

## **DISCLAIMER**

This Report provides a brief of **'PART B'** of the Proceedings of Parliament on **Thursday 9 March 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 **'PART B'** of the Proceedings of Parliament on **Thursday 9 March 2023**, you should consult the official Hansard or seek assistance from the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

## **PART B 2:08pm**

Mr Speaker conveyed apologies to the Members and Samoa listening in for the poor connection with the broadcasting of proceedings of Parliament which resulted to setting aside proceedings of the Assembly before 1pm.

- **Afioga Hon TUALA , Deputy Prime Minister and Acting Minister for the ACC (cont.)**

The Hon Deputy Prime Minister commended the recommendation put forth by the Opposition Leader on the eligibility of those to claim ACC and the point raised by the Member for Sagaga 2, in regards to the feasibility of extending the coverage of people to claim ACC.

Hon Deputy PM highlighted points raised by members regarding those who can claim ACC benefits, and asserted that these requests will be taken into consideration and the Corporation will look at ways to expand benefits coverage. In addition, the Minister acknowledged the request by some members to include farmers and fishers under the ACC benefits as these are important tasks in the livelihood of families, which in turn contribute to the agricultural development of the country.

In regards to people working on the sea, fishermen, the DPM stated that these are also people contributing to the development of Samoa through selling the fruits of their work, however they are not eligible to ACC benefits. The Deputy Prime Minister outlined that the decrease in the number of accidents for the reporting FY is very significant and the reasons behind this decrease are the awareness programs on safety conducted by the Corporation in collaboration with other Ministries such as; the Ministry of Police. Furthermore, another positive factor contributing to the decrease in number of incidents is the prohibition of alcohol sales like Olioli. In regards to the eligible claims for employed/unemployed widow/widower, the Minister asserted the benefit/entitlement is not only for the mother/father as it also includes

the children. The Hon Deputy Prime Minister further emphasized the importance of the Corporation especially with their mission to provide compensation during accidents to those who are eligible.

- **Afioga LAUMATIAMANU Ringo M Purcell, Chairperson for the Social Sector Committee and Member for Safata 2.**

Moved a motion for the Assembly to approve its Report on *P.P. 2022/2023 No. 15, Report of the Social Sector Committee on P.P. 2021/2022 No. 8, Annual Report of the Accident Compensation Corporation for Financial Year 2019/2020*; motion seconded and approved.

- **Afioga Hon TUALA Ponifasio, Acting Minister for the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour and Deputy Prime Minister.**

The Hon Prime Minister moved a motion for the Assembly to approve its responses on recommendations put forth by the Committee on the Report; motion seconded and approved.

**iii. P.P. 2022/2023 No. 16, Report of the Economic Sector Committee on P.P. 2020/2021 No. 126 and P.P. 2021/2022 No. 41, Annual Reports of the Samoa Bureau of Statistics for Financial Years 2019/2020 & 2020/2021.**

**P.P. 2022/2023 No.79, Government Responses on P.P. 2022/2023 No. 16**

**Afioga NIUAVA Eti L Malolo, Chairperson for the Economic Sector Committee and Member for Vaisigano 1,** moved motion for the Assembly to consider its Report which consist its findings and recommendations; motion seconded and approved.

The Chairperson addressed the House by delivering the overall findings and recommendations of the Committee as follows:

**Recommendation 1:**

Update the information technology system used by the BDM Registry to ensure that the service is efficiently provided. Not only does it need to be updated but also look for a system that can be operated locally to make it easier for the office to execute their tasks.

**Recommendation 2:**

Remain working closely with the Government Ministries such as the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Police, Ministry of Customs and Revenue, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Ministry of Education, Central Bank of Samoa and other SOEs to ensure that the office will able to respond to any request on data whenever needed.

**Recommendation 3:**

Follow up requirements for the completion of the National ID project. It's an important project that has been operated for years and it must be ready by now.

**Recommendation 4:**

Encourage conducting trainings for staff to enhance their abilities and skills in using technology and resources provided to carry out their tasks.

