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Fiji Parliament Support Project

Annual Report

2015

Prepared for the Project Steering Committee

Funded by:



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Message from the Project Team

The Fiji Parliament Support Project (FPSP) is pleased to present its official second annual report. The FPSP is a three year project designed to provide support to the Parliament of Fiji in two inter-linked phases¹. The project, currently in its second phase is supporting the Parliament to undertake its legislative, oversight and representation functions.

In 2015, the project operated on a budget of **US\$966,006.50** with a delivery **US\$931,526.75 (96%)** as of 31st December 2015.



FPSP Project Team from (L-R): Adelle Khan, Nanise Saune-Qaloewai, Dyfan Jones

The project is indeed grateful for the support of the Speaker of the Fiji Parliament, Dr. Jiko Luveni, Members of Fiji Parliament, Parliament Secretary General Viniana Namosimalua and all the Fiji Parliament secretariat staff for their willingness to partner and engage with the project and its activities. This support has contributed significantly to the impact and sustainability of the activities implemented by the project throughout the year.

The project would also like to express its sincere appreciation to our funding partners, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), European Union, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and Government of Japan for their ongoing support in 2015.

Finally, a special thank you to the Parliament of New Zealand, the Victoria Parliament and Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships programme for their ongoing support to the project and their ability to mobilise experts and resource people at short notice to assist with the project's implementation.

¹ The first phase from January-September 2014 provided support to the Government of Fiji and the Fiji Parliament as it prepared for the resumption of parliamentary democracy. The second phase of support started soon after the national election on 17th September 2014 and will continue until December 2016.

The Fiji Parliament Project – At a Glance

During the initial stages of the project in 2014, the focus of the project was largely ‘Parliament Creation’ by providing limited infrastructure support for the construction of the main parliament chamber and committees rooms and to facilitate the work of Hansard, technical assistance in the drafting of the Parliamentary Standing Orders and provision of advice and initial capacity building for the Secretariat and MPs. The Fiji parliament that was elected in 2014 was a new institution. Over 90% of the secretariat staff were new and had never been in a parliament before. Over 90% of the MPs elected were new and had never sat in Parliament before. This was a new institution and the project focus was to try and ensure that the Parliament was ready to operate following the election.

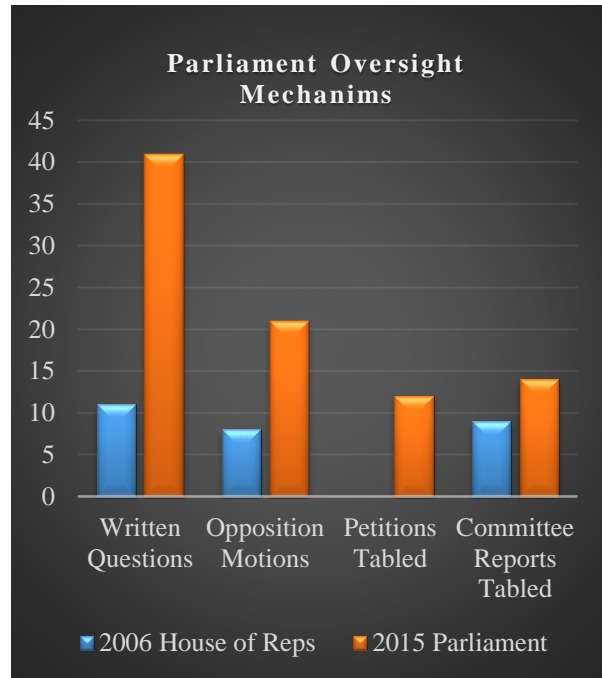
In 2015, the Fiji Parliament Support Project moved this initial ‘Parliament creation’ phase to providing support in strengthening the institution. The project continued to be the first port of call for technical assistance and advice by the Fiji Parliament throughout 2015.

This report will outline the main activities undertaken by the project during 2015. The project monitors feedback from these individual activities. However, the impact of these activities in contributing to having a Parliament that fulfils its legislative, oversight and representation functions is more challenging to measure. On occasion, the project has brought in outside short term expertise to address immediate gaps, but much energy, time and funding has been spent focussing on capacity building of MPs and staff to try and ensure that the project activities have a sustainable impact. Although the work of the parliament may be judged on the ‘political’ issues being played out within the institution, the project has attempted to ensure that the mechanisms to provide effective legislative scrutiny, executive oversight and representation are functioning with MPs capacitated in understanding the mechanisms available. Their desire to utilise the mechanisms available is then a matter for individual MPs and party causes and will depend on many factors that are outside the control of this project.

Although the issue of attribution is relevant, it is useful at the end of the second year of the project to review the way that the Parliament is functioning as an institution and how MPs are utilising the parliamentary mechanisms available. The project is fully aware that many factors, not least political factors, will impact on perceptions of effectiveness of the Parliament in fulfilling its roles. However, below are some of the statistics collated as to the functioning of the Fiji Parliament for the 2015 calendar year (the first full year that a Parliament in Fiji operated since 2005).

Between January and December 2015, the Fiji Parliament sat for 42 sitting days. Throughout 2015, Parliament sittings were streamed live on the internet and broadcast live on television. A total of 38 Bills were tabled in Parliament and 32 Bills were enacted in 2015.

In undertaking its oversight functions, in 2015, a total of 220 oral questions² with notice were asked in Parliament. A total of 582 supplementary questions³ were also asked. These figures compare with 80 oral questions and 120 supplementary questions asked in 2006 House of Representative⁴. In terms of utilising other oversight mechanisms, a total of 41 written questions were tabled and 21 motions by Opposition MPs were moved in 2015. These figures compare with 11 and 8 for the 2006 House of Representatives. A total of 12 petitions were tabled in 2015 compared to ‘zero’ in 2006 House of Representatives. The number of petitions tabled in 2015, and the fact that for the first time in Fiji citizens are utilising a mechanisms to directly raise their issues with Parliament, is an indication that citizens are keen to be involved in the work of parliament and get their issues on the agenda of Parliament. A total of 14 Parliament Committee reports were tabled in 2015 compared to 9 in the 2006 House of Representatives.



