

PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI



PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

DAILY HANSARD

TUESDAY, 3RD SEPTEMBER, 2024

[CORRECTED COPY]

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TUESDAY, 3RD SEPTEMBER, 2024

The Parliament met at 9.35 a.m. pursuant to adjournment.

MR. SPEAKER took the Chair and read the Prayer.

PRESENT

All Members were present, except the honourable M.D. Bulitavu, honourable V. Nath, honourable S.S. Kirpal and honourable A.A. Maharaj.

MINUTES

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Monday, 2nd September, 2024, as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

HON. A.V.B.C. BAINIVALU.- Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE SPEAKER

Welcome

I welcome all honourable Members to today's sitting, those joining us in the gallery, and those watching proceedings on the television and internet. Thank you for your continued interest in the workings of your Parliament.

Responses to Written Questions

For the information of honourable Members, the Secretariat has received written responses from the honourable Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Climate Change, Environment, Civil Service, Information, Public Enterprises and Veteran Affairs to:

- (1) Written Question No. 97/2023, asked by honourable Ratu R.S.S. Vakalalabure; and
- (2) Written Question No. 53/2024, asked by honourable P.D. Kumar.

Honourable Members, the responses have been conveyed to the respective Members and copies made available on the parliamentary website.

PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Review Report on Assets Fiji Limited 2016-2019 Annual Reports

HON. S. TUBUNA.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs hereby submits to Parliament the Review Report on Assets Fiji Limited Annual Report 2016 to 2019. Assets Fiji Limited (AFL) is a private limited company, fully owned by the Fijian Government, established and incorporated under the Companies Act 2015.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, AFL manages all interests in assets previously owned by Fiji Ports Corporation Limited (FPCL), Fiji Ships and Heavy Industry Limited (FSHIL) and Government Printery and Stationery Department.

The key responsibilities of AFL include effective management, valuation and accounting of non-financial assets that are being divested. It plays a crucial role in maintaining and optimising the use of these assets to yield maximum returns to Government. The pertinent issues identified by the Committee are as follows:

- (1) The Committee commends AFL for the effective handling of its assets during the period under review. AFL recorded an accumulated net profit after tax of \$3.39 million for the years 2016 to 2019. The company's strategic priorities and assets were valued at approximately \$57.38 million. In addition, the company had no external borrowings and maintained a liquidity ratio of 2.9 at the end of Financial Year 2019.
- (2) The Committee expressed concern about the low rental lead generated from the asset portfolio valued at over \$57 million is disproportionately low, however, this is compensated by higher dividend given by FPCL except GPSD.
- (3) The Committee acknowledges the successful vesting of 35 land titles which is strategically located near Lautoka, Levuka, and Suva Port areas, and the independent valuation of assets underscores AFL's ability to manage its real estate portfolio.
- (4) The Committee noted that an independent external valuer conducted a valuation for all land vested into the company on 10th February, 2017. The valuation was based on market value and the land's highest and best use. However, land titles pending vesting were not included in the fair value assessment.
- (5) The Committee expressed concern that a total of nine pending land titles from FPCL and one from FSHIL are yet to be vested into AFL, which is necessary to establish a complete financial and equity position.
- (6) The Committee noted that Government grants were continuously issued to AFL from 2016 to 2019 to support AFL's operations.

At this juncture, I would like to thank our Committee Members and Alternate Members who were part of the team that produced this Report:

- (1) Honourable S. Kiran – Deputy Chairperson;
- (2) Honourable P.D. Kumar;
- (3) Honourable Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Waterways;
- (4) Honourable A. Bia; and
- (5) Honourable P.K. Ravunawa.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, I commend this Review Report to Parliament and request all Members of this august House to take note of the Report.

(Report handed to the Secretary-General)

HON. S. TUBUNA.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, pursuant to Standing Order 121(5), I hereby move:

A motion without notice that a debate on the content of the Report is initiated at a future

sitting.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Mr. Speaker, I second the motion.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Consolidated Review Report - Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji 2021 and 2022 Annual Reports

HON. I.S. VANAWALU.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am pleased to present the Report of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs on the Consolidated Review Report on the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji 2021 and 2022 Annual Reports. As mandated under Standing Order 109(2)(b), the Committee looks into issues related to health, education, social service, labour, aviation, culture and media.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji (CAAF), in trying to adjust to the changes in its operation because of COVID-19, had undertaken certain measures to adhere to the restrictions of the pandemic and, simultaneously, allow the operations of the Authority to continue. The former Committee had undertaken a site visit to the CAAF Office and held its public submission with senior CAAF officials. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Committee noted the concerns raised and identified recommendations to better address its findings.

The Committee commended the establishment of International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Office for the Pacific Small Island Developing States in Nadi and for being awarded the ICAO Council President Certificate. I thank the Chief Executive and Management of the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji for the assistance rendered during this review process.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, finally, I take this opportunity to thank the former Chairperson of the Committee, the honourable Minister for Fisheries and Forestry for her leadership and guidance; the former Committee Member, honourable Parveen Bala and Alternate Member, honourable Ketan Lal, for their constructive input and tremendous teamwork; and the current Committee Members for the finalisation of this Committee Report.

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

(Report handed to the Secretary-General)

HON. I.S. VANAWALU.- Mr. Speaker Sir, pursuant to Standing Order 121(5), I hereby move:

A motion without notice that a debate on the content of this Report is initiated at a future sitting.

HON T.R. MATASAWALEVU.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to second the motion.

MR. SPEAKER.- Parliament will now vote.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Review Report - Fiji Airports 2021 Annual Report

HON. I.S. VANAWALU.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am pleased to present the Report of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs on the Fiji Airports 2021 Annual Report. As mandated under Standing Order 109(2)(b), the Committee looks into issues related to health, education, social services, labour, aviation, culture and media.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Fiji Airports' ability to rebound from the setbacks of successive lockdowns as the second wave of the pandemic hit Fiji, is evidence of the organisation's resilience in a time of extreme challenges.

Fiji Airports managed to complete major runway maintenance work in half the usual time due to a longer working window caused by the absence of international and domestic flights.

The Committee was informed of the upgrade and extension of the Nausori Airport runway. This \$60 million project will allow opportunities for increased flights on both, domestic and international routes. Furthermore, the Committee commends Fiji Airports in its commitment to the SDGs on the Green Airports Initiatives, attaining a Level 3: Airport Carbon Accreditation in having their solar farms and the introduction of electronic vehicles.

I wish to convey my gratitude and sincere appreciation to the CEO of Fiji Airports and his team for their valuable contribution to this review process.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I take this opportunity to thank the former Chairperson of the Committee, the honourable Minister for Fisheries and Forestry for her leadership and guidance; the former Committee Member, honourable Parveen Bala; and Alternate Members, honourable Ketan Lal and honourable Penioni Ravunawa, for their constructive input and tremendous teamwork; and the current Committee Members for the finalisation of this Committee Report.

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

(Report handed to the Secretary-General)

HON. I.S. VANAWALU.- Mr. Speaker Sir, pursuant to Standing Order 121(5), I hereby move:

A motion without notice that a debate on the content of this Report is initiated at a future sitting.

HON. V. PILLAY.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I second the motion.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

MR. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, the following Ministers have given notice to make a Ministerial Statement under Standing Order 40, the:

- (1) Honourable Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Climate Change, Environment, Civil Service, Information, Public Enterprises and Veteran Affairs;

- (2) Honourable Minister for Fisheries and Forestry; and
- (3) Honourable Minister for Education.

The Ministers may speak up to 20 minutes and after the Minister, I will then invite the Leader of the Opposition, or his designate, to speak on the Statement for no more than five minutes. There will also be a response from the leader of the G-9 Bloc, or his designate, to also speak for five minutes. There will be no other debate.

I now call on the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Climate Change, Environment, Civil Service, Information, Public Enterprises and Veteran Affairs to deliver his Statement.

Report on the 53rd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting

HON. S.L. RABUKA.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, honourable Ministers and Assistant Ministers, the honourable Leader of the Opposition, honourable Members of Parliament, ladies and gentlemen, and I also greet those who may be watching us on livestream or listening in on the radio.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, last week, Pacific Leaders gathered in Nuku'alofa in Kingdom of Tonga for the 53rd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting 2024. The Forum brought together Heads of States, Heads of Government and Ministers from across the Pacific region. The theme for the Forum Leaders Meeting was “A Transformative and Resilient Pasifiki: Build Better Now”.

On Thursday, 29th August, 2024, Sir, I joined other Forum Leaders in the beautiful island of Vava'u for the Leaders Retreat. The retreat provided an opportunity for Pacific Leaders to consult and hold honest discussions on matters of priority, challenges and opportunities facing our region. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the retreat also provided an opportunity to discuss the concept of the Ocean of Peace which I had presented in this August Parliament not so long ago.

