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# Fiji Parliament Support Project Annual Report 2016

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 third and final annual report.

The FPSP is a three year project designed to provide support to the Parliament of Fiji in two inter-linked phases<sup>1</sup>. The project, currently in its second and final phase is supporting the Parliament to undertake its legislative, oversight and representation functions.

In 2016, the project operated on a budget of US\$1,109,160.03 with a delivery US\$1,053,749.12 (95%) as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016. This high financial project delivery is reflective of the high activity implementation rate that the project has achieved not only in 2016 but also in the first two years of the project.



The project is grateful for the support of the Speaker of the Fiji Parliament, Hon. Dr. Jiko Luveni, Honourable Members of the 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 was due to end in December 2016. However, at the request of UNDP, the project officially closes on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2017.

Finally, a number of the activities implemented by the project would not have been possible without the cooperation and support of other legislatures. In particular, thanks go to the Parliament of New Zealand, the Victoria Parliament, the Australian Parliament, National Assembly of Wales, Scottish Parliament and the 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.

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## The Fiji Parliament – A Summary of the Year

During the initial stages of the project in 2014, the focus of the FPSP 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 from this initial ‘Parliament creation’ phase to providing support in strengthening the newly created institution. The project continued to be the first port of call for technical assistance and advice by the Fiji Parliament throughout 2015. 2016 has seen a continuing institutionalisation of the Parliament and increasingly sustainable capacity within the Secretariat with the UNDP FPSP project continuing as a key partner for the Parliament in terms of providing support and technical assistance.

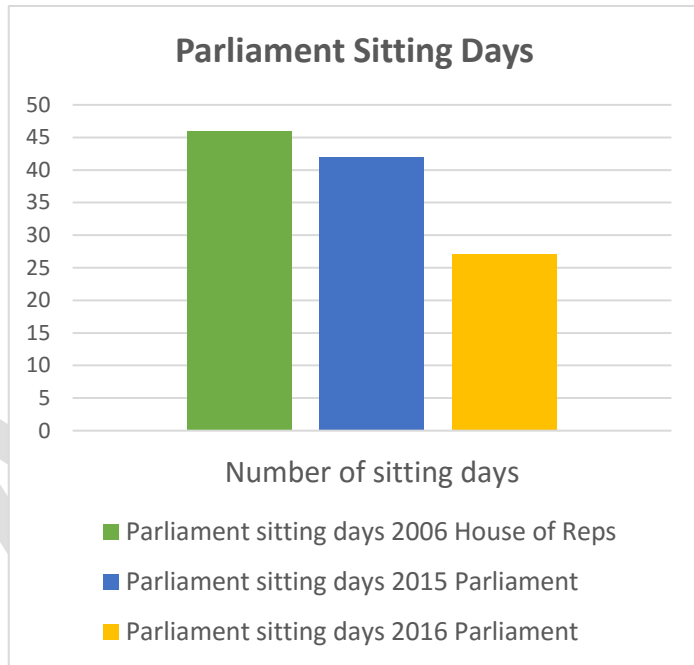
This report will outline an overview of the main activities undertaken by the project during 2016. Full and detailed lists of all activities can be found in the project’s quarterly reports that are available from UNDP. The project has continued to monitor feedback from the stakeholders on the implementation of activities has responded to feedback by being flexible in programming. However, the project recognises that while feedback to individual project inputs or activities is important to measure, it is equally important to analyse the impact that the project has had on the workings of the legislature in terms of a Parliament that is fulfilling its legislative, oversight and representation functions. While the majority of this report focuses on UNDP FPSP activities, this section of the report will focus on the issue of the functioning of the Fiji parliament in 2016.

In measuring this, there are obvious issues around attributions as well as factors beyond the control of the project or the Parliament secretariat that impact on the workings of a legislature. Parliaments are inherently political institutions with the main decisions of Parliament ultimately taken by elected representatives in the chamber and in committees.

When the project started in January 2014, the baselines were clear. There was no parliament, there were no Parliament sitting days, there were no MPs, there were almost no Parliament secretariat

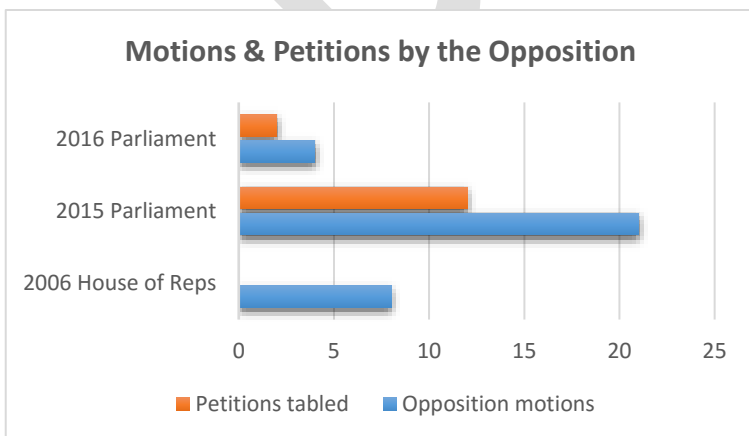
staff, there were no committees and there was no interaction between the Parliament and the people. In 2015, the project was able to establish baselines for some of the oversight, legislative and representative functions of the Parliament. A cursory comparison with the 2006 Fiji House of Representatives was possible although problematic due to the different nature of that Parliament (especially the bi-cameral nature of the legislature) and Fiji’s new Parliament.

2016 has seen an interesting shift in the functioning of the Fiji Parliament and the FPSP project has needed to be flexible and responsive to these dynamics. The Parliament has increasingly moved away from being a chamber based institution towards being a committee focussed legislature. Such an inherently important move has impacted on the way in which the Parliament considers legislation and holds Government to account. There has been a significant decline in the number of sitting days in 2016 compared to 2015 and indeed the 2006 House of Representatives.



It should be noted that Parliament operates in terms of sessions running from September to August, and therefore a calendar year comparison can at times be misleading. However, even after taking into consideration these caveats, the noticeable decline in sitting days from 42 in 2015 to only 27 in 2016 is significant.