**Recommendation 5:**

Find a place where all division can be integrated to facilitate the execution of its services. Poor communication and unsatisfactory service delivery in some cases was noted due to distance between divisions workplaces. The government needs to look at ways to address this issue.

- **Afioga Hon LEOTA Laki Lamositele, Minister for SBS**

The Hon Minister delivered the following responses on the recommendations presented by the Committee:

**Response to Recommendation 1:**

The BDM registry is the central registry that will be used by the National ID project for registration and verifications of citizens. It is anticipated that the project will be able to assist in updating the register and improving on the BDM registry system.

**Response to Recommendation 2:**

SBS continues to work in partnership with the Stakeholders, such as Government Ministries, SOEs and the Community. Our mission is to work in partnership with all our partners, as this will strengthen our data sharing as well as other sharing of other vital information that enable everyone to verify indicators and guide policies and decisions.

**Response to Recommendation 3:**

We have just completed the community consultations for the National ID Draft Bill. It is anticipated that the Bill will go into Parliament mid-year, and once the Bill is passed in Parliament, all the other milestones will be executed. All other milestones of the project are to be implemented pending approval of the Legislation.

**Response to Recommendation 4:**

SBS continues to prioritize trainings for staff using on the job training, as well as opportunities provided by our regional and international partners who shares their expertise and helping our team is conducting these trainings using various technological applications and platforms. Our ICT team always assist as counterparts to these IT Trainings.

**Response to Recommendation 5:**

This is of the main challenges that we have faced throughout the past years. We humbly urge the government for a bigger and proper office space for our office to address the issues that we currently face of having scattered and remote office locations.

*\*Mr Speaker announced that the Chamber is now open for Members concerns/issues/queries on the Committee's Recommendations and Government Responses provided accordingly.*

**i. Tofa Hon LAUOFO Fonotoe Nuafesili Pierre Laufo – Member for Anoamaa 2**

The Opposition Leader commended the Chairperson and Committee for the Report, as well as the Minister and Office for their services to Samoa and in preparation of the Annual Report. He then acknowledged the response where a Bill is being considered by the Attorney General for the implementation of the National ID for our people. This project is very important as it can keep accurate information about each individual and be useful for national purposes.

In regards to the National ID project, the Member noted that this has been the focus of the Bureau of Statistics for accurate records. The Hon Member commented on the importance of collaboration with relevant authorities to ensure the accuracy of records, he also urged information sharing not only locally but with foreign countries, such as American Samoa to have proper record keeping.

The Hon Member with reference to Recommendation 1 stated the importance of having factual and authentic information of records such as every information in a birth certificate must be correct and authentic. Hon LAUOFO highlighted the importance of the Office's role and the storage of accurate records of people such as the name and place of birth. The member stressed that these are important information not only for use in country but also for travel purposes.

Hon LAUOFO, noted the decrease of numbers with births, deaths and registered marriages; then sought clarification from the Committee Chair for possible causes of these decreases. He also acknowledged the importance of conducting surveys to gather accurate and updated information. He then mentioned the imbalance of trade ratio, noting that there was too much import compared to exported goods. Furthermore, Hon LAUOFO stated that it is imperative for developing nations to have the majority of its population in the youth category (youthful population) to help in the development of the nation, given they are the most abled bodies and the strongest group.

**ii. Afioga AUUAPAAU Mulipola Aloitafua – Deputy Speaker and Member for Aiga i le Tai**

The member raised issue regarding the Bill in place for the implementation of the National ID questioning whether this is a reversed process where the Bill should have been drafted first before other processes conducted by the Office. The member sought clarification for the matter noted in Recommendation 3.

**iii. Afioga Lupematasila Galumalemana Tologata Tofia Tile- Falelatai ma Samatau**

The Member commended the Chairperson and their Committee for their thorough report. Then spoke on Recommendation 2 and stressed on the importance of the Bureau collaborating with respective Ministries and SOEs. The Member stated surveys and information gathered by SBS is very essential as the development require these baseline data to determine improvement/progress or otherwise. The Member urged the Government to create or determine indicators required in order to attain accurate and authentic information. He then recalled during Election Days whereby after election day for Vaimauga 3, information was released that over 2,000 people did not vote, he then stressed, that records acquired from our people should be updated and accurate in order to process the right information. He then stated that for national ID, in order for this project to work, it needs valid information.

