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MONDAY, 24 JUNE 2019

Mr Speaker took the Chair at 9:11am.

Prayers.

MR SPEAKER: I announce that Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly resumed.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

The Clerk read out the Papers pursuant to S.O. 49(2).

1. P.P.2019/2020 No.85, Report on Audit Office Operations for the Period of July 2017 – June 2018.

**SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (No.2)
2018/2019 & APPROPRIATION BILL 2019/2020 -
debate on second reading – Day 5**

MR SPEAKER: During the resumption of Proceedings for this Assembly in our previous meeting, the Minister of Education, Sports and Culture was wrapping up his response on matters raised by the members.

This is the opportunity for the Minister of Finance to address the matters raised by the members. I respectfully call the Hon Minister of Finance.

Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI (Minister of Finance): Thank you Mr Speaker and respectable members of this Assembly. I will firstly voice my thankfulness to our God for his love and grace for the strength to continue our deliberations.

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Mr Speaker, I believe the clarifications from the Prime Minister and the Chairperson of the Finance Committee last week is well taken by the members regarding the policies and guidelines for the Main Estimates 2019/2020, which I will not repeat, except for a few additional responses to further elaborate other aspects.

May I firstly accord my appreciations to the heads of Government Ministries and Public Enterprises for your valuable contribution to the compilation of the Main Estimates 2019/2020. I acknowledge your support towards the leadership of the CEO and everyone in the Ministry of Finance within the last six months of preparations.

Mr Speaker, I have attended numerous meetings of the Asian Development Bank and Financial Organisations rendering financial support to our economy and major developments. There have also been a number of missions from these organisations so be able to consult with our government and the public service on major projects that we prioritise.

The common testament that has come to my attention is the significant level of expertise and commitment from our Ministries, particularly the CEOs when in dialogue with them about financing some of our major projects in which emphasis has been given. They are of the view that within the Pacific region, the CEOs of our State are by far more knowledgeable and competent. This in fact evokes pride and my saying thank you and well done. I am familiar with these meetings and what is important is the fact that they dictate things and give advice. Our public servants accordingly respond to ensure that whatever decisions they take when sorting assistance must be in line with our economy and parallel with the developments, which we are prioritising.

What I gathered is very important, the desire to contextualise the assistance with policies and guidelines they are introducing so that it is suitable with our economy today, keeping in mind our long-term objectives. I feel that I must share the many changes in our public service and preparations in place to ensure the assistance coming our way suits the developments we are prioritising.

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Mr Speaker I will say that the state of our economy is going smoothly. You are aware of the surge in our economy in the past year and this year it continues to improve. Financial injections into the economy mostly comes from our own revenues earned domestically as well as capital from our partners overseas namely Australia, New Zealand, Japan and China as well as the financial organisations around the world and Asia who are able to assist with developing our major bank institutions.

The state of our total debt as of the end of March 2019 is at \$1.04billion, is 49.2% of our GDP. As aware, it is gradually decreasing compared to our GDP. Our GDP at the end of March 2019 is \$2.2billion. The debt service ratio which is the amount injected annually to cover our debt is \$73.5million. If you are to look at the total capital accumulated within our country, only 11% of what is collected goes towards our debt. I believe this to be an ongoing process. Perhaps there is a feeling of uncertainty at our being hasty to borrow from overseas organisations, but for your information Mr Speaker we are in the position to repay this, most importantly, we borrow due to our desire to grow our economy by financing our major projects and other areas we can cover at this stage. One thing is for sure is if we do not do this now, within 15 to 20 years' time, the cost of such major projects will be 100% dearer.

Our foreign reserves as of March is at \$465.4million, in other words after 6.4 months we can cover the cost of our imported products.

You are all aware of the IMF report declaring their intention to visit our shores every year in March to hold consultations with the Government. As indicated in the budget statement these consultations are vital as it allows them to be in dialogue with our CEOs so there is a mutual understanding on the state of our economy, at the same time giving our public service the confidence that our economy is doing well. I feel that by the medium term our debt in relation to the GDP should drop to \$45.5million. However, as mentioned at the end of March this year it is now at 49.2% of the GDP. There is still room for us to borrow additional grants for important projects to assist the economy. It was highlighted in the budget statement this particular goal for 2040, the whole purpose of it, is that we must have long-term vision.

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It is true that we have the Samoa Development Strategy or SDS review every four years, but we must have the conviction of looking ahead. I am not saying that we are removing this SDS; we will continue to apply this three to four years strategy to ensure our commitment to our 2040 goal.

Mr Speaker, not only are we preparing ourselves for this but we are also in dialogue with our partners from overseas regarding financial assistance for our developments, to assist us in arranging of...

MR SPEAKER: I beg tolerance Hon Minister of Finance whilst I allow the interjection from the member for Salega East.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai (Salega East): Mr Speaker this is just a small matter... I appreciate the clarification from the Minister on certain matters we raised concerning debts. My query relates to records submitted to the IMF whom you are collaborating with for it seems that there is some inconsistencies with the information presented before Parliament in this Budget Statement and what has been given to the IMF as of March the 29th for your understanding.

Mr Speaker I am looking at these debts and it is going up in the view of the IMF. Only the period 2019/2020 shows a drop before our debt takes a hike again throughout the remaining years until it reaches 50%. The fiscal strategy of our economy submitted to us indicates our debt to be going down. I want to understand why your take differs from that of the IMF.

That is my question Mr Speaker with respect.

MR SPEAKER: I call the Hon Minister.

Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI: Mr Speaker with the inconsistencies of figures may I say that we are constantly being updated with the statistics from the Central Bank and Treasury. The difference cited is not that much, what is important is that it has been declared at the end of March that our debt has dropped compared to our GDP that is now \$49.2million. As I have mentioned the advice from the IMF on medium term which I refer to as a minimum period of ten years.

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In the next ten years, it should drop to 45.5%. I am of the belief, and I say this as I often liaise and in dialogue with these organisations when I am in Washington, the IMF are very conservative. If we have self-belief that we can maintain control over necessary borrowing for developments to propel our economy, we should not hesitate to do so.

As you are aware, our debt level reached over the 50 mark, it got to 57 and 58 after the cyclones and tsunami. Before that, there was the global financial crisis. We have become wise to monitor and plan our infrastructure and economy so that we can reach our desired goals.

My advice to the member is to be patient as we progress. As far as I am concerned, we now possess the ability through our policies to prepare ourselves for our set goals to every four years and our long-term vision, so that by 2040, our employment level will double and our economy will be raised earning us greater success for the country.

As heard through our Budget Statement the highlights of our ongoing plans particularly with the education sector, where it was declared that, although we now have our university the government should still reconsider so they may be in the position to assist students with high marks that hail from low-income families and are unable to pay their fees. We should now be in a state whereby everyone is allowed equal opportunities to education instead of limiting to those who can afford to send their children to private schools. Let everyone access similar education opportunities so they may get to university to pursue and attain good qualifications and knowledge to prepare themselves for public service, and be able to raise the standards of our developments to assist their respective families.

The same motive goes to the health sector where the government is currently is in collaboration with the World Bank to alleviate NCDs. Their take on the issue is that we should consider raising duty taxes on products that contain sugar, fats and the likes. If we do not take this step, by the year 2040 there will countless cases of people with this type of illness. You are all aware of the high cost of running the Dialysis Unit, it is not a treatment that will return the patient to good health.

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MR SPEAKER: I beg tolerance Hon Minister, I call upon the Prime Minister

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker, I want to address the issue that was raised before the Minister moves to a different matter.

May I remind you that we became a member of the IMF in 1971; it is now 48 years since we joined the World Bank in 1973. The way these organisations operate is such that they sent consultative missions annually to hold dialogues with us to find out how our developments are going, to enquire about the state of our trade and a review of how we are dealing with debts repayments. When they are here, it is a norm that meetings are being conducted, like the one, we had at Tusitala and another one in Hideaway. I recall one of the meetings that started at 2.00pm and finished at 7.00 in the evening that consisted of us Government officials from the Treasury that had us stayed there overnight.

The purpose of these missions from the IMF and the World Bank is for them to find the underlying cause of these matters. They come and hold consultations with our banks for their reports, and during one year, they all came separately, the IMF, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. This became a disruption to our public service particularly to the executive of the Ministry of Finance.

It got to a point whereby the Minister felt the same disturbing feeling and accordingly advised them to all come together in one mission to avoid time consumption on our public service particularly when we are occupied with meetings. I recall another year when China came to conduct consultations on financial assistance matters. You will recall the talks between China and leaders of eight countries that hold special ties with China including New Zealand and Australia, held every four years or sometimes five. They will tell us how much grant that will be available for the eight countries, the next of such meeting will be in Samoa later this year where the Government of China will layout the appropriated funds for these eight Pacific nations; and New Zealand and Australia will be part of this very forum.

