



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

MINUTES

of Proceedings of Parliament at Suva on Thursday, Third day of October, 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) The following Honourable Member gave apologies to the Hon. Speaker for absence from the sitting of Parliament –

Hon. Pio Tikoduadua.
 - (b) The following Honourable Members obtained approval from the Hon. Speaker for their intermittent absence(s) during the sitting of Parliament –

Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka, Hon. Charan Singh, Hon. Kalaveti Ravu and Hon. Graham Leung.
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, 2 October 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 welcomed the Year 6 students and teachers of St Joseph the Worker Primary School.

The Hon. Speaker advised Honourable Members on an OHS matter – the planned water cut for the Nausori – Suva areas which would commence from midnight. The Parliamentary complex would also be affected and all preparatory works would not be sufficient to ensure full hygiene standards for the Parliamentary complex. The Hon. Speaker sought the indulgence of the House for Friday's sitting to be stood down and for the only urgent business, the Hon. Prime Minister's Bill to be brought forward. There were no objections from Honourable Members.

The Hon. Speaker also informed Honourable Members that items 4 and 5 on the Order Paper would be deferred to a later special sitting of Parliament, which would be communicated in due course.

6. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

(a) Standing Committee on Natural Resources

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources the Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna tabled the Standing Committee's Consolidated Review Report on the Ministry of Waterways 2017-2018 Annual Report.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources 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 Economic Affairs

(i) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs the Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna tabled the Standing Committee's Review Report on the Accident Compensation Commission Fiji 2019, 2020 and 2021 Annual Reports.

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.

(ii) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs the Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna tabled the Standing Committee's Consolidated Review Report on the Sugar Cane Growers Fund 2021 Annual Report.

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.

The Hon. Speaker allowed personal explanations pursuant to Standing Order 80 by Hon. Charan Singh and Hon. Parveen Bala.

7. MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

- (a) The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics the Hon. Prof. Biman Prasad delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Premila Kumar and Hon. Penioni Ravunawa subsequently responded.
- (b) 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. Viliame Naupoto subsequently responded.
- (c) The Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management the Hon. Sakiasi Ditoka delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Leader of the Opposition the Hon. Inia Seruiratu and Hon. Viliame Naupoto subsequently responded.
- (d) The Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources the Hon. Filimoni Vosarogo delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Sanjay Kirpal and Hon. Ioane Naivalurua subsequently responded.
- (e) The Minister for Justice the Hon. Siromi Turaga delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Ketan Lal and Hon. Mosese Bulitavu subsequently responded.

8. QUESTIONS

Oral Questions

- 215/2024 Hon. Penioni Ravunawa asked the Minister for Health and Medical Services – Can the Minister update Parliament on the Memorandum of Understanding between the Youth with a Mission (YWAM) New Zealand and the Ministry.
- 228/2024 Hon. Alipate Tuicolo asked the Minister for Health and Medical Services – Can the Minister update Parliament on the St Giles Psychiatric Hospital facelift and upgrade.

- 235/2024 Hon. Ketan Lal to ask the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics – Can the Deputy Prime Minister inform Parliament on why the Government has not increased the allowances for university students despite the rising cost of living and education expenses.
- 248/2024 Hon. Penioni Ravunawa asked the Minister for Health and Medical Services – Can the Minister update Parliament on the status of the dental prosthetic services at Nakasi Health Centre.
- 249/2024 Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation – Can the Deputy Prime Minister update Parliament on the outcomes of the recent Second Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation and the Delhi Declaration.
- 250/2024 Hon. Alipate Tuicolo asked the Minister for iTaukei Affairs and Culture, Heritage and Arts – Can the Minister inform Parliament on any plans to revive and document the native iTaukei dialects of Fiji.
- 251/2024 Hon. Jovesa Vocea asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-operatives, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications – Can the Deputy Prime Minister inform Parliament how the Ministry is working towards increasing participation of women and youth in Co-operatives.
- 252/2024 Hon. Hem Chand asked the Minister for Education – Can the Minister inform Parliament how the Ministry ensures that Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary students and teachers are engaged in learning at school for the minimum required number of hours in a term.
- 253/2024 Hon. Kalaveti Ravu asked the Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport – Can the Minister update Parliament on what actions were taken to alleviate shortage of water supply to consumers during dry conditions and in which areas.
- 254/2024 Hon. Semi Koroilavesau asked the Minister for iTaukei Affairs and Culture, Heritage and Arts – With the role of the Great Council of Chiefs being pivotal to the iTaukei people especially in the rural village and tikina communities, can the Minister inform Parliament how will the Government be able to manage village and community affairs with the universal individual freedoms espoused to by the international bodies like the United Nations.
- 255/2024 Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-operatives, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications – Can the Minister update Parliament on what the Ministry's plans are on the Trade Policy Framework that is due for review next year.

