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Resilient nations.*

# Fiji Parliament Support Project

## Phase II

### Quarter 4 Report

1 October – 31 December 2017

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## Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of activities undertaken by the Fiji Parliament Support Project (FPSP) phase II in the period October - December 2017. The project has continued to provide invaluable support to the Fiji Parliament in the three focus areas: 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.

A summary of activities implemented during the last quarter is listed below:

2 October	Members of Parliament SDG Refresher Workshop Speaker's Debate	Suva
3 – 6 October	Fiji Parliament Sustainable Development Goals Self-Assessment Exercise	Suva
14-18 October	IPU General Assembly – assistance to Fiji delegation and organisation of first ever SIDS parliaments meeting	St Petersburg
30 Oct – 3 Nov	Caucus staff exchange with Victoria Parliament to look at post-election training for new MPs	Melbourne
24-27 Oct	Fiji attendance at CPA Regional conference & Hot Topic Event	Sydney
1-8 Nov	Assistance to Fiji Parliament delegation to CPA meeting	Dhaka
4-9 November	Ongoing TA Support to Law, Justice & HR Committee	Suva
4-9 November	Development of handbook for civil servants on their interaction with Parliament [ongoing]	Fiji
7-15 November	TA to the Secretariat on steps following the Dissolution of Parliament	Fiji
12 November	Assistance to the Fiji delegation to COP23 IPU meeting	Bonn
13 Nov	Presentation to MPs and staff on the IPU-UNDP Global Parliamentary Report on oversight	Fiji
14-23 November	TA to the Fiji Public Accounts Committee	Home / Suva
27th November	Speaker Debate “Is Fiji on track to achieve full and productive employment by 2030?”.	Suva
28 November	FPSP II Steering Committee meeting	Suva
12-14 Dec	Training for Pacific Public Accounts Committee including 3 MPs and 1 staff from Fiji Parliament	Wellington
December	Assistance in final review of the PACMAS / UNDP media handbook on parliamentary reporting	Fiji

Resource mobilisation remains a priority for the project. As stated in the Quarter 3 report, the project is faced with a budget deficit issue but has been in discussions with the Government of Japan on potential additional funding. A decision on this is expected to be taken in February 2018.

The project delivered activities outlined in the 2017 annual work plan (AWP), as agreed by the project board except for establishment of Parliament Satellite offices, due to the fact the Fiji Parliament. Funding for this activity was not included in the Parliaments budget for 2017-28 and therefore the FPSP II project will need to re-consider originally envisaged activities in this area.

The project steering committee met and formally agreed the 2018 annual workplan for the project.

# Project Summary

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

**The Fiji Parliament Support Project Phase II (FPSP Phase II) 2017-2020** 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 focusses on capacity development of parliamentary actors, including MPs and staff. The work of the project involves, 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. Despite this generous ongoing financial support to the project, a funding shortfall remains and the Project is actively working towards further resource mobilization.

## 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**

FPSP II places strong emphasis on strengthening the work of Committees in Parliament and this has been a prominent area of support during the second phase of the project. Specific activities undertaken in this quarter by FPSP II included:

#### **Training for Pacific Public Accounts Committee**

As part of UNDP's support to Pacific parliaments to strengthen their capacities in law-making, oversight and representative functions as well as strengthening the general capacity of Parliament Secretariats, FPSP II supported the participation of a Fiji delegation at the Pacific Public Accounts Committee seminar held in Wellington from 12 to 14 December. The broad objectives of the two-day seminar were to support the work of Public Account Committees through the capacity building of their leadership (chair and deputy chair) and support staff (committee clerk). Fiji's delegation comprised of two Government and one Opposition PAC members as well as the PAC secretary.



*Members of Parliament and Parliament staff from Cook Islands, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Tonga during their tour of the New Zealand Parliament.*

#### **Technical Assistance to Committees**

In this quarter, the project also provided technical assistance to two Committees: the Law, Justice and Human Rights Committee and the Public Accounts Committee.

### **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**

Throughout 2017, UNDP has continued to provide professional development opportunities for both Members of Parliament (MPs) and Parliament staff to enable them to undertake their roles

more effectively. However, it is envisaged that this support will decrease leading up to the elections this year and then significantly increase again after the 2018 elections.

The activities carried out under this component in the fourth quarter of 2017 included:

### **Workshop for Members of Fiji Parliament on Parliamentary Engagement with the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals**

On 2 October, the Fiji Parliament Secretariat, in partnership with UNDP and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), organized a one day refresher training on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aimed at refreshing and enhancing MPs knowledge around the SDGs. The sessions were designed to inspire discussions amongst MPs on their engagement with the SDGs in Fiji, as well as what has been and what could be the role of Parliament in attaining them. Importantly, the workshop also provided options on how MPs could engage in their capacity as lawmakers, in providing oversight and representing citizen's interests, learning from the experiences of how this work has progressed in other parliaments.