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The importance of these reports is the fact that they are being prepared from overseas they consult with us and we provide them with data to be inserted into these reports. I have mentioned this point as there are members asking about the inconsistency of these data. It is here that we are providing this data and this is very important, if a mission came in March of last year. What was the state of our economy then up until December of last year? They are discussing information from the period gone, but what the government is providing you here is updated information. Mr Speaker once the Budget is passed, the Ministry will then proceed to make our debts payments to form a reduction. To those people who are always questioning the figures from the government as if it is coming from overseas, they are from us here. We are providing you with the actual figures, but do note that the data from the previous year is recorded when the mission was here. Although, the question is focussed on the report which is most recent and accurate.

Mr Speaker I thought I will say this as they keep saying that the information provided is false, accept for what is being given from overseas. The figures from them are from us on the past years to give our Parliament the understanding that we are doing our job.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you, I call the Minister.

Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI: Thank you Mr Speaker, you have heard the elaboration from the Prime Minister.

The other vital aspect of our relationship with our overseas partners is our state of governance and leadership, political leadership within Samoa and the Pacific Island Region where we must be seen as positive influencer and wielding leadership in groups like the Pacific Islands Forum. It is important that we are well prepared when in dialogue with our partners to get a grasp of the process regarding the implementation of our major developments. This is the role of the **Treasury and most Ministries to ensure that our major projects are achieved in time and to be efficiently mindful of resolving any problem encountered during the process.**

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Mr Speaker, I will now come to the point raised by members on the estimation of deficit three years ago. The three years is up and we have now gained a surplus in our budget, which is proof that the Treasury and other Ministries are currently monitoring spending making sure that it goes directly to our developments and services for the sake of the public. The other aspect we are looking at is avoiding unnecessary spending which does not help the economy. According to Cabinet Directive, as aware, the Ministries are buying two or three vehicles on a monthly basis. The problem with this is that it does not give us the opportunity to make bulk purchases, which will entitle us to discounts from the car supplier. There have been arrangements made by the Ministries and the car companies and the Cabinet has endorsed the Treasury's recommendation in accordance with policy that vehicles are permitted to be purchased twice within a year in order to get discounts from the car suppliers. One of the car companies disclosed to us that preference for Government vehicles are on to luxury cars although, there are vehicles which have all the necessary features to perform their duties when offsite. So at this stage this government policy has been reinforced in order to allow us the bulk purchases of vehicles.

Another area that has been reconsidered is further improvement of our capital and the utilization of our websites by the Government for major projects in particular, tenders through advertisements.

As aware, all Ministries and Public Enterprises have a website. There is no need for them to continue advertising on newspapers and the likes as technology is now up and running. They should no longer follow this trend of advertising on the newspaper on a monthly basis instead put up a list of procurement for advertisement in the next three to six months to allow businesses, which have no websites to view and plan their applications.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: I allow the interjection by the member of Salega East.

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Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Thank you Mr Speaker for allowing me the opportunity. The Minister of Finance is now speaking on a point raised by the committee in the report. In saying that, I applaud the committee for seriously looking at this matter since we have spent a lot of money on the usage of the internet. Mr Speaker the internet does everything we desire like having conversation within our environment without any charges. I have seen new occurrences like the incident at Vaipouli. That should not have happened if the usage of the internet was of preference. Mr Speaker, this is a government service which cost us over \$60million tala yet we are not fully utilising it. Why is it so...

MR SPEAKER: I allow the Minister of Finance.

Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI: The Minister with this very portfolio is not with us, but our Samoa National Broadband Highway SNBH is currently looking at it right now. As known, the Computer Services Limited has been overseeing our broadband service; however, as of now their focus is on something else. We have had discussions with the members of the World Bank and the ADB to work closely with the Ministry of Information and Technology to review the usage of our broadband. It should be set up to allow the connection for all Government Ministries and Public Enterprises. The member is correct on that point in terms of saving money. Although, the status on this issue is such that our private companies Digicel and Bluesky have asked us to allow them some access to avoid any monopoly from CSL. In the meantime, that is the update on this talk and I guess there should be a resolution on the matter soon.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Mr Speaker...

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the member. Our Standing Orders, the Minister must directly speak on issues raised by the respectable members. If your statement was not included, you are not allowed to question it. I beg tolerance to the member. You are upstanding when you did not speak of this matter. Our Standing Orders have been here for some time, it was not written today or yesterday.

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Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Mr Speaker, I made a previous statement on this matter, I also spoke of the economy, which included all these issues.

MR SPEAKER: I allow the Prime Minister.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker. The Minister in charge of Identification Cards or ID matters has already made his statement, and the member did not rise to raise this issue. The fact is that the Minister of Finance has already spoken to remind us, that the Government have major developments underway, especially the Corporations in combining all the activities that are under the supervision of the special authority of the Government, in order to coordinate all the services, and to reduce wasted funds. That is an issue that has already been dealt with by the Cabinet and if the Deputy Minister had brought this up possibly, it would have had the explanation of the Member. It seems that some of these have surprised the Deputy Minister regarding the raising of these new issues, yet he has forgotten that we have rules. This reflects a vigilant member is, through his statements, rather than attempting to surprise other members to earn him points. It does not provide you any additional points but minus points.

MR SPEAKER: I call the Minister, pardon the member.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Mr Speaker, I stand in support of what the Minister of Finance had stated, to what he was concerned about... But I did not stand to...

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker, his support is not needed. When did you ever support the affairs of the Government? You always protest, and oppose, so greatly, your support is not necessary.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Your honor I oppose to generate ideas. It is not a serious objection.

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MR SPEAKER: I ask the respectable members not be like that, and do not generate new ideas from the statement of the Minister, then you stand, query and even raise new issues over new thoughts. That is the case, but I now give the opportunity to the Hon Minister to continue his speech.

Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI: Thank you Mr Speaker, it was also raised by one of the... the state of our development which is our current priority, in terms of the five-story building that we are planning to build at Savalalo. Thank you for the support, the view of the member is vital in relation to the utilisation of the Private Sector. They will be able to get the work and other conditions in support of our NPF or the National Provident Funds, or UTOS or the Unit Trust of Samoa or the ACC or the Accident Compensation Corporation, all of those Corporations I believe are capable of providing funds for this building. It is also important for the country to see that the funds of these Corporations are being used as an investment for Samoa, especially in providing employment opportunities for our contractors and to build more buildings given the shortage of offices for Governmental workers.

Mr Speaker, this is the case... there are a few public statements made on some of the initiatives that the Government is prioritizing. As stated in my response, we have yet to reach the Minister that oversees this area, as raised it is funding for our road development. Of course, the demand for these items are very large compared to the funds available here. However, as the Hon Prime Minister and the Minister and I have suggested, it is necessary to make a visit to these roads first. Observe whether there are developments, and then prioritize them. Priority will also be given to tarred roads, especially schools inland, to ease and safeguard the traveling of children. This is to provide further assistance towards some of the hotels in the community to ensure the safety of those travelling in this area.

Your honour, this is a [brief explanation to Samoa's strategy 2040](#), in the meantime, consultations have begun not only for the Government also, there was a meeting carried out last week that comprised of all non-government representatives, women representatives so that they are able to provide their contributions to the development process for all of us.

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The 20th perhaps it is this weekend, discussions will probably move to Salafai, for those who will specifically speak thoroughly on this matter and be able to gain feedback. The sure part is that by the year 2040, most of us will probably be retiring, step down from being parliament representatives or might also be called home by God.

The idea as we discussed your honor is that it is like a dream, a plan to look ahead so that when this time arrives, the income per capita will increase for our economy which should not be below 5%. There was a time that revenue had gone up to 7% and dropped to 2% and so forth, although we should now have a strong and stable economy and be able to attain a high standard as possible.

In terms of funding, as you know, the Hon Minister of Revenue has a lot of work to do, especially with the level of technology that enables the Ministry of Revenue to monitor any business in regards to the necessary payment that must be made for GST or Goods and Services Tax. Possibly this technology will be of great assistance together with scanners to scan all the containers that arrive at the port. This will ensure that the list of goods in these containers is similar with dutiable goods imported in the country so that it is easier to make assessment on them. I believe this addition will raise our revenue earnings in the future and in response to the requests of members in providing assistance to their constituencies.

