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Fiji Parliament Support Project

Phase II

Quarter 1 Report

01 January – 31 March 2017

Prepared for the Project Board

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Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of activities undertaken by FPSP Phase II in the period January – March 2017. Quarter 1, January - March 2017 was the first quarter of implementation for Phase II of the project. It should be noted the final quarter of the FPSP project was also being implemented in this time period but this report only covers those activities being funded and implemented by FPSP Phase II.

The activities of FPSP Phase II build on the new project focus with a significant emphasis on the work of committees.

A summary of activities implemented during this quarter is listed below. To provide clarity, only the activities of FPSP Phase II have been included in this report and a separate report with activities funded by FPSP in its final quarter of implementation has been produced:

Dates	Events	Status
21 Feb	FPSP Phase II Board meeting	Implemented
7 March	Induction training for new MP	Implemented
10 March	TA to the Speaker and Committee Chairs meeting	Implemented
26-31 March	Code of Conduct expert in-country to assist Law, Justice & HR Committee	Implemented
26-31 March	PAC expert in-country to assist the PAC	Implemented
27 March	NCDs Workshop for MPs and selected staff	Implemented
31 March	Working session with Committee Chairs, Deputy Chairs and whips on planning and implementing committee work	Implemented

Funding for FPSP Phase II was only received from the Australia Government in the middle of this quarter and the New Zealand Government funding was not received during this reporting period. Therefore, project implementation activities in this quarter are limited.

Project Summary

Fiji Parliament Support Project Phase II

The Fiji Parliament Support Project Phase II (FPSP Phase II) is the second phase of UNDP support to the Fiji Parliament that began in 2014. The project seeks to provide support to the Parliament to become more effective and efficient through strengthening the work of its committees related to legislation and oversight, building the capacities of legislators and professionalism of staff, as well as improving outreach and citizen engagement. The project is guided by the Corporate Plan and strategic vision and mission of Parliament. To achieve the aims of a well-functioning modern Parliament, the project will focus on capacity development of parliamentary actors, including MPs and staff. It will involve, among others trainings, placements, manuals, standard operating procedures, needs assessments, CSO and citizen engagement, and the inclusion of minorities and marginalised groups, including women and youth. The timeframe for the support is four years from January 2017 – December 2020. This allows for continued support to the current Parliament term, as well as just over two years of support to the next Parliament term following the next general election scheduled for 2018.

The project is currently funded by the Governments of Australia and New Zealand although a funding shortfall remains. Efforts to resource mobilize for the project will continue.

Key Achievements

The following are the key achievements by FPSP Phase II during the reporting period:

Output 1 - Committees have enhanced capabilities to undertake their legislative and oversight functions, including skills to ensure that the SDGs and development issues are mainstreamed across Parliament's work, including gender mainstreaming

During the first quarter of FPSP Phase II significant emphasis has been put on strengthening the work of Committees in Parliament. Statistics collected by the project show that the Committees of the Fiji Parliament are now meeting far more than in previous years and thus require additional support. Committees meet on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and therefore all project activities must be held on Mondays or Fridays in order not to negatively impact on the workings of the Parliament. Specific activities undertaken in this first quarter by FPSP Phase II included:

Code of Conduct Expert to assist the Law, Justice and Human Rights Committee with their legislative scrutiny (26th – 31st March)

A major focus of the project is on the technical support that can be provided through FPSP to allow committees to better analyse draft legislation and make any necessary changes during the committee stage of the process before reporting back to Parliament. UNDP received a request from the Parliament Standing Committee on Law, Justice and Human Rights to provide such assistance with regards to the Code of Conduct Bill that is with the Committee for scrutiny.

FPSP facilitated that the Chief Executive of GOPAC (Global Parliamentarians Against Corruption), Akaash Maharj, provide assistance to the committee with regards to undertaking a review of the scope of Bill and providing analytical and summary notes on the content for consideration by the Committee, undertaking research on the subject matter for the Committee, providing comparative analysis of other Code of Conduct legislation in other jurisdictions, providing advice, assistance and briefings to the Law, Justice and Human Rights Chair, members and support staff



to enhance the capacity of the Committee to scrutinise the Bill effectively, reviewing and analyzing the written submissions on the Bill and providing summary notes for consideration by the Committee and providing input and advice to the Committee in supporting the development and finalisation of the committee reports.

The expert provided some of this work from distance and was in-country from the 26th – 31st March to work directly with the Committee. A full report from the expert is available from the project team.

PAC expert to assist the Public Accounts Committee in their scrutiny of reports (26th – 31st March)

As part of the ongoing support to the Parliament Public Accounts Committee, the project provided an expert to assist the committee during the month of March. Some of this work was undertaken from distance and Rob Oakeshott also spent one working week in Fiji working directly with the Committee.

The main issues covered through this TA to the Committee were resolving why reports had not been tabled in the previous Parliament, as agreed and expected (Volume Two and Three of Commercial Entities 2009-2013), progressing on draft reports that were currently before the committee but had stalled (Consolidated Audit Oversight Report 2010-2013), and progressing on public hearings in relation to current audit oversight (2014 Audit Report).

A full report from the expert is available from the project team.