The national Budget was debated and approved in the sitting 16-20 November 2015. The 2015 budget debate was the first time since 2005, that the Fiji national budget was fully scrutinized by Parliament in detail. The two Opposition parties had boycotted the Committee of Supply and Third Reading stages of the process in 2014. In scrutinising the national budget in November 2015, approximately 13 hours of parliamentary time was spent on the second reading (general budget debate) with a further 24 hours of parliamentary time spent scrutinising each budget heading one by one during the Committee of Supply stage. A total of 88 amendments were moved by the

² **Question Time** is an opportunity for MPs to question government ministers on matters for which they are responsible. Question Time is a process in which government is held to account and is held most sitting days.

³ **Supplementary Questions** are questions that are asked following the posing of the original questions and must be on the same subject as the original question.

⁴ The last Parliament sat in 2006 before the 2006 December Coup. Parliament did not sit from December 2006 – 5 October 2014. In 2006, Fiji had a bicameral parliament (upper and lower house).

Opposition during the Committee of Supply stage although the only amendment accepted by the Parliament was an ‘editorial’ amendment moved by the Government.

Throughout 2015, Parliamentary Committees held a total of 206 meetings. It was a busy year for the Law, Justice and Human Rights Committee. This Committee held 77 meetings.

In 2015, most of the Bills tabled in Parliament were moved under Standing Order 51⁵ where the mover of the Bill requests Parliament to expedite the legislative process. The motion under SO51 also specifies if the Bill is to be referred to a Standing Committee and if so which Committee. Most of the Bills tabled in 2015 moved under SO 51 were referred to the Standing Committee on Law, Justice and Human Rights. It is for this reason that the number of meetings for Law, Justice and Human Rights standing Committee is so high compared to the other committees.



The other committee met less frequently in 2015 although when these committees did meet, they were mostly engaged in undertaking their oversight role in terms of holding Government to account.

Throughout 2015, during committee meetings, the public and civil society continued to participate through appearing before committees for the purpose of providing evidence and information.

The principle of considering gender equality when undertaking committee work as required under SO110 (2)⁶, has been challenging to effectively implement due to a lack of capacity on this issue.

⁵ **Standing Order 51:** Motion for Bill to proceed without delay.

⁶ **Standing Order 110 (2)** states “Where a committee conducts an activity listed in clause (1), the committee shall ensure that full consideration will be given to the principle of gender equality so as to ensure all matters are considered

UNDP, through the project, will be looking to work with the Parliament Committees to provide additional support in this regard during 2016.

The Civic Education and Media Unit of the Fiji Parliament with support from the project continues to roll out of the Community Engagement Strategy with the objective of raising the profile of Parliament, educating, informing and encouraging community involvement with Parliament. In particular a total of 23 *Meet the Speaker Program* events and 58 *Parliament Bus* activities were organised in schools, villages, towns and communities around the country. This program involves the Speaker and the Civic Education and Media Unit of the Parliament of Fiji travelling around the country to meet the public and provide information on the Speaker’s role in Parliament and how the Parliament works.

<i>Programme</i>	<i>School</i>	<i>Communities</i>	<i>Town/Cities</i>	<i>Est. Audience Reached</i>
<i>Meet the Speaker</i>	17	6	0	6731
<i>Parliament Bus</i>	24	30	4	8147

Generally, as an institution, the Fiji Parliament is now operating as an institution. Parliament has a 12-month sitting timetable, bills are table, debated and approved, the Standing Committees are up and running, Hansard reports are being produced, the work of Parliament is publicised and proceedings during Parliament sittings are covered in-depth in the media. In this sense, the Fiji parliament as an institution is now operating effectively.

However, as will usually be the case in a highly political and politicised environment such as a legislature, there are differing opinions on whether the Parliament is fulfilling its legislative, oversight and representation functions effectively. The political situation in Fiji remains polarised and there is no political dialogue between opposing political factions outside the formal Parliament arena. There is no political culture of cross party dialogue or discussions. Other organisations have been involved in promoting dialogue between the whips and the project has also played a role in facilitating cross party dialogue between the whips. However, this has not been replicated at

with regard to the impact and benefit on both men and women equally.” In general what this means is that any of the six Parliamentary Standing Committees when undertaking their work, whether it be examining bills and subordinate legislations or undertaking an oversight inquiry, must consider the matter that is before them and its impact and benefits on both men and women.

leadership level. This has led to acrimony and Parliament becoming an arena for high political drama of walkouts and boycotts.

In working in this highly political environment and in working with all actors in this arena (MPs from all parties, the Speaker, the secretariat staff), the project is constantly assessing ensuring that activity implementation is balanced and to ensure that the perception of UNDP's neutrality is maintained. Every effort is made by the project to ensure that activities and the approach to implementation benefits all political parties equally in Parliament. The neutral role that UNDP can play in assisting transition in Fiji can be seen when the project is approached by MPs from both sides as a possible facilitator to instigate dialogue between parties. Although this role can be time consuming and challenging for the project, the impact of successful implementation outweighs the potential risks. An example of this is the role the project played in facilitating discussions and eventual agreement between the party caucuses to ensure that there was cross party agreement on time spent in parliament scrutinizing the national budget.