Thank you very much your honour for the opportunity for me to respond. This is also an opportunity to convey congratulations and thanks to your constituency and Salelologa and the sacred Servants of God for their prayers and support, which has made it easier for this district to contribute to the preparation of our stable economy, also to the state of planning and the allocation of our Budget. Thank you very much for the opportunity, and have a blessed morning.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you to the Hon Minister of Finance, and now it is time for the statement of the Hon Minister for Revenue, go ahead with respect.

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Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT (Minister for Revenue): Thank you to the Speaker for the opportunity, and I also offer greeting to you Mr Speaker, Hon Prime Minister, Cabinet, Associate Ministers, and also the Leaders of the Committees and the members of the House, the respectable Members.

I also offer greetings to the dedicated staff from the Chief Executive Officers of Ministries and Corporations of our Government who are present today, as well as our country tuning in.

Now... not many people visited our Ministry, and I believe my statement will not be long. The Minister of Finance has already presented some of the developments that are underway by the Ministry as we move forward to 2040.

Mr Speaker, I believe that our economy and our country does not rely on any other means to raise money for the economy, only taxes. We do not have any minerals to sell or trade. Therefore your honour, we rely on our own hands, the business community and the people of the country as a whole to contribute to the development of the economy, and that is the only way to provide assistance to carry out the development needs of all the different constituencies, as members are requesting the needs for their district. The only way to make money is taxes.

Mr Speaker, I believe the Budget given to us in this... starting from July to June in the new year, seeks us to find \$539 million. The Budget ending this July, in the beginning of July and at the end of June for this term, it was stated in the Main Estimate that \$528 million is to be sought, in the Supplementary Budget at the end of the year, there was a supplementary of \$2 million, we tried to collect \$530 million.

Mr Speaker and the honourable members of Parliament, as of June 17th the \$507 million has... it is \$22 million more and we will reach \$530 million. There was a member that challenged me, that by the *end of this term the income should reach \$550 million. I believe in* the spirit and hope that this dream will come true, but regardless of how it goes, I believe that whatever we anticipate let God be our hope that He will help us, as our country is unsteady, because that is the way we can achieve our developments.

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We would also like to thank the public service, and all the Government Corporations for your contributions in collecting the taxes for the economy of our country.

The technology that the Ministry intends to negotiate with the Private Sector and the country is known as the TIMS (Tax Invoice Monitoring System) which records the VAGST (Value Added Goods and Services Tax), any purchase made at any store will be recorded. Discussions will begin with the Chamber of Commerce as well as the public; this plan is scheduled to start next year in January. Our X-ray is also arriving next year, as the Asian Development Bank will assist in funding the X-ray for the wharf.

There is also another system called CASTLING, which is intended for the Customs Office and another one for the Revenue Office. The purpose of the other system for Customs is to conduct talks with the country. Before the ship arrives the night before, this system has a record of all the cargo coming into Samoa. When the ship arrives, all the goods on board enters Samoa in preparation for duty. This will be a relief to the works of the Customs to carry and release goods once the duties of the Company is paid. It is similar to the current system; the only difference is that whenever the ship departs at night... there is a company with this system that can record all the goods on this ship.

These are all preparations and purposes of the Customs moving forward. The point is, whatever way we can help increase our income, it all depends on us working together.

Moving on to the Ministry of Prisons and Corrections, it is no secret that the project is now complete at the new Tanumalala site and the launching will take place this Friday at 10:00am. In addition to this week, a farewell service was carried out yesterday at Tafaigata as this site is now being relocated to Tanumalala and is now being used. If you have not received any invitation honourable members, I am now extending the invitation; let us meet there on Friday at 10:00am for the opening service. I also extend the invitation to the CEOs here with us, preparations is catering for all, the New Prison will be launched, for a place to bring those who are guilty to redevelop their lives.

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In Savaii, this morning the concrete foundation of the Vaiaata prison was laid out, work at Vaiaata has started while this site is being launched, what is good for Upolu is also good for Savaii. It is in this spirit that a new prison has been established in Savaii for the purpose of finding a better location for Savaii, because when you travel to Savaii, no one knows that the location is a prison. It seems like a place of a family, and that is the desire to remain like a place of a family living together. That is why all the prisoners taken to the East are screened, because there are 470 acres in Savaii, which is where the food supply for the prison comes from, 500 acres is at Tanumalala, but most of this land has rocky soil. So we are relying on Savaii for the food for the Tanumalala prison and for Savaii itself.

Mr Speaker I believe, there is nothing... those are some opinions and concerns, the endeavour is to seek ways to earn money for our country through the Ministry of Revenue, because it is their responsibility, sadly the dream by the Minister of Finance will not come true. We have to trust in the Lord, trust in the workers because the work is not easy, but a warning to the staff, since the very beginning, we will bear hatred through tax and as tax collectors. The only work that can be done, whatever money is available, we acquire it for the good of the country. We work for the old men and women behind us, to have good roads, good water, everything that needs improvement, it will be possible with enough money, because in the event that a problem arises, the Budget for the Minister of Finance will also be incomplete.

Well, Mr Speaker, I come to my beloved Constituency of Vaa of Fonoti, I am the member for Vaa o Fonoti, and the guys who were upset about this, I am the member for Vaa o Fonoti. For the time being I am a representative, I thank my beloved district for their praises, even during my second reign.

Thank you also to the Elder Director and to the pastor of the district for your prayers, perhaps this will give the member strength to improve our constituency, but your member still needs your daily prayers, so that I may always have strength. Because I am still strong, but I do not know about the others, but I am still strong and able to carry out the duties as well as the complaints of the country, no, it is easy, no complaints are wrong, the criticism is important as it gives us useful ideas to implement.

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There are some praises that are not all true, life is like that, praise you here and there, but they talk about you behind your back, but if we trust in the Lord, he is our guide in everything that we do.

That is my statement Mr Speaker, may blessings be upon the House and the public listening in.

MR SPEAKER: Well done, thank you to the Hon Minister of Revenue for the short speech that has covered all the important issues raised by the members of Parliament, thank you.

Now we move to the Minister of Health.

Tofa Hon FAIMALOTOA KIKA IEMAIMA STOWERS (Minister of Health): Mr Speaker, I take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt greetings to you, your honour, for the management of the Parliamentary Sitting of Samoa. I also offer greetings to the Leader of the House, your honour the Prime Minister as well as the Deputy Prime Minister, applauds the successful attendance of the Sitting in pursuit of prosperity for Samoa. Dear Cabinet members, honourable Associate Ministers, I offer formal greetings. I also salute the Chairpersons of the Parliamentary Committees and the honourable members of the Parliament. I also acknowledge the gathering of the Chief Executive Officers of the various Ministries and Public Enterprises, whose shoulders are burdened and are the hands and feet of the Government, not only with your advice and suggestions, but also focusing on the implementation of the various tasks and work that are needed by Samoa and its people. I also offer greetings to the Clerk of the House and the staff, well done to your services for the Parliamentary Sitting of Samoa.

I also extend greetings to His Highness, O Le Ao o le Malo and His Good Lady, Member of the Council of Deputy and His Good Lady, the Hon Deputy Chief Justice and the Judiciary and the salutations of Samoa, especially the ordained servants of God at any altar who are praying for the prosperity of Samoa.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the support of my constituency of Gagaifomau No.1 from Safotu and Manase, especially the ordained servants of the Gospel, thank you for the prayers and support. I feel courage and comfort because of your prayers and praises, thank you.

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Mr Speaker, before I make a statement in accordance to the remarks of the honourable member. I would like to thank the Hon Tuitama, the Hon Minister who was at the helm of the Ministry that I now overtake, in particular his many years of service in the medical profession has made a significant contribution and service to the health of Samoa. Thank you for your service to the country. I, the new Minister will do my best to continue the good work to improve and enhance the services of the Ministry to the health of our country.

Mr Speaker, I also want to give thanks to our Ministry, I thought the work would be difficult, as I was still hesitant for their response. To the notable CEO and the Management, thank you for your dedicated work in assisting the various divisions to boost and improve the services of their Ministries. I also want to thank the Samoa Medical Association for their support. I applaud your hard work and services. Once again, I would like to reiterate, as the House is listening and so as the support of Samoa, thank you for the letter you have given to show support for the Government, as well as your work in the Ministry, because not too long, some ideas was published. May the Almighty God who owns the strength and wisdom bless you in conducting your duties and labours, to help provide relief from the physical ailments and suffering that our country continues to face from time to time in life.

