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# Fiji Parliament Support Project

## Phase II

### Quarter 2 Report

1 April – 30 June 2017

Prepared for the Project Board

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## Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of activities undertaken by the FPSP II project in the period April - June 2017. The first phase of UNDP's support to the Fiji Parliament, FPSP Phase I, formally ended in March 2017. FPSP II project implementation, began in Quarter 1 of 2017 in parallel with the closing quarter of FPSP I. This allowed for seamless transition from FPSP to FPSP II thus ensuring that there was no break in support provided by UNDP to the Fiji Parliament.

During the current reporting quarter, FPSP Phase II was the only ongoing UNDP project supporting the Fiji Parliament and all activities implemented are captured in this report.

A summary of activities implemented during this quarter is listed below:

3-13 April	Committee expert in-country to assist Law, Justice & HR Committee	Delivered
10-12 April	Regional MPs training: Committees in Parliaments	Delivered
1 – 8 May	Round 2 of Rotuma Consultations by Social Affairs Committee	Delivered
8 May	Training for Committee staff on gender analysis toolkit	Delivered
8-12 May	TA to Law, Justice & HR Committee	Delivered
22 May	Launch of Website & Mobile App – Fiji Parliament	Delivered
23-26 May	Cook Islands Speaker to visit Fiji Parliament (southsouth)	Postponed due to illness
29 May	Speaker's Debate – Youth	Delivered
29 May	Seminar for MPs: sharing knowledge from international conferences	Delivered
30 May	Social Affairs Committee briefing with Prof. McCallum	Delivered
30 May	Briefings to Foreign affairs & defence Committee by Energy and Climate Change experts	Delivered
29 May – 02 June	Evaluation of FPSP Phase 1	Delivered
12 Jun	100 women from Eastern Division to visit Parliament (civic education)	Delivered
19 June	Briefings for PS Youth & senior staff on how Parliament works	Delivered
27 June – 8 July	Budget Analysis support – 6 researchers on secondment from other Parliaments	Delivered

This quarter has seen a gradual scaling up of activities under FPSP II. The end of the quarter saw the tabling of the national budget in Parliament with significant preparation being provided by the FPSP II project to ensure that the Parliament has the necessary support needed to provide the service required by MPs in terms of budget information and analysis.

With regards to project funding, during this quarter, the project mobilised an additional AUD\$300,000 from the Government of Australia for the project which brings their total funding support for FPSP Phase II to AUD\$1.3m. Resource mobilisation with the Government of Japan continues and we expect a final decision on funding for this project to be made in Quarter 4 of 2017.

The project has not faced any significant challenges in the quarter and remains on track to deliver the project activities as outlined in the annual workplan (AWP) as agreed by the project board.

The one caveat to mention at this stage is that some of the activities, such as Activity 3.1 - support for the establishment of Parliament Satellite offices - are linked to the financial allocation provided to parliament for the 2017-18 financial year. Therefore, following the approval of the national budget in July 2017, the FPSP II project team will hold meetings with the secretariat to review the proposed implementation of some activities. Following this meeting, the project team will advise the Project Board if there are to be any significant implications on the implementation of the agreed AWP.

# Project Summary

## **Fiji Parliament Support Project Phase II**

**The Fiji Parliament Support Project Phase II (FPSP Phase II)** is the second phase of UNDP support to the Fiji Parliament that began in 2014. The project seeks to provide support to the Parliament to become more effective and efficient through strengthening the work of its committees related to legislation and oversight, building the capacities of legislators and professionalism of staff, as well as improving outreach and citizen engagement. The project is guided by the Corporate Plan and strategic vision and mission of Parliament. To achieve the aims of a well-functioning modern Parliament, the project will focus on capacity development of parliamentary actors, including MPs and staff. It will involve, among others trainings, placements, manuals, standard operating procedures, needs assessments, CSO and citizen engagement, and the inclusion of minorities and marginalised groups, including women and youth. The timeframe for the support is four years from January 2017 – December 2020. This allows for continued support to the current Parliament term, as well as just over two years of support to the next Parliament term following the next general election scheduled for 2018.

The project is currently funded by the Governments of Australia and New Zealand. While additional funding was mobilised in this quarter from the Government of Australia, a funding shortfall remains. Efforts to resource mobilise for the project will continue.

## Key Achievements

The following are the key achievements by FPSP II during the reporting period:

### Output 1 - Committees have enhanced capabilities to undertake their legislative and oversight functions, including skills to ensure that the SDGs and development issues are mainstreamed across Parliament's work, including gender mainstreaming

During this reporting quarter of FPSP Phase II, emphasis has continued on strengthening the work of Committees in Parliament. Specific activities undertaken in this quarter by FPSP II included:

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

During this quarter, FPSP II arranged for a technical adviser to undertake 2 separate missions to Fiji to provide assistance to the Committee as it undertook its work scrutinizing draft legislation. The first mission was in April 2017 and the second mission was in May 2017.