Intervention

The project is designed as outlined in the FPSP project document, has an overall objective, a specific objective, expected outcomes and project activities.

a. Overall Objective

The overall objective is to contribute to the transition to democracy and the rule of law in Fiji.

b. Specific Objectives

To contribute to the preparation of the Fiji Parliament for its resumption in 2014 and to ensure that the systems and processes are in place to provide for a parliament that can efficiently and effectively undertake its legislative, oversight and representative roles, with a view to strengthening good governance and development outcomes in Fiji.

c. Expected Outcomes

Outcome 1: The re-established Parliament of Fiji has the capacity to effectively scrutinize draft laws, oversee the executive branch of government and represent citizens;

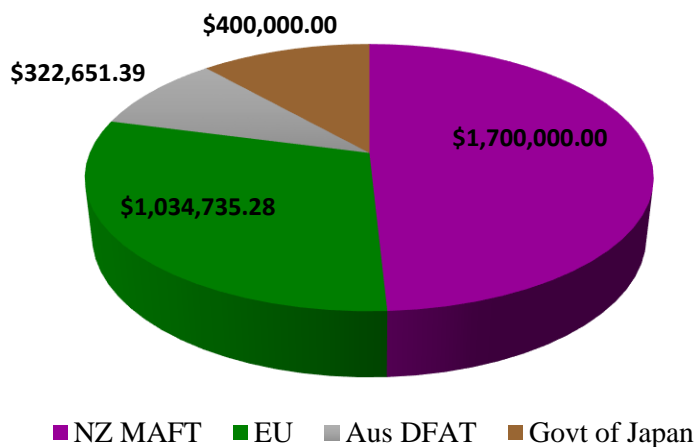
Outcome 2: The Parliament of Fiji is recognised as an inclusive place for dialogue and a venue that reflects the interests of all citizens.

d. Project Activities

Activity 1: Support the establishment and capacity building of the Parliament of Fiji to effectively scrutinise legislation, oversee the executive and represent citizens.

Activity 2: Support the Parliament of Fiji to foster inclusive dialogue processes and the active engagement of citizens.

Fiji Parliament Support Project Funding for 2014 – 2016 (USD\$) - not inclusive of in-kind contributions



Highlights of Key Achievements for 2015

The following list of achievements by the Fiji Parliament Support Project in the second year is not an exhaustive list but rather highlights some of the key activities and achievements of the project in 2015. A more comprehensive list of activities undertaken by the project throughout 2015 is available in the quarterly progress reports which can be obtained from the UNDP Fiji Parliament Support Project Team.

Activity 1: Support the establishment and capacity building of the Parliament of Fiji to effectively scrutinise legislation, oversee the executive and represent citizens.

Output 1.1 - Parliament as an Institution Strengthened

Activity 1.1: Infrastructure and Hardware Support provided.

No activities scheduled for 2015 as this activity was largely completed when establishing the Parliament in 2014.

Activity 1.1.2: Capacity Development provided to Parliament Secretariat and Secretary General:

Under this activity the project document outlines that the focus of the project should be on supporting the Office of the Secretary General in providing professional development and mentoring for Parliament Secretariat staff to strengthen their capacity to give procedural advice and to provide support to Members of Parliament. To achieve this, throughout 2015, the following capacity development activities were organised for parliamentary staff through the Office of the Secretary General.

Technical assistance and procedural advice during the Parliament sittings throughout 2015.

In 2015, the Fiji Parliament met in February, March, May, August, September, October and November for a period of one to two weeks each in these months. For all of these 2015 parliament sittings, the project facilitated the placements of Parliament Procedural Experts, Wayne Tunnecliffe, former Clerk to the Parliament of Victoria and Debra Angus, former Deputy



Wayne Tunnecliffe providing advice to the Speaker and SG during May Parliament sitting

Clerk in the New Zealand House of Representatives, to continue to provide mentoring support and procedural advice to the Speaker, Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General. The main role of the Procedural Experts is to bring international experiences of how other Parliaments deals with similar procedural matters when they arise.

Many significant procedural issues arose during 2015. Some of these issues included the need for the project procedural experts to provide advice on: parliamentary processes for approval of international treaties and conventions, procedures on how parliament debates committee reports, how Members are able to make making personal statements, dealing and ruling on matters raised as Points of Privileges and Points of Order and closed sittings of Parliament.

The budget debates held on 16-20 November 2015 was the first time since 2005 that Fiji national budget was fully scrutinized by Parliament in detail as the Opposition had boycotted the Committee of Supply and Third Reading stages of the process in 2014. Following an agreement reached by the whips which was facilitated by the UNDP project, the Parliament agreed to extend sitting hours to ensure that the budget was fully scrutinized and approved by the end of the sitting week. Approx. 13 hours of parliamentary time were spent on the second reading (general budget debate) with a further 24 hours of parliamentary time spent scrutinizing each budget heading one by one during the Committee of Supply stage. A total of 88 amendments were moved by the Opposition during the Committee of Supply stage although the only amendment accepted by the Parliament was an ‘editorial’ amendment moved by the Government. To prepare the senior parliament staff and speaker for this complicated procedural process mock sessions were held by in the chamber before the budget week to how to deal with the different stages of the process, how to deal with the amendments and possible procedural scenarios that could arise,.

Looking forward to 2016, at the request of the Fiji Parliament, the project will be reducing the emphasis it has placed on providing procedural advice during Parliament sittings. The Parliament feels it has developed enough capacity and confidence in-house to be able to deal with the procedural issues that arise. For the project, this is a positive sign that the project has directly contributed to the building of capacity in-house as a result of the ongoing mentoring and sharing of international comparative experiences through the placement of procedural experts since parliament’s re-establishment in September 2014. It should be remembered that pre-October 2014, those who are now dealing with these procedural issues when they arise had never worked in a Parliament or been involved in this type of work.

South-South Exchange for Female Legislative Clerks from Fiji, Solomon Islands and Tonga Parliaments:

A meeting of Parliamentary Clerks from Fiji, Tonga and Solomon Island to share and discuss experiences and lessons learned was convened on 14 – 16 April in Tonga. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss specific challenges faced by Clerks / Secretary Generals in Pacific Parliaments.



