

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT

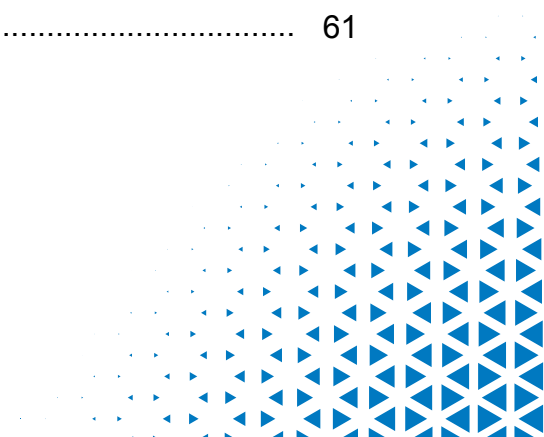
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VISION

A Stronger and Prosperous Fiji through Excellence in Foreign Service

MISSION

To advance Fiji's interests through the Effective Formulation and Implementation of its Foreign Policy

VALUES

- Accountability
- Honesty
- Commitment
- Loyalty
- Courtesy
- Professionalism
- Integrity
- Transparency



ABOUT THE REPORT

This Annual Report has been prepared according to the Financial Regulations within the Fijian Civil Service.

It details the Ministry of Foreign Affairs performance(s) and commitment(s) in the focus areas highlighting robust leadership during the 2019-2020 financial year. The data included in this Annual Report speaks to this.

In Summary, this Annual Report includes the following:

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Organisational Structure;
- The six (6) Divisional Key Performance Indicators (KPI), Outcomes and Outputs; and
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Achievements and Results aligned to the Operational Plan for the 2019/2020 financial year.

The Annual Report also includes activities that show the shift in priorities given the implications of COVID-19.



Prime Minister Bainimarama with staff during Fiji Day celebrations in Suva



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Referral Letter from the Permanent Secretary

Date: 26 October 2021

Honourable Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama
Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji and Minister for Foreign Affairs
Office of the Prime Minister
Government Building
Suva.

Dear Sir,

In accordance with the Financial Management Act of 2004, I hereby submit the 2019-2020 Annual Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for your information and presentation to Parliament.

Yours sincerely,



Yogesh J. Karan
Acting Permanent Secretary

PERMANENT SECRETARY'S FOREWORD

The Annual Report 2019-2020 highlights the key achievements of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with an overview of our consolidated efforts to create opportunities for the people of Fiji through advancement of Fiji's Foreign Policy initiatives.

With, Global Leadership being the cornerstone of Fiji's foreign policy priorities, 2019-2020 featured higher levels of engagements through regional and international visitations by the world's renowned leaders and diplomats. These included high level visits by the Prime Ministers from Australia and New Zealand, further enhancing cooperation at all levels and reaffirming our comprehensive partnership and aspirations as Pacific Vuvale.

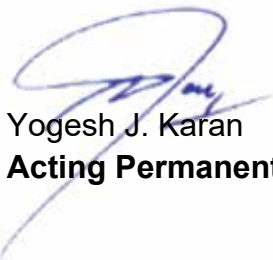
The Ministry also engaged in High-Level Meetings both onshore and abroad with strategic aims to enhance Fiji's collaboration and maximize development opportunities. With Fiji's vested interests in Trade and Tourism further complementing our status as the hub of the Pacific.

The ending of the 2019-2020 year saw the paradigm shift towards combatting COVID-19 and with ultimate goal of building back better sustainably and reviving the economy. It unfolded new areas of collaboration that stands strong amidst the crisis imposed by the pandemic and climate change.

As we reflect on yet another challenging year filled with enormous accomplishments, I wish to acknowledge the Senior Management Team and dedicated staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs serving at headquarters and our foreign missions across the world.

Together we convey our appreciation to the Honorable Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs for his decisive leadership and guidance. We extend our gratitude to all our stakeholders in Fiji, region and the world for their remarkable support in helping us achieve our vision of, **'Building a better Fiji through excellence in foreign service.'**

As the Acting Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it is my honour to commend to you the Ministry's Annual Report for the 2019-2020 financial year.



Yogesh J. Karan

Acting Permanent Secretary

ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

Hon. MFA	Honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Hon. PM	Honourable Prime Minister
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
CAPP	Climate Action Pacific Partnership
FSO	Foreign Service Officer
PFSO	Principal Foreign Service Officer
FFA	Forum Fisheries Agency
WCPFC	Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
BBNJ	Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction
ISA	International Seabed Authority
MACC	Maritime Affairs Coordinating Committee
PSIDS	Pacific Small Islands Developing States
DINFO	Department of Information
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
WFP	World Food Programme
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
IRENA	International Renewable Energy Agency
UNECA	UN Economic Commission in Africa
ISO	International Sugar Organisation
AU	African Union
PIDF	Pacific Islands Development Forum
RAD	Roving Ambassador's Division
PIF	Pacific Islands Forum
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
MSG	Melanesian Spearhead Group
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
FMIS	Financial Management Information System

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM



Yogesh J Karan
Acting Permanent Secretary



Esala Nayasi
Deputy Secretary



Peter Emberson
Director Multilateral



Jonetani Tagivetaua
Director Oceania



Apolosi Lewaqai
Director Asia



Jiko Rasoqosoqo
Chief of Protocol

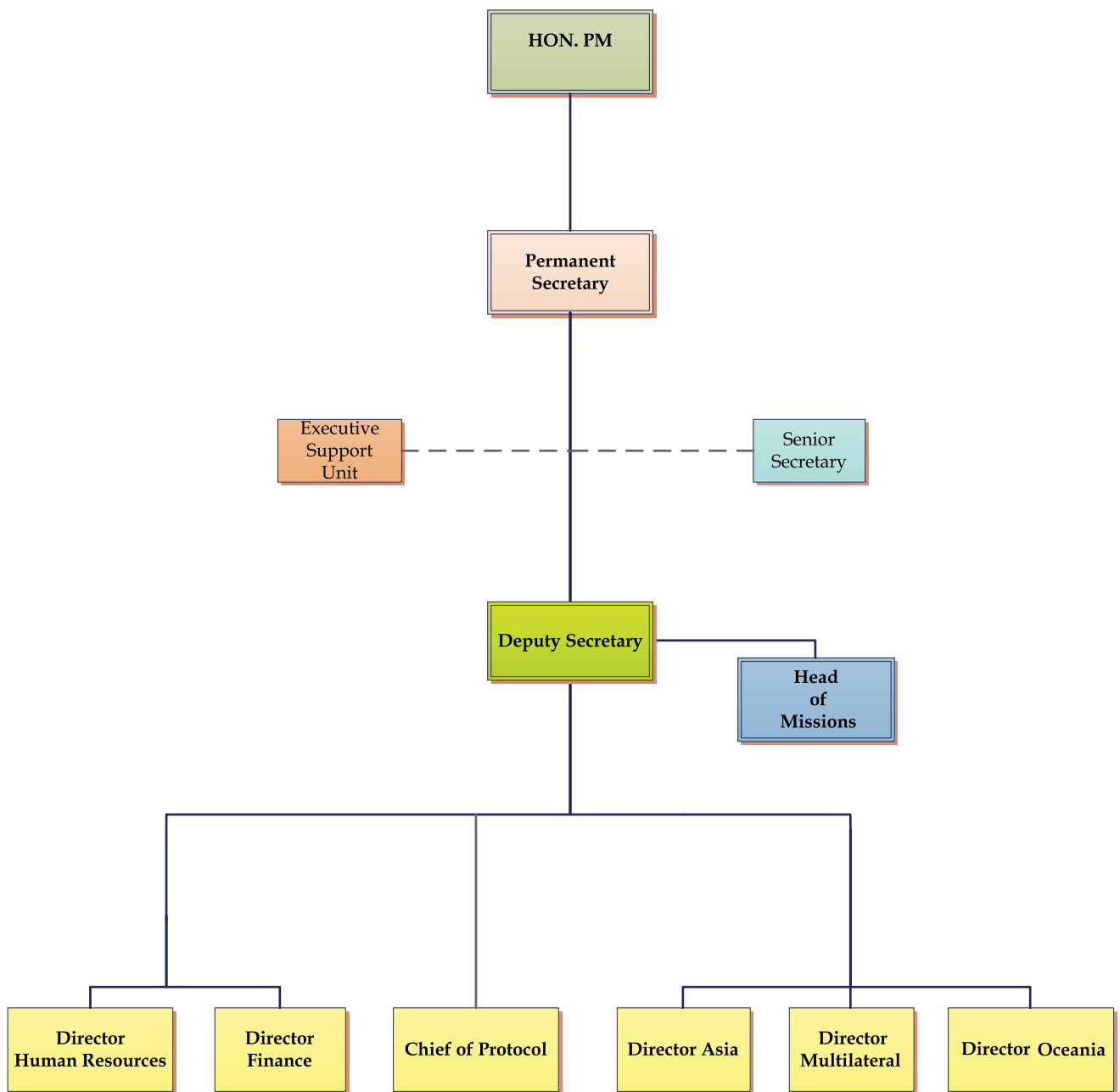


Josefa Tuima
Director Finance



Manjula Shah
Director Human Resources

2019/2020 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS, EUROPE, AFRICA AND SOUTH AMERICA BUREAU

Executive Summary

Multilateralism has achieved legitimate milestones that have led to major political and socio-economic advancements including peace and security and the promotion and strengthening of human rights. The international cooperation that is taking shape within the multilateral framework is saving lives every day and enhance socio-economic progress despite the ongoing challenges posed by climate change, COVID-19 pandemic and other issues which requires global solutions.

International relations were tested when the global community was struck by the COVID-19 pandemic. The period further saw tactical diplomacy played amongst the superpowers. From 2019-2020 North Korea-U.S. Nuclear Talks resumed with President Donald Trump being the first U.S. president to set foot in North Korea.

Britain on the other hand struggled to strike a favourable deal with the EU following the BREXIT which remained hanging until the deal was signed in 2020. Prime Minister Theresa May was forced to delay BREXIT until October 31, and then resigned after the House of Commons voted down her deal three times. Boris Johnson won a Conservative Party vote and became prime minister on July 24.

The U.S.-China Trade War continued as both leaders met at the G20 Summit in 2020, which was held virtually for the first time and committed to push ahead with trade talks, however both sides imposed tariffs on their goods, and eventually reached an Agreement to settle differences. In Central America, the Migrant Exodus continued to grow as asylum seekers fled from escalating violence and poverty. The U.S. House also agreed to impeach President Donald Trump, based on allegations of Abuse of Office.

During the first half of 2020, the world was preoccupied with the rising tensions between the US and Iran, on the killing of an Iranian General in a US drone strike. The impeachment trial of President Donald Trump began, and BREXIT was confirmed, after years of uncertainty. In Wuhan China, a new virus had begun to spread. The world was not prepared.

Fiji welcomed for the first time, the visit of the President of the 74th Session of the General Assembly His Excellency, Tijjani Muhammad-Bande and the President of the Human Rights Council His Excellency Coly Seck. The UN Humanitarian Chief Mark Lowcock also visited Fiji at the same period. These were the last physical visits that were conducted prior to the lockdown of international borders due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the serious economic implications of pandemic, there were

announcements made for the closure of Brussels Mission and all functions were to be transferred to the Geneva Mission.

The COVID-19 pandemic altered the way of life and forced a new normal for the world. By March, 2020 COVID-19 has reached almost every corner of the globe including Fiji forcing the nation into lockdown following its first recorded COVID-19 case. As international borders closed, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs adopted to the new virtual norm of conducting business through online platforms.

All engagements that were conducted in 2020 were held on virtual platforms. The Bureau continued to support the Multilateral Missions in New York, Geneva, London and Brussels.

HIGHLIGHTS

Strategic Priority 1: Global Leadership

Due to the pandemic and the restrictions in place, potential for advocacy remained a challenge, however strategies for new digital platforms were implemented as business continuity became second nature.

July 2019 - Fiji Appointed Vice President of the Platform for Disaster Displacement

Fiji's recognition at the United Nations as the first Pacific Island country that is represented at the United Nations Human Rights Council and its vice presidency at the UNHRC, was further elevated to a new leadership role as the vice-president of the Platform for Disaster Displacement (PDD) at the UN in Geneva, Switzerland. Fiji had been nominated to this position by France.

This new leadership role on PDD was coordinated by the team at the Fiji Mission in Geneva. The work of the PDD is central to Fiji's strategic development priorities and its commitment to enhance response to climate change and disaster.

PDD is a state-led initiative, which was endorsed by 109 States in October 2015 and it seeks to implement the recommendations of the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda, which supports States and other stakeholders to implement the recommendations for the greater protection of cross boarder displaced persons in the context of disasters and climate change.



Senior officials during the EU-Fiji High Level Political Dialogue in Suva

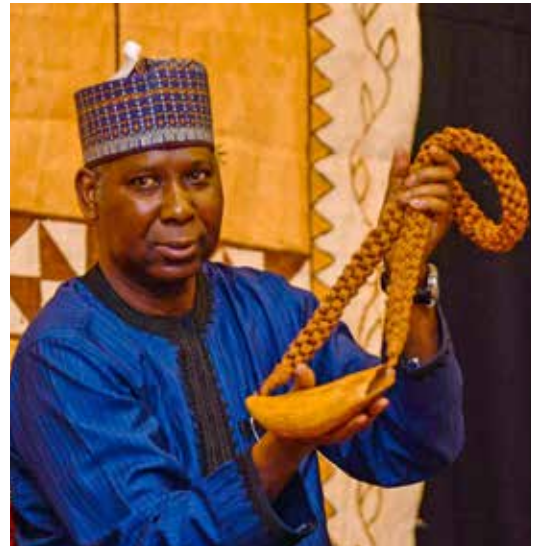
September 2019 - 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, UNHQ, New York, September 2019

The General Assembly also coincided with 5 High Level Summits addressing key global issues that were attended by the Hon. Prime Minister, namely:

- a. Climate Action Summit;
- b. Universal Health Coverage Summit;
- c. Sustainable Development Goals Summit;
- d. Financing for Development Summit; and
- e. Midterm Review of the SAMOA (Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action) Pathway Summit

All engagements that the Hon. Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs were invited to and hosted were successfully completed. The Bureau undertook extensive preparations including inter-agency consultations, preparation of Talking Points, Remarks, Statements and Briefs as well as logistical preparations, media releases and Cabinet paper.

All the events that the Fiji Delegation participated in – reflect Fiji's strategic priorities in its engagement with the UN and alignment to the multilateral agenda. Climate change, Health, Sustainable Development for SIDS, and Global Financing mechanisms are objectives that are being implemented by our Missions in consultation with their relevant multilateral partners at the UNFCCC, the WHO, and the UN and ECOSOC.



President of the 74th Session of the General Assembly
His Excellency, Mr. Tijani Muhammad-Bande

19 to 21 November - SIDS /LDC Trust Fund Regional Workshop

The Small Island Developing States (SIDS) / Least Developed Countries (LDC) Trust Fund Workshop hosted by Fiji for the Pacific region was attended by more than 30 delegates from across the region in Nadi to exchange information and best practices to further the capacity of SIDS to effectively participate in Geneva-based Human Rights Council meetings.

The Workshop also marked the first visit to Fiji of Ambassador Coly Seck of Senegal, President of the Human Rights Council. He is the first President of the Geneva-based rights body to visit the region.

This Workshop concluded with the adoption of the “Nadi Declaration Towards 2022” aimed at enhancing participation of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in the UN Human Rights Council.

The Nadi Declaration sets out a series of recommendations and priorities looking towards 2022 when the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights will produce a report outlining the activities of the Trust Fund. Among the priorities agreed on are

concerted efforts to improve the function of the Trust Fund, which has been operational since 2014, and ensuring relevant topics to the Pacific SIDS were discussed at the Council.

The Trust Fund has benefited Fijian diplomats through exposure and capacity building at the Council and helped the country be better represented in Geneva.

9th African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Summit of Heads of State and Government, 9-10 December, 2019

The Fiji delegation was led by Minister Seruiratu who was accompanied by the Fiji Ambassador to Brussels and First Secretary and Director of the Multilateral Bureau.

