

DISCLAIMER

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Day 5

PART A (9:30am – 1pm)

9:30am

I. ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE CHAIR

The Hon Speaker greeted and welcomed all Members of Parliament and all of Samoa listening to the proceedings of Parliament. He then informed Members that last Friday, the Chairperson for the Finance and Expenditure Committee gave his address and concluded the second reading debates; therefore, today's proceedings will commence with Government Responses on deliberations by Members on the Supplementary Bill. Furthermore, Mr Speaker informed Members that he has the list of all Members who queried, requested, and raised issues to respective Ministers, thus advised Members to refrain from making unnecessary interjections raising new matters to save time.

II. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY – Reading of Bills

1. Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2023/2024 – Government Responses commence – Day 5

1. Afioga Hon FIAME Naomi Mataafa - Prime Minister & Leader of the House

The Hon Prime Minister acknowledged Mr Speaker and greeted her fellow Parliamentarians; she then acknowledged the presence of CEO's in parliamentary proceedings to ensure prompt advice is given to the Government of the day when needed. She also commended the Finance and Expenditure Committee Chairperson and Members for all their efforts put into the consideration and deliberation with Government Ministries and Corporations on the Supplementary Bill.

The Prime Minister then proceeded to clarify and respond to issues raised by certain members

and asserted that there were few issues related to her portfolio as most Members raised questions on the progress and preparations for the CHOGM in October.

- Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

The Hon Prime Minister firstly clarified and spoke on the issues regarding the CHOGM, she asserted that national preparations began last year (2023) with the establishment of different ‘working committees’ assigned with specific tasks and responsibilities including national security. The Hon PM assured Members that plans will be presented to Parliament in the next earliest meeting for the information of Members.

- Good Governance

The Hon Prime Minister addressed an issue raised by certain Members regarding the allocation provided in the Supplementary Bill for new Ministers and direct appointments for certain CEO’s. She clarified that Associate Ministers are an integral part of Good Governance, thus the government has prioritized the appointment of associate ministers as they provide a vital role in assisting the management and running of the affairs of the country. The Hon PM highlighted that the reshuffling of cabinet members and appointment of new ministers and associate ministers is a result of the Government's long-term plan in prioritizing national development in certain areas, such as the separation of the Sports sector from the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture; thus the establishment of the Ministry of Sports and Recreation to focus specifically on the development of sports in the country. In addition, the Hon Prime Minister stressed that the development of the Sports Ministry is important to ensure we can develop and use local players to represent Samoa overseas instead of selecting from overseas based Samoans to represent Samoa.

- Ministry of Sports and Recreation

The Hon PM mentioned the establishment of the new Ministry and stated that Government invests a lot of funds into Sports therefore the separation is warranted. The Hon Prime Minister also acknowledged the national weightlifting team who performed exceptionally at the recent Pacific Games and received numerous gold medals and high international standings. Furthermore, the Hon PM elaborated that the majority of players who competed in the Pacific Games under the Samoan flag live overseas, and therefore it is important to provide a solid Sporting authority to ensure we develop our local pool of players to avoid relying on Samoans living abroad whilst neglecting our local sports people.

The Hon PM then mentioned Fiji and their progress in the sports profession, she stated that Fiji is investing in their players, and these are the same players representing Fiji during Oceania Games, Pacific Games and other international competitions. However, in Samoa, we continue to seek Samoans living abroad to represent Samoa, thus insinuating

that we are not developing our local players well considering the amount of investment the Government puts into sports.

The Hon PM also touched on the importance of the new Ministry portfolio, particularly, the 'Recreation' as this is another avenue for income and development of the country as it would enable Samoa to host numerous sporting activities.

- **Ministry of Public Enterprise**

The member recalled the previous reshuffling of government ministries by the former government which led to the establishment of the Ministry of Public Enterprise, that was previously under a different ministry however, because of the Government's long term plan they decided to separate MPE to ensure the focus is directly on managing Government Corporations similar to how the Public Service Commission deals with public servants. In this instance, the Hon Prime Minister highlighted that this is the similar principle for the separation of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture to establish the Ministry of Sports and Recreation. The PM stressed the importance of long-term government plans for the development of Samoa.

- **Government Lands**

The Hon Prime Minister clarified on the need for establishing a new Ministry to govern all land matters under the Government, emphasizing that there are 3 separate bodies and authorities that administer government land matters, specifically, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment [including the Land Board], Samoa Land Corporation and the Samoa Trust Estate Corporation.

- i. Afioga SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tuiliili Tuivasa, Member for Vaimauga 1**

The Member commended the Hon Prime Minister for her clarification regarding his query on the supplementary and accepted the clarification provided.