Leaders reflected on the concept and welcomed its alignment with the 2050 Strategy for a Blue Pacific Continent, the 2018 Boe Declaration on Regional Security and the 2000 Biketawa Declaration. Forum Leaders acknowledged the importance of the principles presented through the concept for the Ocean of Peace.

I am pleased to report, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the Leaders have tasked the Forum Secretariat, in cooperation with Fiji, to develop a draft Ocean of Peace Declaration for consideration by the Leaders at the 54th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Honiara, Solomon Islands, in 2025.

My fellow Leaders and I were especially encouraged by the very positive remarks of the representatives of the United States (US) and Chinese Governments at the Meeting. The US Deputy Secretary of State, Dr. Kurt Campbell, and China's Special Envoy to the Pacific, His Excellency Qian Bo, in their remarks, embraced the concept of the Ocean of Peace, and demonstrated in a very clear language the intention of China and the United States to cooperate in the Pacific with Pacific Islands countries.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, allow me to quote Dr. Kurt Campbell, the Deputy Secretary of State, who had this to say, and I quote:

“I had a very good meeting just now with the excellent representative from the People's Republic of China... We have agreed that in the weeks and months ahead, the United States and China in the Pacific will work together to find programmes of action where we, together, can work to develop habits of cooperation between the United

States and China, in the Pacific, to address issues of climate change, rural development, or other areas which are critical to the peoples of the Pacific."

Dr. Campbell continued, and I quote:

"I will say he was enthusiastic about it, he believed it was important. I think it is critical for our friends around the table here that we, together the United States and China, are committed. Next year when we meet, we will be underway with those projects of cooperation."

In response, Special Envoy Qian Bo said, and I quote:

"...what Deputy Secretary, Mr. Campbell, has proposed, in my view, is encouraging and constructive. It is not only in line with the consensus reached by the leaders of our two countries, but also in the best interest of the Pacific Island countries and the Region. We wish to keep in close contact with the US side to discuss specific projects on climate change on which we can work."

Mr. Speaker, the words of these two distinguished representatives of their great nations are the very demonstration of what is possible when we go for peace. When we believe in peace, advocate for peace, stand for and uphold peace, it resonates and removes fear.

When this happens, it empowers one to cross the line, to reach out to the other side and offer, "peace be with you". Those were the same words that our Lord Jesus uttered after his resurrection and his victory over death and Hades. He said those to his disciples who were paralysed by fear. In my discussions in London and in New York, I had mentioned that peace is really the absence of fear.

Peace moves people to dare again, to rediscover themselves and eventually, offer the same peace. I am very encouraged that at this time, we are also having our own truth and reconciliation processes here in Fiji, and I believe that is going well, according to the report from the Minister responsible.

The Pacific Policing Initiative, another significant milestone, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is the endorsement of the Pacific Policing Initiative on the heels of the Leaders decision on the Ocean of Peace. This is a major regional initiative to strengthen collective peace and security throughout the Pacific.

Mr. Speaker, the Pacific Policing Initiative can be said to be a practical expression of the Ocean of Peace. If the Blue Pacific wants to make a leading contribution to global peace, we need practical means to support peace here at home.

Mr. Speaker, one of the principles of the Ocean of Peace calls for the introduction of a code of conduct. No one needs reminding of the scourge of drugs and related crimes that befall our nation and others around the region.

The Pacific Policing Initiative is central to the Ocean of Peace. Peace needs to lead to a change of behaviour. The Pacific Policing Initiative provides for the establishment of regional training centres of excellence and a standing multi-national deployable force.

Mr. Speaker Sir, this Initiative came to life through Fiji's Chairmanship of the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police Conference chaired by the Acting Commissioner, Mr. Juki Fong Chew. The region

has seen the benefits of regional peacekeeping and humanitarian training through Fiji's facilities at Blackrock Camp.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, on discussions surrounding climate change and resilience, the Forum Leaders provided support to the Pacific Resilience Facility. This is the first Pacific-led, member-owned and managed, and people-centred climate and disaster resilience financing facility.

Leaders agreed that the Facility will be domiciled in Tonga. Development partners have made commitments to the Facility, including:

- (1) Australia (AUD100 million);
- (2) Saudi Arabia (USD50 million);
- (3) People's Republic of China (USD500,000);
- (4) United States of America (USD25 million); and
- (5) United Kingdom has pledged the provision of technical support valued at £1.3 million.

Mr. Speaker Sir, in addition to this, Forum Leaders were provided an update on the situation in New Caledonia by the President of the Government of New Caledonia, the honourable Louis Mapou. Fiji, along with other Forum Leaders, reaffirmed our continued call for order and stability to prevail. I also reiterated Fiji's commitment to the deployment of the high-level Forum Troika Plus Observer Mission to New Caledonia, as discussions continue on a date for the Mission.

Other highlights from the Forum Leaders Meeting, Sir, are reflected in the Forum Leaders Communique developed as an Outcome of the Leaders Plenary and Retreat. Although I did not want to interfere with Troika, there was a personal invitation from the President of France for me to be present.

Mr. Speaker Sir, in parallel to the Forum Leaders Programme, the Fiji delegation held 22 bilateral meetings throughout the week. The Annual Forum Leaders Meeting provides an opportunity for Fiji to meet bilateral and multilateral development partners to progress development cooperation.

I had the privilege of meeting and holding discussions with the:

- (1) United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, who continue to express his admiration and respect for Fiji because of the work done by our peacekeepers;
- (2) Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Honourable James Marape;
- (3) Prime Minister of Cook Islands, Honourable Mark Brown;
- (4) Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, Honourable Jeremiah Manele;
- (5) Prime Minister of Tonga, Honourable Sovaleni Hu'akavameiliku;
- (6) Governor of American Samoa, Honourable Lemanu Mauga; and
- (7) United States Deputy Secretary of State, Dr. Kurt Campbell.

Mr. Speaker Sir, I am pleased to report to this August Parliament and the Nation, that Fiji's first official Air Transport Agreement for "open skies" was signed with the United States on Wednesday, 28th August, 2024, in the margins of the meeting after our Cabinet approved the day before under the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-operatives, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications.

The Agreement will advance our countries' bilateral aviation cooperation and bring the civil aviation transportation relationship between the United States and Fiji to the highest modern standard.

The Agreement will expand our economic and commercial partnership, promote people-to-people ties, and create new opportunities for customers, airlines and travel companies. Under the Agreement, air carriers will be able to provide more affordable, convenient and efficient air services to travellers and shippers, promoting tourism and commerce.

The Agreement includes unrestricted capacity and frequency of services for both passenger and all-cargo carriers, open route rights, an open charter regime, self-handling provisions and open code-sharing opportunities.

I am confident, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that this will foster increased investments, maintain trade and increase visitor arrivals for Fiji's tourism industry, and also contribute to our continuing growth. Fiji Airways' new Nadi to Dallas flight route will commence on 10th December this year.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I also take this time to acknowledge other bilateral engagements by Ministers and Senior Officials from our delegation. These included the honourable Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management, honourable Minister for Fisheries and Forestry, honourable Minister for Health and Medical Services, honourable Minister for Home Affairs and Immigration, Permanent Secretaries, our Permanent Representative to the United Nations, High Commissioner and Special Envoy, supported by Technical Officials. Fiji actively participated in various side events and meetings that were held on the margins of the Leaders' Meeting.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, now that the meeting has concluded, the next stage for work to start. All in all, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the meeting in Tonga was a timely reminder of the resilience of our Pacific region when we work in solidarity and unity. This was evident when meeting proceedings were barely affected by the 6.6 magnitude earthquake and aftershocks occurred after heavy rain in Tongatapu on Monday, 26th August. It was a stark reminder to all that were present of the challenges that we face on this side of the world.

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to His Majesty the King Tupou VI, the Prime Minister, the Crown Prince and Crown Princess, their Royal Highness Prince Tupouto'a 'Ulukalala and Princess Sinitakala who were at the meeting throughout the five days occupying Tonga's Chair in the conference. The people of Tonga made excellent arrangements in hosting the 2024 Pacific Leaders' Meeting and for the warm hospitality extended to all delegations during our stay.

Tonga's rich culture and tradition, vibrant dances and exuberant *mafana*, uplifting sounds of choir and harmonious community spirit of the Friendly Isles was on full display, a most remarkable experience and wonderful showcase of our "Pacific Way".

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Ministerial Statements are great opportunities for the Government to keep the Opposition Members abreast with what we are doing. It is where we also benefitted while we were on that side. When they made Ministerial Statements, we knew where to take over from when sides change, so please do not try and crowd out our many Ministerial Statements. It is our way of informing the Opposition and the people of what Government is doing.

