

## **DISCLAIMER**

This Report provides a brief of the Proceedings of Parliament on **Tuesday 12 March 2024**. While all efforts have been made to provide an informative brief, this information must not be relied upon as an alternative to the official Hansard record of proceedings of Parliament. If you have any specific questions about the Proceedings of Parliament on **Tuesday 12 March 2024**, you should consult the official Hansard or seek assistance from the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

**Day 5  
9:34am**

### **I. GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIR**

Mr Speaker greeted the House, CEO's of respective Ministries and Government Agencies who were present in the House, then addressed Samoa in all her honorific salutations.

### **II. ORDERS OF THE DAY – Consideration of Parliamentary Committee Reports and Government Responses**

### **III. ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE CHAIR**

The Speaker acknowledged the Parliament Commission specifically to the Leader of the House and Leader of the Opposition Party for accepting all Government responses and agreeing to consider them briefly by the Assembly. Mr Speaker reiterated his announcement last week advising Members on how the consideration of Reports and Government Responses will proceed; that is, the responsible Chairperson and the Minister will not call out recommendations and responses as usual.

- 1. P.P. 2022/2023 No. 119, Infrastructure Sector Committee Report on the P.P. 2021/2022 No.3, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Annual Report for the Financial Year 2019/2020.**
- **P.P. 2023/2024 No. 19, Government Responses on P.P. 2022/2023 No. 119 (carried forward from debates on 16 June 2023)**

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

The Member greeted Mr Speaker, Hon Prime Minister and Cabinet and all members of Parliament in Chamber. He then acknowledged the Government Responses on the Report of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment; and expressed his support for all 3 Government Recommendations outlined in the report. He then spoke on Recommendation 1: which recommended the merge of the Renewable Energy Division of the Ministry and the Electric

Power Corporation given efforts to combat the impacts of climate change. The Member differentiated between the two, asserting that the renewable energy division focuses on effectively enforcing the regulations and policies that combat harmful gases released in the atmosphere as well as encouraging to increase renewable energy sources in Samoa (wind turbines, solar energy, hydro power, biogas, etc...) The Member noted that before the country achieved 60% renewable energy however, he highlighted from the report that this has been reduced to 32% as a result of high demand for electricity but the country has insufficient resources available for the generation of abundant renewable energy. The Member also requested more wind turbines in his constituency to harness air which is another useful source of energy.

Moreover, the Member noted that achieving renewable energy in the country is important as it aligns with International Agreements that we have signed like the Paris Agreement. Furthermore, the Member noted that if we continue to abide by provisions of International Agreements then International Organizations like the UNFCCC and GCF can pour funds to boost our economy in terms of increasing the production of Renewable Energy and development of mitigating factors that help address climate change.

The Member recalled when the Hon Prime Minister was the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment whereby a fund from GCF was given to the Ministry to cater for its adaptation and mitigation efforts, thus the construction of the Vaisigano Bridge, the Vaisigano wall, etc... Lastly, the Member expressed his support for having the generation of Renewable Energy under the authority and oversight of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment as this fully embodies the connection between the environment and energy. In addition, the Member highlighted that if we continue to boost the development of renewable energy we can obtain numerous Carbon-Credit which is another source of finance for the Ministry and country if we sell them to developed countries. He then concluded and acknowledged the whole of Samoa and his Constituency tuning in to Parliament Proceedings.

- **Other Announcement by Mr. Speaker**

Mr. Speaker announced that he has been informed that the live streaming of proceedings is experiencing a technical fault, thus ruled to set aside proceedings until the system is fixed and then proceedings will resume.

**Proceedings set aside at 10am and resumed at 11:05am**

- **Other Announcement by Mr. Speaker**

Proceedings resumed and Mr Speaker again conveyed apologies to the Parliament and Samoa for the disruption of proceedings due to a technical issue with the live streaming of proceedings, however assured Members that it has been solved, he stated that although the live was on, there was no audio/sound; he then acknowledged the members for their patience and further accentuated that this issue needed to be address as it is required in provisions in our Standing Order.

