

DISCLAIMER

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PART A

**DAY 6
9:33am**

I. ORDERS OF THE DAY

- **Consideration of Parliamentary Committee Reports and Government Responses (cont.)**

- 1. P.P. 2022/2023 No. 35, Report of the Social Sector Committee on P.P. 2020/2021 No. 63, Annual Report of the National Kidney Foundation for Financial Year 2019/2020;
- P.P. 2022/2023 No.83, Government Responses on P.P. 2022/2023 No. 35 (cont.)**

**Mr. Speaker announced that the floor is open for Members who wish to raise issues or make queries on the recommendations and responses put forth.*

i. Afioga FEPULEAI Faasavalu Faimata Sua – Member for Salega 1

The member greeted Mr. Speaker and all Members, the Clerk and his Office, the Attorney General and all Government Officials present in the House and Samoa listening from near and far. He then commended the Chairperson and his committee for the well-prepared report presented.

The member touched on Recommendation 2 and 3 and highlighted that it mainly refers to the duty of each member for their respective constituency. The member requested to the Chairperson and Minister to have additional programs in addition to community outreach programs, as awareness is not enough to counter the problem, more action is needed to continue the promotion of healthy living. Furthermore, the Member recalled a program for women's Committee's in villages, that the Ministry of Women sponsored, and \$10k was distributed to encourage healthy lifestyles, such as Zumba and exercising in villages.

He then mentioned the celebration of the international World Food Day and suggested to have a Day to celebrate Samoan Food Day where we only eat locally produced food, such as fish and vegetables from our land, to promote a healthy diet similar to World Food Day. The member also proposed banning noodles and candy from school cafeterias and canteens as this is poor eating habits for our children.

ii. Tofa Hon LAUOFO Fonotoe Nuafesili Pierre Laufo – Leader of Opposition Member for Anoamaa 2

The Hon Member was pleased to note that the Ministry continues to prioritize prevention over treatment, and commended the transition of the Foundation to their new location. He then queried if there are any plans for renovations in Tuasivi as there is dire need for major repairs. The Member then made a recommendation for dialysis machines especially for remote districts in the rural areas to ensure safety on road especially during torrential rain where rivers/fords tend are flooded, causing hindrance for these people seeking treatment.

The Opposition Leader also raised the issue noted in the report regarding the lack of local specialist doctors for dialysis treatments in the Foundation. He noted that the report stated two foreign surgeons have to travel to Samoa occasionally to conduct surgery/treatment for the people thus, the member queried whether the Foundation has any plans to send local students overseas to study this area as a long-term goal for the benefit of the Foundation and avoid reliant on overseas specialists.

He then acknowledged the work of Dr. Ben Matalavea in promoting healthy lifestyle and in the testing and screenings for kidney. The Member advised that there are numerous opportunities to send locals overseas to train in this field so that we can have more specialized people specifically for this area as it is much needed given the increase number of patients seeking dialysis treatment.

iii. Afioga MASINALUPE Makesi Masinalupe - Lefaga & Faleaseela.

The Member greeted the Speaker, Deputy PM, Cabinet, Leader of the Opposition and all Members of the Assembly and those present in the House. He then commended the Chairperson and Committee for preparing the Report at hand, and highlighted that it mainly outlines preventative measures for the issue of kidney disease. The Member noted the importance of utilizing technology effectively, as most individuals have phones which can be used to find healthy habits and preventative measures to avoid kidney failure. The Member then encouraged to drink a glass of water before bedtime and when waking up in the morning. He then expressed gratitude to the Minister of Communications and Information Technology on the importance of internet connection and requested to lower the cost for internet connectivity as it plays an important part in a person's health.

iv. Afioga LAGAAIA Tiatuau Tufuga - Palauli 3

The Member greeted the Speaker and all Members present then noted the seriousness of kidney failure especially given the alarming rate of youths affected by this disease. He then acknowledged the Minister of Health for bringing up this issue and providing awareness on ways to address it, and requested the establishment of a dialysis facility in Salelologa as this is more accessible for other members of Savaii residing in rural areas. The Member also recalled an incident whereby a dialysis patient was rushed to Tuasivi for treatment; however, did not make it as the distance was too far thus his request for a Kidney Facility at Salelologa.