L-R: Taeasi Sanga, former Clerk, National Parliament of Solomon Islands; Gloria Pole’o, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly of Tonga; Viniana Namosimalua, Secretary General to the Fiji Parliament

The topics and issues discussed included:

- The role of the Parliament Clerk;
- Systems and processes for developing an effective working relationship between the Clerk and Speaker;
- Addressing specific challenges for secretariat staff with regards to political and traditional power structures in Pacific Parliaments.

Capacity Development of the Secretariat Staff:

A number of training sessions and training attachments was facilitated by the project throughout the year either in-country or overseas. The broad objectives of these trainings and placements was to expose them to the roles and responsibility of their respective counterparts in the other jurisdictions and to strengthen their capacities in carrying out their roles and responsibilities in the Fiji Parliament. The list of trainings and placements below is not an exhaustive list. For full details of these activities, please refer to the quarterly progress reports.

- **February 2015, SUVA.** Training workshop for Committee Staff;
- **30 March to 03 April, 2015. WELLINGTON.** Training attachments for the Deputy Secretary General and Director of Legislative Services with the New Zealand Parliament;
- **July 2015. WELLINGTON.** Committee Clerk training attachments to the Parliament of Victoria and New Zealand Parliament;
- **11 – 12 August, 2015. SUVA.** Two day training event for the Fiji Parliament Secretariat staff to build the capacity of staff to better understand the role of Parliament and the role of Parliament Secretariat staff.
- **September 2015, CARDIFF.** Two week training attachment for the senior ICT officer to the National Assembly for Wales.

➤ **24 – 25 September 2015, MELBOURNE.**

Parliamentary Librarian attended the Association of Parliamentary Libraries of Australasia (APLA) Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Melbourne, Australia as a key note speaker;

➤ **September/October 2015, SUVA.** On the job training provided to the Hansard team by Managers of Hansard from the New Zealand Parliament and Parliament of Victoria;

➤ **06 October, 2015. SUVA.** Procedure workshop for Library Staff;

➤ **19 – 23 October 2015. MELBOURNE.** Training attachment for Table Office Staff with the Parliament of Victoria;

➤ **06 November 2015. SUVA.** Mock Chamber sessions for Speaker and senior staff on budget processes;

➤ **10 November 2015. SUVA.** Research Techniques workshop for Library and Research Staff;

➤ **30 November – 04 December 2015. LONDON.** 64th Westminster Seminar on Parliamentary Practice and Procedures, London. The Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General, Government MP and Opposition Whip attended the CPA UK's flagship capacity-building programme for newly appointed members of parliament and procedural/committee Clerks from across the Commonwealth.

➤ **10 – 11 December 2015. SUVA.** Professional Development Seminar for Committee Staff.



Former Deputy Clerk of the NZ House of Representative, Debra Angus, led the training for Fiji Parliament secretariat staff

Activity 1.1.3: Support to the formulation of parliamentary procedures, processes and policies.

As per the project document, the project is also designed to provide support to the Parliament to assist in putting in place key documents and policies that legislatures ought to have in order to operate effectively. In ensuring such key documents are in place, and reflect international best practice, the project assisted the parliament in the development and review of the following procedures, processes and policies:

Review and Collation of Hansard Policies from other Parliaments: At the request of Secretary General, the project facilitated the collation of Hansard Policies from other Parliament and worked with the Hansard Department to draw up a draft policy for Fiji Parliament.

Working with Party caucuses to Review Parliamentary Procedures and Standing Orders: On 15 and 19 April, the project provided assistance in the process of reviewing Parliamentary Procedures and Standing Orders. Separate sessions were held by the project with each party caucus. The review included discussions on way the Parliament has worked to date - taking stock of what has worked well and what needs to be changed, an analysis of the Standing Orders chapter by chapter with specific focus on sittings of parliament, questions, motions, rules of debate, legislative procedures, committees and approval of international treaties. The sessions were meant to provide the caucuses with a facilitated discussion to assist them in drawing up their formal responses to the Standing Orders review.

Parliament Strategic Plan (Draft): Upon the request of the Fiji Parliament, UNDP provided an expert in Parliament Strategic Planning to work with the Fiji Parliament Director Corporate to develop a 5 year strategic plan for the Fiji Parliament. The draft plan is currently being reviewed and finalised by the Parliament Secretariat.

MP Handbook Developed (Draft) and MPs Guide to Standing Committee (Draft): A draft Handbook for MPs was been developed by the project. The *MPs Handbook* is intended to provide MPs with an understanding of their roles and responsibilities as an MP and to understand their role in the law making process, oversight and representation. The *MPs Guide to Standing Committee* outlines the role and the work of Parliament Standing Committees and elaborates on the Standing Orders in terms of processes and procedures that Committees should follow. Both the Handbooks are finalised but have yet to printed and distributed as Parliament is currently undertaking a review of the Standing Orders. Once this process has completed it will be clear if changes need to be made to these handbooks before printing and distribution.

Output 1.2 – Members of Parliament knowledgeable about participatory law-making, oversight processes and representation.

Activity 1.2.1: Capacity development for newly elected members of Parliament developed and implemented.

After an absence of parliament of more than seven years, newly elected members were provided with capacity development in order to fulfil their duties. In addition to the initial induction

programme implemented in 2014 following the election, the UNDP FPSP project implemented a



Media Skills Training – Ian Galloway, NZ MP, sharing hints with Minister Vuniwaqa on how to deal with media to during the Media Skills One-on-One session

programme of professional development for MPs. The capacity development activities undertaken by the project were broad ranging from induction trainings for new MPs to learning about the duties of Parliament and their work as parliamentarians to professional development programmes with a strong emphasis on cross cutting issues such as the issue of gender in governance, promoting human rights and on supporting MPs in their

legislative, representative and oversight roles. The topics for professional development programmes were reflective of the priorities of the MPs as identified in a needs survey undertaken by the project with the Parliamentarians.