Full reports from the consultant are available from the project team but some of the support provided included research, preparing briefs and papers for the Committee members, working with the Committee to prepare for meetings, providing advice and guidance to Committee members before Committee hearings and the provision of information on similar issues from other jurisdictions as those under scrutiny in Fiji.

#### **Seminar attended by Fiji MPs on Parliament Committees**

In April, UNDP brought together Members and staff from 8 Pacific Parliaments to discuss the challenges and opportunities for Pacific Parliaments in terms of ensuring that there are effective committee systems operating and playing a key role in the legislative and oversight process. The event was held in Suva and numerous members of Parliament from the Fiji Parliament attended the event. The former Speaker of the Trinidad and Tobago Parliament attended the event as a resource person allowing MPs from Fiji to interact and discuss issues of importance with another SIDS Parliament.



*Participants at the regional seminar with UNDP Resident representative, Osnat Lubrani, and the Honourable Speaker of the Fiji Parliament*

In addition, as part of the programme, the MPs from the Pacific visited the Fiji Parliament to see the work of the Fiji Parliament Committees.

## **Public Consultations by the Standing Committee on Social Affairs**

The FPSP II project continued to provide support to a number of the Standing Committees. One specific request was from the Standing Committee for Social Affairs with regards to further public consultations in Rotuma on the two bills related to Rotuma that are currently before the Committee. The project facilitated that the Committee members and support staff visited the island by boat. Unfortunately, due to adverse weather, the proposed 3 days in Rotuma turned into 10 days as the boat was unable to return to Suva due to a cyclone warning.

A full report on the consultations is available from the project team.

## **Technical Assistance to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs**

During this quarter, the UNDP FPSP II project received a request for support from the Standing Committee on Social Affairs with regards to further information to assist their scrutiny of the Bill before the Committee on Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The FPSP II project managed to secure the services of world renowned disability legal expert Professor Ron McCallum to undertake an analysis of the draft legislation and to provide a briefing by skype to the Committee on the Bill.



*Professor McCallum providing evidence to the Committee via video conference*

## **Technical Assistance to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence**

The Fiji Parliament Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs is mandated to scrutinise International Treaties and Conventions before they are debated and voted upon in the Parliament itself. Two of the international treaties referred to the Committee were on (i) The Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol (ii) Review of the Framework agreement on the Establishment of the International Solar Alliance.

The FPSP II project facilitated the attendance of 2 UNDP energy and climate change experts to provide information and briefings to the Committee during their scrutiny of these International treaties.



*UNDP Climate Change expert, Kevin Petrini, and UNDP Energy expert Thomas Jensen, briefing the Committee*

## **Training for Committee staff on scrutinising legislation from a gender perspective**

At the beginning of 2017, UNDP launched the Toolkit on Scrutinising Legislation from a Gender Perspective. This toolkit is to be used by Parliament Committees when undertaking their scrutiny of legislation.

In May, UNDP organised a half-day training session for all Committee staff on the Toolkit in order for them to be capacitated on how to provide advice and guidance to the Committee on the toolkit, and how to ensure that consideration of gender issues is included in Committee reports.

## **Output 2 - MPs, including women MPs, and staff have increased capacities and improved professionalism to fulfil their obligations, benefitting from exposure to other parliaments through south-south triangular cooperation**

UNDP, in the second quarter of FPSP II, continued to provide professional development opportunities for both Members of Parliament and Parliament staff to enable them to undertake their roles more effectively. The support in this area for Honourable Members will slowly diminish in the lead up to the election in 2018 but will then significantly increase again.

Some of the activities carried out under this component in the second quarter of 2017 included:

### **Seminar for MPs on Sharing Knowledge from International Conferences.**

One of the issues previously raised by the Honourable Speaker and other stakeholders in Parliament was a mechanism to share information between all MPs from international conferences and events attended by the Fiji MPs. At the end of May, the FPSP II project arranged a one day knowledge sharing workshop for MPs to share their experiences, lessons learned and the new issues highlighted at these conferences attended. The MPs themselves were the resource people and presented to their peers on the conferences and activities attended on behalf of the Fiji Parliament. Unfortunately, SODELPA MPs did not attend the event as they were unhappy that they have not recently been selected as part of the official Parliament delegations. However, MPs from Fiji First and NFP did attend and participated.



### **Preparation for Budget Analysis support to MPs**

The national budget was tabled in Parliament on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2017. In preparation for the tabling of the budget, the FPSP II project mobilised 6 international researchers to come to Fiji to work with the Parliament Library and Research Services team to undertake an analysis of the Budget and to hold workshops and briefs for MPs and civil society on the budget.

