



Honourable Sitiveni Rabuka, OBE, MSD, OStJ
Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Climate Change and Environment, Civil Service,
Information and Public Enterprises

Cabinet Decisions 25 April 2023

Suva
Fiji

Wednesday 25 April 2023
2.00pm

The decisions made at the seventh meeting of the Peoples' Coalition Cabinet include the following:

1. Guidelines for Capital Projects Implemented under the Public Sector Investment Programme

Cabinet approved new Guidelines for the preparation, appraisal and approval of capital projects under the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP).

Implementing the Guidelines and new procedures will enhance capacities for preparing a better quality PSIP.

The aim is to obtain best value for money in Government's Capital Projects Program.

The Guidelines describe general principles governing good planning, procurement and management.

Ten (10) entities have been selected as pilot institutions to receive additional capacity development support commencing in the next financial year (FY 2024).

The ten entities are:

1. Ministry of Finance;
2. Fiji Roads Authority;
3. Water Authority of Fiji;
4. Ministry for Public Works, Transport and Meteorological Services;
5. Ministry of Housing and Local Government;
6. Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways;
7. Ministry of Health and Medical Services;
8. Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development, Disaster Management;
9. Ministry of Education; and
10. Ministry of Sugar Industry.

Pursuant to Cabinet's decision earlier this year, the Ministry of Finance is reactivating its strategic planning functions and this will strengthen Government's planning capacity.

2. Review of Fisheries Act and Policies

Cabinet approved the review of laws and policies related to fisheries.

The Fisheries Act was first enacted in 1941 (82 years ago) as a Colonial Ordinance.

It is archaic, and in dire need of modernisation.

In its current form the Fisheries Act has not kept pace with developments such as:

- (i) aquaculture,
- (ii) the need to designate marine protected areas,
- (iii) the need for marine spatial planning in the fisheries sector,
- (iv) post-harvest handling and management of artisanal fisheries, and
- (v) does not adequately deal with customary rights considerations.

The review is also intended to update the Offshore Fisheries Management Act 2012 (OFMA).

It will also involve a holistic review of existing policies, programmes and institutional capacity to ensure sustainable best practices in the management of our fisheries sector.

The Review will commence in May 2023.

3. Review of the Audit Act 1969

Cabinet approved a comprehensive review of review of the Audit Act.

The review is intended to modernise the Act which was first enacted as a colonial ordinance in 1969 (54 years ago).

The review will ensure that the Office of the Auditor General is able to carry out its functions in line with international standards and best practices.

The review will be carried out by the Ministry of Finance and the Office of the Auditor General.

4. The Emission Reduction Programme's Benefit Sharing Plan

Cabinet approved the Emission Reduction Programme's Benefit Sharing Plan.

Fiji signed the Emission Reduction Payment Agreement (ERPA), with the Carbon Fund of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), in January 2021.

The Benefit Sharing Plan outlines the modalities for distribution of USD\$12.5 million in carbon results-based payments under the Emissions Reduction Payment Agreement (ERPA).

The ERPA required Government to dedicate forests as carbon stocks capable of reducing greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions from agriculture, forests and other land use by 2.5 million tons over a 5-year period i.e., from 11 July 2019 to 31 December 2024.

5. Review of the “Fijian-Made – Buy Fijian” Brand

Cabinet endorsed the review of the “Fijian Made – Buy Fijian” branding.

The Ministry of Trade, Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises will engage with stakeholders to review the Brand and create an effective marketing strategy.

The intention of the review is to build Fiji back better in terms of economic recovery that focuses on blue economy, sustainability, resilience and food security.

It will also complement Government’s plans for post-pandemic economic recovery.

6. Review of the Regulation of Surfing Areas Act 2010

Cabinet endorsed the review of the **Regulation of Surfing Areas Act 2010**

This law was promulgated in 2010 to liberate access to any surfing area in Fiji. It defined "surfing area" as the “reefs or other foreshore or offshore areas, which are used for surfing or any water sport.”

In section 4 (1), this law “wholly and absolutely vested in the Director for Lands the absolute ownership of all “surfing areas” without any compensation being payable to any person.”