The following are highlights of the professional development program undertaken in 2015.

26 May 2015, SUVA. Representation and Constituency Relations. The workshop provided an overview from other Parliaments as to how MPs are able to effectively ‘represent’ and are in constant dialogue with constituents.

31 August – 04 September 2015, SUVA. Media Skills Training: With many Fiji MPs being new to public life and due to the regular interactions between MPs and the media, a ½ day workshop for MPs was organised to cover some of the key issues of media skills including preparing for media interviews and delivering interviews for radio, television and print media. Following the ½ day workshop, four days of one-on-one trainings were organised for individual MPs with the trainers to practice their media interviews skills and techniques. The workshop was facilitated by Marc Gage, a Canadian Media and Communication specialist and Honourable Ian Lees-Galloway, a New Zealand MP who provide insight on the issues from the viewpoint of a current Member of Parliament.

7th – 11 September 2015, SUVA. *Public Speaking Training:* A workshop to cover some of the key skills needed for effective public speaking and Parliamentary speech making was also organised by the UNDP FPSP. Similar to the Media training, a ½ day training was organised and the training agenda included tips on speech preparation, speech delivery in different public settings and including some key differences between speaking at public events and in parliament. Following the ½ workshop, one on one sessions between the individual MPs and trainers were organised and included practicing public speaking, delivering a parliamentary speech, videoing and playback of the speeches and feedback sessions on the speech and delivery. The workshop was facilitated by Francesca Mold, a former journalist and former adviser and Chief of Staff to the New Zealand Leader of the Opposition. In addition, two New Zealand MPs, Honorable Carmel Sepuloni and Honorable Nuk Korako were also part of the training team to provide insight on the issues from the viewpoint of a current Member of Parliament.

24 – 25 November 2015, SIGATOKA. *Fiji Parliament Members Retreat:* At the Members Retreat organized by the Secretariat, UNDP was responsible for providing the training content for the retreat. In this regard, UNDP held briefing sessions on the following topics for MPs and their caucus staff:

- Seminar for MPs on effectively Utilising social media;
- Briefing for MPs on the Research and Library services available and techniques for research

28 September – 09 October 2015. CANADA. *Canada Parliamentary Study Tour:* With the vast majority of MPs new to Parliament, and the development a “culture of parliamentary democracy” a priority for the project, FPSP continues to promote opportunities for Members of Parliament and staff to be exposed to different parliaments and political systems that are similar in structure, rules and customs to those of the Parliament of



The Fiji Parliament delegation with the Nova Scotia Parliament Speaker

Fiji. To this end, the project supported a four member delegation to undertake a study visit of the provincial legislatures of Canada. The three provincial legislatures were Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia Legislative Assemblies. The latter two are smaller provinces with parliaments with a similar number of staff and MPs as in Fiji, allowing for a more relevant comparison. Ontario was chosen as a venue for the tour because it has the resources to provide good opportunities for learning from foreign delegations. The Study Tour provided an opportunity for the delegation to observe and interact with MPs and staff from three provincial parliaments.

Continued Induction of New Members of Parliament: The project throughout the year continued to provide induction briefings for new Members of Parliament sworn in 2015. Three MPs were sworn in during 2015. The briefings focused on the role of parliament in lawmaking, oversight and representation, the role of Government and Opposition and briefing on the Standing Orders.

Roles and Responsibilities of Public Accounts Committee (PAC): During 2015, the project facilitated opportunities for members of the PAC to participate in international conferences to network with other PAC's across the commonwealth, to learn international best practice on how to increase their effectiveness and efficiency in scrutinizing public expenditure from budgeting and planning to tracking performances. PAC members attended the following meetings:



The Fiji Parliament delegation in Malta

- **15 - 18 April, 2015. ADELAIDE.** *Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committees (ACPAC).*
- **01 – 04 June, 2015. MALTA.** *Effective, Independent and Transparent Public Accounts Committees for Robust Public Financial Oversight, CPA.*
- **25 – 26 August, 2015. WELLINGTON.** *Public Accounts Committees of Pacific Region from, Parliament of New Zealand.*
- **6 - 8 October, 2015. INDONESIA.** *Sixth Global Conference of Parliamentarians against Corruption, Yogyakarta.*

Activity 1.2.2: Research and Analysis of the Parliamentary Service strengthened.

Throughout 2015, the project has continued to facilitate opportunities to strengthen the research and analysis services of Parliament. In supporting these efforts, the following activities were facilitated:

Gender Analysis Support to Public Accounts Committee. The Fiji Parliament Standing Orders stipulate that Parliament Committees must in their work consider the impact of policies and proposals on both men and women. To assist the Public Accounts Committee to consider these issues and provide research and information the Committee as it developed its report the project requested support from UN Women to identify an expert to undertake this analysis. The consultant, produced a report and some of the findings from this work was presented to the Committee by UN Women.