Some highlights of the Nairobi Summit included:

- i. The ACP appointed its new Secretary General from Angola who took up his post in February 2020. The Pacific lobbied hard to get its very own Assistant SG Post in the newly reformed ACP Secretariat and was successful in securing this; ASG Ms. Cristelle Pratt is the first of the three females to be appointed to a leading position with the ACP Secretariat.
- ii. The Revised Georgetown Agreement which is the Agreement that establishes relations between the ACP Group was passed at Council. Countries would now need to proceed with their ratification processes to align with domestic requirements. Fiji has since ratified the Georgetown Agreement in alignment with the groups position.
- iii. The Nairobi Declaration entitled, “A Transformed ACP Committed to Multilateralism” was adopted by acclamation. The Nairobi Declaration lays out the ACP Group’s position on issues such as multilateralism, good governance, peace and security, environmental sustainability and climate change, among others. Over the years, its range of activities has been extended where cooperation amongst its members has gone beyond development cooperation with the European Union and covers a variety of fields spanning trade, economics, politics and culture, in diverse international fora such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Another important outcome of the December 9-10 Summit in Nairobi, Kenya, is a name change from the ACP Group of States to the Organisation of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (OACPS).

This name change would coincide with the ongoing negotiations between the ACP group with its long-standing partner, the European Union for the Post-Cotonou Agreement. It will replace the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement (CPA), a treaty between the European Union and the ACP countries, signed in June 2000 in Cotonou, Benin's largest city, for a 20-year period from 2000 to 2020.

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) 16 Meeting, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, 5-11 December, 2019

Fiji participated at the WCPFC16 meeting, represented by the Ministry of Fisheries supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) was established by the Convention for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPF Convention) 2004.

The WCPFC Convention seeks to address problems in the management of high seas fisheries resulting from unregulated fishing, over-capitalization, excessive fleet capacity, vessel re-flagging to escape controls, insufficiently selective gear, unreliable databases and insufficient multilateral cooperation in respect to conservation and management of highly migratory fish stocks.

While the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) provides the exclusive rights to Pacific Island Countries to conserve, manage, explore and exploit fisheries resources, the PICs do not have the capacity (yet) to capture and manage all of the fish within its EEZs. The WCPFC sets the limits for the amount of fish that may be caught in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean that covers all the PICs' ocean space and ensuring that the Western Pacific's tuna species are captured at sustainable levels.

The Ministry continues to work with the Ministry of Fisheries to ensure that national and regional interests of PICs are addressed at the WCPFC.

10th Session of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) Assembly, 10-12 January 2020

The 10th Session of the Assembly brought together Heads of States and Governments, Ministers, Member delegations as well as Heads of International and Regional organisations, public and private entities and civil society representatives to contribute to the energy transformation dialogue.

The 10th Assembly represented a curtain-raiser to a decade in which the world must achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established by the United Nations and adopt a climate safe energy path. Renewable energy is recognised as playing a central role in the achievement of several goals including energy access (SDG 7), climate safety (SDG 13), sustainable economic growth (SDG 8) and sustainable cities (SDG 11).



PM Bainimarama with members of the Human Rights Council at the UN General Assembly Hall in New York, USA

IRENA published a 2019 Report which was launched at the 10th Assembly. The Report found that jobs in renewables could reach 40 million by 2050 under a climate-safe energy scenario.

The IRENA Assembly is important for Fiji as it provides the overall framework for the achievement of our energy targets and Fiji's transition from fossil-based energy to alternative sources of renewable energy across all sectors.

Fiji continues to work to meet the energy targets in place as part of the National Development Plan. Moving to renewable energy will need financial support as well as expertise and the costs are high. The IRENA meeting allows participating countries to discuss the challenges they face, and the programs in place to help meet their targets.

Fiji, with a population of around 900,000, is also among the nations committed to net-zero emissions by 2050, with a goal of 30 percent reduction of carbon emissions from the energy sector by 2030.

Visit of the Under- Secretary General and Emergency Relief Coordinator for UNOCHA - February, 2020

His Excellency Mr. Mark Lowcock on his first visit to Fiji met with Hon. Minister for Foreign Affairs (Seruiratu) to discuss issues of mutual cooperation. Fiji has a long-standing relationship with OCHA in the region. OCHA has supported Government with humanitarian coordination during times of natural disaster over the past years. Given the evolution of the global humanitarian agenda, the meeting was an opportune time to reflect, discuss and strategically plan the way forward for cooperation.

The impacts of climate change are cross cutting on our socio-economic livelihood and our existence in general and this was highlighted in the "Global Humanitarian Report of 2020" where the impact of climate change, unexpected infection disease and the impact of protracted and often intensifying conflicts have combined to drive needs to unprecedented levels in 2020.

Visit of the President of the UN General Assembly - March, 2020

The President of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly H.E. Muhammad-Bande made his first official visit to Fiji from the 5th-8th March, 2020.

The visit complements the momentum created by the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres historic visit to Fiji in 2019. The PGA's visit focused on key priorities on Climate Change, Oceans, Youth and Women Empowerment and the United Nations role in supporting member states achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in this decade.

During his official visit to Fiji, President Muhammad-Bande paid a courtesy call on His Excellency, the President of Fiji, Major-General (Ret'd) Jioji Konusi Konrote and met with the Acting Prime Minister and Attorney-General Hon. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum.

Courtesy calls were also made to the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security, Hon. Jone Usamate and the Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Hon. Mereseini Vuniwaqa.

The visit also aligned with Fiji's commitment to playing its part in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals 2030; appreciating the Secretary-General's vision on UN reform in calling for a UN that can deliver services that better support members states, particularly the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in achieving Fiji's National Development Plan.

Phone Meeting with the Chair of the Organisation of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States – 13th May 2020

Hon. Prime Minister Bainimarama held a phone meeting with H.E President Kenyatta and congratulated him for a successful hosting of the 9th ACP Summit of the Heads of State and Government and his exemplary leadership for the meaningful outcomes from the Summit. H.E President Kenyatta was also reassured of Fiji's full support towards his Chairmanship to lead the Organisation of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) in the implementation of our relationship under the revised Georgetown Agreement, which was approved at the 9th Summit.

In their discussions, the Hon. Prime Minister also assured of Fiji's support of A Transformed ACP Committed to Multilateralism, the main theme of the 9th Summit and renewed Fiji's commitment to multilateralism as a viable and valid framework for responding to the current global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and Climate Change. He also encouraged the need to ensure that multilateralism is underpinned by shared values, principles and preservations of solidarity, unity and cohesiveness of the ACP Group.

World Health Assembly (WHA) 73rd Session- Virtual Session, 18 May 2020

The key agenda for the WHA was the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in close coordination with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services and the Fiji Mission in Geneva ensured the effective representation of Fiji in this supreme Health body. The following were some of the critical role:

- i. Procession and submission of WHA 73 Credentials;
- ii. Nomination of MoHMS focal point;
- iii. Preparation of and recording of Ministerial statement.



UN-organised morning tea at GPH to mark the opening of the UNGA 75th virtual session in New York, USA.

- iv. Drafting of interventions in relevant agenda items on issues of priority to Fiji and the Pacific ;
- v. Provision of textual suggestions for WHA resolutions in line with Fiji's interests and priorities as a vulnerable SIDS country prone to varying climate extremes and tropical diseases which requires targeted support.

108th International Labour Conference, 10 to 21 June 2019

The Fijian government has called on the International Labour Organisation to devise strategies to assist vulnerable communities cope with the ongoing existential threat of climate change and to build capacity that promotes resilience and green economy skills as well as to consider alternative mechanisms that promotes labour mobility with minimum requirements.

The key focus of the 108th Session of the ILO this year includes the crafting and adoption of international labour standards in the form of conventions and recommendations, the supervision of the application of conventions and recommendations at the national level, deliberation on labour questions of importance to the entire world and to explore the course of social progress in the world. The Conference also passes resolutions that provide guidelines for the ILO's general policy and future activities.

International Labour Organisation (ILO) Virtual Global Summit, 1-9 July 2020

Fiji effectively participated in the ILO Virtual Global Summit event from 1 – 9 July, 2020. The event provided the opportunity for ILO to engage with Leaders and head of tripartite bodies to share best practices which helped mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in the world of work. The Summit paved the way for the key stakeholders to formulate measures that would amicably reduce the burden posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and to foster partnership on the way forward. The Summit enabled the ILO Secretariat to impress on Leaders the gaps prevalent in societies which were further exploited by the COVID-19 pandemic. Discussions and acknowledgement on the pressing need for greater investments in health and social protection to ensure the resilience of societies in the face of risks such as pandemics was a priority.

1st Extraordinary Inter-Sessional Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) – 3rd June 2020

The 1st Extraordinary Inter-Sessional Summit was held under the theme, “*Transcending the COVID-19 Pandemic: Building Resilience through global solidarity.*” The objective of the Summit was to create an opportunity for OACP Leaders to discuss measures to help combat the impacts of COVID-19. Hon. Prime Minister Bainimarama delivered Fiji's statement addressing the expected outcome under *Key Global Solidarity Actions*.

The swift response of the ACP in collaboration with the European Union resulted in mobilising EUR 25 million from the 11th EDF Intra-ACP Funds to assist member countries cope with the Pandemic. Fiji noted the redirecting of existing funding by the

European Union to support partner countries' efforts to deal with the Coronavirus pandemic. From this allocation, it is estimated around EUR 120 million will be dedicated to the Pacific ACP countries and Other Countries and Territories to help deal with the crisis, both on the health and the socio-economic front. However, this package is inadequate to assist with the members' economic recovery given the widespread and serious impact the pandemic has on substantial loss of economic activities, jobs and income due to the region's heavy reliance on the tourism sector. Moreover, these funding are taken from the existing Intra-ACP allocation, hence this will affect the projects for which the funding were initially allocated to.

These concerns was raised with other ACP leaders at this Summit. The ACP needs to become an influential political lobby group to garner global support for the unique vulnerabilities its member states. There is a need for much greater solidarity, in this regard.

Strategic Priority 3: Socio Economic Development

Launch of the Norway - Pacific Ocean-Climate Scholarship Programme (N_POC) May 2020

The Norway-Pacific Oceans-Climate Scholarship Programme was launched in 2020. It was built on shared belief and perspectives on opening advanced research and development opportunities for young people in Fiji and across the Pacific Island Development States (PSIDS). The N_POC program was officially launched by Prime Minister Honourable Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama and Norway's Minister for International Development Mr. Dag-Inge Ulstein. The Norway and Pacific partnership accelerates implementation of the SDG's and the urgency of taking actions to preserve the health of the Pacific's oceans and its biodiversity.

Maritime Affairs Coordinating Committee (MACC)

The Ministry is chair of the Inter-Agency Maritime Affairs Coordinating Committee (MACC). The interagency comprises all national agencies that work or contribute to the Oceans mandate.



PM Bainimarama at the official launch of the Ocean Transformation Document in Suvavou House, Suva

MACC's work is guided by the Marine Spaces Act of 1977 and international agreements including the Continental Shelf Act and UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

During the reporting period – the MACC convened 3 meetings in which various agendas were progressed including, Fiji's ongoing Maritime Boundaries negotiations, the draft National Oceans Policy was presented and discussed, the Calendar of Events for Oceans related international meetings, Fiji's oceans commitments and other relevant Oceans related matters were discussed and progressed during this period.

Strategic Priority 5: Peace and Security

UNSG Action for Peace (A4P)

Fiji also welcomed the United Nations Secretary General's Action for Peace (A4P) Initiative, to reform United Nations Peacekeeping. UN Peacekeepers today face far more complex conflicts than ever before. These call for new training, better force protection, and for highly specialized and newer skills. UNSG's efforts to reform peace operations need to be fully and unequivocally supported by all member states."

Fiji through its innovative strategies aspires to enhance its international and regional partnership for global peacekeeping, acknowledging the Governments of USA, China, UK, Australia, New Zealand, and Malaysia for their assistance to Fiji in training and development of senior women officers for UN peace engagements.

UN Security Council Reform

The UNSC reform is part of the UNSGs UN Reform. There are three (3) components of the Reform including:

- i. Development - The 2030 Agenda will require bold changes to the UN development system for the emergence of a new generation of country teams, centered on a strategic UN Development Assistance Framework and led by an impartial, independent and empowered resident coordinator.
- ii. Management - A new management paradigm for the Secretariat and a United Nations that empowers managers and staff, simplifies processes, increases transparency and improves on the delivery of our mandates.
- iii. Peace and Security (incl. UNSC Reform) - The overarching goals of the reform are to prioritize prevention and sustaining peace; enhance the effectiveness and coherence of peacekeeping operations and special political missions and move towards a single, integrated peace and security pillar.

Fiji would wish to see an equitable representation at the Council, noting that it is not presently representative of the geopolitical realities of the modern world.

Advocacy at the UN Security Council

Fiji participated at the UN Security Council open debate on, “Women, Peace and Security: Sexual Violence in Conflicts”. The meeting in New York was chaired by Germany’s Foreign Minister, Hon. Heiko Mass.

The Council had adopted Resolution 2467 (2019), on “the complete cessation with immediate effect by all parties to armed conflict of all acts of sexual violence and calls for these parties to make and implement specific time-bound commitments to combat sexual violence.”

Fiji has always recognized UN Peacekeeping and peace operations, as one of the key instruments available to the international community through which systematic violations can be addressed. In doing so, Fiji highlighted that all peacekeeping countries need to invest more resources to better prepare peacekeepers to identify early signs of systematic sexual violence in conflict areas and that getting more women into the peacekeeping force is an important starting point.

Fiji has acquired important lessons from its various peacekeeping deployments in the past to Iraq, South Sudan, Timor Leste and elsewhere. And that these experiences are helping it to shape its new peacekeeping preparations, and Fiji is working with development partners like New Zealand and Australia to strengthen its peacekeeping preparation.

Fiji will also be working closely with other peacekeeping nations such as Ireland to build new competencies and skills.

Strategic Priority 6: Human Rights and Democratic Values

United Nations Human Rights Council 42nd, 43rd and 44th Session

The 42nd Session of the Human Rights Council was held from 09 September to 27 September 2019. Fiji presided over the Council Session as Vice President and Member of the Council Bureau, a nominee of the Asia Pacific Group.

On 06 November 2019, Fiji successfully presented its Human Rights Report during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review to the Human Rights Council in Geneva. A high level delegation from capital attended the session alongside Fiji’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva, Ambassador Nazhat Shameem Khan. Fiji had supported a total of 207 out of 242 recommendations that were made by other UN member states.



His Excellency Major-General Jioji Konusi Konrote during celebrations to commemorate 50 years of Fiji's contribution to the United Nations

In March 2020, the Human Rights Council during the 43rd Session adopted Fiji's Universal Periodic Review Outcome report by consensus.

The 43rd session of the Human Rights Council commenced on February 24, 2020 and was suspended on March 13 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This session resumed on June 15 and concluded on June 23. During its resumption, the Council called for an Urgent Debate on the current racially inspired human rights violations, systemic racism, police brutality and violence against peaceful protests. This was the fifth ever Urgent Debate to be held by the Council since its inception. The Urgent Debate resulted in a consensus adoption of a resolution which requests the High Commissioner to prepare a report on systemic racism, violations of international human rights law against Africans and people of African descent by law enforcement agencies, especially those incidents that resulted in the death of George Floyd and other Africans and of people of African descent, to contribute to accountability and redress for victims.

The 44th session of the Human Rights Council began on June 30 and concluded on July 20. Fiji was effectively represented at the 44th session that was held from 30th June – 17th July, 2020 and continues to advocate on matters of critical importance to Fiji and SIDS.

Fiji pursues candidacy for Presidency of the Human Rights Council in 2021

As part of the Asia-Pacific (APG) regional rotation for the HRC Presidency in 2021, Fiji officially conveyed its interest to stand as the APG candidate to the Permanent Mission of the Sultanate of Oman as the APG Regional Coordinator.

