



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

MINUTES

of Proceedings of Parliament at Suva on Thursday, Fifth day of September, 2024

1. The House met at 9.30 a.m. pursuant to adjournment.
2. Hon. Speaker took the Chair and read the Prayer.
3. ATTENDANCE
 - (a) All Honourable Members were present except for the Hon. Sachida Nand and Hon. Aliko Bia.
 - (b) The following Honourable Members gave their apologies to the Hon. Speaker for their absence from the sitting of Parliament –

Hon. Vijay Nath, Hon. Alvick Maharaj, Hon. Graham Leung, Hon. Jese Saukuru and Hon. Ifereimi Vasu.
 - (c) The following Honourable Members obtained approval from the Hon. Speaker for their short absence(s) during the sitting of Parliament –

Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka, Hon. Aseri Radrodro, Hon. Esrom Immanuel, Hon. Sashi Kiran, Hon. Charan Singh, Hon. Dr Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu, Hon. Viliame Gavoka and Hon. Parveen Bala.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Leader of the Government in Parliament the Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau moved that the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Wednesday, 4 September 2024 as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

Motion seconded.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

Hon. Speaker welcomed all Honourable Members to the sitting, those seated in the gallery and those watching the live proceedings on television and the internet.

The Hon. Speaker also extended a warm welcome to the 2024 Hibiscus Festival Contestants. The Hon. Speaker acknowledged the significance of the festival's revival after a lapse of five-years and hoped that the experience would not only educate the contestants but also raise awareness on the Parliament institution and promote women's representation in Parliament.

The Hon. Speaker commended the contestants for addressing important issues in the media and encouraged them to continue engaging in decision-making processes to effect positive change in their communities.

The Hon. Speaker reminded the contestants that only one would be crowned Miss Hibiscus, but urged the others to persevere and keep moving forward. He concluded by wishing the contestants well for the rest of the week's activities.

The Hon. Speaker informed all Honourable Members on the availability of the back-to-office report for the study visit that was undertaken at the Parliament of Victoria by the Public Accounts Committee and Economic Affairs Committee in the Library for their perusal and reference.

Finally, the Hon. Speaker reminded all Honourable Members to communicate with their respective Whips if they intended to go on short leave during the sitting day or if they would be absent for the whole day, so that the Speaker's Office could be notified.

6. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

(a) Standing Committee on Economic Affairs

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs the Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna tabled the Standing Committee's Consolidated Review Report of Investment Fiji Annual Reports for 2019-2020 and 2021-2022.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs moved a motion without notice pursuant to Standing Order 121(5) that a debate on the content of the report would be initiated at a future sitting. The motion was seconded and agreed to unanimously.

(b) Standing Committee on Public Accounts

(i) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts the Hon. Esrom Immanuel tabled the Standing Committee's Review Report on the Special Investigation Report on Procurement of Goods and Services – 52nd Asian Development Bank Annual Meeting.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts moved a motion without notice pursuant to Standing Order 121(5) that a debate on the content of the report would be initiated at a future sitting. The motion was seconded and agreed to unanimously.

- (ii) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts the Hon. Esrom Immanuel tabled the Standing Committee's Review Report on the Housing Authority Special Investigation on the Allotment of Lots and Tender Processes.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts moved a motion without notice pursuant to Standing Order 121(5) that a debate on the content of the report would be initiated at a future sitting. The motion was seconded and agreed to unanimously.

(c) Standing Committee on Social Affairs

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs the Hon. Ilesia Vanawalu tabled the Standing Committee's Consolidated Review Report of the Tavua Town Council Annual Report for the Years 2016-2018.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs moved a motion without notice pursuant to Standing Order 121(5) that a debate on the content of the report would be initiated at a future sitting. The motion was seconded and agreed to unanimously.

7. MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

- (a) The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-operatives, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications the Hon. Manoa Kamikamica delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Faiyaz Koya and Hon. Alipate Tuicolo subsequently responded.
- (b) The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation the Hon. Viliame Gavoka delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Faiyaz Koya and Hon. Viliame Naupoto subsequently responded.
- (c) The Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport the Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Jone Usamate and Hon. Naisa Tuinaceva subsequently responded.
- (d) The Minister for Health and Medical Services the Hon. Dr Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Rinesh Sharma and Hon. Penioni Ravunawa subsequently responded.
- (e) The Minister for Employment, Productivity and Workplace Relations the Hon. Agni Singh delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Joseph Nand and Hon. Ratu Josaia Niudamu subsequently responded.

- (f) The Minister for Health and Medical Services the Hon. Dr Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Premila Kumar and Hon. Penioni Ravunawa subsequently responded.

8. QUESTIONS

Oral Questions

- 195/2024 Hon. Naisa Tuinaceva asked the Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport – Can the Minister inform Parliament on how the Ministry plans to regularise private vehicles that are engaged in illegal public service activities.
- 196/2024 Hon. Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation – Can the Deputy Prime Minister update Parliament on the Farm to Fork initiative that is currently being spearheaded by the Ministry.
- 197/2024 Hon. Mosese Bilitavu asked the Minister for Housing and Local Government – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the reasons why the Municipal Councils are not providing town base permits to vehicle owners application which have been accepted by LTA for the processing of their PSV permits in particular for LMs and LCs.
- 198/2024 Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna to ask the Minister for Education – Can the Minister update Parliament on the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Education and China’s Education Ministry.
- 199/2024 Hon. Premila Kumar asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics – Can the Deputy Prime Minister inform Parliament on the reasons for the virement and redeployment of funding away from capital and operational expenditures allocated in the 2023-2024 financial year and its utilisation.
- 200/2024 Hon. Ratu Isikeli Tuiwailevu asked the Minister for Agriculture and Waterways – Can the Minister update Parliament on the proposed Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry and the United Nations University for Environment and Security.
- 201/2024 Hon. Viam Pillay asked the Minister for Multi-Ethnic Affairs and Sugar Industry – Can the Minister inform Parliament on how the FSC intends to assist farmers in light of the recent drought and subsequent low production of cane.
- 202/2024 Hon. Jovesa Vocea asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics – Can the Deputy Prime Minister update Parliament on the proposed increase in student bus fares by the Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission.

- 203/2024 Hon. Shalen Kumar asked the Minister for Home Affairs and Immigration – Given the 94% increase in illicit drug cases recorded in January 2024, what specific measures is the Ministry implementing to combat the surge in drug trafficking and usage, particularly concerning methamphetamine and marijuana.
- 204/2024 Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu asked the Minister for Housing and Local Government – Can the Minister update Parliament on the Phase 2 of the National Housing Policy Review.

The responses to the Oral and Supplementary Questions were provided by the respective Ministers. The Hon. Speaker informed Honourable Members that Oral Question 198/2024 had been withdrawn.

9. SUSPENSION MOTION BY THE LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT

The Leader of the Government in Parliament the Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau moved pursuant to Standing Order 6 that so much of Standing Order 23(1) be suspended so as to allow the House to sit beyond 4.30 p.m. to complete the remaining items listed on the Order Paper.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

10. CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

The Hon. Speaker informed all Honourable Members that there were no Bills for consideration.

11. MOTION FOR DEBATE

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics the Hon. Prof. Biman Prasad moved a motion for the purpose of section 145(1) of the Constitution and pursuant to Standing Order 131, that Parliament approves –

- (a) the increase in Government guarantee limit for the Fiji Sugar Corporation Limited ('FSC') borrowings of \$95.0 million for the period 1 August 2022 to 31 May 2028 (Guarantee Period), by \$105.0 million to \$200.0 million; and
- (b) that the FSC be exempted from paying the guarantee fee.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. Speaker thanked all Honourable Members for their contributions and adjourned Parliament until Friday, 6 September 2024 at 9.30 a.m.

Parliament adjourned at 6.51 p.m.

Speaker of Parliament

Secretary-General to Parliament

5th September, 2024.