- **Tofa LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, Member for Faleata 3**

The Member requested for the opportunity to speak on the report with its recommendations and responses to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, highlighting that he was not present in Chamber when it was firstly deliberated in June 2023.

- **Mr. Speaker:**

Mr. Speaker approved the Member's request.

- **Afioga FUAAVA Suluimalo Amataga, Member for Aleipata Itupa i Luga**

The Member sought approval from the Chair whether he can make his statements again given that there was an issue with the sound on our live feed which means that the public, specifically his constituency did not hear his contribution to the report under consideration.

- **Mr. Speaker – Point of Order**

Mr. Speaker assured the Member that his remarks have already been recorded and will be re-aired later, as we cannot go back.

**ii. Tofa LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, Member for Faleata 3**

The Member stated that the 2AP's broadcasting services are accessed globally and can be utilized instead of relying on the facebook live feed in instances such as the one that occurred this morning. He then noted plans made by the previous Government to transfer the Renewable Energy Division to be under EPC and supports this. The Member also mentioned that there are individuals who are interested in purchasing renewable energy, then queried who the relevant authority is to seek approval for such matters.

The Member emphasized the importance between the MNRE and EPC in terms of communication so they can cooperate and work together in generating renewable energy, furthermore, the member highlighted that EPC should be able to join the MNRE for overseas trainings especially regarding renewable energy. The Member also queried whether the Ministry was considering plans made by previous government to establish another ministry/office to handle matters pertaining to climate change. The Member also touched on the regulations of chemicals that have been banned in other countries as it was reported it can affect water systems and queried the Minister whether they have plans in prohibiting these chemicals as there are alternatives that can be used.

**iii. Susuga Hon. TUILAEPFA Fatialofa Auelua Sailele Malielegaoi, Opposition Leader**

The Hon Member stressed to the responsible Committee for the Report discussed, that it has been 5 years since it was signed therefore it should have been tabled before Parliament years ago. He noted the importance of timely and accurate submissions to allow the Government sufficient time to consider the challenges encountered by the Ministry and respond accordingly in a timely manner. The Member stressed the significance of the Committee's work in

scrutinizing the Executive, and advised the Committee to fast track their work next time as their job is of the utmost importance ensuring that the Ministry is operating well. The Hon Member urged Committee members to abide with the timeframe when they consider referred papers. Thus recalled the time where there was a backlog in the Committees scrutiny roles on papers referred and a motion was moved for the Assembly to approve such reports without consideration in the House. Through this, it gave respective Government Ministries and SOE's to provide poor reporting. In this regard, he urged the Committee members to do their work and meet the timeframe so reports are considered in the House at an earlier time rather than years later. The Hon member clarified that this report was also during the time when the Hon Prime Minister was the Minister for MNRE but was later-on transferred under his portfolio as Prime Minister at the time as there was an accusation that lands were leased to own to Chinese people. He clarified that this is not true as there is no provision in the law to allow Chinese people to purchase or own land.

**iv. Afioga FEPULEAI Faasavalu Faimata Sua, Chairperson of the Infrastructure Sector Committee**

The Chairperson greeted the House and Samoa listening in to Parliament Proceedings. He then commended and acknowledged his Committee for all its efforts and work throughout last year and beginning of this year. He touched on the Members comments and issues raised by member for Aleipata Itupa i Lalo. He acknowledged the Member for his advices and contribution to the Ministry's report. In terms of issues raised by the Authority which oversees Renewable Energy, the Chairperson noted that it is the Committee's intention to have Renewable Energy under one management like the MNRE or EPC. He further acknowledged the Government responses towards the Committee recommendations.

In terms of the delay in their consideration of the report, he conveyed apologies and clarified that they were only given the MNRE report in 2022 and then they started their analysis. He also wanted to remind the House that their work has been put off track because of the 2021 post General Election activities. The Chairperson clarified that the report is based on the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and not on leased lands.

