



Parliamentary institution building in Fiji

Mid-term evaluation of the UNDP Fiji Parliamentary Support Project

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Acronyms

ACPAC	Asia Conference of PACs
AFPPD	Asia Forum of Parliamentarians for Population and Development
AG	Attorney General
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CPA	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
CROP	Conference of Regional Organizations in the Pacific
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DSA	Daily Subsidiary Allowance
EU	European Union
FPSP	Fiji Parliamentary Support Project
FTP	Fast Track Procedures
HC	High Commissioner
HoC	House of Commons
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFES	International Federation for Electoral Systems
ILO	International Labour Organization
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCO	Multi Country Office
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Member of Parliament
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
RBA	Results Based Approach
SC	Steering Committee
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SG	Secretary General
SO	Standing Orders
SPC	Secretariat of Pacific Community
TA	Technical Assistance
WHO	World Health Organization

Disclaimer

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I. Executive Summary

UNDP started its support to the establishment of the new parliament of the Republic of Fiji well ahead of the September 2014 elections. Already in December 2013, UNDP conducted a preliminary needs assessment for the new parliament. It formed the basis for the current three-year project, which started in January 2014.

The project was designed around four components: "parliament as an institution strengthened", "MPs knowledgeable on their tasks", "MPs knowledgeable about coalition building, negotiating skills and engage in dispute resolution", and "Parliamentary engagement with citizens strengthened".

In line with UNDP's policy on program management, an independent Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) was commissioned. The MTE mission took place between 21 September and 4 October 2015.

The objective of this MTE was to assess the implementation of the project since its start in January 2014 (results, achievements, constraints), to review the effectiveness of UNDP support to the project, to analyze the relevance of project activities and to produce an overall report on findings, complemented by recommendations for the future project implementation.

The evaluation has been made against the activities outlined in the Project Document, the Results and Resources Framework (RRF), the annual work plans, the project progress reports and other documents made available by the UNDP project team and the Parliament of Fiji.

The evaluator conducted a wide range of interviews with interlocutors within and outside the Parliament of Fiji, engaged with the parliamentary experts and consultants which worked with the project, and consulted UNDP and the project's donors: Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the European Commission Delegation.

Based upon the analysis deriving from the assessment, the evaluator structured the evaluation report under three main headings: (i) project design, (ii) project implementation and (iii) project management. Under the section "Project design" the evaluator analyzed the extent to which the Project Document provided a solid and workable basis for successful project implementation. The section "Project implementation" evaluated the activities against the stated outputs and the RRF. As per the ToR of the assignment, the evaluation was based on five criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The section "Project management" reviewed how the implementation, management and evaluation mechanisms were structured and managed.

The evaluator has observed the favourable conditions benefitting the project: there is a clear political will by the leadership of parliament to learn and take on board the suggestions of the project; UNDP had the right staff on board from the very beginning of the project, the donor resources and partnerships with key assisting parliaments were in place from the start of the project; there is a good and functional relationship between the Speaker and Secretary General of Parliament. However, from time to time, there is a trust issue in parliament leadership from the side of the opposition.

The evaluator identified that the project has been very successful in implementing activities that are within the control of the project. Following are a number of achievements of the project during its implementation so far:

- The project's assistance in the areas of infrastructure and ICT secured a smooth start of the newly created parliament. Drafting of the Standing Orders and procedural advice during the sittings has enabled the Fiji Parliament to establish its proceedings based on best international practices.
- The coaching of senior staff, trainings and working visits abroad have made a significant contribution to the establishment and professional functioning of the parliament secretariat.
- The procedural advice to the Speaker, the Public Accounts Committee and other committees brought knowledge and best practices to the parliamentary proceedings in Fiji in a way that was

often an eye-opener for MPs and that helped to establish a working practice suitable for the Fiji parliament.

- Through workshops, conferences and visits abroad, the project facilitated interaction between the political parties, in particular the party whips. The dialogue with the party whips is of utmost importance in terms of trying to reach a common understanding on the way forward in the democratic transition of Fiji.
- The project's coaching and advisory support helped all three caucuses enhance their understanding of the importance of committee work, of adherence to clear and fair procedures in parliament, and of the logic of the project's political impartiality.
- Following the initial outreach activities, supported by the project, the parliament has created a civic education and media unit, which is now in charge for all outreach and communication activities. The attendance to the outreach activities outside of Suva is overwhelming, and this demonstrates the clear need and interest among the Fiji population to learn about the work of the parliament.
- The Fiji Parliament has benefitted a lot from the assistance and expertise, through the project, of the federal Australian Parliament, Victoria Parliament and the Parliament of New Zealand. The parliament also benefitted from the experience of visiting the parliaments in the UK (House of Commons, Scotland, Wales), Canada and the European Parliament in Brussels. The evaluator noted that the project's approach of bringing back consistently the same experts is very beneficial. It enables building a sustainable relationship with the Fiji parliament, and it provides the confidence which is required to transfer knowledge based on a trusted relationship.

In summary, the evaluator is of the opinion that the project has played an important and strategic role in establishing and coaching the new Fiji Parliament. The project enabled UNDP rebuilding relationships with the authorities and political parties of Fiji, donors and civil society at a delicate moment in the country's history. The project is a model project for UNDP, amongst others, because it has been conducted at the right moment, with the right approach and by the right persons. As outlined in the project's risk assessment, the successful implementation of the project was and remains closely tied to the political developments and the transition process in Fiji.

The evaluator hopes that this report will provide both broad and focused guidance to the Fiji Parliament and UNDP in the design of a successor project, with the aim to continue assisting Fiji in the process of deepening democracy.

II. Introduction to the project

The Fiji Parliament Support Project (FPSP) is a three year project designed to provide support to the Parliament of Fiji in two inter-linked phases. 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. This second phase is aimed at supporting the Parliament to undertake its legislative, oversight and representation functions.

In the first phase, UNDP liaised with the Office of the Solicitor General as the main government focal point for any support to the Fiji Parliament in the absence of a Secretary General to Parliament. Following the appointment of the Secretary General to Parliament in September 2014, UNDP has been liaising with the Office of Secretary General to Parliament for any support to the Fiji Parliament.

The project is managed and implemented by UNDP through the UNDP Pacific Centre in cooperation with the UNDP Multi-Country Office (MCO). The project is supported and funded by the European Union, the Government of Japan, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and UNDP. In addition the project also receives 'in kind' technical support from the Australian Parliament's Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships programme, and it can count on the expertise of the Parliament of New Zealand and other parliaments.

The project was initiated in a politically and historically challenging context. For a number of reasons, Fiji in the past has had difficulty entrenching democratic institutions, such as the Parliament, into the political system of the country. Following a period of military rule between 2006 and 2014 and the adoption of the new Constitution of Fiji in 2013, a new parliament was to be created. The FPSP is thus a rather atypical project, in a sense that it is not only a "parliament development project", but it is as much a "parliament creation project".

In recent history, there were only a couple of cases when an entirely new parliament was established with international assistance, such as in East Timor, South Sudan, Kosovo and Fiji. The experience of the FPSP will thus be important for UNDP corporate in terms of collecting the lessons learned and keeping them available for other situations when a new parliament will be established in a context of state building or transitioning to democracy.

III. The Mid-term Project Evaluation Mission in 2015

1. Structure of the evaluation report

The evaluator has structured the project's review, and the evaluation report, under three main headings: project design, project implementation and project management.

Under the section 'Project design', the Project Document and the implementation framework as established at the start of the project were reviewed. The evaluator analyzed to what extent the Project Document has provided a solid and workable basis for successful project implementation.

The section 'Project implementation' evaluated the activities against the stated objectives in the four project components:

- "Parliament as an institution strengthened";
- "MPs knowledgeable on their tasks";
- "MPs are knowledgeable about coalition building, negotiating skills and dispute resolution";
- "Parliamentary engagement with citizens strengthened".

The section 'Project management' reviewed how the management, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms have been performed.

Due to the specific national context of Fiji, the report includes a contextual chapter on the Parliament of Fiji (next chapter of the report). At the end of the report, two sets of recommendations are listed: recommendations for the remaining one year and two months of the project (until December 2016), and recommendations for a second phase of the project (beyond 2016).

2. Criteria for the evaluation

The evaluator conducted the mid-term evaluation of this project in an objective, impartial, open and participatory manner, based on empirically verified evidence that is valid and reliable.¹ The evaluator reviewed the implementation of the four project outcomes based on five criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability:

- *Relevance*: Evaluating to what extent the project addressed the existing and changing needs of Parliament and how well the project displayed a coherent set of activities.
- *Efficiency*: Evaluating to what extent the project inputs delivered the desired outputs in an efficient way, with minimum waste of time, human, financial and other material resources.
- *Effectiveness*: Evaluating how much the project outputs influenced the institutional capacity of Parliament to become a democratic, functional, accountable and inclusive institution.
- *Impact*: Evaluate the overall impact of the project and its contribution to the development of the legislative institution (short term perspective).
- *Sustainability*: Assess the sustainability of results with specific focus on national capacity and ownership over the project (long term perspective).

At the end of each outcome section of this evaluation report, an indicative mark between 'low' and 'very high' was given, for all activities within the specific outcome, and with a narrative justification.

A 'low' mark means that the set of activities under that output did not meet the requirements in terms of one of the five criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability). A mark 'medium' means that the set of activities under that output only partially met the requirements in terms of the stated criteria. A 'high' mark means that the set of activities under that output fully met the requirements in terms

¹See: UNDP *Handbook on Planning, monitoring and evaluating for results*, New York, 2009 (revised: 2011), 232 p. <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/handbook>

of the reviewed criteria. A 'very high' mark means that the set of activities under that output exceeded the requirements for the stated criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability).² The evaluation resulted in an 'evaluation chart' for each of the four main program components.

3. Methodology for the evaluation

In order to conduct the mid-term evaluation, the evaluator applied a multi-dimensional methodology.

- *Desk review.* The evaluator obtained in-depth understanding of the documented contents and activities of the project by reviewing the Project Document, work plans, annual and quarterly reports, research papers, manuals, and assessment reports. The desk review also considered the relevant legal framework (Constitution of Fiji, Standing Orders of the Parliament), the Needs Assessment Report, and external assessments of the democratic transition process in Fiji.
- The *conceptual back-ground information* considered for the evaluation included a number of policy documents on parliamentary development such as the "UNDP Strategy Note on Parliamentary Development" (2009)³, the "EC Reference Document on Engaging with Parliaments Worldwide" (2010)⁴ and the "IPU Parliamentary Self-Assessment Toolkit" (2008)⁵, and also a comparative study on Public Accounts Committees (2014).⁶
- *Structured interviews.* Based upon the desk review of documents, the evaluator designed a check-list for the interviews, enabling to gather consistent data on activity results, activity feed-back, Parliament performance and suggested future project approaches. The evaluator conducted structured interviews with key counterparts, such as the Speaker of Parliament, whips and deputy whips, chairpersons of the Committees involved in the project, Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General and Secretariat staff. Other interlocutors of the project such as parliamentary staff and experts from Australia, New Zealand and Canada, training providers, donors and civil society organizations were interviewed and/or consulted. The evaluator interviewed the UNDP Technical Advisor, National Project Manager and Project Assistant, the head of the UNDP Pacific Centre and the Senior Management of the UNDP MCO. A full list of those interviewed is included as Annex of this report.
- *Review of quantitative data.* The evaluator attempted to collect quantitative information on the conduct of the activities, as well as on the outcomes through data on the performance of the Fiji Parliament. These areas have been analysed and directly addressed by the project's activities.
- *Validation.* Prior to finalizing the report, the evaluator sought to validate the main findings and recommendations of the mission, with a view to obtain comments and opinions. A briefing and validation meeting was conducted on 2 October 2015, with participation of the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General of Parliament, the donors and UNDP. The comments and opinions on the main findings were incorporated in this report.

² An example of ratings given for each of the evaluation criteria to parliamentary strengthening projects, can be found at: DE VRIEZE, Franklin & BEECKMANS, Ruth & AHMAD, Raza, *Evaluation of the UNDP Parliamentary Project in Pakistan and Recommendations*, October 2012, Brussels / Islamabad, 77 p.; DE VRIEZE, Franklin & TÔ VÂN, Hòa, *Strengthening the capacity of representative bodies in Vietnam. End-of-Project evaluation*, March 2013, Vietbid, Brussels / Hanoi, 90 p.

³ [http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/parliamentary_development/parliamentary-development-strategy-note-.html)

[governance/parliamentary_development/parliamentary-development-strategy-note-.html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/oppd/Page_8/engaging_and_supporting_parliaments_en.pdf)
⁴ http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/oppd/Page_8/engaging_and_supporting_parliaments_en.pdf

⁵ <http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/self-e.pdf>

⁶ Stapenhurst, R., Pelizzo, R., Jacobs, K., *Following the Money. Comparing Parliamentary Public Accounts Committees*, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association & World Bank Institute & Pluto Press, London, 2014, 152 p.

4. Challenges to the evaluation

The first conceptual challenge for the evaluation of the project was the attribution question: to what extent can one attribute the quality of Parliament's functioning to an intervention by a project? Experience in other countries and in other parliamentary strengthening projects indicates that neither the implementation of specific activities nor the expenditure of resources is necessarily or uni-dimensionally correlated with parliamentary strengthening. This is largely due to the large number of intervening variables in parliamentary performance. Choices by the country's leadership and Parliament's decisions can have a decisive impact on project implementation. Therefore, there is no substitute for nuanced policy and conceptual analysis. For instance, the way that the project supported knowledge and skills building by the staff or provides procedural advice to the Speaker and Secretary General has been assessed by the evaluator, as discussed further in this report.

A second challenge for the evaluation was to accurately review the sustainability of the project's achievements. This means one has to assess the ability of supported activities and functions to continue after that the project ends. In order to do so, the evaluator needed to review to what extent the project has focused on structures and procedures beyond individual activities and workshops. Lessons learned from the evaluation of other parliamentary projects indicate that specific activities can be sustained by an institution such as Parliament if the capacity building project has managed to ensure that the appropriate organizational structures and procedures have been put in place by Parliament and are observed. The success of such approach depends on the level of national ownership. In this context, it was noted that the project played a determining role in drafting the Standing Orders of Parliament, set up the framework for ICT, and also has developed several manuals and Standard Operating Procedures. The evaluator is well aware that, one year after the start of the new Parliament, it is very early to discuss sustainability of the project's inputs and try to reach any final conclusions. The end-of-project evaluation (by end of 2016) will be in a better position to assess the sustainability of the project's interventions.

IV. Context: the Parliament of Fiji

The Parliament of Fiji is the unicameral legislature of the Republic of Fiji. Under the 2013 Constitution of Fiji, the Parliament comprises 50 members elected by an open-list proportional representation in one multi-member nationwide constituency.