v. Susuga Hon MULIPOLA Anarosa Ale Molioo – Minister of Finance

The Hon Minister greeted the House, and noted the importance of the issue discussed then asserted that she appreciates comments and advises brought by Members on the Kidney Foundation; however, she does not agree with building a new NKF around the country, or purchasing more dialysis machines. This is because it reflects poor health and management in the country and indicates Samoa's acceptance that there will be more and more patients needing dialysis treatments. The Hon Minister then urged Members that they should consider the root causes of the issue (kidney failure) and initiate preventative measures.

The Hon Minister also mentioned the theme message from an Early Childhood Development she attended in Fiji by Children notes: "Less Talk – We need More Action" thus the Minister urged Members to make a commitment to themselves not to use a dialysis machine, and pleaded to the Minister of Health not to bring in any more dialysis machines. In this regard, she challenged the Minister of Health and Parliament for preventative action and to refrain from bringing in more dialysis machines and setting up more Dialysis facilities as the cure to this disease is in our hands.

vi. Afioga ALIIMALEMANU Moti Momoemausu Alofa Tuuau: Alataua West

The Member addressed her fellow Parliamentarians and all who were present in the House and clarified that the reason why it was encouraged bringing in dialysis machines is giving our people, and families the ability to prolong the lives of our people so that families have more time with them. The Member highlighted the importance of discussing Committee Reports as it acknowledges the work of each Ministry and Corporation and informs Members and the public about each Ministry and Corporation's tasks and responsibilities.

vii. Afioga LUPEMATASILA Galumalemana Tologata Tofia Tile- Falelatai ma Samatau

The Member expressed gratitude to the Chairman and his Committee for the preparation of the report and recommendations considered. He then commended the Minister of Health and Ministry on addressing the issue on ways to prevent such disease. He also commended the Ministry of Women for initiatives/programs offered to various districts in promoting healthy habits such as

the \$10K given out to each constituency for health-related promotions. He further advised the Minister and Ministries for other health initiatives to spark interest and gain the attention of citizens. The Member urged the Ministry and Government to look into other means of improving these assistance offered to districts, especially for Savaii, as it is the role of the Government to respond to the needs of the people. The Member also noted the importance of the role of Church Ministers as spiritual healing through prayers and fasting is important.

The Member also highlighted the differences in technology in the olden days compared to today, he believes that NCDs and kidney failure are not new but given the upgraded technological devices, we are able to detect such diseases which could not have been detected in the past. In this regard, he encouraged Members to be cautious about these diseases and draw closer to God, as He is our greatest Healer.

viii. Afioga LEANA eaana Ronnie Posini- Safata 1

The Member commended the Ministry of Health on their efforts in addressing this issue and acknowledged the role played by the Ministry of Agriculture in addressing this issue by further pushing the growth of local agricultural products, as these are healthy options for our people. The Member commended on the recommendations provided by the Committee, and emphasized the importance of preventative measures and it is worth noting that there are also locally grown tobacco and alcohol production in the country which also contribute to kidney failure and NCDs. The Member stated that if we're really trying to promote healthy living, we should then have a regulation to stop selling such products and making them as it has a negative impact to our health.

ix. Afioga Hon SALA Fata Pinati - Sagaga 3

The Member greeted the Speaker and the whole House then spoke on the freedom of choice gifted to each individual by God, to choose as they please in this lifetime. He then emphasized the importance of choosing to obey and honour God. The Hon Member spoke on a spiritual encounter with regards to the Catholic faith and their belief in the Holy Mother Mary and pleaded with Members to keep the faith in God and to seek God's love and forgiveness. The Hon. Member sought the Assembly's forbearance as the Holy Spirit is encouraging him to share about these things.