Treaties and Conventions

The Bureau presented to the Parliament Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs and Defence on the following treaties and conventions:

- i. Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol
- ii. Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulation of Sports (Tokyo Convention)
- iii. Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
- iv. ILO - Violence and Harassment Convention 2019
- v. ILO Protocol of 2002 to the Occupational Safety and Health Convention 1981

Fiji ratified, signed and acceded to the following treaties and conventions:

- i. Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol
- i. Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
- ii. ILO - Violence and Harassment Convention 2019
- iii. ILO Protocol of 2002 to the Occupational Safety and Health Convention 1981

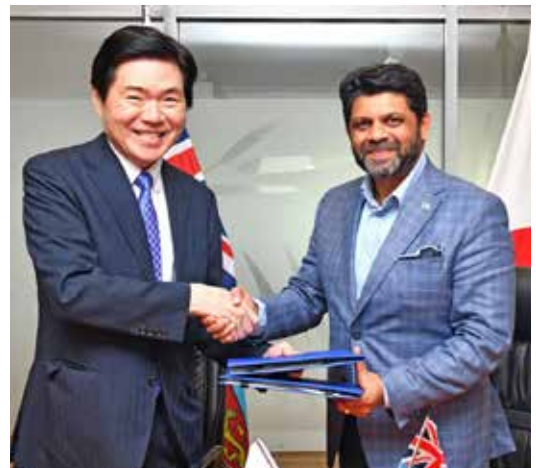
ASIA, MIDDLE EAST & RUSSIA

Executive Summary

The Ministry's Strategic Priorities formed the basis of the Asia Bureau's engagement with its key stakeholders throughout the 2019-2020 Financial Year. The period was marked by significant events in East Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia and Middle East Region. A number of countries of accreditations covered by our Overseas Mission's in these regions witnessed internal government transition coupled with national and regional (competing) priorities and challenges - political, economic, social and environmental in nature. The Countries in this region also felt the impact of COVID-19 pandemic which impacted their economic performance and the international relations and diplomacy in this region.

Year 2019-2020 marked the year of external downside risks to the outlook stem from a possible further deepening of US-China trade tensions, weaker than expected growth of key trading partners, higher oil prices, and a disorderly Brexit. Risks within the region include a faster than expected slowdown in China, a deepening of regional tensions such as Japan's and Korea's bilateral relationship, rising geopolitical risks, and increased incidence of natural disasters.

On the outset, engagement and strengthening the diplomatic relationship with the Asia region was paramount for Asia bureau and missions based in Asia region (Japan, China, India, Korea, Indonesia and Malaysia) for the financial year 2019-2020. For this financial year the bureau was able to engage in number of diplomatic meetings and functions to promote Fiji's interest in the region and secure economic, social and development cooperation's. The bureau extensively engaged with the mission in Asia region to enhanced and promote Fiji's bilateral and multilateral relations to promote and engage in areas of Social Economic Development, Trade and Investment, Public Diplomacy engagements and Peace and Security based on the Asia regions strength and comparative advantage. Briefly highlighted below are some of the key achievements for the Bureau during the 2019-2020 fiscal year based on the key priorities of the Ministry. This section of the 2019-2020 Annual Report seeks to capture and highlight these engagements successfully covered by the Asia Bureau.



Signing of agreement between the Government of Japan and the Fijian Government on the stand-by Loan on Disaster Risk Management

HIGHLIGHTS

Strategic Priority 1: Global Leadership

High Level Visits

There were number of high level visits by the Honourable Ministers and Fiji Head of Security Forces to Asia region and Middle East region to further enhance the diplomatic relationships. The Honourable Prime Minister, Voreqe Bainimarama, undertook a short visit to Japan to attend the 2019 RWC Pool D Fiji's first match against the Wallabies in Sapporo city, Hokkaido. Commander of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF),

Rear Admiral Viliame Naupoto was also in Japan, attending the Finals of the IDRC tournament, which saw the RFMF Rugby Team once again crowned the International Defence Rugby (IDRC) Competition champion beating the United Kingdom Armed Forces Rugby Team.

The major outcome of these meeting was to enhance and promote Sports cooperation and exchanges in the field of rugby.

Climate Change Summit, New Delhi

The Hon Minister for Agriculture, Dr. Mahendra Reddy visited India from 17th to 25th September 2019 to participate in the Climate Change Summit organized by Government of India and met with number of line Ministries in India and private investors in Agriculture sector. The major outcome of the visit was to explore opportunities in the field of agriculture and strengthen relationships at bilateral level to increase cooperation in the field of agriculture development in Fiji. This visit enabled Fiji to secure 5 tonnes of vegetable seedlings for Fiji, and have negotiation with Indian Government which allowed Fiji to secure a bilateral cooperation with Government of India in field of Agriculture and its allied sectors.

The Second Well Aging Society Summit in Tokyo, Japan

The Hon Minister for Health and Medical Services of Fiji, Honorable Dr. Ifereimi Waqainabete, was in Japan to attend the Second Well Aging Society Summit in Tokyo, Japan from 16 to 17 October, 2019, and whilst in Tokyo, the Hon Minister held a bilateral talk with his Japanese counterpart on 18 October 2019 – State Minister for Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) Hon. Gaku Hashimoto.

The meeting had covered a few issues of mutual interest to both countries which included;

- i. Short attachments of about 4(four) weeks for Fijian health specialists at the Japan Centre of Global Health, for training and exposure of our health specialists;
- ii. Japanese volunteers to come to Fiji and undertake exchanges in the areas lacking. Engineering or technicians for bio-medical equipment was stressed; and
- iii. Support mechanism available to support the influence of climate change, particularly on the 30 medical facilities in Fiji that needs to be relocated. The current focus is to have one relocated first.



PM Bainimarama receives the key from Ambassador Qian Bo for two new buses donated to the Fiji Rugby Union by the Chinese Government

H.E the President Bilateral Visit to Japan

His Excellency Major General (Ret'd) Jioji Konousi Konrote, President of the Republic of Fiji, and Madame First Lady were in Tokyo to attend the Enthronement Ceremony of His Majesty Crown Prince Naruhito as the Emperor of Japan on 22 October 2019. HEP also attended the banquet hosted by the Prime Minister of Japan on 23 October 2019. On the margin of these two major events were other meetings arranged, including those between the HE President and Hon. Seiichi Eto MP - Minister for Promoting Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens; Minister in charge of Territorial Issues; Minister of State for Okinawa and Northern Territories Affairs; Minister of State for Consumer Affairs and Food Safety; Minister of State for Measures for Declining Birth rate; Minister of State for Ocean Policy, the Japan-Fiji Parliamentary Friendship League (JFPFL) Chairman and Executive Members, the President of APIC, and Chairman of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF).

The outcome of these meetings was to strengthen Fiji's bilateral relationship with government of Japan in area of food security, discuss issues of climate change, parliamentary exchanges and sharing of information.

PALM 9 Senior Officials Meeting in Tokyo, Japan

The Permanent Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister, and Acting Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Yogesh Karan, attended the PALM-9 SOM on February 19th 2020. The PSOPM/APSFA met with the Honourable Mr. Tomohiro Yamamoto, State Minister of Defense, and Honourable Mr. Norihiro Nakayama, Parliamentary Vice-Ministers for Foreign Affairs, and held fruitful discussions on bilateral cooperation and opportunities. For a small Pacific Island Mission like Fiji, especially in countries like Asia region, high-level visits are always crucial, as they strengthen bilateral relations and energise diplomatic work and rapport.

6th Korea-Pacific Islands Senior Officials' Meeting

The 6th Korea-Pacific Islands Senior Officials' Meeting (ROK-PICS SOM 6) was held in Busan from the 14th-18th October and the Fiji delegation of four officials was led by Deputy Secretary Esala Nayasi which also included Ambassador Lalabalavu from the Mission. The Fiji delegation had a bilateral meeting with the Chair of the ROK-PICS forum, Deputy Director General Asia and Pacific Affairs Bureau, MOFA Korea, in the margins of the meeting.

A number of issues were discussed at the bilateral meeting including issues relating to the modality of the ROK-PICS meetings and discussions were also held on labor mobility, the extradition treaty, the KOICA development framework agreement, air services agreement.

Global Policy Forum

Senior Government Officials from Fiji attended the global policy forums in Korea and the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Mr. Rusiate Tudravu and his Director Human Resources also attended the 2019 International Police Summit of which 29 Countries participated in from the 21st -23rd October.

The Assistant Minister for Youth and Sports attended the Saemaul Global Leadership Forum held in Seoul and the Deputy Secretary for Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport attended the Intelligent Transport System workshop held in Seoul from the 16th-19th of October, 2019.

Bali Democracy Forum

A Fiji Delegation participated in the Bali Democracy Forum from 5-6 December 2019. The Fijian delegation included the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Honourable Inia Seruiratu and Deputy Secretary Mr. Esala Nayasi. In consultation with the Asia Bureau the delegation secured four bilateral meetings at the margins of the Bali Democracy Forum with Indonesia's Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi, Australia's Senator Marise Payne and New Zealand's Minister for Pacific People, Hon. Aupito Sio and Venezuela's Vice Minister for Asia, Middle East and Oceania, Mr. Ruben Molina.

INFOFISH World Shrimp Conference and Exhibition and the 2nd Asia Pacific Day for the Ocean

In the month of November 2019, the bureau through Fiji mission in Malaysia provided support to travelling delegations from Fiji attending meetings in Bangkok. Hon. Minister for Fisheries, Mr. Semi Koroilavesau attended the INFOFISH World Shrimp Conference and Exhibition and the 2nd Asia Pacific Day for the Ocean in Bangkok.

Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing +25 Review

The Hon. Minister for Women, Ms. Mereiseini Vuniwaqa attended the Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing +25 Review in November 2019. The Honorable Minister for Women, Ms. Mereiseini Vuniwaqa was elected chair of the Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing +25 Review. The 3 days conference was attended by Government and Non-Government Organization representatives, regional and multilateral officials to review progress and actions taken since the Beijing Platform for Action was adopted in 1995.



Ministry of Forestry Engagements with Beijing

There had been high-level engagement between the Fijian Minister of Forestry and the Deputy Minister for National Forestry and Grassland Administration of China. During the engagements the Ministry approved Operational Work Plan of the Ministry of Forestry was submitted by Minister Naiqamu. The Work Plan has now become the basis on which future engagements and activity implementation has been discussed between the two line agencies. Apart from ongoing capacity and training exchanged between the two line agencies a major conference on the development of the Bamboo Industry in Pacific Island Countries was scheduled to be hosted in Fiji in partnership with China, 2022.

Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week



PM Bainimarama with His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi.

Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week (ADSW) from 13-18 January 2020 theme “Accelerating Sustainable Development” had been a global platform for accelerating the world’s sustainable development. The week-long sustainability summit brings together Heads of Government, policy-makers, industry specialists, technology pioneers and upcoming sustainability leaders from around the world. The ADSW platform is aimed at enhancing understanding of the major social, economic and environmental trends shaping the world’s sustainable development.

The Prime Minister held a bilateral meeting with the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheik Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan to discuss ways to further enhance Fiji’s relationship with the UAE. Prime Minister thanked the Crown Prince for the \$10 million assistance through UAE Red Crescent in the rehabilitation and construction of three schools in Fiji that were affected by TC Winston in 2016 also expressed appreciation on the potential and opportunities that the two countries relations can offer, at the same time, reaffirming his personal commitment to building stronger bilateral relationships with the UAE. Other key issues discussed included the establishment of UAE Mission in Suva, Visa-

Exemption Agreement with the UAE, Phase 2 of the LAKARO Project, possible scholarships and the establishment of a new UAE Recruitment Agency in Suva, Fiji

The Prime Minister also met with the UAE Minister for Climate Change and Environment and had a dinner and talanoa session with the Fijian Diaspora during his stay in UAE.

10th Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF10) – Abu Dhabi



PM Bainimarama speaks at the opening of the Tenth World Urban Forum in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

The 10th Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF10) from 8 to 13 of February hosted by Abu Dhabi with the theme ‘Cities of Opportunities: Connecting Culture and Innovation’ is an opportunity to increase local and regional knowledge on sustainable urbanization issues, and could be leveraged to learn from global lessons and increase cooperation with stakeholders on a global scale. The Hon. Prime Minister attended the Forum to share a story of hope that cities can emerge as game-changers for climate action, as drivers of sustainability, and at the same time, uplift people’s lives for new and better opportunities.

While delivering his statement at the opening of the Forum, Prime Minister said cities are particularly vulnerable but he doesn’t see fear as the strongest call to action and that Fiji is firmly committed to becoming carbon-neutral by 2050 because it knows that every percentage of emissions reduction matters. He called on every nation, every city and every community to join Fiji in achieving net-zero by 2050 and highlighted that no country, no city, no community’s contribution is too small. PM further highlighted that Fiji remains committed to addressing urbanisation and its challenges through integrated planning, strengthening urban governance and balancing rural urban developments and has embarked on an urban planning initiative with the Singaporean Government that is placing low-emissions and climate-resilient strategies at the heart of our urban development agenda

The UN-Under Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif acknowledged Prime Minister Bainimarama for his continued support

towards the UN-Habitat. Ms. Sharif said Prime Minister Bainimarama's sense of urgency, ability to translate policy into practice and to regard urbanisation in holistic terms is another opportunity for sustainable development.

WUF10 brings together more than 18,000 participants from 168 countries including key stakeholders, international leaders, government representatives, municipalities, NGOs and UN entities to name a few, providing them with a platform to showcase their most innovative solutions to various challenges in attaining the vision of smarter, more inclusive, prosperous and more sustainable future cities. The key focus areas of WUF10 includes innovative financing mechanisms for sustainable cities, empowering cities as open investment platforms to harness an enabling business and regulatory environments and the impact of migration on cities, among others. Participants were urged to make sustainable urbanisation a reality and ensure that no one and no place is left behind.

International Solar Alliance General Assembly

The 2nd edition of the ISA General Assembly was held in New Delhi India from 30 October to 01st November. The General Assembly had delegation from Fiji participating headed by Hon Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Disaster Management and Meteorological Services – Mr. Jone Umute accompanied by Director Energy – Mr. Mikaela Belena and Scientist -Mr. Vishal. High Commissioner – Mr. Yogesh Punja accompanied the delegation at the General Assembly.

The major outcome of the assembly was Fiji being able to secure 50,000FJD worth of solarization of Kadavu and Beqa nursing station roof tops.

Strategic Priority 2-Trade and Investment.

Korean Investment and Developments

A New International School was established at Laucala bay, Suva by a Korean Investor – Mr. Jun with an initial investment of \$4 million dollars. The new primary and secondary school which is now registered with the Ministry of Education and has commenced operation and will enroll both local and international students and recruit local teachers who meet their required selection criteria.

A Korean Investment company-Korea Global Investment Company have registered with Investment Fiji for to undertake Commercial land development project at Vatuwaqa Rifle Range site. The project with an initial investment of \$54 million dollars is subject to the approval of the Department of Lands and the Director of Town and Country planning in terms of leasing and the rezoning of the proposed site.

Another Korean company – Chodam Company Limited has registered with Investment Fiji to undertake Korean model Greenhouse farming project in Togomasi, Nadi with an initial investment of \$2Million. The project which involved the in-house farming of tomatoes and other vegetables is anticipated to be completed before the end of 2021.

A Korean International Development consultancy firm-Envelops Company is involved in the USD12Million GCF funded Agro-photovoltaic project on Bureta, Ovalau. The project which entails solar power generation and growing of agricultural commodities has been approved by GCF through support from FDB and Ministry of Economy. The project is anticipated to boost Fiji's Carbon emission reduction strategy and will directly result in reduction of our Fuel imports and increase our renewable energy footprints.

21st Century Maritime Silk Road International Expo, China

On 14 Aug, the Fijian Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism, Local Government, Housing and Community Development, Hon. Premila Kumar led an official delegation to China at the invitation to attend the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road International Expo. With the rapid development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the business interest of Fiji as a Maritime Silk Road country has been growing in this area. As a result, the trip aimed to further strengthen the cooperation across the fields with regions and cities of Hong Kong, Macao, Shenzhen, Jiangmen and Guangzhou and was facilitated by the Consulate General of the Republic of Fiji in Shanghai and the Fiji Embassy in Beijing.

Fijian Made Products in the Asia Region

After successfully negotiation and dialogue Fiji Water and Pacific Green products entered into Indian Market with an approved distributor. The products are accessible in all states of India.

Fiji Airways Appoint New Country Manager – Japan and India

Fiji Airways appointed Country Sales Manager in Japan on 28th October 2019 and in June 2019 Country Sales Manager was appointed in India. These appointments were made to increase passenger travel from Asia to Fiji.

Fiji Day Symposium

In the month of October, Fiji mission in New Delhi organized a Fiji Day Symposium in collaboration of Tourism Fiji, Fiji Airways and Film Fiji to showcase Fijian made niche products and cultural items in the India Market. The outcome of this symposium was that the mission was able to attract some potential investors to Fiji in the area of renewable energy and agriculture sector.



Hosts of the 7th Asia Pacific Urban Forum in Penang, Malaysia

International Cooperative Trade Fair.

The Delhi mission participated in the India's largest cooperative Trade Fair, "the International Cooperative Trade Fair" in New Delhi with the aim to exhibit Fijian made products such as ginger lolly, root crop snacks, VaiWai and promotional materials on Fijian Agriculture, Tourism and Investment materials and run information session to attract investor from India to Fiji and gather information on best practices, ideas, technology, resources and models to improve performance of cooperative sector in Fiji.