We would also like to thank one of the key stakeholders especially the largest staff of the Health Department, the raising of nurses in some statements. Good work, thank you for your services. This is an important area as expressed by some members and most often heard in some complaints, a village is not always dark. Thank you to this group for leading the work of the Ministry which is vital, they are the first ones to see the patients and their families during the check-up at any hospital, may you always be cheerful, with your kind and loving arms to sooth the pains of the sick as well as the families who come anxiously. Well done to the service. The entire staff of drivers *even the janitors, it is critical to offer support to every individual.*

I wish to voice the strong support of the Associate Minister, with the time allocation, thank you your honour for the support on your collaborative effort.

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I want to express the strong support of the Associate Minister, with the time allocation, thank you your honour for the support on our collaborative work.

Mr Speaker, I resume to thank all the honourable members who have supported their statements, as well as the speeches that have voiced the needs of their constituencies. With due respect, especially with your constituencies tuning in, all your requests have been noted, not only myself but the Associate Minister, as well as the Chief Executive Officer and the Administration team who are present in the House. However, I wish to clarify in a statement like this, most of the issues raised, they are already in our reports through our visits during the first month of the Minister. We have been to hospitals in every district in the country including the sub-centres in Upolu as well as our main island of Salafai, and all the areas of the hospital at Tuasivi, especially our main hospital at Motootua.

Mr Speaker, these are just a few of the issues raised by the members, but I would like to point out that there are a number of other issues that are more important and urgently needed at this time, that requires the implementation of various services for the treatment of patients. For example, many modern devices and equipments are required to perform the work of male and female doctors and nurses; the improvement of many other rooms used by the doctors to see patients, there is also a great demand of supply for other hospitals in the rural areas and Savaii. Special refrigerators is needed for the proper storage of medicine and pills; furthermore, air conditioners are required in rooms where the doctor awaits for the arrival of patients. Our hospitals in the rural areas and in Savaii need an abundance of supplies.

Many hospitals are in need of more beds, as they are still using old beds and so, additional amount is needed, some hospitals have only 4 or 6 beds, but these are urgently needed for our people who arrive at the hospital and are sick.

In addition, there are areas of the hospital where patients wait to see the doctor, the waiting area, it requires chairs and pavilions. Perhaps this is noticeable for hospitals in the rural areas, immediate help is now progressing towards a few funds left in the budget this year.

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There is a hospital at Tuasivi, as Savaii needs it.... Just as mentioned in a previous statement, things that are good for Upolu, please it is also good for us in Savaii.

Well, a CT scan for the Tuasivi hospital may also reduce travel to and from Apia. The Tongan doctor in Savaii or Sione by name said, "Minister, they came during the days of Noah". What is the name of the machine, because I am not a doctor so I have to quickly learn the names of the devices and medical terms, also the ultra sound is in need of immediate improvement, a modern device, much is needed, the mirror and so on.

Our main hospital at Motootua, there is a lot of areas required to be improved for better service. I would like to thank the Minister of Finance and the Minister for Revenue. I persuaded the respectable members for an opportunity so they can come and we can examine and review the things needed for our hospital at Motootua. Thank you. In particular, the facility where the food is produced and prepared for the patients, the facility where the fabric is cleaned and sanitized and all that is needed for the patients, especially the facility where the treatment is provided, surgery and all similar conditions. I thank you honourable members. Although you have many duties and responsibilities, but you still responded to my request. In addition, when it comes time to submit applications to the Ministries while you two are witnessing, in particular you both took photos of the various requirements, thank you so much for your support.

Mr Speaker, I will give a brief statement that may summarise all that has been mentioned, as those who have already spoken are listening, because most of what they already said is for sub-centres to be rebuilt, and ambulances to be in place for all outpatient clinics. All these issues are very important. If there was funding, then why not use it? Why leave it? However, we are also keeping track of all priorities in the meantime. For your information, the Ministry of Health is in the process of restructuring, especially now that its [strategic plans is nearing completion](#). [This plan outlines the objectives by the Ministry to work with our partners going forward.](#)

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The overall goal is to strengthen the co-operation of all people, especially our country, to strengthen the work of Primary Health Care for the provision of public health in the community, especially in hospitals and district services in the rural areas. To maintain a high standard of service and ensure safe health services in any hospital. Perhaps there were past events that occurred at the hospital in your constituency, the Lord sees it all.

Events are also useful for the future, as well as the efficiency and improvement of the services of the Ministry. This plan is in line with the Health Act 2019, which came into effect in February of this year. Some of the important activities and programs planned for the future will be counter the many issues raised by the members throughout the past week. Plans are in place to emphasize the extension of our BEN Samoan program, to communities in Samoa, in order to respond to the problems of diseases affecting organs, Non Communicable Diseases, also known as the disease of death as added by the Hon Minister of Finance.

This works calls for the cooperation of our country in various areas and where it is necessary, especially for village representatives and the revival of Women Groups (Komiti Tumama) in order to sustain this program by the community, so that this program is maintained for our health in collaboration with this Ministry.

The emphasis is again on the primary health care services, through the efficient allocation of resources in rural hospitals, through the provision of essential services, multidisciplinary teams such as mid-wives, nurses for public health, nutritionists, environmental and hygiene inspectors, and other health services to be present twenty-four hours seven days a week. This is in line with the restructuring plan by the Ministry, to ensure that resources and funds are properly allocated to district hospitals, such as ambulances, as previously stated by the other members. We must ensure that there is an adequate supply of medications for treatment and all necessary services. There is a lot of modern technology needed for the work of male and female doctors, as well as tools.

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It is also important to note that the Ministry works closely with the community sanitation committees to assist in the cleanliness and maintenance of the hospital environment and the safety of staff and patients. There are plans to expand this service as soon as possible, and continue for the near future.

Taking the primary health care to the rural villages is first priority by reviving the women groups, it is a good way to improving better health care in Samoa. When growing up I have noticed a car of five to six qualified nurses heading over to measure baby's weights and immunizations. During the healthcare work in the rural areas, the measuring of blood pressure and blood sugar including the nurses' recommendations, were all conducted on the spot. I also trust there will be less burden on the health's budget to achieve the requests submitted for your constituencies. In the meantime, majority are still sitting around without getting themselves checked by a doctor in due time and when we have the results for a boy, girl, old woman and old man the sugar scale numbers would almost explode. If it is high blood pressure, give people time to be aware of their sickness instead of having an emergency case rushed to the hospital resulting in the patient need to seek medical treatment overseas when they should have seen the doctor earlier.

What I see now, I trust this may be another budget of the health that is, there are millions and millions of money spent on medical treatment for our sick people overseas. Because they cannot be treated here due to the fact that the illness is getting too advanced and if necessary to apply appropriate treatment locally then do so right away without having to worry about seeking medical remedy abroad and thus save our funds.

I also wish to notify that there is a continuous partnership with the private practitioners in assistance to serving our rural health district clinics. The same with our Tuasivi health service due to shortage of staff.

This undertaking is to ensure that a doctor is on duty in the rural health district area. In addition, to raise time length as mentioned by other members when waiting for a doctor. Perhaps there is change now when we take a visit, but do lend us your patience.

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The Chief Executive Officer has already given advice regarding the partnership process made by the Hon Minister of Finance from the World Bank, World Health Organisation, NZ Government and the Australian Government in merging this funding assistance to allow the improvement of the district health services in the rural areas. God willing that we gain these funds fast so that we can achieve this purpose very soon.

Endure patience as you can see the Minister is new in this office for less than two months, you have so many views, give me a chance. There are several other areas that the Minister has not yet made any investigations on nor findings. As wonderful as it sounds regarding some of your talks, Rome was not built in one day, I would say, I refuse to make this statement, leave it to me. Rather yet it is best to say, leave me your pleas until the end of this Parliament Sitting, *sei fono le pa'a ma ona vae*, given the variety of things like new technology to improve the services, based on the observations from our inspections that was conducted in Savaii, Upolu, Tuasivi and the main hospital in Motootua.

In that regard, should there be a dire need for these things priority must be set first. Let us distribute the pie and see, big or small we shall keep in touch. Another member shared that the Minister should set up an office in Motootua, do not worry I am very fit to move around, I am more than able to run around whenever necessary to fulfill your requests. Another member put forth the need for a dialysis machine in the rural health clinic.

The head of the kidney foundation advised me that these machines are very pricey and a huge health facility is required to be set up for these machines even if it is just one, a power generator, spare watertanks, water purifier, air conditioning room to operate this service and a special storage area that will be useful for this treatment. Special engineers is also a requirement especially for these dialysis machines particularly specialized expert staff who had undertaken specialized trainings.

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The advice I received from the head of the Ministry of Health is that this service is very costly and for the time being, the State finds it suitable to implement this service in one specific area. One for Upolu and one for Savaii. Perhaps it is more fitting if it is five to ten patients but if it is only one, we members must give assistance for this one patient rather than spending millions on these things, which had me advised, leave it to me, this is how we share our views.