The Parliament of Fiji dates back to 10 October 1970, when Fiji became an independent Republic from the United Kingdom. Since independence, the Fiji Parliament has suffered from periodic interruptions, the latest one being in 2006. The re-establishment of Parliament after the general elections in September 2014 marked an important milestone for Fiji. It signalled a return to democratic ideals after a lapse of eight years. Fiji's Parliament was previously bicameral, consisting of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The composition of Parliament has changed over the years. Since 1992, Parliament had 70 Representatives and 34 Senators, figures marginally adjusted in 1999 to provide for 71 Representatives and 32 Senators. 25 of these were elected by universal suffrage. The remaining 46 were reserved for Fiji's ethnic communities and were elected from communal electoral rolls.

Where previous Constitutions attempted to address the political challenges within the country by catering to a confessional system of politics - assigning seats in Parliament based on ethnicity and proportionality – the 2013 Fiji Constitution went in a different direction, resulting in a “one Fiji” approach. The current Fiji Parliament results from an electoral system based on proportional representation and one national constituency, instead of either single-member or multi-member constituencies that were previously the norm.

The 2013 Constitution changed the structure of the Parliament from being bicameral to unicameral. The number of seats in the new one-chamber Parliament is 50, significantly fewer than the previous elected lower house. There are presently three political parties represented in the new Parliament.⁷ Fiji First has 32 seats and is the ruling party. The Social Democratic Liberal party (Sodelpa) has 15 seats and the National Federation Party has three seats; and both parties are parties in opposition.

A majority of the Members are new to the workings of the practice and procedures of Parliament. So are the Speaker, the Secretary General of Parliament and the majority of the staff of the Department of Legislature (the Secretariat-General), which provide Secretariat services to the Fiji Parliament.

According to article 58(1) of the 2013 Constitution, the present Legislature continues for a mandate of 4 years, from October 2014 to October 2018.

⁷ <http://www.parliament.gov.fj/>

V. Project Design

The chapter on project design will review the degree to which the Project Document and the Parliament Needs Assessment provided a solid and workable basis for successful project implementation. The evaluation of the project design will follow the structure of the Project Document and review some of the analysis included in the Parliament Needs Assessment. The evaluation of the project design will thus review the context; project rationale; project objectives and activities; risk and assumptions, budget information; implementation and management arrangements; project sustainability, monitoring and evaluation; cross cutting issues; and the results and resources framework.

1. Context

Considering the institutional and political context in Fiji, a well elaborated situation analysis and description of the context is an important asset at the start of the project. It enables to better positioning the project and to prepare for a more strategic planning of the project interventions.

The 2013 Parliament Needs Assessment⁸ and 2014 Project Document have well described the context in which the project was designed and why the project was needed.

The Project Needs Assessment was prepared by two senior International Parliamentary experts. It had been commissioned by UNDP as soon as the (new) constitutional and electoral system was decided, and especially once the time-period for parliamentary elections was clear. The Needs Assessment Report draws an analysis and puts forward recommendations on what needs to be done prior to the first session of Parliament and after the first session of Parliament. The Report spells out a clear Political Economy Analysis (PEA) for initiating a parliamentary assistance project. The Report describes the "drivers of previous fragility" such as the ethnic divide and the socio-economic divide. In addition, the Report refers to UNDP's study on the role of Parliaments in promoting reconciliation after a period of fragility and the World Bank - CPA Report on Parliaments and conflict prevention. The PEA and the references to key documents on the role of Parliament in a national and political context of fragility provided a good basis for drafting the Project Document.

The Project Document has its own section with context analysis for this project. It refers to the history of the Parliament of Fiji since independence in 1970, and some of the features of the previous Parliament before it was dissolved in 2006, such as the Committees and the composition of the membership. The project document thus outlines the continuity in institutional developments of the Parliament of Fiji, while also outlining the challenges posed by the constitutional and electoral system as decided by the previous government. Some of the challenges mentioned in the Project are the one national constituency under open party lists and the strong positions of party leaders towards their MPs. In addition, the challenge of the outdated infrastructure and the absence of a Parliament staff are highlighted as well.

The project was designed following a comprehensive needs assessment, which included numerous consultations with stakeholders. It is important to highlight that the needs assessment outlined priorities for the design of a specific project related to the establishment of a new Parliament, which is considerably different from priorities for the reform and institutional development of an already established Parliament. The context for this project also mentions UNDP's experience with parliamentary development globally and regionally in the Pacific, specifically focusing on the parliamentary projects in Tonga, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Palau, Kiribati, Marshall Islands and Tuvalu, as well as the lessons learned from the previous UNDP parliamentary project which ended in December 2006.

⁸ Deveaux, K. and Feulner, F., Fiji Parliament Preliminary Needs Assessment Report, UNDP Fiji, Suva, December 2013, 60 p.

2. Project rationale

The project rationale section describes well the reasons why this project was prepared in 2013. While much of the Government and donor discussions were focusing on the proposed elections, there were limited discussions and focus on the role of the legislature. Also, few discussions were concerning the capacity of the Parliament to fulfil its core responsibilities and mandate as outlined in the Fiji Constitution. The project drafters were well aware that, when Parliament sits for the first time following the elections, almost eight years will have passed since the Fiji Parliament last sat. The rationale section then outlines why there is a need to prepare new Standing Orders and other legislative acts, to train a new cadre of Parliament Secretariat staff, also to renovate and refurbish the infrastructure and ICT of the Parliament. To this end, the project period is divided in two phases: phase 1 from January to September 2014 (prior to elections) and phase 2 from September 2014 to December 2016.

3. Project objectives and activities

The objectives of the project are clearly stated in the Project Document, and they are specified as overall (long-term) and specific objectives. Then the four outputs are listed. The Project Document foresees in narrative paragraphs describing the main content under each of the project outputs.

The overall project objective is to contribute to the transition to democracy and the rule of law in Fiji. The specific objectives are 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. The goal is to provide 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.

The project document points at four outcomes of the project: "Parliament as an institution strengthened", "MPs knowledgeable on their tasks", "MPs knowledgeable about coalition building, negotiating skills and engage in dispute resolution", and "Parliamentary engagement with citizens strengthened".

When analyzing the proposed project activities described under each of these outcomes (see chapter on Project Implementation), it is obvious that the project design has chosen for both soft interventions (capacity building) and hard interventions (ICT and infrastructure investments).

The capacity building approach reflects traditional instruments such as workshops, legal advice, technical assistance, coaching and international exposure. In the context of political fragility and for the purpose of the creation of a new institution of Parliament, it was a wise choice that the project opted for well tested approaches and project activities, rather than piloting new approaches from the very beginning. In a context where the executive is a dominant force and UNDP's cooperation with the Fiji leadership had to be re-established, it was wise to design the project in a standardised way, which enabled the project to demonstrate to all political parties that its approach and proposals have been implemented and previously validated in other Parliaments. This has strengthened the confidence of all national stakeholders in the sincerity of the international support to the transition process.

4. Risks and assumptions

The 'risk assessment' contained in the Project Document is an important instrument to assess in advance what can hamper the project implementation, and what mitigation measures the project needs to take. Most UNDP parliamentary project documents have a well-elaborated risk-log annexed to the Project Document.

As UNDP was not part of the support to the electoral process in 2014, the support to the creation and development of the Fiji Parliament after the elections was all the more important. The risks of engaging in parliament were well assessed prior to the start of the project, through the Parliament Needs Assessment, and the specific risk and assumptions section in the Project Document. It enabled the UNDP to engage in

the area of Parliament support in Fiji with sufficient confidence that risks and assumptions were well considered. A specific risk log in the Project Document would have been useful, outlining in further detail some of the mitigating initiatives foreseen.

The donors were included in the project design, asked for their inputs and recommendations for instance during the December 2013 needs assessment mission, and contributed to ensure that the project was focussed on a results-based approach (RBA) and had a strong risk assessment. Hence, the project planned for an additional risk assessment at the time when the project moves from Phase I (January – September 2014) to Phase II (October 2014 – December 2016).

Looking back at the discussions held in 2014, one of the donors said that the project was a 'life saver' for UNDP in Fiji. The donor said this because following the decision of UNDP not to engage with the elections the parliament project showed that UNDP could still play a useful role in the transition process and was once again a central governance actor in Fiji. The project enabled rebuilding relationships with the authorities and political parties of Fiji, donors and civil society. In this way, the project has given a large boost to the United Nations in Fiji who implemented the project, as well as the donors in terms of visibility.

5. Budget information

The Project Document has a stated budget of 2,988,510 USD. Annex C to the Project Document is a one-page budget overview. The budget overview gives the amounts foreseen under generalized categories such as supplies, materials, equipment, contractual services, travel, workshops and training, and general operations. Based upon the information provided in the one-page budget overview, it is hard to comment on the project budget. A more detailed budget in the Annex C to the Project Document would have been useful, although some further detail on budget amounts has been included in the Results and Resources Framework (RRF). We are aware that the project team has detailed Excel budget tables at hand and in the UNDP ATLAS system.

As the project started, its budget was fully covered by the donor's contributions. The project found itself in a very fortunate situation. Amongst others, this was made possible due to the fact that the donors were consulted on the project design, which enabled them to raise the funds for their contribution to the project budget early on.

The project is well supported by the donors. It is also well noted that Fiji Parliament engaged in-kind contributions from the Parliament budget (lunches, dinners, travels, office), and that the Parliament progressively joins the project and the donors' contributions. Through our discussions with the beneficiary of the project, it has been suggested to include in the budget a monetization of the in-kind contribution of the parliament to the project activities.

6. Implementation and management arrangements

The Project Document mentions that the project is managed and implemented by UNDP. It speaks about a Steering Committee (SC) which aims to the overall management of the project. The SC's task is to oversee transparency, accountability and efficiency of the project operations. It also permits to assess opportunities, risks and political challenges, as well as linking the project to other relevant Government and development partners initiatives. The Project Document mentions the composition of the SC, although the frequency or the number of meetings is not specifically mentioned. It is understood that the SC itself decided on 6-monthly meetings. The Project Document does not touch upon the chairmanship of the SC meetings, though it is understood that the United Nations Resident Representative chairs the meetings. At the start of the meetings of the SC, a ToR has been agreed upon as well. The Project Document mentions that the members of the SC receive the annual report; however also the quarterly reports are shared with the SC.

As part of the management arrangements, this project has been placed within the UNDP Pacific Centre, which is managing a regional parliamentary program for many years, assisting 15 Parliaments. The advantage of placing the Fiji project as part of this regional parliamentary program was, firstly, political. As part of a regional program that had already been endorsed by stakeholders in the region, there was no need for a signature of the then non-elected Government of Fiji to endorse the project. Secondly, by placing the project within the existing regional parliamentary program, the availability of project staff was guaranteed from the very beginning of the project. Extensive project delays due to time-consuming staff recruitment procedures have been avoided. In practice, the project reports to both the UNDP Multi-Country Office (MCO) and the Regional Centre. With the merger of the MCO and the Pacific Centre per 1 January 2016, the project will continue to function within a regional project context.

7. Project sustainability

The Project Document mentions the approaches more likely to guarantee the sustainability of the project interventions and thus, to ensure that project inputs will last beyond its lifetime. Examples are technical assistance to develop the legal and policy frameworks for Parliament, work with Secretariat staff to build their capacity and skills, training and mentoring for MPs to build their skills and capacity.

However, since this is a parliamentary creation project, it is clear that three years is a too short period to guarantee a full sustainability, meaning to guarantee that all project inputs and contributions will be taken forward without any project support. Most other Parliaments in transitional societies, or in a context of political fragility have received development assistance for a much longer period than three years before they even could fully incorporate the project contributions in a sustainable way, and finally develop a parliamentary culture. Building a parliamentary culture in Fiji will take some times but could finally ensure the project sustainability. It might have been useful to refer to this perspective in the Project Document's section on project sustainability.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

The Project Document is composed of a section on the monitoring and evaluation framework. The Annex A "indicative output indicators" outlines for each of the outputs the baseline and the indicators (two to four indicators for each output). The Annex B is an indicative timeline, assigning each activity area to one or more quarters of the years (2014, 2015, 2016). From a planning perspective at the start of the project, this is satisfactory.

However, the monitoring and evaluation framework reveals some gaps. The project implementation would have benefitted from a more explicitly designed process on how annual work plans are to be prepared, in particular the consultation with all the stakeholders. In addition, it would also have been useful to stipulate that the structure of annual work plans and of the quarterly and annual progress reports should follow the structure of the Results and Resources Framework. This would facilitate the monitoring of project implementation.

The evaluation section of the Project Document is rather short, mentioning the mid-term evaluation as the only concrete evaluation instrument. Additional reference could have been made to the role of the Multi-Country Office in project assurance, and to the way in which the project team will conduct monitoring and evaluation throughout the life-span of the project (client satisfaction questionnaires, etc.).

9. Cross cutting issues

The Project Document has no specific section on how to address cross cutting issues such as gender, environment / climate change, MDGs / SDGs in general or civil society involvement. Although activities under the output 2.2 'parliamentary engagement with citizens' are included in the Results and Resources

Framework, there is no distinct approach to gender-mainstreaming in the project activities in terms of support to legislation, oversight or research priorities.

Given the political context of Fiji (e.g. limited experience with involvement of civil society in public hearings and lack of familiarity with the MDGs / SDGs), it would be preferable for the Project Document to mainstream such cross-cutting issues in project activities, as is the case in most other UNDP Project Documents for parliamentary strengthening. Nevertheless, the implementation of the project activities does pay attention to gender mainstreaming and civil society inclusion.

10. Results and resources framework

The Results and Resources Framework (RRF) is a comprehensive overview matrix, outlining the intended outputs, indicators, baselines, targets, indicative activities, responsible partners, and inputs. It is based on a UNDP standard format. The RRF is the operational guide for project implementation and the basis for drafting the Annual Work Plans. The Project Document includes the 7 pg. RRF as annex.

Each of the four components has a set of indicators. Indicators help to determine to what extent the project is achieving the expected results. They are a means of measuring what actually happened against what was planned in terms of quantity, quality and time. In this RRF, the project indicators are mostly qualitative and very few of them are quantitative. The best practice in parliamentary project design look for a balanced mix of qualitative and quantitative indicators.

Baseline data establish a foundation from which to measure change. Without it, it is very difficult to measure change over time or to monitor and evaluate retrospectively. Baseline data allows progress to be measured against the situation that prevailed before an intervention.⁹

Best practice in parliamentary project design also suggests that there is an alignment between the baseline, the indicator, the target and the indicative activity. This means that for each indicative activity / actions, the RRF mentions what is the baseline which the activity / action wants to remedy, what is the annual target for this activity, and what is the indicator to measure the progress on this activity. Although we understand that it would have been hard to draft an RRF in such detail prior to the establishment of the Fiji Parliament in early 2014, it would have been useful to provide for, for instance, more baseline information in the RRF. Nevertheless, it was noted that the 2015 Annual Work Plan does correspond with the above mentioned best practice in parliamentary project design, and does see an alignment between the baseline, the indicator, the target and the indicative activity.

Best practice in parliamentary project design suggest that, at the start of a new project, all partners through a consultative process agree on how progress towards achieving outcomes should be measured, and how to determine the indicators of success. Such consultative process on the indicators are repeated once a year, on the occasion of drafting the Annual Work Plan for the next year and preparing the annual report from the past year. It is understood that it was not possible to initiate these discussions in 2014, as the parliament was still to be elected or had just been constituted. However, for the design of the 2016 Annual Work Plan that could be a useful way forward.