256/2024 Hon. Sachida Nand asked the Minister for Health and Medical Services – Can the Minister inform Parliament if Government has any plans to establish a cancer treatment hospital in Fiji to address the surge in cancer patients.

257/2024 Hon. Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure asked the Minister for Education – Can the Minister update Parliament on the re-introduction of scaling in the National Examination Process.

Written Question

258/2024 Hon. Hem Chand to ask the Minister for Education – There are circumstances due to which some children are compelled to drop out of school. Can the Minister inform Parliament on the following–

- (a) what is the Ministry doing to identify these students and how is the Ministry planning to assist these children;
- (b) how many students dropped out in the last 5 years (2019 to 2023) before completing primary education; and
- (c) how many students dropped out in the last 5 years (2019 to 2023) before completing Year 10.

The responses to the Oral and Supplementary Questions were provided by the respective Ministers. The Hon. Speaker informed that Oral Question 235/2024 had lapsed pursuant to Standing Order 45(6). The response to the Written Question was tabled by the respective Minister.

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 Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-operatives, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications the Hon. Manoa Kamikamica moved a motion pursuant to Standing Order 51 –

- (a) That the Access to Business Funding Bill 2024 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- (b) That the Bill must pass through one stage at a single sitting of Parliament;
- (c) That the Bill must be immediately referred to the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs;
- (d) That the Standing Committee must report on the Bill at the next sitting of Parliament; and
- (e) That upon presentation of the report on the Bill by the Standing Committee, the Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament at the next sitting of Parliament, with the right of reply given to the Hon. Deputy Prime Minister as the Member moving the motion.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

11. ANTI-DOPING BILL 2024 (BILL NO. 1 OF 2024)

The Minister for Youth and Sports the Hon. Jese Saukuru moved that pursuant to the resolution of Parliament on Monday, 20 May 2024 that the Anti-Doping Bill 2024 be debated, voted upon and be passed.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Votes Cast –

Yes	–	32
No	–	2
Abstained	–	10

Motion agreed to.

A Bill for an Act to establish drug-free sport Fiji, and provide for anti-doping requirements in sports under the UNESCO International Convention against doping in sport and related matters, enacted by the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji.

12. NATIONAL DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT BILL 2024 (BILL NO. 6 OF 2024)

The Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management the Hon. Sakiasi Ditoka moved that pursuant to the resolution of Parliament on Thursday, 23 May 2024 that the National Disaster Risk Management Bill 2024 be debated, voted upon and be passed.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

A Bill for an Act to repeal the Natural Disaster Management Act 1998 and to provide for disaster risk governance, disaster risk reduction, disaster risk management and disaster management, and for related matters, enacted by the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji.

13. FIRST READING OF THE FIJI TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION BILL 2024 (BILL NO. 19 OF 2024)

The Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Climate Change, Environment, Civil Service, Information, Public Enterprises and Veteran Affairs the Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka moved pursuant to Standing Order 84, that the Fiji Truth and Reconciliation Commission Bill 2024 be read a first time. The motion was subsequently seconded.

The Hon. Prime Minister tabled the four copies of the Fiji Truth and Reconciliation Commission Bill 2024.

A Bill for an Act to establish the Fiji Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Bill No. 19 of 2024).

The Hon. Speaker informed Honourable Members that in accordance with Standing Order 84(1), the Fiji Truth and Reconciliation Commission Bill 2024 had been read for the first time and the Bill would be listed on the Order Paper for Second Reading on a future sitting day.

The Hon. Speaker reminded Honourable Members to utilise the time to peruse the Bill and prepare for debate which would primarily focus on the principles and merits of the Bill.

14. ADJOURNMENT

The Leader of the Government in Parliament the Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau moved that Parliament stands adjourned until such date and time as would be determined in due course, for the special sitting to appoint the President of the Republic of Fiji.

Motion seconded.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

Hon. Speaker thanked all Honourable Members for their contributions during the sitting week, and declared Parliament adjourned.

Parliament adjourned at 7.46 p.m.

Speaker of Parliament

Secretary-General to Parliament

3rd October, 2024.