Mr Speaker lest I miss anything else, that is the explanation regarding the raising concerns of members particularly for the sake of Samoa tuning in, lend me your patience. We must prioritise projects that needs first priority. One of the members still has not received a final decision regarding a new hospital in Vaipouli, which we also visited unfortunately, the location is quite distant, but we shall talk about this matter some time in the future. Thank you my district and the Ministry of Health for all your support and collaborating services for our people.

Thank you for the chance, wishing you well in managing our Sitting honorable Speaker, the dignity of the House, and Samoa listening in.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you, your part is not easy to play. I announce that the Hon Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture will not be absent due to two Meetings he will be attending internationally. The Prime Minister will respond on his behalf regarding to any other matter related to this Ministry even if the Hon Minister has already given his response.

Respectfully, I call upon the Hon Minister of Works, I beg your pardon Hon Minister, and we have reached our recess hour.

Before Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly is put aside, the Hon Minister of Education, Sports and Culture has made known that this is the chance for our photo taking, pardon the dignity of the Parliament and Samoa. The photos of this Parliament will be taken in the backside of this house for us to obtain our Identification Cards **in order to enter the Pacific Games sites. This is our only chance, if you do not attain an ID, you will not be permitted to enter even if you are a Parliament member. This is the notice with due respect.** Signed by Loau, the Minister of Education, Sports and Culture.

I announce that proceedings of the Legislative Assembly suspended for our normal recess, thank you.

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Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly set aside for normal recess at 10:42am and resumed at 11:35am.

MR SPEAKER: I announce that Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly resumed, I trust you have regained new strength to resume our works.

During break the Hon Minister of Health was concluding his speech, with respect I call the Hon Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure.

Susuga Hon PAPALIITELE NIKO LEE HANG (Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure): I wish to note a word of thanks to the honorable Speaker, respectfully I wish to respond to the matters raised by the distinguished members.

Mr Speaker, before I respond to the statements of the members, I firstly wish to greet the dignity of the House, the presence of the honorable Speaker, Deputy Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers and Associate Ministers and this Side, I wish to make known the presence of the Chairpersons of Parliamentary Committees especially the respectable members of Parliament.

The presence of the Clerk of the House and staff, Heads of Ministries and Public Enterprises. I also greet Samoa in all your honorific salutations, your Highness O Le Ao o le Malo and your good lady, the Member of the Council of Deputy and your good lady, Chief Justice and the Ministry of Justice, the Church Ministers for various church demoninations who are pleading for blessings upon Samoa and her people especially blessings upon its Parliament.

I wish to greet the dignity of my constituency, the Urban East, well done to your support and prayers in all your honorific salutations from spiritual, custom and the State..

Mr Speaker, I wish to note a word of thanks to the Hon Minister of Finance and the Chief Executive Officer and staff for the Supplementary Budget No.2 2018/2019 and the Main Budget 2019/2020, well done.

I also appreciate the efforts of the Chairperson and members of the Finance Committee and your report especially your critical recommendations submitted in your report.

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Mr Speaker, most of the statements pleaded for access roads, streetlights, seawall areas, water, and a wharf in Manono. In regards to this wharf, we visited its extension some time in the previous year in Manono-tai. And we noticed a big concern with this wharf in Manono-uta because it was not secure for anyone especially our visitors or tourists. This port is still being used however it is not secure anymore, henceforth we have recorded them and will conduct a visit once we finish our Sitting to verify your requests.

In regards to the saying leave it to us that was changed by the Hon Minister of Health to leave it with us, well my wording to it, bear with us accordingly, as we have a lot on our list and we do not have sufficient funds to execute all the major projects of the State. So bear with us in accordance to the funding given in our Budget. Ia o le faaupuga foi lea o le taatia mai lea na suia e le Minisita mo le Soifua Maloloina, e palalau mai, a o lau la faaupuga, ia lafolafu faatatau mai, fuafua mai, ia leaga e tele galuega, a e le o lava ia tatou seleni e faatinoaina ai ia tatou galuega tetele a le Malo. Ia lafolafu mai la ma fuafua mai i le tatou seleni lea na faailoa atu i le Tala o le Tupe.

Cabinet has already passed the change for our public roads stated by the member which is beyond maintenance or irreparable it is beyond repair. LTA has already been advised to find all the conditions for our public roads and reconstruct areas that are beyond maintenance. This change will save public funds whilst reconstruction of public roads will last long and will also save a lot of public money from this maintenance works to ensure the enhancement of our public roads. Looking at the crossroad from Aleisa to Leulumoega that area has finished reconstruction, this is an example of improved change for our public roads.

The Hon Minister of Tourism, Sala Fata Pinati strongly supported this change as Sala is the tentative representative for Aleisa district in the upcoming elections in 2021. This is not campaigning but implemented work in Aleisa village.

The merging of the NUS and SSC sailing schools was also raised. An assignment by a Task Force Committee appointed by the Cabinet for a Consular from the World Maritime University with a report being submitted by the Consular together with recommendations for the Task Force Committee to look at will be reported back to the Cabinet.

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SSC is proposing another ferry like the Lady Samoa III to further improve the ferry services to and fro Mulifanua and Salelologa in preparations for the General Elections 2021.

Mr Speaker, I am so happy for this chance to inform the entire Parliament about the grant of \$USD 23 million from the Government of Japan to build a new ship in replacement of the Lady Naomi that is over 20 years old and thus a very appropriate change today as the Lady Naomi has brought forth a lot of issues causing delay in its schedule to American Samoa.

The Asau wharf was also raised, and the Samoa Ports Authority has conducted surveys in improving the channel for entry point for vessels due to a blockage caused by solid coral rocks. Mr Speaker, hopefully after this survey, we will find a new machine to demolish this rock that is blocking the channel. Because it was not the barrel nor the chain as addressed by the respectable member.

Mr Speaker, others further raised the need for change on some of the roles for LTA and the Ministry of Police. The Hon Prime Minister has already clarified that issue. Another point is the tabling of an Amendment to the Principal Act for the LTA and the Ministry of Police involving these changes made by the notable member and I trust this matter need not be raised again.

Mr Speaker other ongoing projects for your information is the Vaisigano Bridge funded through a \$43 million grant from the Government of Japan through JICA. This project will be completed in July 2020 and the motor road raised by the member starts from the front area of John Williams Building in Tamaligi.

Another major ongoing project is the Bailey Bridge in Loto Samasoni funded by Australia at a cost of \$AUD858,000 which should be completed by mid July.

The Maliolio bridge was funded by the World Bank and Australia under a Programme called IRRAP at a total cost of \$8.6million and should be completed in December this year.

The West Coast Road to the airport has Phase 1 currently undertaken starting from Saina to Malua funded by the World Bank at a total cost of \$38.5million and this project is hoping to complete in August 2020. Phase 2 of this road from Malua to Faleolo airport will begin consultations in December 2019.

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Mr Speaker, this is the response, and one more thing I forgot, the preparations of our ongoing roads by LTA for the Pacific games, perhaps you have looked at it and all these ongoing road constructions towards the games sites will all be improved.

Your honor, this is the response to this raising matter, and that concludes by presentation.

Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi (Faleata West): Mr Speaker....

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the Minister, the member of Faleata West is up, you may proceed.

Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi: Thanks, just this short comment, hearing the Hon Minister's talk in the morning, our works rely on the number of people who will be using this and the size of population in this part of the country.

Your honour, you are moving on, the road in Falelauniu, tell me directly because we have had several comments on it for the hundredth time, and because majority of the people settling here are very frustrated with this concern, please.

Another thing is the power we talked about, this is happening far too often which is not normal, give us a statement as we used to have feeders when it was believed that only one generator was used to feed power, and it was nice in those days whereby when power cut occurred in one sub-village, the electricity in other parts was still supplied. There was a power generator for the hospital and one for the township area, however it seems that when there is a power cut here, it affects Samoa entirely. This was never a norm. With all due respect. Thank you.

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the Minister I recognize the next interjection before you go ahead and cover all concerns. I allow the member for Safata West.

Afioga Leaana Ronnie Posini (Safata West): Thank you honorable Speaker and Hon Minister. Just this one matter I mentioned in my statement on school water bills. Commercial water bills and private water bills.

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By observation, the bill used by schools is the one categorised under commercial businesses please. By request, Hon Minister why not categorise it under individual household category. With due respect.