**iv. Afioga ALIIMALEMANU Moti Momoemausu Alofa Tuuau- Alataua i Sisifo**

The Member emphasised that SBS performs one of the core and essential functions for our country and Government as it provides all records of citizens; respective Ministries and SOEs role will not be complete without the information recorded by the SBS. Furthermore, the member noted the importance of collecting and recording accurate information on the population of Samoa, as this information affects the decision making of all Government Ministries and eventually influences national interests as a whole. The Member stated that the GDP of a country is measured/based on the statistics collected by the Bureau. She then urged to conduct a Special audit to affirm the collection of valid and accurate data, as these information are also used by the CBS and other ministries.

**v. Afioga NIUAVA Eti L Malolo, Chairperson for the Economic Sector Committee and Member for Vaisigano 1**

In response to queries and recommendations put forth by Members, he commends the SBS for their effort and commitment in ensuring their role is executed effectively and efficiently. The Chairperson emphasized the importance of the Office's role and contribution to the country. In regards to concerns raised against the accuracy of the information and statistics collected by the SBS, the Chairperson clarified that the work of the SBS relies heavily on the collaboration of other Ministries, such as the Ministry of Health, with the provision of Birth Certificates of all the new-born babies in the country.

In regards to paucity of information recorded by the Office, the Chairperson elaborated that this was due to the delay of information provided by respective Ministries and SOEs. He further iterated on the importance of collaborating with all ministries and agencies in order for the SBS to record accurate information. The Chairperson acknowledged the advise given by the Member for Alataua West and noted that these matters will be taken into consideration for the overall

improvement of the Bureau's operations. The Chairperson concluded by acknowledging the services and contribution of the previous CEO who recently passed away.

**vi. Afioga FUAAVA Suluimalo Amataga- Aleipata Itupa I Luga**

The member informed Mr Speaker, that although he is a member of the Committee which considered the report, he believes that the Committee takes on a collective responsibility to ensure the report is clarified. The Member then addressed a point raised by the member for Aiga ile Tai regarding the delay of the National ID project and clarified that the measles outbreak and covid restrictions impacted the completion and progress of the project. He further stressed that the National ID is an important project, which consists of recording important details/records for citizens. Further elaborated that the National ID is to be used as a form of identification for all services hence the need to collaborate with all Government Ministries and Agencies.

- **Afioga Hon LEOTA Laki Lamositele - Minister for Samoa Bureau of Statistics**

The Hon Minister further responded and expressed his support on the suggestions of Member to strengthen the collaboration of SBS and all Government Ministries and SOEs. Furthermore, the Minister acknowledged suggestions made by members to acquire a Specialist with the knowledge and skill to oversee the accuracy of information recorded by the SBS. The minister highlights that the work of the Office is important as the statistics recorded affect national development and decision-making. The Hon Minister urged the Attorney General for necessary drafting of the Bill for the implementation of the National ID noting that they need to hasten this process so that the office can move on to the next stage such as the designing of the ID etc. Furthermore, noted the importance of the National ID as a link between all Government Ministries and Corporations in terms of collective decision making that affects national interests.

- **Afioga NIUAVA Eti L Malolo, Chairperson for the Economic Sector Committee and Member for Vaisigano 1**

The Chairperson moved a motion for the Assembly to approve its Report on P.P. 2022/2023 No. 16, Report of the Economic Sector Committee on P.P. 2020/2021 No. 126 and P.P. 2021/2022 No. 41, Annual Reports of the Samoa Bureau of Statistics for Financial Years 2019/2020 & 2020/2021; motion seconded and approved

- **Afioga Hon LEOTA Laki Lamositele, Minister for Samoa Bureau of Statistics**

Hon Minister moved a motion for the Assembly to approve its responses on the Committee's recommendations; motion seconded and approved.

iv. P.P. 2022/2023 No. 17, Report of the Finance and Expenditure Committee on P.P. 2020/2021 No. 110 & P.P. 2021/2022 No. 11, Annual Reports of the Samoa Post for Financial Years 2019/2020 & 2020/2021.

