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Resilient nations.*

Fiji Parliament Support Project

Phase II

Quarter 1 Report

1 January – 31 March 2018

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Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of activities undertaken by the FPSP II project in the period 1 January – 31 March 2018. This report is the 4th such report under the FPSP II project.

In 2018, the Fiji Parliament will be dissolved and an election held. The date for Parliament to be dissolved will be anytime between April and October 2018, thus making project planning challenging. However, the project has taken this into consideration and is implementing activities accordingly.

Some activities have been put on hold as elections are approaching, for example the Speaker's Debates on the SDGs, and in other areas the project has minimised activities, for example the professional development of MPs since some may not be returned following election. However, other work has continued or increased such as the ongoing support to the Parliament Committees.

What is also notable from the activities implemented this quarter is the capacity that has been developed in the Fiji Parliament already through FPSP and FPSP II with the Fiji Parliament now serving as a knowledge hub for the Pacific region. In this quarter alone, one MP from Fiji has shared with the PNG Parliament the way that Committees operate, the Speaker of the Cook Islands Parliament undertook a placement with the Fiji parliament during a sitting, staff from the Fiji parliament research unit provided assistance to the Solomon Islands Parliament to undertake a budget analysis and staff from the PNG Parliament Hansard department undertook a training placement with the Fiji Parliament. While some of these activities were not directly funded through the FPSP II project, they do highlight the way in which the project has managed to develop the skills and capacity of the Fiji Parliament in a sustainable manner which is now benefitting the region as well as Fiji.

Finally, during this quarter funding for FPSP II was received from the Government of Japan. This funding now means that FPSP II is funded by the Governments of New Zealand, Australia and Japan. Despite the generous contribution by Japan, a project budget deficit \$353,888.70 USD remains and the project team continues to liaise with donors and partners on resource mobilisation.

A summary overview of activities implemented by FPSP II during this quarter is listed below:

Dates (Tentative)	Activity Description	Location	Status
Jan	Finalization of dissolution roadmap and FAQs for MPs on dissolution	Suva	Completed
Jan	TA to clear Hansard backlog	Suva	Completed
Jan	Job Evaluation: Organizational review	Suva	Mission complete Reports submitted
16-29 Jan	TA to PAC to finalize outstanding PAC reports & Gender training / report editing	Suva	Mission Complete
23 Jan	Gender training for Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence	Suva	Completed
31st January	Fiji participation at regional seminar on preparing for Parliament sittings	Holiday Inn, Suva	Completed
5 February	UNDP support to Fiji Parliament Strategic Planning sessions	Suva	Completed
9 Feb	SDGs self-evaluation report finalized	Suva	Completed
27-28 Feb	Fiji MPs as Resource Person @ PNG Chairs & Deputies Chair Committee Induction	Port Moresby	Completed
Mid-Feb	Outreach to the maritime zone of Lau	Suva	Completed
19 Feb – 2 March	TA to Committees Kevin Deveaux (From home + in-country 19 th Feb – 2 nd March)	Suva	Ongoing
5 - 16 March	Hansard consultants support to Fiji Parliament for March sitting	Suva	Completed
4th – 17th March	Attachment 2 staff from Research & Library Unit to support NP of Solomon Islands on Budget Analysis	Honiara	Complete
Feb	TA for Parliament before finalizing SDG report for tabling in Parliament	Suva	Complete
5th March	Signing Ceremony with Government of Japan for funding FPSP		Complete
March	Niki Rattle, Cook Islands Speaker to Fiji (South-South Speaker's exchange)	Cooks / Suva	Completed
March	SDG Self-Assessment report discussed / presented during Parliament sitting (Chair communication)	Suva	Completed

Project Summary

The Fiji Parliament Support Project's (FPSP) II interventions are guided by the Corporate Plan and Strategic vision and missions of the Fiji Parliament.

The project's focus is to assist parliament to become more effective and efficient through strengthening the work of its parliamentary committees, building the capacities of members of parliament, professional development of the parliamentary staff and improving parliaments outreach and citizen engagement. Interventions includes trainings, placements, manuals, standard operating procedures, needs assessments, CSO and citizen engagement, and the inclusion of minorities and marginalised groups, including women and youth.

A key achievement in this reporting quarter was the signing of the new funding agreement between the Government of Japan and UNDP Pacific Office. Up to March of this year, FPSP II was co-funded by the Governments of Australia and New Zealand. The inclusion of Japan's new funding support for FPSP II (as well as other Parliaments in the Pacific) allows the project to scale up its activities with the Fiji Parliament and provides financial stability for the project.