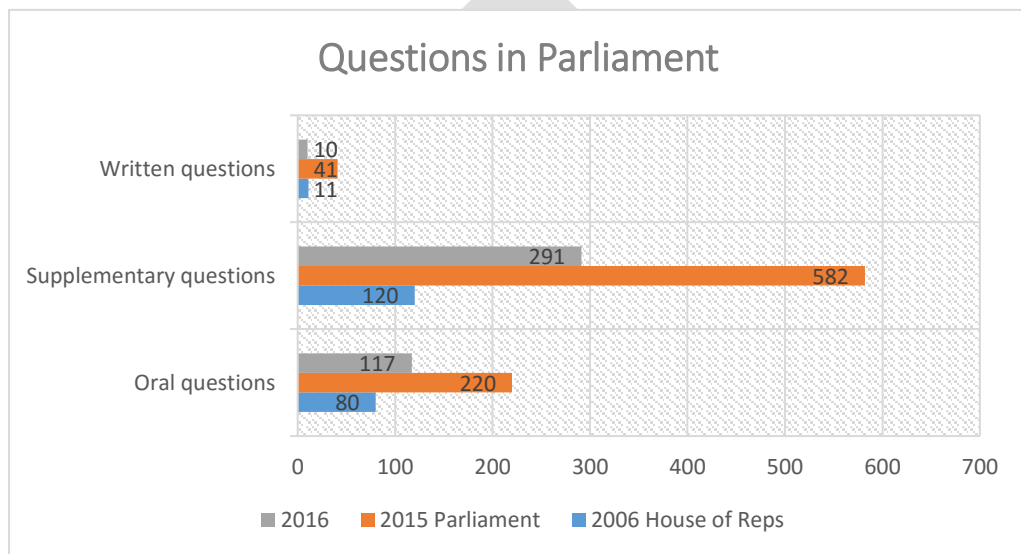
The decline in sitting days has directly impacted on some of the chamber based mechanisms used



to hold Government to account. A decline in sitting days means fewer days for MPs to ask oral questions to Ministers and fewer days upon which Opposition MPs can move motions. The statistics highlight that 2016 saw a significant decline in the use of these mechanisms. However, the decline in the number of sitting days cannot

necessarily explain all of the statistical trends. The decline in the number of petitions tabled in Parliament cannot necessarily be explained by the decrease in sittings days as MPs may introduce petitions on any sitting day and yet only 2 were tabled. Rule changes that mean that petitions are no longer automatically referred to Standing Committees may have dissuaded MPs from tabling petitions, but conversely these rule changes could have been perceived as actual incentive for MPs to present petitions since any petition tabled is now guaranteed up to 30 minutes of debate in the chamber every day regardless if it a day for Government business or Opposition business.

Equally, the number of written questions tabled by MPs declined in 2016 as compared to 2015. Once again, although the number of sitting days upon which questions can be tabled was

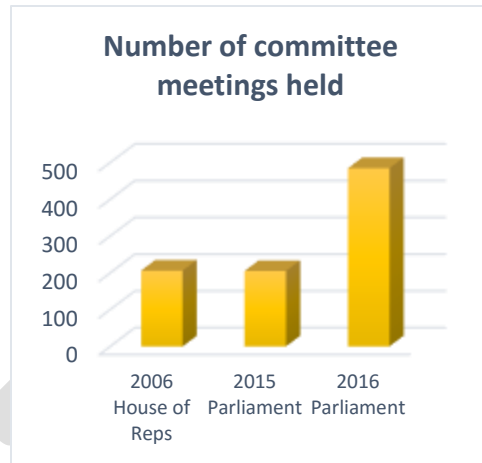


reduced, the number of written questions remains low and this remains an accountability mechanism that has not been used to its full potential by MPs in 2016<sup>2</sup>.

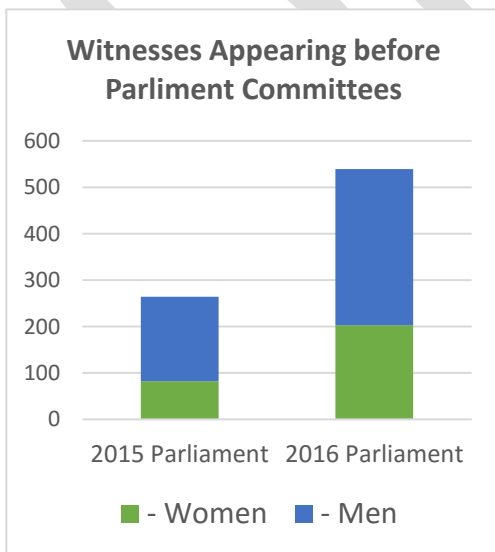
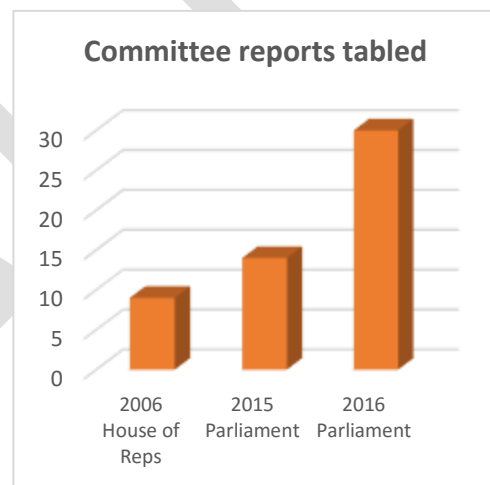
In 2016, the national budget was debated and approved by the Fiji Parliament during the first half of the year for the first time due to the change in financial year that now begins in August. While the chamber based mechanisms for oversight of the Government declined in 2016 as compared to 2015, scrutiny of the budget remained at similar levels. As there were some Opposition Members suspended from Parliament at the time of the budget, the amount of time on 2<sup>nd</sup> reading (general debate when all MPs may speak for up to 20 minutes) slightly decreased. However, the statistics collated by the Parliament show that detailed scrutiny during the line by line discussions of the budget which is held during Committee of Supply actually increased as compared to 2015. During the 2016 budget consideration, the Parliament spent almost twice as much time scrutinising the details of the budget than was undertaken by the House of Representatives in 2006. Additionally,

<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that in the first sitting week of 2017, a total of 16 written questions were tabled by the Opposition which amounts to more than the total number of written questions tabled during the whole of 2016.

the Opposition tabled 121 substantive amendments to the budget as compared to 89 tabled in 2015 and none at all tabled in 2006. While none of these substantive amendments were passed, the tabling of amendments instigates further debate on the budget line in question and allows the Government to outline why it does not support the proposed amendments. Such public and detailed scrutiny of the national budget live on televisions, radio and the livestream is a significant change in Fiji compared to the pre-2014 election era.