*Members of Parliament and Fiji Parliament staff at the one day SDGs workshop.*

### **Fiji Parliament Sustainable Development Goals Self-Assessment Exercise**

The SDG self-assessment exercise was conducted from 3 to 6 October. The self-assessment was an opportunity for Parliament to self-reflect on their capacity to engage in SDG implementation. The Fijian Parliament made history by being the first in the world to carry out a self-assessment exercise on SDGs. Led by the Research & Library Services Unit of the Parliament secretariat, the team used focus-group discussions and existing information such as information papers and presentations covering the Fiji Parliament's work on the SDGs. Support was provided by a team consisting of resource persons from UNDP, IPU and GOPAC. A report for the exercise is currently being finalised by Parliament and the Speaker noted her wish to have the report tabled and discussed in Parliament.

### **Caucus staff exchange**

Three Fiji Parliament caucus staff were invited by the Parliament of the Australian state of Victoria to undertake a professional development programme from 31 October to 2 November 2017. One caucus staff from each of the three parties represented in Parliament were invited, but in the end the staff member for the Fiji First caucus was unable to travel due to late submission of his visa application. The staff exchange offered participants a range of activities to enhance their knowledge and understanding on the important role that caucus staff play in relation to the parliamentary works. UNDP has also previously provided some training opportunities for caucus staff.

With a national election due to be held in 2018, it is likely that there will be a turnover of MPs and new Members will require induction training and support. Whilst the Secretariat of Parliament will provide a formal induction package for new and returning Members, new Members will require more nuanced induction and assistance by their party caucuses to guide them on the realities of the way in which party caucuses in Parliament operate and their role as MPs within these caucuses.

### **IPU General Assembly – SIDS Parliaments meeting on COP23**

In October, FPSP II facilitated the attendance of a parliamentary delegation from Fiji, comprising three Members of Parliament (MPs) and two Parliament staff, at the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) General Assembly in Russia. The Assembly gathers almost all the national Parliaments of the world. In addition, UNDP assisted the Fiji Parliament to coordinate with the



*Fiji Parliament Speaker, Hon. Jiko Luveni, and part of the Fiji delegation at the SIDS meeting*

Parliament of the Seychelles to organize the first ever meeting of Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) parliaments.

### **Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Regional Conference**

The first Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Australia and Pacific region “Hot Topic” forum took place in Sydney in October. With the increasing threats of climate change to some of the Commonwealth’s most vulnerable and smallest nations, especially in the Pacific, the forum heard from speakers whose jurisdictions are affected by climate change. The forum brought together Parliamentarians, academics, students, civil society organisations (CSOs) and relevant



stakeholders. The project supported the participation of Fiji whilst Ms. Nanise Saune represented the UNDP Pacific Office at the conference and gave a presentation on “the role of Parliament in overseeing the government action in the fight against climate change”.

### **Fiji Parliament delegation to COP23**

FPSP II supported the participation of a cross-party Fiji Parliament delegation at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 23) in Bonn, Germany, in November. The Speaker of the Fiji Parliament, Hon. Jiko Luveni, was a panelist at the IPU Parliamentary meeting on 12 November where she highlighted the leading role MPs should play as climate change advocates in their respective countries, especially in the Pacific where the effects are clearly visible. She also emphasized the importance of IPU organized forums which strengthen links and cooperation on global issues like climate change between parliaments of developed countries and those in the developing or least developed part of the world.

### **IPU – UNDP Global Parliamentary Report**

In November, Mr. Mads Hove of the UNDP Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS) in New York, presented the new Global Parliamentary Report 2017 to MPs and Parliament staff. This is the second Global Parliamentary Report jointly produced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The presentation was again an opportunity for UNDP to highlight parliament’s role in oversight of government, and parliament’s power to hold government to account for its actions and decisions.



*Mads Hove of UNDP New York presenting the IPU-UNDP Global Parliamentary Report 2017 to MPs and Parliament staff.*

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

Under this output, the project continues to support the Parliament Outreach and Civic Engagement Unit to conduct public outreach activities to reach communities that might not otherwise have access to information about the Parliament’s activities, or be able to utilise opportunities for citizen engagement.

There were two Speakers Debate held in this area in the last quarter of 2017 on two SDG related topics: employment and transport . A series of discussions were organised in 2016 and 2017 to encourage debate and discussion on key development issues. These discussions are called “Speaker’s Debates”. To date, nine debates on a range of topics have been held.

### **Speaker Debate - Employment**

The SDGs establish clear commitments to address the issue of jobs and tackling unemployment. SDG 8 is to promote sustained, inclusive, full and productive employment and decent work for all. Under this SDG there are two targets linked to employment. Target 8.3 is to promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation. Target 8.5 states that by 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.