Under section 4(2), the absolute vesting of all interest in a surfing area in the Director for Lands overrides and nullifies any other interest in any surfing area existing in any other person or body by virtue of any written law.” Further, “to the extent of any inconsistency with the Decree, and any other written law, the Surfing Decree shall prevail.” (Section 4(2))

Cabinet agreed that the review is imperative to ensure that our laws relating to surfing areas, and by extension tourism, are conducive for the further development and growth of the tourism industry which has become the backbone of Fiji’s economy.

The outcome of the review will be tabled in Cabinet in August this year.

7. Letter of Agreement between the Pacific Community and the Ministry of Agriculture

Cabinet approved an agreement with Pacific Community and the Parties on Pacific Organic Learning Farm Network.

The purpose of this Project is to develop organic farming systems.

It facilitates access to modern farming methods and technologies for food security, climate change adaptation, and biodiversity conservation by smallholder farmers.

The purpose of the Project is to develop organic farming systems, access to modern farming methods and technologies for food security, climate change adaptation, and biodiversity conservation in order to strengthen resilience of smallholder producers through the establishment of a network of organic learning farms.

The project is part of the Kiwa Initiative. The Kiwa Initiative launched in 2020, is a 4.6 million-euro initiative implemented by Pacific Community aimed at meeting the climate resilience and capacity building needs of smallholder farmers in Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu, Palau, Nauru, Tonga, Timor Leste and the Solomon Islands.

8. International Solar Alliance Grant for Solarisation of two Health Centres

Cabinet agreed to a grant assistance of USD 50,000 from the International Solar Alliance (ISA) for the solarisation of two health centres at Daviqele, Nabukelevu Kadavu and Dakuibeqa, Beqa.

The project will provide 24 hours solar power supply to the two facilities.

The project will include the installation of an eight kilowatt solar system with a battery capacity of 20kWh for each of the health centres. The system will provide 24 hours supply to the health facilities.

The Department of Energy had consulted with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services and the two health centres were identified.

ISA will engage the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Limited based in New Delhi, India as the Project Management Consultant (PMC).

A tripartite agreement between the ISA, NTPC Limited and the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Meteorological Services outlining the responsibilities of the respective parties for the project, will be executed.

9. One month for Export of Beche-de-mer

Cabinet approved the lifting of the bech-de-mer export ban for one-month from the 30 April to 30 May 2023.

This will enable the clearing of fully processed and semi processed bech-de-mer at the processing plants awaiting exports.

The ban on harvesting of sea cucumber will remain in place during this one-month period.

10. Establishment of a Korea-Fiji Cooperation Centre on Oceans and Fisheries

Cabinet approved the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Fisheries and the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea on the Establishment and Operation of a Korea-Fiji Cooperation centre on Oceans and Fisheries in Fiji.

The Korea-Fiji Cooperation Centre on Oceans and Fisheries will strengthen research cooperation in the marine and fisheries sectors between Fiji and Korea and lay a foundation for consistent and systematic cooperation in identifying and executing new projects.

11. World Bank/IMF Spring Meetings

Cabinet was informed of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, and Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics' attendance at the Spring Meetings of the World Bank Group (WBG) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Washington DC from 10 to 15 April, 2023.

12. Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation Digital Week

Cabinet was updated on the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) 2023 Digital Week Events which comprised the Executive Committee (EXCO) Meeting, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and Telecommunications Forum, Ministerial Alliance and Council Meeting highlights held in the Royal Society and Marlborough House, London, the United Kingdom from 17 to 24 February 2023.

Fiji played a pivotal role as the Chair of the executive committee since being unanimously elected as Chair from 2018 until 2023.

The CTO is an international organisation in which Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth governments, business organisations and civil society organisations are members. Fiji has been a full member country of the CTO since 2012 and has hosted the CTO Council and Forum in 2016.

13. Fiji to host Asia Pacific Telecommunity Policy and Regulatory Forum 2023

Cabinet was updated on the hosting of the 23rd Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT) Policy and Regulatory Forum (PRF) 2023.

The PRF provides a platform where high-level policy makers and regulators meet to discuss telecommunications and ICT policy and regulatory challenges that are of common interest to the region.

Fiji will host the PRF from 20 to 22 June 2023.

-End-