In summary, the RRF of the Project Document provides a clear overview of activities, which largely matches the description of outcomes mentioned in the main text of the Project Document. The RRF was of sufficient quality to enable the drafting of more detailed Annual Work Plans in terms of indicators and baselines.

⁹ UNDP, *Handbook on planning, monitoring and evaluating for development results*, New York, 2011, p. 69.

VI. Project Implementation

This chapter is the most central chapter of the evaluation report. It assesses to what extent the objectives of the project have been achieved through the specific project activities. In this chapter, we evaluate the implementation of the four stated outcomes of the project: "parliament as an institution strengthened", "MPs knowledgeable on their tasks", "MPs knowledgeable about coalition building, negotiating skills and engage in dispute resolution", and "Parliamentary engagement with citizens strengthened". In this chapter, we list the main activities under each outcome, and provide information on the development of the parliament in these areas. Each section foresees in a qualitative commentary, followed by occasional recommendations for further project support. Each outcome is evaluated according to the above mentioned evaluation criteria, followed by a specific mark. The rationale for this evaluation approach has been explained in the introduction chapter of this report.

1. Output "Parliament as an institution strengthened"

The analysis of the implementation of the output 'Parliament as an institution strengthened' has been divided into three sections, as was outlined in the Project Document: 1/ Infrastructure and hardware; 2/ Capacity Development for the Parliament Secretariat and Secretary General; 3/ Support to the formulation of parliamentary procedures, processes and policies.

1.1. Infrastructure and hardware

- Building Infrastructure Assessment Report and ICT Assessment Report (April-May 2014)
- Purchasing and installing ICT equipment prior to first sitting of parliament (August-September 2014)
- Refurbishment of Parliament premises (August-September 2014)
- DVD on the experience and lessons learned of setting up the new Parliament.

Ahead of the September 2014 national elections, the project conducted an assessment of the requirements to make the anticipated parliament building ready for the inaugural sitting. Experts from the Parliaments of Scotland, Wales and Australia did an extensive assessment and drafted the *Fiji Parliament Building Infrastructure Assessment Report* and the *Fiji Parliament ICT Assessment Report*. Based upon the findings included in the reports, and with the funding from the Australian government, UNDP offered to purchase and install the full list of ICT equipment's, valued at USD 900,000.

Time was a considerable challenge in the implementation of this project component. While the two assessments reports were submitted to the Office of the Attorney General (AG) and the Solicitor General's Office on 19th May 2014, only on 28th July UNDP received official confirmation from the Office of the Attorney General accepting UNDP's offer to procure the full list of ICT equipment while indicating that all renovation work, including procurement, installation, commissioning and testing of ICT components needed to be completed by 12th September 2014. Since there were only six weeks left to complete the task, UNDP activated its *Fast Track Procedures* (FTP). During August 2014, UNDP participated in several meetings of the Government's ICT Working Group to finalise the ICT equipment list, review and evaluate the proposals received from vendors and make a selection of vendors to award contracts to supply various ICT equipment. The project established good cooperation with the Government and with the customs services, enabling it to get equipment from New Zealand and Australia quickly transferred to the Parliament's premises. The Parliament ICT experts from the Parliaments of Wales and Victoria assisted for the entire period and checked the installation of all equipment, including the audio and video equipment's

in the main chamber, the electronic voting equipment, as well as ICT equipment installed in the two Committee rooms, the library, and the offices of the Speaker, the Secretary General, and those in the Procedures office. In the end, thanks to the possibility to call upon the *UNDP Fast Track Procedures (FTP)*, and thanks to the dedication of the experts from the various supporting Parliaments, all was ready for the inaugural session of Fiji Parliament on 6 October 2014.

In review, it can be evaluated that the ICT component was very well managed. The project brought top-notch parliamentary ICT experts from Wales and Scotland to Fiji. The ICT investments financed by donors have been matched with a financial contribution of the beneficiary country itself, which shows its commitment to the process. The project established user-agreement policies. All equipment was handed over to Parliament, which is now the full owner. The project used surveys in order to get feed-back and maximize the utilisation of ICT equipment. During the mid-term evaluation, we have observed that the ICT is well integrated in the daily proceedings of Parliament and well utilized by the staff. However, the use of iPads by MPs is mixed, and depends on the general computer literacy of the MPs.

We suggest that, by the end of 2016, the project conducts a utilization review of the ICT equipment, its usage and the prevailing training needs. The utilization review will provide a useful input for the drafting of an ICT Strategic Plan aimed at establishing the "e-Parliament" in the years ahead.

The project also substantially contributed to the refurbishment of the previous courtroom building and turn it into proper Parliament premises, based upon the above mentioned assessment report. It enabled the smooth start of the operations of Parliament and it was of symbolic importance, demonstrating to the population that parliament was the "House of Democracy", which deserved to be well taken care of.

One aspect of the renovation was the investment in translation booths and interpretation equipment. This was decided based upon the draft Standing Orders, which foresaw in a multi-lingual functioning of the Parliament. However, when the SO were promulgated, the multi-linguality was taken out in favour of an English-only language policy of Parliament. Nevertheless, the project's investments in translation booths and interpretation equipment are not necessarily in-vain, as they provide the Parliament with the necessary instruments if, at a future moment in time, it wishes to revisit the issue; or when simultaneous interpretation is required at a particular occasion, such as an address to Parliament by a foreign leader speaking another language than English. This part of the investment can therefore still be considered value-for-money.

1.2. Capacity Development for the Parliament Secretariat and Secretary General

- Preparing the 'Parliament Staff Professional Development Programme' (August 2014)
- Leading the Table Office and mentoring of Table Office staff (September 2014 onwards)
- Templates for MPs to submit questions, motions and petitions (September - October 2014)
- Study tour to New Zealand Parliament for staff from the Solicitor General's Office (June 2014)
- Training for newly appointed Hansard Staff (August 2014)
- Workflow Development for Hansard Services (September 2014)
- Workflow Training for Hansard Production (October 2014)
- Drafting of Hansard policy and style guide (2014)
- Briefings and 'mock sessions' for newly appointed SG and deputy SG (September, October 2014)
- Procedural advice to the Office of the Speaker and the SG prior to the first meetings of the Public Accounts Committee, Standing Orders Committee and Business Committee (November 2014)
- Peer-to-peer mentoring by various resource persons from Westminster Parliaments to build the skills and knowledge of the secretariat staff (October - November 2014)
- Fiji Parliament Human Resources Assessment and Review

- Briefing paper on Staff Board (February 2015)
- Technical assistance and procedural advice during sittings (AI sittings in 2014-15)
- Senior management training (June 2015)
- Code of Conduct for parliamentary staff (March 2015)
- South-South exchange with the Clerks of the Parliaments of Fiji, Tonga & Solomon Islands (April 2015)

In the run-up to the inaugural session of Parliament on 6 October 2014, the project prepared a comprehensive 'Parliament Staff Professional Development Programme'. During the period July to September 2014, it was envisaged that the newly appointed Parliament Secretariat staff would benefit from a series of activities, such as: 1/ training workshops in Fiji; 2/ placements / short term secondments / study tours with other Parliaments; 3/ attendance at relevant regional & global training events and courses; 4/ advisers / experts in Parliament to provide advice to senior staff. However, with the exception of the Hansard staff, no Parliament staff had been appointed by the (previous) Government during the first eight months of 2014. This meant that the staff's professional development activities had to be postponed. In the first months of the new Parliament, a majority of the Parliament Secretariat staff were on secondment from various Ministries with the aim to support Parliament through the initial sittings and during the tabling of the national budget. In August, September and October 2014, the project conducted capacity building activities for Hansard staff, followed by drafting a Hansard policy document and style guide.

A couple of days prior to the inaugural session, the Secretary General was appointed, which enabled the start of the recruitment process of other staff in Parliament. The project provided advice on recruitment processes, development of Job Descriptions and ToRs.

As the staff recruitment process got underway, the project was able to conduct a number of trainings, mainly in the last quarter of 2014 and in 2015. The evaluator learned that the project's experts applied a capacity building methodology including: (1) workshops with presentations; (2.) practical exercises; (3.) group discussions; (4.) On the job coaching on issues which arise during the day; (5.) email and phone contact when experts are out of the country.

In addition, specifically for the Table Office, the project's expert from the Victoria Parliament managed the Table Office herself, until the time when Parliament staff was in place. Then, she assisted with further training and prepared a business plan and Standard Operating Procedures for the Table Office.

The project worked with the Unit for Inter-parliamentary relations to organize in a more structured way the outgoing visits and incoming delegations. Upon advice of the project, the Unit ensures that every outgoing parliamentary delegation submits a report, which is shared with the Speaker.

To establish good governance practices in the Secretariat of Parliament, the project prepared a briefing paper and provided advice and feedback on the effectiveness of the current Staff Board Committee governance structure, Staff Board Practice and Procedure Guidelines and recommend changes.

The project assisted with a senior management training for Parliament Secretariat; which was an entirely new and well appreciated experience for senior staff participating. The project provided inputs in relation to thematic issues and the development of skills set for senior management. It was noted that, within a politically polarized environment, parliament staff is sometimes under attack because of different perceptions on their ability. In these circumstances, it is beneficial that an external advisor from another Parliament is available to support and bounce back some ideas explored by Fiji Parliament staff.

In review, it can be evaluated that the Parliament secretariat has shown a steep learning curve to take on board experiences, information and best practices encountered at visits abroad and from technical experts visiting Fiji. The steep learning curve is evidenced by the fact that, during the time of the mid-term

evaluation mission in September 2014, the Secretariat stood ready to conduct a workshop for MPs on the budget process. At the last minute, the Government took over the briefings on the budget process; but, from a capacity building point of view, it was very promising that the Parliament staff was ready to conduct this activity by itself.

The evaluator has observed that the project regularly brought the same experts back to Fiji. This is a good choice as it enabled to deepen the learning experience and it provided continuity in the assistance.

The visits of experts to Suva and the attachments in the Victoria Parliament were very complementary; and in good sequencing. The outbound visits were planned after having faced some domestic experience in Suva, which made the staff placement in Victoria a more intense learning experience because the Fiji staff had gathered an initial point of reference at home. Study tours helped staff to be aware of the knowledge gaps and skills gaps they are facing; which then helped them to engage with the consultants in a more focussed way.

Parliament senior staff is aware of the need to work as independent and politically neutral staff and to be seen as such. This will be of utmost importance during the transition to the next Parliament in 2018. In March 2015, the project worked with Parliament on drafting a Code of Conduct for parliamentary staff. The Code amplifies the values contained in the relevant provisions of the Constitution, the Public Service Act 1999 and confirms the unique working environment in Parliament. Adherence to the Code of Conduct is important for building cross-party confidence in the functioning of a politically neutral staff.

Some of the twinning experts mentioned that the interaction with the Fiji Parliament (and other Pacific Islands Parliaments) is valuable for their own, more established Parliament as well, as it is an opportunity to question and review old practices.

The Parliament Secretariat has strong appreciation for the UNDP project and is eager for it to continue beyond 2016. While at the start of the project, the Fiji Parliament was dependent upon UNDP support, this is now, at the time of the MTE, no longer the case. The project took a conscious decision not to deploy permanent full-time international advisors in Parliament; and - within the Fiji context - this has contributed to strengthening the domestic structures at their establishment and enhanced sustainability. In addition, the project has connected the Secretary General with a network of other Clerks of Parliament, with whom in-person, email and phone consultations take place on regular basis. This is an additional sustainability mechanism built-in through the project.

Some of the persons interviewed during the mid-term evaluation noted that, although they had good experiences with all consultants coming to Fiji, a visit of one week is very intensive but slightly too short. It has been suggested that it would be more beneficial if the visits are slightly longer in time.

Finally, it can be said that the sustainability of parliamentary capacity building can further be enhanced by creating an institutional learning platform among Parliaments of the region, such as a regional Parliamentary Training Academy (see chapter with recommendations).

1.3. Support to the formulation of parliamentary procedures, processes and policies

- Drafting of Standing Orders
- Drafting of the Remuneration decree
- Drafting of the Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act
- Drafting of the Electronic Voting guide
- Procedural advice to Select Committee on the revision of Standing Orders
- Review and Collation of Hansard Policies from other Parliaments
- MP Handbook Developed
- MPs Guide to Standing Committee
- Procedural support during sitting periods

One of the key contributions of the project to the smooth beginning of the Parliament was the drafting of Standing Orders by UNDP's senior parliamentary consultants. They took the old Rules of Procedure from the previous, democratic Fiji House of Representatives as a starting point and enhanced them with several key provisions, such as: bills go to Committees; amendments are possible; committees are open to the public; and there is a mandatory gender equality clause for the work in Committees (SO, art. 1.10 sub 2). In this way, the Committee work got some teeth and became more inclusive.

The Parliamentary Needs Assessment and the draft Standing Orders foresaw in the establishment of an Independent Parliamentary Counsel within the parliamentary administration. This was not taken on board by the previous government when it signed off on the Standing Orders and the parliamentary organizational chart. MPs who want to ask legal advice or to submit a private members bill need to rely on the legal advice of the Office of the Solicitor General. MPs from the opposition parties claim that this puts them at a disadvantage in their parliamentary work. The Secretariat of Parliament tries to address this concern by calling upon the knowledge and skills of three legally skilled staff persons currently in Parliament - to investigate issues raised by the opposition, draft opinions on these issues and run it through the Solicitors General Office.

In the future, the UNDP project could assist parliament in working more intensively with the Solicitor General's Office to enhance their understanding of the role of Parliament and to respond to the need for legal advice which facilitates the work of all members of Parliament. While the Parliament is currently, as far as its legal capacity is concerned, depending on the Office of the Solicitor's General, the question of an Independent Parliamentary Counsel needs to be seen in the context of the emerging process of Parliament becoming an equal independent arm of the state, which is a process the Office of the Solicitor General will logically need to be part of.

In 2014, the UNDP's senior parliamentary consultants prepared a draft Act on parliamentary remuneration, based upon best practices in other countries. While the previous Government decided on a substantially different system of parliamentary remuneration and allowances, the current Parliament created a special Committee to review the issue. Following a specific request from the Fiji Parliament, the UNDP project recruited the former Deputy Clerk of the New Zealand House of Representatives to support the work of the special Committee by providing materials, best practices on processes and scenarios with the aim that the special Committee puts forward its conclusions on this issue; though within the limited time available that turned out not to be feasible. The UNDP project did not engage into the question of the specific amounts for salaries and remuneration, as this is for the stakeholders themselves to decide. In a number of other Parliaments, an independent "salary review commission" determines the salaries and remuneration, instead of the Government deciding on MPs' salaries or the Parliament deciding on its own salaries and allowances. Depending upon the conclusions of the special Committee, or in case the next Parliament would like to review the issue, the UNDP project should be ready to provide further advice on developing new legislation in line with the previous draft decree developed in 2014 and international practices, if that would be the request of Parliament.¹⁰

¹⁰ In the absence of a reviewed system, there is a risk that the pay gap between Ministers and backbenchers becomes too big, resulting in all backbenchers wanting to become ministers (and a too-large cabinet) and a weak parliament. In the absence of a reviewed system, most MPs might become part-time MPs, seeking other employments and incomes in addition to the job of MP. This has the risk that the most capable politicians will choose for more attractive jobs in the private sector and this will further weaken the governance in the country. The House Committee would be well placed to look into the conclusions and recommendations of the special committee / ad hoc committee. If the House Committee would like to do so, and if requested, the UNDP project should be prepared to continue its technical input into the discussions on this matter.