- P.P. 2022/2023 No.41, Government Responses on P.P. 2022/2023 No. 17

- **Afioga FALEOMAVAEGA Titimaea Tafua, Chairperson for the Finance and Expenditure Committee;** The Chairperson moved a motion for the Assembly to consider its Report on P.P. 2022/2023 No. 17, Report of the Finance and Expenditure Committee on P.P. 2020/2021 No. 110 & P.P. 2021/2022 No. 11, Annual Reports of the Samoa Post for Financial Years 2019/2020 & 2020/2021 which consist its finding and recommendations and resolution; motion seconded and approved

The Chairperson then delivered a summary of its report and provided the following recommendations:

**Recommendation 1:**

The Committee recommends Samoa Post Office to look into ways to expand outpost offices in remote areas to ease overcrowded in the main office. Another important aspect is to increase the use of online services to facilitate and speed up the process for the Community.

**Recommendation 2:**

The Committee recommends the Office to set up Corporate Objectives Plan to measure the time and revenue, so that in case Samoa will face another disease but the Office is well prepared for the next wave just in case.

**Recommendation 3:**

The Committee recommends enforcing marketing and awareness of mail boxed because this is one of their revenues collected.

**Recommendation 4:**

The Committee recommends having a proper parking lot to make it easier for the clients.

- **Afioga Hon TOELUPE Puumulinuku Onesemo, Minister for Samoa Post**

The Hon Minister provided the following responses to Committee's recommendations accordingly.

**Response to Recommendation 1:**

The Committee's recommendation is noted. Samoa Post is exploring opportunities to extend services to rural areas depending where the demand for postal services exists with sustainability considerations. Meanwhile, Samoa Post as a Public Trading Body is governed by the Public Bodies Act 2001. The key objective in section 8, is to be as profitable and efficient as comparable business that is not owned by the State.

Samoa Post implemented system developments projects, for customers access to postal services features that can be provided online. Customers are now able to complete Customs Declaration

Forms online, track and trace their mail items online and all District Post Offices are now connected to the internet. However, core aspects of postal services, that is delivery and sending of Parcels and Courier items, cannot be entertained online.

**Response to Recommendation 2:**

Samoa Post operations are in accordance with Corporate Objectives in its Corporate Plan 2020-2024. These Corporate Objectives are reviewed every six months with changes to Budget Estimates and Strategies accordingly. Reviews from effects of the pandemic, are included in our Quarterly Reports submitted to the Ministry of Public Enterprises.

To notable drop in financial performance in the FY 2019/2020, was due to Covid pandemic, driven by limited understanding about covid, when it first emerged. However, Samoa post and the postal family worldwide, have learnt how to operate with covid safely, by abiding and strengthening all prevention and protection measures from health experts, at all times.

**Response to Recommendation 3:**

The Committee's Recommendation is noted. Marketing of mail boxes is ongoing through social media (Facebook and website) for public awareness, though we have witnessed huge changes in the way society communicates in this technological era.

**Response to Recommendation 4:**

This is an ongoing challenge for Samoa Post and its customers, as the Matafele Building does not have any other vacant space for parking, and Samoa Post is operating in this old building on a lease basis from MNRE.

In this effect, Samoa Post submitted a special request to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. for Samoa Post to lease the RSA land, to build a new Samoa Post Building, to enhance service provision and with a car park for postal customers.

*\*Mr. Speaker opened the opportunity for any Member to raise any concern or queries on recommendations and government responses provided accordingly.*

**i. Tofa Hon LAUOFO Fonotoe Nuafesili Pierre Laufo – Opposition Leader**

The Hon Member commended the Samoa Post Limited for their continuous services to the country and provision of dividend to Government although their revenue earned is not much. The Member commended the Samoa Post Limited for enduring challenges such as advances in technology in regards to mails as nowadays, we are able to send one email across with just a click of a button. The Member stated that we have upgraded to emails these days and people have opted to use fast means of communication these days, hence the slow use of postal services; thus his appreciation of the efforts of the Office in pursuing other avenues for acquiring revenues such as creating overseas partnerships and delivering of parcels, etc...