MOU signed between the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, PRC and Agriculture Ministers of Pacific Island Countries in the margin of the China-PIC Agriculture Ministers meeting hosted by Fiji. The "Nadi Declaration" 2020-2022 that was committed by all Agriculture Ministers paved the way for future engagements in ensuring greater exchange and cooperation between China and PICs in the Agriculture Sector.

Strategic Priority 3- Socio-economic Development.

Secured Loan for Disaster Recovery & Rehabilitation

The bureau was able to secure Stand-by Loan for Disaster Recovery & Rehabilitation. Attorney-General, Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communication, Honourable Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum and Ambassador of Japan to Fiji, His Excellency Masahiro Omura signed the Exchange of Notes on the Stand-by Loan on 27th December 2019. The Stand-by Loan is a USD \$50 million rapidly deployable funding for disaster recovery and rehabilitation. The interest rate is 0.01% with tenure of 40 years.

The Bureau was able to secure approximately 17 million FJD for Tsunami Early Warning System from Government of Japan. The Cabinet of Japan approved a funding of Yen \$848m (approximately \$17 million FJD) under the ESDP programme as a grant aid to Fiji. The signing ceremony was officiated on 23rd March 2020.

Scholarship and Capacity Building Programme

In areas of training and development, Fiji had been allocated 4 places for the Woojung Scholarship annually depending on the number of students qualified based on those who achieve the required grades in the previous semester. For the 2019 fall semester three students qualified and were awarded with scholarship.

Indian Council for Cultural Relations offered scholarship to Fijian students to study in Indian under full scholarship. Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation short term scholarships were also available to pursue short term trainings.

Scholarship and training were offered by China, Singapore Cooperation, Japan, Malaysia and Indonesia and Fijian students are taking advantage for these scholarship opportunities for development.

Cooperation in the field of Sports

A new MOU in the area of Sports has been signed between Republic of Korea and Fiji through the Vice Minister for Sports Republic of Korea, Mr. Roh Tae Kang and the Assistant Minister of Sports, Hon. Alipate Tuicolo Nagata Republic of Fiji through exchange of notes. The MOU sets the framework for cooperation between the two Ministries in the area of sports.

Fiji Ministry of Sports and Beijing Sports University cooperation through which 5 scholarships (increase of 4) will be offered to Fijian students to study at BSU for 2020-21 Academic year. Result of successful visit by Minister Bala to China. Promotion of High Performance Sports in Fiji through Sports Science.

Fiji joins International Bamboo and Rattan Organization

Fiji's membership approval to join the International Bamboo and Rattan Organization based in China paves the way for further development and re-vitalisation of the Bamboo Industry in Fiji. INBAR and its unique set-up makes INBAR an important representative for Member States. With over 40 of its Member States from the Global South, INBAR has played an especially strong role in promoting South-South cooperation for the last 20 years. Since its founding in 1997, it has been making a real difference to the lives of millions of people and environments around the world, with achievements in areas such as: raising standards; promoting safe, resilient bamboo construction; restoring degraded land; capacity-building; and informing green policy and Sustainable Development Goal objectives.

Development Assistance from Korea through KOICA

The Korea KOICA Framework Agreement by the government of Korea provided a provision of 200,000 USD for International Cooperation Plan for Small Project Assistance.

Fiji has been a recipient as well, with the Chinese Government donating FJD300, 000 to the Fijian Government to assist us in combatting the COVID-19 pandemic. The Indonesia Government also provided a Grant for the Supply of Hand Held Tractors and provided a provision of 4 million FJD for QVS Grant for Rehabilitation.

The Bureau was able to finalize the Fisheries MOU between the Ministry of Fisheries of Fiji and the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea. The MOU which sets the framework for cooperation between the two Agencies in the area of Fisheries

Research and Development of Fiji's Aquaculture program was signed in Suva on the 5th of December, 2019. A major project earmarked under this MOU is the funding for the redevelopment of Makogai Research station in Lomaiviti with an estimated cost of \$10 million.

Cultural Cooperation

Mrs. Veena Bhatnagar, Assistant Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and Deputy Speaker of Parliament of Fiji visited India (Ayodhya) for Deepotsav 2019 on 26 October 2019. She was invited as the Chief Guest on the occasion by the Government of State of Uttar Pradesh. She came to Delhi after the Deepotsav ceremony and visited Parliament and held a courtesy meeting with the MOS (VM)

Regional International Hindi Conference

The first ever Regional International Hindi Conference was held in Suva on 25 January 2020. The conference was jointly inaugurated by Shri Akhilesh Mishra, Director General, Indian Council for Cultural Relations from India and Mr. Yogesh Karan, Permanent Secretary to Office of the Prime Minister of Fiji. The Conference saw enthusiastic participation from Hindi teachers from all over Fiji and was well-attended by various Ministers, Academicians and Media

Strategic Priority 4: Public Diplomacy.

There has been on-going advocacy and promotion of Fijian Government information and its people and its diverse cultures to respective Government Agencies, local communities, schools and interest groups in their respective countries of accreditation. The Missions also participated and made presentations about Fiji in promotional and cultural functions organized by their respective countries of accreditation both at local and at the national levels.

In addition, events, functions and activities were arranged in the region for Fijians living in their countries of accreditation and also keep them informed of the recent developments in Fiji. The respective diaspora communities are also involved in promotional events organized during National day functions and other major events that are organized.

Consular Service to Medical Patients.

Fiji Mission in New Delhi has been actively involved with the medical patients visiting India for treatment. Consular Services such as logistical arrangements, extension of visa, transportation and other administrative assistance is usually provided to the Fijian patients visiting India. Approximately 100 patients on yearly basis visit India for treatment either through Ministry of Health referrals or private patients.

Consular Services to Fijian Students.

Consular Services is provided to the Fijian students studying in Asia and Middle East countries by the mission and bureau. The services such as visa extension, administrative assistance in terms of liaising with the university for counsellor issues for the students. On a yearly basis 30 to 40 students visit Asian and Middle East countries to further their studies under the scholarship schemes.

Strategic Priority 5: Peace and Security

Korean Cooperation in the area of Peace and Security

The Bureau was able to secure a draft engagement MOU between the Korean National Police Agency and the Fiji Police Force in the area of Policing. The MOU sets the framework of engagement between the two agencies in the area of Cybercrime and building capacity through training and exchange of experts in specific areas including Forensic.

In addition the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Korea has confirmed that the MOU that was signed in 2017 was for 5 years and not 3 years and as such it given its assurance for support to the Fiji Military for training and other technical support under the current MOU. Based on the same both the Ministry of Defence and National Security of Fiji and the RFMF is tasked to form a technical working group to further discussed the specific areas of cooperation with the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Korea.

9th Xiangshan Forum

The bilateral engagement between the Commander RFMF Mr. Viliame Naupoto and the PRC Chief of Staff during the 9th Xiangshan Forum in October, 2019 had paved the way for a promising engagement between the RFMF and the PLA, PRC. The Chief of Staff was scheduled to visit Fiji but due to the Pandemic was postponed.

Development Assistance

The Government of the Republic of Korea donated a \$5 million research vessel to the Fiji Navy in November 2019 and the handing over ceremony was officiated by the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of Korea, Honorable Kim Sang-Yoo to the Fiji Hydrographic Office of the Fiji Navy at the Stanley Brown Base in Suva.

Strategic Priority 8: Leadership, Good Governance, Best Practices, and Employment Standards

Based on the 2020-2021 budgets announcement the Bureau was informed of the Closure of its two Missions namely the Fiji Embassy in Korea and the Fiji Embassy in Malaysia before the end of 2020. The reason for the closures was based on Governments view on the need for cost cutting measures due to the effects of the Pandemic as well as the Return on Investment to Government.

As a result of this decision preparatory works were made for the closure of office as well as other administrative issues to be addressed regarding office and residential contracts as well as employment contracts for the affected staff in the two Embassies.

To conclude, apart from the effects of the Pandemic which resulted in restrictions to face to face meetings and other engagements and the news of the closure of the two Fiji Missions in Seoul and Kuala Lumpur the Bureau had a very productive year in terms of our bilateral engagements with Asia regional countries.



His Excellency, Major-General (Ret'd) Jioji Konusi Kororua meeting Hon. Mr. Seichi Eto MP, the Japanese Minister responsible for Promoting Dynamic Engagement for All Citizens; Minister in charge of Territorial Issues; Minister of State for Okinawa and Northern Territories Affairs; Minister of State for Consumer Affairs and Food Safety; Minister of State for Measures for Declining Birth rate and Minister of State for Ocean Policy.



PM Bainimarama with his counterpart, PM Scott Morrison of Australia

OCEANIA & NORTH AMERICA DIVISION

Executive Summary

The Oceania region had a number of elections during the reporting period. President Hilda Heine of the Republic of Marshall Islands lost to David Kabua a veteran politician, former cabinet minister and second son of the founding President Amata Kabua. In Kiribati, His Excellency Taneti Maamau was re-elected to a second term as Kiribati's President just two months after losing his parliamentary majority over switching diplomatic allegiance to China. In New Zealand, Right Honourable Jacinda Ardern won by a landslide with her administration becoming the first single-party majority Government since the 1990s. Her Cabinet line-up has been applauded for its diversity with nearly half of the new parliament and a majority of Labour's caucus being women. A non-binding independence referendum was also held in Bougainville, an autonomous region of Papua New Guinea. The referendum question was a choice between greater autonomy within Papua New Guinea and full independence; vote was overwhelmingly for independence.

The Pacific witnessed the re-emergence of measles, with outbreaks declared in Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, American Samoa, and cases reported in Kiribati. Samoa experienced a wide scale measles outbreak which had significantly impacted the country's population and health system. In support of Samoa's efforts to contain the outbreak, 10 Fijian midwives were deployed for 10 weeks to assist. Many Pacific countries have made serious efforts to close immunity gaps in their population and strengthen infectious disease prevention, surveillance and response systems. Fiji was able to successfully contain measles following vaccination of more than 98% of the 360,000 people of the target population.

The United States of America's announcement that it will cease all implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement has disappointed members of the Pacific Islands Forum with the Forum Chair remarking that America's challenge to multilateralism and a global rules based system has undermined its influence in the region. These sentiments were shared by the Honourable Prime Minister who joined the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders meeting in August 2019 in Tuvalu for the first time since Fiji's suspension in 2009.



NZ Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern is accorded a traditional welcoming ceremony at the GPH Hotel in Suva

2019-2020 also witnessed the emergence of the COVID-19 virus and its eventual spread into the Pacific. In response to the pandemic, the Pacific Islands Forum established a Pacific Humanitarian Pathway for COVID-19 (PHP-C) to facilitate the movement of essential supplies and personnel across the region. Further to this, the Oceania region has had to adapt and learn how to operate in the new norm using virtual platforms and other innovative means to continue with business.

The Oceania Bureau together with its Missions in, Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Roving Ambassadors Division and Washington continued to pursue Fiji's Foreign Policy interests amidst the evolving regional landscape and the humanitarian crises posed by COVID-19.

HIGHLIGHTS

Strategic Priority 1: Global Leadership

Engagement with Australia

The visit made by the Honourable Prime Minister to Australia from 12 – 17 September 2019 was a historical milestone as it was the first Guest of Government visit for a Fijian Prime Minister to Australia. This was also the Honourable Prime Minister's first official visit to Australia.

The signing of the Vuvale Partnership was a key outcome of the visit. The Partnership founded on six key principles that affirm our shared ambitions and five pillars is a comprehensive framework that provides strategic guidance to Fiji and Australia's bilateral engagements. Additionally, in recognition of the long standing defence cooperation and most recently Australia's commitment to the redevelopment of the BlackRock Peacekeeping, Humanitarian and Disaster Relief facility in Nadi, the Hon. Prime Minister together with Hon. Alex Hawke MP, Assistant Defence Minister and Minister for International Development and the Pacific, unveiled the 'Defence Cooperation & Friendship Plaque' at the Australian Command and Staff College. Meetings were also held with Australian businesses and organizations that are of interest to the Fijian Government, in areas of sustainable resources management, renewable energy and the defence sector in the hope of scaling up Fiji's commitments to sustainable development and global targets. Finally, as part of the official program, the Prime Minister and the delegation visited the Fijian diaspora. This was an opportunity to provide the Fijian Government's progress on initiatives of interest to diaspora communities such as the digitalization of government services, including electronic passports and easy access and payment of services online such as the business registration process under the Fijian Government's Digital Transformation Programme.

Engagement with New Zealand

The Rt. Hon Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern visited Fiji from 24 – 28 February 2020. Prime Minister Ardern's visit was an important step in elevating the Fiji-New Zealand bilateral relationship. A key outcome of the visit was the agreement between the two Prime Ministers to pursue a 'Statement of Partnership', an overarching document that would set the strategic direction for the bilateral relationship for the next few years. Additionally, New Zealand also recognised Fiji's visionary leadership in tackling the issue of climate-induced migration by donating \$2 million to Fiji's Climate Relocation and Displaced Peoples Fund. PM Ardern acknowledged Fiji's leadership and the recent signing of the Agreement on Climate Change, Trade and Sustainability (ACCTS) as a catalyst to morphing climate change and trade concerns. PM Ardern also visited the Lautoka Mosque, to commemorate the lives of the three Fijians killed in Christchurch.

New Zealand Minister for Trade and Export Growth, the Hon. David Parker visited on 2nd October 2019. The Hon Minister extended a courtesy call to the Acting Prime Minister, Hon. Koroilavesau at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The visit was facilitated and coordinated by the Ministry officials.

Engagement with Pacific Island Countries

Fiji is commonly viewed as the hub of the region hosting multiple diplomatic missions, international organisations, regional organisations and multilateral agencies. In 2019, Fiji received notification from the Governments of Cook Islands and Palau of their intention to establish their diplomatic Missions in Fiji which was subsequently supported by the Fijian Government. On the bilateral aspects, both Governments have expressed interest to grow their influence within the region and pursue further economic cooperation with Fiji. The importance of a presence in Fiji has been further underlined by the present health and economic crisis brought about by COVID-19. With restricted travel through the region, engagement with regional and international organisations based in Suva has been maintained. Notably, the COVID-19 regional response that has been coordinated through the Pacific Islands Forum and the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway on COVID-19 (PHP-C).

Roving Ambassador Esala Teleni facilitated the arrival and visit of H.E. Dr Hilda Heine, the President of the Republic of Marshall Islands into Fiji in September 2019. As the Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific, H.E. Dr Hilda Heine visited Fiji to attend the USP Graduation at Laucala Campus from 19 to 20 September, 2019. During her stay, Her Excellency paid a Courtesy call to the President of the Republic of Fiji H.E. Major General (ret'd) Jioji Konusi Konrote at Boron House on 16 September 2019. The Roving Ambassadors Division facilitated the courtesy calls and provided necessary policy support.

Hon. Inia Seruiratu briefly visited Papua New Guinea to reaffirm our bilateral relations with Papua New Guinea in his new role as the new Foreign Affairs Minister. The Hon. Minister met with and congratulated the new Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Hon. Patrick Pruaitch, and expressed Fiji's intentions to engage more bilaterally as

regional neighbors to ensure common interests were given due consideration and interests exclusive to each sovereignty were negotiated in good faith. Another key point of discussion during the visit was the convening of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) governing body meetings which was important especially given the lapse in time since the last meetings. An outcome of which was PNG's agreement as Chair of the MSG to convene the meetings in early 2020 in Fiji. Hon. Seruiratu also met with Hon. Saki Hacky, Minister for Defence, National Fire Service, National Volunteer Service and National Disaster and Hon. Bryan Kramer, Minister for Police.

Fiji hosted the Israel and Pacific Islands Summit on 20 February 2020. President Reuven Rivlin of Israel met with Pacific Leaders and Government representatives from Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Tonga and Palau. President Rivlin noted the range of fields in which Israel and the Pacific have cooperation such as health, airport security and advanced agricultural and water management. President Rivlin also announced the establishment of one hundred new scholarships for Agriculture students from the Pacific Islands to train at the Arava College in Israel, and that the State of Israel will open a Centre for Excellence and Innovation for the Pacific Islands in collaboration with the University of the South Pacific. In the bilateral meeting between Hon. Prime Minister and President Rivlin, the President noted the successful cooperation between the states, despite the great distance and thanked Fiji for its contribution to the UN peacekeeping forces around the Middle East.

Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)

The Pacific Islands Forum held their annual Forum Officials Committee Meeting, Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting and the Forum Leaders Meeting for the year 2019 – 2020. The Bureau lent policy as well as logistical support to Fiji's engagement at all three governance body meetings.

The 50th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Summit was held from 14 -16 August 2019 in Tuvalu. This was the first Leaders' meeting attended by the Hon. Prime Minister since Fiji's suspension from the Pacific Islands Forum in 2009. Climate change was the main issue deliberated at the meeting, along with economic development, maritime security and marine pollution. Leaders called for the need of strong, able leadership, the review of the regional architecture and also endorsed the development of the 2050 Strategy for

the Blue Pacific Continent. Interestingly, there were two separate outcomes on the issue of Climate Change. The main communiqué endorsed a declaration from the Small Island States calling for a commitment to limit the rise in global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, an immediate phase out of coal, and contributions to the UN Green Climate Fund. A separate statement was endorsed by Australia urging greater action on climate change.

The newly established Forum Officials Sub-Committee for the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific co-chaired by Fiji and Vanuatu have also begun their meetings taking into consideration concept notes for the 2050 Strategy and the review of the Regional Architecture. The 2050 Strategy presents a unique opportunity for the region to develop

long-term approaches to critical challenges such as climate change, sustainable development and security. It also represents the opportunity to consider how the Pacific might best leverage its solidarity, strength and areas of opportunity, as one region. The Sub-Committee has agreed that sufficient time (and resources) is required to ensure the process is delivered properly. The Oceania Bureau and Roving Ambassadors Division have been actively coordinating with Vanuatu counterparts and the PIF Secretariat in driving this regional initiative.

Pacific Islands Forum Leaders invoked the Biketawa Declaration in April 2020, to collectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Pacific region. The Pacific Humanitarian Pathway on COVID-19 (PHP-C) is the region's mechanism that provided the enabling political environment and commitment to expedite assistance and cooperation between member countries in preparing for and responding to COVID-19, by enabling the provision of medical and humanitarian assistance from regional, international and development partners in a timely, safe, effective and equitable manner. The Roving Ambassadors Division together with the Oceania Bureau have been coordinating consultations with relevant line Ministries towards this regional initiative. As a transit point, Fiji has been active in the facilitation of the PHP-C at the Nadi International Airport.

Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG)

Fiji was represented at the 8th Council of Arts and Culture Meeting & 7th Melanesian Spearhead Group Ministers of Culture and Arts Meeting on 27 – 28 October 2019 by the Assistant Minister for iTaukei Affairs and the Fiji's First Secretary at the High Commission in PNG. Major topics of discussion included Arts and Culture in the Melanesian sub-region and how member countries can collaborate in preserving and sustaining it.



Women leaders from various sectors joining New Zealand Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Jacinda Ardern at a luncheon organised by the New Zealand High Commission at the USP's Laucala campus.

The Melanesian Spearhead Group Governance Body Meetings convened from 10 – 12 February 2020 at the Grand Pacific Hotel in Suva. The Senior Officials convened from 10-11 February while Foreign Ministers met on 12 February 2020. In the meetings, the Secretariat provided an update to Members on the programme activities undertaken by the Secretariat. Papua New Guinea Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Trade Patrick Pruaitch officially opened as Chair of the MSG Foreign Ministers' Meeting (FMM) while Hon. Inia Seruiratu as Minister for Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security led the Fijian delegation.

On 03-05 March 2020, Fiji hosted the MSG Inaugural Ministers for Women meeting at the Pullman Resort in Nadi. The meeting was to promote awareness on the elimination of gender-based violence in the sub-region given that it has the highest number of gender-based violence in the Pacific. The meeting was hosted by the Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Hon. Mereseini Vuniwaqa in partnership with the Pacific Community's (SPC) Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT), UN Women and the Pacific Islands Development Forum. In support at this meeting was also the representatives from the Australian High Commission, New Zealand High Commission, and the European Union. The Ministry provided the necessary secretariat and logistics support.

Pacific Community (SPC)

The Pacific Community's 49th Meeting of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA) and 11th Conference took place at the Pacific Community (SPC) headquarters in Noumea, New Caledonia, under the theme of 'Ocean Science: A sustainable future for the Blue Pacific'. Members gathered to review the performance of SPC, highlight priorities for the coming year, and select the organisation's next Director-General. SPC members agreed to expand the Pacific Community Centre for Ocean Science (PCCOS), promote the Pacific Data Hub, and call for donors and partners to make a greater investment in scientific research into the impacts of changing climate on our oceans. Fiji High Commissioner Luke Daunivalu provided interventions for Fiji against the theme and acknowledged the interventions of other members in supporting action on ocean plastic pollution.

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)

Papua New Guinea hosted the 16th Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Meeting in Port Moresby from 10 – 11 December 2021. The Fiji High Commission facilitated the visit by the delegation from the Ministry of Fisheries and Ministry of Foreign Affairs led by the Hon. Semi Koroilavesau. The meeting was vital for Fiji in terms of the survival of the industry as well as the impact on several communities who rely on it. The meeting agenda included, Conservation and Management Measures, WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels, Harvest Strategy, Current stock status and advice, Implementation of Article 30 of the Convention, Compliance Monitoring Scheme and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Vessel List.

Strategic Priority 2: Trade and Investment

In its effort to create stronger business links between Fiji and New Zealand, the Fiji High Commission in Wellington in collaboration with the New Zealand Fiji Business Council facilitated a Business Mission to Fiji on 30 September 2019 for 20 potential investors. The Nadi leg of the Mission took place at Novotel Nadi Conference Centre. Investors heard first hand case study testimonials from Reddy Dimond Fiji, Tour Managers, Essence of Fiji and Cocoa Fiji. There were also site visits to Denarau Waters, BAT Fiji's Nadi Leaf Station and farm visits. This visit was successful when Fiji Business Mission delegate, Andy Yoo commenced business in Suva on 21 December 2019. "Dollar Things" opened at the newly refurbished Damodar Complex at Scott Street, Suva. Director Andy Yoo confirmed his company invested close to \$3million in its first Fiji outlet with plans to open 10 outlets in Fiji in the next three years. The shop caters for everyone's needs, from hair accessories, stationery, hardware, kitchenware, toys, party accessories and equipment, homeware and footwear. The second phase of the business mission rolled out in October 2019 with the visit of Trade Minister, Hon David Parker to consolidate growing investment opportunities for New Zealand and also discuss bilateral cooperation issues.

The convening of the Australia-Fiji Business Forum in Brisbane on 17-18 October has provided a strong boost to strengthening the bilateral cooperation between Fiji and Australia. The Hon. Prime Minister officially opened the Forum and was joined by Hon. Mark Coulton, the Assistant Minister of Trade & Investment of Australia. With two other Fijian Ministers present (Hon. Premila Kumar and Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy) and two Permanent Secretaries (Yogesh Karan and Shaheen Ali), it was a very strong political signal to Australia and our business partners that Fiji is keen to grow the economic relations between our two countries. Discussions at the Forum focused on implementing the five pillars of the Vuvale Partnership Agreement; Trade and Economic Relationship; Impact of climate change to which High Commissioner Daunivalu gave a presentation on Investing in Fiji; and Labour services.

HC Waqabaca and H.E Jonathan Curr, New Zealand High Commissioner to Fiji facilitated the Hon. Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications Hon. Aiyaz Sayed Khaiyum from 25 - 30 November for a series of meetings in New Zealand with Hon David Parker, New Zealand Attorney General and Minister for Trade and Export Growth, Environment and Associate Minister for Finance, Hon. James Shaw, New Zealand Minister for Climate Change and Statistics and Associate Minister for Finance, the New Zealand and Fijian business communities and other stakeholders.



Representing Fiji for the first time in this forum, the Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation Honourable Mereseini Vuniwaqa at Forum Foreign Minister's Meeting

Strategic Priority 3: Socio Economic Development

The Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) on Fiji Volunteer Scheme Teacher was signed between the Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relation, Hon. Parveen Bala and the Tuvalu High Commissioner, H.E Temate Melitiana on 18 October 2019. The MoA relates to the placement of retired Fijian Teachers in Tuvalu under the Fiji Volunteer Services. The signing of the MoA was facilitated by the Roving Ambassadors Division.

Hon. Premila Kumar and Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy's commenced Site Visits with its counterparts in Australia in October 2019. The Fiji High Commission in Canberra collaborated with the Trade Commission for Hon. Kumar to meet with the Mayor of Blacktown City Council (including site visit), Mayor of Sydney City Council, Victoria Minister for Local Government, Mayor of Melbourne City Council, Commissioner of Victoria Emergency Services, DFAT State Office in Queensland and Queensland Minister for Infrastructure Development. The High Commission also organised meetings for Hon. Reddy with the Queensland Minister for Agriculture, Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food, site visits to Buderim Ginger facility, Proway Livestock Equipment, Great Western Corporation, Vanderfield Pty Ltd and Clipex. These visits aligned with the Vuvale Partnership and Australia's Step Up to explore and strengthen relationships with Australia at state level, universities and the private sector.

Both the Canberra and Wellington Missions continue to work together with the Ministry of Employment to provide pastoral care to Fijian workers under the Pacific Labour Scheme and the Recognised Seasonal Employers (RSE), respectively. Welfare checks and meetings are often conducted for Fijian workers on a regular basis. Both Missions have continued to actively encourage the workers to continue the good work and encourage the labour hire companies to also meet their legal requirements towards the workers.



The 54 member RFMF troops deployed for assistance to Australia in dealing with the bushfire crisis returning to Fiji onboard the ADF Flight

Strategic Priority 4: Public Diplomacy

Familiarisation Visit

17 Non-resident Ambassadors and High Commissioners accredited to Fiji from Canberra and Wellington spanning the regions of Asia, Africa, Europe, Western Europe, Middle East and Latin America, arrived into Fiji in August 2019 with Fiji High Commissions in Canberra and Wellington facilitating the Familiarisation Visit, in efforts to deepen Fiji's foreign relations and global cooperation in a first ever familiarization visit. Themed "Nurturing Global Partnerships for Sustainable Development," the program was purposed to highlight Fiji's national development efforts and strengthen global partnerships to achieve development aspirations across all sectors and included an opportunity to witness environmental programs adopted by Fiji to mitigate the impacts of climate change, interactions with village communities and visiting research and development facilities in agriculture

High Commissioner Luke Daunivalu delivered a keynote address at the UN Climate Change Action Summit 2019: A Pacific Youth Talanoa for Greater Ambition on Climate Change. This event was jointly organised by Pacific Missions in Canberra, UN Information Centre and Australian National University. In his keynote address HC Daunivalu provided an update from Fiji and the region on the impacts of climate change on the livelihood and survival of Pacific people and mitigating efforts, calling on the major polluters to take concrete steps and contribute towards mitigating the impacts of climate change. HC Daunivalu also joined a panel discussion that included youths from the various Pacific countries to provide insights and answer questions from the audience.

The Institute of International Affairs in Auckland in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Ministry of Defence and the Pacific Cooperation Foundation organised a Pacific Future Conference in Auckland on 18 October 2019. High Commissioner Filimone Waqabaca was invited to speak at the Conference which focused on the Pacific and the influences shaping its future and some of its biggest challenges. Themes included Pacific Re-Setting: Economics, Leadership & Youth; Crime and Security in the Pacific: Expanding Concepts of Security; Climate Change: Right here, Right now; and Pacific Connectivity: Youth, Media and New Opportunities.

Donation Assistance through Missions

Between October 2019 to June 2020, the Fiji Embassy in Washington, Fiji High Commissions in Canberra and Wellington secured and/or facilitated the conveyance of donations to Fiji for Tropical Cyclone Harold and COVID19 from donors Satya Narayan family from Amherst county, South Virginia, HammondCare, SummitCare, Qantas/Rotary Club of Rockdale Mr Vinod Reddy, Rotary Club of Rockdale City; Mr Thami Loganathan, Supply Chain Officer, DHL; Mr Stirling Savona, Equipment Controller, Dnata Catering and Premobil NZ. Donations included Disaster relief supplies Worth USD\$344,871.00, hospital beds, mattresses, monkey bars, 1,908 hospital trays, and 15 new wheelchairs worth NZ\$75,000.

The Fiji Embassy in Washington, Fiji High Commissions in Canberra and Wellington together with the Oceania Bureau also coordinated with host countries on the humanitarian support available to Fiji.

Strategic Priority 5: Peace and Security

54 Republic of Fiji Military Forces personnel were deployed to Victoria to assist the Australian Defence Force in their efforts to fight the bush fires in Victoria and assist in the rehabilitation in parts of Victoria that were affected by the bushfires. High Commissioner Daunivalu joined the Commander of the 4th Brigade, Brigadier Douglas Laidlaw, other senior ADF officers and a few members of the Fijian community in Victoria at the Jet Base of the Tullamarine Airport in Melbourne to receive the personnel. Brigadier Laidlaw said that Fiji has sent its best resources, its people to assist in Australia's time of need even with Fiji battling Tropical Cyclone Tino in its home front. High Commissioner Daunivalu in thanking the RFMF personnel also reminded them of the task the government of Fiji has put on their soldiers and to serve with honour and pride during their stay in Victoria. The High Commission maintained close communication with the ADF throughout the deployment.

Strategic Priority 7: Advocacy, Communications, Awareness and Sectoral Partnership

Fiji Missions in coordination with each other and MFA negotiated transit for Fijians on repatriation flights. In the same manner, the Bureau together with the Ministry's Protocol Division coordinated with the Australian and New Zealand High Commissions on the repatriation of their nationals. Further advocacy and coordination for the attainment of Personal Protection Equipment was acquired following close consultation with the Ministry of Health. The reality and uncertainties surrounding the pandemic has provided a steep learning curve for the Ministry and Missions alike as it begins to adapt to the new modus operandi.

Air Niugini launched its inaugural direct flight from Port Moresby into Nadi and back on Thursday 05th September, 2019. This major route was previously incorporated into the Nadi / Honiara / POM for a good number of years. The link between these two nations have been in existence since 1975 when Fiji opened its Mission in Port Moresby. Now over the years, Fiji has been an integral part of PNG's growth and the new service supports this. Previously both weekly flights used to transit through Honiara but early this month, only one service will continue through Honiara while the other one will be a direct service to Nadi.

Fiji's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (SCFAD) study visit to New Zealand's House of Representatives SCFAD

The Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives Rt. Hon. Trevor Mallard extended an invitation to Fiji's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (SCFAD) members for a study visit of New Zealand's House of Representatives Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence from the 15 - 22 September 2019 and to the Speaker of the Fiji Parliament for Members of Parliament to attend the Pacific Parliamentary Forum from 25 – 26 November in Auckland and 27 – 28 November in Wellington. The Minister for Local Government, Housing and Community Development, Industry, Trade and Tourism Hon. Premila D Kumar, Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua and Hon. Peceli Vosanibola accompanied the Speaker of the Fiji Parliament for this event. The Forum promotes understanding and build ties between emerging political leaders across the Pacific as invitations were sent out to 50 Pacific region Parliamentarians.

Fiji's High Commissions in Wellington and Canberra facilitated the visits of the Fijian delegations for all the Parliamentary visits.

2nd Pacific Women in Power Conference

The 2nd Pacific Women in Power Conference was held in Brisbane from 5 – 8 November where the women members of parliament from Fiji participated. The Fijian delegation was led by Hon. Mereseini Vuniwaqa, Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation. The 2nd Pacific Women in Power Forum has brought together women parliamentarians from Pacific Island countries, New Zealand and Australia, for a dialogue and professional development on ways to address issues affecting women in the Pacific region. The Public Accounts Committee led the Chair Hon. Alvick Maharaj, Assistant Minister for Employment, Productivity & Industrial Relations and Youth & Sports also attended the Asia-Pacific Public Accounts Committee biannual conference and committee meeting hosted by the Parliament of Australia.

Fiji's High Commissions in Wellington and Canberra facilitated the visits of the Fijian delegations for all the Parliamentary visits.



During his visit to Australia, PM Bainimarama visited the Downer's Western Sydney Waste Processing Facilities to learn more about their waste management processes and practices.

PROTOCOL & CONSULAR DIVISION

Executive Summary

During this reporting period, the Division ensured that diplomatic obligations under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961), the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (1963) and Fiji's Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities Act (1971) were accorded efficiently and effectively to the twenty four (24) resident diplomatic missions in Suva, the fifty seven (57) non-resident missions accredited from Canberra and Wellington, the twenty (20) resident regional and international organizations in Suva, the fifteen (15) Fiji Missions abroad and Honorary Consuls in Suva and overseas in order to further enhance and elevate Fiji's international and regional standing and moreover in setting the stage and conducive environment for our Leaders to effectively advance Fiji's foreign policy priorities with our diplomatic partners..