He then commended the Minister of Health for his service through the Ministry and echoed the request made by a fellow Member regarding the need for a Hospital in Salelologa for convenience and accessibility of the public to essential services. Furthermore, the Member noted his support for the point made by the Minister of Finance where it is not needed to purchase more dialysis machines. The Member noted that acquiring more machines implies that more people will become sick and eventually end up using these machines. He concluded by conveying apologies

to Mr. Speaker for their shortcomings during proceedings and encouraged his understanding and patience with the Opposition; he then wished Mr. Speaker well on the execution of his roles.

x. Afioga Hon TOEOLESULUSULU Cedric Pose Salesa Schuster – Minister of Communication and Information Technology

The Hon Minister noted that the 1 million initiative for each constituency can be used to conduct awareness programs and initiatives that promotes healthy living. This can also assist with the government's efforts in trying to address the issue of kidney failure and NCDs. Furthermore, the Minister suggested districts to allocate 1% (10k) of their 1 million for preventative programs to promote healthy lifestyle and urged the Government to construct a template as a guide for these programs' implementation annually for each district.

**Proceedings set aside at 10:46am; and
Resumed at 11:17am**

Motion- Deputy Prime Minister

Hon Deputy PM moved a motion to set aside S.O 32(1) to change sitting hours as follows: Sitting to continue until 1pm and to reconvene at 2pm - 6pm; motion seconded & approved

• Afioga LAUMATIAMANU Ringo M Purcell, Chairperson of the Social Sector Committee

The Chairperson responded to queries and matters raised by Members on the Committee Report; in regards to matters raised by the Member for Siumu to conduct blood test, he acknowledged the importance of the point raised and noted that this issue of kidney failure is very serious and it is caused at a very young age which stems from poor unhealthy choices of food we consume. He then added onto the advice by the Minister of Education to encourage healthy food and nutrition alongside education. The Chairperson further acknowledged all Members on their points raised and assured them that they will be taken into consideration. He further acknowledged the Minister of Agriculture for always promoting agro-farming to encourage our people to eat healthy and to stay healthy.

In regards to the query raised by the Member for Anoamaa 1 regarding 64 machines available at the Foundation, the Chairperson clarified that there are 64 plugs available at the NKF building for machines to be plugged-in; however, as of now there are only 32 machines operating while 30 new machines have been approved by cabinet and are awaiting their

arrival. On the issue of personnel cost, where there are 18 staff with a personnel allocation of 2.1 million, he clarified that the staff mentioned are all registered nurses and they were trained specifically on how to operate the machines and care for dialysis patients. Not including 34 employees in administration positions that brings the total of employees to 54, this information can be found on page 27 on their Annual Report 2019/2020.

The Chairman clarified from the AR 2019/20, a total of 18-19 deaths were recorded due to kidney disease within the financial year. These deaths do not include people not admitted to the Foundation. He then expressed his gratitude to the General Manager of NKF for the works they have put into providing prevention and treatment for people affected with kidney diseases. In reference to comments and advises against the purchasing of more dialysis machines, the Chairperson noted that he understands the request made; however, it is their duty to provide service and cater for the growing number of dialysis patients in the country hence why the need to acquire more dialysis machines is unavoidable. The Chairperson also stressed the importance of healthy eating and maintaining our faith through all hardships especially for patients experiencing this unfortunate health issue and encouraged them to eat healthy to prolong their lives.

Afioga Hon Tuuu Anasii Leota- Siumu

The member followed up on his question about the Government's assistance for youth who suffer from NCDs.

- **Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele, Minister of Health**

The Hon Minister assured the Member of Siumu he has prepared his Responses to all queries missed out by the Chairman. He then acknowledged the former Minister of Health FAIMALOTOA for her efforts and services to the country through the Ministry of health. He understands the value of her role and responsibilities especially considering the financial period and all the challenges encountered. Also acknowledged the Ministry as a whole for their services as reflected in the Annual Report. The Minister acknowledged and commended all 17 Members who deliberated on the report which reflects the important role the Foundation plays for our nation. He then asserted that most comments provided by Members are on preventative measures; however, it is also important to look at the root causes of kidney failure and NCDs.

The Minister then quoted Mike Myers statement, 'to work towards addressing the problem' and he was inspired by this, so he insinuated that we should prioritize Primary Health care and personal hygiene. The Minister stressed the importance of primary health-care which is the responsibility of Parliament as leaders of the country to facilitate. The Minister emphasized the importance of starting our health-promotions and advocacies in our communities to avoid the costs of sending our people overseas for medical treatment. The Minister also expressed his gratitude to the Clerk and Office for heeding the request and advice he offered in regards to breakfast/lunch meals offered for Members today.

