

DISCLAIMER

This Report provides a brief of the Proceedings of Parliament on **Tuesday 19 December 2023**. 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 19 December 2023**, you should consult the official Hansard or seek assistance from the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

9:32am

I. ANNOUNCEMENT FROM MR. SPEAKER

The Hon Speaker greeted Samoa then conveyed well wishes to the Hon Prime Minister and Minister of Sports and Recreation who are seeking medical treatments overseas; he addressed Samoa in all its honorific salutations and acknowledged all who were present for their efforts and commitment throughout the year.

II. MESSAGE FROM O LE AO O LE MALO

Pursuant to Article 59 of the Constitution, Mr Speaker read out a Message from O Le Ao o le Malo to permit the introduction of the **Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2023/2024**.

III. PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

The Clerk read out a total of 12 Parliamentary Papers tabled in the Legislative Assembly; 11 Annual Reports and 1 Corporate Plan.

IV. PRESENTATION OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Clerk read out a total of 10 Committee Reports tabled:

- 4 Reports - Standing Orders, Electoral, Petitions and Constitutional Offices Committee;
- 3 Reports - Infrastructure Sector Committee
- 2 Reports - Social Sector Committee
- 1 Report - Economic Sector Committee

V. MOTIONS FROM PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON:

i. Standing Orders, Electoral, Petitions and Constitutional Offices Committee

The Chairperson for the Committee, Afioga AUUAPAAU Mulipola Aloitafua Mulipola moved a motion pursuant to S.O 166(2), for an extension of time for the Committee to complete its deliberations on the following reports:

- i. P.P.2022/2023, No. 57, Report on the Operations of the Samoa Audit Office for the Financial Year 2019/2020;
- ii. P.P. 2022/2023, No.133, Report on Irregularities for the Financial Year 2020/2021, Samoa Audit Office.

Motion seconded and approved

ii. Finance and Expenditure Committee

The Chairperson of the Committee, Afioga FALEOMAVAEGA Titimaea Tafua moved a motion pursuant to S.O 166(2) for an extension, to allow the committee time to complete its deliberations on the National Provident Fund Amendment Bill 2023 and have its Report tabled in the next Meeting.

Motion seconded and approved

iii. Economic Sector Committee

The Chairperson of the Committee, Afioga NIUAVA Eti Malolo moved a motion pursuant to S.O 166(2), for the Assembly to approve its request for an extension of time for the Committee to fully complete its deliberations on the National Digital Identification Bill and have its report tabled in the next Meeting;

Motion seconded and approved.

iv. Infrastructure Sector Committee

The Chairperson of the Committee, Afioga FEPULEAI Faasavalu Faimata Sua, moved a motion in accordance with S.O166(2), for an extension of time for the Committee to fully complete its deliberations on the P.P.2022/2023 No.141 Ministry of Communications and Information Technology Annual Report for the Financial Year 2021/2022.

Motion seconded and approved.

VI. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY – Reading of Bills

1. Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2023/2024

The Minister of Finance, Afioga Hon LAUTIMUIA Uelese Vaai moved a motion for the bill to be first read; seconded by Minister of Health, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment and Members for Siumu and Faleata 4 and approved.

2. Supplementary Estimates (No.1) 2023.2024 - tabling

The Hon Minister of Finance moved to table the Budget Estimates pursuant to S.O 132(1).

3. Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2023/2024 - second reading

The Hon Minister of Finance moved a motion for the bill to be second read; motion seconded by Minister of Health, Minister of Natural Resources and Minister of Communications and Information Technology and approved.

Afioga Hon LAUTIMUIA Uelese Vaai, Minister of Finance – clarification

The Hon Minister, LAUTIMUIA Uelese Vaai first addressed Samoa in her honorific salutations and respective denominations of Samoa as well as the people of Samoa locally and around the world. Following his opening remarks, he emphasised the preparation of the Supplementary Bill was a collective work from the Cabinet to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our people as well

as accommodating the essential needs of our people. He then highlighted on the following matters:

- Samoa's economy has rebounded from the adverse effects of the COVID19 pandemic, whereby Economic growth has surged by 8.0%, reaching a substantial 2.55billion by the end of the financial year 2022/2023.
- The official government debt is recorded at \$907.50 million, equivalent to 35.6%GDP as of 30th June 2023.
- Gross Official Foreign Reserves is recorded at \$1.14billion for the first quarter of the current financial year.
- The annual inflation rate recorded for the past 12 months ending September 2023 stood at 9.1% which is a decrease of 2.9% when compared to the 12% recorded in the 12 months ending June 2023.
- Employment statistics have increased by 6.2% (25,976)
- Tourism industry continues to grow with a remarkable 233.5% increase of total arrivals into Samoa.
- The prices for imported fuel have dropped for the month of December,

First Supplementary Budget Estimates:

Additional Revenues

The total additional revenues under the First Supplementary Budget amounts to **\$42,542,811** and includes:

- 23,470,760- Ministry of Finance
- 1,000,000 - Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- 18,072,051 - Ministry for Customs and Revenue

- Additional Grants from development partners: 1,025,759

Reallocations of Current Appropriations:

1. \$520,621 from the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour
2. \$400,000 from the Ministry of Finance

Additional Expenditures:

The total expenditures sought in this First Supplementary Budget amounts to **\$27,791,151**

- Statutory Expenses: \$24,008,831
- Priority Expenditures for Government Ministries: 2,756,561

Additional Grant Financed Development Expenditures:

- new grants amounting to \$1,025,759 which will be directly spent on development projects under the following sectors:
 - *\$435,000 the Community Development Sector
 - *\$59,705 for Health Sector
 - *\$187,282 for the Law and Justice Sector
 - *\$343,772 for the Transport and Infrastructure Sector

Furthermore, the Hon Minister paid special acknowledgment to the New Zealand Government for the recently pledged assistance of NZD\$15million to support

Government's efforts to address climate change impacts and build a more resilient Samoa.

The Hon Minister also informed the House as the Minister responsible for the National Provident Fund, he is happy to announce that the Board has resolved to declare an interim dividend of 2.4% for financial year 2023/2024 at the value of \$24,076,668. This will be paid out in cash to provide much needed assistance to all contributors and their families in preparation for the new academic year. The disbursement will be effective on 10 January 2024 using the online portal.

The Hon Minister then concluded by extending wishes of a Merry Christmas and Prosperous 2024 to Samoa.

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM MR. SPEAKER

The Hon Speaker informed the House that pursuant to Standing Order 133, the **Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2023/2024** will be referred to the Finance and Expenditure Committee for its deliberations and will be reported back to the House not less than 14 days from date of referral. He further commended all Parliamentarians and all those present for their efforts this year and wished them a Merry Christmas and a prosperous new year.

Proceedings adjourned at 10:26am and will reconvene on Tuesday 23 January 2024 at 9:30am.