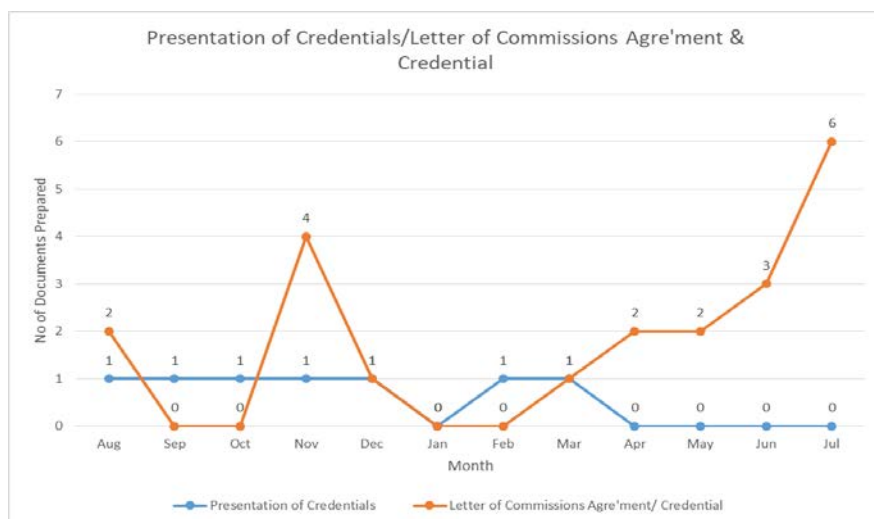
The Division played a pivotal role in the momentous and fruitful Official Visit of the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Right Honourable Jacinta Arden from 24 to 27 February, 2020 and the State Visit of the President of the State of Israel, His Excellency Reuven Rivlin from 20-21 February, 2020. The Division was also instrumental in coordinating the successful hosting of the Pacific Islands Leaders' Summit Meeting with the President of the State of Israel at the Pullman Hotel in Nadi and the MSG Foreign Ministers Meeting that was held at the Grand Pacific Hotel in Suva on 11 February, 2021.

Despite the unprecedented challenges brought in by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Protocol Division with the full support and guidance of the Executive Management and the collective hard working efforts of all Bureaus and Divisions, we were able to defy all odds by carrying out our mandate with sheer dedication and commitment.

Months	Diplomatic Visa Exemption	Consular Services - Authentication of Public Documents	Diplomatic Duty Concession (FA 608)	Issuance of Diplomatic ID Cards	Protocol Facilitation for Govt Official, Foreign VIP, VVIP & Regional Meetings	Resident Diplomats/ Diplomatic Couriers	Presentation of Credentials	Letter of Commissions Agre'ment/ Credential	Exequaturs and Letter of Commission for Honorary Consuls	Establishment of Mission/Regional & Intl. Organisation	Meeting Credentials	Visa Facilitation for Govt Official	VIP/ Official Function -National Days
2019													
Aug	92	126	71	19	216	2	1	2	1	0	5	12	4
Sep	92	103	73	16	192	1	1	0	0	0	2	14	5
Oct	105	117	103	22	242	-	1	0	1	0	2	22	7
Nov	74	101	84	16	201	2	1	4	0	0	5	10	6
Dec	72	80	80	13	173	2	1	1	0	2	2	5	2
2020 (COVID)													
Jan	100	137	79	19	235	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	5
Feb	122	110	71	8	189	1	1	0	0	0	0	9	3
Mar	87	75	54	19	148	0	1	1	4	0	1	3	2
Apr	18	11	42	23	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	1

Months	Diplomatic Visa Exemption	Consular Services - Authentication of Public Documents	Diplomatic Duty Concession (FA 608)	Issuance of Diplomatic ID Cards	Protocol Facilitation for Govt Official, Foreign VIP, VVIP & Regional Meetings	Resident Diplomats/ Diplomatic Couriers	Presentation of Credentials	Letter of Commissions Agreement/ Credential	Exequaturs and Letter of Commission for Honorary Consuls	Establishment of Mission/Regional & Intl. Organisation	Meeting Credentials	Visa Facilitation for Govt Official	VIP/ Official Function -National Days
May	28	131	62	24	0	0	0	2	0	1	2	1	1
Jun	38	67	78	16	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	1	2
Jul	33	47	75	3	5	0	0	6	1	0	6	7	1
TOTAL	861	1105	872	198	1601	10	7	21	7	3	30	88	39

ACCREDITATION OF HEAD OF MISSIONS



Seven (7) Foreign Heads of Missions presented their letters of credence to His Excellency the President, Major General (Ret'd) Jioji Konusi Konrote at Borron House and State House during this period. Following their credential ceremonies, the said Head of Missions paid their courtesy call on the Prime Minister, Honourable Josaia V. Bainimarama, the Speaker of Parliament and Cabinet Ministers. Three (3) of these Heads of Missions are based in Australia and New Zealand and the remaining four (4) are stationed in Suva and they are as follows:

- H.E Mr. Alexey.V.Pavlovsky - Non Resident Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Fiji with residence in Canberra
- H.E Mr Sujiro Seam- Ambassador of the Delegation of the European Union in Suva.
- H.E Mr Ta Van Thon- Non- Resident Ambassador of Vietnam based in Wellington
- H.E Mr Jean- Francois Fito- French Ambassador based in Suva
- Archbishop Novatus Rugambwa- Non Resident Ambassador of the Holy See based in Wellington
- H.E Mr Joseph James Cella- Ambassador of the United States of America based in Suva.
- H.E Michael Mithis Aroi- High Commissioner of Nauru based in Suva

The Division also expedited twenty one (21) Letters of Commissions, Agréments and Letters of Credence for Fiji's Heads of Missions and Foreign Heads of Missions accredited to Fiji in liaison with the Office of the President and the Office of the Prime Minister.

PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS

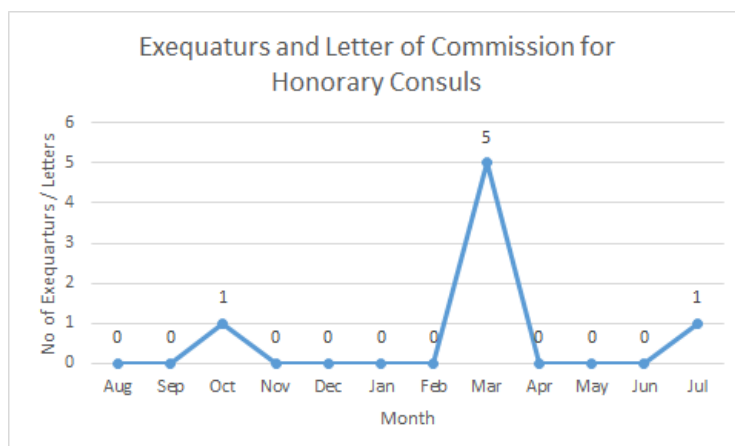
The Division expedited the Agrément and credential for Fiji's High Commissioner to the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, H.E Mosese Tikoitoga. High Commissioner Tikoitoga presented his credentials to the Governor General, Grand Chief Sir Bob Dadae

This appointment is equally important as it further enhances our close relationship and partnership with Papua New Guinea on a bilateral level and more importantly at regional level. High Commissioner Tikoitoga is also cross accredited to Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and East Timor. Additionally, it has also propelled Fiji's standing/footprint in the regional landscape having to be accredited to the MSG Community.

APPOINTMENT OF OVERSEAS HONORARY CONSUL IN FIJI

A total of two (2) Honorary Consul appointments and Exequaturs were facilitated by the division in close collaboration with their sending states through their missions in Canberra and Wellington. The appointments are as follows:

- MR MAURICE PAULO RUGGIERO – Honorary Consul for Italy in Fiji
- MR. DAVID IRO FULARA – Honorary Consul for Solomon Islands with residence in Nadi.



These appointments are of significance, as they will forge links, promote commercial and trade ties between the Fijian government and their sending states. They are also responsible for providing consular support to the citizens of their sending states in Fiji.



New resident Ambassador of the United States of America, H.E Joseph Cella inspecting the guard of honour following his presentation of credentials.

APPOINTMENT OF FIJI 'S HONORARY CONSULS ABROAD

The Division expedited the request for Agréments and Consular Commission Papers for Fiji's Honorary Consuls in Malaysia, Italy, Republic of Korea and United States of America. The appointments are as follow:

- MR DATUK CHA HOO PENG PJN.J. P – Fiji's Honorary in Butterworth, with jurisdiction over the State of Penang, Malaysia.
- MR. DIEGO MASSIMILIANO DE GIORGI – Fiji's Honorary Consul in in Rome with jurisdiction throughout the whole territory of Italy
- MR. YOUNG MOO KO – Fiji's Honorary Consul in Gyeonggi Province, Republic of Korea with jurisdiction over Gyeonggi Province.
- MR. VINOD KARSANJI BHINDI – Fiji's Honorary Consul in Los Angeles, United States of America
- DR. KAREN EELLS LAWSON – Fiji's Honorary Consul in Philadelphia the United States of America.

These appointments are equally important for Fiji's Foreign Policy Goals and Priorities as they will promote and advance our country's commercial, tourism and trade interests with their host countries, coordinate and work together with the Fijian Diaspora. They will be also responsible for providing consular services to Fijians in their respective host countries. Moreover, they will be Fiji's intermediary to their host countries and will provide timely advice and guidance to our Heads of Missions accredited to their host countries.

ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW MISSION/ REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION



The Division supported the Oceania Bureau in obtaining approval on the establishment and setting up of Cook Islands High Commission in Suva, the Embassy of Palau, and the High Commission of the Independent State of Samoa in Suva.

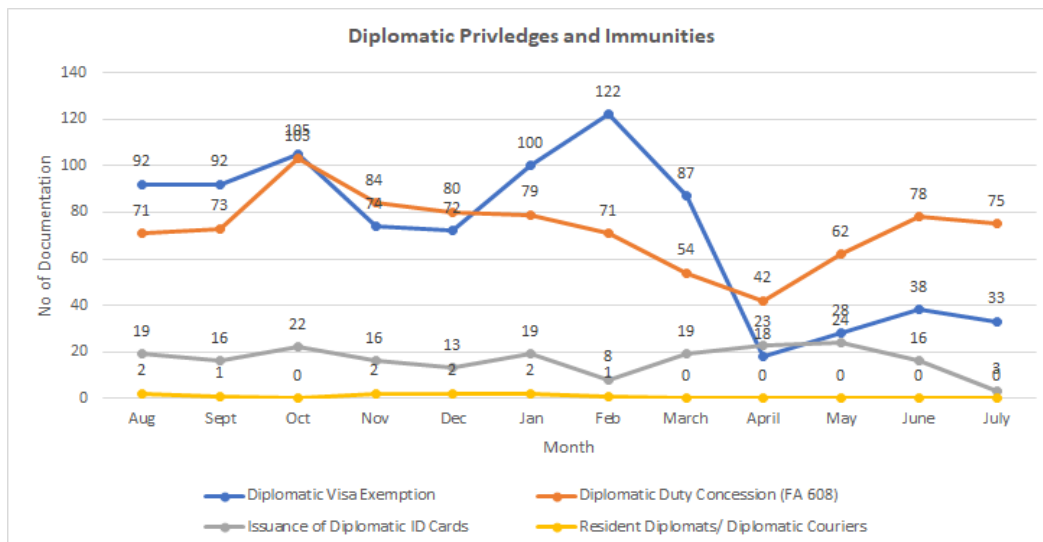
The establishment of these Missions in Suva further demonstrates their confidence and recognition of Fiji's strategic location as "Hub of the Pacific" in which they can immensely

benefit from. Moreover these new establishments will create more employment benefits and generate more economic activities for Fiji and the region.



Ambassador Jean-François Fitou following his presentation of credentials at Borron House in Suva

DIPLOMATIC PRIVILEGES & IMMUNITIES



The graph illustrates the privileges and immunities that diplomats enjoy which are set out in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961 (VCDR), and consular privileges and immunities in the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations 1963 (VCCR).

The Ministry works closely with Fiji Immigration department to process Visas for members of the diplomatic community. The increase in Visa Exemption is due to the arrival of new diplomatic staff for Diplomatic Missions and international public servants employed at the various international and regional organizations, contract extensions and visa transfers. In April the Ministry recorded a decrease in number as the result of the travel restrictions and the closure of international borders due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

A key part of our roles was the processing of Diplomatic Duty Free Concession in liaison with Fiji Revenue and Custom Services and the Ministry of Economy in regards to the application of duty free purchases received from the Diplomatic Corps.

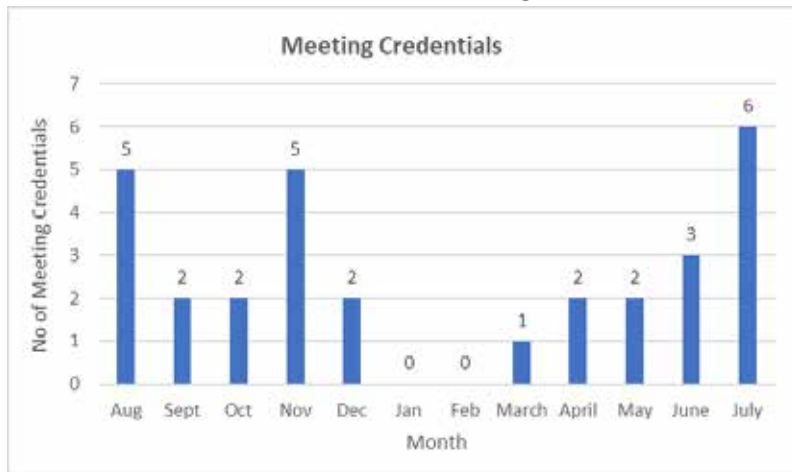
Diplomatic ID cards were also issued to diplomats upon their arrivals and lastly in accordance with Article 27 of the Vienna Convention, diplomatic couriers carrying diplomatic bags were facilitated and assisted by our Protocol Office at Nadi International Airport in collaboration with the Border Control Agencies.



PM Bainimarama inspects a parade during his official visit to Australia

MEETING CREDENTIALS

A total of thirty (30) meeting credentials were prepared by the Division in consultation with relevant line Ministries and the Office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs.



This reporting period recorded a decrease in meeting credentials issued due to the COVID19 pandemic and closure of international borders which resulted in the cancellation of most meetings.

Meeting credential is a legal binding document signed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

and recognised by the host or meeting organiser whereby authorised representatives of a state to represent their government to a particular meeting with powers to vote and act on behalf of its government as and when deemed necessary.

HIGH LEVEL MEETING HELD IN FIJI

On 11 February, 2020 the Division assisted the Oceania Bureau in the planning, coordination and staging of the MSG Foreign Ministers Meeting (FFMM) that was held at the Grand Pacific Hotel in Suva.

The Meeting coincided with the MSG Governing meetings which brings together Foreign Ministers and senior government officials from MSG-member countries, including Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, FLNKS, and Republic of Indonesia as Associate Member, and MSG Observers.

The Division was tasked with the overall arrangements and coordination of the meeting, with close collaboration with the MSG Secretariat, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the Ministry of Trade and Commerce. Diplomatic Airport Courtesies were accorded to all delegates arriving and departing at Nadi International Airport and Nausori Airport.



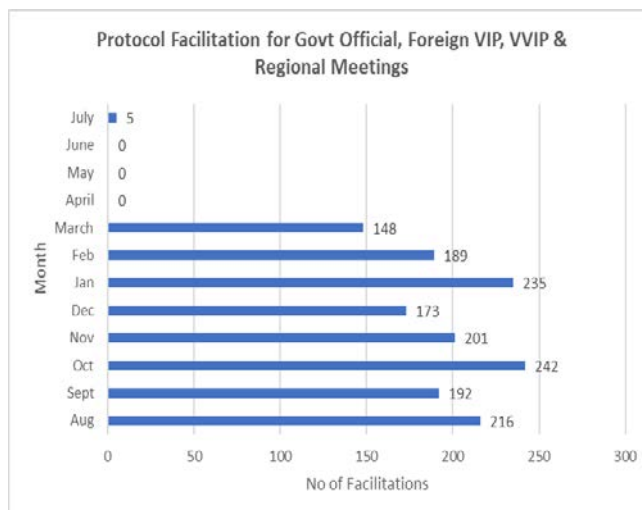
His Excellency the President, Major General (Ret'd) Jioji Konusi Konrote in Tokyo, Japan to attend the enthronement ceremony of Emperor Naruhito.