HON. I.B. SERUIRATU.- I thank the honourable Prime Minister for the Ministerial Statement that prepares us for coming across, come 2027. But honourable Prime Minister, you made a mistake by not taking the honourable Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Waterways with you to Tonga. I also stated this to the honourable Minister for Health and Medical Services. If you want a reliable guide in Tonga with local knowledge, you should have taken the honourable Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Waterways. The honourable Speaker knows that.

MR. SPEAKER.- *Malo lelei.*

HON. I.B. SERUIRATU.- But on a serious note, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank the honourable Prime Minister for his Statement this morning. I did pick a few things, honourable Prime Minister, from your statement that you made during the plenary session, particularly highlighting that the Pacific we are in now, is no longer the Pacific we were in 20 years ago, given the challenges that you have stated and, of course, the priorities and the opportunities too, although we do agree that we are in a very challenging environment but if we strategise well, we will always benefit, despite the maneuverings that are happening, particularly in as far as geo-politics is concerned within the region.

There are some serious questions, there has been a lot of papers written about the future of regionalism but, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to agree with the sentiments echoed by the honourable Prime Minister, that our dignity is in our unity and that is also our strength, and we will need to continue to build on that.

However, on Ministerial Statements, Mr. Speaker, Sir, before I continue in the two minutes that I have left, I would also urge Government if we can also have a Ministerial Statement on the recent participation of Fiji in SIDS4 in Antigua and Barbuda. This is very important when we want to link this with the statement that you made in Tonga, that today, security as noted by the *Boe Declaration* is not just understood in military terms but also in terms of human security, and we want to link that with the SAMOA Pathway because that was also the theme of the Pacific Islands Parliaments Group (PIPG) Meeting in Palau.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is all linked and the continuation from the SAMOA Pathway into SIDS4, we would appreciate if we can also be furnished with the information because we are anticipating this National Development Plan, particularly on the areas of human development and human security because the Pacific Island countries (I want to stress this), due to its vulnerability and the special circumstances of SIDS, we have that advantage and, hopefully, we can use it to our best advantage because it will help us a lot in terms of our priorities.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the PIPG Meeting in Tonga, the focus was on human security and the theme in PIPG in Palau was, “Human Development in Oceania: How Can Legislatures Strengthen People-Centred Security for the Pacific Islanders?” Mr. Speaker has said in the Business Committee that we will continue to provide information as well. There is now a move in the legislative work of PIPG to link PIPG with PIFS and the Secretariat is working on it.

The only key thing, Mr. Speaker, Sir, because of time limitation, and I had briefed you on this and the honourable Prime Minister has just talked about some of the financial assistance that we are getting, is that it has already been identified that the special situation of SIDS – their small size, remoteness, narrow resource export base, exposure to global and environmental challenges and external shocks, including a large range of impacts from climate change and potentially more frequent and intense natural disasters, this drew attention to the special circumstances of SIDS and that is why, into the SAMOA Pathway and into SIDS4.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, if I may just end by saying that this is the one thing that was strongly emphasised in the development of these documents regarding implementation, that we need genuine international co-operation and partnerships based upon the principles of national ownership. This is something, Sir, that I want to stress here because I know that we have national issues, we have regional issues, and we have our CROP agencies as well. This was one of the issues highlighted in one of the Leaders’ Meeting in Tuvalu and I have briefed Mr. Speaker on that. When we have funding, the important thing is, what are our national issues? What are our national priorities? Because some of the donor agencies have this tendency of dictating to us how these funds are going

to be utilised. That is why the link between SIDS4, National development Plan and the utilisation of funds, we need to use it to the best of our advantage. That is something that I will urge the Government to keep an eye on because funds are being offered, but how is it positively impacting the lives of every Pacific Islander and every Fijian, given the context of human security and human development, people-centred development as emphasised in the *Boe Declaration*.

HON. I. NAIVALURUA.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to start by thanking the honourable Prime Minister for the update on the Pacific Island Development Forum (PIDF) for its future functions and roles. He has termed, after the outcome of the review, PIDF will be the Integrated Development Centre. I think this will be an appropriate platform, not only to serve the best interest of the Island States, but Fiji also. Congratulations for the review of the PIDF into the Integrated Development Centre.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, on to PIF in Tonga, I concur with my colleague, the honourable Leader of the Opposition, on his remarks regarding the Statement by the honourable Prime Minister. I thank you honourable Prime Minister for a very clear and comprehensive overview of the results of your Leaders Retreat, bilateral and multilateral engagements, and likewise, the understanding of the efforts to try and bring peace and stability into New Caledonia.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, a special congratulations to the honourable Prime Minister for the endorsement of the Ocean of Peace. It resonates well with our nation, a nation that has stood on peace externally and in our efforts in trying to bring peace within Fiji. When this is driven and articulated well, it should be a model not only for the world, but in our region in the Pacific.

I concur with the Pacific Policy Initiative and thank you, Sir, for supporting that in the meeting. With all the key outcomes that has now been reported by the honourable Prime Minister, our view from this side of Parliament is our ability to thread this together, how it is converged and threaded together.

On that note, Sir, I look forward to the National Development Plan and how this will be threaded together, bringing more meaning, and how the Government will take Fiji forward as a better, prosperous and stable Nation. On these initiatives, this side of Parliament and my group are in full support.

On those key areas of how we shape our nation forward, I take this opportunity to talk about five key initiatives, and those are:

- (1) determination by the Government to amend and review our Constitution, and I commend them for that;
- (2) Truth and Reconciliation Initiative;
- (3) ongoing current developments on the review of the Security and Defence Review;
- (4) the effort towards our external relations on the White Paper for Foreign Affairs; and
- (5) the National Development Plan.

Those key guiding documents will help us shape a better future for our Nation. I thank the honourable Prime Minister for his complete and comprehensive report on the outcomes of his meetings in Tonga.

Sandalwood Harvesting: Development of Project and Proposed Plans for the Future

HON. A.V.B.C. BAINIVALU.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, the honourable Prime Minister, honourable Deputy Prime Ministers, honourable Cabinet Ministers and Assistant Ministers, the honourable

Leader of the Opposition, honourable Members of Parliament, Ladies and Gentlemen; *ni sa yadra vinaka*.

Mr. Speaker Sir, I am pleased to deliver my Statement on the progress of the development of Sandalwood in Fiji. We have three main species of sandalwood that we are promoting, and these include our native sandalwood - *Santalum yasi*, the Indian sandalwood - *Santalum album*, and a crossbreed between *Santalum yasi* and *Santalum album* known locally as the *Santalum hybrid*.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, looking back in history, sandalwood (*Santalum yasi*) was one of the commodities that put Fiji's name in the international trade arena in the 18th and 19th century. Unfortunately, the resource was over exploited and the local *yasi* almost became extinct. Like in other Pacific Island countries, there has been a failure in properly managing the harvesting of sandalwood due to strong market demand, coupled with the very low levels of replanting. This has resulted in the disappearance of much of the initial natural stands, causing concerns for the species' future survival.

Mr. Speaker, between 2010 to 2022, we exported a total of 154,172 kilogrammes of sandalwood with a total value of FJD12.3 million. The average price over the period was around FJD71 per kilogramme, ranging from FJD35 to FJD208 per kilogramme, with the lower values recorded from 2010 to 2011. From 2012 to 2016, the value went above FJD100 per kilogramme, and reaching more than FJD200 per kilogramme in 2015 to 2016.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, although the value declined to around FJD83 per kilogramme in 2017, the value, overall, was on an increasing trend over the nine-year period. Sandalwood trade was on hold in 2020 due to the global COVID pandemic. However, trade re-commenced from 2021 with prices hovering below FJD100 per kilogramme.