In regards to the question raised by the Member for Siumu regarding the Government's assistance to youth who suffer from NCDs, the Minister clarified that our young people from infancy-15 years of age are entitled to free medical check-up and medications from our national Hospital, this also includes youth with terminal and chronic illnesses. The Minister noted that currently the Foundation has specialist surgeons from overseas who travels 3-4 times to Samoa to assist our local surgeon with dialysis patients.

The Hon Minister also clarified to the Leader of the Opposition that on the 19th December last year during the opening of the new foundation, a graduation was also held for local students who were trained by New Zealand doctors/specialists on the knowledge and skills of handling dialysis machines. In regards to questions about the need to upgrade the hospital in Tuasivi, the Minister informed Members that there are machines at the hospital; however, more can be added from the new set of machines coming in later. On the issue of setting up a new hospital for Savaii, the Minister clarified that there is 20 acres of land reserved for this new hospital at Salelologa and noted that clearing work is being done at the area while awaiting for construction to commence.

The Minister further stressed the importance of conducting site visits on school canteens and restaurants to monitor what they sell, and emphasized that it requires a collective action to put business owners in the right place especially on food sold to students and children. The Hon Minister also reminded the house of their other role to visit all restaurants and businesses for health safety issues to make sure that the area and the space used in preparation of food is clean and hygienic.

He then commended the Member for Aleipata itupa i Lalo for outlining the importance of a balanced diet, and acknowledged her profession as a former nurse thus her knowledge on the issue is very important to inform and educate Members about healthy-living.

The Hon Minister further acknowledged comments made by Members regarding the importance of more initiatives by the Government, thus raising the importance of the Special Advocacy Parliamentary Group, SPAGHL. He also acknowledged the comments by the Minister of Finance, in which she strongly disagrees in bringing in more dialysis machines and emphasized that the Minister means well. This will encourage our people to eat healthy, live healthy, and more importantly to avoid being listed as a dialysis patient.

In addition, the Minister stated during their site visit with his CEO and Committee on the 2nd and 3rd of February, they were delivering wheelchairs and canes for district hospitals (with Tuasivi receiving 15 wheelchairs while other district hospitals received 5 each) and stated no Members were present or waiting for them for this visit. The Minister mentioned that he is considering an advice put forth by the management to consider a mobile-service of dialysis machines out to rural areas as a solution. The Minister commented on the point raised by the Member for Lefaga and Faleaseela regarding the use of phones for medical advice and treatment; he acknowledged the

Member and asserted that it is always best to seek a professional medical opinion from the doctor.

In regards to the number of deaths of dialysis patients, the Minister commended the preceding Minister of Health at the time of the AR presented, as these are significant information which can be found in page 8 of the NKF Report. Furthermore, the Minister informed Parliament that there are dialysis patients who have been on treatment for 21 years or 15 years which is a result of good healthcare and continuation of dialysis treatment.

xi. Afioga ALAIASA Moefaauouo Malagatutogia i Sepulona Moananu- Anoamaa 1

The Member expressed his gratitude to the Minister for the responses given today and queried the doctor from the Lufilufi district hospital who said that they do not need dialysis machines. The Member further stressed the importance of the issue at hand and informed the Minister that his constituency committee will conduct a survey about the number of dialysis patients in his constituency to determine an accurate answer to this question and the need for a dialysis machine at his district hospital.

xii. Afioga Fuaava Suluimalo Amataga- Aleipata Itupa i Luga

The Member also echoed concerns raised by the Member for Anoamaa 1 and requested if a survey can be conducted in his constituency to determine the actual number of dialysis patients in his constituency who are in need of dialysis machines.

Susuga Hon LAAULI Leauatea Polotaivao Fosi – Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries

The Hon Minister reminded the House it is the paramount role of the Government to address this issue and noted that he has plans to put forward and requests the Speaker to revive the SPAGHL committee given its importance in advocating for healthy living and healthy eating. He then urged Members of Parliament to stand united and take lead in initiating healthy programs and activities in respective constituencies as well as to raise awareness and educate the youth.

