

**Annex B: LPAC Minutes Format  
UNDP [Fiji]**


**Minutes of the Local Project Appraisal Committee Meeting**

**Date: 03 November 2016**

**Project Appraised: Fiji Parliament Support Project Phase II**

**1. Attendance**

**LPAC Members:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Hon. Ruveni Nadolo	Deputy Speaker	Parliament of the Republic of Fiji
Viniana Namosimalua	Secretary General to the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji	Parliament of the Republic of Fiji
Joeli Ditoka	Director Legislature	Parliament of the Republic of Fiji
Bakhodir Burkhanov (Meeting Chair) 	Country Director, UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji and Head of Regional Programme and Policy Support	UNDP
Elena Wakolo	Team Leader, Joint Operation Centre	UNDP
Ruth Verevukivuki	Quality Assurance Consultant	UNDP
Sonja Bachmann	Senior Peace and Development Advisor	UNDP
Brendan Sherry	First Secretary Development	NZ High Commission
Sally Page	Second Secretary Development	NZ High Commission
Marcus Khan	First Secretary, Governance,	Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Yamada Genta	Second Secretary	Embassy of Japan in Fiji

Isaac Grace		Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Dyfan Jones	Effective Governance Team Leader & Parliamentary Development Specialist	UNDP
Nanise Saune	Effective Governance Deputy Team Leader & Programme Manager (Parliamentary Development & Women in Politics)	UNDP

### *Welcome and Introductions*

The meeting was opened by Bakhodir Burkhanov, Chair of the local project appraisal committee meeting for Phase 2 of the Fiji Parliament Support Project. On behalf of UNDP, he welcomed the stakeholders to the meeting and provided some brief introductory remarks about the project.

### *Opening Remarks by the Fijian Parliament*

The Chair, then invited the representatives from the Fijian Parliament - Deputy Speaker, Honorable Ruveni Nadolo and the Secretary General (SG) to the Fijian Parliament, Mrs. Viniana Namosimalua to make some opening remarks.

*Honourable Deputy Speaker, Ruveni Nadalo, on behalf of the Speaker of the Fijian Parliament,* conveyed the Parliament's appreciation of the overall support provided to the institution to enable it to undertake its representative, legislative and oversight functions. He highlighted four areas of support that the Parliament was appreciative of:

- *Installation of ITC Equipment in the Main Chambers and Committee Rooms:* The assistance received ensured the smooth running of the first sitting of parliament including the first ever budget session in 2014. He also mentioned that the donation of the iPad for MPs and Senior Secretariat staff was a step closer in aligning with the vision of a "paperless parliament".
- *Capacity Development for Parliament Staff:* With a significant number of staff having no experience of working in a parliament, the Parliament is thankful and relied on UNDP for the various opportunities to equip the Secretariat with skills and knowledge in their new areas of responsibility. As a recipient of the services provided by the Parliament Staff, in

particular the support received from Committees and Research Unit, he observed a positive change in the quality of work.

- *Technical Support and Capacity Building for MPs:* He mentioned that learning from other Westminster-style Parliaments like Canada, Australia, and New Zealand offered remarkable opportunities to learn from other well established Parliaments. The Parliament was also grateful for the technical assistance provided to strengthen the work of the Committees in carrying out their oversight and legislative functions.
- *Public Outreach:* He highlighted that this programme was very close to the Speaker's heart and that she was passionate about wanting to take Parliament to the people. To explain the work and the role of Parliament, programmes such as "Meet the Speaker" and "Parliament Bus", Speaker's Debate, Women and Youth Parliaments, development of school curriculum to name a few have been rolled out by the Civic Education and Media Unit with the funding support received from the Project and its donors. He mentioned that Parliament has seen recent increases in visitors to the Parliament and he attributes this to an increase interest by the public to understand how their parliament is working.

In closing, he thanked the donors of the project and UNDP for the support to the Fijian Parliament and he remarked that this support "*has transformed us [Parliament] in many aspects from the little we knew to what we now know*". The Fijian Parliament continues to look forward to the support from UNDP and the donors to the project, in the coming years.

*Secretary General (SG) to the Fijian Parliament, Mrs. Viniana Namosimalua*, also took the opportunity to express her gratitude for the work that project and its donors have done for the Fijian Parliament. The SG pointed out that with technical assistance received from the project, she has observed the confidence of Parliament staff in undertaking their roles and responsibilities significantly grow in the last two years since Parliament's re-establishment in 2014. The SG stressed that these results are a testimony of the work of the project. The SG also shared at the meeting, that in the early days of the new parliament, there were times when she considered "throwing in the towel" but was grateful for the support that the project offered during these times. She also emphasized that the project has assisted the Fijian Parliament to be creative in promoting democracy. She underlined the importance of the support the Parliament is currently

receiving through the project in helping to shape, consolidate and strengthen how the Parliament upholds democracy. She emphasized the importance of the support received from the project to influence and shape the institution in the years to come. While she recognized that in the future the Parliament will need to stand on its own two feet, for now, she is of the opinion that the Parliament still needs the support of the project to continue to build the foundations at the early stages of the new parliament.