- Susuga Hon LAAULI Leuatea Polataivao Fosi, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries**

The Hon Minister greeted Mr. Speaker and Members of Parliament, he then requested to Mr. Speaker to please continue Government responses with other Ministers as he is currently waiting for further details from his Ministry to ensure he provides a thorough response on matters raised by Members on his portfolio.

- Susuga Hon. TUILAEPa Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, Leader of the Opposition.**

The Member sought clarification from Mr. Speaker as to why the Minister for Agriculture has asked for approval when these matters should be addressed at the discretion of the Hon. Prime Minister.

Afioga Hon FIAME Naomi Mataafa - Prime Minister & Leader of the House

The Hon Prime Minister clarified that the proceedings of the Assembly are guided by Mr. Speaker's authority.

Mr. Speaker – Ruling:

Mr Speaker ruled that the final decision on proceedings comes from the Chair; therefore, responses from the Government will continue with other Ministers.

2. Hon OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai - Minister of Works, Transportation and Infrastructure

The Hon Minister acknowledged the Speaker, the Hon Prime Minister, and Members of Parliament, He also greeted CEOs of Ministries present in Chamber and particularly greeted his constituency and thanked the people of Samoa for their support and their endless prayers for the government.

- **CHOGM**
The Hon Minister asserted that although there are reserved funds for the preparation of this important meeting, he further accentuated that it is not enough to complete road developments from the airport to town. The Minister clarified the queries regarding the delay in the road works on the West Coast from the Airport noting that this is mainly due to the changing of the tar seal for public roads, from a chip seal tar to asphalt.
- **Electric Power Corporation**
The Hon Minister clarified that the Corporation is also preparing for the Conference, noting that there are 4 generators in place with the intention to place the other two for the big islands of Savaii.
- **Samoa Water Authority**
There are also development works carried out for bore holes in respective villages to ensure there is enough water supply to avoid issues arising during the CHOGM Meeting.
- **National Security**
The Hon Minister emphasized that the responsible bodies including the Samoa Airport Authority and Samoa Ports Authority as they deal with border security and are also in preparation to ensure our shores will be safeguarded and protected. He further urged the members for their patience with respective development requests as the government prioritizes preparations for the CHOGM which will take place within 8 months.

The Hon Minister concluded his response by acknowledging efforts from previous CEO's under his portfolio, specifically the previous CEO's for the Airport Authority and the Land Transport Authority; Afioga Silimanai Ueta Solomona, who is now a CEO for PASO based in Vanuatu, and Afioga Galuamalemana Titi Schwalger; he acknowledged their services and wished them well for their future endeavours.

i. Afioga Hon LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell, Member for Satupaitea

The Member queried whether the government intends to improve the cross-island country road in preparation of the CHOGM for convenience in transportation especially for our guests.

ii. Afioga SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tauiliili Tuivasa, Member for Vaimauga 1

The member commended the Minister of works and reminded him of the requests made regarding compensation for the health and safety consequences of his constituents residing nearby the Fagalii Airport. In addition, the request for government assistance to help with the ford at Fagalii which is quite dangerous during times of heavy rainfall.

iii. Afioga FUAAVA Suluimalo Amataga, Member for Aleipata Itupa i Luga

The Member commended the works of the former CEO's for the Airport Authority and LTA for their hard work while they were in office. The Member also touched on Samoa's border control (SPA and AA) in their preparations for the CHOGM in October, whether they are well equipped and prepared for the meeting to ensure there are no issues and problems in October.

iv. Afioga LUPEMATASILA Galumalemana Tologata Tofia Tile, Member for Falelatai & Samatau

The member commended the PM's response and clarification regarding the importance of Government Corporations. He further highlighted the importance of boosting the executive management for government corporations so that they can help with national development and the generation of revenues for the economy.

v. Afioga ALAIASA Moefaauouo Malagaitutogi Sepulona Moananu, Member for Anoamaa 1.

The Member requested the Minister to inspect the water supply in his constituency as this is a vital necessity for certain people without water supply. He further commended the Prime Minister on her response especially with clarification on the Ministry of Sports and Recreation considering that it is important that our local players represent our nation in overseas championships instead of players that reside overseas.

vi. Tofa Hon TUUU Anasii Leota , Member for Siumu.

The Member queried the status for road developments in his constituency, specifically the road for Sa'aga.

Hon OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai - Minister of Works, Transportation and Infrastructure (cont. response)

The Hon Minister assured the Member for Anoamaa 1 that inspection works will be carried out on the water supply in his constituency. Furthermore, he mentioned collaborative efforts between the Airport Authority and border securities at the wharf to ensure the provision of aviation and naval security is up to standard for the CHOGM.