In addition to the Standing Orders and the draft Act on parliamentary remuneration, the project's senior parliamentary consultants in 2014 also prepared the draft Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act. Until today, this Act is still pending.

As part of the advice on procedures, the project's expert from the Victoria Parliament assisted the Fiji Parliament in preparing templates for filing parliamentary questions, motions and petitions. The templates are widely used and incorporated in the daily proceedings of Parliament. The evaluator learned about the specifics on one example, which is the template for petitions. While the previous Parliament saw only one petition filed for the entire term of Parliament, during the first year, a total of fourteen petitions have been already filed. While the technical assistance of the project might obviously have contributed to this increase in the number of petitions, at the same time the increase is related to the political context in which motions of the oppositions are defeated in the House; while petitions are forwarded to Committees without a vote in Parliament, hence, MPs have a stronger incentive to file petitions when attempting to influence the agenda of the Committees.

Another policy document which the project is currently contributing to is the Parliament Strategic Plan. A Canadian consultant visited Fiji in August and September 2015 for two weeks and prepared the draft Strategic Plan. The draft document is currently with the parliament senior staff for comments, before it will be forwarded to MPs for further input. Once the process is finalized, the Speaker will table the Strategic Plan in the House. The project's consultant is "holding the pen" of the Strategic Plan in an inclusive process aimed at designing a document which will provide further guidance to the institutional development of the Fiji Parliament and to the priorities for donor support.

Evaluation chart for the Output "Parliament as an institution strengthened"

- *Relevance*: The project's assistance in the areas of infrastructure and ICT was highly relevant for a smooth start of the newly established Parliament. The coaching of senior staff, trainings and working visits abroad have made a significant contribution to the establishment and professional functioning of the parliament secretariat. Drafting of the Standing Orders and procedural advice during the sittings has enabled the Fiji Parliament to establish its proceedings based on best international practices. The evaluator considers the relevance of this component as very high.
- *Efficiency*: The implementation of this component is generally considered as efficient. The project relied on quality inputs of experts and has put a number of quality control mechanisms in place, such as: (1.) For each assignment, a detailed ToR with concrete deliverables has been drafted. (2.) With the Parliaments participating in the implementation of the project (Australia, New Zealand), the project team discussed the expert's specific approach, including the need to be politically aware and culturally sensitive. (3.) When selecting an expert, he/she was asked to present an outline of the study or training, prior to commencement. (4.) The project team gives comments on the draft reports; and remuneration is conditional to approval of the deliverable against the criteria outlined in the ToR. The project managed to deal with the timing-challenges on e.g. the delivery of ICT equipment prior to the inaugural session of Parliament or the holding of staff professional development activities. The evaluator considers the efficiency of the component as very high.
- *Effectiveness*: The evaluator learned that the project applied a capacity building methodology which includes workshops with presentations; practical exercises; group discussions; and on-the-job coaching. The project regularly brought the same experts back to Fiji; and this enabled the deepening of the learning experience and it provided continuity. The evaluator noticed that the Parliament Secretariat has shown a steep learning curve by taking on board the experiences, information and best practices encountered at visits abroad or from technical experts visiting Fiji. Study tours helped staff to be aware of the knowledge gaps and skills gabs they are facing; which then helped them to engage with the

consultants in a more focussed way. The evaluator considers the effectiveness of the component as high.

- *Impact*: The impact of the project activities is noticed throughout Parliament. The templates for filing parliamentary questions, motions and petitions are widely used and incorporated in the daily proceedings of Parliament. The ICT is well integrated in the daily proceedings of Parliament and well utilized by the staff. The Standing Orders as drafted by the project's experts have become the corner stone of the functioning of Parliament. The evaluator considers the impact of the project under this component as very high.
- *Sustainability*: While at the start of the project, the Fiji Parliament was dependent upon UNDP support, this is no longer the case. The project's decision not to deploy permanent full-time international advisors in parliament has, with the context of Fiji, contributed to strengthening the domestic structures and thus enhanced sustainability. The project has connected the Secretary General with a network of other Clerks of Parliament, which is an additional sustainability mechanism built-in through the project. For the first time in September 2015, the Secretariat was ready by itself to conduct a workshop for MPs (on the budget process). The depth of the discussions at the recent senior management retreat indicated that the policies and processes as advised by the project are well embedded in the functioning of parliament. The evaluator considers the sustainability of the project under this component as high.

<i>EVALUATION COMPONENT 1</i>	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	VERY HIGH
Relevance				X
Efficiency				X
Effectiveness			X	
Impact				X
Sustainability			X	

2. Output "MPs knowledgeable on their tasks"

2.1. Capacity development for newly elected MPs

- Half day induction prior to first sitting of Parliament (September 2014)
- Two-day induction following the first sitting of Parliament (October 2014)
- Briefing on Standing Orders for in the lead up to the tabling of the 2015 budget (October 2014)
- Briefing on the use of the iPads (October 2014)
- Advise to the Speaker on procedural rulings, and justifications made available to all MPs
- Study visit to New Zealand Parliament for Deputy Speaker, Party Whips and SG
- UK visit for Speaker, Leader of Government, Leader of Opposition, SG (January–February 2015)
- Concept Notes outlining possible training and briefing sessions
- Workshop with Asia Forum of Parliamentarians for Population and Development (AFPPD)
- Draft Handbook for MPs
- Briefing for MPs on MDG and Post 2015 Development Agenda
- MP retreat for 5 days to discuss key development issues
- Training for MPs on (i) speech making (ii) interacting with the media

As a significant number of the fifty newly elected MPs had no prior experience of working in Parliament, there was a clear need for proper induction. A first, half-day induction workshop was organised by the project on 30th September 2014 with a focus on the scenario for the first session of the new Parliament, MPs rights and responsibilities, tour of Parliament building and a test run of the ICT equipment in the Chamber. The initial induction session has been particularly well received, with MPs being very engaged. The attendance by MPs was high, with the majority of Ministers (including the Prime Minister) as well as senior Opposition members (including the Leader of the Opposition) present.

Prior to the inaugural session of Parliament, the project was able to organise a series of briefing sessions for the *FijiFirst* Speaker Nominee having also offered the same to the Opposition should they decide to also make a nomination for the position of Speaker. The briefing sessions had a similar focus as the briefing sessions for SG and deputy SG. A series of 'mock runs' were conducted in the Chamber for the Speaker Nominee in preparation for what to expect at the first sessions of Parliament. Role plays were also conducted to enable the Speaker Nominee to explore making rulings based on the Standing Orders.

During the past twelve months, the project has provided procedural advice to the Speaker, initially on a daily basis in Parliament. The procedural advice was related to the proceedings, as they happened, and included input into the formulation of the Speaker's rulings. Initially, the UNDP experts from Victoria Parliament drafted the rulings. Soon afterwards, the Parliament took over and started drafting by itself while the UNDP experts from Victoria Parliament gave feed-back to the proposed language. While the UNDP experts initially were asked to sit-in at the Business Committee meetings and the meetings held between the Speaker and the whips, gradually the Speaker became more confident in her role, and the UNDP experts were then on 'stand-by' outside the meeting room. Currently, the experts are also available in their home country for on-line or phone advice when needed. The current practices are a reflection of the conscious decision to be less involved and leave more space for Parliament to take its own decisions.

At the same time, the South-South cooperation is starting to take shape, with other Parliaments from the Pacific region coming to Fiji (e.g. Speaker of Vanuatu) and learning from the progress made in the parliament in Suva.

The project's advice to the Speaker is also relevant to the work of the Business Committee. Based upon the model of the New Zealand Parliament, the Fiji Standing Orders foresee in a Business Committee which is responsible for setting the agenda of parliament. The Committee is chaired by the Speaker and, according

to the SO, aims at reaching agreement based upon "consensus or near-consensus". Opposition parties perceive that insufficient efforts are made in this direction; and that the Business Committee does not sufficiently attempt to reach agreement on "consensus or near-consensus". The project has given procedural advice based upon practices in other Parliaments, in particular in New Zealand.

During the mid-term evaluation mission, one of the project's experts noted that the composition of the Business Committee is very Fiji-specific, since it also includes the Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the third party. While in New Zealand the Business Committee includes the Speaker and the party whips, in Fiji it was decided to add the party leaders. In the current political context of Fiji, one can claim that this composition makes sense since the Business committee is the primary platform where the political leaders meet. Although the Business Committee is thus set to fulfil a role beyond the management of Parliament, namely to facilitate consensus building between the leaders, the current political polarization seems to suggest that this potential role hasn't been realized yet. While a review of the Standing Orders in the next Parliament might potentially consider a new composition of the Business Committee with the Speaker, party whips and deputy whips only, the occurrence of a regular political dialogue between the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, the Leader of Opposition and political party leaders would be desirable for the continuation of the transition process in the country and for the process of deepening democracy in Fiji.

At the time of the MTE in September 2015, the Parliament organized a closed-door session to discuss the government's proposal for a financial loan, and on that occasion suspended the SO. While the House approved the loan, the opposition asked questions about the procedure to suspend the SO. There was need for technical, procedural advice in order for the Speaker to make a considered ruling. While half a year earlier the UNDP advisor would draft such rulings, now the Secretariat does it, and the advisor gives feedback. The UNDP procedural advice has built the capacity of the senior officials, strengthened their confidence and provided clarity to all MPs that the rulings are not arbitrary. To demystify the procedures, it helps when the Speaker can refer to precedents, international practices and other rulings. This is the kind of input provided by the project. As the Speaker is establishing a series of rulings, it is advisable that the rulings are also publicly available and posted at the parliament web-site.

To strengthen the capacity of the newly elected MPs, the project organized several working visits abroad. There was the 2014 study visit to the New Zealand Parliament for the Deputy Speaker, party whips and the Secretary General. In January–February 2015, there was a visit to the UK for the Speaker, the Leader of Government in parliament, the Leader of the opposition and the SG. The delegation visited the UK Parliament in London, and the Parliaments of Scotland and Wales. The bipartisan visits abroad have contributed to establishing regular working relationships across party lines, and are important for the further development of a parliamentary culture. For most MPs who participated in the visits, it was an eye opener, as 90 % of current Fiji MPs are first term MPs.

As part of the MP capacity building support, the project co-sponsored a workshop with the Asia Forum of Parliamentarians for Population and Development (AFPPD) and organized a briefing for MPs on MDGs and Post 2015 Development Agenda. ILO and UN Women provided relevant information. The project supported the MPs retreat, which further involved WHO and UNICEF. We consider it a good practice that the UN Country Team brings all of its expertise together to strengthen the young parliamentary institution in the country. This practice can be further reinforced in the next project phase.

2.2. Research and analysis of the Parliamentary Service

An important aspect of strengthening the MPs' capacity is developing a strong parliamentary library and research service. In Fiji, work in this area is at its initial phase. The Parliament currently employs one librarian and one researcher. Other posts couldn't be filled yet with the right persons having the right

knowledge and skills set. The project arranged for the librarians from the New Zealand Parliament and the Victoria Parliament to come to Fiji to work with the Fiji Parliament staff to develop a multi-year strategy which is now the basis for development of the Parliament's Library and Research strategy. Pending further recruitment efforts, the project has now provided an external researcher from New Zealand on a 3 month placement, to assist with research support, further develop details of the four year research strategy, and draft Standing Operating Procedures for library research work in Fiji. It is advised that the Parliament creates a roster for national experts who can contribute to strengthen the research capacity.

2.3. Budget Scrutiny and Oversight

- Advise to PAC by the former Chair of the Australian Public Accounts and Audit Committee
- Support to drafting of the PAC consolidated report on the Auditor General's reports 2007-2009
- The Victoria parliament hosted the Fiji PAC committee
- PAC members to attend ACPAC conference in Adelaide
- PAC Chair and Deputy Chair to attend CPA UK branch 5th Westminster Workshop (Malta)

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) was officially appointed in late November 2014 and its first Committee meeting scheduled in early December. The SO foresees that the PAC is chaired by a member of the opposition. The PAC has the power to conduct an examination of accounts, amongst others. After the return to democracy, there was a considerable backlog in reports of the Auditor General to be reviewed by parliament. Hence, the PAC started to review the Auditor General's reports for the years from 2007 onwards.

The project provided substantial support through the advisory services of a former MP and Chair of the Australian Public Accounts and Audit Committee. He worked with the Chair and members of PAC in Fiji in discussing and reviewing the reports of the Auditor General. The project's advisor drafted the analytical report on the 2007-2009 accounts for discussion at the meetings of the PAC. The PAC report includes a number of recommendations, lessons learned and general trends as identified through these reports of the Auditor General. As the work proceeded, the confidence of the members of the PAC grew that they were doing the right thing in examining the Auditor General's reports in considerable depth. The UNDP assistance and advice gave reassurance to the members of the PAC that it is right to question the Government officials and that this should not be perceived as an offense towards the Government, but normal oversight practice. The project's advice gave legitimacy to the work of PAC, but it remains a delicate balancing act between the concerns of the ruling party and of the opposition. Hence, the project's advisor explained to the members of the PAC the approach and responsibility of PACs in other jurisdictions.

The consolidated PAC report 2007-2009 found good reception among members of the Fiji Parliament. It was tabled in Parliament, and though a parliamentary debate didn't take place yet, it has some significance that the Ministry of Finance did attend the final PAC meeting on the matter, accepted the recommendations of the PAC and promised to follow-up on them.

The next PAC report will cover the expenditures for the years 2010-2013 as examined by the Auditor General. The drafting and debate on the second consolidated PAC report is still ongoing.

The project's advisor worked mainly with the chair and members of the PAC, and not so much with the staff. He had general conversations with the staff; but not yet any specific training for the staff. In future, it would be useful to involve the staff more in the PAC policy work, include them in the capacity building work for the PAC and organize a specific training for them.

The Fiji Parliament Standing Orders stipulate that each Parliament Committee must, in its work, consider the impact of policies and proposals on both men and women. To assist the PAC to consider these issues and provide research and information to the Committee as it developed its first consolidated report for the

years 2007-2009, the project facilitated that UN Women identified an expert to undertake the gender-related analysis. UN Women presented the findings from this research to the Committee.

Overall, the project's advisory support to the PAC has been of high quality, is strongly appreciated by the chair and members of the PAC and can be a model for the project's support to other Committees as well. It is fair to say that without the project's support the PAC would not have been in a position to draft and adopt such extensive consolidated report on the Auditor General Reports for the years 2007-2009.

In terms of areas for future capacity building support, the role of Parliament in the approval of the state budget deserves special attention. Currently, the budget process in Parliament is very tightly timed.¹¹ After the Minister of Finance presents the draft budget, there is one week of break to study the budget, and the following week is the time for discussing and approving the budget.