While sitting days in the Chamber reduced in 2016, there was a significant increase in the activities of Parliament Committees and the FPSP project was increasingly focussing on supporting the work of Committees during the year. The number of Committee meetings more than doubled to 485 in 2016 as compared to 205 in 2015. The productivity of the Committees as measured by the number of Committee reports tabled in Parliament also more than doubled in 2016 as compared to 2015.



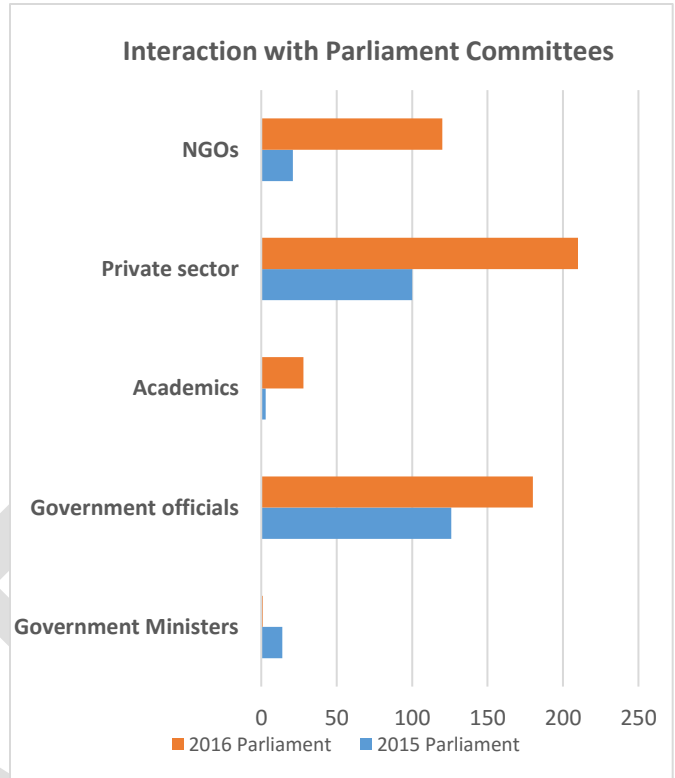
The Committees also provide the main formal mechanism for interaction between the legislature and citizens. With the Committees becoming increasingly active, the opportunities for increased participation by citizens in the work of the Parliament also increased. In addition to Committees increasingly undertaking visits outside of Suva to consult with the people on draft laws, the number of witnesses called before the committees to give their views on issues under consideration more than doubled<sup>3</sup> in 2016. In addition, the number of written submissions to Committees rose from a mere 11

<sup>3</sup> In 2015, 182 men and 82 women appeared before Standing Committees as witnesses. In 2016, the number rose to 203 women and 336 men.



in 2015 to 235 in 2016. The significant rise in public interaction through oral presentations and written submissions, especially by Civil Society Organisations, can partly be attributed to the FPSP’s work with CSOs and key stakeholders in explaining the work of the committees and how citizens and CSOs can interact with committees.

In conclusion, statistics do not always show the full picture but they can highlight how an institution is changing. The Fiji Parliament in 2016 is a very different legislature to the House of Representatives in 2006. The FPSP project that was designed before the Parliament recommenced in 2014, has adapted to these developments and through its work has on occasion influenced these developments.



As the FPSP project comes to end it is important to note that the Fiji Parliament is now fully functional and operating at a higher capacity than many other Pacific Parliaments. Parliament has a 12-month sitting timetable, bills are tabled, debated and approved, the Standing Committees are some of the most active in the Pacific, citizen engagement has dramatically increased, Hansard reports are now being produced overnight ready for MPs before they start the sitting the next day, the work of Parliament is publicised and proceedings during Parliament sittings are covered in-depth in the media. The Parliament has come a very long way in a short time and the FPSP project has played an important role in assisting and, on occasion, facilitating the development of the institution.

Significant challenges remain ahead for the Parliament, not least the continued polarisation of politics as witnessed by 2 Opposition MPs remaining suspended from Parliament as of early 2017. With elections scheduled for the period April to September 2018, it is unlikely that this situation will improve in the short term. Despite these challenges, the Parliament is becoming increasingly robust as an institution and is now firmly established as the national venue where leaders from across the political spectrum sit around the same table and where issues of national importance for Fiji are discussed and debated.

## 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;

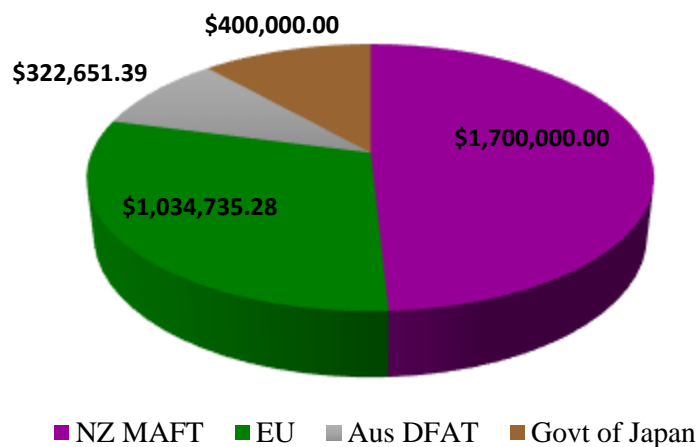
**Outcome 2:** The Parliament of Fiji is recognised as an inclusive place for dialogue and a venue that reflects the interests of all citizens.

### *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 2016

The following list of achievements by the Fiji Parliament Support Project in its final year is not an exhaustive list but rather highlights some of the key activities and achievements of the project in 2016. A more comprehensive list of activities undertaken by the project throughout 2016 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.*

**ICT Equipment to facilitate public access to the work of parliamentary committees:** In line with the recommendation of the Midterm Evaluation of the project, the Project supported the Parliament to initiate the process for the purchase of equipment to allow for live broadcasting and live-streaming of Parliament Committee meetings. The costs for the purchase and installation of ICT equipment is being cost-shared between the Project and the Fiji Parliament. Efforts to purchase the necessary equipment in 2016 has been significantly delayed by Government ICT procurement processes that the Fiji Parliament must follow but, in 2017, the Project will continue to work closely with the Fiji Parliament to ensure that activity is delivered within the time frame of the current phase of the Project.