Despite this additional funding, a project shortfall of approx. \$353,888.70 USD remains and the project team will continue to liaise with donors and partners to ensure that the full project budget amount can be mobilised to allow for full implementation of the project.



Country Director UNDP Bakhodir Burkhanov with Hon. Jiko Luveni, Speaker of the Fiji Parliament and Embassy of Japan Chargé d'Affaires ad interim Mr. Tsuguyoshi Hada

Key Achievements

This report will provide a brief outline of the work undertaken during this reporting quarter by outputs. Information on other areas included in the table on pages 3 and 4 of this report can be obtained from the project team.

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

The project continues to engage technical experts on Long Term Agreements (LTAs) to support the various Committees of Parliament upon request. Based on discussions with stakeholders and feedback received on this support to Fiji Parliament, the technical assistance to committees has enabled them (and staff) to effectively carry out their functions and have a better understanding of issues that could be technical and difficult to follow through.

Technical Assistance to Parliament Standing Committees

FPSP provided technical support to the review of several reports and papers tabled, some of which were priorities leading up to the elections this year. These included the Fiji Electoral Commission (FEC) 2014 Annual Report; Multi-national Observation Group (MOG) Report on the 2014 General Election (2014)¹; In addition, TA was provided to this committee in its ongoing scrutiny of key bills.

Similar support was provided to the Economic Affairs Committee on two Bills currently being considered by the Committee - specifically Bill 19/2016 "Bill for an Act to provide for the reform, promotion and regulation of the Sugar Cane Industry; and Bill 20/2016 "Bill for an Act to amend the sugar cane Growers Funds Act."

Upon request from the Fiji Parliament Secretariat, the project provided technical support to the PAC in their review of four (4) outstanding Auditor General reports. The technical expert continues to provide advice on demand in-country and remotely when required.

During the March sitting of Parliament, the Social Affairs Committee's report on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was tabled in Parliament. The Committee made a number of amendments to the Bill which were subsequently accepted by Government and made law. The committee worked on a cross-party basis and with the assistance of the UNDP FPSP II project managed to achieve consensus on the report and the proposed changes of in tabling the report in Parliament, the Chair of the Committee Honourable Viam Pillay noted:

¹ The MOG Report was an appendix the FEC 2014 Annual Report and therefore formed part of the FEC Report

“In addition, the Committee commends the support from the United Nation Development Programme, Pacific Centre for the assistance rendered towards the engagement of Professor Ron McCallum, a legal expert in labour law. The Committee was fortunate to involve Professor Ron McCallum who was the Chairman of the first Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of the United Nations that monitors the compliance of the CRPD. The Professor Ron McCallum provided the much needed technical support, advice and guidance which assisted the Committee to scrutinise the Bill thoroughly and make amendments”.

Support to Committees on Gender analysis

Additionally, PAC requested technical advice on gender basics and analysis which was provided by UNDP’s Regional Gender Governance Advisor, Ms. Christine Ross. Going forward, it is anticipated the PAC will incorporate gender analysis in their reports and interventions, consistent with Standing Order 110(2). Similar support was requested and provided to the Foreign Affairs and Defence standing committee. Ms. Ross’s presentation was shared with the committee staff, including how to practically integrate gender analysis in the work of the committees.



Christine Ross presenting to PAC. Looking on is PAC advisor, Rob Oakeshott

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

In the first quarter of 2018, the project continued to provide professional development opportunities for both Members of Parliament and Parliament staff to assist them undertake their roles more effectively. In the lead up to the elections this year support in this area for Members of Parliament will slowly diminish with the exception of those members sitting in Standing Committees and Secretariat staff. As outlined in the Executive Summary, this quarter has seen Fiji Parliament MPs and staff serve as resource persons at training sessions in other parliaments which has allowed for both their own professional development and assistance to the other Parliaments through “south-south” knowledge sharing.

South-South cooperation – Support to PNG Parliament

In February, the Chair of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence was a key resource person at a training workshop for Committee Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the Papua New Guinea (PNG) National Parliament.



PNG Committee Chairs, Deputy Chairs & Staff listening to Hon. Netani Rika from the Fiji Parliament

Peer to peer learning platforms such as this serve to strengthen networks amongst parliaments in the region and to share good practices, what works, the issues MPs face and to see how other Pacific Island countries are overcoming some of these challenges. For the participating MP from Fiji, it was an important professional development opportunity that allowed him to take stock of the way in which Parliament committees operate and how they might be improved.