Susuga Hon PAPALIITELE NIKO LEE HANG: Well done to the member who intervened, the matter raised by Lealailepule, the road to Falelauniu is now under the enhanced roads program. This other road does not need repair nor maintenance, it should be reconstructed. I second the Hon Minister's statement that the roads to schools should be prioritised. In regards to the poor roads raised by the member in the village, that is correct. Bear patience and do not lay it before me otherwise, that will not be achieved. Well done on that raising matter.

With regards to frequent power cuts from EPC, you should have investigated the reasons as we had a recent power outage in our village of Vailima. EPC responded that there are some fixed works over in Alaoa Tanugamanono which is now done. For security reasons, that feeder going up to Vailima was turned off for the resumption of fix works. It is now improved.

The matter on water, the member's request is being noted. The essence of this thought in my belief, there should be a separate charge for school water bills. With your recommendations, we will talk and decide with the SWA on what change to undertake as the private is now under the same category as the schools. Commercial is now separated as they have more funds, whilst schools is covered in accordance to your statement, but we shall decide on this matter.

Perhaps these is all the raising matters from members, may God bless your honor...

Afioga Sulamanaia Fetai'ai Tauiliili Tuivasa (Vaimauga East): Mr Speakr, since you are coming to a conclusion, can I get a chance to remind something small.

MR SPEAKER: Did this member state any matter related to the Minister or not?

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Susuga Hon PAPALIITELE NIKO LEE HANG: Yes, I forgot but I think he mentioned his roads.

MR SPEAKER: Since there is....I allow the member.

Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauiliili Tuivasa: Our request is already there since I entered Parliament until today and nothing has been done. In regards to seawall please, Hon Minister of Environment or the Prime Minister, have a look at the delicacy of the village of Laulii considering our submitted request as this village does not have coral reef as it is made up of a whole channel and tidal waves would almost reach the homes. The spirit is whether to firstly prioritize the roads of my village given security although they can be risky at night given the high tidal waves that could endanger the lives of my constituency.

This is the basis for this seawall in Laulii, have a look at it your honor as it has taken too long since our request was submitted on this matter and the existing seawall area is greatly ruined. With respect Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: I recognise the Hon Minister, I think the member for Vaimauga East is correct.

Susuga Hon PAPALIITELE NIKO LEE HANG: Mr Speaker, the member for MNRE is also stating it. I therefore do not understand where exactly you have taken your request. My insight of seawall areas affecting the main roads, this is under the jurisdiction of the LTA. But the seawall covering the inner settlements from rivers pardon me is the responsibility of the MNRE, but leave it with us, the LTA will have a look into that, if the LTA finds that it is not their duty, they can refer it to the MNRE. As soon as I took over the Ministry of Works, I have never seen your request, you only **requested your roads. If mistaken, the Ministry will look into it again.**

I have stated in my general response, all seawall areas will be included in the visit of the LTA and perhaps your long awaited request will somehow be found along the way. The Ministry will look into this matter.

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Mr Speaker, may the Lord bless you abundantly in health and may you live a long lasting life for the sake of managing the Sitting of Parliament. May God bless the Hon Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and may you find strength to fulfill your duties engaged by the both of you in leading the Government of the day. May God bless the Associate Ministers and the dignity of Parliament. To the Ministries and Public Enterprises and the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, may you find blessings from God in the works and obligations that you are engaged in.

The same with the support of the Urban East, may God bless the paramount chiefs and orators of our village.

Just this one matter your honor, perhaps you have witnessed the beautification of our roadpath areas indicated with plants and flags. There are many villages that have started this doing in preparation for us being hosts of the Pacific games the same with us on higher grounds. If you visit the Cross Island Road, you will observe the beauty of that area. My advise to all Parliament members, if you have the same doing in your villages, please do it nicely, and punish the youth who endeavors to ruin it. That is the advise to Parliament if you have beautified your villages. Have a blessed Sitting.

MR SPEAKER: Well done thank you Hon Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure.

We have now come to the Hon Minister of Tourism.

Afioga Hon SALA FATA LISATI PINATI (Minister of Tourism): I firstly extend great thanks to the honorable Speaker, Hon Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Cabinet and the chosen members of the country as well as the Associate Ministers.

I greet the Government Heads, and Samoa tuning in to our discussions for the welfare of Samoa this morning. The main objective of our discussion this morning, I wish to state the saying when we have our swearing in, I speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. So help me God. That is the declaration from me pardon the dignity of the House.

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Many of the speeches as stated by the recent representative, it is made whole during this statement given the custom that this is intended by the Government in beautifying and promoting of Samoa to the world. I therefore think that we should not speak on this again, it is there with you as the Pacific games is soon to start. The Leader also spoke about signing of the African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) – Samoa Pathway to Samoa which comprise of thousand plus participants that will historically record Samoa in the next one hundred years. On that note, we must praise God for His wise authority upon us and for having a Leader who is doing good works for Samoa today. This is a huge pride for me and in this regard, I extend you great appreciation. Let us give God praise for guiding us until this day, this is everyone's collective responsibility and contribution, by working together. For whatever faults we have whether it be a member or the Cabinet, if you find anything useful, that is life, we are one family, although we were chosen from different villages, it all comes down to one objective, our service for the wellbeing of Samoa. And for that, I convey the spirit of appreciation.

There were not many queries directed to this Ministry, the response is very short perhaps it will only take five minutes. The economy of Samoa is well aware. In truth the emphasis of the State is directed here. It is reflected in the total number of visitors to Samoa last year, a total of 172,496. The Oceania alone comprising of American Samoa, Fiji, Cook Islands and other Pacific nations that covers New Zealand and Australia, the total for their....is 141,000 participants who came. Europe had a total of 7,125. America had a total of 14,419 people, Asia had 7,836 and in summary, we had a total of 172,496 visitors in Samoa. One member queried the categorisation for this number of visitors. The holiday visitors had a total of 49,000. Those who came for business and conferences was 7,677. Our normal partners including our visiting families and relatives is 66,849. For sports related activities, 1,084. Others who came here for transit were 4,848 in the previous year. And that is the total revenue earnings we have in our records here.

In the year 2018, a total of \$493,800,000 revenue earnings came from tourism. In 2017, it was \$425,800,000. Therefore, these two years had a total of \$68 million additional earnings.

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Having said that, I convey sincere thanks to our foreign partners, relatives and friends as well as visitors including our families. It is no doubt that we have several family matters like funerals, weddings and reasons alike for our people visiting home.

The lay out plans of the State is not all that the matters given priority. Some hotels were included in the speeches of members from... saying it is an issue, the thought has been made, we have discussed this matter. There is still chance for discussion so that we are able to meet the needs of both sides. The essence is to provide the necessary assistance and execute what is necessary. The promotion of Samoa also has various broadcasting studios used nowadays. The Minister of Communications has also opened up on websites for hotellers for people to visit because the criticality here is that the success of hotels depends on their websites. Such promotions include simple things like the type of food available, room rates and whether they accept Samoan, Chinese or American currency. Because most of the hotels now use the American money.

I am not sure why I do not have a hotel. This business of hotel development, I thank those who are operating them; it is very challenging for someone who has a big heart, because it is not something simple. The valuation or fluctuation of money for this tourism development depends on the expenditures. In terms of visitors and their choice, it is up to them to choose which hotel they want to go to. Whether it is budget accommodation or superior for the rich or even the middle category accommodation. It all depends on the visitor's choice. As stated by one of the members, all that counts is a smile. Because when you go to a Samoan family and get the scowling greeting face, we have the Samoan saying, are they being stingy. Alternatively, either the person wants to be popular and does not want to treat the workers properly.

Raising the standard for the tourism industry, well we do have trainings. There are three trainings conducted in Savaii and one of them is customer service. These practices are necessary to take; two being in Upolu. The saying that goes, what is good for Upolu should also be good for Savaii. It is very true; this is why the State is aiming to resume our flights to Asau and Maota. There are those that still need this service.

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The aim is to gain further improvement for this part of the service for our visitors traveling over, based on the availability of funding, as financial statement is vital.

I wish to further acknowledge New Zealand and Australia, has there been any significant grant from New Zealand, you have noticed the status of our waterfront project, it is not long to go before this wonderful project is complete. Although the planting of gardens is underway, this area must have better gardens. Let us hope that these gardens will grow well to better beautify our township area. The expression of our acknowledgement to New Zealand has been conveyed. The Tosua sketch will be enhanced.

The Sopoaga falls in Lotofaga, Lanutoo and Afuaau. The Lava field in Saleaula and Aopo in the footpath area in Umamoa.

Mr Speaker, you spoke of the Swimming with the turtles, I wish to speak on that, I wish to swim with the turtles, if whatever happens, if it is permitted to swim in bikinis and ride on the turtles and...all this. Whereas for maintenance and things like this, I will lay it before your honour.