### **1. Background information on the project**

The Chair then invited Dyfan Jones to provide a brief background information on the project.

*Dyfan Jones* briefly provided an overview of the process followed in developing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase of the Fiji Parliament Support Project. He mentioned that the design and development of Phase 2 of the project is based on the recommendation of the 2015 Mid Term Evaluation of the project and further articulated in a Concept Note which was later approved by Project Steering Committee in the July 2016 meeting. The draft project document has been developed by Frank Feulner, a Parliamentary Expert, following extensive consultation with stakeholders. He also pointed out that there are similarities and overlaps between Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the project. He added that Phase 2 builds on Phase 1 but has a different focus.

There are 3 specific Outputs under Phase 2:

- *Output 1:* The focus of this Output is on strengthening the work of the Parliamentary Committees. The Project envisages that the Committees will be the central focus of the work of the Parliament due to the reduction in the number of Parliament sitting days. The Committees are also an avenue where the general public, civil society organisations, other stakeholders and MPs can interact. The focus of this Output is different from Phase 1, which emphasized more the development of procedures and processes for Committees.
- *Output 2:* The focus of this Output is on the capacity development of the MPs and the Secretariat Staff. The design of the Output assumes that there will be General Elections in 2018 and that there will be some new MPs elected. Therefore the focus of the first one and half years in terms of capacity development is the Secretariat Staff with only a few limited capacity building activities for the current MPs. Following the General Elections in 2018 there will be an

increased focus on capacity building of newly elected and returning MPs. These trainings include an induction program for newly elected MPs and an on-going professional development for returning MPs.

Under this Output, the project will expand its south-south and triangular cooperation with other Parliaments in the Asia-Pacific Region with similar parliamentary systems or with similar parliamentary development challenges, in order to create a two-way learning process.

• *Output 3:* The focus of this Output is on Parliamentary Outreach and Citizens Engagement. While this Output was a prominent feature in Phase 1 of the Project, there still is a need to focus on this area in terms of Civic Education, to understand the work and the role of Parliament, and ensuring that Parliament remains accessible and is inclusive of traditionally excluded groups, such as women and youth, and reaching out to remote areas. This Output is also closely linked to Output 1 by enhancing the meaningful participation in the work of the Committees through the provision of trainings for CSOs to productively engage in the work of the Parliament. An additional aspect that has been added under this Output is the establishment of the Parliamentary Satellite Offices aimed at providing more information on the work of Parliament to citizens outside Suva and strengthening parliamentarians' accountability to citizens. To ensure sustainability, these Satellite Offices will be run by the Parliament with support from the project.

## **2. Quality Assurance Assessment Report by the Project's QA Assessor (areas of strength and weaknesses)**

The Project's quality assurance assessment results were presented by Dyfan Jones. In presenting the results, he provided brief background to the purpose of the Quality Assurance (QA) Assessment. He mentioned that QA Assessment is an internal UNDP requirement of ensuring that all programmes and projects adhere to a certain quality standard for programming. He added that the FPSP Phase 2, has already undergone a rigorous quality assessment review internally and was approved by UNDP to proceed to its final stage of review by this external Local Project Appraisal Committee.

He provided the Committee a brief overview of some of the programming quality standards that the project must adhere to and these quality criteria include:

- Strategic: This criteria rates the projects theory of change and how the project is intending to contribute to outcome level change using the current strategy as outlined in the project.
- Relevant: This criteria rates the project design and how it has integrated knowledge, good practices, and past lessons learned by UNDP and others development partners working in the area of Parliament development into the design of the project.
- Management and Monitoring: This criteria reviews the projects proposed governance mechanism and whether it is clearly defined in terms of its roles and responsibility and its composition. In addition, this criteria also reviews the identified project risk and whether clear mitigation strategies to address each risks have been clearly identified.

He pointed out to the Committee that following the internal review of the project by UNDP, the project team has updated the Risk Log to include two additional risks and strategies to mitigate these identified risks.

Overall the project was rated as a “4 – HIGHLY SATISFACTORY”. This was accepted by the Committee.

### **3. Summary of LPAC members comments**

*Strategy of the Project to ensure capacities are in place to implement the project within a tight timeframe:*

A question was raised regarding the continuity of the existing staff into the new project phase to assist in implementation of the project:

In response, the project team highlighted that this risk has already been identified in the Risk Log. As a mitigating strategy, the current Project staff from Phase 1 will transition on to Phase 2 of the Project. The project team further clarified that in the new phase, the project is also looking to recruit additional staff to assist in the implementation of the project. While recruitment of new staff is in progress, these capacities gaps can be temporarily performed by short term consultants and secondments if required.