*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.



**8-9 March 2016, SUVA: Committees in Parliament**

To achieve this, throughout 2016, the following capacity development activities were organised for parliamentary staff through the Office of the Secretary General. Some of these include:

**Technical assistance and procedural advice during the Parliament sittings February 8-12 sitting.**

Wayne Tunnecliffe, former Clerk to the Parliament of Victoria, continued to provide mentoring support to Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General and procedural advice to the Speaker and Secretary General during the first parliament sitting of 2016. During this sitting period, the Parliament faced a number of new procedural issues that had to be considered. A motion of no confidence in the Prime Minister was moved by the Opposition on Friday and therefore took precedence over any other business. The motion was subsequently defeated.

For the remainder of 2016, the project reduced the emphasis it has placed on providing procedural assistance during Parliament sittings. The Parliament felt it has developed enough capacity and confidence in-house to be able to deal with the procedural issues that arise. This was a positive sign that the project had 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.

**Capacity Development of the Secretariat Staff**

A number of training sessions and training attachments were facilitated by the project throughout the year either in-country or overseas. The broad objectives of these trainings and placements was to expose staff 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.

- **4 – 10 January 2016:** Training Attachment for the Director Corporate Services to the Victoria Parliament, Melbourne, Australia.



**9-10 May 2016, SUVA: Code of Conduct Workshop**

and Library to the New Zealand Parliament, Wellington

- **11 – 12 April 2016: Communication Training for Secretariat:** A two-day training was held in Suva for selected staff within the parliament secretariat in the area of Communication with an emphasis on communication during times of ‘crisis’. As an outcome of the two-day training a draft protocol for Crisis Communication and a draft Crisis Communication Plan was developed.
- **26 – 30 June, 2016: The World e-Parliament Conference:** Two staff from the Fiji Parliament presented at the Conference in Chile under the session on “Innovations”. The Fiji Parliament shared its experience in terms of the steps it is taking to make Parliament more accessible to the public and the use of ITC to speed up some of the processes in Parliament.
- **16 – 20 May, 2016, Montreal, CANADA: World Bank – McGill International Development Program for Parliamentary Staff, Residency Seminar:** The Deputy Secretary General of the Fijian Parliament attended an intensive professional development program which included a one-week residency seminar at McGill University followed by expert-moderated online courses and one-on-one professional mentoring.
- **23 – 27 May 2016: Secretary General Attachment to the Victoria Parliament:** “Role and Functions of a Clerk”, Melbourne.
- **29 August – 2 September 2016: Training Attachment to Victoria Parliament -Media and Communication for Senior Media Officer.**

➤ **26 February 2016: Parliament Committee Staff:** A ½ day training for Fiji Parliament Committee staff was conducted by a former UK House of Commons Committee Clerk with the aim of strengthening the staff’s capacity to carry out their roles and responsibilities in supporting the work of the Parliamentary Standing Committees.

➤ **21- 25 March 2016: Training Attachment for the Manager - Research**

In October, due to some concerns regarding foreign travel by staff, the Parliament Secretary General decided to temporarily halt travel overseas for professional development training for staff while a review of the most effective implementation of a staff professional development

programme was carried out. The Parliament approached UNDP for assistance and UNDP, through the PPP, facilitated the attachment of Fran Barresi, Senior Organisation Development Officer, to the Fiji Parliament from 5-13 December. Fran worked with the Director of Corporate Services and her staff to undertake a review of current procures for staff professional development and propose new systems and policies.

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

#### **Victoria Parliament attachment to Table Office: 11-15 July**

This attachment by Ms Kate Murray, the Procedure Office Manager of the Victoria Parliament, to the Fiji Parliament assisted senior procedural staff in enhancing their practical understanding of parliamentary rules and procedures. In addition to refresher procedural advice and training, the consultant also provided advice on compiling Speaker's rulings.

#### **Development of a mobile application for legislative tracking**

With a view to strengthening citizen engagement, FPSP supported the development of a parliament mobile app. This entails the design and development of an application - for IOS, Android and Windows – that will provide a secure connection for MPs to access digital content, allow the general public easy access to digital content, and facilitate an audio/video streaming server for live streaming of parliamentary proceedings. As indicated below (activity 2.2.1), this was done in parallel with the re-development of the Fiji Parliament website in order to ensure maximum compatibility of the two systems. The mobile application is set to be launched in Q1 of 2017.

#### **Mentoring and Professional Development for the Deputy Speaker**

In October 2016, the Deputy Speaker of the Fijian Parliament undertook a one week attachment to the Parliament of Victoria and Federal Parliament of Australia. The objective of the attachments was to expose him to the roles and responsibilities of his respective counterparts in the respective Parliaments and to strengthen his capacity in carrying out his roles and responsibilities in the Fiji Parliament. As part of his attachment, he shadowed his equivalent in the Victoria Parliament.

#### **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 programme of professional development for MPs which has continued into 2016. The capacity development activities undertaken by the project were initially mostly focused on the role of Parliament and the role of MPs, but in 2016, procedural capacity building activities have slowly declined and the project has focused more on building the capacity of MPs to engage with key development issues and briefings on legislation that has been tabled in Parliament. 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 and following discussions with MPs and Parliament staff.