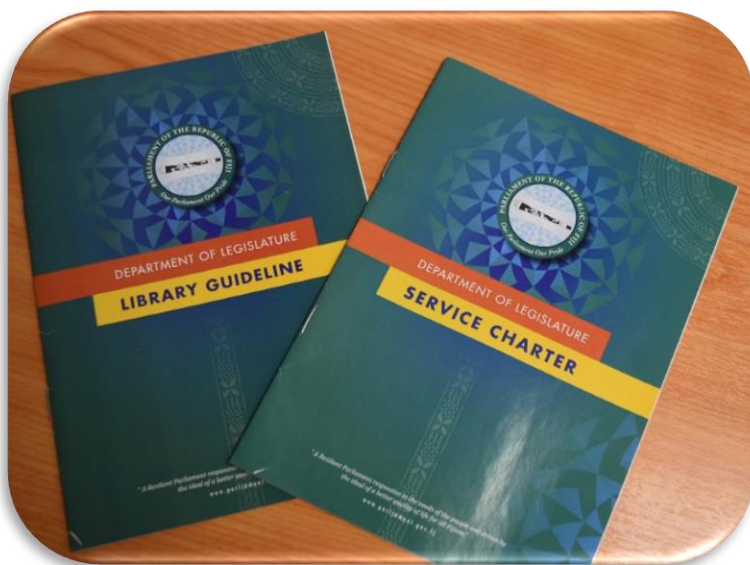


Nicolas Burniat, UNWOMEN providing gender analysis to PAC

Development of Standard Operating Procedures for the Research and Library Unit. With the secondment of the Senior Librarian from the Parliament of New Zealand for 3 months, working alongside the staff of Library and Research services of the Fiji Parliament, a number of operating

procedures were developed to enable Parliament to effectively support and respond to the needs of its clients. These included the development of the following:

- Library Guidelines – on the provision of services, and how to use the Research and Library service.
- Library Service Charter – detailing levels of service, priorities, and the function of the *Research and Library Unit*.



Procurement of new resources for Library and Research services: The project facilitated the procurement of new books, journals and online subscription to strengthen the capacity of Library and Research services to undertake its role in providing improved services to Members of parliament, caucus staff and parliament secretariat.

Support under this activity is intended to strengthen the research and analysis services of the Research and Library Services of Parliament, and will be focus area for the project in 2016 with the project providing support to facilitate the development of research and briefing papers on Bills and matters under consideration by Committees.

Activity 1.2.3: Capacity building for MPs and Committees to address relevant human development issues.

MPs and Standing Committees should play a central role in the examining of bills and in providing financial oversight. In this regard, the project continues to provide training for MPs on the legislative process, training and mentoring for committee staff, briefings on specific subjects covered by the committees and expert advisors to Parliamentary Committees when considering bills, petitions and any issued assigned to them by Parliament.

To provide MPs with better understanding of key national and international development issues, the project implemented a number of activities throughout the year:

25 May 2015, SUVA: Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Post-2015 Development.

This workshop outlined key issues around development and relates it to the discussion on MDGs and the post 2015 development agenda.

08 – 12 June, 2015, CORAL COAST. Fiji Parliamentarians Forum on Key Development Issues.

The forum provided a platform for discussion on key development issues in Fiji and also highlight

the key role of Parliament in engaging with these development issues. Topics covered included population, children's rights, education, health, poverty reduction, climate change, youth development, energy and disaster risk resilience.



Fiji Parliamentarians Forum on the SDGs and Key Development Issues, 8 – 11 June

24 – 25 November 2015, SIGATOKA.

Fiji Parliament Members Retreat: At the Members Retreat organized by the Secretariat,

UNDP provided a briefing session on the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and Climate

Change Financing. The session focused on how GEF funds work and the different streams of funding related to climate change that are utilised in Fiji and the Pacific.

30 November – 01 December, 2015. EL SAVADOR. Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) Annual Parliamentary Forum: *'The Role of Parliamentarians in Support of Peace and Security'*. The project facilitated the participation of one government and one opposition MP at 37th session of PGA's Annual Parliamentary Forum, hosted by the Parliament of El Salvador. The subject matter of the 2015 Annual Forum was *'The Role of Parliamentarians in Support of Peace and Security'* with an overriding objective of promoting universality and implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and, separately, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC).

Policy Briefings for Committees: The project facilitated a specific briefing for the Parliament's Standing Committee on Economic Affairs on some of the key economic and development issues facing Fiji.

Activity 1.2.4: Technical support and capacity development provided in law-making and oversight for Select Committees and the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

Technical Advisers / Enquiry support for Parliament Committees: With the support of the Parliament of Victoria, a committee management system was developed to assist the Head of the Committees Division to track and log committee meetings and committee work. Through the support provided by the project, tentative committee schedules for 2015 were confirmed and finalized. A number of templates and operating procedures were also developed to contribute to the effective functioning of Committees.

Public Submission to Committee review Employment Relations Promulgation (amendment)

Bill: In partnership with International Labour Organisation (ILO), the project facilitated and part funded the attendance of an ILO Labour Law technical expert to provide a formal oral submission to the Standing Committee on Law, Justice and Human Rights in its review of employment relations legislation. The Specialist provided general views on the bill as well as specific views on clauses which were in line with International Labour Standards and Labour law and views on clauses that the committee could consider amending.

Technical Advisor to Public Accounts Committee: At the request of PAC, a former MP and Chair of Australian Public Accounts and Audit Committee, was engaged by the Project to continue to provide advisory support, briefings and on demand support and technical advice to the PAC

Chair, PAC Members and PAC secretariat staff. With the support of the PAC Advisor, the 2007 – 2009 reports were reviewed, analytical and summary notes on the content for consideration by the Committee prepared. Work in this area has been impacted by recent political developments in Fiji and the Public Accounts Committee was not able to meet during the last few months of 2015.

Advisory Services to Special Committees on Emoluments: In July, Parliament passed a resolution that a Special Committee on Emoluments be formed to review the remunerations of the President, Prime Minister, other Ministers and Assistant Ministers, the Leader of Opposition, the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and Members of Parliament for the Parliament of Fiji. At short notice, the project was not in a position to respond to the request of the Committee to provide an expert to provide advice on the levels of remunerations, but FPSP was able to respond to the request for administrative and clerking support for the Committee. However, for political reasons, the report of the Committee has not yet been tabled despite the Parliament resolution to report back to Parliament on its findings by 24th August 2015.