*Articulation of each activity under the 3 Outcomes areas.*

The meeting noted that the project document does not outline in great detail the proposed activities to be undertaken under each outcome each year to address the specific development challenges that had been identified although it was assumed that this would be addressed by more detailed annual workplans.

In response, the Project Team clarified that following the approval of the Project Document, a detailed Annual Work Plan will be developed to outline specifically the activities to be undertaken under each outcome. This will be shared to the Project Board for approval.

*Output 3: Setting Up of Parliamentary Satellite Offices as a means to strengthen parliamentarians' accountability to citizens.*

The meeting discussed the issue of the Parliamentary Satellite Offices as an activity to potentially address the lack of interaction between the citizen and MPs due to the current electoral system and whether the project has considered other alternative options.

In response, the Chair mentioned that while Civic Education and Public Outreach was quite prominent in both the Phases, UNDP is open to suggestions from Board Members on possible activities that strengthen the links between citizens and parliament including through use of new technology and this can be considered in the development of activities under the Parliament's outreach strategy that the project will support.

*Possible impact of internal parliamentary procedures and decisions on the implementation of certain activities within the project.*

Various members of the Committee sought clarification from the Project Team on the project's strategy to deal with the impacts of certain internal parliamentary procedures and decisions on implementation of certain activities – particular reference was made to the recent parliament decision to increase MPs allowances.

In response, the Project pointed that the recent decision by Parliament to increase the travel allowances of MPs has already had an impact on certain activities – in particular the activities with proposed Committee visits. As a strategy to deal with the risk, the

project continues to discuss with the Parliament to explore and agree on alternative approaches to deliver certain activities and ensure minimal impacts on the timely implementation of project activities.

The SG also responded saying that Parliament is currently seeking legal advice from the Solicitor General's Office in the interpretation of recent allowance changes.

A further point was raised that certain internal procedures of Parliament, such as the limited time and notice provided to civil society organisations to contribute to the work of Committees, was a hindrance to the effective and meaningful participation of CSOs in the work of the Committees.

In response, the Parliament clarified that the limited time and notice provided to civil society organisations is the result of Standing Order 121, which limits the number of days a Bill is referred to a Committee, although improved notification to CSOs by Parliament of Bill being introduced would allow them more time to prepare submissions.

#### *The challenge of assessing the impact of activities undertaken by the project.*

The Project Team mentioned that assessing the activities within the projects was a challenge and this is due to the difficulty in determining specific changes that can be directly attributed to the project and its activities.

The SG also added that as an institution, assessing the impact that parliament is having on a broader level and with the general population is challenging as well. Identifying the specific attributes that the Parliament can bench mark itself against remains a challenge.

#### *Project Funding for Phase 2*

UNDP has been undertaking bilateral discussion with donors on the funding for Phase 2. The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs have provided an indication of the amount that they are mostly likely to commit to the Project. These amounts are reflected in the Cover Page of the Project Document. Japan is currently exploring options to support Phase 2 through a regional parliamentary development programme in which Fiji will be a specific focus country. The funding amount to be received from Japan cannot yet be determined at this stage. UNDP and the



Fiji Parliament will confirm at a later date with the Project Board their financial contribute to Phase 2, if any.

Should there be a short fall in the total financial resources received from Donors, UNDP will convene a meeting of the Project Board to discuss and prioritise the implementation of activities.

#### 4. Final LPAC recommendations

- The Project is approved by the Committee.
- UNDP to discuss bilaterally with each donor to discuss and clarify their financial and in-kind contribution to the project.
- UNDP to proceed to ensure the Project Document is signed off by UNDP and the Fiji Parliament (both the Speaker and the SG).
- UNDP to approach other potential development partners, to gauge interest in providing financial support for the project. This ensures that the political risk of a politically sensitive project is spread across multiple development partners.
- UNDP to continue to use the same modality of implementation used in Phase 1 - Direct Implementing Modality (DIM) as the modality for implementation for Phase 2.
- UNDP to convene a meeting of the Project Board to review and approve the 2017 Annual Work Plan. The date for this meeting is to be confirmed by UNDP.
- The Project Document and its activities remains flexible and will be adapted to reflect the politically sensitive environment in which the Project is being implemented. Any changes to the Project Document and its activities to be approved by the Project Board.

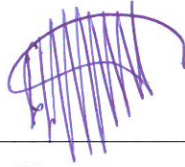
LPAC minutes prepared by:



Nanise Saune- Qaloewai

Effective Governance Deputy Team Leader & Programme  
Manager (Parliamentary Development & Women in Politics)

LPAC minutes approved by:



---

Bakhodir Burkhanov

Country Director, UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji and Head of  
Regional Programme and Policy Support

(Chairperson of the meeting)



LPAC Recommendation is approved by:

---

Resident Representative