As part of the process of deepening democracy in Fiji, one may expect that in the next couple of years, the Standing Orders will be reviewed and foresee in some more time for Parliament to study and examine the draft budget. If that is the case, the project should be ready to provide the required technical assistance. As foreseen in the draft 2015-2018 Strategic Plan, MPs will receive ongoing general training on budget review and specialized training on gender based budgeting; and Parliament will ensure that deliberations on the budget review are fully accessible to the public.

2.4. Technical Support to the Standing Committees

- Assist Head of Committees Division to track and log committee meetings and committee work.
- Draft a number of templates and operating procedures
- Ongoing support for committee work
- Training for Committee Chairs / Members
- Handbook for Committee Chair and Members

The Parliament of Fiji has six Standing Committees. During the last six months, Committees have become more operational. MPs from different parties do sit together and work together. Those spoken to by the evaluator claimed that amendments from the opposition parties have been valued on merit and been accepted on occasion. Following an initial period when there was concern that Bills were being fast-tracked, most bills are going to Standing Committees for review. The Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee held a meeting where representatives of the security institutions were present and provided information to the committee. This is a significant step, one year after the restoration of democracy in Fiji. Committee chairs are committed to field visits. For instance, during the time of our MTE mission, the Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights made a series of field visits in relation to the Income Tax Bill. Many of these achievements would not have been possible without the support given by this project.

Through the project's work, two draft guides have been prepared, one for Committee chairpersons and one for staff on the work of Committees. The two guides provide conceptual and organizational guidance to the conduct of Committees and will be distributed to MPs once the current review of Standing Orders is completed.

But the Committee activity needs significant strengthening. Currently, the work of Committee staff is mainly practical/organizational and secretarial. Committee staff organizes hearings, compiles the written

¹¹ In the Parliament of Fiji the budget process is outlined in Chapter 8 of the Standing Orders which stipulates that there is established a Committee of the Whole Parliament called the Committee of Supply. Following adoption by the Cabinet, the budget is sent to Parliament as an Appropriation Bill to be scrutinized by the Committee of Supply with due consideration to the principle of gender equality, as stipulated under Standing Order 110. The Appropriation Bill must be accompanied by an Estimates document and is circulated to all members immediately after the Bill is introduced. The public is entitled to observe the Committee during its deliberations.

submissions of witnesses and prepares a report and the Hansard. However, the Committee staff is often not in a position to prepare an analytical report with recommendations for follow up yet. On a couple of occasions, the project has provided external international expertise, e.g. to the Foreign Affairs Committee on the issue of the Anti-Torture Convention; and the project's advisor prepared an analytical report on this Convention for the Committee. The Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights examined the Employment Relations Promulgation Bill 2015, based upon written submissions and oral evidence heard at the Committee's public hearings in Parliament. The project supported the Committee in this endeavour and arranged for ILO to provide input to the committee's work. However, overall, more capacity building for Committee staff is needed, so that the level of staff assistance can move from practical organizational support to policy advisory services for the Committees. Also, additional work is needed with the Committee chairs and deputy chairs to strengthen their capacity and knowledge. While further training is provided to committee staff, Parliament is advised to create a roster of national experts. We propose that the UNDP project makes more international technical advisors available to different committees, in a way similar to the successful assistance provided to the PAC.

Strengthening the knowledge and skills of Members and staff of Committees will be crucial for Parliament in 2016. Next year, Parliament will meet during four sitting weeks, and it is expected that more work will take place at Committee level. The project should adjust its priorities for support accordingly. We suggest that all committees prepare an Annual Work Plan, with project assistance where needed.

2.5. Consultative and transparent legislative process

As is the case in Westminster-style Parliaments, most legislation in Fiji is prepared by the Government and tabled in Parliament. Draft laws prepared by the line ministries go through the Solicitor General's Office for review, prior to tabling in Parliament.

On the one hand, in recent sessions, laws were introduced under section 51 of the Standing Orders, this is under expedited procedure which means that Bills do not proceed through the different stages (1st reading, 2nd reading, Standing Committee, Committee of the Whole, 3rd reading) within the timeline outlined in the general provisions of the Standing Orders. On the other hand, the Income Tax Bill was sent to a Standing Committee for scrutiny. This enabled the Standing Committee to conduct hearings throughout the country, as mentioned above.

The President's speech to Parliament in September 2015 announced the Government's legislative plans for next year: 23 laws will be tabled in parliament in 2016: 16 new laws and 7 amendments to existing laws. While it is very beneficial that the President's speech provided the information on the number of laws to be expected for next year, the need for an annual legislative plan has become all the more clear. As the Parliament will sit during four sitting weeks in 2016, the legislative plan will be critically important for the functioning of the democratic system in Fiji. The scope of the legislative agenda should be to outline which laws will come-in when, which committees will review them and by which time; while ensuring that the bills will be reviewed under regular procedure (not expedited procedure); and which kind of public engagement can be set up.

During 2015, the project already advised the senior leadership of parliament on the need to prepare drafting such legislative agenda. During the mid-term evaluation mission, the proposal for an annual legislative plan was endorsed by the Speaker, the Government representatives in Parliament and the opposition parties. Further to the policy advice already given in 2015, the project will be well placed to offer practical assistance to Parliament in drafting this plan, taking into account relevant practices in other Parliaments (UK, Canada).

Evaluation chart for the Output "MPs knowledgeable on their tasks"

- *Relevance:* As most MPs were new to Parliament, the project started a number of knowledge and skills building initiatives for MPs, which were very relevant. The induction workshops helped parliament getting through the initial sessions. The procedural advice to the Speaker, the PAC and other committees brought knowledge and best practices to the parliamentary proceedings in Fiji in a way that was often an eye opener for MPs and that helped to establish a working practice suitable for the Fiji parliament. The evaluator considers the relevance of this component as very high.
- *Efficiency:* The implementation of this component is considered efficient. Amongst others, input for the knowledge building of MPs relied on the expertise at hand within other UN agencies. It is a good practice that the UN Country Team brings all of its expertise together to strengthen the young parliamentary institution. The project regularly brought the same international experts back to Fiji. This was a good choice as it enabled to deepen the learning experience and it provided continuity. The efficiency of the management of this component is considered very high.
- *Effectiveness:* The interviews during the mid-term evaluation learned that the project's advisory support, for instance on the Speaker's rulings, was very effective because it built the capacity of the senior officials, strengthened their confidence and provided clarity to all MPs that the rulings are not arbitrary but based on relevant international best practices. The bipartisan visits abroad have contributed to establishing regular working relationships across party lines, and are important for the further development of a parliamentary culture. For the area of the parliamentary library and research, the project's support resulted in a four years research strategy, and draft Standing Operating Procedures for library research in Fiji. The effectiveness of the project is considered very high.
- *Impact:* The impact of the project's support to the operations of Committees is noticed throughout parliament. During the last six months, Committees have become more operational. MPs from different parties do sit together and work together. Amendments from the opposition parties have been valued on merit and been accepted on occasion. Several Committee chairs are committed to field visits. The evaluator considers the impact of the project under this component as very high.
- *Sustainability:* While the project's assistance to the PAC and other committees is well regarded and appreciated, the project's input to the sustainability of the Committee work lays - for instance - in the Handbooks for Chair and members of Committees. However, more work is needed with committee chairs and deputy chairs on their capacity and knowledge. After one year of assistance to parliament and its committees, it is still too early to assess the sustainability of the support. The development of the annual legislative plan of Parliament, which includes guidance on which laws will be forwarded to which committees at which moment in time, will provide a more clear framework for the required capacity building for the Committee staff. Committee staff which can provide policy advisory services for the Committees will guarantee the sustainability of the project's support to committees in future. The 'Parliament Staff Professional Development Programme' provides the basis to further strengthen the skills and knowledge of Committee staff. The sustainability of this component, so far, is considered high.

EVALUATION COMPONENT 2	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	VERY HIGH
Relevance				X
Efficiency				X
Effectiveness				X
Impact				X
Sustainability			X	

3. Output "MPs are knowledgeable about coalition building, negotiating skills and engage in dispute resolution"

3.1. Caucus support and dialogue

- Workshops for three caucuses on review of parliamentary procedures
- Briefing and training to Party Caucus Staff by Director of CDA, Netherlands Parliament on parliament caucus staffing structures and roles of staff
- Workshop for MPs on outreach and 'constituency' work
- Facilitation of dialogue between whips

At the start of the first term of Parliament, the project offered quite intensive mentoring to the leadership of Parliament. This included formal briefings and casual conversations with caucus leaders, the Speaker and deputy Speaker. Briefing sessions were provided for the Parliamentary Party whips as well as the deputy party whips on their roles and strategies for working effectively to fulfil their duties. A former Canadian MP and party whip was recruited by the project to help develop Fiji's Parliamentary Standing Orders, and he was very instrumental in providing procedural advice and strategies to the party whips. As part of this mentoring, it was proposed that each caucus appoint a "keeper of the Standing Orders" within its group; the person who will be most knowledgeable and consulted on procedural matters. Mentoring of caucus leaders took also place in the framework of the Business Committee or of discussions on the agenda of the Parliament, as mentioned above.

Through the project, whips of the different political parties have been offered a platform for conversations with each other. Through workshops, conferences and visits abroad, the project tried to facilitate interaction between different parties, in particular the party whips. This dialogue has not always been easy, in particular in the beginning of this Parliament. However, it is complemented that all parliamentary parties have stayed in parliament and that no long-term boycotts occurred. In such a delicate period of transition and institution building, this is important; and the substantial assistance by the project provided a favourable context for this.

In addition, the dynamics within some of the caucuses might have changed slightly. While one year ago, the decisions within the caucus of the largest party were centred on a small leadership group, currently the evaluators were told that the backbenchers have more political space, demand to be more consulted and are eager to know in-depth the issues which parliament is voting on. In each of the three caucuses, there is an increased understanding of the importance of committee work; and this is, to a large extent, due to the project's intensive dialogue with the whips and deputy whips.

On the other hand, the opportunities for dialogue between the three parties have not yet resulted in a common understanding on how to deepen the democratic processes in Fiji. For instance, the reduction of the number of sitting weeks from nine in 2014/2015 to a likely six in 2015-2016 was not a consensual decision across party lines. The organization of the Parliament's schedule is an important issue for consultation between the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, party whips and deputy party whips.

In review, it can be evaluated that the project has navigated well through the political issues. Working with politicians from different parties has been interesting but also challenging in a way that political arguments can sometimes be used against the project. For instance, on the one hand, the opposition MPs claimed that the project was more supportive of the Government's side. On the other hand, the MPs from the ruling party claimed that the project was more supportive of the opposition. As MPs sometimes found an interest in publicly complaining about something which didn't serve them or their party, all parties understood the

logic of the project's approach to political impartiality and they recognized that the UNDP project has a value for all parties in Parliament, and hence that the Parliament of Fiji as a whole benefits from it.

The political context affects the basic functioning of the parliament, and hence the possibilities of the project to support parliament. The reduction of the number of sitting weeks from six weeks (in 2015) to four weeks (in 2016) is an example of how political choices can affect the basic functioning of Parliament. The practical consequence is that the project in 2016 should direct its support more towards Committee work and less towards advisory support on parliament sittings.

The decision to reduce the number of sitting days in Parliament, combined with the last sitting week of 2015 dedicated to the week-long debate on the budget, means that the next parliamentary question time will be in February 2016, leaving a gap of six months with the previous parliamentary question time. This example reveals the limitations of parliamentary capacity building. Parliamentary capacity building can contribute to deepening democracy, but only up to a certain level.

Parliamentary capacity building can assist but is not sufficient for shaping genuine democracy building. Therefore, we believe that there is a profound need for top-level and open political dialogue in Fiji on how to continue the transition process towards genuine democracy. Absent of such political dialogue between the main leaders, there is a risk for regress in the democratic process. Since the election, the politics has remained polarised and according to those interviewed there have been no genuine efforts to provide for political dialogue between leaders outside of parliament. In a speech given in parliament on 23 September 2015, the leader of one of the opposition parties noted the complete lack of political dialogue: *“Madam Speaker, the total lack of dialogue both within and outside Parliament between three political party leaders in the past year has stood out like a sore thumb. The Honourable Prime Minister, Honourable Leader of the Opposition, and I have not had even an informal conversation, let alone a cup of tea together”*.¹² This lack of political dialogue is of serious concern to the ongoing and future viability of the parliament project.

Therefore, we believe that it would be beneficial for the democratic transition in Fiji if such top-level dialogue on the democratic transition process in Fiji be assisted by an external actor, such as the UN or a diplomatic mission based in Suva. The convening power of the UN, being able to share experiences of deepening democracy processes elsewhere, can broker an agreed way forward between top-level political stakeholders on how to deepen democracy in Fiji. Also a diplomatic mission based in Suva could provide a platform for discussions.

The success of a second phase of this parliamentary project will to a large extent depend upon an incrementally growing consensus among political leaders on democracy building in Fiji.

3.2. Cross-party women MPs group

- Options paper for strengthening dialogue between the elected women MPs.
- Exchanges with a cross-party group of women MPs from East Timor
- Support to meetings between women of different parties and Fiji civil society

The Fiji Parliament counts seven women MPs. The Speaker of Parliament, Leader of the Opposition, the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General are women. However, currently, there is no all-inclusive cross-party Women Caucus in the Fiji parliament. Discussions during the mid-term evaluation seem to indicate that political relations across party lines are not favourable for such cross-party format, while the term 'caucus' is perceived to be exclusively linked to the party caucus, and hence not very useful for a cross-party women's network in parliament.

¹² Hansard of speech by Member of Parliament Biman Prasad, 23 September 2015, p. 135.

The project has supported the idea of cross-party cooperation between women MPs via dialogue and exchanges with a cross-party group of women MPs from East Timor, which is an example of South-South cooperation. This was organized by the Fiji Women Rights Movement in cooperation with other CSOs and UNDP. While civil society had strongly advocated for the creation of a Women Caucus at the start of this Parliament, this idea has now become a lower key issue. The project drafted an option paper for strengthening dialogue between the elected women MPs. It has also supported meetings between women MPs and Fiji CSOs, such as the Fiji Women Rights Movement.

As mentioned above, the project advocated for the gender clause in the Standing Orders, and it currently supports awareness raising and skills building on the implementation of the gender clause in the regular work of Parliament. The project did one training session for MPs through UNFPA on the clause. Further assistance could now focus on a Manual on Gender mainstreaming in all activities of Parliament. In 2015, the project also worked with the PAC on the consolidated 2007-2009 report on audited accounts and hired an international expert to draft a gender analysis. However, in order to be sustainable, there is a need for domestic capacity and knowledge on gender mainstreaming in Parliament.

3.3. Constituent relations

The current electoral system is one nation-wide constituency, proportional representation and party lists. As a result of this political and electoral system, none of the MPs necessarily represents a specific locality of Fiji, but all MPs represent the whole of the population of Fiji. Organizing constituency relations and MP's regular interaction with citizens requires more thoughtful consideration.

Therefore, in 2015 the project organized a roundtable discussion with participation of MPs from different countries which have features somehow similar to Fiji's electoral system. The panel included, amongst others, a representative from the Netherlands, which is also a nation-wide constituency. The formula of a mixed panel with MPs with different institutional background has been very inspirational and thought provoking.