VVIP & VIP AIRPORT PROTOCOL COURTESIES AT NADI / NAUSORI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Airport Diplomatic Courtesies were extended to all visiting VVIPs (Head of States, Head of Governments and Royalties) and VIPs (Speaker of Parliament, Cabinet Ministers, Head of Missions and guest of the State) including Pacific Leaders with their delegations that transited through Nausori and Nadi International Airport to attend the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Tuvalu from 13th to 16th August, 2019.

The graph illustrates trends and number of Senior Government officials, Foreign VIPS, VVIPs and regional meetings facilitated by the Protocol Division; Suva Office and Nadi Airport Office from March 2019 – August 2020.

Overall, majority of the facilitation were accorded to VVIPs and delegations attending regional meetings in Fiji and transiting via Nadi/Nausori International Airports to attend the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' summit in Tuvalu.



HIGH LEVEL VISITS:

Pacific Islands Leaders' Summit Meeting with the President of the State of Israel, H.E. Reuven Rivlin, 20-21 February 2020, Nadi, Fiji.

The President of the State of Israel, H.E Reuven Rivlin, paid a two day State Visit to Fiji from 20-21 February, 2021. Upon his arrival at Nadi Airport, President Rivlin was received by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Honourable I. Seruiratu before he was accorded a 100 men Guard of Honour by the Republic of Fiji Military Forces guards.

The full Fijian traditional ceremony of welcome was accorded to President Rivlin before joining other Pacific Island State Leaders and representatives to a roundtable summit and bilateral meetings - the first of its kind. This included Pacific representatives from Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Tonga and Palau.

President Rivlin also had an opportunity to pay a courtesy call on the President of the Republic of Fiji, H.E Major General (Ret'd) Jioji Konusi Konrote. President Konrote then graciously hosted his Israeli counterpart to a State Dinner together with other leaders from the Pacific and the diplomatic corps to celebrate this momentous occasion.

The State Visit by President Rivlin was to further strengthen the excellent relations between the two countries particularly in the areas of defence and security, agriculture, health, education, climate change, and disaster rehabilitation. The Division ensured that all Diplomatic and Security Protocols were well coordinated and executed to the highest standard.

Official visit of New Zealand Prime Minister, Right Honourable Jacinda Arden from 24 to 27 February 2020, Suva.

The historical and successful Official Visit of the New Zealand Prime Minister, Rt Honourable Jacinda Arden from 24 to 27 February, 2020 was another great achievement for the Division. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Protocol and Consular Division played the lead role in the planning, coordinating and executing of the four (4) days program in close collaboration with the inter- agency task force committee.

Upon the arrival of the Prime Minister Arden at Nadi International Airport, she was greeted and received by the Honourable Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation who then accompanied her via flight to Nausori. Prime Minister Bainimarama welcomed Prime Minister Arden at Nausori Airport before she was accorded a 100 men Guard of Honour.

A full Fijian traditional ceremony of welcome was accorded to Prime Minister Arden at the Grand Pacific Hotel followed by a courtesy call on His Excellency the President, Major General Jioji Konusi Konrote. Prime Minister Arden later laid a wreath at the National War Memorial to acknowledge our historical security ties.

Prime Minister Bainimarama also had a fruitful Bilateral Meeting between his New Counterpart, Rt Honourable Arden at the Office of the Prime Minister. Prime Minister Arden also had an opportunity to meet with the Opposition Leader and the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum. She concluded her trip with a short visit to the Lautoka mosque to commemorate the Christchurch Mosque massacre with the family of the victims.

The official visit by the Rt Honourable Arden was indeed a successful and memorable one for Fiji, as it provided the impetus to further deepen and elevate our bilateral friendship to a greater height under the overarching 'Statement of Partnership' between Fiji and New Zealand.



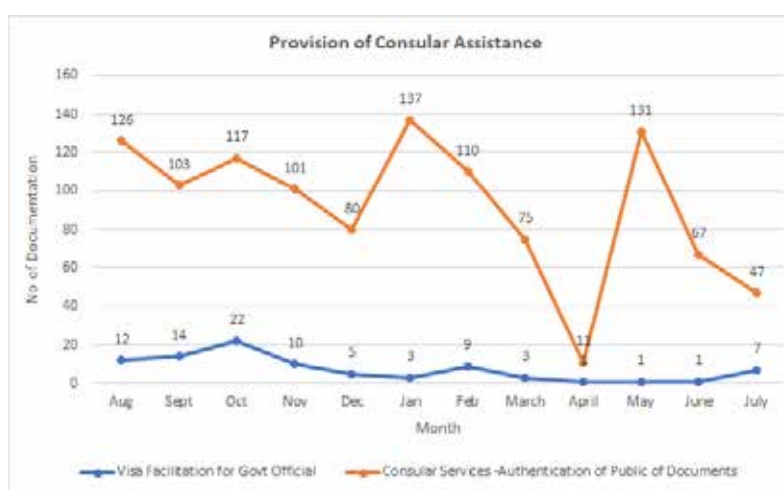
Mr. Olota Rokovunisei of Daku Village in Tailevu briefs Non-Resident Ambassadors accredited to Fiji of the impact climate change has had on his village.

OVERSEAS VISITS OF THE PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER OF FIJI

The Division assisted the Office of the President and Office of the Prime Minister in coordinating and liaising with Foreign Diplomatic Missions in Suva and our Fiji Missions abroad in terms of visa arrangements and other logistical support with the host countries to ensure that the visits of our Head of State and Head of Government to the following countries are smooth and fruitful:

- Prime Minister of Fiji's Official Visit to the Republic of Cuba from 01 to 04 October, 2019
- President of Fiji's Visit to Japan at the invitation of the government of Japan to attend the Enthronement Ceremony of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan on 22 October, 2019 in Japan
- Prime Minister of Fiji's Visit to Spain to attend the 2019 UN Climate Change Conference (COP25) in Madrid, Spain from 02 to 13 December, 2019.

PROVISION OF CONSULAR ASSISTANCE

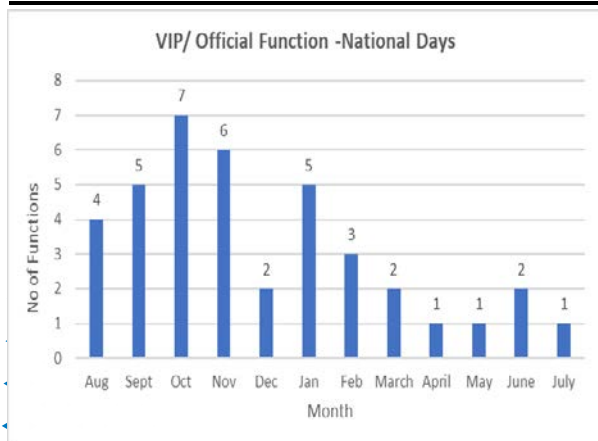


Fiji is a member of the Hague Apostille Convention (1961 Hague Convention), through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Apostille is issued on any official document destined for this country with no fees charged. As illustrated by the graph an average of 80 documents were received and authenticated by the Protocol and Consular Division from members of the public and Fiji citizens residing abroad. These documents include Birth Certificate, Death

Certificate, Divorce (dissolution of marriage) certificates, Fiji examination certificates, power of attorney and Police Clearance Certificates.

The vivid drop in the number of Apostille in April was a result of the temporary closure of the Ministry's office as the outcome of COVID-19 restrictions.

CELEBRATION OF NATIONAL DAYS AND OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS



National days and official functions are hosted and celebrated every year by the respective missions. The Chief of Protocol normally officiates during National Days events on behalf of the Fijian government.

The COVID19 restriction and the protocols put in place resulted in virtual or small scale gatherings.

HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION

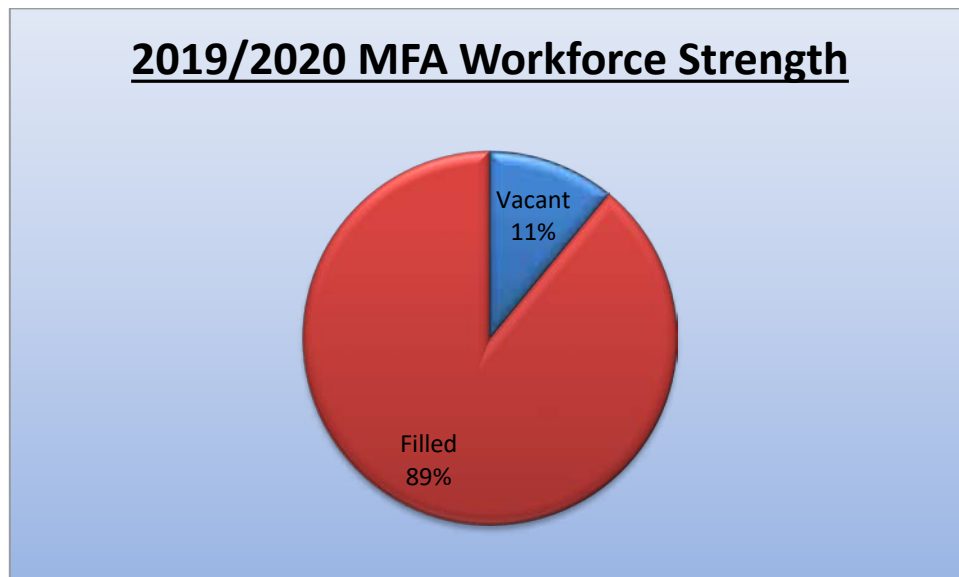
The Division is responsible for facilitating key human resource management activities that involves HR planning, recruitment and selection, contract management, reward and recognition, Occupational Health and Safety, Corporate Social Responsibility, training and development, and performance management. Human Resources Division is an internal support service managing resources for the achievement of the Ministry's strategies, ensuring compliance with a number of governance obligations and improving corporate policies, procedures and outcomes. With the review and restructure of the Ministry's Organisational Structure to improve efficiency; productivity and better manage overall operational cost the Division has been streamlined to be responsive to the expectations and needs of the Ministry; subsequently consolidation and reduction on the number of work unit within the Division.

Some of the major activities for the 2019/2020 fiscal year included; Fijian Civil Service Transition and Reform Implementation in terms of implementation of the Discipline guideline and transitional arrangements to the Performance Management Framework for on-going performance requirements for contract renewals and performance appraisal.

Staff Establishment:

Workforce Strength

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has an approved establishment of 146 from which 130 positions are substantively filled and 16 positions (Missions and HQ) vacant. The graph below illustrates the workforce strength for the Ministry during the year.



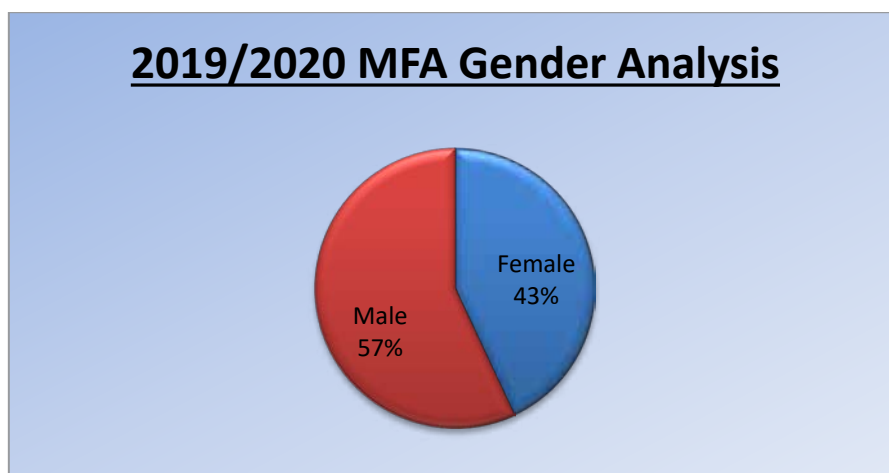
Out of its total establishment, 11% of the positions remained vacant in the 2019/2020 financial year.

The Ministry strategizes to ensure that the service delivery to our diverse customers are not disrupted or compromised due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) worldwide pandemic whereby majority of the Mission staff were working from home which was aimed at containing the spread of the virus whilst ensuring continuity of service where possible.

The table below illustrates the total number of staff employed by the Ministry at the end of the 2019/2020 Financial Year:

Division/ Mission	Gender		Vacant	Grand Total
	Female	Male		
Headquarters				
Executive Support Unit	2	5	1	8
Media & Communication Unit	1	3	0	4
Policy Research & Development Division	1	0	2	3
Protocol Division	5	5	2	12
Human Resources Division	8	4	1	13
Finance Division	8	5	0	13
Multilateral Bureau	7	3	1	11
AAMEER Bureau	0	1	0	1
Asia Bureau	3	3	2	8
Oceania Bureau	3	1	1	5
Missions				
Abu Dhabi Mission	0	2	1	3
Beijing Mission	1	3	0	4
Brussels	0	3	0	3
Canberra	2	2	0	4
Geneva	2	2	0	4
Jakarta	0	3	1	4
Kuala Lumpur	0	1	2	3
London	2	1	0	3
New Delhi	1	3	0	4
New York	2	2	0	4
Papua New Guinea	0	3	0	3
Roving Ambassador	2	1	1	4
Seoul	2	1	1	4
Tokyo	2	2	0	4
Washington	0	3	0	3
Wellington	1	2	0	3
Government Wage Earners	1	10	0	11
Grand Total	56	74	16	146

Of the 130 filled positions, the Ministry had a workforce that had been male dominated with 57% Males to 43% Females. The Ministry is an equal opportunity employer and committed to ensuring that initiatives and activities implemented have a good representation of both genders in the processing of vacant positions in future.



Recruitment & Selection

Ministry of Foreign Affairs uses a fair and effective recruitment process governed by the principles set out in the Open Merit Recruitment and Selection (OMRS) Guideline to employ the right people with the required skillset for each of its job vacancies.

The table below illustrates different the recruitment and selection activities undertaken throughout the financial year:

No	Type of Appointment	Total
1	Acting Appointment	8
2	Extension of Acting Appointment	6
3	New Appointment	11
4	Renewal of Contracts	36
5	Extension of Contract	6
6	End of Contract	1
7	Deemed Resignation	1
8	Resignation	7
9	End of Diplomatic Posting	1
10	Leave without pay	2
11	Retirement	0
12	Termination	0
Total		79

In this financial year, there were no recorded cases of retirements or termination of staff. It is noted that the Ministry made a very high number of renewal of contract appointments during the 2019/2020 financial year in line with the performance management framework for on-going performance requirements for contract renewals and performance appraisal accordingly with operational plan outcomes.

Training & Development

There had been 28 learning and development opportunities availed to staff during this fiscal year including both local and overseas trainings. The Ministry has an ongoing commitment towards providing a range of shorter-term learning and development opportunities which is focused on specific capability development needs. The table below shows the types of training against number of staff attended.

No	Type of Appointment	Total
1	Overseas	4
2	Reform	6
3	In-house	6
4	Local	12
Total		28

Fiji National University (NTPC) Levy and Grants Compliance

In compliance with the FNU Amendment Act 2010 and FNU Levy Order, all employers in Fiji are required to register with Fiji National University Levy Department and facilitate the payment of the bi-annual levy.

The 1 % Levy imposed on Gross Emoluments for all staff is paid bi-annually to Fiji National University Levy and Grants Department. The assessments are done annually to determine the points and refunds if the Ministry is fully compliance with the training assessment criteria.

Summarized below are the assessment points of the Ministry for the past five years.