The following are highlights of the professional development program undertaken in 2016:

- **8-9 March 2016, SUVA: *Committees in Parliament*:** The project in collaboration with the Parliament hosted a two-day training at Grand Pacific Hotel, from 08 – 09 March, 2016 for Members of Parliament on the topic: “*Committees in Parliament*”. Also in attendance were the Parliament Secretariat staff from Library and Research Services, Committees Unit, Table Office Unit and staff from the Cooperate Services and Caucus support staff from Fiji First caucus and SODELPA.
- **02 - 06 May 2016, MELBOURNE: *Training Attachment for the Whips to the Victoria Parliament: “Role and Functions of a Whip”*:** In partnership with the Parliament of Victoria, the Fiji Whips and Deputy Whips from the three parliamentary party caucuses were attached to the Federal Parliament in Canberra and the State Parliament of Victoria, Melbourne to further explore the roles and responsibilities of a whip. The attachment provided the opportunity for Fijian Whips to meet their fellow Whips in the Federal Parliament and State Parliament and share experiences and lessons learnt while discussing specific challenges often faced by Whips. As an outcome of the workshop, the Whips collectively developed a job description for the position of Whip. The Job Description developed is available from UNDP.
- **01 – 02 August, SUVA: *Parliamentary Privilege and Contempt*.** The Project in collaboration with the Fiji Parliament hosted a two-day training for Members of Parliament on the topic: “*Parliamentary Privilege*”. The workshop covered a number of topics, including: an outline of references to parliamentary privilege in the Constitution, an outline of references to parliamentary privilege in the Parliament Standing Orders, discussions on the difference between privilege and contempt, examples of issues related to and cases of

Parliamentary privilege and contempt from other jurisdictions, a discussion on the draft Bill on Parliamentary Privilege currently being considered by the Fiji Parliament

- **24 – 26 August, Pearl Resort, PACIFIC HARBOUR, CORAL COAST:** *The Role of Parliament in Extractive Industries.* A three day Retreat was held for Members of Parliament for the purpose of providing information to Members of Parliament on the legislative and policy frameworks governing the Extractives Industries in Fiji. The workshop heard from a range of stakeholders including Government Ministries, academics, international and regional organisations and a representative of the mining companies. The agenda was designed to offer a comprehensive overview of the extractive industries and mining sectors in Fiji. The programme also included a field trip



**24 – 26 August, Pearl Resort, PACIFIC HARBOUR, CORAL COAST:** *The Role of Parliament in Extractive Industries*

to two nearby gravel mining sites (one land-based, one river-based). The MPs were given a comprehensive tour by the project managers and engineers working on these projects and took the opportunity to ask questions on prospecting, safety and security, and closure provisions.

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

Throughout 2016, the project has continued to facilitate opportunities to strengthen the research and analysis services of Parliament. In supporting these efforts, the following activities took place:

#### **Secondment of Staff from the National Parliaments of New Zealand, National Assembly of Wales and Scottish Assembly.**

A number of attachments were undertaken in 2016 to support the Library and Research Services and the Committees Units of the Fiji Parliament. The following national parliaments seconded their parliamentary staff:

- *Hannah Johnston, Parliament Researcher from National Assembly of Wales, 18 January – 30 April 2016;*



- *Heather Lyall, Parliament Researcher from the Scottish Parliament, 11 April - 08 July 2016;*
- *David Meek, Committee Clerk from the New Zealand Parliament, 30 July – 11 November 2016.*

The purpose of these secondments was to build the capacity of Fiji Parliament staff in key areas through on the job training and mentoring. Such an approach allows capacity to be built in the Parliament and skills transfer to occur without taking Fiji Parliament staff out of the working environment.

### **Increased Library Resources, 7<sup>th</sup> March**

In March 2016, the Speaker of the Fiji Parliament officially received over FJD\$20,000 worth of library resources from the UNDP. These resources included: books, journals and online subscriptions for the Parliament Library and Research Services to enable it to have up-to-date resources available to Members of Parliament and their caucuses when preparing for parliament sittings or when undertaking parliamentary committee work.

### **Scrutinising legislation from a gender perspective: a practical toolkit**

This toolkit was developed by Ms Hannah Johnson from the National Assembly of Wales during her secondment to the Fiji Parliament, in collaboration with the Fiji Parliament Research staff. The toolkit explains how MPs can undertake legislative scrutiny from a gender perspective, offering concrete tips and suggestions for reviewing proposed legislation and budgets. The toolkit also offers a quick overview of the international framework (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Beijing Platform and, most recently, the SDGs), as well as instrumental pieces of legislation Fiji has adopted in support of gender equality. The toolkit will be launched in Quarter 1 of 2017.

### **Bills Summaries Workshops for MPs: 13 – 14 April**

A two-day workshop was held with relevant officials from various Government Ministries who were invited to give 10-20 minute presentations on the Bills that had been presented to Parliament, and then take questions from Members for a further 20 minutes. All MPs, Caucus staff and selected staff from the parliament secretariat were invited to be part of the Bills Briefing and all correspondence emphasized that the workshop was an opportunity for MPs to receive information and ask questions in a non-political environment and to equip them to effectively engage in the debates when the Bills are considered by Parliament.

The focus of the Bills Briefing was on information sharing rather than scrutiny. The workshops also provided an opportunity to ‘relaunch’ services of the Research and Library Services: new marketing material was distributed to Members, and the new staff were introduced to MPs.

### **Enhancing the capacity of the research team to provide budget support for MPs: 20 June – 01 July**

In June 2016, six international researchers from the Australian (Federal & Victorian) and New Zealand Parliaments spent two weeks in the Fiji Parliament to support the local research team in the creation of a series of budget briefings. This is the first time that the Research and Library team had the capacity to produce any budget briefings for Members. The work was coordinated by Heather Lyall, a secondee from the Scottish Parliament.

The budget briefings produced by the Research Team exclusively for MPs and Caucus staff included the following information:

1. A budget process step by step guide and FAQ.
2. A budget overview document giving main highlights and changes from previous years.
3. A thematic area briefing on each of the priority areas as identified in the budget supplementary document.
4. Bill summary documents for the consequential Bills relating to the Appropriations Bill.
5. Media Packs of press cuttings relating to the budget.

As a result of the exercise, the Research team staff now have a clear structure and template to be able to continue to produce budget briefings in subsequent years. The Research team staff have also increased their confidence, skills and knowledge to deal with finance and budget related queries.

More importantly, MPs were able to receive impartial, comprehensive documents to support their understanding of the budget process and key contents. Many of the MPs utilized the budget briefings during the budget debates in Parliament. It is hoped that the above exercise would contribute to a better informed MP who is then able to make effective contributions to the Appropriations Bill debate in the chamber.

*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 in 2016 continued 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:

**Options for Parliamentary Engagement on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 11 January 2016.**

At the request of the Fijian Parliament Speaker, the project facilitated the development of a concept note which outlined possible options that the Fiji Parliament may want to consider to ensure effective engagement with the SDGs. The concept note considered a number of engagement mechanisms including utilizing parliament committees and holding public debates on key development issues.