I do not wish to state before the House this issue. I refuse to make it known as Samoa is listening, there is an office that I can talk to about it, all that you speak of will be implemented there.

Mr Speaker, since you own a lot of buses, if the ship arrives. I bear witness that the buses of the honorable Speaker should be used in replacement of other buses. That is all from me. May God bless this House and Samoa.

Tofa Nafaitoa Talaimanu Ketu (Gagaemauga No.3): Mr Speaker

...

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the Hon Minister I allow the honorable Speaker.

Tofa Nafaitoa Talaimanu Ketu: I do not intend to interrupt the wonderful speech of the Hon Minister of Tourism. I have thought that you mentioning the site in Satoalepai that is part of my district; thank you for your intention towards the beautification of this attraction site.

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The intention made earlier is to improve the road towards this attraction site. That is the sole purpose of raising this concern with you. I thank your honour that this road will be upgraded, with respect.

MR SPEAKER: I call the Minister.

Afioga Hon SALA FATA LISATI PINATI: Thank you is it not good to talk whilst your brother is sitting on the other side. I still recall our crew from the Ministry of Police in the past. This was one of the good men beside me. Why are you concerned your honour? I am here. Listen, I am speaking the truth, do not worry about anything. I conclude your honour, soifua.

Afioga Fuimaono Teo Samuelu Teo (Falealili East): Mr Speaker, please as this matter is important, just to clarify to the Hon Minister, it is finished....

MR SPEAKER: Which Minister do you wish to talk to, when you are finished with...

Afioga Fuimaono Teo Samuelu Teo: Because I always visit Savaii and this attraction site, and the request of the Minister, states that he wants to swim and ride on the turtles. This is a request, I forbid this doing, have pity on these animals lest they are affected. Nobody should ride on the turtles. With due respect.

MR SPEAKER: Well it is up to you whether to respond here or outside during our tea break.

Afioga Hon SALA FATA LISATI PINATI: My brother Fuimaono is my brother chief. He makes luau and the Prime Minister has not tasted the luau that is mixed with lemon, dove and steamed chicken. Good grief. The saying by one of the men in our village, "Oka oka Asita."

No I did not say I want to ride on the turtles, I said, "I swim with the turtles."

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MR SPEAKER: Very well. The Ministerial statement of the Minister and the response has also been made by the fathers of Parliament on those concerns. Well done Sala.

We now come to the Minister of Women, Community and Social Development.

Afioga Hon TUITAMA TALALELEI TUITAMA (Minister of Women, Community and Social Development): I acknowledge Mr Speaker, respects of the Hon Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, Cabinet and Associate Ministers.

I also welcome the members on the opposite side of Chamber and the Legislative Assembly office on the services provided towards Parliament, the Heads of Government Ministries and Public Enterprises who are the moderators of Government

Lest I forget the support of the Le Ao o le Malo and Samoa in all its respects. Lest I also forget the support of my constituency of Aana Alofi No.1 East, I also thank our spiritual leaders around Samoa for their prayers and blessings upon the Laws implemented for the development of Samoa.

Mr Speaker there are only three members that queried this Ministry, I have already responded to some of these matters except for the other two whom I have given responses to, it is a rather significant issue. Therefore we have agreed to scheduled a meeting with them to consult together with the Ministry at an appropriate time.

I move with respect Mr Speaker to take this opportunity to elaborate on the work undertaken by this Ministry that is engaged with a lot of work, the Ministry is governed by four Acts. First is the Ministry of Women Affairs Act 1990. This Act was amended in 1998 to reinforce its status in the Womens Advisory Council. It was amended again in 2009 for the inclusion of women representatives in villages. Mr Speaker since the implementation of this amendment in 2009, there are now 200 Women Representatives.

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Secondly, the Family Safety Act 2013, this Act provides greater protection upon families that are breaching abuse and violence in the homes. For clarification the number of households recorded within the country is about 28,880. All families are covered in this Act regarding various types of violence including the different penalties imposed from such offenses. There are 22,000 households in Upolu and 6,000 from Savaii.

The third Act is the Village Fono Act 1990 amended in 2017, provisions of this Act state policies and resolutions for each village together with the authority to exercise penalties in accordance with the Act. There are 185 traditional villages in Samoa, whilst the total number of villages including non traditional villages is 337 villages. All these villages are provisioned under this Act implemented by the Ministry.

Fourth the Internal Affairs Act 1995 which was amended in 2010, that amended the pulenuu title to Sui o le Nuu, and omit Pulenuu together with the Sui o le Malo. For the clarification of the House, there are now 211 Sui o le Nuu and 42 Sui o le Malo carrying out the work.

It is carefully noted by the Ministry that majority of concerns voiced were upon the need to improve the work carried out by the Sui o le Nuu and the Sui o le Malo or Village and Government Representatives in the rural areas. Therefore the Ministry will be carrying out consultations reference to the Act, the Pulenuu has 16 duties to fulfill within each village, majority of the complaints made to the Ministry involve these duties. There are also matters raised by members regarding the Pulenuu. The Ministry will meet to discuss whether setting up workshops will be best to inform the Pulenuu of their duties in the village. Also to compile a pamphlet stating the duties and responsibilities so that these representatives will understand their work according to the Act.

Lastly, the Samoa Antiquities Ordinance which regulates our Samoan fine mats. This Regulation was established in 2013 based on the Samoa Antiquities Ordinance 1954. This Act states the width of the ie samoa which is 12 inches long, 9 inches wide with the use of strip one, strip two and strip three.

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This means strip one is about 1 millimeter, strip two is 2 millimeter and strip three is 3 millimeters. Due to the small size of these strips it is difficult to make it with a normal knife therefore needles are used to make strip one and two. Meanwhile, a display of more than 2,129 strips have been made for strip one and strip two. As known this is an annual event for our ie samoa to be displayed, and so far, the Ministry has recorded 1994 strip one and 225 strip two, in total there are now 2,129 strip one and strip two in the country. Although we rarely see one strip for *faalavelaves* nowadays, except huge fine mats that are being promoted. Perhaps when you finish 5,000 ie Samoa, there is belief that we will see more of these in our faalavelaves today.

As for the ie Samoa, it is no different with what I heard with the rugby fundraising, there are complaints about the funds allocated to the women to promote the weaving of the ie Samoa. For clarification, there is a lot of earnings from the ie Samoa and this is no different with the money spent on rugby trainings for players who are playing abroad to send money here. As heard from the Hon Minister on my right, money spent is money earned. Such is the significance of this initiative we aim to promote for our ie Samoa.

Mr Speaker these are a few matters I wanted to discuss with the opportunity given since there were not many queries made towards this Ministry.

MR SPEAKER: I call the Prime Minister.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker there is a traditional healer's house at the back of the Government building under the watch of the Hon Minister of Tourism.

There is a village called the STA Village, it is a model for visitors in the rural area and this is also where the tatau work is being done. So the traditional healers are based here and normally I would pay a visit to the old women who specialise in various forms of traditional massages from strain, itchy, seizure and other types of diseases.

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The testimony I hear is that our people are mainly affected from diseases like strain (gaugau) due to carrying heavy fine mats that are lifted by a picker for picking breadfruits. If the hospital fails, these traditional healers are able to provide help towards the untreated patients.

I am therefore asking the Hon Minister, what is the Ministry's undertaking in avoiding the young men from carrying the heavy fine mats. Why not use the strip one ie in consideration of the efforts of the women that is also highly recognized for even the needles are being used and I am not sure if these needles are applicable for sewing or for injecting blood. I ask for an explanation of when the Samoan ie of 5,000 or 10,000 can be displayed as these mats are being kept under the bed and others are being taken to Tonga and other countries. Other mats are being sold to tourists visiting our country who enjoy our local handicrafts. Can I get clarification on this matter?

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the Minister, I remind that we are in the same constituency, you are aware that during your recent faalavelave, only the Church Ministers are being presented with one strip and two strip mats. It is being used at our district in the rural area.

I call the Hon Minister.

Afioga Hon TUITAMA TALALELEI TUITAMA: Your honour, the message I am after, do not weave this type of big fine mats as they are easily torn apart, we should encourage the weaving of the real Samoan ie to increase the numbers to avoid people from looking at these huge mats. Because with the increasing number of these fine mats, they will eventually become cheap. Today, it is difficult to find the one strip mats at a cost of no less than \$5,000. It takes 6 months per year to weave the one strip mat, and according to the statements of some of the members, the recent fine mat exhibition, there was one from Upolu in the district of Aana that was woven for 11 years for the one strip, and 15 years in Salafai, the youth are beginning to learn about the weaving of this ie Samoa.