Attachment to the Fiji Parliament for PNG Hansard Staff



Lee Sirote and Kenneth Sebeprin from the PNG Parliament with members of the Hansard Unit

In February two (2) Hansard staff from the National Parliament of Papua New Guinea went on attachment to the Hansard unit of the Fiji Parliament. The South-South attachment not only provided an opportunity for hands on training for the staff but also allowed them to observe other units in parliament that have direct interactions with the Hansard unit such as the Information Technology (IT), Tables and Library units of the Fiji Parliament and the Research Unit.

Attachment to the Fiji Parliament for the Speaker of the Cook Islands Parliament

Cook Islands Speaker Hon. Nikki Rattle was attached to the Fiji Parliament during the March sitting as part of efforts to review and improve Cook Islands Parliament Standing Orders and create a sustainable network of senior Parliament leaders in the Pacific. Only Cook Islands and Fiji currently have women Speakers of Parliament. Through the South-South exchange model, Hon. Nikki Rattle sat through parliament sittings and also witnessed the stages of preparation for the sittings and the roles that each unit plays.



Hon. Speaker Rattle meeting Hon Speaker and some women Members of Parliament of the Fiji

The Cook Islands Speaker said they were currently reviewing their Standing Orders and one of the main reasons she chose Fiji was because its parliament is practicing most of what is contained in the Standing Orders. Coming from one of the smallest parliaments in the region, the attachment provided the Speaker with a fresh perspective on how a parliament (of any size) would normally function.

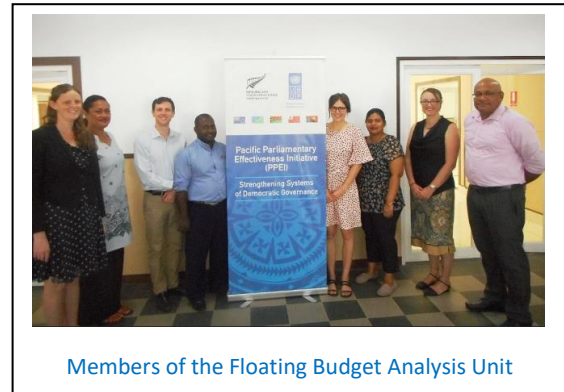
Budget Analysis support to the National Parliament of the Solomon Islands

As part of their professional development, two (2) staff of the Fiji Parliament’s Research & Library Unit joined a team of international researchers who formed the “Floating Budget Analysis Unit”, that supported the National Parliament of Solomon Islands in the analysis of their budget.

Comprising of research staff from the Parliaments of Australia, New South Wales, New Zealand, Fiji and an independent researcher from Tonga, the objectives of

their support were two-fold: to develop general budget analysis and sector specific briefs for the National Parliament and contribute towards capacity building of national officers.

The ‘floating budget analysis unit’ was an innovative approach initiated by the project that provided similar support to the Fiji Parliament in 2016 and 2017 and the model has now been replicated in the Solomon Islands, with Tonga also expressing interest. Such placements in other parliaments allows Fiji staff to their knowledge and also provides an important professional development opportunity for the staff to see how other parliaments operate and how national budgets are development, scrutinised and approved in other jurisdictions.



Members of the Floating Budget Analysis Unit

Workshop on Procedural Preparations for Parliament Sittings



Secretary General Fiji Parliament with her Deputy, sharing good practices with regional peers

On 31st January 2018, the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General participated in a one-day regional workshop held in Suva for senior stakeholders from six (6) Pacific Parliaments to share information and experiences in terms of procedural preparations for Parliament sittings and resolving procedural issues when they arise during sittings.

As a leading parliament in the Pacific, the contributions of the Fiji SG and DSG were well appreciated by the other Pacific parliaments as they provided useful insights and perspectives on procedural processes, strategies on civic education and standard operating procedures.

Support to the Hansard unit

Following a request received from the Office of the Secretary General of the Fiji Parliament for support to the Hansard unit, the project engaged three national consultants to provide editorial



National consultant, Alifereti Bulivou, briefing Hansard staff

support. This support was deemed essential as there was a backlog of Hansard transcripts from committees that was negatively impacting on the ability of committees to finalise and table reports in Parliament. The consultants reviewed and edited pending transcripts from Parliament and Committee sittings. The national consultants also provided feedback and recommendations on strengthening the Hansard unit at the end of their assignment which the Fiji Parliament will now work on, with the support of the project.