**Regional Conference: *Achieving SDG16 in Melanesia: Creating Political & Parliamentary Stability to catalyse development*, 27-28 June, Nadi, Fiji**

Selected Members of Fiji Parliament from both side of Parliament actively participated in this two-day UNDP regional conference which brought together representatives from governments, parliaments and civil society from Melanesia to discuss how to best promote strong, inclusive and peaceful institutions for sustainable economic growth and development. The conference explored the link between development and political stability, as well as factors impacting on stability including constitutions, electoral systems, political and cultural dynamics, development and parliamentary rules. The conference was formally opened by the Speaker of the Fiji Parliament and selected staff from the Secretariat also attended.

**Mainstreaming SDGs**

In November 2016, the UNDP FPSP project partnered with the Inter-Parliamentary Union and OHCHR to host a conference on parliamentary engagement with the SDGs and in particular implementing the SDGs from a human rights perspective. The project facilitated the attendance of cross party group of Fiji MPs at this event as well as key support staff from the Parliament. In addition, the projects Chief Technical Adviser spoke at a number of sessions at the meeting which was attended by parliamentarians from across the Pacific.

### **Committee sitting schedules**

One of the challenges faced by the Fiji Parliament has been to facilitate the development of an effective committee schedule planner. The rise in MPs' allowances for travel to Suva and for attending committee meetings led the Parliament to review its committee meeting policies. The UNDP Committee's expert on secondment from the New Zealand Parliament, David Meek, played a key role in pulling together consultation responses from the MPs on the new policies as well as providing briefing papers and advice for the Secretary General on practices in other parliaments. In November, the project was asked to attend the meeting between the Speaker and the Committee Chairs to review the draft policy and agree final changes. This policy has led to committee meetings being extended to meet for at least 4 hours per meeting and a maximum number of meetings per draft bill under consideration being implemented by Parliament, although leeway is provided for additional time at the discretion of the Speaker should a committee be scrutinising complicated legislation.

### **Social Affairs Committee consultations in Rotuma**

On December 27<sup>th</sup> the Social Affairs Committee travelled to Rotuma to carry out public consultations on the Island on the two Bills: Bill No.6 Rotuma Bill and Bill No.7 Rotuma Land Bill. The main purpose of the Consultation was to receive submissions and views of the people on the island with regards to the two Rotuman Bills. It was the intention of the Committee to report back to Parliament on the Bill during the first sitting of Parliament in 2017. The FPSP project facilitated this important outreach and consultation by the Committee as one of the key principles for the committee work includes ensuring that people impacted by Bills are given opportunities to have their voices heard before Bills are finally voted upon in Parliament.



**December 27, 2017: Social Affairs Committee consultations in Rotuma.**

*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 Assistance to the Standing Committee on Law, Justice and Human Rights**

Hon. Sarmite Bulte, a former Canadian MP was recruited by the project to provide advisory support, briefings and on demand support and technical advice to the Law, Justice and Human Rights Chair, Committee Members and Committee secretariat staff. Her support also includes the preparation of analytical and summary notes for consideration by the Committee. Hon. Bulte assisted the Committee to review the Fiji Interchange Network (Payments) Bill.

### **Roster of Experts to support the work of the Committees finalised**

The project provided support to the Parliament to make a call for expressions for national experts to be on a roster of national experts that is available to the committees to assist them with their work.

### **Code of Conduct Workshop, 9-10 May**

At the request of the Fiji Parliament, the project facilitated a workshop on international best practices on Codes of Conduct. The workshop had the following objectives:

1. To understand Fiji's Constitutional requirement for Parliament to enact a Code of Conduct, establish the Accountability and Transparency Commission, protect whistleblowers and establish a gifts and declarations regime;
2. To provide Fiji parliamentarians with clear and useful guidance to develop the various building blocks of an effective ethics and conduct regime – a regime that is consistent with their respective political and cultural contexts, and at the same time, adheres to fundamental international standards.

The workshop was moderated by UN-Pacific Regional Anti-Corruption (UN-PRAC) Project team consultant and former New South Wales MP John Hyde. Kenyan Parliamentarian Hon Shakeel Shabbir Ahmed, who also chairs the Global Organisation of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC's) regional African Network, along with Kinley Tenzin, who heads the Legislative and Procedural Division of the National Council Secretariat of Bhutan's Parliament, provided the international best practice comparisons. UN-PRAC's Mihaela Stojkoska, UNDP Anti-Corruption Specialist, also contributed best practice from the UN Convention Against Corruption and the Secretary-General's Report on the International Code of Conduct for Public Officials (resolution 51/59, annex).

### **Technical Assistance to PAC to develop the 2016 work plan**

TA was provided through the project expert, former Australia Parliament PAC Chair Rob Oakeshott. Mr Oakeshott undertook two missions to Fiji, following which the PAC Report

(“Report on the Public Accounts Committee on the Audits of Government Commercial Companies and Commercial Statutory Authorities 2009 - 2013 (Volume One)”) was tabled during the September sitting. In addition, a 2016 PAC work plan was developed and agreed by the Public Accounts Committee. Further support was provided from distance to the PAC, with the next mission scheduled for Quarter 1 of 2017.

## **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 area was to support MPs and parliamentary caucuses to develop their skills in conflict mediation and dispute resolution. Furthermore opportunities for cross party dialogue and sharing information with parliamentary committees and caucuses on how to conduct successful constituent relations was facilitated under this activity area.

The following activities were organised in 2016:

- ***Facilitation of Whips Meeting:*** One the crucial factors in the operating of a Parliament is the development of the ‘usual channels’ of communication between party caucuses. To ensure that the lines of communication and dialogue continue to function, the project continued to facilitate cross-party dialogue between the party whips throughout the year to encourage the development of ‘usual channels’ of communication between party caucuses.
- **13-15 April, SUVA: *Communication Training for Caucus Staff:*** MPs rely on the caucus staff to promote their work as Members of Parliament to the general public so that citizens can better understand the ongoing work of the Parliament and the issues raised by MPs. A one-day training was held for each of the parliamentary caucus staff (Fiji First, SODELPA, NFP) on managing public relations and providing public information for their caucus, and to provide coaching on how to reach out to international media, tips on setting up news conferences and reviewing news releases and providing tips on writing news release.
- **30 November – 01 December 2017, Coral Coast: *Whips Retreat.*** On 30th November – 1st December, the FPSP project brought together the 5 Fiji Parliament whips and deputy whips as part of its ongoing work to foster discussion and dialogue across party groups. To promote south south knowledge exchange and encourage peer to peer discussions, the project also facilitated the attendance at the workshop of the Cook Islands Government and Opposition whips, the New Zealand Government senior whip, a former Australia Parliament National Party whip, the Government whip from the Victoria Parliament. The



**30 November – 01 December 2017, Coral Coast: Whips Retreat**

Victoria Parliament Clerk Ray Purdey also joined the workshop and provided important inputs into the session on the way in which whips interact with Parliament secretariat staff.