The Member noted the issue of location for the Post Office especially in terms of poor car park, as the office does not have one; thus the Member suggested closing off the street in between the Office and ANZ Bank to use as a car park for the Office.



**Proceedings set aside at 3:46pm and  
Resumed at 4:24pm**

**ii. Afioga Hon LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell – Member for Satupaitea**

The Member commended the Office for their service to the country and for always managing to record revenue for each FY as well as, acknowledged the Office's overall operations for every FY. He then asserted and confirmed that the Operation is not big but emphasized that the Office is always able to meet its dividend to the Government. The member commended the Office's request to MNRE for the land where RSA is currently located so they can expand their operations especially considering the issue raised against the lack of Car Park space at its current location.

**iii. Afioga LEAANA Ronnie Posini – Member for Safata 1**

The Member noted that the reports continue to record a surplus which indicates the office operation is effective; the Member noted there is still an increase in revenue mainly from parcels mailed overseas and he commends the Office for this. He then asserted whether it is possible to have this service through the district project. Furthermore the Member also touched on the road in between ANZ and the Post Office [as mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition] to close-off this road and use it as a parking lot for the Office. The Member asserted if we opt to establish a new/bigger Post Office it would cost more money but find a parking space to address the parking lot issue. The Member also suggested increasing awareness programs conducted by the Office so the public are aware of the services offered by the Samoa Post.

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

The Chairperson acknowledged all comments and recommendations by Members regarding the improvement of the Office's operations as well as the recognition given to the CEO of the Office who has been working hard to ensure the smooth flow/operation of the Office over the years.

- **Tofa Hon OLO Fiti Vaai- Minister for Work, Transport and Infrastructure**

In terms of the advise raised by the members for Anoamaa 2 regarding the road between ANZ and the Office to be closed off for parking, the Minister elaborated that the Government is currently in the process of implementing its plans to address the limited parking spaces available to the public. Hon OLO elaborated that Government plans to make this stretch of road as a one-lane road, with the other side as exit and the other as entry and parking meters set up. Furthermore, the Hon. Minister asserted that there are plans in the pipeline between the MWTI in collaboration with PUMA in establishing buildings with parking on the ground floor. The Minister also provided an example of parking in overseas countries such as Singapore whereby a person would pay for his/her parking which would cover the entire year.

The Hon. Minister stated that these plans were put in place in March last year and there have been a total of 5 letters/requests from ANZ and Post Office in regards to parking issues as they are losing many customers as they are unable to find any parking around the area.

- **Afioga Hon. TUALA Tevaga Iosefa Ponifasio – Deputy Prime Minister**

The Hon Deputy Prime Minister acknowledged all comments, advises and requests by members especially in terms of the land where RSA is located as the new location for the SPL. The Minister echoed sentiments by the Opposition Leader to leave the land where RSA is located as this location has sentimental value. The land and House established has immense significance for those who served to protect the lives of others; the service of men to country during the two World Wars.

- **Afioga Hon TOELUPE Poululinuku Onesemo - Minister for Samoa Post**

The Hon Minister explained that the Office has done much developments in Savaii in terms of Money Transfer through Western Union, as well as with the payment of water and electricity bills. The Minister asserted that the Ministry and Office would thoroughly consider what needs to be done. The Minister also acknowledged the plans the Ministry has regarding the car park at ANZ. In terms of partnerships with couriers, the Minister highlighted that the Office has developed partnerships with international couriers in New Zealand and Australia under the Universal Post Union where Samoa is currently paying a subscription fees; these are other ways where the Office is able to expand its services and therefore earn profit.

The Minister also stated the significance of the Office especially during the Covid-19 outbreak as this was the only means to mail products such as koko Samoa overseas in countries such as USA and Japan. Furthermore, the Minister also clarified that the Office continues to conduct awareness programs in the community to inform the country about the Office's functions for instance; informing the community about export options where the Office can post Koko Samoa overseas. Hon Minister further acknowledged the SPL and management, and Committee for their preparations.