Afioga Masinalupe Makesi Masinalupe- Lefaga ma Faleaseela

The Member commended the Minister of Health for responding to his request about the need for wheelchairs for his district hospital and also assured the Minister that 5 acres of land has been offered for the construction of a hospital in Lefaga and Faleaseela. The Member also requested the Minister for an Ambulance to be stationed at his district once the district hospital is built.

**Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele, Minister of Health
(cont.)**

The Minister clarified to Members questioning the doctors claiming they do not need machines in the district hospitals does not mean they will not offer dialysis machines. In regards to the Member for Lefaga and Faleaseela's request for wheelchairs and an ambulance for his constituency, the Minister clarified that they cannot accept the request when there is no hospital in place at his constituency. He also noted that he did not receive a letter in regards to a hospital in Lefaga. He then acknowledged the former Minister for Health for the efforts made as reflected in the report being considered and acknowledged Samoa for the continuous support.

Mr. SPEAKER:

In regards to SPAGHL mentioned by the Minister of Agriculture, there would be a Seminar for Members in May to discuss further on these Special Parliamentary Advocacy Groups, as these Groups are essential in addressing such issues deliberated in Parliament.

- **Afioga LAUMATIAMANU Ringo M Purcell, Chairperson of the Social Sector Committee**

The Chairperson moved a motion for the Assembly to approve its Report on the *P.P. 2020/2021 No. 63, Annual Report of the National Kidney Foundation for Financial Year 2019/2020*; seconded and approved.

Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele, Minister of Health

The Hon Minister moved a motion for the Assembly to approve the Governments Responses on *P.P. 2022/2023 No.83, Government Responses on P.P. 2022/2023 No. 35*; seconded and approved

ii. P.P. 2022/2023 No. 36, Report of the Social Sector Committee on P.P. 2020/2021 No. 98 and P.P. 2021/2022 No. 53, Annual Reports of the National University of Samoa for Financial Years 2019/2020 & 2020/2021;

- P.P. 2022/2023 No.84, Government Responses on P.P. 2022/2023 No. 36

Afioga LAUMATIAMANU Ringo M Purcell, Chairperson of the Social Sector Committee, moved a motion for the Assembly to consider its Report on *P.P. 2020/2021 No. 98 and P.P. 2021/2022 No. 53, Annual Reports of the National University of Samoa for Financial Years 2019/2020 & 2020/2021* which consists its findings, recommendations and resolution; motion seconded and approved.

The Chairperson then presented the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1:

The Committee recommends the Government to construct a new school building for the School of Medicine in Motootua since the current building has insufficient space to cater for educating future doctors.

Recommendation 2:

The Committee recommends the Ministry of Commerce Industry and Labour to encourage private companies to support their employees by allowing them to attend apprenticeship classes for capacity building in Vocational skills.

Recommendation 3:

The Committee recommends the National University of Samoa to continue registering courses and programmes with the Samoa Qualifications Authority and consider ways for other programmes to be officially recognized by overseas institutions.

- **Afioga Hon SEUULA Ioane, Minister of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC)**

The Minister greeted the House and pursued to read out the following Government's Responses.

Response to Recommendation 1:

We note the recommendation and wish to inform the Committee that the Government of Japan and the Government of Samoa are about to sign a Memorandum and exchange project documentations to officially start the project of building a new 3 storey building for the National University of Samoa's Faculty of Health Sciences. This new building will house the School of Medicine, the School of Nursing and the new Library. This building will be built at the Le Papaigalagala main site due to the MoH's initial lack of support for this project because they have future plans for the current School of Medicine location.

