitted to the respective agencies responsible for those services

NOTE 3: SIGNIFICANT VARIATIONS

- (a) Established Staffs expenditure increased by \$1,294,009 or 10% in 2019 compared to 2018. This was mainly attributed to the increase in personal emoluments and post allowance for Overseas Missions due to the appointment of new ambassador/high commissioner for Beijing, New Delhi, Seoul, New York. Also, there was an increase in the Education allowance budget paid as well as overtime payments due to increase in dignitaries visits to Fiji.
- (b) Maintenance and Operations expenditure increased by \$490,482 or 4% in 2019 compared to 2018. This was mainly attributed to the increase in Rent of Buildings expenditure for FE Beijing, FHC New Delhi, FE South Korea, FE Tokyo and PRUN New York to accommodate the new Missions Diplomats that were newly appointed during the year. Also, the running expenses for FHC Ethiopia increased due to the processing of the Mission's closure requiring shipping of office and Diplomat's items back to Fiji, while the increase in running expense for FHC Indonesia was due to the cost of relocation and logistics for Counsellor and the urgent logistics and treatment required for the Ambassador in Jakarta.
- (c) Purchase of Goods and Services expenditure increased by \$453,285 or 44% in 2019 compared to 2018. This was mainly attributed to the increase in Medical Insurance expenditure for FE Beijing, FE Indonesia, FE Geneva and PRUN New York as all Missions Diplomats, their dependents and locally engaged staff (LES) were required to be medically covered under an internal circular issued in December 2018. Also there was an increase in training expenses such as Protocol Training by overseas partners, hosting of in-house trainings and payment of Levy to Fiji National University for short course.
- (d) Operating Grants and Transfers expenditure decreased by \$557,718 or 10% in 2019 compared to 2018. This was mainly attributed to the reduction in Fiji's contribution to the United Nations, United Nations Peace Keeping Force, Commonwealth Secretariat, Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission and Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG). Fiji's annual contributions to these International and Regional Bodies varies depending on the assessments these organisations made.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued...) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2019

NOTE 3: SIGNIFICANT VARIATIONS (continued...)

- (e) Special Expenditures increased by \$594,523 or 74% in 2019 compared to 2018. This was mainly attributed to the increase in protocol and hospitality expenditure due to the major state visits by Prince Harry and spouse, UN Secretary General and Samoan and Australian Prime Minister and delegates. Also, there was an increase in expenditure relating to MSG meeting, Annual Biodiversity beyond National Jurisdiction meeting and the United Nations Human Rights Election, which was also held during the year.

NOTE 4: SIGNIFICANT SAVINGS

Significant Savings for the financial year ended 31 July 2019 are as follows:

No.	Expenditure	Revised Budget (\$)	Actual Expenditure (\$)	Savings (\$)	Percentage Savings (%)
(a)	Government Wage Earners	4,426,129	3,752,543	673,586	15
(b)	Capital Construction	1,300,000	8,530	1,291,470	99
(c)	Capital Purchase	323,000	23,104	299,896	93

- (a) The savings of \$673,586 or 15% under Government Wage Earners was largely attributed to savings from Missions locally engaged staffs' superannuation fund as only 3 locally engaged staffs' superannuation contributions were paid from this allocation during the year. Also, the retirement benefit budget for Missions locally engaged staffs was not utilised as there were no claim of retirement benefits made from locally engaged staffs.
- (b) The savings of \$1,291,470 or 99% under the Capital Construction was attributed to the non-implementation of the planned refurbishment work for Wellington Mission budgeted for \$1 m and Overseas Missions with a budget of \$300,000. The projects were managed by the Construction Implementation Unit (CIU) of the Ministry of Economy. For Wellington Mission, there were technicalities to be resolved with the host country authorities given that the Fiji properties in Wellington are heritage sites and any refurbishment work need to strictly comply with relevant heritage regulations. For Overseas Missions, there were issues with contractual agreement with Project Management Company due to differences on the scoping work, costing and the construction by-laws from the Municipal authorities. Also, there were difficulties faced in obtaining relevant documentations to warrant the utilization of funds for refurbishment works, hence the non-implementation of Overseas Missions refurbishments.
- (c) The savings of \$299,896 or 93% under the Capital Purchase was attributed to delay in the finalization and approval of purchase of office equipment for Overseas Missions and the Document Management System. For the purchase of office equipment, delay was due to the non-submission of tender documentations from Missions within the stipulated period. For the Document Management System, the project was awaiting ITC processes in finalizing the calling of tenders for the required system. However, the procurement could not be processed as there were no confirmation made from ITC hence funding was not utilized.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued...)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2019

NOTE 5: APPROPRIATION CHANGES

There were no redeployments of the Ministry's funds during the year. In 2018 – 2019, a total of 13 virements were processed as follows:

Virement Number	From	Amount (\$)	To	Amount (\$)	Approved By
DV0801	SEG 7	13,000	SEG 9	13,000	PSFA
DV0802	SEG 4	201,870	SEG 7	201,870	PSFA
DV0803	SEG 3	142,270	SEG 3	285,316	PSFA
	SEG 4	478,841	SEG 4	249,168	
	SEG 5	50,000	SEG 5	106,627	
			SEG 7	30,000	
DV0804	SEG 6	3,545	SEG 6	3,545	PSFA
DV0805	SEG 7	138,995	SEG 7	138,995	PSFA
DV0806	SEG 1	275,560	SEG 3	421,000	PSFA
	SEG 2	206,850	SEG 4	757,500	
	SEG 3	100,124	SEG 5	253,000	
	SEG 4	844,595	SEG 6	425,145	
	SEG 5	135,306	SEG 7	25,000	
	SEG 6	278,138			
	SEG 7	41,072			
DV0807	SEG 1	536,000	SEG 1	536,000	PSFA
	SEG 2	245,000	SEG 2	245,000	
DV0808	SEG 3	532,830	SEG 3	640,882	PSFA
	SEG 4	1,332,780	SEG 4	1,441,735	
	SEG 5	355,674	SEG 5	295,252	
	SEG 6	180,380	SEG 7	23,795	
DV0809	SEG 1	49,120	SEG 1	49,120	PSFA
	SEG 2	51,865	SEG 2	51,865	
DV0810	SEG 1	35,000	SEG 3	148,457	PSFA
	SEG 3	55,200	SEG 4	701,650	
	SEG 4	153,700	SEG 5	67,900	
	SEG 5	209,407			
	SEG 6	270,500			
	SEG 7	194,200			
V08001	SEG 1	100,000	SEG 1	100,000	PSE
V08002	SEG 1	456,000	SEG 1	90,000	PSE
			SEG 2	366,000	
V08003	SEG 1	93,656	SEG 1	86,749	PSE
			SEG 2	6,907	



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued...)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2019

NOTE 6: EVENTS SUBSEQUENT TO BALANCE DATE

Subsequent to balance date, five Overseas Missions were closed permanently as announced in the 2020-2021 National Budget Address on 17/07/20. The five Missions were Washington DC, Seoul, Port Moresby, Brussels and Kuala Lumpur

As a result of this policy decision, related cash accounts and overseas remittance to these Missions will cease.



“Never before has Fiji’s voice been heard so strongly in the world, never before has that voice been respected and we continue to punch above our weight in global affairs whether it is through our contribution to UN Peacekeeping or our lead role in the fight against climate change and oceans, and it is something every Fijian can be proud of.”

UN Secretary General, His Excellency Antonio Guterres during his visit to the Pacific in May 2019