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

The Chairman moved a motion for the Assembly to approve its Report on P.P. 2022/2023 No. 17, Report of the Finance and Expenditure Committee on P.P. 2020/2021 No. 110 & P.P. 2021/2022 No. 11, Annual Reports of the Samoa Post for Financial Years 2019/2020 & 2020/2021; motion seconded and approved.

- **Afioga Hon TOELUPE Poumulinuku Onesemo, Minister for Samoa Post**

The Hon Minister moved a motion for the Assembly to approve its responses provided in accordance to committee's recommendations. Motion seconded and approved.

**v. P.P. 2022/2023 No. 19, Report of the Finance & Expenditure Committee on P.P. 2020/2021 No. 97 & P.P. 2021/2022 No. 62, Annual Reports of the Samoa Life Assurance Corporation for Financial Years 2019/2020 & 2020/2021;**

**P.P. 2022/2023 No.80, Government Responses on P.P. 2022/2023 No. 19**

**Afioga FALEOMAVAEGA Titimaea Tafua, Chairperson for the Finance and Expenditure Committee**, moved a motion for the Assembly to consider its Report *which consist of its findings, recommendations and resolution; seconded and approved*

The Chairperson then delivered a summary of the Committee's report and provided the following recommendations:

**Recommendation 1:**

The Committee recommends the Samoa Life Assurance Corporation to increase and create awareness programs about the importance of life insurance to all employees. Not only employees but also Parliament members and urge them to begin insurance once becoming a Member of Parliament.

**Recommendation 2:**

The Committee recommends the Corporation to robustly encourage our local people especially those recruited for overseas missions and RSEs to enroll into the Corporation's policies to cover their lives when they return or as a financial benefit for themselves and families.

The Hon Minister Afioga Hon LEOTA Laki Lamositele, Acting Minister of Finance presented its responses in accordance to the Committee's recommendations:

**Response to Recommendation 1:**

For FY 2021/2022 Public awareness for Life Insurance was strengthened, commencing with a career day, conducted for secondary schools in Savaii, to stress the importance of getting a life insurance policy for the upcoming workforce and future business people of Samoa. A program for Upolu secondary schools, was scheduled for the beginning of 2022 but deferred due to Covid19 restrictions.

The Corporation continues its awareness programs on Television and Radio as well as through social media, with new billboards located at Salelologa, Lepea and Malifa. In 2022, presentations have been conducted for village representatives (Sui-o-Nuu) in collaboration with the Ministry of Women, Culture and Social Development. During the Methodist Conference, a booth was set at Faleula to gauge the interest of participants. A program to do presentations for villages and churches that have requested are also scheduled as well as Government Offices. A presentation for Members of Parliament, is also in the pipeline, based on an agreed date, but at the moment, sales agents contracted by the Corporation to sell life policies, have been approaching members individually.

### **Response to Recommendation 2:**

The Corporation is also addressing local people recruited overseas, such as our sea-fearers, in partnership with Samoa Shipping Services (SSS) to ensure premiums are paid and their life insurance policies do not default. A program for RSE workers is also scheduled, especially securing means for premium payments so that their life insurance policies do not default.

Samoa Life Corporation continues to emphasize the importance of having a life insurance, however, since its voluntary, it all comes down to the individual person to take up a policy and maintain their premium payments so that their policies remains active.

*\*Mr. Speaker opened the floor for any Member who would like to raise an issue or make an input on the recommendations and government responses provided accordingly.*

#### **i. Tofa Hon LAUOFO Fonotoe Nuafesili Pierre Laufo – Opposition Leader**

The Hon Member noted the importance of having insurance plans/policies for sailors, police officers and RSE workers, so that families have something to fall back too when the breadwinner is unable to earn a living to provide for their families due to job-related matters. Another issue noted by the Member was the increase amount of overpaid premiums, noting that the report recorded an amount of more than \$600,000; he then queried the reason for such overpayments.

The Member also noted an amount of \$1.6million saved in the BNZ Bank in NZ and \$150,000 in Westpac Australia Bank; he then queried whether Samoa has any intention for these savings abroad.