Mr. Speaker, the buyers of Fiji's sandalwood include Dubai, Hong Kong, China, Australia and Taiwan. Current evidence suggests that market outlook and prices of sandalwood of high quality will remain very strong for, at least, the next five years.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Ministry of Forestry, in realising the high demand for sandalwood, especially in the Asian market, began investing significant number of resources in research to work out ways of improving natural standmanagement and to introduce sandalwood in agroforestry systems, as well as in plantations.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the Fiji Government has continued to support the development of sandalwood under a capital project, investing FJD1 million over a decade now in the revitalisation of sandalwood development nationally, with a focus on enhancing policy and regulatory requirements to support the sustainable management of sandalwood and to promote more re-planting towards the establishment of a long-term sustainable high value industry for the country.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, interest in planting and expanding the sandalwood resource has been increasing over the last 10 years or so, given the crop's high value and its good long-term prospects in terms of both, price and demand in the international market. Under the initiative, over 132 hectares of sandalwood woodlots have been planted with over 58,000 sandalwood trees. In addition, Mr. Speaker, Sir, a total area of 31.4 hectares was planted with sandalwood using the agroforestry system, integrated with other timber and fruit trees.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, sandalwood can now be seen to be growing in almost any village/community and any inhabited island in Fiji. In the next five years, we have forecasted to

harvest around 106,000 kilogramme of sandalwood with an estimated export value of FJD10 million.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the last financial year, FJD0.1 million was invested in the Sandalwood Development Project. The fund was mainly used for the sandalwood grower's consultation in the three Divisions (Central, Western and Northern), with the main objective of establishing the Sandalwood Growers Association that will protect the interests of the farmers. Sandalwood inventory was also carried out and also established sandalwood demonstration plots using the agroforestry approach.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the project plans to continue the consultation process with the farmers in the three Divisions in this few financial year and also formalise the establishment of the Sandalwood Growers Association to promote sustainable planting practices using the agroforestry approach and the Sandalwood Industry Framework for Fiji.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the project also plans to continue the inventory of sandalwood woodlots in Fiji. The project will also carry out a farmer survey in this new financial year documenting the views and observations made by sandalwood farmers on the effects of climate change in the last 10 years on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu islands.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, at this juncture, I would also like to mention here that the Ministry of Forestry in 2021 submitted a project proposal titled 'Promoting the Sustainable Production of Sandalwood in Fiji' to the Asia Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNeT). Sir, APFNeT is an organisation constituted by its members which comprises 27 economies and five international organisations in the Asia-Pacific region. Fiji is also a member of this organisation.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this project was approved for funding by the APFNet Council in 2022 and will be implemented over a period of three years beginning this year, with a total grant of around US\$0.9 million. The inception meeting is planned to take place in the first quarter of this financial year.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the aim of this project is to promote and expand sandalwood resources that will improve the long-term rural socioeconomic development in Fiji through the promotion of efficient plantations and sustainable management of sandalwood.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are two main objectives:

- (1) To promote a substantial expansion and quality improvement of sandalwood resources through development and demonstration of efficient plantation and sustainable management of sandalwood; and
- (2) Silviculture technologies and experiences on sandalwood are to be enhanced and knowledge extended in the Pacific region through information sharing and capacity building programmes.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, at the end of the three years, the APFNet Sandalwood Project aims to achieve the following:

- (1) Construction of a 3,500 square metre nursery with a capacity of 20,000 high quality sandalwood seedlings;
- (2) 60 hectares efficient sandalwood plantation and sustainable management demonstration established;

- (3) 5 hectares demonstration on sandalwood plantation using different hosts since it is a semi-parasitic plant;
- (4) training courses conducted for project stakeholders; and
- (5) best practice guidelines on the planting and management of sandalwood for landowners.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, with the domestication of the sandalwood in Fiji in the last 40 years and the establishment of planted sandalwood woodlots, the Ministry of Forestry is confident that we are on track in reviving and revitalising the sandalwood industry. With the right policies and regulations in place, we will never repeat the mistake of the 19th century which almost led to the depletion of our natural stock which is mostly due to unsustainable harvest practice.

MR. SPEAKER.- I intend to adjourn Parliament now for morning and when we resume, the honourable Leader of the Opposition or his designate may make his response and after that the G-9 Bloc to also make their response to the Statement.

The Parliament adjourned at 10.29 a.m.

The Parliament resumed at 11.06 a.m.

MR. SPEAKER.- I will now call on the honourable Leader of the Opposition or his designate to make their response.

HON. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank the honourable Minister for Fisheries and Forestry in deliberating on the subject of sandalwood this morning. I appreciate the fact that she has brought this up, especially on sandalwood, after the discussions on fisheries development in the coastal areas of Fiji yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is important, because this is one of the fundamental resources that the rural isolated communities in Fiji can depend on. She has covered the historical aspect of the sandalwood trade, the current status, sandalwood development plans and proposed future developments.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, sandalwood in its historical aspect was one of the causes of wars in Fiji. As you may recollect Mr. Speaker, Sir, the war in Bua was the Sandalwood War, in Bua Bay, and this is where Charles Savage was finally put down on top of the hill in Naivaka where the Buan warriors were able to trap him, slaughter him and *lovo* him, as some might say in my normal dialect.

(Laughter)

It is important, as it was one of the traditional commodities that was farmed and harvested in the early days. It was either sandalwood or *bêche-de-mer*, and the early impacts of overharvesting has caused the depletion status that we see today.

The honourable Minister has highlighted the development aspect of what the Ministry of Forestry is trying to do, and I think the honourable Minister can be confident on the natural aspect that we enjoy in Fiji.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, if I may just divert a little bit, about five years ago I went to Ogea and told them that they are quite fortunate because I can see a lot of sandalwood in your island. They said *yanu*, this sandalwood is not planted by us, we are fortunate to have a lot of birds that pick on the sandalwood fruits and as they fly around, and they plant all the sandalwood for us. So, in these small island communities, in the rural areas, where there are so meagre resources they can depend on.

I think that this one of the other resources that the Government and the Ministry of Fisheries and Forestry can concentrate on. Replanting the natural aspect of it, the weather is good, the climatic conditions, it can grow almost anywhere and more so, closer to the beaches and the sandy parts of the islands.

I appreciate the fact that she has brought up the subject, because there are a lot of avenues that we can generate. What I would like to ask the honourable Minister for Fisheries and Forestry, if she could look into value-adding. If there is a possibility of value-adding, then the returns to the resource owners would be much higher with sending wood and then they value adding to overseas. I think the prospect of giving a maximum return to the resource owners is not to the level that is expected.

I thank the honourable Minister again for bringing up the subject of sandalwood, and I wish her well in her endeavour to improve on this commodity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER.- I now call upon the honourable Leader of the G-9 Bloc or his designate.

HON. V. NAUPOTO.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, thank you honourable Minister for Fisheries and Forestry for the statement this morning. Thank you, former Minister for Fisheries and Forestry for that response. If we put a dollar sign or value to sandalwood, and I can just give an example from the Forestry website. In 2016, they auctioned a 40 year old sandalwood tree and it was bought at \$300 a kilogramme. That one tree was worth \$60,000, that is the worth of sandalwood, and the longer it stays, the more valuable it becomes.

As alluded to by the honourable Minister and the former Minister for Fisheries and Forestry, it now grows almost anywhere. It never used to grow in Vatoa, but now sandalwood grows on my island. The key to replanting, I suppose is a nursery, and nurseries that are accessible. So, for those small islands it will be worth going over there and setting up nurseries where you want to replant sandalwood

I mentioned this before in Parliament, that there is a way to advertise the planting of sandalwood, and that is to young families. When they have a child, when the child is born and if you plant 10 sandalwood trees, when that child is 21 years old, the trees are 21 years old also. If we half the value of that tree that I mentioned of \$60,000, or let us say one tree is \$10,000, if you planted 10 trees then this child who is now 21 years old, there is a \$100,000 there ready if you are sending him off.

It is also a worthwhile investment for those in the villages when you build houses. For example, if you build a school in the rural area and at the same time plant 50 sandalwood trees, by the time that school needs repairs in 20 years, you do not have to fundraise, there you go! You just need to harvest that sandalwood, and it will go towards the rehabilitation of that building. Also, another way of advertising the worth of these trees is, the longer you leave it, the more valuable it becomes.

I just encourage the Ministry, I think it is a very worthwhile project to get this very easy commodity. If you look at the value of mahogany, it is a big tree and you have to weigh it. To harvest your mahogany you need all the machines et cetera. Except for sandalwood because it is not a very big tree and it is easy for those that have sandalwood plantations to harvest and take it to the market.

I agree with the former Minister for Fisheries and Forestry, if you can get oil extraction here in Fiji, that will be worth more than the sandalwood now. We are exporting sandalwood oil rather than exporting the wood itself. I thank the honourable Minister for her Statement, and I wish the Ministry well in this very worthwhile project that they are doing.

MR. SPEAKER.- You might recall honourable Members that I mentioned in this august Parliament that a house belonging to the present *Turaga Tui Bua* came from the proceeds of sandalwood. A complete house was able to be funded and the construction took off, and that is where the present Tui Bua resides in Lomanikoro, Bua. The funny thing is sandalwood that was growing overnight had disappeared and some very strange things happened, not only in Bua, but even in my village in Somosomo. When the sandalwood is growing to this height, you will be lucky to see them around the garden of that particular household. And not in the too distant future, of course it will disappear. So, value-adding is, indeed, a great thing, because I remember quite vividly that honourable Koroilavesau promoted this idea with nurseries in the village, and we learnt to intercrop with *dalo ni tana*, it grew very well.

And there is the white sandalwood in Lakeba, Lau. I do not know if it produces that same odour or smell which makes it attractive for people to buy. So again, value-adding is indeed a great area to ponder upon, honourable Minister for Forestry, if we would like to encourage villagers to grow more.