Regular meeting between Speaker and Committee Chairs (10th March)



Through FPSP support in 2016, the Parliament has been examining mechanisms for improving the coordination of committee work and ensuring that committees are provided with the requisite support to ensure smooth functioning. The project provides TA to the Secretariat and Speaker in

preparing for regular meetings where each Committee Chair presents a workplan to the Speaker

and fellow Chairs and Deputies. The process allows for open discussions between the Committee and the Speaker as to the functioning of the Committees and opportunities to strengthen the operation of the committee system in Parliament.

The second such meeting was held on 10th March and was attended by the FPSP project staff.

Working Session with Committee Chairs, Deputy Chairs and Whips (31st March)



On 31st March, the project held a one-day working session with the Committee Chairs and Deputy Chairs. As all of these positions except one are now filled only by Government MPs, it was also decided to invite the Opposition Whips to ensure that discussions were cross-party.

Some of the issue covered in this working session included:

- Planning committee work

- Step by step guide and timelines for dealing with Bills
- Step by step guide and timelines for dealing with annual reports / papers referred to the committee
- Preparing for evidence sessions – how to advertise who to invite, how much time, the format, preparing questions, preparing briefings / analysis
- What does the chair do and what does the committee Clerk do
- What is done in meetings and what is done between meetings
- When do committees need to travel outside Suva and how to complete the travel form
- The remit of committees – dealing with individuals who contact committees / individual complains or issues

The Members were keen to ensure that this was a working session rather than workshop and therefore the number of resource persons were limited. Committee Clerk David Meek from the New Zealand House of Representatives did participate, but all other sessions were facilitated just by the UNDP project staff and the Members. The project has previously interviewed Committee Chairs and / or Committee Clerks from the Parliaments of Victoria, Wales, Scotland and UK and therefore these videos were played to the members during the sessions.

A full report from the working session is available from the project team.

Output 2 - MPs, including women MPs, and staff have increased capacities and improved professionalism to fulfil their obligations, benefitting from exposure to other parliaments through south-south triangular cooperation

UNDP in the first quarter of FPSP Phase II started work to provide professional development opportunities for both Members of Parliament and Parliament staff to allow them to undertake their roles more effectively. This support can be in terms of the workings of Parliament, such as a procedural training, or more generally on key development issues that are discussed and legislated upon in Parliament. Some of the activities carried out in this area in the first quarter of 2017 included:

Induction training for a new MP (7th March)



Following the resignation of NFP MP Tupou Draunidalo, a new MP was selected to be sworn in from the National Federation Party. Hon Parmod Chand of NFP was sworn in to Parliament at the March sitting. Prior to this, on 7th March, the FPSP Phase II project provided induction training for Hon. Chand. This induction training covered the main procedural aspects of the Parliament's work. The format was through presentation, discussion and mock sessions in the chamber itself.

A full copy of the induction presentation can be obtained from the project team.

Workshop for MPs and selected Parliament staff on Non-Communicable Diseases (27th March)

A one-day briefing for the Fiji Members of Parliament was organized by the project and held on 27th March 2017 at the Grand Pacific Hotel, Suva from 9am to 4pm. The briefing follows a series of briefings for Members of Parliament on important development issues organized by Phase I of the FPSP project.

The briefing was organized by UNDP but was a collaborative effort by the following organisations – UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji, Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services, Fiji National University- Centre for Obesity and NCD prevention (C-POND), McCabe



Centre for Law and Cancer, World Health Organisation – Pacific office and Pacific Community Public Health Division.

The training sessions were delivered by:

- Elisiva Na'ati (Pacific Community Public Health Division's Nutrition Officer)
- Dr. Isimeli Tukana (National Adviser – NCD – Ministry of Health Fiji)
- Dr. Wendy Snowdon (NCD Coordinator, WHO 's Division of Pacific Technical Support)
- Nafiz Ali (Tobacco Control Unit Ministry of Health Fiji)
- Prof. Marj Moddie (Deakin Economics – Australia)
- Dr. Iliapeci Kubuabola (C-POND –FNU)
- Ferdinand Strobel (Health & Development Policy Specialist– UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji)
- Ayodele Akinremi (FNU)

A full report on the event can be obtained from the FPSP Phase II project team.

Output 3 - Parliamentary outreach and citizen engagement have expanded to include traditionally excluded groups, such as women and youth, and reach remote areas

The Fiji Parliament is still in its infancy following its resumption in September 2014 following a number of years in Fiji where no Parliament operated. The project under this output is focussing on providing information to citizens on the work of Parliament, looking at opportunities for citizens to engage with the Parliament and utilising Parliament as an institution to facilitate national discussions on important development topics.

UNDP did carry out a number of activities in this quarter linked to this outcome but they were all majority-funded by FPSP and not Phase II of FPSP and further details can therefore be found in a separate report.

Project Management

On 21st February, FPSP Phase II also held its first project board meeting. The board meeting is made up of the Parliament of Fiji, project donors and UNDP.

The Board will meet regularly twice per year with the option of additional meetings should the need arise.

During this first project board meeting, there were discussions on the proposed work of the project in Phase II as well as a discussion on the need for further resource mobilisation to fill projected funding shortfall.

The Board approved the project annual workplan for 2017.

Full minutes of the Board meeting are available from the project team.



Annex 1: Financial Summary for the period 01 January – 31 March 2017.