#### **ii. Afioga FEPULEAI Faasavalu Faimata Sua – Member for Salega 1**

The Member echoed requests made by the Opposition Leader on the importance of providing insurance plans for sailors, seasonal workers and police officers. Further queried whether the insurance can cover all costs associated to medical treatments, such as the airfare cost and all others rather than just the medical procedure/treatment.

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

The Chairperson responded that there is currently, on record more than 400 sailors already covered with insurance. In regards to the investments in Australia and New Zealand, the Chairperson clarified that these are the normal investment avenues where SLAC invests to receive a return on investment. The Chairperson stressed that the Office's premium investment to banks like BNZ is vital due to the high value we get in return. Furthermore, the Chairperson noted that these investments are not new they have been done for the past 5 years.

In terms of questions raised by FEPULEAI, the Chairperson highlighted that any person who has paid insurance for up to 6 months is entitled to withdraw some of their money to pay for their medical treatments if needed (for example), while the other part of the insurance remains for future purposes/coverage. The Chairperson clarified that the longer you invest money in the SLAC the more you get.

In terms of insurance for police officers, the Chairperson noted that the Minister will clarify this point. On the issue of insurance for students, the Chairperson advised that it is up to parents to pay for their insurance as parents should think about the future and wellbeing of their children, and pay insurance for their kids.

- **Afioga Hon LEOTA Laki Lamositele, Acting Minister of Finance**

The Hon Minister advised the Committee to look into the matter of investments raised by Members as they need recent information of these investments for better understanding of the Members especially on investments pertaining to the Samoa Marine Cable. The Minister noted that the Office will consider conducting a Cost-Benefit Analysis for future investments to ensure the well management of all portfolios so the Office is not so dependent on one investment given the uncertainty experienced by the world. The Minister noted future intention of the Office to establishing an Insurance Scheme with collaboration with the development bank for example as this bank conducts great community outreach programs. This idea is important as it provides opportunities for people in the community to access small loans and expands the Offices service to the country. He then concluded by commending the SLAC and Committee for all their work.

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

*Moved a motion for the Assembly to approve its Report on P.P. 2022/2023 No. 19, Report of the Finance & Expenditure Committee on P.P. 2020/2021 No. 97 & P.P. 2021/2022 No. 62, Annual Reports of the Samoa Life Assurance Corporation for Financial Years 2019/2020 & 2020/2021; motion seconded and approved.*

- **Afioga Hon LEOTA Laki Lamositele, Acting Minister of Finance**

The Hon Minister moved a motion for the Assembly to approve the Government Responses presented in accordance to the Committee's Recommendations provided; motion seconded and approved.

vi. **P.P. 2022/2023 No. 20, Report of the Finance & Expenditure Committee on P.P. 2020/2021 No. 107 & P.P. 2021/2022 No. 43, Annual Reports of the Unit Trust of Samoa (Management) Limited for Financial Years 2019/2020 & 2020/2021;**  
**P.P. 2022/2023 No.81, Government Responses on P.P. 2022/2023 No. 20**

**Afioga FALEOMAVAEGA Titimaea Tafua, Chairperson for the Finance and Expenditure Committee**, moved a motion for the Assembly to consider its Report *which consist its findings, recommendations and resolution; motion seconded and approved*

The Chairperson then delivered a summary of the Committee's report and provided the following recommendations:

**Recommendation 1:**

The Committee recommends the Management to implement public promotional and awareness programs, specifically on creating investments for our people, ensuring that they are safely kept.

**Recommendation 2:**

The Committee recommends the Management to continue operating on the sole purpose of its establishment and carefully look into outstanding debts which may assist with the development of the country.

- **Afioga Hon LEOTA Laki Lamositele, Acting Minister of Finance**

Presented the Governments responses in accordance to the Committee's recommendations:

**Response to Recommendation 1:**

The Management currently has promotional and marketing programs through television advertisements and talk shows, radio programs and also digital marketing on social media platforms. There is also an annual promotional event in Savaii. In addition, the Management, this year, also started presenting to seasonal workers as part of their pre-departure briefing program.

Although there are promotional and awareness programs in place, the Management is aware that these are not enough as there is still a large number of people who are unaware and do not understand UTOS and what it has to offer. In this regard, the Management is working on carrying out more public promotional programs across the country in line with the district development project initiative put in place by the Government.