Rehabilitation of Schools Around Fiji

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, the honourable Prime Minister, honourable Deputy Prime Ministers, honourable Cabinet Ministers, the honourable Leader of the Opposition and fellow honourable Members of Parliament, ladies and gentlemen; *bula vinaka* and good morning to you all.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise this morning to inform Parliament on the progress of school rehabilitation works to date on the schools that have been affected by natural disasters or man-made disasters in the past years since *TC Winston*. Before I do that, I would like to acknowledge the work done by the former Government in rehabilitating all the 336 *TC Winston* damaged schools at a total cost of more than \$230 million. Out of this, 206 schools were managed by the Construction Implementation Unit (CIU) and the balance by the Ministry of Education.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the recovery work has been uneven at some stages and some of the most devastated segments of our population in the rural, remote and maritime areas continue to be disproportionately impacted. For instance, the recovery efforts from 2018 to 2022 were halted in the rural and maritime zones and efforts were directed to the mainland of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we all understand Fiji's geographical location, which falls within the cyclone paths that normally develop around the region. Fiji suffers from an extended cyclone seasons from November to April with usually two to three cyclones per year. These cyclones are usually associated with heavy rainfall, massive flooding and tidal surges. The culmination of these can lead to massive destruction such as landslides, loss of vegetation, destruction to the physical environment, resulting in damages to school buildings, teachers quarters and dormitories. Once the work on the *TC Winston* rehabilitation was still progressing, Fiji was again hit by several other tropical depressions and cyclones of varying intensities. A typical example was TD04 depression that affected the Fiji group from Monday, 12th December, 2016 to Sunday 25th December, 2016, causing multiple floodings, landslides and widespread damages to major infrastructure.

The extensive landslide affected the Laucala District School which totally destroyed a one by four classroom, Head Teacher's quarters and the school water tanks. Mr. Speaker, Sir, plans for the one by three classrooms have been approved by the relevant Government Agencies and we are also thankful to the Taveuni Rotary Club for sponsoring the building materials. The Office of the Prime Minister is still working on the tender for the barge to take the building materials to Qamea Island.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, TC Gita developed from Tonga and made its way to the Lau group. It damaged six schools in Southern Lau, including Ono Levu Primary School, Doi Village School, Vatoa Village School, Matuatabu Primary School in Ogea, Fulaga District School and Babasea Primary School in Matuku. To date, schools have been scoped by consultants and drawings are ready for tender process. There is a need to reassess the documents before they actually go on tender, as some value engineering may need to be done to match classroom sizes with current school rolls.

Some minor repairs have been undertaken by school management to continue with everyday learning processes pending the upcoming major rehabilitation works. In April of 2018, Mr. Speaker, Sir, 36 schools were affected by the two cyclones, including three stand-alone ECE, 30 Primary Schools with attached ECE and three secondary schools in Kadavu. Additionally, two maritime Nadroga schools were negatively impacted. Lead consultants were engaged by the Government to carry out detailed assessments and manage the rehabilitation works for *TC Keni*.

Before the tenders were called for TC Keni rehabilitation, TC Harold struck two years later leaving a trail of more destruction on Kadavu schools. The associated whirlwind that developed in

Wainibuka also destroyed some school buildings, Tailevu North College and Namalata Primary School in Korovou. Same number of schools in Kadavu, plus two additional schools in Tailevu were affected and lead consultants had to be engaged to redo scoping and detailed drawings. The final documents are yet to be completed.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Ministry of Education is contemplating on continuing with the same consultants or to opt for Public Works to continue with the program. In December 2020, *TC Yasa* struck mostly affecting schools in the North with a few schools in Northern Yasawa, Lau and Lomaiviti also suffering damages. A total of 59 schools were affected with 38 seen as suffering damages. Some schools have been quickly fixed by RFMF engineers with oversight by the SMC. Sir, DFAT also came on board to start with the rehabilitation works for the *TC Yasa* affected schools and I am happy to say that seven out of the nine adopted schools have been completed and commissioned. The remaining two will be commissioned by the end of September 2024.

Yadua Island school was also badly affected by *TC Yasa* and to date there has been no rehabilitation awarded. The school is using UNICEF tents as classrooms. Currently the Vanua is constructing a temporary one by two wooden classrooms, the Ministry of Education, Northern Education Office is also assisting in providing the materials for the classrooms. *TC Ana* and *TC Bina* hit the country on 30th and 31st January, 2021 and brought with it heavy flooding which affected the two main islands and Viti Levu and Vanua Levu.

Heavy flooding was experienced in Labasa and also in Rakiraki to Nadi. Fiji was also impacted with COVID-19. There were a number of schools that were also being destroyed by fire. Ongoing fire rehabilitation is happening at the Lelean Memorial School and Vanuakula Catholic School in Waidina, Naitasiri. Degei House in RKS is at a completion stage and should be handed over during the 100-year centennial celebration for the school next week. Other burnt dormitories included Sukuna House in RKS and Verata House and Rewa House in QVS have also been included in this year's budget and preliminary works have been undertaken, a tender to be called before the end of this month. There are also other schools which had suffered the same fate through fire incidents, which included Vatuwaqa Primary School, Ba Special School to name a few, and plans are in line to start in this financial year.

At present, the engineers of NRW Macallan (Fiji) Ltd have done a thorough inspection with the DFAT team on the burnt buildings of Vatuwaqa Primary School and a report is yet to be furnished to the Ministry of Education before further actions are taken. The Ministry has set up a Rehabilitation Unit within our Asset and Infrastructure Section, and we have plans to secure rehabilitation staff within the first quarter of this financial year. Once the Unit is up and running, we will relook at all the scoping reports and drawings provided by the lead consultants that were engaged with the then CIU.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, most of the administrative works and review of the technical aspects of the rehabilitation works will be happening in the second and third quarter respectively. The Ministry has been allocated a \$6 million budget under Head 50 in this financial year to cater for the rehabilitation works. We are hoping to also have access to the Climate Change Fund of US\$22.5 million to cater for all the pending cyclone rehabilitation, as most of the schools are usually used as evacuation centres during natural disasters. The Ministry of Education is also challenged by having the right personnel with the right qualification, therefore, the Ministry has undertaken an interview process and should have the right people with cyclone rehabilitation experiences to fill up key positions to kick start the rehabilitation programme within this financial year.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, during our school visitations across Fiji, it was also found that some schools did not have valid land leases, and the Ministry of Education is currently working with iTLTB and

other stakeholders to effect land leases for affected schools as part of the mandatory requirements for rehabilitation assistance. Matuku Secondary School is one of the schools that has land lease issues. The school was part of the establishment of Junior Secondary School in 1967, however work on the project was incomplete. The forms of EA2 and EA3 have been given to the Interim School Committee for their furtherance and the secondary school will be part of the Ratu Mocevakaka Primary School lease while working for having their own secondary school lease is underway.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Fiji is so fortunate that over the years and through past major disasters, we have had assistance of our development partners, other humanitarian groups and financial institutions to come to our aid. Their assistance cannot go unnoticed as they have contributed in speeding up our recovery and rehabilitation efforts. The strengthening of our Vuvale Partnership has seen DFAT extending its support during *TC Yasa*. We also acknowledge the Embassy of Japan, MFAT, UAE, Government of Indonesia, UNICEF, Save the Children Fund and many others that I have not mentioned here.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in conclusion, the Ministry has started on its Fire Rehabilitation Programme. We are poised to start with the cyclone rehabilitation works given that we have an opportunity to access the Climate Change Funds for this programme. All rehabilitation buildings will be seen to be in compliance with the new standard building codes and other regulatory requirements for stronger and resilient structure.

MR. SPEAKER.- I now call on the honourable Leader of the Opposition or his designate to make their response.

HON. H. CHAND.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank the honourable Minister for Education for his Ministerial Statement on a very important subject, that is, rehabilitation of the schools in Fiji. Our aim is to improve the quality of education through the management of facilities and infrastructure so that our students are provided very good learning environment.

A school is a social institution whose existence is part of the nation's social system which aims to produce capable, democratically faithful, physically and spiritually healthy individuals. The honourable Minister has highlighted a number of good plans to bring about improvements and I would like to thank him. The support of good facilities and infrastructure will help teachers teach effectively, learning activities will also be more varied, interesting and meaningful. It is the responsibility of the schools to maintain the facilities and infrastructure that they have.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have noted vast improvement in facilities and infrastructure in schools since the introduction of Free Education Grant. The Free Education grant was introduced by the Bainimarama Government, all the schools are given grants ...

HON. F.W.R. VOSAROGO.- Hogwash!