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I recommend villages and constituencies to encourage our people to carry out this responsibility, not only will it enrich our culture, it will also boost our economy especially in providing more income to fund family matters.

Mr Speaker I extend gratitude to the Sui o Nuu and Sui o Malo in the rural areas for accepting our invitation in our last meeting. We have noted the beautification of villages from the airport to Apia, the same with the rural areas and Salafai, thank you for the commitment and your hospitality. As consulted, there come a time when we will be able to meet and give our acknowledgements in regards to your support for the Government and the beautification of our village communities.

In addition, let focus be not on the beautification alone, we should concentrate on our culture and respect upon our visitors when they visit our shores, as shared in our meeting, we rarely get this opportunity to host a huge amount of people from the ruralside areas. Most of our Visitors are tourists who are rich from the cities and hold high positions and do not communicate with the general public. Whereas for those who will be coming, they live in the village areas and they will have the chance to experience and spread the message across, so, this will be a grand opportunity for us to promote our culture and tradition to our Visitors.

This is the reminder with respect. As the saying goes, *e le aoaia e Laupua Tamafaiga*. I am grateful for the opportunity, I pray for success upon our hosting.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker since this is the duty of the Minister he is now speaking of weaving the ie Samoa for 11 years. There are also old village men who does this weaving. Is it possible to maybe have a separate weaving program for men. Let us not mix the men and women in one place. *Otherwise, we will find one man weaving with the wife of another man together.* I think we should have a weaving house for men only. It will be useful especially for men who sit in small fales on the roadside area and disturb the tourists making Hon Sala Fata Pinati unhappy.

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It would be appropriate to have the men's own weaving house although this does not apply to all villages. Have you thought of this Hon Minister?

Afioga Hon TUITAMA TALALELEI TUITAMA: Hon Leader of Government, the plans of the Ministry are underway seeing that the women are progressing to weaving the fine mats whilst men are doing the gossiping. Most of the disseminating information is from the men.

For that, the Ministry has decided that it is time for men to have a weaving house. There will be special prizes for those men who will be good at weaving, although the main idea is to create a happy family, the woman weaves from one side whilst the man is weaving from the other side and in the end, they can finish the job by meeting in the center. This is the notice with great respect, bless our Proceedings.

MR SPEAKER: Very well thank you, I trust this is up to the person. I now call upon the Hon Minister of Commerce, Industry and Labour.

Afioga Hon LAUTAFI FIO SELAFI PURCELL (Minister of Commerce, Industry and Labour): Thank you Mr Speaker, I pleaded if we have reached our recess time? Nonetheless I will abide by your decision whether Satupaitea will speak part of his speech today or start properly when... I accept whatever you say.

MR SPEAKER: Since we have a few more minutes left, it is now quarter to 1, we can adjourn at 5 to 1 this afternoon.

Afioga Hon LAUTAFI FIO SELAFI PURCELL: Thank you Mr Speaker I am certain I will finish in 5 minutes, thank you very much. The Hon Minister is whispering to me that the ie Samoa is only presented to the Church Minister by the Minister who is my dual representative in my constituency and does not remember him. Well if you have another faalavelave, remember your fellow Minister.

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Mr Speaker first I want to convey greetings to the dignity of the House, the Hon Prime Minister, Cabinet, Chairpersons of Parliamentary Committees, members of Parliament. Also to this side of the Chamber, Associate Ministers, and the respects of those who are the hands and feet of the Government, Chief Executive of Ministries and Public Enterprises, the Office of the Legislative Assembly and everyone gathered today. I acknowledge all of Samoa and the support from the highest mountain to the lowest, also the various churches around the country. I greet with respect my constituency, *Satupaitea the dignity of Vaiti ma le Vaimalae, Susu o le Aiga Sa Moeleoi, Afifio o Tapaau, tainane le Mamalu ia te Oe le Alataua, afifio foi o faletua ma tausii, aemaise ia i latou o tauasuina le ipuvai o le ola i totonu o le tatou itumalo*. Thank you for your support and prayers.

I also want to acknowledge all Samoans listening in from overseas and the advancement of technology today which is something new. Some of my friends are communicating from overseas are saying that wherever they are in the world they are listening to our Proceedings.

I am grateful because even though they reside overseas they are still interested in what is happening and what we are deliberating in our Proceedings, *e lele le toloa, ae maau lava i le vai*. I greet everyone.

Mr Speaker there are a few matters mentioned regarding this Ministry. I believe some of the matters raised would have been understood if the Ministry had thoroughly discussed some of the issues for people to grasp the meaning. Nevertheless since it is not mentioned within the House I will try my best to respond. If the clarification made is not understood and further information is needed then my office is always open for further consultations.

All the Ministries under my designation have been instructed if a member needs to speak with the Chief Executive they should make time. Because these are the leaders of the Government, everyone should take note of this now. If a CEO is not available or is in a meeting then come and talk to me, you will swiftly gain your chance to all the Ministries. The Ministries under my supervision are aware of what is significant and what is prioritized.

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Mr Speaker I will give a general clarification and summary of all the matters raised. Some of the members mentioned the matter of minimum wage saying that it should be increased. This is an issue the Government has been considering for a long time and this matter was mentioned before. The Government is reviewing the current minimum wage of \$2.30. The coming month of July will begin a review for our minimum wage by a foreign consultant. This issue is always raised pardon me, for consideration to gain us something good. Because the employers will be the main people who will be affected with the minimum wage if it will be increased. We have to see if there is revenue earning for businesses to pay their employees if this is increased. The Consultant's report should finish in two to three months' time before submission to the Cabinet for discussion and tabling in the House. There are comments about the poor quality of products, another thing is...

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Seaker...

MR SPEAKER: I call the Prime Minister please.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi: Pardon the Hon Minister perhaps this matter of minimum wage is ambiguous. This matter is directed to those working in temporary positions and not those in permanent positions. This means it is directed to those who are casual workers. They can be terminated at any time. It could be in a day or a week.

This point specifically to the public servants. The salary of permanent workers is based on set policies and procedures. Whereas for casual or labor workers who are required by the old men to plant the taro or cut the grass, they receive pay on a daily basis. This is for the clarification of the country, the permanent workers or public service have set requirements and conditions specified by the Salary Committee for the State and the Public Enterprises in particular. At least, the Public Enterprises is listening in, it does not mean you are not included; we are all involved in this.

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What the State is cautious about is that once the salary is set, all the businesses will be involved. Since the Government is in charge of salary arrangement, this matter is important, because there was a query on this area to me regarding a debate and whether I support it or not, how can I not support since the State is setting this salary structure arrangement for permanent public workers including the labor workers.

In saying that, this matter is pertained to the Ministry as mentioned by the Minister. They are the ones who oversee these matters, and when it comes to temporary, we must be extra cautious. Why? Temporary workers are dependent on business operators, plantation owners, and this is why there was a closure in the cocoa plantations since the State had to undertake another step to coincide with the labour wage system around the world. This also resulted in the closing down of the Pop Crop and other major farmers due to the set minimum wage increase covering the labourers. The main impact will be the private sector on this increase therefore; this is why the Ministry is not being negligent. Majority of the employers particularly companies with much higher wages than \$2.40. The Ministry is cautious of this increase by setting a benchmark for minimum wage to ensure there is some consistency for labor workers lest we see the closing down of this business and that farming business.

This is what happened to the Fish Cannery, which led to three Canneries in Tutuila being closed down, what happened then? The minimum wage during the American Congress session was set and the minimum wage for labourers should not be lower counting in the temporary workers and fish canneries.

The American Samoa Governor had to travel to attend the American Congress meetings every month to discuss with the senators in America about the high minimum wage set for smaller territories like them that could affect their fish canneries. The Congress did not listen. What happened? When the minimum wage was increased, these fish companies had to close down. I think only one fish factory is operating today. This is why it is appropriate to understand these things, as we are not discussing the wages of permanent employees but the labor workers.

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MR SPEAER: Thank you. I believe the clarification relayed by the Hon Prime Minister and the Hon Minister is now understood. The Prime Minister has taken the floor to discuss the matter for the understanding of the Parliament and the country. We should work together, and attempts by the Government is to thoroughly plan for our benefit through our businesses, farmers and employees to work and continue these efforts. As such, thank you Hon Prime Minister. Pardon the Hon Minister we will continue with your clarification tomorrow God willing bears us strength to return in good health.

Since we have arrived at our normal recess hour, before we adjourn I call upon the Deputy Speaker to conclude our Proceedings with a prayer.

*Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly adjourned at 1:05pm
until 9:00am Tuesday 25th of June 2019.*