These researchers were mobilised from the Parliaments of Tonga, Australia, Victoria, Wales, Scotland and New Zealand. Details of the work they undertook in early July will be included in the next quarterly report as it falls into the next reporting period.

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

The Fiji Parliament is still in its infancy following its resumption in September 2014 following a number of years in Fiji where no Parliament operated. The project, under this output, focuses on providing information to citizens on the work of Parliament, looking at opportunities for citizens to engage with the Parliament and utilising Parliament as an institution to facilitate national discussions on important development topics. This output also includes key stakeholders such as senior civil servants, the CSOs and private sectors.

Some of the activities carried out in this area in the first quarter of 2017 included:

### **Launch of new Parliament website and Parliament app**

During the first phase of the FPSP project, work was undertaken to develop a new interactive website for Parliament to develop apps that could be downloaded to mobile phones and tablets to allow for easy access to Parliament documents and information on Parliament.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> May, the website and apps were formally launched at an event organised by FPSP II in Parliament.



*Honourable Speaker launching the new Parliament Website and apps*

### **Speaker's Debate – Youth:**



*Over 250 people attended the Speaker's Debate on the topic of youth in Fiji.*

The FPSP project is continuing to support the hugely popular public Speaker's debates on the SDGs and key development issues. On 29<sup>th</sup> May, the seventh debate was organised on the topic – "Do communities in Fiji value the voices of our youth?". The panel consisted of the Minister for Youth, the Leader of the Opposition, General Secretary of the National Youth Council of Fiji, National President of Sanatan Youth, President of the Fiji Muslim Youth

Movement and an Associate Dean (Pacific) of University of Otago. Over 250 people were in attendance, with the event being livestreamed. This was the first time that the project involved the Fiji Deaf Association to provide sign language services during the Debate.



*Women from the Eastern Division in the Parliament Chamber*

### **Visit by Women from Eastern Division**

The FPSP II project worked in close collaboration with the UNDP REACH project to facilitate the visit of 100 women from the Eastern Division to the Fiji Parliament in June. The women from the maritime

communities of Lau, Kadavu, Lomaiviti and Rotuma were provided with information on the way the Parliament functions and were given a tour of the Parliament building.

### **Briefings for senior Civil Servants on Parliament**

Under Activity 3.3 of the project a key activity related to Parliament outreach is to organise information sharing sessions with senior civil servants so there is a better understanding by Ministries of the way in which Parliament works and that there can be smoother information flow between the Legislature and the Executive.

The first of these small meetings was organised by Parliament with the Permanent Secretary and senior staff from the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The FPSP II project attended and provided assistance to the secretariat in preparing for the meeting. The Parliament intends to roll out these meetings with other Ministries over the course of the year.

### **Sign Language Interpretation for Parliament sittings**

In line with the project's aims of taking Parliament to the people and especially marginalised groups that are often not engaged with the work of Parliament, FPSP II provided financial support to the Parliament to allow sign language interpretation on television for all Parliament sittings. This initiative was launched by the Parliament in the April sitting.



*All sittings of Parliament are broadcast on television with sign language interpretation.*

## Project Management

Although not directly covered by FPSP II, it is worth noting that during this quarter the final independent project evaluation of the FPSP project Phase I was undertaken. The evaluator held meetings with all stakeholders including members of the FPSP Board.

## Annex 1:

### Financial Summary for the period: 01 January – 30 June 2017

Activity Details	Activity ID	Expenditure in USD\$
Output 1: Committees have enhanced capabilities to undertake their legislative and oversight functions, including skills to ensure that the SDGs and development issues are mainstreamed across Parliament's work, including gender mainstreaming.		
Support provided to Committee Chairs and MPs	ACTIVITY 1.1	\$51,965.05
Assistance provided to committee staff and committee services	ACTIVITY 1.2	\$10,006.41
Support provided to the work of committees	ACTIVITY 1.3	\$25,207.61
Output 2: MPs, including women MPs, and staff have increased capacities and improved professionalism to fulfil their obligations, benefitting from exposure to other parliaments through south-south triangular cooperation.		
Skills development provided to MPs	ACTIVITY 2.1	\$28,309.58
Assistance provided to staff of the Parliament Secretariat	ACTIVITY 2.2	\$14,046.56
Support to the organisation and management of Parliament and parliamentary bodies	ACTIVITY 2.3	0
Output 3: Parliamentary outreach and citizen engagement have expanded to include traditionally excluded groups, such as women and youth, and reach remote areas.		
Support provided to parliamentary outreach	ACTIVITY 3.1	\$14,046.56
Assistance provided to citizen groups to engage with parliament	ACTIVITY 3.2	\$284.14
Support to MPs and civil servants to better understand the representation function of parliament	ACTIVITY 3.3	0
Effective technical advisory services and project implementation & Direct Project Costs	ACTIVITY 4.0	\$43,703.43
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE (USD)</b>		<b>\$208,355.54</b>