- **Susuga Hon. TUILAEPA Fatialofa Auelua Saillele Malielegaoi, Opposition Leader**

The Hon Opposition Leader clarified that this Ministry consists of handling of leased lands which is inclusive of freehold and customary land.

- **Afioga Hon TOEOLESULUSULU Cedric Schuster: Minister for MNRE**

The Hon Minister clarified on the request by the member for Aleipata Itupa i Lalo to merge the EPC and MNRE so that Renewable Energy production is under one management, the Minister further advised that this cannot currently take place as the Ministry and Corporation have different functions. Furthermore, the Hon Minister mentioned the difference between solar

energy and solar farms that might be taken in the wrong way. A solar system is a core provider between planets, however solar power harvested from the sun.

The Minister mentioned that the Ministry is re-assessing projects mentioned by the Member as they are working on a Low Emission Development Plan to reduce the use of diesel for electricity and to promote the use of renewable energies such as solar energy and hydro-energy.

The Minister noted that the Ministry is reviewing the project at Alaoa before it commences. This feeds into Members raising issues regarding unused funds by the Ministry, the Minister clarified that it is because projects are on-hold. In regard to the pesticide issue raised by Members, this is under the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries as the Pesticide Board is chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries however some employees of the MNRE are working with them in banning and removing harmful pesticides and to consider other alternatives. Regarding climate change, he asserted that the Ministry is finalizing a Bill to address issues on climate change and will be brought in Parliament in due time.

- **Afioga FUAAVA Suluimalo Amataga, Member for Aleipata Itupa i Luga**

The Member wanted to correct his statements earlier, as he believes he was referring to the Solar Power System which includes all energy related resources rather than the solar system itself.

- **Tofa Hon OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai: Minister for EPC - Clarification**

The Hon Minister clarified on the issue raised with Power Supply companies, and stated that currently there are 3 Companies that are in the process of approving their PPA's (Purchasing Power Agreements); negotiations have also taken place to construct the biomass at Tafaigata, which produces gas from the burning of rubbish; there is also the burning of car tyres at the tyre-recycle which produces diesel to source the EPC generators and the Green Energy Holding which has implemented their turbine farm. He then confirmed that the wind turbines in Aleipata will remain stagnant; the Corporation has no intention to progress with this project - noting that there is not enough power generated from these wind turbines. The Hon Minister noted that Expressions of Interest has been opened for any company that wants to bid their solar energy plans/developments, with the hope that it will be completed in July.

- **Tofa LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, Member for Faleata 3**

The Member acknowledged the Minister's response and stated that he understands there is an Energy Board, however sought clarification from the responsible minister regarding who has the final say or authority over the approval of overseas companies coming into the country to develop Renewable Energy; asserting that there are 2 factors that should be considered, its eco-friendly and sustainability. The Member stressed that considering this is of utmost importance as most overseas companies come in to take funds and build RE that are not sustainable. Therefore, the member advised the Minister to be vigilant in monitoring and assessing these proposals before granting licenses to companies that generate Renewable Energy in the country.

- **Afioga Hon TOEOLESULUSULU Cedric Schuster: Minister for MNRE – Clarification**

The Hon Minister noted the importance of the National Energy Coordinating Committee (NECC) in assessing and determining that the proposals from these companies are environmentally friendly. This can be determined from conducting the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), this will assist the Ministry with determining whether the proposal is eco-friendly and financially sustainable. The Hon Minister further clarified that this is the involvement of the Ministry through the NECC, however the process and paperwork for these Purchasing Power Agreements (PPAs) will be handled by the EPC and they will also ensure these proposals adhere to the laws of the land.

- **Tofa Hon OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai: Minister for EPC - Clarification**

The Hon Minister stood to clarify the matter raised by the Member for Faleata 3 regarding licenses; Hon OLO asserted that when the new government took over the reins from the previous government the licenses for these companies were already in existence, however the delay was caused from trying to secure appropriate funds to implement these projects.