The workshop built on the previous whips workshop held in Victoria in 2016, reviewed the whips ‘duty statement’ that was previously developed, and facilitated in depth discussions on a host of issues including the patronal role of whips, the powers of whips in negotiating and facilitating house business, interaction mechanisms between whips, the role of the whips in coordinating caucus media work and the role the whip can play in facilitating coordination between the party caucus in Parliament and the broader party in the country.

**Increasing Interaction between MPs and Citizens: Pilot Activity.**

Following consultation with and approval by the Parliament, in 2016, UNDP worked with Whips and Deputy Whips of the 3 caucuses to design a pilot activity to facilitate interactions between backbench MPs and citizens and allow opportunities for citizens to raise issues directly with their elected representatives.

The activity was piloted in the Nasinu/Nausori corridor. Four backbench MPs participated (2 Fiji First, 1 SODELPA, 1 NFP) separately visiting residents in the area. The MPs when participating in the pilot activity, were undertaking this work as parliamentarians and were not permitted to use the opportunity to promote their political party. UNDP FPSP staff attended the meetings to monitor proceedings. This initial pilot was followed by a second round of meetings and discussions are ongoing on rolling this out to more remote areas in 2017.

*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



**MPs Meeting Citizen in Lami Corridor**

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 2016:

**Parliament Bus – Taveuni, 15 – 23 February 2016**

The project continues to support the implementation of the Parliament Outreach Strategy which is aimed at raising the profile of parliament, educating, informing and encouraging community involvement with Parliament. The Parliament Bus program visited schools, villages and communities around Taveuni.

**Feasibility Study on Establishing Parliament Satellite Offices, 15 April – 12 May**

UNDP facilitated the recruitment of an international consultant to undertake a feasibility study on establishing Parliament satellite offices, assess the existing parliament-constituency relationship and suggest better mechanisms aimed at providing more information on the work of Parliament to citizens outside Suva and strengthening parliamentarians' accountability to citizens. The mechanisms suggested should enable the electorate to effectively access more information on parliament and access their representatives. The report of the Feasibility Study was submitted to Parliament and the proposed implementation of pilot satellite offices has been included as an activity under the FPSP Phase II project.



## **Follow up Induction for CSOs on the role and work of Parliament & legislative advocacy and engagement: 24 – 25 May 2016**

UNDP through FPSP and in partnership with the UNDP Strengthening Citizens Engagement in Fiji Project (SCEFI) and with the Parliament, facilitated a follow up briefing session targeting Tier 1 CSOs that have the capacity for policy engagement, legislative advocacy and engagement, research and analysis skills, and undertake strong evidence based advocacy.

The main objective of the follow up briefing session was to:

1. Facilitate a refresher session on how Parliament works, including recent changes to the Parliament Standing Orders;
2. Facilitate advocacy skills training on how NGO's can organise themselves to present to a Parliament Standing Committee and ensure their views on legislation and other business is heard and taken into account;
3. Facilitate briefings on the Bills tabled for first reading that are likely to move to 2nd readings and then committee stage in the coming months.

Chakshu Roy, head of the legislative engagement at PRS Legislative Research in New Delhi, India was a resource person at the workshop to share the experience of CSO in working to provide research support to Federal and State Legislators and working to promote the openness of the Parliament.

### **Speaker's Debates**

At the request of the Fiji Parliament Speaker, the project developed an options paper outlining possible options to encourage discussion and debate on key development issues in Fiji. The request followed the successful panel debate in September 2015 at Parliament on the occasion of International Democracy Day.

As a result of the options paper, the Parliament, with the support of the FPSP project, held a series of 'Speaker's Debates' organized throughout the year to encourage debate and discussion on key issues. The topics – nominally based on issues included in the SDGs - were selected by the Speaker. Each Debate was chaired by the Speaker, with a panel consisting of four to five speakers, and was attended by between 200 and 300 members of the public.

The following Speaker's Debates were organized:

- **1<sup>st</sup> Speaker’s Debate: “Was the Paris Climate Change Agreement a Good Deal for Fiji?” 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016.**
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Speaker’s Debate: “Is Fiji making progress in tackling violence against women and girls?” 09 May, 2016.**
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Speaker’s Debate: “Is Fiji’s Economic Growth Benefitting All Fijians?” 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016**
- **4<sup>th</sup> Speaker’s Debate: Is Fiji’s education system effectively contributing to the country’s sustainable development?**

The series of debates aim to promote open public discussion in Fiji on important development issues and raise the profile of the SDGs.

### **Practice Parliament for Women: 16-18 August**

50 women from various backgrounds across Fiji took part of Fiji’s first “Women’s Parliament Fiji”. The three-day program included two days of training on policy-making and parliamentary processes, followed by a ‘mock’ parliament session in which participants debated the merits of a mock bill on maternity leave, paternity leave and mandatory day care by employers.



**Women’s Parliament Fiji 2016**

The 50 women participating in the 2016 Women’s Parliament Fiji were selected by a Steering Committee made up of representatives from the Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation, the National Council of Women and the Office of Secretary General of the Fijian Parliament.

### **Development of a new website for the Parliament of Fiji**

To meet the increased demand for information sharing and constituency engagement, FPSP supported the Fiji Parliament in revamping its website. Terms of Reference were drawn up in collaboration with the Parliament IT manager and support staff, focusing on a more user-friendly website that is both more intuitive in navigation and more comprehensive in the information it seeks to provide. *Webmedia* were selected to support the Fiji Parliament in this work. Development of the new website's skeleton has been finalized; content is expected to be transferred in time for a March 2017 launch date. It should be noted that this was done in tandem with the development of the mobile app (see activity 1.1.3), to ensure maximum complementarity.