27 May 2015, SUVA. *Effectiveness of Parliamentary Committees.* A one day briefing session was organized for Members to provide an opportunity to review the work of the Parliament Standing Committee to date and to expose them to the experiences of MPs from other countries and the way in which their respective Parliament Committees operate. Experiences from other parliaments as it relates to Committees interaction with citizens and the media, ensuring gender issues are considered and reflected in the work of the committees, the leadership role of the Chair in planning and coordinating the committee's work, were covered in the briefing sessions. Resource persons for this briefing included, a Member of Parliament from New Zealand and Senator from the Australian Parliament.

Output 2.1: Members of Parliament are knowledgeable about coalition-building and negotiation skills and actively engage in dispute resolution.

Activity 2.1.1: Caucus Support and Dialogue.

The primary focus of this activity is to support MPs and parliamentary caucuses to develop their skills in conflict mediation and dispute resolution. In particular the project should be facilitating opportunities for caucuses to learn international best practice on coalition building, effective management of caucuses and the division of work among caucus staff. Furthermore opportunities for cross party dialogue and sharing information with parliamentary committees and caucuses on how to conduct successful constituent relations should also be facilitated.

The following activities were organised in 2015 under this activity:

26 May 2015, SUVA. Constituency Relations and Representation: To expose the Members and their caucus staff to the various strategies and activities used by MPs in other countries to keep in touch with voters within a large geographical electoral constituency, the project facilitated a one day briefing bringing together MPs from other Parliaments to share first hand examples of undertaking constituency work in the context of large geographical constituencies. The sessions explored important concepts of effective representation for MPs, different ways of defining ‘constituents’ and developing strategies for interacting with constituents. Examples of different ways Members can respond to constituency issues and to be able to distinguish between individual complaints, constituency complaints and issues requiring changes in national policy or legislation was discussed at length. The resource people also shared their experience of balancing political party interest and the interests of their constituents.



Edward de Lanoy, Director of Christian Democratic Alliance Caucus, briefing with SODELPA caucus

25 - 27 May, SUVA. Political party caucus briefings on organising caucus work: With the support of the Netherlands Parliament, a Chief of Staff from one of caucuses in the Netherlands Parliament, held three separate briefings with the three party caucuses to share his experiences of organizing caucus work on behalf of his party in a Parliament elected through a similar electoral system to that of Fiji. As part of his briefings for party caucuses, the following subjects were covered: examples from Netherlands of the role and work of parliament party caucus staff members; staffing and support structures to parliament party caucuses in the Netherlands; the role of parliament party caucus staff when parliament is sitting; the role of



L-R: Alfred Ngaro, NZ MP; Eduard Lanoy, CDA Director & Senator Fawcett, Australia.

parliament party caucus staff when parliament is not sitting; and the relationship between elected Members and parliament party caucus staff.



The Fiji Parliament delegation included the Assistant Minister for Health Veena Bhatnagar, Leader of Opposition Ro Teimumu Kepa, MP Salote Radrodro, MP Jilila Kumar.

26 – 30 October 2015, TIMOR LESTE. *Women MPs Study Visit to Timor Leste:* In partnership with Fiji Women’s Forum and Asia Pacific Forum for Women, Law and Development (APWLD), the project facilitated the attendance of four women MPs on a study visit to Dili, to meet, learn and exchange with fellow women parliamentarians and women’s rights organizations from Timor

Leste. The study visit had the following objectives: to increase awareness over processes and structures that enable women’s rights perspectives and community engagement to influence policy making (particularly cross party women’s caucuses); to establish an initiative towards a collective voice of female parliamentarians to influence processes and policy in Fiji and to initiate relations between women leaders of these two countries for continuous collaboration and response to emerging issues between the two countries.

Facilitation of Whips meeting: The political situation in Fiji remains polarized and, outside the formal mechanisms, there is currently no cross party dialogue ongoing in Parliament without facilitation through the UNDP Fiji Parliament Support Project. During the year, the project therefore continued to facilitate cross-party dialogue between the party whips to encourage the development of ‘usual channels’ of communication between party caucuses.



The FPSP facilitating a meeting between Fiji First, SODELPA and NFP

Before the November Budget sitting, the project staff met the party whips separately on a number of occasions to discuss the need for agreement on parliamentary proceedings for the budget week bearing in mind the need for the budget to be fully scrutinized by Parliament but also to be approved by the end of the Parliament sitting week. Options on timings were discussed and the project staff then facilitated two meetings between Government and Opposition whips to broker

the final agreement. The agreement was adhered to by both sides and saw the Parliament sitting late into the night to allow for detailed scrutiny of the budget during Committee of Supply. The Speaker made a point of publicly thanking the whips for brokering the agreement.

Activity 2.2.1: Support for General Public Outreach.

Implementing of the Fiji Parliament Community Engagement Strategy 2015 – 2018: With the assistance of the Parliament of Victoria, a community engagement strategy was developed with four main objectives: to raise the profile of parliament, to educate, to inform and to encourage community involvement with Parliament. The community engagement strategy focuses on four themes: organizing a range of activities to engage students and youth with Parliament, aims to be a reliable source of information about Parliament for Fiji communities, including the media; organizing a range of outreach activities for communities across Fiji to connect them with the Parliament and arranging exhibits, tours and events at Parliament House.

The following activities were organized in rolling out the community engagement strategy in 2015:

Meet the Speaker Program (various locations throughout the year): The Speaker of the Parliament of Fiji travelled around the country to meet the public and inform the public of her role in a Parliament and how the parliament works.



Meet The Speaker programme – Lodon Primary School, Tailevu North.

Parliament Bus Program (location: various): The Civic Education and Media Unit of Parliament travelled the country to inform the public about the role of Parliament and how it works. The project provided technical assistance in the design of the content of the ‘Meet the Speaker’ programs and in the developing content of printed material (brochures and banners).