- **Afioga FUAAVA Suluimalo Amataga, Member for Aleipata Itupa i Luga**

The Member queried whether the Ministry is conducting any feasibility study for the wind turbine project at Aleipata.

*The Hon Minister for EPC responded that the feasibility study for the wind turbine is in progress.*

**P.P. 2022/2023 No. 119, Infrastructure Sector Committee Report on the P.P. 2021/2022 No.3, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Annual Report for the Financial Year 2019/2020;** The Chairperson moved a motion for the Assembly to approve the report, motion seconded and approved.

P.P. 2023/2024 No. 19, Government Responses on P.P. 2022/2023 No. 119

**The Hon Minister, TOEOLESULUSULU Cedric Schuster** moved a motion for the Assembly to approve the Government's Responses; motion seconded and approved.

2. **P.P. 2022/2023 No. 110, Report of the Economic Sector Committee on the P.P.2021/2022, No.20, Samoa Trust Estates Corporation Annual Report 2019/2022**  
- **P.P. 2023/2024 No. 73, Government Responses on P.P. 2022/2023 No. 110**
3. **P.P. 2022/2023 No.111, Report of the Economic Sector Committee on the P.P. 2020/2021 No.79 & P.P. 2021/2022 No. 28, Samoa Land Corporation, Annual Reports for 2019/2020 & 2020/2021.**  
- **P.P. 2023/2024, No. 118, Government Responses on P.P. 2022/2023 No.111**

**Afioga NIUAVA Eti Malolo, Chairperson for the Economic Sector Committee**

The Chairperson greeted the House and Samoa, he moved a motion for the Assembly to approve the Reports; motion second by the Members for Falealili 2 and Gagaemauga 2;

*Motion approved.*

**Afioga Hon TOEOLESULUSULU Cedric Schuster: MINISTER FOR MNRE**

The Hon Minister moved a motion for the Assembly to approve the Government Responses for the mentioned reports, motion seconded by Minister of Sports and Minister of MCIT;

*Motion approved.*

*The Speaker opened the floor for members who wish to speak on the reports tabled before Parliament.*

**i. Susuga Hon. TUILAEPA Fatialofa Auelua Sailele Malielegaoi, Opposition Leader**

The Hon. Member commended the efforts of the Corporation and Committees for the report and then raised 2 queries on the report. Firstly, queried the status and operation of our Export House in Auckland after the pandemic (post-Covid), he also sought clarification on the Corporation's loans to develop this Export House as he recalled from his last visit to New Zealand that it was unoccupied. Secondly, the Opposition Leader wanted to seek clarification on the production of vanilla and asserted that if Samoa secures a stable market for our vanilla product, we can reap from this development. He believes there is enough growth of vanilla in Samoa, however we need a stable market, that can assist generating revenue for the Corporation (STEC), therefore it is pertinent that STEC finds a market.

**ii. Afioga ALIIMALEMANU Alofa Tuuau, Member for Alataua West**

The Member greeted the House and commended the Committee for their usual work in considering the Annual Reports. She then highlighted the importance of the assessment provided in the Auditor's Report which states that the Corporation (STEC) is in a deteriorating state and therefore questions its continuance and sustainability in the long run. Furthermore, she noted from the report that a total of 35 sheep were killed in the reporting period, and queried whether the livestock development, specifically sheep farming is worthy. She concluded by asserting that the Corporation is positive that the establishment of the Export Authority will help assist the Corporation, therefore she asked for an update on the completion date of the Export Authority.

**Afioga NIUAVA Eti Malolo, Chairperson for the Economic Sector Committee**

The Chairperson noted that the Government has plans instore for reviving the Export Authority in Auckland, and advised the Leader of the Opposition that this matter will be further clarified by the relevant Minister. The Chairperson commends the Leader of the Opposition for remarks regarding vanilla however the major issue encountered was the shortage of workers, and the lack of staff capacity to enhance the development of vanilla locally.