The Hon Minister responded to the Member of Vaimauga 1 regarding compensation for families affected by the Fagalii Airport, that he will thoroughly consider this, however his main concern is that opening this door will possibly lead to other constituencies seeking compensation for other Government related developments, thus recommended the member to be patient. The Hon Minister noted that he will not give full details on the location of where participants will be residing at the CHOGM for security reasons.

The Hon Minister then touched on the issue of disrupted power supply in Savaii due to low voltage and the need for a proper generator to cater for the people of Savaii.

vii. Susuga Hon. TUILAIPA Dr Sailele Malielegaoui, Leader of the Opposition.

The Hon Member queried why the government is seeking to bring in generators for electricity while there are other available renewable energy sources such as hydro renewable energy which can generate 50% of electricity.

Hon OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai - Minister of Works, Transportation and Infrastructure (cont. response)

The Hon Minister clarified on the standard of generators, stating that there are no issues with the current generators. He then asserted that the 50% as mentioned by the Opposition Leader is not accurate, as there was only about 25-30% renewable energy generated given our nation's weather patterns are usually wet and dry.

Susuga Hon. TUILAIPA Dr Sailele Malielegaoui, Leader of the Opposition – interjection

The Opposition Leader sought clarification from the Minister in this matter discussed why it did not happen during their time. The Opposition Leader advised the Minister not to bring in Green Power Company as they operate with high charges.

Hon OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai - Minister of Works, Transportation and Infrastructure (cont. response)

Hon OLO mentioned that it is estimated to be 20million for initiating renewable energy, thus planning is important to ensure there is enough funding for such a project.

Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly were set aside at 10.42am
and resumed at 11:22am

Motion by the Leader of the House, Hon FIAME Naomi Mataafa

Hon Leader of the House moved a motion to set aside Standing Orders 32 to change sitting hours until the Supplementary Bill is passed by the Assembly; in this regard the new sitting hours are as follows:

Continue until 1pm and reconvene at 2pm until 10pm;

Motion seconded by the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and the Minister for Works, Transport and Infrastructure; *Motion Approved.*

Mr. Speaker – Point of Order

Mr. Speaker advised the Minister of Works that he will give the opportunity to the Member for Falelatai and Samatau and the Leader of the Opposition to speak as the Minister mentioned their names in his response, he then advised the Minister to speak on matters of his time as the Minister for EPC rather than mentioning past events.

Susuga Hon. TUILAEPA Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, Leader of the Opposition – interjection

The Opposition Leader asserted that it is important to put all projects through the tender board and undergo the process to ensure the Government receives the best options with reasonable costs.

Afioga LUPEMATASILA Galumalemana Tologata Tile, Member for Falelatai & Samatau

The member noted since the beginning of this parliamentary term, the Minister assured that a generator would be provided for Savaii yet recently this has not been the case. Furthermore, the Member recalled that in 2020, there were projections to have 100% renewable energy in Savaii, however due to the COVID19 outbreak, this project was deferred and was supposedly to be continued when the new government took over, however it seems that is not the case. The member noted that when he left EPC 60% of electricity was generated from Renewable Energy however, now only 20% of energy is generated from Renewable Energy.

The Member asserted that the autonomy of the Ministry of Public Enterprise depicts that it is more superior than the Minister of the Sector, therefore may lead to possible confusion as to who will give the final decision on matters involving the Ministry and the Sector.

Hon Prime Minister – Clarification

The Hon PM clarified that the recent Government did not change anything in relation to the existence of the Ministry of Public Enterprise. The separation of MPE existed for years to oversee Government Corporations. Therefore, there are no complexities among the responsibilities of the MPE, Government Corporations and Minister of the Sector as a whole. The PM advised the member that the plans of the Government is for the betterment of the nation as a whole.

Mr. Speaker – Point of Order

Mr Speaker advised the Member for Falelatai & Samatau to move on and refrain from discussing matters as the Prime Minister has provided a response.

- **Afioga LUPEMATASILA Galumalemana Tologata Tile, Member for Falelatai & Samatau**

The Member mentioned the Grid Market Company, and noted that the previous government carried out the tender process to ensure the we had a bigger selection pool to choose from. Furthermore, the Member noted that this was the first time we had the lowest cost for electricity unit, 20cents but the problem that was stated at that time was the differences in terms of currency.

The Member noted that the only issue that they were trying to resolve is the sovereignty currency of the government which they wished that the new government would resolve but it seems that it has not been done. Furthermore, they had hoped that by 2023, the Corporation would accomplish 100% of renewable energy.