HON. H. CHAND.- ... whether it be government schools or committee schools. If the grant is well managed and utilised properly, I am sure all schools in Fiji will have good teaching learning resources, good classrooms and will be able to maintain the buildings. There is an allocation of 20 percent for buildings and maintenance and 15 percent for teaching and learning resources. If a primary school has a roll of 500 students, the school will receive a grant of about \$100,000; \$20,000 can be used for building and maintenance and \$15,000 can be used for teaching and learning resources.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBER.- Hear, hear!

HON. H. CHAND.- Secondary schools get more grant than primary schools. There is also provision for virement if there is a need. Mr. Speaker, Sir, teachers' welfare is very important. The Ministry of Education spent \$4.4 million from 2015 to 2020 to upgrade teachers quarters for 187 schools around the country through its building grant allocation. The improved facilities and better infrastructure such as new classrooms and other school resources will create better learning and teaching environment for teachers and also for the students.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in 2016 many schools were badly damaged by *Cyclone Winston* and the FijiFirst Government, with the support of other development partners were very quick to rebuild and rehabilitate the schools and students were back in their classrooms within weeks and in some cases, it took a month.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. H. CHAND.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, now the cost of everything has gone up and I urge the Government to consider increasing the grants to schools, so that schools can bring about improvement in the teaching and learning facilities and infrastructure. The Government should be committed to providing quality education, not only in words, but also in action.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBER.- Hear, hear!

HON. H. CHAND.- I would like to thank you Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity, and the honourable Minister for his Ministerial Statement and plans.

MR. SPEAKER.- I now call on the Leader of the Group of Nine or their designate.

HON. A.N. TUICOLO.- Mr. Speaker, I rise to respond briefly to the Ministerial Statement presented by the honourable Minister for Education on the rehabilitation of schools around Fiji. Mr. Speaker, at this juncture, I thank the honourable Minister for updating this august House on the Ministry's rehabilitation programme for schools around the country that are in dire need for repairs, maintenance and upgrade and also thank the Coalition Government for the continuation and completion of rehabilitation works started by the FijiFirst Government.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to commend all teachers and support staff from these respective schools on their dedication, commitment, perseverance and efforts to continue in imparting knowledge to our students, despite the conditions of the schools they serve in.

Mr. Speaker, with the completion of the rehabilitation programmes, it will indeed bring forth relief and hope to our teachers and most importantly, our children in having to now dwell in an environment that will be conducive to learning.

Mr. Speaker, I will also urge the Ministry of Education to consider upgrading school dormitories both, primary and secondary, teachers and staff quarters. Our teachers and staff should deserve better living conditions, and their welfare must be paramount.

Mr. Speaker, I noted that Vatuwaqa Primary School is also one of the schools listed under the rehabilitation programme. The request has been brought to this august Parliament before and I thank the Coalition Government for considering our plea.

Mr. Speaker, with the reconstruction and upgrade phase, I urge the Ministry to ensure that it continues to fulfil Target 4.8 of SDG 4, that is, to build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning

environment for all students.

QUESTIONS

Oral Questions

Update on the Review of the iTaukei Affairs Act (Question No. 172/2024)

HON. RATU J.B. NIUDAMU asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the honourable Minister for iTaukei Affairs and Culture, Heritage and Arts inform Parliament on the status of the review of the iTaukei Affairs Act?

HON. I. VASU.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank the honourable Niudamu for the question. The overarching objective of the review of the iTaukei Affairs Act is twofold - the economic empowerment of the *iTaukei* and the strengthening of *vanua* governance.

The Ministry of iTaukei Affairs undertook the review of the iTaukei Affairs Act, not only to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its service delivery but to improve the overall wellbeing of the *iTaukei* communities.

The request for the Expression of Interest was published on 9th December, 2023, and it was closed on 22nd December, 2023. At its closing, seven applications were received and four were shortlisted for the interview. After going through the relevant process, one was selected.

The team signed a four-month contract on 6th May, 2024. The work commenced immediately and will be completed on 17th September, 2024, in two weeks' time.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the review team's work is guided by the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG). The review is divided into five phases where in each phase, the team presents an update to the Strategic Advisory Group.

The review team has met with the following groups:

- (1) religious groups;
- (2) Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs);
- (3) tertiary and university students;
- (4) *iTaukei* institutions;
- (5) iTaukei Affairs stakeholders;
- (6) women's Group;
- (7) statutory bodies;
- (8) provincial councils; and the
- (9) public at large.

The review team has covered sufficient ground in its work. It has consulted and obtained the views of credible cross-sections of the community. During the consultation, Fijians have expressed their support for the *iTaukei* administration to continue but there must be a fundamental shift in how it does its business. It must take into account emerging issues that are shaping the development of today's agenda. More will be revealed when the review team completes its work. The team is expected to wrap up its work and submit its report by the middle of this month.

Healthy Catering and Sale of Food and Beverages
(Question No. 173/2024)

HON. T.N. TUNABUNA asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the honourable Minister for Health and Medical Services update Parliament on the National Policy on Healthy Catering and Sale of Food and Beverages and its Standard Operating Procedures?

HON. DR. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank the honourable Member for his question. The National Policy on Healthy Catering and Sale of Food and Beverages at all Government ministries and institutions and its SOPs and Guidelines were launched on Wednesday, 14th February, 2024 by the honourable Prime Minister. Cabinet has also endorsed the adoption and implementation of this National Policy at all Government ministries and institutions. The new policy supersedes its predecessor, the Healthy Catering Guideline which was endorsed in Cabinet of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this policy is a bold step in tackling NCDs in Fiji and mainly the ultimate goal of the policy is to reduce the number of people in Fiji developing NCDs and succumbing to any complications of diabetes, heart disease which are the most common causes of sickness and death in Fiji. For some clarity, in the last 12 months, the Ministry of Health and Medical Services together with our Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) partners conducted screening activities at 107 workplaces where 3,456 participants were assessed.

The result showed that 50 percent of participating workers were obese, 32 percent have high blood pressure, with 5 percent had severe hypertension category. In addition, 60 percent of the workers in the age group 20 years to 25 years who have high risk of developing an NCD while 41 percent had a high risk of suffering from heart diseases in the future.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, these findings are consistent with our national disease burden with heart attack as our number one killer and coupled with the risk of obesity and high blood pressure, as well as the reports from 2021 Food System and Nutrition Survey and Multi Indicator Cluster Survey of 2021. Therefore, in summary, Mr. Speaker, Sir, a policy has been adopted and it is mainly to try and reduce the effects of NCD in the workplace.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, this particular policy, I understand actually comes on the back of two things that were conducted in 2021. One was the food systems and nutrition study and there was a cluster survey.

I think in it there are quite a number of recommendations. Currently, I understand what the policy says is with respect to Government workplaces, et cetera. When will the Government be taking this out to the general public in terms of that particular policy for the public at large because these two surveys indicated how much there is a need for us to keep a tab on this.

HON. DR. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank honourable Koya for his supplementary question. As I had mentioned, it was launched earlier this year, it has been adopted by Cabinet and right now it is a policy within the Government institutions. We, as the Ministry of Health have taken the lead in most of our catering, healthy food choices have been put on the table.

With that being said, based on the findings of the cluster study, and the surveys that was done and also the recent one with the workplace survey, it has indicated that the workplace area within the government institutions especially the workforce are at risk of developing NCDs especially at the younger age. So, with this policy being brought in and its SOP, will allow Government to take the

lead in trying to combat NCDs. It has taken into consideration also the data from the previous studies in 2021 as well.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, a supplementary question. In terms of the Government institutions, et cetera, does the SOP have a programme whereby if there are functions, et cetera taking place within Government institutions, is there some monitoring that is done with respect to the food that is being dished out to these particular institutions?

HON. DR. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, part of the policy is the training. The Ministry takes the lead in doing the training to the various other ministries. So, Training of Trainers (ToT), that is currently being conducted and we will do more training in the future. But nevertheless, it is trying to standardise the catering services throughout the ministries and that will involve training as well and that is included in the SOP.

HON. V. LAL.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, a supplementary question. Once implemented, will the National Policy affect those vendors who sell food on the roadsides?

HON. DR. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, similar to the catering within the school, so it is within the vicinity of the workplace. Outside of the workplace, that is beyond the relevant Ministry's control.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to thank the honourable Minister for coming up with an excellent policy to guide the catering within government services. My question to the honourable Minister is, we are talking about healthy food choices and beverages. Does your policy include serving of liquor at government functions?

HON. DR. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will have to come back to you with a response.

(Laughter)

MR. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, please join me in welcoming a delegation from the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia. It is headed by honourable Mohammed Muraz and the Ambassador of Indonesia, His Excellency Dupito D. Simamora. Welcome to Fiji and to the Parliament of Fiji.

