



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

MINUTES

of Proceedings of Parliament at Suva on Tuesday, First 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) All Honourable Members were present except for the Hon. Sanjay Kirpal.
 - (b) The following Honourable Member gave apologies to the Hon. Speaker for absence from the sitting of Parliament –

Hon. Dr Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu, Hon. Prof. Biman Prasad, Hon. Charan Singh, Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna and Hon. Pio Tikoduadua.
 - (c) The following Honourable Members obtained approval from the Hon. Speaker for their intermittent absence(s) during the sitting of Parliament –

Hon. Filimoni Vosarogo, Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka, Hon. Jone Usamate and Hon. Ketan Lal.

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 Monday, 30 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 welcomed the Speaker of the South Australian Parliament the Hon. Leon Bignell, the Deputy Australian High Commissioner Ms Clair McNamara and the First Secretary Ms Rebecca Brown.

Hon. Speaker informed all Honourable Members that following extensive discussion with the Business Committee on the audit issue which was tabled by the Public Accounts Committee in the last sitting period, he had deemed it necessary to invoke Standing Order 20 for the purpose of undertaking oversight and scrutiny in the unresolved issues.

The Hon. Speaker further informed that pursuant to Standing Order 20, a subcommittee would be established under Standing Order 122 and the subcommittee would further investigate the unresolved issues and report back to his office. His office would determine the membership of the subcommittee as well as issue a term of reference and the subcommittee would report back to his office as per the deadline that would be issued to them.

6. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

(a) Standing Committee on Social Affairs

- (i) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs the Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu tabled the Standing Committee's Consolidated Review Report of the Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts for the years 2018 to 2021.

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.

- (ii) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs the Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu tabled the Standing Committee's Consolidated Review Report of the Ministry of Women and Poverty Alleviation 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 Annual Reports.

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.

(b) Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights

- (i) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human rights the Hon. Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure tabled the Standing Committee's Review Report on the Anti-Doping Bill 2024.

The Hon. Speaker informed Honourable Members that pursuant to the resolution of Parliament on Monday, 20 May 2024, the Standing Committee had reported back and the Bill would be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Thursday, 3 October 2024.

- (ii) The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human rights the Hon. Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure tabled the Standing Committee's Review Report on the National Disaster Risk Management Bill 2024.

The Hon. Speaker informed Honourable Members that pursuant to the resolution of Parliament on Monday, 20 May 2024, and the communication from the Chair on Monday, 5 August 2024, the Standing Committee had reported back and the Bill would be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Thursday, 3 October 2024.

7. MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

- (a) The Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Climate Change, Environment, Civil Service, Information, Public Enterprises and Veteran Affairs the Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Leader of the Opposition the Hon. Inia Seruiratu and Hon. Ioane Naivalurua 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. Ketan Lal and Hon. Penioni Ravunawa subsequently responded.
- (c) The Minister for Fisheries and Forestry the Hon. Alitia Bainivalu delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Leader of the Opposition the Hon. Inia Seruiratu and Hon. Viliame Naupoto subsequently responded.

8. QUESTIONS

Oral Questions

- 228/2024 Hon. Alipate Tuicolo to ask the Minister for Health and Medical Services – Can the Minister update Parliament on the St Giles Psychiatric Hospital facelift and upgrade.

- 229/2024 Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna to ask the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Climate Change, Environment, Civil Service, Information, Public Enterprises and Veteran Affairs – Can the Prime Minister update Parliament on the Fiji Foreign Policy White Paper.
- 230/2024 Hon. Ratu Josaia Niudamu asked the Minister for Women, Children and Social Protection – Can the Minister inform Parliament as to the types of grants provided to organisations for persons with disability.
- 231/2024 Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna to ask the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-operatives, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications – Can the Deputy Prime Minister update Parliament on the National Export Strategy that promotes export and economic diversification.
- 232/2024 Hon. Inia Seruiratu asked the Minister for Agriculture and Waterways – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the work that has been undertaken to utilise the \$1.5 million allocation for coastal erosion protection in the 2023–2024 financial year.
- 233/2024 Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua asked the Minister for Agriculture and Waterways – Can the Minister inform Parliament on what measures are being undertaken by the Ministry to ensure the implementation of sustainable water management practices among farmers particularly in view of the increasing impact by climate change.
- 234/2024 Hon. Premila Kumar asked the Minister for Women, Children and Social Protection – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the measures in place to ensure accountability in the Government’s management and distribution of social pensions.
- 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.

Written Questions

- 236/2024 Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua asked the Minister for Justice – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the following –
- (a) how many Justices of Peace have been appointed in the last 6 months by Province and Division;
 - (b) the names and addresses of these newly appointed Justices of Peace; and
 - (c) how many applications were received for the appointment of Justice of Peace from January to June, 2024 and how many of those applications have been processed.

237/2024 Hon. Inia Seruiratu asked the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Climate Change, Environment, Civil Service, Information, Public Enterprises and Veteran Affairs – Can the Prime Minister provide the following in relation to the civil service for the end of December 2022 and the end of August 2024 –

- (a) the roll or total number of Civil Servants on the two dates;
- (b) the staff turnover rate by Ministries on both dates; and
- (c) what plans are in place to address skilled staff shortage.

The responses to the Oral and Supplementary Questions were provided by the respective Ministers. The Hon. Speaker approved the request from the Government Whip for Oral Questions 228/2024 and 235/2024 to be asked on Thursday. The Hon. Speaker informed Honourable Members that Oral Question 229/2024 had been addressed by the Ministerial Statement earlier in the day. The Hon. Speaker informed that Oral Question 231/2024 had lapsed pursuant to Standing Order 45(6).

The responses to Written Questions 236/2024 and 237/2024 were tabled by the respective Ministers.

9. CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

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

10. 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.

11. MOTIONS FOR DEBATE

- (a) The Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs the Hon. Sashi Kiran moved that Parliament debates the 'Review Report of Assets Fiji Pte Limited Annual Report 2016–2019' which was tabled on 3 September 2024.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

- (b) The Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs the Hon. Sashi Kiran moved that Parliament debates the 'Review Report for the Fiji Meat Industry Board Annual Reports 2018–2022' which was tabled on 4 September 2024.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

- (c) The Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs the Hon. Sashi Kiran moved that Parliament debates the 'Consolidated Review Report of Investment Fiji Annual Report 2019–2020 and 2021–2022' which was tabled on 5 September 2024.

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 Wednesday, 2 October 2024 at 9.30 a.m.

Parliament adjourned at 6.23 p.m.

Speaker of Parliament

Secretary-General to Parliament

1st October, 2024.