Workshop participants with the two Australian facilitators and chief guest, Secretary-General Mrs Viniana Namosimalua and Deputy Secretary-General Mrs Jeanette Terubea Emberson

Curriculum Development for the Ministry of Itaukei Affairs Board, 19 June: The project also contributed a chapter on “How Parliament Works” to the curriculum of the Ministry of Itaukei Affairs Aboard. The chapter on the Fijian Parliament is part of larger curriculum developed with the Itaukei Affairs Board with support from UNDP, to revise the current Leadership and Governance Modules. These modules are used by the Board to train traditional and community leaders in the fourteen provinces of Fiji.



Meet The Speaker programme – Verata Village.

Supporting Youth to interact with the legislative process, 29 May: Information and technical assistance was provided to the National Youth Council (NYC) to outline the legislative process in Parliament and options for groups to consider when wanting to interact with the legislative process. The NYC is considering options for developing a Bill that calls for the inclusion of youths in decision making processes.

Primary and Secondary School Module on “How Parliament Works”, 9 – 10 November 2015.

In its efforts to encourage greater understanding by the public of Parliament, the project in partnership with the Parliament of Victoria and Fiji Parliament, facilitated a two day training for teachers to review the draft curriculum for Primary school level on “How Parliament Works”. The draft curriculums were developed with the assistance of Victorian Parliament’s education unit



Parliament Bus Program - Lautoka

and assistant principal from Elwood Primary School. The draft curriculum were presented to 30 teachers and curriculum specialists for their review and feedback. Work on finalizing the school curriculum will continue in 2016.

Youth Parliament Fiji (YPF), 30 November – 04 December 2015.

The Parliament of the Republic of Fiji, in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the National Youth Council of Fiji with support from the UNDP hosted the Youth Parliament Fiji held 30 November – 04 December 2015. Fifty-seven youths were selected from across Fiji through a competitive process to be provided an opportunity to learn about the procedures, processes and practices that govern the working of a Parliament. In particular, the Youth Parliament experience was intended to demonstrate how Parliament is able to: (1) Debate matters of national and international concern; (2) Provide accountability for those in Government (Executive); (3) Discuss legislation in Committees and legislate in Parliament; (4) Represent citizen interests. In addition, YPF also provided a useful forum for youth parliamentarians to voice concerns and views on a range of international and national issues and convey these messages on a national platform.



Project Management and Implementation

Effective technical advisory services, project management and implementation.

As agreed in the Steering Committee in December 2014, the Project Steering Committee meets on a biannual basis.

A Project Steering Committee is set up to function as the overall management structure for the project to oversee transparency, accountability and efficiency of the project operations as well as assess opportunities, risks and political challenges and link the project to other relevant Government and development partners initiatives.

The Committee is comprised of the following:

- the UN Resident Coordinator;
- The Speaker of Parliament
- The Secretary General of Parliament.
- a representative of the EU;
- a representative of New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade;
- a representative from Japan;
- a representative from Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade;
- the Manager of the UNDP Pacific Centre;
- the Deputy Resident Representative of the UNDP Fiji Multi-country office;

As of 31st December 2015, the financial delivery of the project for the year was 96%.

Earlier in the year, the project produced two DVDs as part of UNDP's corporate requirement to document and share knowledge of best practice. The first DVD is intended for UNDP Global Parliamentary Development Practitioners. The video examines some of the project activities implemented and highlights a number of valuable lessons that were learned during the early stages of Project implementation. The second DVD is intended for the general audience and highlights the leading role UNDP played in supporting preparations for the re-establishment of Parliament.

In line with good project practice, a midterm evaluation of the project was undertaken in September 2015 and the Midterm Evaluation Report was circulated to members of the Steering Committee for their comments. The Midterm Evaluation Report was finalised and accepted by the Steering Committees members on 10th December 2015.

The Mid Term Evaluation report proposed seven recommendations of strategic areas that should be considered for inclusion in the FPSP 2016 AWP. The recommendations were: (1) Enhance its technical assistance to the Parliamentary Standing Committees; (2) Support the development of parliament's legislative plan; (3) Advise parliament on its interaction with other state institutions; (4) Explore the feasibility of Regional parliamentary information and constituency offices; (5) Strengthen parliament's research services; (6) Build capacity of parliament staff and (7) Contribute to a separate UN led initiative dedicated at top-level political dialogue.

In this regard, the 2016 Annual Work Plan (AWP) that was discussed and approved by the project steering in December 2015, takes into account the recommendations of the Mid Term Evaluation report through the activities planned and resources allocated against the planned activities. The only 2 recommendations not included were 2 and 7 as they were beyond the scope of the project although the project noted that it remained ready to support any ongoing initiatives in these areas.

Looking forward to 2016 and in light of the recommendations and interest by Members of the Steering Committee for a Phase two of the project from January 2017 onwards, the project will undertake the following steps:

- The project team to develop a concept note for Phase II of the project covering four years (January 2017 – December 2020) and circulate it to all the member of Steering Committee for their inputs and comment;
- Following feedback and discussion, develop a full project document for Phase II and circulate it to all the member of Steering Committee for their inputs;
- Funding Agreements to be in place for signature by interested donors;
- Phase II of the project to commence in January 2017.

Annex 1: Financial Summary for FPSP for the period 01 January – 31 December 2015.

Description of Activity	Expenditure (USD)
Thematic briefings for MP's	115,589.87
MP's Capacity Building	130,774.63
Parliament Outreach	60,815.88
Staff Capacity Assessments & Capacity Building	119,384.36
Parliament Committee Support	91,835.03
Promote Coalitions & Dialogue	55,437.08
Technical Advice & Project Implementation	357,689.90
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	931,526.75
Approved Budget	966,006.50
2015 Financial Delivery as a percentage	96%

NOTE: This table is taken from UNDP ATLAS finance platform and does not include the in-kind technical support provided to the project by PPP