Tofa Hon OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Minister of Works, Transportation and Infrastructure (cont.)

The Hon Minister mentioned a proposal from France for 5 cents per unit regarding the Grid Market Company mentioned, but there was no VGAST added by that time. The Minister noted that the EPC has already hired generators from New Zealand at the beginning of 2023 which will be used as standby generators for the CHOGM and then after they will be transferred to Savaii. Furthermore, the Hon Minister highlighted that EPC had 22.5million arrears at Treasury when he took over the reins for Minister of EPC and asserted that all these arrears have been cleared. The Hon Minister raised the need for the Opposition Leader and Deputy Leader to provide evidence showcasing that he is a shareholder in the Green Power Company.

- **Susuga Hon LAAULI Leuatea Polataivao Fosi, Minister of Agriculture & Fisheries**

The Hon Minister seconded the motion made by the Hon Minister for Works, regarding evidence to be brought forward by the Leader and Deputy Leader of Opposition.

Mr. SPEAKER - MOTION

To provide evidence on a matter mentioned in the Assembly:

Mr. Speaker put forward the question whether the Motion is carried; Motion approved. Therefore, Mr. Speaker informed the Members for Lepa and Anoamaa 1 to provide evidence that the Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure holds shares in the Green Power Company.

- **Tofa Hon LAUOFO Fonotoe Pierre Laufo, Deputy Opposition Leader**

The Hon Member asserted that he never made statements insinuating that the Minister for Works is a shareholder of the Green Power Company, thus the motion moved is not relevant.

Susuga Hon. TUILAEPa Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, Leader of the Opposition – interjection

The Opposition Leader clarified that he did not mention the Minister holding shares in the Green Power Company, rather that the Minister came to him when he was the Prime Minister at the time, to discuss the Green Power Company.

Tofa Hon OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Minister of Works, Transportation and Infrastructure (cont.)

The Hon Minister acknowledged the work of his Sector and acknowledged Members for their support, advice and concerns for the betterment and improvement of their work.

iii. Tofa Hon. LEATINUU Wayne So'oialo, Minister of Public Enterprise (Samoa Airways)

The Hon Minister acknowledged all members that queried and demanded a national aircraft. He noted that there are processes in place as well as consultations being conducted with certain airlines on how we can acquire an aircraft. He highlighted that this will not be an easy process considering the financial status of our previous airline. However, an aircraft may be acquired without a loan if possible.

The Minister mentioned that they started a consultation regarding the airplanes to be funded and provided for our country. Hon Minister added that the desire was there to fund our own national carrier without a loan, however currently we cannot meet this due to insufficient funds.

i. Susuga Hon. TUILAEPa Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, Leader of the Opposition – interjection

The Opposition Leader asserted that he continues to push for a plane as it will assist our people, then mentioned the increase in travelling between Samoa and American Samoa, thus urged the Minister to continue this service.

3. Tofa Hon. LEATINUU Wayne So'oialo, Minister of Public Enterprise (Samoa Airways)

The Hon Minister acknowledged the members' advise however, he highlighted that the reason why there are less flights between Pago and Upolu is because of conditions set by the Government of American Samoa, as well as the importance of having pilots well rested.

- **Gambling Activities**

The Hon Minister addressed the issues raised on prizes for raffles and bingo, he clarified that the prizes are based on the types and fees paid for the gambling license. Adding that fees are different depending on the type of license applied, further stated that there are policies in place by the Gambling board so that these issues are resolved.

ii. Afioga LEAANA Ronnie Posini, Member for Safata 1

Seasonal Workers: The Member reminded the Minister on his query regarding the RSE Scheme particularly the selection process of seasonal workers, when this process will be handled by the constituency.

Tofa Hon. LEATINUU Wayne So'oialo, Minister of Public Enterprise (Samoa Airways)

The Hon Minister informed the Member that due to cabinet reshuffling their portfolios he no longer deals with the seasonal work scheme. Therefore, the response he seeks will be provided by the relevant Minister responsible for the RSE Scheme.

4. Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele, Minister of Health.

The Hon Minister acknowledged all Members who raised issues and put forth requests towards his Ministry. He noted that 18 members spoke on the Supplementary Bill, with only 9 Members raising issues regarding his portfolio, the Minister noted the importance of addressing these issues to ensure that the work carried out by the Ministry is done with integrity. He then acknowledged plans behind the NKF by HRPP which is an important initiative, although it only started with only 9 patients, currently it has increased.