Response to Recommendation 2:

We note the recommendation. The National University of Samoa and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour (MCIL) continues to work closely in the delivery and administration of the Samoa Apprenticeship Scheme. This year marks 50 years since the Samoa Apprenticeship Scheme started in 1972, and on 13 July this year we started the new Samoa Apprenticeship Certificate III and Certificate IV programmes in the 7 trade areas of: Automotive, Carpentry, Electrical, Fitting & Machining, Plumbing, Refrigeration & Air-conditioning, Welding. The payment for Apprenticeship fees is as follows: MCIL pays 50%, the Employer pays 30% and the Apprentice pays 20%. This is the reason why some employers or private companies may be reluctant to push their employees to build their capacity through the Apprenticeship programme. Despite that, the Ministry and the University continues to advocate to encourage employers of private companies that the Apprenticeship programmes is about quality training to upskill their workers.

Response to Recommendation 3:

We note the recommendation. Since January 2020, the National University of Samoa has started moving all of its programmes to be accredited by the Samoa Qualifications Authority and registered on the Samoa Qualifications Framework. Today, of the 104 NUS programmes, only 37 programmes (or 35.6%) have been accredited by SQA, 15 programmes (or 14.4%) are currently in progress, while 48 programmes (or 46%) have yet to be accredited but they will be soon. The NUS Management aims to accredit 70% of our programmes by the end of 2024.

Currently our graduates who went overseas with their NUS qualifications and have successfully returned with degree from universities in New Zealand, Australia, Europe and America is a sign that our NUS qualifications are slowly being recognized internationally. Our Masters of Development Studies programme is currently being accredited by the International Accreditation Council (IAC) for Global Development Studies of the European Association of Development Research & Training Institutes (IADI). Our TVET graduates are also recognized in New Zealand and Australia by the relevant trades employers.

**Mr Speaker opened the floor for any Member to raise any concerns and/or queries on the Report under consideration in detail.*

i. Afioga PESETA Vaifou Tevagaena – Member for Faasaleleaga 5

The Member commended the Minister and Chairperson and the Committee for the preparation of the report. He further commended the government's plans to build a new hospital at Moto'otua (Health Science Building) as this is very important for our country to meet higher standards and accredited courses in the country. The Member also expressed his gratitude to the Australian Government for their assistance through the Apprenticeship Program. Afioga PESETA then requested to have the Australian Government provide experts with knowledge in various fields to expand the knowledge and skills of youth under this program. He further noted that he perceives that the students/youth after years of learning and receiving the skills and expertise in their respective field is not reflected when they execute their work.

ii. Afioga LEAANA Ronnie Posini – Member for Safata 1

The Member stated Education and Health do not foster revenue rather it is where majority of Government expenses is allocated, as these two are the most essential areas needed by the people. The Member voiced his support for the plans to build a new building for the School of Health Science and urged the University to look at implementing other programs that could be beneficial for our people. The Member also stated on how costly Vocational education is but suggested to include more fields and programs in the technical vocational studies, which can be achieved through effective collaboration between the NUS and MCIL. The Member commended SQA on their continuous collaboration with NUS in regards to Program Accreditation as SQA qualifications are recognized by foreign countries such as New Zealand and Australia, which may eventually lead the recognition of NUS internationally and globally.

The Member then queried the possibility to separate the operations of NUS courses and Apprenticeship-Programs in order to avoid students from only selecting to pursue apprenticeship courses when they fail to meet the requirements of the NUS.

iii. Afioga FEPULEAI Faasavalu Faimata Sua – Member for Salega 1

The Member expressed his support on Recommendation 2 and noted that in regards to engineering course, he stated that while the child is learning in class, he/she is also doing practical work in class and this has enabled them to learn faster and be motivated to push themselves because the theory is tested through a practical test at the same time.

The Member then raised his concern regarding the length of years required by students to take apprenticeship programs from when it was first established in 1993-2006. The Member believes that this is a contributing factor to why most students are not well equipped and passionate about their programs because nowadays students only take 1 year to complete a course compared to the past where students were required to complete 3 years. Further to this, several youths tend to find employment elsewhere, such as the RSE scheme which therefore defers their education. As a result, the lack of knowledge and passion by these students will lead them to opt for easier jobs such as seasonal work schemes living a huge gap in our apprenticeship-related workforce. In this regard, the Member suggested separating the Apprenticeship and NUS courses. The Member concluded by highlighting the issue on the shortage of lecturers for vocational courses and therefore suggested that the University looks into hiring enough teachers.

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