



PRESS RELEASE

Fiji PAC Workshop to Enhance Accountability and Transparency

Suva, Fiji (13 June 2019) – Members of the Fiji Public Accounts Committee (PAC) participated in a second series of workshops to build their capacity in better understanding their financial oversight role within the legislative process.

The role of the PAC is important in that it ensures public funds are spent effectively, efficiently and economically for the benefit of citizens.

The training was facilitated by the Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions (PASAI) in collaboration with the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) in Fiji, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Pacific Technical Assistance Centre (PFTAC) on 4 - 5 of June 2019.

The workshop was implemented as part of the activities of the *Strengthening Public Finance Management and Governance in the Pacific Project* funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by UNDP. PASAI is a responsible party to the project and delivers the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) component and contributes to the strengthening of the budget oversight capacities of PAC from the perspectives of SAIs.

The two-day workshop covered the Parliament's accountability and reporting framework and the implications Parliament has on the PAC oversight role on public expenditure, compared to PAC roles in countries and regions around the world.

Members of the PAC were introduced to the Fiji budget process and budget documents, the regional Public Financial Management (PFM) and Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) review as well as the accounting and reporting framework.

In delivering his opening address for the training, the Speaker for the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji, Honourable Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, highlighted the importance of capacity building for the PAC Members.

"I cannot emphasise enough the importance of capacity building for you honourable members of the public accounts committee, (and other committees of parliament for that matter), to equip yourselves with technical skills and the knowledge to enhance your oversight roles and perform them effectively and efficiently," said Hon. Ratu Nailatikau.

He added, 'The programme complements other capacity-building programmes that have been undertaken by the committee over their term in office.'

The EU Programme Officer, Mr Miroslav Skriecka, in his closing remarks highlighted the EU support in this area.

"The EU is committed to support PFM reforms in the Region. EUR 11 million has been allocated to this end through the EDF11th regional project *Strengthening Public Finance Management and Governance in the Pacific* which has also facilitated this important workshop," said Mr Skriecka.

“An essential component of the PFM EU regional project supports UNDP's and PASAI's contribution to improving the budgetary scrutiny, PFM oversight and accountability capacities of parliaments, supreme audit institutions, to align them with international standards and foster citizen engagement and oversight.

He added, “In order to achieve a holistic approach, the project also provides some funding to PFTAC and contributes to USP's capacity building work in PFM area.”

The objectives of the workshop are:

- to build the capacity of the members of the Fiji PAC to better understand their financial oversight role within the processes of Parliament;
- to facilitate efficient and effective scrutiny of the operations of the government organisations;
- to make the members of the PAC aware of both the Fiji SAI and PASAI and the work they perform in the country and the Pacific region.

The workshop for PAC Members was followed by a similar workshop for senior officials and management, including members of boards of government companies, commercial statutory authorities and other government agencies, on Thursday 6 June 2019.

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Background:

Strengthening of Public Finance Management and Governance in the Pacific Project aims to strengthen oversight over public financial management in the Pacific region, through improving the budgetary scrutiny, public financial oversight and accountability capacities of parliaments, supreme audit institutions and civil society within the region, aligning with international public financial oversight and accountability standards, and fostering citizen engagement and oversight. The Strengthening of Public Finance Management and Governance in the Pacific Project is funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with the Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions (PASAI).

For more information contact:

1. **Jill Marshall, Communications Advisor,** PASAI (Auckland, NZ) E: jill.marshall@pasai.org, P: +64 9 304 1893

2. **Jone Tuipelehaki Raqauqau,** Effective Governance – Communications Associate, UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji. E: jone.raqauqau@undp.org, P: (679) 3227 552

Website: www.pasai.org

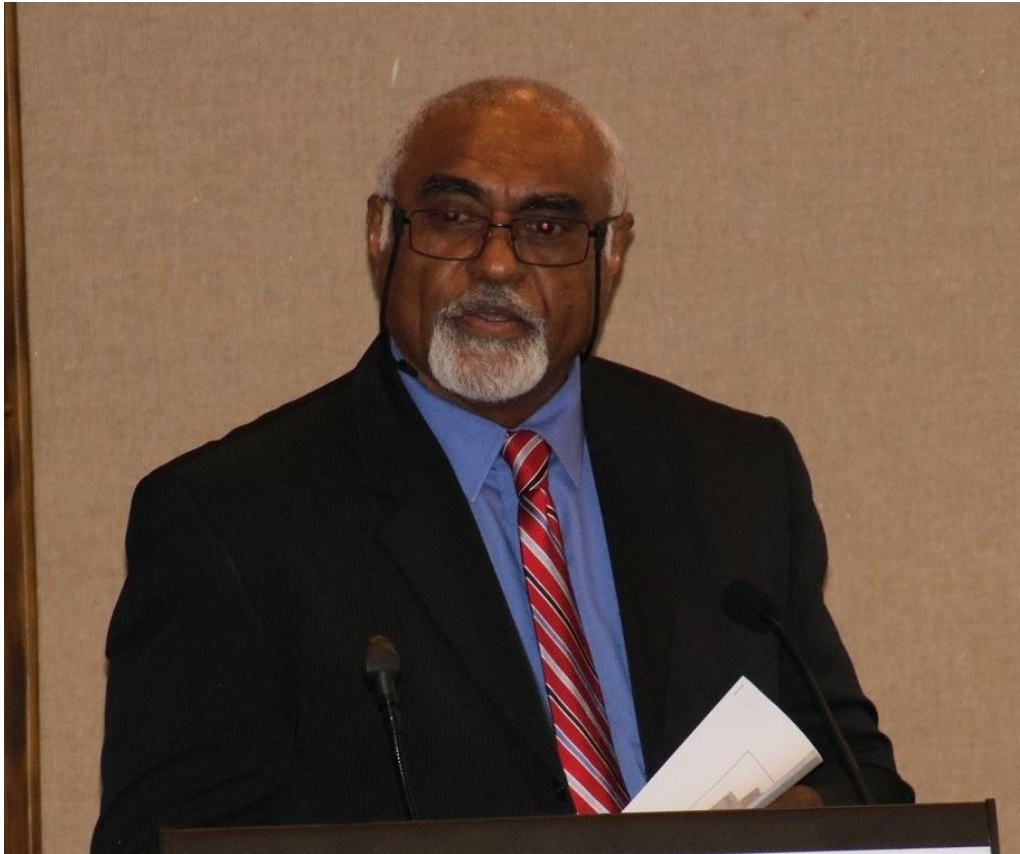




Attendees of the PAC workshop 4-5 June 2019



Honorable Speaker of Parliament, Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, who opened the workshop



PASAI's PFM Consultant, Eroni Vatuloka



Fiji Auditor-General, Ajay Nand, with the Chairman of the PAC Alvick Majaraj and EU Programme Officer