*Panelists and the audience at the last Speaker's Debate for 2017.*

Attended by more than 150 people, the question for the last Speaker’s Debate for 2017 was: Is Fiji on track to achieve full and productive employment by 2030?

### **Technical Assistance - Broadcasting Needs**

Two NZ based firms were contracted, based on their expertise in the area and experience working with the NZ Parliament, to carry out technical assistance to the Fiji parliament in the planning and management of the process of procurement for remote control broadcast cameras and connectivity equipment. They worked in close coordination with the Fiji Parliament IT team as well as the Fiji Governments IT unit. The setting up of the broadcasting unit would enhance the work of the committees during hearings and provide for a much wider scope of outreach to the communities, not only during hearings but parliament sittings as well. The procurement of the relevant equipment, serviced by Parliament staff, ) will enable the Fiji Parliament to produce and record coverage of parliamentary proceedings held in the debating chamber and Parliament’s two main committee rooms, for television and online broadcast and for provision to the media. The equipment will give the Fiji Parliament autonomy and independence in its broadcasting of the sittings and hearings.

## **Project Management**

The FPSP Project Board meeting was held on 28 November, and attended by UNDP management and project staff, Fiji Parliament Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General, as well as representatives of the project donors from the Australia and New Zealand High Commissions in Suva.

The project team collated statistics on the work of the project and the parliament's performance for 2017 which was presented at the FPSP II Board meeting. Main items on the agenda included: overview of project developments and achievements, institutional indicators, project budget and financial overview of the project. The 2018 project workplan was also approved at the meeting.

The Fiji Parliament Secretary General expressed her deep appreciation to UNDP and the project donors for the support rendered to the Fiji Parliament team during the year and said they looked forward to further cooperation in 2018, especially at a critical time when Fiji is due to hold elections.

## Conclusion

UNDP, through the Fiji Parliament Support Project, has been working with the Fiji Parliament since it re-started in 2014. This support has focused on several key areas including professional development of MPs and staff, and improvement of Committees' legislative and oversight work. The project has also been assisting the Parliament in its outreach and citizen engagement functions.

The Fiji Parliament has come a long way in recent years in terms of raising public's awareness and access to information. It now uses a modern website interface and has new mobile apps that can be downloaded on mobile phones and tablets so citizens can access information about the Parliament's work.

The project continues to provide key day to day technical advice to the Fiji Parliament on a range of issues, for example, the most recent being the next steps following Parliament dissolution.

A number of the activities implemented by the Fiji Parliament are now receiving regional and global recognition as best practice for Parliaments. For example, the Fiji Parliament outreach programme is considered a model for the Pacific and has also generated interest globally. Having a good parliament outreach team has been important for a new institution and in a context where no legislature operated for 8 years. Fiji's outreach programme focuses on traditionally excluded groups such as women and youth with different components such as the Parliament bus, Meet the Speaker, Speakers Debates etc.

The detailed national budget analysis which was piloted in Fiji in 2016 is also receiving interest from other Pacific countries where Parliament of briefings for CSOs on the content of the budget shows that Parliament as an institution can engage pro-actively with CSOs. UNDP has been able to provide assistance to the Parliament team in their endeavours. The project brought in six expert researchers from the Parliaments of New Zealand, Australia, Victoria, Tonga, Wales and Scotland to work with the Research team here in Fiji. Fiji Parliament then held two workshops held two workshops for MPs on the budget and the research undertake and separately for civil society as a key stakeholder of the budget process. The Fiji Parliament is the only legislature in the Pacific to provide such information and the project will extend similar assistance to the Parliament of Solomon Islands in 2018.

The project team has continued to invest time into resource mobilisation activities for the project with the aim of ensuring that by early 2018 the FPSP II is fully funded.

## Annex 1:

### Financial Summary for the period: 01 October – 31 December 2017<sup>1</sup>

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	\$ 43,107.98
Assistance provided to committee staff and committee services	ACTIVITY 1.2	\$ 11,368.60
Support provided to the work of committees	ACTIVITY 1.3	\$ 34,606.82
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	\$ 5,902.17
Assistance provided to staff of the Parliament Secretariat	ACTIVITY 2.2	\$ 16,277.85
Support to the organisation and management of Parliament and parliamentary bodies	ACTIVITY 2.3	\$ 27,541.27
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	\$ 90,778.91
Assistance provided to citizen groups to engage with parliament	ACTIVITY 3.2	\$ 0
Support to MPs and civil servants to better understand the representation function of parliament	ACTIVITY 3.3	\$ 11,646.95
Effective technical advisory services and project implementation & Direct Project Costs	ACTIVITY 4.0	\$ 104,799.65
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE (USD)</b>		<b>\$ 346,030.20</b>

<sup>1</sup> Note that these figures provide only an overview of financial expenditure during the reporting period. These figures are pulled from the UNDP ATLAS financial system.