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

Lau Citizens Engagement Outreach

A key area of support for the project is the Fiji Parliament's civic education programmes: activities that inform Fijians on the importance of parliamentary democracy, its roles and functions and how Fijians can engage with Parliament.

The project supported parliament's outreach activities in the Lau group of islands from 6 to 16 March. This was the Fiji Parliament's second outreach activity in the maritime area, the first being in 2017 also supported by the project. During the Lau mission, the civic education team conducted outreach activities in schools, communities and villages spanning seven (7) islands, including some of the most remote islands in Fiji.

Below are two quotes gathered from the outreach activities:



Mr Filimone Colate, an elder in the island of Makogai, giving a prize to a student during the Quiz time.

"We are isolated but we're glad that the team enlightened us today about the roles and functions of a Parliament. We have a lot of wrong perceptions of Parliament but after today's programme we are now better informed," said Filimone Colate an elder on the island of Makogai .



Students of Kabara Primary School listening attentively to the explanation of the Speaker's wisdom.

"Today's presentation was well done. These students are far away from the mainland and this is the first time we've heard about the Parliament and its structure. The students now have an idea of what is really happening inside the Parliament house." Sireli Ratu, Head Teacher – Kabara District School.

Conclusion

The project remains on track to deliver its activities as envisaged in the original project document, the Results and Resources Framework and the Annual Workplan for 2018.

At the end of Quarter 1, the project delivery was at 14% against its agreed annual budget. It is expected that the utilization will increase in the latter part of the second quarter after the next parliament sittings.

A number of activities are currently on hold until Parliament is dissolved when opportunities for staff professional development will increase. Additionally, funding has been set aside to ensure that a thorough and in-depth induction programme can be implemented by FPSP II following the election.

This reporting quarter witnessed the first parliament sitting for 2018 while the project continued to implement activities benefiting both staff and standing committees. In particular, the work of the project is having direct impact on the work of the Parliament Committees with their project support being noted by MPs when tabling reports in Parliament.

As mentioned earlier, 2018 is election year for Fiji and the political environment will have implications on project implementation. While the election date has not been confirmed, and there is still uncertainty on when exactly it will take place, the project continues to engage closely with the Fiji Parliament leadership to plan for possible activities during the recess period and the post-election period.

An initiative now being pursued by the project as part of efforts to promote citizen learning and interest around the roles and functions of parliaments, is the parliament internship opportunity for students at the University of the South Pacific's School of Government, Development Studies and International Affairs. Discussions are at initial stages but positive so far and it is envisaged that an arrangement will be in place by the next reporting quarter.

Looking ahead into Quarter two, a number of activities are currently planned for the period April-June. These include: south-south / attachment of parliament secretariat staff to other parliaments; capacity development training of staff on committees; as well as specifically tailored trainings for staff during the dissolution period; ongoing technical assistance to PAC and various other Standing Committees; and seminars on parliamentary procedures to CSOs and the civil service.

Annex 1:

Financial Summary for the period: 01 January – 31 March 2018

<p><i>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.</i></p>		
Support provided to Committee Chairs and MPs	ACTIVITY 1.1	\$ 5,748.96
Assistance provided to committee staff and committee services	ACTIVITY 1.2	\$ 771.82
Support provided to the work of committees	ACTIVITY 1.3	\$ 44,875.81
<p><i>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.</i></p>		
Skills development provided to MPs	ACTIVITY 2.1	\$ -
Assistance provided to staff of the Parliament Secretariat	ACTIVITY 2.2	\$ -
Support to the organisation and management of Parliament and parliamentary bodies	ACTIVITY 2.3	\$ 13,833.73
<p><i>Output 3: Parliamentary outreach and citizen engagement have expanded to include traditionally excluded groups, such as women and youth, and reach remote areas.</i></p>		
Support provided to parliamentary outreach	ACTIVITY 3.1	\$ 11,708.23
Assistance provided to citizen groups to engage with parliament	ACTIVITY 3.2	\$ -
Support to MPs and civil servants to better understand the representation function of parliament	ACTIVITY 3.3	\$ -
Effective technical advisory services and project implementation & Direct Project Costs	ACTIVITY 4.0	\$ 59,096.07
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (USD)		\$136,034.62

Note – These are draft figures taken from UNDP's internal ATLAS system in order to provide an overview of project expenditure. Full expenditure details will be provided in line with any contract agreements.