Year	Points
2015	13.04
2016	3
2017	39.20
2018	71
2019	66

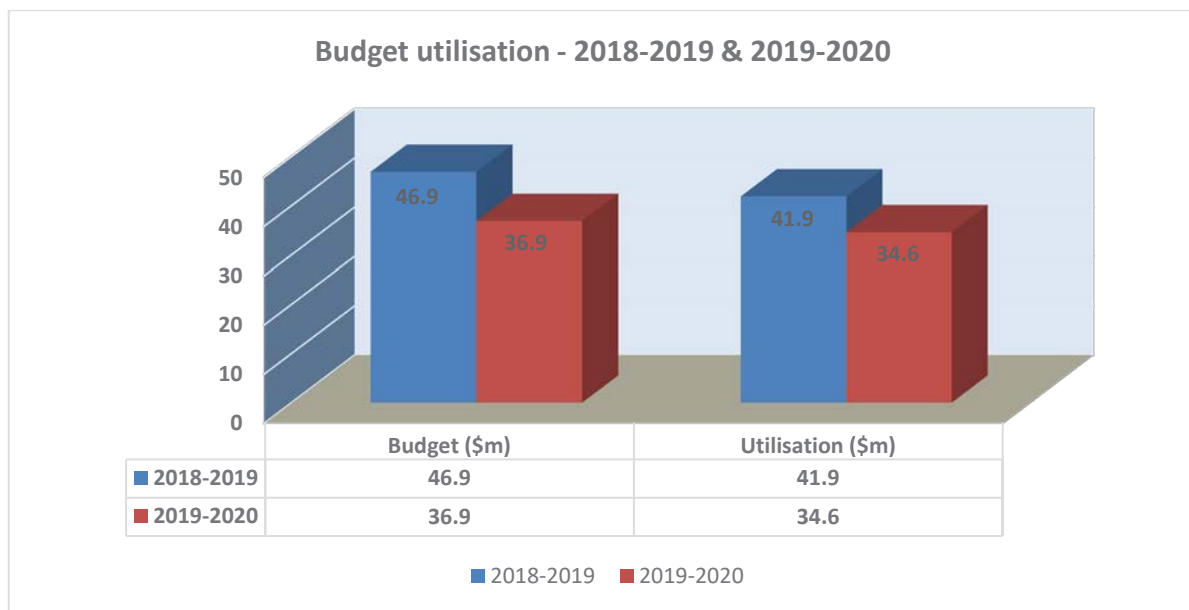
Ministry encourages staff to attend training programs that address competency gaps to ensure that they perform to the optimum. The workforce learning and growth shows the commitment of the Ministry towards its workforce investment which leads to high performance rate.

FINANCE DIVISION

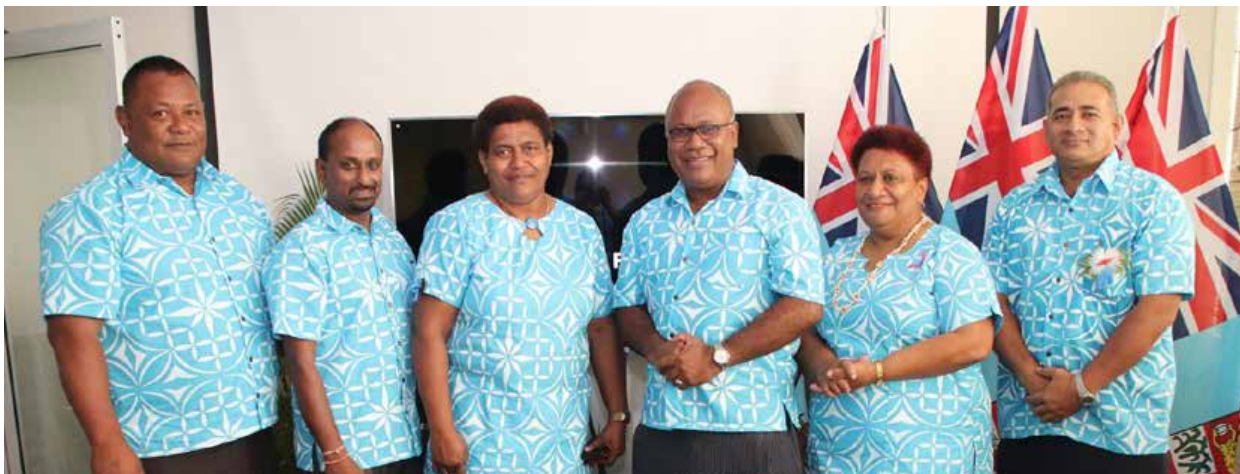
The Division provides financial oversight and management of financial resources and guarantees that all expenditures and revenue collections are in compliance with the relevant provisions outlined under the Finance Instructions, Finance Manual (2019), and the Fiji Overseas Service Regulations (FOSR). The Division also ensures the effective implementation and upgrading of the Financial Management Information System (FMIS).

Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2019-2020 Budget Overview

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had received a total budget of \$36.9 million for the 2019-2020 financial year compared to \$46.9 million for the 2018-2019 financial year. Total budget utilization for the year ended 31st July 2020 was at 91%. The Column Charts below illustrates the financial expenditure summary for 2019/2020 fiscal year:



Approximately 74 per cent of the Ministry's budget is allocated towards its 'off-shore' operations through the Overseas Missions and the remaining 26 per cent is for its on-shore operation or Headquarters.



Fiji Day Celebrations at MOFA Headquarters

Asset Management

Annual Board of Survey (BOS)

The BOS for the financial year 2019 – 2020 was conducted at Headquarters and in the Fiji Missions abroad:

1. HQ/Protocol Nadi
2. New Delhi
3. Seoul
4. Tokyo
5. Washington
6. Beijing
7. Canberra
8. Wellington
9. Brussels
10. Jakarta
11. Kuala Lumpur
12. Papua-New Guinea
13. London
14. Abu Dhabi
15. Geneva
16. PRUN - NY

The 2019-2020 BOS report was approved and received from the Ministry of Economy within its financial year. The items written off had a total value of \$233,402.58.

Vehicle and Transport

A total of 11 vehicles were engaged to facilitate Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the 2019-2020 financial year.

One was designated for the Deputy Secretary and another for the Roving Ambassador. The remaining nine was used for Ministry staff and VIP operation(s).

The total fuel consumption for 2019/2020 financial year was \$58,301 and repair and maintenance cost was \$40,263 which totals to \$98,564.

Challenges

A major challenge for the Ministry is the management of its off-shore (Overseas Missions) component of the budget, which accounts for over 74% of the Ministry's budget. Ensuring better and efficient financial practices and overall compliance remains a challenge in our effort to achieve prudent management of all financial resources allocated to the Ministry.

Way Forward

Better coordination between Headquarters and each of our diplomatic Missions abroad is critical for the effective management of the Ministry's financial resources. The Ministry, through its Finance team is exploring options that will facilitate the adoption of electronic platforms as a practical means of doing business. Apart from encouraging the use of electronic platforms, strengthening of the Ministry's internal audit mechanism is critical in supporting the Ministry's effort of an improved compliance and adherence to financial policies and regulations.



PM Bainimarama with PM Morrison in Canberra, Australia

OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

Promoting Public Sector Accountability and Sustainability through our Audits



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Website: www.oag.gov.fj



File No: 347

24 May 2022

The Honourable Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama
Minister for Foreign Affairs
GCC Complex
SUVA

Dear Honourable Bainimarama

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2020

The audited financial statements for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for the year ended 31 July 2020 together with my audit report on them are enclosed.

Particulars of any errors and omissions arising from the audit have been forwarded to the Management of the Ministry for their necessary actions.

Yours sincerely

Sairusi Dukuno
ACTING AUDITOR-GENERAL

Cc: Mr. Yogesh Karan - The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Encl.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2020

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2020

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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Opinion

I have audited the financial statements of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ("the *Ministry*") which comprises the Statement of Receipts and Expenditure, Appropriation Statement, Statement of Losses for the financial year ended 31 July 2020, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In my opinion, the accompanying financial statements of the Ministry are prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the Financial Management Act 2004 and Finance Instructions 2010.

Basis for Audit Opinion

I have conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISA). My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of my report. I am independent of the Ministry in accordance with the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountant's *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (IESBA Code) together with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in Fiji and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements and the IESBA Code. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Other Matter

An unreconciled variance of \$3,839,862 exists between the FMIS general ledger balance of \$7,682,103 and the accumulated Overseas Mission's bank reconciliation statements balances of \$3,842,241. The Ministry is working with the Ministry of Economy to rectify the variances.

Responsibilities of the Management and those charged with governance for financial statements

The Management are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the Financial Management Act 2004 and Finance Instructions 2010, and for such internal control as the Management determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Ministry's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISA will always detect a

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements (Cont'd)

material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISA, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Ministry's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the management of Ministry.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Sairusi Dukuno
ACTING AUDITOR-GENERAL



Suva, Fiji
24 May 2022

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2020

We certify that these financial statements:

- (a) fairly reflect the financial operations and performance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the year ended 31 July 2020; and
- (b) Have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Financial Management Act 2004 and Finance Instructions 2010.


Yogesh Jitendra Karan
Permanent Secretary
Josefa Tuima
Director Finance

Date: 16/5/22

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2020

	Notes	2020 (\$)	2019 (\$)
RECEIPTS			
State Revenue			
Operating Revenue		4,801	768
Total State Revenue		<u>4,801</u>	<u>768</u>
Agency Revenue			
Administration Fees & Miscellaneous Revenue		179,640	338,392
Total Agency Revenue		<u>179,640</u>	<u>338,392</u>
TOTAL RECEIPTS	3 (a)	<u><u>184,441</u></u>	<u><u>339,160</u></u>
EXPENDITURE			
Operating Expenditure			
Established Staff		12,890,975	14,680,296
Government Wage Earners		3,537,754	3,752,543
Travel & Communication		2,123,333	3,851,458
Maintenance & Operations		10,057,758	11,485,449
Purchase of Goods & Services		1,259,872	1,472,189
Operating Grants & Transfers		4,626,059	4,931,319
Special Expenditure		703,076	1,394,199
Total Operating Expenditure		<u>35,198,827</u>	<u>41,567,453</u>
Capital Expenditure			
Capital Construction		-	8,530
Capital Purchase		-	23,104
Total Capital Expenditure		<u>-</u>	<u>31,634</u>
Value Added Tax		131,212	393,235
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	3 (b)	<u><u>35,330,039</u></u>	<u><u>41,992,322</u></u>

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROPRIATION STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2020

SEG	Item	Budget Estimate (\$)	Appropriation Changes (\$) Note 5	Revised Estimate (\$) a	Actual Expenditure (\$) b	Carry Over (\$)	Lapsed Appropriation (\$) Note 4 (a-b)
	Operating Expenditure						
1	Established Staff	12,885,489	5,538	12,891,027	12,890,975	-	52
2	Government Wage Earners	3,587,889	(5,538)	3,582,351	3,537,754	-	44,597
3	Travel & Communication	2,010,242	139,364	2,149,606	2,123,333	-	26,273
4	Maintenance & Operations	10,228,333	(41,395)	10,186,938	10,057,758	-	129,180
5	Purchase of Goods & Services	1,132,796	203,400	1,336,196	1,259,872	-	76,324
6	Operating Grants & Transfers	5,150,012	(375,420)	4,774,592	4,626,059	-	148,533
7	Special Expenditure	660,501	74,051	734,552	703,076	-	31,476
	Total Operating Expenditure	35,655,262	-	35,655,262	35,198,827	-	456,435
	Capital Expenditure						
8	Capital Construction	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	Capital Purchase	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total Capital Expenditure	-	-	-	-	-	-
13	Value Added Tax	1,262,838	-	1,262,838	131,212	-	1,131,626
	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	36,918,100	-	36,918,100	35,330,039	-	1,588,061

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

STATEMENT OF LOSSES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2020

Loss of Money

There was no loss of money recorded for the year ended 31 July 2020.

Loss of Revenue

There was no loss of revenue recorded for the year ended 31 July 2020.

Loss of Fixed Assets

There was no loss of fixed assets recorded for the year ended 31 July 2020. However, the following items worth \$233,403 have been written off following the Ministry's Board of Survey for the year ending 31st July 2020.

Fixed Assets Category	Amount (\$)
Motor Vehicle	44,734
Office Equipment	106,520
Furniture & Fittings	82,149
Total	233,403

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2020

NOTE 1: REPORTING ENTITY

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs promotes Fijian interests in other nations and on the world stage. This includes a broad range of activities from providing consular services to Fijians living overseas to organising high level visits to Fiji.

The Ministry develops and carries out Fiji's foreign policy and manages Fiji's relationships with other nations and with multi-national and sub-regional organisations like the United Nations and the Melanesian Spearhead Group. The Ministry is focused on securing the maximum benefits for Fiji from these relationships.

NOTE 2: STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

(a) Basis of Accounting / Presentation

In accordance with Government accounting policies, the financial statements of the Ministry is prepared under the cash basis of accounting. All payments related to purchases of fixed assets have been expensed.

The financial statements are presented in accordance with the Financial Management Act and the requirements of Section 71 (1) of the Finance Instruction 2010 and the Financial Management Act 2004. The preparation and presentation of a Statement of Assets and Liabilities is not required under the current government policies.

(b) Accounting for Value Added Tax (VAT)

All expenses and revenue are VAT exclusive. The Ministry on a monthly basis takes out VAT output on total money received for expenditure from Ministry of Economy. VAT input on the other hand is claimed on payments made to the suppliers and the sub-contractors for expenses incurred.

The VAT payment as per the Statement of Receipts and Expenditures relates to VAT input claimed on payments made to the suppliers and sub-contractors for expenses incurred and VAT payments to FRCS. Actual amount paid to FRCS during the year represent the difference between VAT Output and VAT Input.

(c) Comparative Figures

Where necessary, amounts relating to prior years have been reclassified to facilitate comparison and achieve consistency in disclosure with current year amounts.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued...) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2020

(d) Revenue Recognition

Revenue is recognised when cash is actually received by the Ministry.

Administration Fees is charged by the Overseas Missions for providing services such as processing of passports and visas, birth certificates and police clearance. All fees are retained by the Ministry, however the normal fees and charges for the above services are posted to the respective agencies FMIS general ledger.

NOTE 3: SIGNIFICANT VARIATIONS

- (a) Total revenue decreased by \$154,719 or 46% in 2020 as compared to 2019. This was attributed to the current global pandemic of COVID-19 which started in December, 2019 in Wuhan City, China causing major economic downturn around the globe.
- (b) The Total Expenditure decreased by \$6,662,282.47 or 16% in the year 2020 when compared to 2019. The decrease is mainly due to the effects of COVID-19 pandemic where very minimal activities and movement have taken place which impacted on expenditure utilization rate for the period.

NOTE 4: UNUTILISED BUDGET

Significant unutilised budget for the financial year ended 31 July 2020 are as follows:

Expenditure	Revised Budget (\$)	Actual Expenditure (\$)	Savings (\$)	Percentage Savings (%)
Value Added Tax	1,262,838	131,212	1,131,626	90

The savings of \$1,131,626 was attributed to the lack of economic activities around the globe which contributed to minimal transactions affecting VAT during the period.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued...) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2020

NOTE 5: APPROPRIATION CHANGES

There were no redeployments of the Ministry's funds during the year. In 2019/2020, the following virements were processed as follows:

Virement Number	From	Amount (\$)	To	Amount (\$)	Approved by
V08001	SEG 1	20,000	SEG 2	20,000	PS Economy
	SEG 2	26,292	SEG 1	26,292	
V08002	SEG 1	748,216	SEG 1	759,462	PS Economy
	SEG 2	253,558	SEG 2	242,312	
DV0801	SEG 2	293,000	SEG 2	293,000	PSFA
DV0803	SEG 1	652,870	SEG 1	640,870	PSFA
	SEG 2	282,952	SEG 2	294,952	
DV0804	SEG 3	286,000	SEG 3	278,162	PSFA
	SEG 4	283,000	SEG 4	392,900	
	SEG 5	188,688	SEG 5	187,300	
	SEG 6	214,844	SEG 7	114,170	
DV0805	SEG 3	70,173	SEG 3	247,000	PSFA
	SEG 4	853,713	SEG 4	620,000	
	SEG 5	30,749	SEG 5	171,000	
	SEG 6	177,896	SEG 6	116,750	
	SEG 7	112,219	SEG 7	90,000	
DV0806	SEG 3	94,211	SEG 3	64,586	PSFA
	SEG 4	319,450	SEG 4	418,052	
	SEG 5	46,456	SEG 5	94,809	
	SEG 6	100,000	SEG 6	570	
	SEG 7	20,030	SEG 7	2,130	
DV0807	SEG 4	58,317	SEG 4	42,133	PSFA
			SEG 5	16,184	

NOTE 6: CLOSURE OF FIVE OVERSEAS MISSIONS

Five Overseas Missions were closed permanently as announced in the 2020-2021 National Budget Address on 17/07/20. The five Missions were Washington DC, Seoul, Port Moresby, Brussels and Kuala Lumpur.

As a result of this policy decision, related cash accounts and overseas remittance to these Missions ceased.

NOTE 7: EVENTS SUBSEQUENT TO BALANCE DATE

Circular 08/2020 issued to all Heads of Missions that due to budget constraints hence motor vehicles are not to be disposed as per approved method but retained by Mission.