For the information of honourable Members, Fiji and Indonesia established diplomatic relations in 1974 and since then, our two countries have progressively developed various sectors including people to people exchanges, technical training, human resource development, defence and policing, agriculture, disaster management, forestry and fisheries. Our enduring friendship through our two Governments and Parliaments continue to strengthen, fostering mutual understanding and shared achievements. Again, I welcome you all, Your Excellency and honourable Members.

Honourable Members, just a little bit more, before we attended a meeting in Indonesia known as Indonesia-Pacific Parliamentary Partnership, there was a huge protest, it was being carried out in front of Parliament showcasing how people were not responding or taking into account the great task that the Government of Indonesia was doing in West Papua.

Upon this visit of ours, in exchange this huge delegation is here, we heard directly from the honourable Members in the House of Representatives in the Republic of Indonesia how they constructed huge roads, wharves and jetties, airfields, et cetera in the very areas that they were protesting for outside here. That was straight from the honourable Members to us who are visiting

their country for that particular meeting and here they are, and as the honourable Prime Minister had sounded in the PIFS meeting in Tonga, he is trying all his best to promote his Blue Ocean bounded by the Pacific Ocean, and of which the great Government of Indonesia shares with the rest of us that shares our border in the Pacific.

It is a huge task that is now being undertaken and endorsed by PIFS in Tonga, but it is a matter of how best we can support each other. They are well known for MMSE, they are so far ahead in that particular area and there are so many things to learn from Indonesia as well. Being a huge country with this massive population of almost 300 million, they are a market to themselves, and we wonder as to how best they have progressed both in all areas of development including the military and police as well.

We are so grateful for them to be here, and we will be having a private luncheon with them when we rise midday today, in the hope that we continue to foster this relationship and see how best we can work on areas that will benefit both, including the region as well.

Construction of Crossings – Nakawaga Village and Viani Village
(Question No. 174/2024)

HON. N.T. TUINACEVA asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the honourable Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport inform Parliament on the construction of crossings for Nakawaga Village in Koroalau and Viani Village in Navatu, Cakaudrove?

HON. RO F.Q. TUISAWAU.- I thank the honourable Member for the question in terms of these two crossings. We as a Government are very open to discussions on these crossings, especially I have impressed upon FRA and also within my Ministry the need to really look at those communities which have issues in terms of crossings, especially where school children, women and the general public are involved and which we can solve quickly.

Just looking at this one, the Viani Crossing in the *Tikina o Navatu*, we have not specifically budgeted for it but we are considering this too within the Ministry and also FRA in terms of inclusion. It is not really a wide crossing, it is approximately about 10 meters, we can cater for that and that is something we are considering at the moment. Just looking at the location, it is near the coast, so it is affected sometimes by excessive high tides and such events. That is something which we will also need to be considered as the team is looking into that.

The other one, Nakawaga Crossing in the *Tikina o Koroalau*, the first one in the *Tikina o Navatu*, this is in the *Tikina o Koroalau*, again this is planned in the next financial year as part of our broader strategy in terms of infrastructure in the North. It is also part of the broader Nukubuno to Navakuru Rural Roads Programme from the Savusavu side to the Labasa side. That will provide an alternative route connecting Labasa to Savusavu.

So just looking at the sketch again of the area, it is quite a wide river, it is 30 meters and when there is a sea-level rise, it is quite wide. There are locations along that which are not as wide as where the road is. So, again, that is something we need to relook at in terms of the location.

HON. K. LAL.- Mr. Speaker, when it comes to Cakaudrove, I always stand and speak for those people. Apparently, there has been a few instances where the road has been turned into gravel and still the FRA has not tarsealed that, for example, the road near the Savusavu Airport. It is our tourist hotspot. I hope the FRA and the Minister will look into this matter and tarseal those roads.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Just a statement.

MR. SPEAKER.- We thank you for that statement of yours, honourable Ketan Lal.

(Laughter)

Any other supplementary questions?

HON. RO F.Q. TUISAWAU.- Email me.

Health & Safety at Work (General Workplace Conditions) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
(Question No. 175/2024)

HON. S. KIRAN asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the honourable Minister for Employment, Productivity and Workplace Relations update Parliament on the justification to amend the Health and Safety at Work (General Workplace Conditions) (Amendment) Regulations 2024?

HON. A.D. SINGH.- Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable Kiran for asking the question. In line with the Whole of Government Review on Ease of Doing Business, spearheaded by the Ministry of Trade, Co-operatives, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communication, the Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Workplace Relations has reviewed the effectiveness of the general workplace inspections and audits conducted by the National OHS Inspectorate at workplaces in Fiji.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the World Bank through the Ministry of Trade, Co-operatives, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications reported on 25th August, 2023, the following issues:

- (1) The Ministry of Employment through the National OHS Services does not have a full list of businesses and workplaces to be inspected.
- (2) Updated data is available at Fiji Revenue and Customs Service and the Registrar of Companies, but this is not shared with the agencies or made publicly available.
- (3) Only a small percentage of businesses and workplaces in Fiji are inspected.
- (4) Publicly available information from 2018 indicates that FRCS had 28,984 SMEs and workplaces registered in its database. This number would have grown significantly since Fiji's reopening after the pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the OHS inspectors spend significant amount of time inspecting workplaces and businesses which are already compliant, and this time could be better spent visiting and advising non-compliant workplaces and SMEs. In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, it is essential to strike a balance between ensuring the health and safety of workers while also supporting businesses, growth and employment creation. As such, there is a growing need to review and potentially adapt existing health and safety regulations to better align with the needs of businesses and facilitate job creation.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the amendment to the regulations introduces a new clause in Part 26, Regulation 66(1) and (2)(a) and (b) of the general workplace conditions. Regulation 24 outlines a risk-based inspection and audit provision with a proposed schedule. The provisions and schedules outline the workplaces based on high and low risk, and corresponding inspection and audit frequencies. Low risk workplaces to be inspected and audited at least once every three years. These workplaces present minimal safety hazards. High risk workplaces to be inspected and audited at least

annually and based on the elevated level of risk, which has the potential to cause accidents, injuries or even death.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, also an inclusion in Regulation 66 is a new Regulation 4, which requires that in the case of non-compliance on the part of an employer rated as low risk workplace, the Chief Health and Safety Inspector has the power to classify the workplace as high risk. Sir, OHS is one of the critical areas for businesses anywhere in the world, because of any non-compliance in this area, there will be significant impacts on human lives and work environment. Ensuring compliance with OHS laws is a priority for this Government, and hence, the need to review these regulations was very critical for ease of doing business for both public and private sectors.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Honourable Minister, as you have mentioned the new regulations actually create a high risk and a low risk factory, premises, et cetera that you look at. As you also mentioned, the Chief Health and Safety Inspector is the one that is given the authority for compliance and non-compliance. Will the honourable Minister be able to further amend it in terms of checks and balances to ensure that it is not a singular person that signs off on this, purely because it could be an area where they may be some corruption, et cetera that may arise? For example, if the Permanent Secretary was to co-sign, or the Minister himself, would the honourable Minister be doing that?

HON. A.D. SINGH.- Mr. Speaker, I thank honourable Koya for the suggestion and we will definitely discuss it with our senior staff.

HON. R.R. SHARMA.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank the honourable Minister for his response about the amendments. My question is about the general workplace conditions because there is a question raised by the general public about the health and safety concerns around amusement ride operators. Fairly the points that have been raised is, are these amusement rides safe for our children and are they OHS certified? I do thank the honourable Minister for Local Government for his early intervention into the investigation. Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is a very serious matter because a lady has died from a ferries wheel incident and yet justice is not being served. So, in terms of OHS compliance, this very morning the honourable Minister has stated that the caused had been identified and operations has been ceased. What is this cause in terms of the failure of the amusement ride operation?

MR. SPEAKER.- Would you like to answer that? I have just been informed that it is now before the courts.

HON. A.D. SINGH.- Sir ,I would just like to partly answer that question; the first one. I just wish to say that I had given a full explanation to this House in the last sitting and it was your directive that because it is a triable case and it is with the DPP, it is not wise to discuss this any further. I find it very strange that the honourable Member has brought it up again.

HON. R.R. SHARMA.- People are asking.

HON. A.D. SINGH.- People are asking and we have made the statement very clearly, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister, we will leave it at that, because a ruling has already been done on that.

HON. S. NAND.- Mr. Speaker, it is not a question but a statement. I have passed a message to the honourable Minister. There are some workers in workplace who deliberately try to cause accidents or sabotage things and today I saw a video where a pallet trolley was rolled in Raojibhai

Patel Street and someone was waving and taking a video while sitting on the pallet trolley and rolling down. That is a deliberate attempt to cause an accident, people can get hurt, properties can get damaged, people's lives are at risk. Pallet trolley is not supposed to be ridden on the main road. Raojibhai Patel Street is a very busy road. I hope the honourable Minister can put measures in place that culprits as such needs to be taken care of.

