



# PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

---

## MINUTES

of Proceedings of Parliament at Suva on Monday, Third day of March, 2025

1. The House met at 9.30 a.m. pursuant to adjournment.

2. Hon. Speaker took the Chair and read the Prayer.

3. ATTENDANCE

All Honourable Members were present.

The Hon. Mosese Bulitavu obtained approval from the Hon. Speaker for intermittent absence during the sitting of Parliament.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Leader of the Government in Parliament the Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau, moved that the Minutes of the sittings of Parliament held on Friday, 6 December 2024 and Monday, 24 February 2025, 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 of Parliament. He also welcomed those in the gallery and those watching the proceedings on television and the internet. The Hon. Speaker also welcomed Mrs Sulueti Rabuka and the Australian High Commissioner H.E Mr Ewen McDonald and his wife Mrs Wendy McDonald. The Hon. Speaker also expressed the Parliament's gratitude and appreciation for His Excellency's exceptional service and unwavering commitment during his tenure as the Australian High Commissioner to Fiji.

### **Hon. Alvick Maharaj's Status**

Hon. Speaker informed the Honourable Members that he had received official notification from the Hon. Alvick Maharaj on the following –

- (a) his status as an Independent for the remainder of this Parliamentary term;
- (b) that he would support the group that is being led by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition; and
- (c) that he has withdrawn his appeal which was before the Fijian Electoral Commission with respect to the deregistration of the Fiji First Party.

### **Review of Standing and Select Committees Membership**

Hon. Speaker informed all Honourable Members that he had undertaken a review of the Standing and Select Committees Membership following the recent move by the Group of 9 Bloc to join the Coalition Government. A re-organisation of the Standing and Select Committees membership was necessitated to ensure balanced representation and effective governance.

The Hon. Speaker further informed that there are now 3 Government Members and 2 Opposition Members on each of the 6 Standing Committees, and that the changes came into effect on Monday, 3 February 2025. The Hon. Speaker also informed Honourable Members of the following appointments –

#### **Standing Committee on Economic Affairs**

- Hon. Semi Koroilavesau replaces Hon. Aliko Bia;
- *Alternate Member*. Hon. Ketan Lal.

#### **Standing Committee on Social Affairs**

- Hon. Parveen Bala replaces Hon. Ioane Naivalurua;
- *Alternate Member*. Hon. Shalen Kumar.

#### **Standing Committee on Natural Resources**

- Hon. Vijay Nath replaces Hon. Taito Rokomatu;
- *Alternate Member*. Hon. Joseph Nand.

#### **Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence**

- Hon. Virendra Lal replaces Hon. Viliame Naupoto;
- *Alternate Member*. Hon. Ketan Lal.

#### **Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights**

- Hon. Faiyaz Koya replaces Hon. Mosese Bulitavu;
- *Alternate Member*. Hon. Joseph Nand.

#### **Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

- Hon. Hem Chand will replace Hon. Naisa Tuinaceva;
- *Alternate Member*. Hon. Shalen Kumar.

With respect to the House Committee membership under Standing Order 126(1)(f), the Hon. Viam Pillay replaces the Hon. Naisa Tuinaceva.

There are no changes to the membership of the Standing Orders Committee.

With respect to the Privileges Committee membership under Standing Order 127(1)(b), the Hon. Premila Kumar replaces the Hon. Ratu Josaia Niudamu.

### **Allocation of Questions and Ministerial Statements**

Hon. Speaker further stated that from the April sitting onwards, in the case of allocation of oral questions per sitting day under Standing Order 42(1), five questions shall be allocated to the Government and five questions shall be allocated to the Opposition, which is now solely the Group of 17 Bloc.

In the case of Ministerial Statements under Standing Order 40(4), the only response would be from the Leader of the Opposition or his designate. The Leader of the Group of 9 Bloc would no longer qualify for a response as the Group has joined the Coalition Government.

### **Referral of Annual Report**

The 2019-2020 Parliament of Fiji Annual Report which had been with the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights had been referred to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence.

## 6. **MOTION IN THE NAME OF THE HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER**

The Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Civil Service and Public Enterprises, and Information the Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka moved that the Parliament thanks His Excellency the President for His most gracious speech.

The motion was seconded by the Leader of the Government in Parliament the Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau.

Hon. Speaker reminded all Honourable Members of the importance of maintaining decorum and order in the esteemed House pursuant to Standing Orders 58 and 70. He requested all Honourable Members to refrain from any disruptive behaviour, including unsolicited interjections, and to allow their colleagues the opportunity to speak without interruption.

Hon. Speaker further reminded all Honourable Members of the 20-minute speaking times during debate pursuant to Standing Order 68 – the first bell would be rung at 18 minutes and the final bell at 20 minutes.

Debate ensued.

[Speakers: Prime Minister the Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka, Leader of the Opposition the Hon. Inia Seruiratu, Hon. Alitia Bainivalu, Hon. Parveen Bala, Hon. Alikia Bia, Hon. Hem Chand, Hon. Mosese Bulitavu, Hon. Sanjay Kirpal, Hon. Sakiasi Ditoka, Hon. Semi Koroilavesau, Hon. Viliame Gavoka, Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna, Hon. Esrom Immanuel and Hon. Premila Kumar.]

## 7. **CONSIDERATION OF BILLS**

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

8. 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.

9. MOTION IN THE NAME OF THE HONOURABLE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR FINANCE

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

- (a) that the Government guarantee for the Fiji Development Bank (**'Bank'**) borrowings for the 12-months period from 1 March 2025 to 28 February 2026 (**'Guarantee Period'**) through the issuance of short and long term bonds, promissory notes, term deposits, any Reserve Bank of Fiji financing facility and other short-term borrowings;
- (b) that the Government guarantee for a sum of FJ\$190 million for the Guarantee Period; and
- (c) that the Bank pay a guarantee fee of 0.075% on the cumulative utilised guarantee credit.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. Speaker thanked the Honourable Members for their contributions and adjourned Parliament until Tuesday, 4 March 2025 at 9.30 a.m.

Parliament adjourned at 6.34 p.m.

**Speaker of Parliament**

**Secretary-General to Parliament**

3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2025.