As elaborated further in this document, the Fiji Parliament might consider exploring the feasibility of regional parliamentary information and constituency centres. During the evaluation assignment, this proposal seems to have gained the support of all relevant parliament stakeholders: Speaker, SG, the ruling party and the opposition parties.

Evaluation chart for the Output "MPs are knowledgeable about coalition building, negotiating skills and engage in dispute resolution"

- *Relevance*: From the start of the Parliament, the project has offered intensive mentoring to the leadership of parliament, including Speaker, whips and deputy whips. Through the project, whips of the parties have been offered a platform for conversations with each other. Thanks to the different activities of the project (ie: workshops, conferences and visits abroad), the project tried to facilitate interaction between the parties, in particular the party whips. The relevance of this type of activities in the context of the delicate process of Fiji's return to democracy cannot be underestimated. The evaluator considers the relevance of this project component as very high.
- *Efficiency*: The management of this component is considered as to be efficient. For instance, the project supported the idea of cross-party cooperation by encouraging women MPs to engage in a dialogue and exchanges with a cross-party group of women MPs from East Timor, which is an example of South-South cooperation. This was organized by the Fiji Women Rights Movement in cooperation with other CSOs and UNDP. Calling upon the experience of a cross-party group of women MPs from another country was an efficient approach to encourage reflection on the sensitive topic of cross party cooperation. The efficiency of the management of this component is considered as very high.

- *Effectiveness*: The interviews during the mid-term evaluation learned that the project's coaching and advisory support to the caucuses was effective in a way that in all three caucuses, there is an increased understanding on the importance of Committee work, and that there is an understanding for the logic of the project's political impartiality. However, the opportunities for dialogue between the three parties have - for sure - not yet been fully taken advantage of, and have not yet resulted in a common understanding on how to deepen the democratic process in Fiji. Nevertheless, within the scope of this project, the initiatives towards dialogue between the parties have been conducted in an effective way.
- *Impact*: The project's advice to and dialogue with the party caucuses had a certain impact on the internal processes within the parties in terms of their actions within Parliament, for instance in terms of filing petitions. Although it cannot be attributed to the project as such, it is important that all parties stayed in Parliament despite the political tensions, and that no long-term boycotts occurred. Nevertheless, the impact of the project didn't reach so far that it resulted in consensual decisions on the Parliament's schedule (e.g. sitting days in 2016) or processing of parliamentary questions. The evaluator considers the impact of this component as high.
- *Sustainability*: The Parliament leadership and party whips have expressed their willingness to continue participating in different consultations and coaching as planned by the project. However, parliamentary capacity building can contribute to deepening democracy up to a certain level only. We believe that there is a profound need for top-level and open political dialogue in Fiji on how to continue the transition process towards genuine democracy. The sustainability of the results of the current project and the success of a second phase of the project will to a large extent depend upon an incrementally growing consensus among political leaders on democracy building in Fiji. The evaluator considers the sustainability of the project under this component as medium to high.

<i>EVALUATION COMPONENT 3</i>	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	VERY HIGH
Relevance				X
Efficiency				X
Effectiveness			X	
Impact			X	
Sustainability		X	X	

4. Output "Parliamentary engagement with citizens strengthened"

4.1. Public Outreach

- Media Reporting for Parliament Training, with staff from Solomon Islands and ex-BBC journalists
- One day briefing session for advocacy-based CSOs
- Briefing to National Youth Council on parliamentary mechanisms to make legislative change
- Assist session of FemLINK Pacific community network in partnership with the International Federation for Electoral Systems (IFES) on entry-points for citizen's engagement in parliament.
- Develop the Fiji Parliament Community Engagement Strategy for 2015-2018
- Training placement for Civic Education Officer with the Victoria Parliament
- Parliament Community Outreach – Meet the Speaker
- Parliament Community Outreach – Parliament Bus
- Curriculum developed for Min. of Itaukei Affairs for Itaukei Traditional and Community Leaders

Citizens outside of Suva, and especially outer islands citizens of Viti Levu (main island), have very few possibilities to access the Parliament, learn about its functioning, express their concerns towards Parliament/democracy issues or get an opportunity to meet MPs. There is a clear need for additional means for MPs to communicate directly with citizens outside of Suva. In early 2015, the Parliament, as an institution as such, had limited institutional outreach beyond the capital.

The project has worked with the Parliament in developing a community engagement strategy, directed towards four priorities: education and youth engagement, news and information, community connections and parliament house experience. Parliament created a civic education and media unit which is in charge of implementing these four priorities:

- *Education and youth engagement*: producing learning resources and organizing a range of activities to engage students and youth with parliament.
- *News and information*: providing reliable information about parliament for the media, including via "Fiji Parliament News", news via web-site, Facebook Twitter and You-Tube-channel
- *Community connections*: organizing a range of outreach activities across Fiji to connect with the communities and provide opportunities for people to voice their views on the parliament; including the 'Parliament Bus' travelling road show, and 'Meet the Speaker' visits to communities.
- *Parliament House experience*: organizing exhibits, tours and events that encourage people to visit Parliament House at the 'Parliament Discovery Centre'.

The Victoria Parliament hosted the Fiji Parliament communication officer and worked with him on a detailed planning of activities for 2015. Parliament started a civic education unit, and a civic education program, with assistance and advice of the project's consultant of the Victoria Parliament.

Based upon its experience working with parliaments in the Pacific, the Victoria Parliament, through the UNDP project, made sure that the coaching and advising enabled sufficient time for Fiji officials to reflect on the information received, took into account the collective learning practice in Fiji and encouraged developing own Fiji templates of working rather than copying the Australian practice.

In addition to in-country coaching, the Victoria Parliament's communications expert was consulted on specific issues via email and gave on-line support over the past six months. One example is the set-up of activities around the 'International Day of Democracy' in 2015, which is a direct help to build the parliamentary culture. The Victoria Parliament staff engaged in email conversation on the type of activities the Fiji Parliament could organize and what issues to take into account. The Victoria parliament is currently assisting the Fiji Parliament with video equipment and training to create Fiji Parliament's videos.

Between March and September 2015, with the project's support, the Parliament outreach program visited 17 schools throughout Fiji. The feed-back from the communities has been overwhelmingly positive. The Parliament outreach program is now conducted by the Speaker and Parliament staff. To date, due to concerns by Parliament that MPs would use the platform for political campaigning rather than civic education, they are currently not included in the outreach work. The opposition tabled a motion for MPs to be part of the outreach campaign, but that motion didn't pass. The project also supports the organization of the Fiji Youth Parliament.

On the way ahead, there is possibility to strengthen the opportunities for civil society to engage with the parliament, for instance in terms of the written and verbal submissions to committee inquiries and the use of new technologies for citizens' input to the work of Parliament. Use of social media is very high among young people in Fiji, and Parliament can go beyond traditional media for its outreach towards social media. However, it will probably take some time before citizens' virtual input in Parliament's work can be made operational. The Victoria Parliament expert cautioned not to raise citizens' expectations too high, as usage of social media for citizens' input also requires that Parliament staff is available to review the inputs and that MPs are able and willing to consider the suggestions in their work in committees.

As the Fiji Parliament prepares next steps to enhance the outreach of Parliament and citizens input, the idea of parliamentary monitoring by CSOs was discussed. Considering today's acrimonious political climate, monitoring of Parliament by external actors (supported by international organizations) contains certain risks to create additional friction between the parties, and higher political tension with the Government. However, support to CSOs to prepare for monitoring can be considered in the next Parliament, after the 2018 elections, as a next step, pending further consolidation of the democratic transition.

It would be useful to do a follow-up training with Fiji journalists. Possibly in the next phase, the project can assist Fiji journalists in establishing a 'Parliamentary Reporters Association', and provide technical assistance by providing best practices on independent and high quality reporting in other Parliaments.

4.2. Website, open parliament and media

- Advise on revising and enhancing the Parliament web-site
- Advise on developing a media relations strategy
- Training on parliamentary reporting by media (before elections, with journalists of BBC).

The above mentioned ICT assessment of Parliament was a solid basis for the electronic outreach. The assessment report is considered comprehensive and well structured by the current ICT unit in Parliament. The project advised the Parliament's ICT unit to upgrade the (old) Parliament web-site. This activity is under way, and will be completed by early 2016. The web-site is not too user friendly, but still one of the best parliamentary web-sites in the Pacific. It currently contains all Committee reports, Order Papers, bills, and some interactive features. The ICT unit expects that by next year the Parliament will have its web-site as a stand-alone website and no longer depend upon government hosting of the site.

The project did one training on media reporting of Parliament (before elections, with BBC journalists).

On the way ahead, a number of suggestions can be made:

- ✓ It is useful to develop a multi-year ICT strategic plan, as a section of the Parliament Strategic Plan, outlining in which way specific aspects of e-parliament can be achieved, and with which resources.
- ✓ The Fiji parliament has not yet developed and adopted an 'Open Parliament Action Plan' nor joined the activities of the Legislative Openness Working Group of the Open Government Partnership (OGP).¹³ It might be useful to consider joining this network and adopt a parliamentary openness Action Plan.¹⁴

¹³ <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/open-government-declaration>

¹⁴ <http://www.openingparliament.org/>

- ✓ It is proposed to explore the feasibility of the creation of regional parliamentary information and constituency centres. The Feasibility Study for regional parliamentary information and constituency centres in Moldova¹⁵, which has a similar electoral system as Fiji, may provide good guidance for Fiji.
- ✓ It would be useful for the project to do a follow-up training with a group of Fiji journalists. However, longer-term, possibly in the next phase of the project, the project can consider assisting Fiji journalists in establishing a Parliamentary Reporters Association, and provide technical assistance by providing best practices on independent and high quality reporting in other parliaments.

Evaluation chart for the Output "Parliamentary engagement with citizens strengthened"

- *Relevance*: Due to the limited information available to the public on the work of the parliament, the project has supported the Fiji parliament in its engagement with citizens. The community outreach program, the briefing with CSOs, the training for media and the revised web-site are activities of the highest relevance to the objectives of the project.
- *Efficiency*: The management of this component is considered very efficient. For instance, the project supported the activity for the Victoria parliament hosting the Fiji parliament communication officer. The Victoria parliament worked with him on a detailed planning of activities for 2015, which was the basis for a multi-year civic education program. In addition to working visits to Fiji of external experts and a placement in Victoria parliament, the project encouraged online and phone communication between officers of the two parliament, thus contributing to optimizing the opportunities for contact. The above mentioned ICT assessment of parliament was a solid basis for the electronic outreach of parliament. The efficiency of the management of this component is very high.
- *Effectiveness*: Following the initial outreach activities as supported by the project, the parliament has created a civic education and media unit, which is now in charge for all outreach and communication activities. The attendance to the outreach activities outside of Suva is overwhelming, and demonstrates the clear need and interest among the Fiji population to learn about the work of the parliament. The effectiveness of this component of the project is very high.
- *Impact*: The project's assistance to the parliament secretariat, in particular the civic education and media unit, has a clear impact in the priority areas established by the community engagement strategy: education and youth engagement, news and information, community connections, parliament house experience. The staff of the unit seems to be well informed and hands-on in their tasks. The impact of the unit's work can be enhanced by joining international initiatives on parliamentary outreach and openness. The evaluator considers the impact of the project under this component as very high.
- *Sustainability*: The availability of a community engagement strategy and a dedicated structure to implement it, the civic education and media unit, means that the sustainability of the initiatives in outreach can be guaranteed. The evaluator considers the sustainability of the project under this component as high.

EVALUATION COMPONENT 4	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	VERY HIGH
Relevance				X
Efficiency				X
Effectiveness				X
Impact				X
Sustainability			X	

¹⁵ *Parliamentary constituency and information Centres in Moldova. Feasibility Study prepared by Franklin De Vrieze and Liuba Cuznetova, commissioned by UNDP Moldova, April 2013, 118 p.*

VII. Project Management

Following the above chapters on Project Design and Project Implementation, this chapter will evaluate the management of the project in 2014 and 2015. Particular attention will be given to the Steering Committee, Project team, Project's reporting, monitoring and evaluation, Donor relations, Cooperation with partner parliaments, and Project communication.

1. Steering Committee

Prior to the establishment of the Parliament, a donor coordination meeting was organized on 19 February 2014, with UNDP, Japan, EU Delegation and New Zealand in attendance. The agenda of the meeting included the review and approval of the Terms of Reference and composition of the Project Steering Committee, an overview of the project (which had just started), funding status and the presentation and approval of the project Annual Work plan for 2014. A first, official Steering Committee meeting was expected to be scheduled in May 2014. However the meeting was deferred as no Parliament Secretary General had been appointed by that time. Rather than holding a Steering Committee without representation from the Parliament, the project team provided the members of the future Steering Committee with regular updates until a first Steering Committee meeting could be held. It was then convened on 15th December 2014.

During the evaluation meetings in September 2015 with the Speaker and the SG, both parliament representatives stressed the importance of the SC as the platform to discuss the objectives, activities and results of the project, the validation of the progress, planning of the project and liaison with the donors.

The SC currently includes the Speaker and SG, donors and UNDP. During the evaluation meetings, the question has been considered if it would be useful, or not, to include party whips in the SC of the project. The aim of potentially enlarging the SC would be to involve political parties in the reflection process on the progress and planning of the project. After careful consideration and for the duration of this project, we advise to keep the SC in its current composition. As long as the political climate is as polarized as is currently the case, we advise that the SC would continue to perform its duties in its current composition. However, we also advise to conduct separate consultations with the party whips and with party caucuses on the draft 2016 Annual Work Plan, prior to its formal approval at the meeting of the SC. These consultations will be an opportunity to inform parties on the overall progress of the project and to ask feed-back on the proposed plans for the following year.

During the evaluation meetings in September 2015, the donors expressed appreciation for the regular bilateral updates on project progress which they received from the Technical Advisor to the project. Donors expressed an interest in conducting meetings of the SC at a frequency of two times or potentially three times a year.

2. Project team

The UNDP Fiji Parliamentary Support Project is a model project for UNDP, amongst others because it has been conducted at the right moment, with the right approach and by the right persons. The UNDP project team is professional, committed and well respected. During the evaluation meetings in September 2015, all interlocutors expressed strong praise for the project team: Dyfan Jones, Adelle Khan and Nanise Saune.

The project managed a delivery of 95 % of the project budget, from its first year onwards. This exceptional result is due to the fact that the project team was in place from the very start of the project, and it included a project associate who is very well versed in UNDP procedures and administration. The project was up and running and in full capacity, as of day one. There were no delays due to lengthy recruitment procedures at the beginning of the project. Moreover, the Technical Advisor was at the same time the regional advisor for

UNDP parliamentary projects throughout the Pacific. This enabled further cross-fertilization between the Fiji project and the other parliamentary projects in the region.

During the evaluation meetings it was noted that the project manager and project assistant had a very heavy work schedule; and the workload is probably slightly too heavy. If a next phase of the project would be of a similar size, it is recommended that the project's human resources would be reinforced with one additional administrative assistant.