The Minister mentioned the issues that was raised on social media regarding his Ministry and the expensive cost of dialysis treatments; noting that the public interpreted this increase wrongly, as the decision was made collectively by the Government including the Ministry of Finance and Health to increase the prices for dialysis. The Minister acknowledged the efforts of the staff and Committee of the National Kidney Foundation, again mentioned that the Foundation began with only 9 patients with about 200 patients.

Therefore, he highlighted the importance of this service for our own people but as years have passed the diaspora community have visited Samoa and demanded this service too. Thus, he advised for these people living overseas travelling to Samoa for dialysis treatment, to go through the normal process of applying to use the machines so that local doctors are aware of their case as some people might have other health complications. He clarified that the process of applying for a chance to use dialysis machines as it takes up 2-3 weeks and this is because all the machines have been scheduled for our local patients. Furthermore, he highlighted that the high price of undergoing dialysis has been passed by the Revenue Board, that is \$600 tala for Samoans from overseas, and 1,000 tala for foreigners (non-Samoans). The Minister further advised people traveling from overseas who plan to undergo dialysis treatments to apply in

advance at least 2-3 weeks prior so that they can guarantee a spot as all machines have been scheduled for our own local patients. Furthermore, the Hon Minister raised concerns by employees who were mistreated due to this matter and advised members of the public to communicate and consult peacefully with workers as we are all Samoans.

i. Afioga LEANA Ronnie Posini, Member for Safata 1

The Member reminded the Minister of his request to revisit the cost of dialysis treatment for our people living abroad as it is too costly for them.

• Afioga Hon. FIAME Nomi Mataafa, Leader of the House

The Hon PM expressed concern that we need to finish deliberation on the supplementary, advising that the Ministers have given their clarification and that is final, and Members should accept it.

Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele, Minister of Health

The Minister further clarified that it is not the Foundation's intention to disregard our people coming from overseas to use dialysis machines however, because of the pre-schedule that the Foundation has in place for our local patients it is important to consider that they follow procedures already in place for them to use the machines. The Hon Minister further clarified that overseas people are eligible to receive our dialysis treatments.

ii. Afioga SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tauiliili Tuivasa, Member for Vaimauga 1

The Member commended the Minister of Health for his response however, echoed concerns raised by the Member for Safata 1 regarding the high cost of treatment especially for our people living abroad.

iii. Afioga FUAAVA Suluimalo Amataga , Member for Aleipata Itupa i Lalo

The member noted that the government should have considered the gradual increase of prices for dialysis treatment, rather than the surge from \$300 to \$600 which has caused much concern for our people. He then mentioned the mobile system for dialysis treatments especially since we would be hosting the Heads of Government Meeting and there are people who may reside in rural areas, for instance his constituency, as Aleipata is a far distance from town.

Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele, Minister of Health

The Hon Minister mentioned the issue of conflict of interest as raised by certain members and explained that if ever there are any concerns on such matter, the Member should gather the relevant information and present to the Attorney General Office to determine the matter.

Susuga Hon. TUILAEPA Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, Leader of the Opposition – interjection

The Opposition Leader noted that the private clinic was opened and put into a trust, however the issue is that the trust belongs to this CEO, thus the potential conflict of interest.

Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele, Minister of Health

The Hon Minister brought up the former Prime Minister's son's appointment as the Finance CEO and stated that this appointment was also conflicted.

Susuga Hon. TUILAEPA Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, Leader of the Opposition – interjection

The Opposition Leader clarified that the selection process of CEOs was followed, with the Cabinet endorsing the panel's recommendation, and elaborated further that there is no law prohibiting any Member's child from applying where he/she has the relevant qualification and capabilities. Furthermore, he explained that his son did not have a business which could cause a conflict of interest, thus the comparison is irrelevant.

Mr Speaker – Point of Order:

Mr Speaker advised members to refrain from talking about other issues not pertaining to the Supplementary budget as they should be focusing on the important matters before Parliament.

- **Afioga SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tauiliili Tuivasa, Member for Vaimauga 1**

The Member clarified that he is just advising the Minister of Health but has no ill intentions to discredit the CEO of Health as he is highly qualified for the job.

Mr Speaker – Point of Order:

Mr Speaker cautioned the Minister and Members on mentioning individuals who are unable to respond in Chamber.

Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele, Minister of Health

The Hon Minister mentioned the request by Members to increase pharmaceutical supplies, and asserted that the Ministry is regards to members request to increase medication supplies he noted that the Ministry is currently working on ways to improve the supply to avoid any shortages. He acknowledged all doctors and nurses as well as the Ministry as a whole for their continuous efforts in servicing the country.

Proceedings suspended at 1pm and will resume at 2pm.