The Chairperson also acknowledged the advice given from the Member for Alataua West and noted that the Corporation together with the Government will work together to generate more revenue for the Corporations development. Furthermore, he asserted that the issue with livestock [sheep farming] is a result of limited staff to provide proper monitoring.

- **Afioga Hon. FIAME Naomi Mataafa – Hon Prime Minister**

The Hon Prime Minister clarified the recent changes of Ministers portfolio which has shifted STEC under the Minister of Natural, Resources and Environment, as the Cabinet believed it is crucial to have all land-related developments under one relevant authority and umbrella like the MNRE for now. However, the Prime Minister noted that in the future the Government will lay out their plans of combining all land related developments under one separate Ministry pertaining to land.

**iii. Afioga ALAIASA Moefaauouo Sepulona Moananu, Member for Anoamaa 1:**

The Member clarified the importance of the STEC especially in terms of overseeing government land that is more than 6,000 acres. The Member also clarified to the member for Alataua West that the STEC conducts very important functions despite the Audit Office statement.

- **Susuga Hon. TUILAEPA Fatialofa Auelua Sailele Malielegaoi, Opposition Leader**

The Opposition Leader clarified that he did not specifically talk about the loss of these projects by STEC, he only emphasized the importance of continuing with on-going projects that do not receive any income/revenue. Which is why he strongly argued for the need to enhance the vanilla market as this can be another revenue generating avenue for the Corporation.

- **Afioga Hon. FIAME Naomi Mataafa – Hon Prime Minister**

The Hon Prime Minister clarified that there are developments that requires specialists and qualified people for the development to be successful and therefore these factors need to be considered to ensure the effective implementation of business as well as running a smooth production that would ensure a profitable outcome.

- **Susuga Hon LAAULI Leuatea Polataivao Fosi: Minister for MAF**

The Hon Minister clarified that the Government is finding other effective ways to address this issue regarding the exportation of local goods such as vanilla, cocoa etc... and further emphasized that such arrangements are plans formulated by the current Government with hope to gain income. The Minister announced that this coming Friday 15th of March all local exporters are welcomed to attend a meeting and discuss with the Corporation export related issues.



**iv. Afioga MASINALUPE Makesi Masinalupe, Member for Lefaga & Faleseela**

The member queried the status of the Biomass Project.

**Mr. SPEAKER – Point of Order:**

Mr. Speaker reminded members not to interrupt on a point of clarification or point of order if they did not make any queries or raise concerns on the report.

**Susuga Hon. TUILAEPFA Fatialofa Auelua Sailele Malielegaoi, Opposition Leader**

The Opposition Leader on a point of clarification stood to assert that the statement by the former Minister of STEC claiming that there were only 5 staff at the Corporation, he wanted to correct this as this is not true and the public is listening in. In addition, the Leader of the Opposition encouraged the Government to thoroughly consider their future plans for STEC and expressed his support for this as they await its outcome. The Leader of the Opposition stressed that he supports anything that will improve and maintain Government assets and developments.

- **Susuga Hon LAAULI Leuatea Polataivao Fosi: Minister for MAF**

The Hon Minister clarified that there are 5 staff per blocks of various products (eg: cocoa, vanilla, etc...) Furthermore, he noted that the Government has plans instore for the improvement of STEC and its transferral into the Export Authority. Thus, encouraged Members to wait and see while all these plans are in progress for the betterment of the Corporation moving forward.

**Afioga ALIIMALEMANU Alofa Tuuau, Member for Alataua West**

The Member clarified that it is not important to look at whether a Government Corporation or Ministry generates a profit or endures a loss. She emphasized that the most important aspect to consider is the maintenance of Government assets and trying to improve the economy through these developments. Thus, reminded the House that the points she raised were questions and advices for the Government to consider and to help improve its work.