### **Parliamentary Curriculum Development**

With a view to updating Fiji's national governance curriculum, which had not been revised since the adoption of the 2014 Constitution, the FPSP recruited Mr Steve Lee as Curriculum Developer Consultant. Mr Lee was tasked to review existing parliamentary education material from other parliaments – primarily New Zealand - and develop the drafts of the Fiji parliamentary education materials for the age groups 10 – 13 years, 14-15 years, and 16-18 years. The following materials were delivered:

- A full set of teaching cards, outlining the roles and responsibilities of parliament, for years 5-8 and 9-10;
- A Teacher's Guide for years 5-8 and 9-10, to support the use of these cards in a classroom setting;
- A set of role plays and interactive activities each of the three age groups.

These new resources were tested through a teacher consultation workshop in Labasa, organized with the support of the Ministry of Education and the Parliament of Victoria on September 13-14. The materials are undergoing final review by the Civic Education team; official publication and distribution to all Fiji schools is expected to take place in March 2017.

### **Development of Documentary: “*How Parliament Works – Behind the Scenes*”.**

UNDP in partnership with the Parliament has commissioned the development of a documentary to increase public understanding of the role and work of the Parliament. The documentary will focus on:

1. The history of the Fijian Parliament;
2. The role and the work of Parliament;
3. Demonstrate some “behind the scenes” of what an MP does on a day to day basis outside sittings in the main chambers;

4. Demonstrate some “behind the scenes” of how the institution of parliament conducts its business.

The documentary is intended to be 45 – 60 minutes in length and to be aired on free to air channels such as Fiji One, FBC and Mai TV. During this quarter, final reshoots were completed along with additional interviews of key figures, and a storyboard was approved by the project team. The documentary is expected to be finalized in Q1 of 2017.

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## 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;
- Country Director & Head of Pacific Regional Programme and Policy, UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji

As of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016, **the financial delivery of the project for the year was 95%.**

In 2016, the Steering Committee met only once in July 19 with a further meetings scheduled for early 2017. One of the agenda item for discussions was the development of the Phase 2 of the Fiji Parliament Support Project.

At the end of Quarter 4, the Project Document for Phase 2 of the Project was officially signed off by UNDP and the Fiji Parliament.

Phase 2 of the project has the following focus:

- *Output 1:* Strengthening the work of the Parliamentary Committees. The Project envisages that the Committees will be the central focus of the work of the Parliament due to the reduction in the number of Parliament sitting days. The Committees are also an avenue where the

general public, civil society organisations, other stakeholders and MPs can interact. The focus of this Output is different from Phase 1, which emphasized more the development of procedures and processes for Committees.

- *Output 2:* UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji Capacity development of the MPs and the Secretariat Staff. The design of the Output assumes that there will be General Elections in 2018 and that there will be some new MPs elected. Therefore the focus of the first one and half years in terms of capacity development is the Secretariat Staff with only a few limited capacity building activities for the current MPs. Following the General Elections in 2018 there will be an increased focus on capacity building of newly elected and returning MPs. These trainings include an induction program for newly elected MPs and an on-going professional development for returning MPs. Under this Output, the project will expand its south-south and triangular cooperation with other Parliaments in the Asia-Pacific Region with similar parliamentary systems or with similar parliamentary development challenges, in order to create a two-way learning process.
- *Output 3:* The focus of this Output is on Parliamentary Outreach and Citizens Engagement. While this Output was a prominent feature in Phase 1 of the Project, there still is a need to focus on this area in terms of Civic Education, to understand the work and the role of Parliament, and ensuring that Parliament remains accessible and is inclusive of traditionally excluded groups, such as women and youth, and reaching out to remote areas. This Output is also closely linked to Output 1 by enhancing the meaningful participation in the work of the Committees through the provision of trainings for CSOs to productively engage in the work of the Parliament. An additional aspect that has been added under this Output is the establishment of the Parliamentary Satellite Offices aimed at providing more information on the work of Parliament to citizens outside Suva and strengthening parliamentarians' accountability to citizens. To ensure sustainability, these Satellite Offices will be run by the Parliament with support from the project

Phase 2 of the Project will begin in January 2017. At the end of 2016, donors that had committed to financing Phase 2 of the Project included Australia and New Zealand. There is also high likelihood that Japan will also commit to funding Phase 2.

The last Project Committee meeting for Phase 1 of the Project will be held on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2017.

## Annex 1: Financial Summary for Fiji Parliament Support Project for the period: 01 January – 31 December 2017

<b>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</b>		
<b>Output 1.1: Parliament as an Institution Strengthened</b>		
Activity 1.1.1	Infrastructure and Hardware support provided.	\$40,198.60
Activity 1.1.2	Capacity Development provided to Parliament Secretariat and Secretary General.	\$84,424.31
Activity 1.1.3	Support to the formulation of parliamentary procedures, processes and policies.	\$37,464.97
<b>Output 1.2: Members of Parliament knowledgeable about participatory law-making, oversight processes and representation.</b>		
Activity 1.2.1	Capacity Development for newly-elected Members of Parliament developed and implemented.	\$69,742.32
Activity 1.2.2	Research and Analysis of the Parliamentary Service strengthened.	\$61,012.35
Activity 1.2.3	Capacity building for MPs and Committee to address relevant human development issues.	\$73,499.91
Activity 1.2.4	Technical support and capacity development provided in law-making and oversight for Select Committees and the Public Accounts Committee.	\$90,151.46
<b>Outcome 2: The Parliament of Fiji is recognised as an inclusive place for dialogue and a venue that reflects the interests of all citizens</b>		
<b>Output 2.1: Members of Parliament are knowledgeable about coalition-building and negotiation skills and actively engage in dispute resolution.</b>		
Activity 2.1.1	Promoting coalition-building and dialogue	\$51,016.21
Activity 2.2.1	Support for General Public Outreach	\$87,566.72
Activity 3.1.1	Effective technical advisory services (Project staff) Office Costs & Communication	\$351,225.29
Activity 3.1.2	GMS	\$107,466.98
<b>TOTAL Expenses as of 31 December 2016</b>		<b>US\$1,053,749.12</b>

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