Finally, it is worth noting that the project team works together well with both the UNDP MCO and the Pacific Centre. A potentially complicated issue has been managed well; and there is flexible interaction with the Pacific Centre and with the MCO.

3. Project reporting, Monitoring & Evaluation, project budget

The project team has prepared the 2014 Annual progress report and quarterly progress reports in 2014 and 2015. The reports are drafted according to the structure of the Project Document and the Results and Resources Framework. During the evaluation meetings in September 2015, donors confirmed that the reporting was timely and comprehensive.

The reporting is based upon the Annual Work Plans. It was noted that the Annual Work Plans of 2014 and 2015 do not provide clear information in which quarter of the year specific activities are envisaged. For the purpose of consistency in reporting, it would be useful if the AWP indicates the specific quarter of the year when activities are envisaged. Of course, flexibility will be applied when political context or project implementation require changes to the timeline.

During the evaluation meetings it was noted that the project applied five instruments of quality control on the work of the consultants and parliamentary experts. (1.) On several occasions, the project relied on the governance expert roster of UNDP New York. Persons on the expert roster have been vetted according to a number of criteria, including quality work over a longer period, familiar with UNDP procedures, etc. The team was aware of the need to recruit a group of experts with a complementary skills set; and thus relied on external experts from the UNDP roster as well as staff and MPs from the parliaments with whom the project has established cooperation. A list of experts has been put in annex to this report. (2.) For each assignment, a detailed ToR with concrete deliverables has been drafted. With the parliaments which participate in the implementation of the project (Australia, New Zealand, Scotland, ...) the project team discussed the specific approach of the experts, including the need to be politically aware and culturally sensitive. (3.) When selecting an expert, he/she was asked to present an outline of the study or training, prior to commencement of the assignment. (4.) The project team provides comments on the draft reports of the experts; and their remuneration is conditional to approval of the deliverable based upon its verification against the criteria outlined in the ToR. (5.) Following each activity, the project team distributed a questionnaire to the MPs and staff. The client satisfaction survey provided useful feed-back on the activities and the work of the experts. From a monitoring and evaluation perspective, these five instruments of quality control on the work of the consultants and experts are most valuable. Their application seems to have given clear guidance to the project team in its management of the project.

In terms of monitoring and evaluation, it is worth noting that the project has advised the Fiji Parliament in creating its own Monitoring and Evaluation Unit. Parliament has started to make a quarterly review of its performance, based upon the annual corporate plan of the parliament secretariat, and taking into account the joint activities with the UNDP parliamentary support project.

During the time of implementation of the project, the project has received additional donor pledges, beyond what was envisaged when the project document was signed. We recommend that UNDP does a proper project budget revision. In this way, the final financial report will match with the actual project budget. This will facilitate the work of a future audit of the project and its financial management.

Different donors have indicated that they want their contribution to be earmarked for specific activities and outputs. In the ATLAS system, this earmarking of funds has been taken on board fully. At the same time, the project's narrative reports and the project communication mention the support of all four donors to the project in its entirety, rather than for specific activities only. This is a pragmatic solution, which gives each donor even more exposure than in case the reporting and communication would be split-up according to specific donor contributions, and hence it avoids additional workload for the project team.

By July 2016, the contributions by Japan and New Zealand will face its concluding date, due to the budget cycle of these two countries. Since the project runs until December 2016, it would be useful to agree as soon as possible on the roll-over of the remaining funds from Japan and New Zealand to the project's continued activities until the end of the year 2016.

4. Donor relations

The project has four donors: Australia, European Commission, Japan and New Zealand. While the donors were involved in the design of the project, they have also been an active partner to the project. As members of the Steering Committee, the donor agencies (Embassy, High Commissioner or Delegation in Suva) receive the project reports and the Annual Work Plans. They are also consulted for their input in the draft AWP. All donors expressed strong appreciation for the implementation and management of the project.

While the parliaments from New Zealand and Australia expressed their wish to receive more information on the overall planning and results of the project -- in addition to the information received from the UNDP Technical Advisor -- there is probably room for more intensive communication between the High Commissioners, as donors of the project and Members of the SC, and their national parliament, as contributors to the implementation of the project.

In addition to the financial contribution of the four donors, the project was able to call upon the in-kind contribution of the Australian Parliament through its Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships programme, which facilitates a twinning arrangement between the Fiji Parliament and the Victoria Parliament. The in-kind contribution through the Australian Twinning Project has been inserted in the budget of the 2015 Annual Work Plan. This twinning arrangement has been very instrumental in the quick deployment of experienced resource persons to support the work of the Secretariat of the Fiji Parliament.

As the four donors agreed to channel their support to the Fiji Parliament through UNDP, the Parliament Secretariat was in the fortunate position that it has not to deal with too many development agencies willing to offer specific assistance. This has allowed the Parliament Secretariat to focus on its core business while relying on one major development partner providing technical and financial support where needed. This project implementation modality is a good practice in terms of donor coordination and reduces an unnecessary burden of workload for the recipient Parliament.

As the current project is considered very successful, all donors expressed an interest - in principle - to explore the feasibility to contribute to a potential second phase of the project, depending on the proposed scope of the project.

In addition to the UNDP Fiji parliamentary support project, there exists one other parliamentary project, implemented by 'Global Partners Governance', financed by the UK Government. This project works on the political priority setting of the parliamentary caucuses; and is thus complementary to the UNDP project.

5. Cooperation with partner parliaments

The cooperation between the UNDP project and the Australian parliamentary twinning project is considered very beneficial for all parties involved. While the Australian Parliament has a MoU with the Fiji Parliament to strengthen the cooperation and exchange, the actual implementation of the Australian

assistance to the Fiji parliament takes place in the framework of the UNDP project. The twinning approach foresees that the Victoria Parliament and the Australian Federal Parliament provide technical and financial assistance to the Fiji Parliament. The technical assistance includes making parliament staff and MPs available for in-country visits to Fiji with a view to exchange expertise and provide coaching, participate in workshops in Fiji, receive Fiji delegations in Australia and organize staff placements. The financial assistance covers investments in the infrastructure of the parliament of Fiji and the costs for flights, DSA and accommodation for the technical assistance. The total amount of the Australian in-kind contribution is 400,000 Australian Dollars. For this purpose, UNDP has signed an MoU with the Australian Parliament. In the 2015 AWP, this is reflected by including the "in-kind" contribution of the Australian twinning project in the budget table. During the evaluation meetings in September 2015, the Australian parliament and the Victoria parliament expressed their satisfaction about the cooperation with the UNDP project, and expressed their interest in continued cooperation in the future.

The project's cooperation with the parliament of New Zealand is similar in terms of technical expertise, but without the set-aside amount for financial assistance. The New Zealand parliament has made its parliamentary staff available for missions to Fiji. While the parliament of New Zealand continues to cover the salary of its staff when on-mission in Fiji, the UNDP project covers the costs for travel, accommodation and DSA. If during a second phase of the project, the parliament of New Zealand would also set-aside a specific budget for its in-kind contribution in a similar way as the Australian parliaments, it is advisable that UNDP signs a MoU with the parliament of New Zealand as well. For its parliamentary assistance work, the New Zealand parliament closely follows the assignments of its staff. It conducts a preparatory meeting prior to the departure of its experts to Fiji, with a focus on how to build knowledge and transfer skills. Upon their return to New Zealand, there is a debriefing meeting. During the evaluation meeting in September 2015, the New Zealand parliament expressed its satisfaction about the cooperation with the UNDP project, and expressed its interest in continued cooperation in the future.

International study visits are an important part of the cooperation with Fiji for all of the parliaments which are participating in the project. For instance, the Deputy Speaker and the party whips visited New Zealand in 2014; and the Speaker of the Fiji Parliament conducted a visit in 2015. These visits had a capacity building aspect but also helped to foster the bilateral relationship between New Zealand and Fiji. Similarly, the Parliaments of Australia and Japan received delegations of the Fiji Parliament as well.

It was noted that the outreach to and the involvement of experts from other countries than Australia and New Zealand provides a different and very useful learning opportunity. Visits have been conducted to the federal parliament in Canada and to the parliaments of the UK (House of Commons, Scotland, Wales). Because the historical relationships are different and there no potential political sensitivities linked to regional politics, as is the case with, for instance, Australia, such visits are highly valued as well. The expertise and repeated visits by a former Canadian MP and party whip from Halifax have been well appreciated by Fiji MPs.

Finally, it was noted that the project's approach of bringing back consistently the same individuals as the project's experts is a good practice. It enables building a sustainable relationship with the Fiji parliament, and it provides the confidence which is required to transfer knowledge based on a trusted relationship.

6. Project Communication

Some UNDP parliamentary projects foresee in a clear communication strategy for the project, communicating its achievements, results and lessons learned, making available on-line the project's activity calendar, publications and reports, multi-media outputs, etc.

In Fiji, the UNDP parliamentary support project has chosen for a 'light footprint', due to a couple of politically inspired reactions to the involvement of the United Nations in the national Parliament, and hence

the need to manage politicians' perceptions of the project. However, the visibility criteria, important for donors/sponsors of the project has always been respected and clearly demonstrated during workshops or other events including communication outreach by the team implementing the project.

Nevertheless, there is room for an enhanced project communication, for instance by creating a project section on the Parliament's website, which will provide the interested public the basic information on the purpose, activities and results of the project.

As part of the project's communication, we suggest to share this evaluation report with the Members of the Steering Committee and with the different parliaments, parliamentary experts and consultants which have contribute so far to the implementation of the project.

For the next phase of the project, and as is the case in most other UNDP parliamentary projects, it is advisable to establish a project office within the Parliament premises. Such office will make the project more reachable for MPs and staff. It will enable the project to strengthen its communication, conduct consultations, provide instant-advice and immediately counter potential misperceptions by providing an opportunity for staff and MPs to drop-by.

We also suggest to articulate and communicate more clearly about the project towards CSOs in Fiji.

VIII. Recommendations for the 2016 Annual Work Plan

1. Enhance Technical Assistance to Standing Committees

Taking into account the importance of the work of Committees and the reduced number of sittings of the parliament plenary session during 2016, we recommend that the project in 2016 broadens its technical assistance to more Standing Committees of the Fiji parliament. In terms of activities this means:

- Conduct a baseline assessment of all Committees, incl. their legislative and oversight role, procedures, resources and sources of information, practices of consultations with stakeholders and the public;
- Provide coaching on committee agenda setting, reporting, functioning, outreach and communication;
- Strengthen the cooperation with other institutions and agencies of the state, advise on follow-up to the findings and reports of other state agencies in the proceedings of the committees;
- Provide Technical Advice -- through an international technical advisor -- on the oversight role of committees, procedural issues, organizing public hearings, international best practices, drafting committee inquiry reports, etc.;
- Publish a Public Hearing Manual for the Committees of the Parliament of Fiji;
- Support the application of the gender-clause in the Standing Orders in the work of the Committees;
- Facilitate thematic technical expertise from the UN agencies to specific Standing Committees. The merger of the UNDP Pacific Centre with the UNDP MCO provides opportunity for further coherence and synergies between different program areas, which can result in developing a comprehensive package of available UN and UNDP expertise for parliament committees. The UNDP Fiji parliamentary project can coordinate all UN technical expertise for the parliamentary Committees.

2. Support the development of parliament's legislative plan

The government has announced its plans to submit 23 laws to parliament during the next year: 16 new laws and 7 amendments to existing laws. As the Parliament will sit during four sitting weeks only, a parliamentary legislative plan will be of critical importance in terms of outlining which laws will come to parliament at which moment in time, which committees will review them and by which time, how and when the public hearings and consultations will be organized and in which sitting the laws will be debated and voted. The project can play a pivotal role in advising the drafting of such parliamentary legislative plan and seek to find consensus endorsement of the plan through the Business Committee.

3. Advise parliament on its interaction with other state institutions

Fiji counts a number of state institutions and agencies which, in a democratic system, need to build a functional relationship with the Parliament: Independent Commission against Corruption, Office of the Solicitor General, Human Rights Commissioner, Permanent Secretaries of the Ministries. The Parliament Speaker and Secretary General have an important role in explaining to other state bodies the role of parliament and how to interact with parliament in a democratic system. It is recommended that the project supports the Parliament in this endeavour, via technical and procedural advice, best practices from other countries, joint working visits abroad and joint seminars in Suva.

4. Explore the feasibility of Regional parliamentary information and constituency offices

Citizens outside of Suva (especially outer islands citizens of Viti Levu, main island) have very little possibility to access Parliament, learn about the functioning of parliament, express their concerns towards the institution of Parliament or get an opportunity to meet MPs. There is need for further means for MPs to communicate directly with citizens outside of Suva. Parliament as institution has limited institutional outreach beyond the capital. It is therefore proposed to explore the feasibility of

the creation of regional parliamentary information and constituency relations centres, possibly at different islands or areas within Fiji. The idea seems to have gained the support of all parliament stakeholders: Speaker, SG, ruling party and opposition parties. For 2016, it is recommended that the project commissions a feasibility study to review the legal and procedural framework, provide comparative analysis on the functioning of such centres in similar political and electoral systems, propose options for the possible establishment of such centres in Fiji, explore a number of potential locations, outline the required human and financial resources, and make recommendations on a piloting approach for the establishment of a limited number of centres within a defined time period during the second phase of the project.

5. Strengthen parliament's research services

A key aspect of strengthening Parliament is developing a parliamentary library and research service. Through an expert from New Zealand, the project currently assists through research support, a multi-year research strategy and draft Standing Operating Procedures for library and research work. Once additional staff for the library and research service is in place, it is recommended that the project assists parliament in 2016 in: (1.) creating a roster of national experts to contribute to strengthen the research capacity, (2.) liaising with the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), (3.) supporting the creation of a Digital Library System (similar to the system established by the Parliament of Solomon Islands), (4.) taking subscriptions to international Journals and on-line research publications, (5.) establishing guidelines for the parliamentary research service in Fiji.¹⁶

6. Build capacity of parliament staff

As mentioned above, the support of Committee staff is mainly of practical, secretarial and organizational nature. More capacity building for Committee staff is needed, so that the level of staff assistance can move towards policy advisory services for the Committees. In addition to parliament creating a roster of national experts, the project is advised to organize further training, coaching and knowledge and skills building with committee staff and staff of other sections in the Secretariat. In particular peer-to-peer coaching from staff in other parliaments is useful, as well as staff placements. Project can also continue to support the Human Resources policy of the Secretariat, in particular in setting up a curriculum for staff professional development.

7. Contribute to a separate UN led initiative dedicated at top-level political dialogue

As mentioned in this evaluation report, the project's support towards dialogue between the three parliamentary parties didn't result yet in a common understanding on how to deepen the democratic processes in Fiji and reveals the limitations of parliamentary capacity building in such context. We have identified a profound need for top-level and open political dialogue in Fiji on how to continue the transition process towards genuine democracy. It would be beneficial for the democratic transition in Fiji if such top-level dialogue on the democratic transition process be assisted by the United Nations or, alternatively, by a diplomatic mission based in Suva. Because the success of a second phase of this project will to a large extent depend upon an incrementally growing consensus among political leaders on democracy building in Fiji, we recommend that the project in 2016 explores the feasibility of an initiative dedicated at top-level political dialogue. While the actual initiative of accompanying the top-level political dialogue, if and once it starts, falls outside the scope of the UNDP parliamentary support project, this project is well placed to explore the feasibility of such initiative in terms of the parties' interest and political will, and the format, agenda and participants for such initiative.