MR. SPEAKER.- It is just a statement.

HON. J.N. NAND.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, supplementary question to the honourable Minister. Are there any changes to the OHS legislation for climate change adaptation?

HON. A.D. SINGH.- Mr. Speaker, I can get an answer to that new question for the Member later.

HON. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Sir, I thank the honourable Minister for the review of this regulation. I have always been concerned about OHS particularly on the health aspect. It is about occupation health and safety and unfortunately in Fiji, we neglect the health component of that regulation. What is the honourable Minister going to do about it, because we need a healthy workforce in order to boost production. This is one of our major issues in Fiji; the health aspect of the regulation. What is the Ministry considering and what are the plans we have to deal with this issue?

HON. A.D. SINGH.- Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to thank the honourable Leader of the Opposition....

MR. SPEAKER.- The Wellness Programme and all that going?

HON. A.D. SINGH.- Yes, Sir. I just wanted to advise that PPE's are compulsory in all workplaces and there is awareness provided by the Ministry at workplaces, at floor level, as well as inspections done at all workplaces.

HON. I.B. SERUIRATU.- We have to appoint officers who will do these inspections. With this Parliament, the food that is served here, nice food but is it healthy? Is it contributing to improve the health of the workers? That is what OHS, the health aspect is all about. Training facilities, you have the gymnasium, it should be part of the regulation.

MR. SPEAKER.- Before the honourable Minister replies, I would like to make an attempt to answer the question because you pointed a finger at the food that is being prepared here.

Honourable Members, with due respect to you, this is your demand that we provide lunch. We have gone out of our way to ensure that it is the best lunch that can be provided to each and everyone. There is a variety that we have dished out in front of you. On that, I think the Secretariat is doing a great job in ensuring that we provide good food to you honourable Members and secondly, since it is free of charge.

(Laughter)

Update on Replanting Indigenous Trees
(Question No. 176/2024)

HON. S.T. KOROILAVESAU asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the honourable Minister for Fisheries and Forestry inform Parliament how has the emphasis on replanting indigenous trees progressed considering that Fiji has concentrated on the introduction of high-value species in our country?

HON. A.V.B.C. BAINIVALU.- Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable Koroilavesau for his question. I first want to highlight the difference between indigenous tree species and high-value tree species.

Indigenous tree species or native tree species are those which have been growing naturally in our country. This will include *dakua*, *makadre*, *damanu* and *kauvula*. As a direct comparison, both pine and mahogany, our main plantation species are termed as “exotics” meaning that they were introduced into our country.

High-value tree species on the other hand are those which can be either native or exotic but of high value in terms of their wood product prices in the market. Most of our native species especially *dakua*, *vesi*, *yaka* and *sacau* are considered high-value species. In terms of our plantation species, mahogany is considered to be higher value when compared to pine.

Sandalwood, both our local species and the introduced ones are much more valuable than any other tree species that we have both natives and exotics.

Mr. Speaker, from 2012 the Ministry of Forestry embarked on a number of tree planting initiatives which included the Million Trees, Reforestation of Degraded Forests and the Four Million Trees in four years which expanded to 30 million trees in 15 years, an initiative in response to commitments made at the UN Heads of States Climate Change Summit in New York in September 2019.

Mr. Speaker, tree species that were planted included native tree species of different types, both timber and non-timber, tree species, food trees, exotic timber trees, coastal species including mangroves and non-timber forest product including high-value species like sandalwood and agarwood.

Mr. Speaker, according to the Ministry’s planting records, the total number of trees planted so far is around 19.2 million trees. Out of this total, 14.9 million or about 78 percent are pine seedlings majority of which are under the management of Fiji Pine Limited. The remainder comprising of mahogany at 776,081, mangrove 930,920 seedlings, sandalwood 17,114 and mixed species including all indigenous tree species amounting to around 2.5 million seedlings.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the budget for our Reforestation Programme for this financial year in supporting the 30 Million Trees in 15 Years is \$2.5 million. A major focus of our programme will be the maintenance of beat-up activities, replacing all the dead seedlings in all the planted areas in the three operational Divisions. The target has, therefore, been reduced from 1,800 hectares in the last financial year to 600 hectares for this financial year, to allow our teams to carry out their maintenance activities and to also conduct their monitoring.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in addition to our reforestation efforts, we have been working on the protection and conservation of our native tree species, mainly because of their significant importance in maintaining our rich biodiversity and also, because of their social and cultural importance to our people.

MR. SPEAKER.- The question was on indigenous species. In your reply, you stated that pine has been one of the ones that you have been replanting. So, on the question of indigenous species,

our friends from Indonesia are here. Teak wood is one of their popular trees species, or shall I say, hardwood. They do a lot in ensuring that they get the maximum benefit out of value -adding from those teak wood.

Your Million Trees that began by the FijiFirst Government, I do not know how far it has gone. How many trees have we planted? These are the kind of issues that we would like to hear, honourable Minister. You do not have to make an effort to reply now, I am just raising this because the crux of the question was on the indigenous species.

HON. J. USAMATE.- A supplementary question, Sir. I would like to thank the honourable Minister for her elaboration on the number of trees that they have planted, in particular the 19.1 million that we have managed to plant for that 30 Million target. I think you mentioned around 2.5million, was it 2.5 million?

HON. A.V.B.C. BAINIVALU.- Budget of \$2.5 million for reforestation.

HON. J. USAMATE.- For indigenous trees or plants?

HON. A.V.B.C. BAINIVALU.- Yes, for the Reforestation Programme.

HON. J. USAMATE.- My question is, and this is the question that I asked the other day, how do we calculate success? Is it the planting, or is there monitoring on the percentage of success of the growth of those particular trees? Do we have that in process, or do we count it as a success when you have just planted one?

That was the issue that was brought up in the Copra Millers Report when they were counting the number of coconuts they planted, but there was no monitoring of the real success in terms of making sure the plants grow. So, is that part of the process when you look at these indigenous trees that we are planting?

HON. A.V.B.C. BAINIVALU.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank the honourable Member for his question. I mentioned there have been 19.2 million trees that have been planted so far. Depending on whether these trees are planted around Fiji, the various Divisions, the Ministry of Forestry is responsible for the monitoring of the survival rate of these plants. That is how they monitor the progress of the of the programme, and that is by looking at the survival rate of the plants that are planted in the various Divisions.

HON. J. USAMATE.- A follow-up question on the indigenous species, in particular, what is the survival rate of the plants been planted?

HON. A.V.B.C. BAINIVALU.- I can provide that information to you later on this week, but based on the survival rate, Mr. Speaker, Sir, what the officers at the Ministry do, they change the way or the method of planting that they have undertaken in order to improve the survival rate. So, in the case of honourable Usamate's question, I will get the answer later on this week, Sir. *Vinaka*.

HON. I.B. SERUIRATU.- A supplementary question from me, Mr. Speaker, Sir. We are dealing with an extractive industry and we have always talked about sustainable development. Honourable Minister, is it possible to put it as part of your law or regulation too, particularly in terms of replacement? I know that developed countries have this. You log one tree, and you replace it with three trees. This is about sustainability. What are we going to leave for our children in the future, particularly when it comes to indigenous species? So, that is the question that I want to put before you. Thank you.

HON. A.V.B.C. BAINIVALU- I think the current practice or the initiatives that have been carried out by the Ministry now, is to encourage the landowners to undertake that activity. For every mahogany plant they cut down, they plant three or four more in place of that. That is one initiative that the Ministry is currently undertaking now. Currently, we are also reviewing the Forest Act, so all these will be incorporated into the Act once the review is finalised. Thank you, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, I now intend to adjourn the House for lunch, especially when we are having a meeting and lunch as well with the delegation from the Republic of Indonesia. We will now adjourn and resume at about 2.30 p.m.

The Parliament adjourned at 12.22 p.m.

The Parliament resumed at 3.00 p.m.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE SPEAKER

Welcome

Honourable Members, in the gallery this afternoon, we have the students and teachers from Moce Secondary School. Welcome to your Parliament.

Adjournment - Unplanned Power Shutdown

At this juncture, please be advised that I will have to adjourn Parliament now due to the unplanned power shutdown. The automatic recording through the ITC infrastructure has been affected. As a result, we cannot broadcast live and the FTR cannot record as well. That is how the Hansard Team records all that is said and done for our future records.

I hope you will bear with us on this effect of the sudden unplanned power shutdown that occurred just after 2.00 p.m. Therefore, honourable Members, I will now adjourn the House until tomorrow at 9.30 a.m.

The Parliament adjourned at 3.03 p.m.