- **CHAIRPERSON of Economic Sector Committee: Afioga NIUAVA Eti L Malolo**

P.P. 2022/2023 No. 110, Report of the Economic Sector Committee on the P.P.2021/2022, No.20, Samoa Trust Estates Corporation Annual Report 2019/2022 moved a motion for the Assembly to approve:

- P.P. 2022/2023 No.111, Report of the Economic Sector Committee on the P.P. 2020/2021 No.79 & P.P. 2021/2022 No. 28, Samoa Land Corporation, Annual Reports for 2019/2020 & 2020/2021.

Motion seconded by Members for Falealili 2 and Gagaifomauga 2,

*Motion Approved*

- **Afioga Hon TOEOLESULUSULU Cedric Schuster, MINISTER for STEC and SLC moved a motion for the Assembly to approve:**

-P.P. 2023/2024 No. 73, Government Responses on P.P. 2022/2023 No. 110

-P.P. 2023/2024, No. 118, Government Responses on P.P. 2022/2023 No.111

Motion seconded by; Minister for MCIT and Sports and Recreation,

*Motion approved.*

**4. P.P. 2022/2023 No. 121, Infrastructure Sector Committee Report on the P.P. 2021/2022 No. 5 & P.P. 2021/2022 No. 31, Office of the Regulator, Annual Reports for Financial Years 2019/2020 & 2020/2021.**

- P.P. 2023/2024 No. 20, Government Responses on P.P. 2022/2023 No. 121

**5. P.P. 2022/2023 No. 118, Infrastructure Sector Committee Report on the P.P. 2020/2021 No. 138 & P.P. 2021/2022 No. 32, Annual Reports of the Ministry of Communications, and Information Technology for Financial Years 2019/2020 & 2020/2021.**

- P.P. 2023/2024 No. 31, Government Responses on P.P. 2022/2023 No. 118

Afioga FEPULEAI Faasavalu Sua Faimata, Chairperson for Infrastructure Sector Committee moved a motion for the Assembly to consider its Reports; motion seconded and *Motion Approved.*

Afioga TOELUPE Minister for the MCIT moved a motion for the Assembly to consider Government responses; seconded by Minister for Sports n Recreation, MOH and Member Falealupo; *Motion Approved*

**6. P.P. 2023/2024 No. 5, Report of the Finance and Expenditure Committee on the P.P. 2022/2023, No. 142, Samoa Post Office Annual Report 2021/2022.**

- P.P. 2023/2024 No. 75, Government Responses on P.P. 2023/2024 No. 5

- **Afioga FALEOMAVAEGA Titimaea Tafua, Chairperson for Finance and Expenditure Committee.**

A motion was moved by the Chairperson for the Assembly to consider its Report which consist of its findings and recommendations on Samoa Post Office Annual Report; motion seconded by member for Vaisigano 1 and Member for Lefaga and Faleaseela, *Motion approved.*

- **Afioga Hon TOELUPE Poumulinuku Onesemo Toelupe, Minister for MCIT and Post Office**

The Hon Minister moved a motion for the Assembly to consider Government Responses, motion seconded by the Minister for Sports n Recreation and MOH, *Motion approved.*

*The Speaker opened the floor for any members who wish to speak on the reports and Government Responses.*

- **Susuga Hon TUILAIPA Fatialofa Lupesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi, Opposition Leader**

The Hon member asserted the advantages on telecommunication especially during the pandemic as most conferences and meetings were postponed while most were held virtually (online).

The Opposition Leader commended the Minister and Ministry for their efforts in ensuring the maintenance of internet connection in the country and advised that this should always be affordable to the country. He then advised the Regulator that it is their responsibility to ensure the affordability of internet connectivity in the country. The Member noted that affordable internet prevents people from acquiring Starlink connection from NZ which puts us at a loss.

Proceedings were adjourned at 1:05pm and will reconvene at 9:30am on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024.