¹⁶ <http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/services-for-parliaments/preconference/2015/workshophighlights.pdf>

IX. Recommendations for a next phase of the project

Following the closure of this (first) project in December 2016, we recommend a second phase. The current three year project can be considered as the initial project phase aimed at supporting the creation of a new Parliament. The second project phase will be focused towards the further institutional development of the Parliament and accompanying it through the 2018 elections transition period. Therefore, we recommend that the second phase of the project has a four years time-span: January 2017 to December 2020. Following are the preliminary programmatic suggestions, for consideration by the project formulation team for a new Project Document.

1. Support implementation of Parliament Strategic Plan

As the Strategic Plan is expected to be adopted before the end of 2015, we recommend that the next phase of the project takes this Strategic Plan as the guiding document for the priorities of the second phase.

2. Support Committees in their legislative and oversight work

Based on the experience of advising Committees so far, we recommend that the next phase of the project broadens its support to all Committees of Parliament.

It is recommended to prioritize on the legislative and oversight work of the Committees. One of the issues the project can support particularly is the Committee oversight on the implementation of legislation. Various Westminster-style parliaments have a good track record in effective practices of post legislative scrutiny; and it will be worthwhile sharing with the Fiji Parliament. The project's support to post-legislative scrutiny methodology and organization can be very beneficial in giving the Committee structure in Fiji Parliament a distinct sense of purpose and visibility.

3. Strengthen citizens engagement

Building upon the current work by the Parliament's Unit for civic education and media on parliamentary outreach, we recommend the project supports parliament in enhancing opportunities for citizens' input in the work of parliament. Parliament outreach and citizens' input are two coins of the same model; and further project support to enhancing opportunities for citizens' input will be useful. This can include physical input to the work of parliament, for instance citizens and CSO contributions to committee hearings and inquiries, as well as virtual input through web-site features for on-line comments on draft legislation.

4. Piloting the Regional parliamentary information and constituency offices

Based upon the "feasibility study" in 2016, we recommend that the project supports the Parliament in piloting the creation of one or more Regional parliamentary information and constituency offices.

5. Building research services

We recommend that the project invests in creation of a Digital Library System and continues to support its application linked to a Document Management System for the Parliament.

6. Strengthening parliament's role in the budget process

Currently, there are few opportunities for the Parliament to discuss and review the budget. The current Standing Orders limit the time available to discuss the budget to one week. After the 2018 elections, the new parliament will be required to review its Standing Orders. If requested to do so by Parliament,

in particular if the revised SO would project a larger timeframe to discuss the budget, the project might offer support in this area. In doing so, the project can provide technical assistance to analyze the draft budget document, advise on the organization of budget hearings with relevant stakeholders, assist in preparing gender budget analysis and environment budget impact assessment, etc.

7. Transition to the next Parliament

Following the 2018 elections and provided the democratic consolidation of Fiji continues, the project has a key role to play in accompanying the transition period from the current parliament to the next parliament. While this transition period is a maturity test for key principles of respect for the independent and continued functioning of the parliament administration, the project can assist the parliament in the induction program for the new MPs, review of the Standing Orders by the new parliament, and review key legislative Acts, such as on remuneration and parliamentary powers and privileges.

8. Explore and establish a regional Parliamentary Training Academy

The sustainability of parliamentary capacity building can be further enhanced by creating an institutional platform among parliaments of the region, such as a regional Parliamentary Training Academy. Such Academy can have an in-person, in-country learning program as well as a virtual, on-line learning program, and would be beneficial for the Fiji parliament and the other parliaments of the Pacific region. As UNDP is currently leading parliamentary assistance programs throughout the Pacific region, UNDP is well placed to initiate discussions, prepare a Concept Paper for consultations with the parliaments of the region, and explore possible partnerships with the existing Pacific-wide cooperation platforms such as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Secretariat of Pacific Community (SPC) and other agencies under the Conference of Regional Organizations in the Pacific (CROP). The initial discussions and development of the Concept Note can take place during 2016. Pending the outcome of these consultations, the next phase of the project can aim to have the regional Parliamentary Training Academy agreed among all stakeholders, established with a comprehensive curriculum and be up-and-running by 2020. For the region of the Pacific, this will be a sustainable contribution to deepening democracy.

X. Annexes

Annex 1: Bibliography

1. Legal and procedural documents

- Standing Orders 2014
- Parliamentary powers and privileges act 2014
- Parliamentary remuneration decree 2014

2. Assessments by the project

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- Fiji Parliament Building and Infrastructure Assessment Report (2014), by Mc Donagh Vincent, Mc Millian Shirley, Tosh David.
- Fiji Parliament ICT Assessment Report (2014), by Tosh David.
- Research paper on Parliament funding of staff for MPs and party caucuses (2015)

3. Strategy Documents, Concept Notes and Guidelines by the project

- Multiples templates for parliament Secretariat
- Fiji Parliament Outreach and Community Engagement Strategy (2015)
- Members Handbook
- Guide to Standing Committees
- Parliament Strategic Plan, draft, June 2015
- Professional Development Programme for Parliament staff
- Concept Note on Millennium Development Goals and Post-2015 SDGs
- Concept Note on Representation and constituency relations
- Concept Note on Effectiveness of parliamentary committees
- Concept Note on Fiji Parliamentarians Forum on key development issues
- Review paper - Delivering project activities in a neutral and non-partisan manner

4. Project reporting

- FPSP Quarterly Report 2014 / Q 1-2
- FPSP Quarterly Report 2014 / Q 3
- FPSP 2014 Annual Report
- FPSP Quarterly Report 2015 / Q 1
- FPSP Quarterly Report 2015 / Q 2
- *Report on study visit to UK Parliaments (Westminster, Parliament of Scotland and the National Assembly of Wales), January 21 to February 4, 2015*

5. Other project materials

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Annex 2: Experts and consultants who participated in the project

- 1. Mr Kevin DEVEAUX**
Former UNDP Global Parliamentary Adviser, formal legal drafter, former MP, independent consultant
Period in Fiji : 14 November – 6 December 2013-Fiji Parliament Needs Assessment Team
Period in Fiji : 13 – 30 April 2014 – legal drafting, Standing Orders etc with Leeanne OBrien
Period in Fiji : 15 September to 17October, 2014 - Provide technical and strategic advice and assistance to the Parliament before, during and following the first sitting of parliament.
- 2. Mr Frank FUELNER**
Parliamentary Development Expert, independent consultant
Period in Fiji : 14 November – 6 December 2013 - Fiji Parliament Needs Assessment Team
- 3. Ms. Leeanne OBRIEN**
Legislative drafter for the New Zealand Parliamentary Counsel Office (NZCPO)
Period in Fiji : 13 – 30 April 2014
- 4. Shirley McMILLAN**
Head of Building Management at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh, Scotland
Fiji Parliament Infrastructure Mission Team
Period in Fiji : 22 April – 2nd May – provide t/advise/assessment on the infrastructure
- 5. Vincent McDONAGH**
Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) – Australia
Fiji Parliament Infrastructure Mission Team
Period in Fiji : 22 April – 2nd May – provide t/advise/assessment on the infrastructure
- 6. Mr Russell GROVE**
Former clerk of the legislative assembly, New South Wales Parliament
Period in Fiji : 1/10 to 17/10, 2014
- 7. Mr Wayne TUNNECLIFFE**
Former clerk of legislative assembly, Victoria Parliament
Period in Fiji : 18/09 to 30/09, 2014
- 8. Mr Ray PURDEY**
Clerk of Parliament of Victoria
Period in Fiji : 11-13/11, 2014
- 9. Mr Andres LOMPE**
Parliament of Victoria
Provide assistance and advise to Outreach manager and formulate the Parliament’s Outreach and Communication Strategy;
Period in Fiji : 11-13/11, 2014

10. **Ms Kate MURRAY**
Manager, Procedure Office, Victoria Parliament
Period in Fiji : 18 Nov – 12 December, 2014 – role play with MPs on procedures
Period in Fiji : 2 – 6 February 2015 with table officers
11. **Ms Elisabeth WEIR**
Former MP from Canada
Period in Fiji : for the 8 and 9 October, 2014 – two days induction programme for the first sitting days in Parliament
12. **Hon. Andrew McINTOSH**
Current MP from Victoria Parliament
Period in Fiji : 8 and 9 October 2014 - two days induction programme for the first sitting days in Parliament
13. **Hon. John PANDAZOPOULOS**
Current MP from Victoria Parliament
Period in Fiji : 8 and 9 October 2014 - two days induction programme for the first sitting days in Parliament
14. **Hon. Alfred NGARO**
Current MP from New Zealand Parliament
Period in Fiji : 25 – 27 May 2015 - 3 day briefing with MPs on Committees in Parliament & Constituency Relations
15. **Senator David FAWCETT**
Current Senator from the Australian Senate
Period in Fiji : 25 – 27 May 2015 - 3 day briefing with MPs on Committees in Parliament & Constituency Relations
16. **Mr. Eduard LANOY**
Managing director and official secretary of the Christian Democratic Alliance in the National Parliament of The Netherlands (*Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal*)
Period in Fiji : 25 – 27 May 2015 - 3 day briefing with MPs on Committees in Parliament & Constituency Relations
17. **Hon. Ian LEES-GALLOWAY**
Current MP from New Zealand
Period in Fiji: 31 August – 4 September 2015 – 1 week training with MPs on Media Communication
18. **Hon. Carmel SEPULONI**
Current MP from New Zealand
Period in Fiji: 7 - 11 September 2015 – 1 week training with MPs Public Speaking/Speech Making
19. **Hon. Tutehounuku (Nuk) KORAKO**
Current MP from New Zealand
Period in Fiji: 7 - 11 September 2015 – 1 week training with MPs Public Speaking/Speech Making

- 20. Sean COLEY**
 Manager Hansard – New Zealand Parliament
 Period in Fiji: 23 March – 1 April, 2015 –Training with Committees staff – on procedures; processes; schedules
- 21. Christopher CLIFF**
 Research/Library – New Zealand Parliament
 Period in Fiji: Secondment – 21 September - December 18, 2015 – assist and provide t/a to library and research section of the fiji parliament
- 22. Lynlee EARLES**
 Manager Hansard – New Zealand Parliament
 Period in Fiji: 18 – 20 August, 2014 –Training with new Hansard staff using the new FTR system
 Period in Fiji: 21 Sept – 1 Oct 2015 – refresher training with Hansard staff
- 23. Christine WHITE**
 Director Hansard – Australian Parliament
 Period in Fiji: 18 – 20 August, 2014 –requested by Fiji Parliament library – library set up , needs etc
- 24. Robyn EMETT**
 Research Services Manager – New Zealand Parliament
 Period in Fiji: 13-17 April, 2015 – requested by Fiji Parliament library – library set up , needs etc
- 25. Carolyn McVEAN**
 Head of Library – Victoria Parliament
 Period in Fiji: 13-17 April, 2015 – requested by Fiji Parliament library – library set up , needs etc
- 26. James SCOTT**
 Manager Hansard – Victoria Parliament
 Period in Fiji: 21 Sept – 2 Oct 2015 – refresher training with Hansard staff
- 27. Debra ANGUS**
 Former Clerk to NZ Parliament
 Period in Fiji: 6 – 28 August 2015 –training with Parliament staff /TA to Emoluments Committee
 Period in Fiji: 17-30 September 2015 – procedural advise and training and advise to senior staffs
- 28. Mr Dave TOSH**
 Director of Information and Communication Technology, National Assembly for Wales
 Period in Fiji : 11-15/08, 2014
- 29. Mr Jones BEDWYR**
 Head of ICT and Broadcasting, National Assembly for Wales
 Period in Fiji : 15-26/09, 2014
- 30. Mr Angelo ALTAIR**
 Audio visual supervisor, Parliament of Victoria
 Period in Fiji : 15-26/09, 2014

Annex 3: Persons interviewed for this evaluation

3.1. Members of Parliament of Fiji

Jiko Fatafehi Luveni	Speaker of Parliament
Ruveni Nadalo	Deputy Speaker to Parliament
Ro Teimumu Kepa	Leader Opposition
Semi Koroilavesau	Fiji First Whip
Sanjit Patel	Fiji First Deputy Whip
Biman Prasad	NFP Leader; Chair Public Accounts Committee
Ratu Isoa Tikoca	Sodelpa Whip
Salote Radrodoro	Sodelpa Deputy Whip
Prem Singh	National Federation Party Whip
Balmindar Singh	Vice Chair – Public Accounts Committee (Fiji First)

3.2. Secretariat of Parliament of Fiji

Joeli Ditoka	Fiji Parliament, Director Legislature
Atelaite Rokosuka	Fiji Parliament, Director Corporate
Kalolaini Galuvakadua	Fiji Parliament, Manager Committees
Miriama Vereivalu	Fiji Parliament, Manager Finance
Manjula Shah	Fiji Parliament, Manager Corporate
Vatimosi Delailovu	Fiji Parliament, Manager Civic Education and Media
Rovil Kumar	Fiji Parliament, Manager Information Technology
Paulini Tokaduadua	Fiji Parliament, Manager Research
Sakiusa Rakai	Fiji Parliament, Manager Table Office
Senitieli Wainiu	Fiji Parliament, Manager Inter-Parliamentary Unit
Serei Naicavu	Fiji Parliament, Manager of Debate
Veniana Namosimalu	Fiji Parliament, Director General to Parliament

3.3. International Community

Osnat Lubrani	Resident Representative UNDP
Akiko Fujii	Deputy Resident Representative UNDP
Peter Batchelor	UNDP Pacific Centre Manager
Sonja Bachmann	UNDP Senior Peace and Development Advisor
Dyfan Jones	UNDP Technical Advisor Parliament
Nanise Saune-Qaloewai	UNDP Project Manager FPSP
Adelle Khan	UNDP Project Assistant FPSP
Jerome Pons	EU Delegation, Head of Economic and Social Sectors
Marcus Khan	Australia High Commission DFAT, First Secretary Governance
Joanne Choe	Australia High Commission DFAT

Tsukada Kazuo	Embassy of Japan, Counsellor
Sally Page	New Zealand High Commission MFAT, Second Secretary
Willy Morrell	New Zealand High Commission MFAT, First Secretary Development

3.4. Civil Society

Bulutani Mataitawaikilai	Citizens Constitutional Forum, Director
Michelle Reddy	Fiji Womens Rights Movement, Programme Director
Wiliam Nayacatabu	National Youth Council, Director

3.5. Experts, consultants and parliament partners

Kevin Deveaux	Consultant Canada
Andres Lomp	Parliament of Victoria
Kate Murray	Parliament of Victoria
Rob Oakeshott	Consultant Australia
Sean Coley	Parliament of Victoria
Andrew Templeton	Parliament of Australia
Ray Purdey	Parliament of Victoria
Steve Cutting	New Zealand Parliament
Debra Angus	New Zealand Parliament