Safeguarding of unitholders funds is of utmost importance in the work of the Management. There are policies and procedures in place that are effectively carried out to ensure that unitholder funds are secure and safely invested at every point in time.

**Response to Recommendation 2:**

Management notes the recommendation of the Committee and will continue to carry out its duties in accordance with its mandates.

The management will look into outstanding debts to assess how it may assist with the development of the country.

**OTHER MATTERS:**

For the purpose of accurate information, the Management humbly suggest to the Committee to make these corrections to the report as follows:

1. Section 5 (Foreword), Line 1, currently reads 'The Unit Trust of Samoa (UTOS) Company...' and we suggest that this be corrected to 'The Unit Trust of Samoa (UTOS) Trust.'

There continues to be a misperception with these two entities, the Unit Trust of Samoa (the Trust) and the Unit Trust of Samoa (Management) Ltd (the Company), in the report provided. Perhaps if acceptable by the Committee, the Management provides below an alternative write up for the first part of this paragraph 5 that can be used:

"The Unit Trust of Samoa (the Trust) was set up under The Unit Trusts Act 2008. In the same Act, there is a requirement for all Unit Trusts to have a Manager, hence why the Government set up the Unit Trust of Samoa (Management) Ltd (the Company), under the Public Bodies Act 2001 with a mandate, to manage the Unit Trust of Samoa (the Trust), as also stipulated within the Trust Deed signed on July 2010,...."

2. Section 6.5 (Other Matters), Paragraph 3 states, 'The Management continues to pay rent to the Central Bank of Samoa'. The Management's office is currently situated at Level 3, DBS Building and therefore we request for the sentence to be amended as 'The Management continues to pay rent to the Development Bank of Samoa.'

*\*Mr. Speaker opened the opportunity for Members to raise a concern or queries on recommendations and government responses provided accordingly.*

**i. Tofa Hon LAUOFO Fonotoe Nuafesili Pierre Laufo – Opposition Leader**

The Hon Member commended the Committee for the Report and the Government for the responses as well as the Trust for their performance for the FY under consideration. The Member was pleased to note from the report that there was a surplus for UTOS. He then further commended the recommendation noting the community outreach programs conducted by the Office to increase awareness of the public on the Office's purpose. In regards to the district project, the Member queried the possible to have an allocation of the project funds invested with UTOS to ensure the sustainability of the project. He then queried the Chairman on the 660k of expenditure spent on Board expenses.

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

The Chairperson commended the Member for Anoamaa 2 for raising interesting points and noted that he supports the idea of district investment with UTOS as this is an important development for each constituencies. He then clarified on the expenses noted by the member saying that the money 660k was spent on salaries of the CEO, 4 Managers and 5 directors.

- **Afioga Hon LEOTA Laki Lamositele, Acting Minister of Finance**

The Hon Minister spoke on the pros and cons of investments in UTOS and the ability to maximize your return on investment as well as the safety and assurance of your investment in the Company. Hon Minister confirmed that it is the responsibility of the District whether they would like to invest a portion of their 1million district development fund with UTOS to ensure the sustainability of the project, affirming that there are Districts who have invested a portion with UTOS. The Hon Minister urged Members to please inform and educate their respective Fono Faavae Committees on the advantages and risks of certain projects to ensure sustainable developments. Furthermore, the Member commended the UTOS service for all their efforts to ensure the

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

Chairperson, moved a motion for the Assembly to approve its Report on *P.P. 2022/2023 No. 20, Report of the Finance & Expenditure Committee on P.P. 2020/2021 No. 107 & P.P. 2021/2022 No. 43, Annual Reports of the Unit Trust of Samoa (Management) Limited for Financial Years 2019/2020 & 2020/2021; motion seconded and approved.*



- **Afioga Hon LEOTA Laki Lamositele, Acting Minister of Finance**

The Hon Minister moved a motion for the Assembly to approve the Governments Responses on the Committee's recommendation; motion seconded and approved

**Proceedings adjourned at 6:04pm and will reconvene at 9:30am on Friday 10  
March 2023**