

DISCLAIMER

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**DAY 7
9:33am**

) **ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE SPEAKER:**

Mr. Speaker greeted the Deputy Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers, Leader of the Opposition and all Members, he then extended greetings to the CEOs and Ministries present in the House. The Speaker also acknowledged all Members for their patience during proceedings for the last few days.

I. PRESENTATION OF PAPERS:

1 Government Response was tabled in Parliament:

P.P. 2022/2023 No.174, Government Responses to Recommendations in the P.P. 2022/2023 No.96, Report of the Standing Orders, Electoral, Petition and Constitutional Offices Committee Report on the P.P. 2020/2021 No.118 & P.P. 2021/2022 No.45, Samoa Law Reform Commission, Annual Reports for Financial Years 2019/2020 & 2020/2021.

II. ORDERS OF THE DAY:

) **Consideration of Parliamentary Committee Reports and Government Responses (cont.) Day 7**

- i. **P.P. 2022/2023 No.114, Report of the Economic Sector Committee on the P.P. 2021/2022 No.50, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour, Annual Report for 2020/2021;**

- P.P. 2022/2023 No.172, Government Responses on P.P. 2022/2023 No.114 (cont.)

) **Afioga NIUAVA Eti L Malolo, Chairperson of the Economic Sector Committee.**

The Chairperson greeted Mr. Speaker and fellow Parliamentarians and Members seated in the public gallery. He also acknowledged the prayers and support from Church Ministers of respective denominations. The Committee Chair then presented the

Committee's Report, which contained its findings, recommendations and resolutions as follows:

The Chairperson delivered a summary of its findings and read out the following recommendation:

Recommendation 1:

The Committee recommends the Ministry to thoroughly consider legislations and policies that will help guide its operations such as registering businesses within the country. Additionally, the Committee advised the Ministry to encourage working together with other Government Ministries that will help strengthen, and enforce these legislations and policies.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends the Ministry to conduct health and safety awareness programs for workers and the public as a whole. The Committee noted that having these awareness programs will ensure the safety of workers in their workplace and avoid accident from occurring. Additionally, these programs will also inform consumers about the products they purchase, and inform businesses about legislation that must be followed.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends the Ministry to carefully monitor the flow of Government Funds for Private Sector Organizations (PSO) ensuring that all PSOs have access to these funds. Additionally, the Ministry is advised to make sure that conditions for submitting proposals for acquiring these funds are simple for PSOs

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends the Ministry to push for more employment opportunities for their office to fill in the shortage of staff conducting their operations, especially in the Seasonally Employment Division

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends to thoroughly consider the selection of seasonal workers to ensure that everyone in the country gets equal opportunity to apply. Additionally, the Committee recommends the Ministry to look at preparing policies that outlines a code of conduct for seasonal workers.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends the Ministry to strengthen its international partnerships. This will ensure assistance is offered to the Ministry through upgrading assets, and funding important operations and projects.

Afioga Hon. TOEOLESULUSULU Cedric Pose Salesa Schuster, Acting Minister for the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour (MCIL).

The Hon Minister called out the Governments Responses in accordance to the Committee's Recommendations:

Response to Recommendation 1:

The Committee's recommendation is noted. The preliminary consultations of relevant stakeholders affected by a new Business Names Register, which includes Government Ministries and the Private Sector have been completed in 2020/2021. Public consultations are planned for 2023 once the draft Business Names/Trading Names Bill has been drafted.

Response to Recommendation 2:

The Committee's recommendation is noted by the Ministry.

Through its Fair Trading function, the Ministry as part of its regulating and monitoring role continues to conduct awareness campaigns to consumers and businesses in both Upolu and Savaii as well as in Manono Tai. The main purpose is to promote the Ministry's services and roles as well as to keep the community, business communities and public at large informed of their obligatory responsibilities, reforms and legislative requirements in order to ensure a competitive and fair trading environment, provide a more enabling environment for business development and employment creations for all. The past consumer awareness covered 95% of districts in Upolu and Savaii as well as selected secondary school in both islands. Online modes such as television and social media platforms were used to transmit awareness since the proclamation of the State of Emergency (SOE) for the Measles and the COVID19 in late 2019 and early 2020. MCIL will continue its awareness to ensure consumers, communities, the public and the business community are well informed of their obligatory roles and their benefits in strengthening a level playing field for trading, business innovation and development.

Through its OSH unit, the Ministry continues to carry out awareness for both Upolu and Savaii on ensuring safety and health in the workplace. To support trainings and give practical guidance to employers, nine (9) guidelines were developed with the support of the Government of Australia that address common workplace hazards e.g. working at heights, working with electricity, hazardous substance, emergency preparedness. The delivery of these programs are also supported through promotional videos and key messages delivered through traditional media and social media platforms.

Response to Recommendation 3:

The Committee's recommendation is noted by the Ministry. The PSOs are reminded at least five months in advance of their reporting obligations in line with the PSO Grant's reporting requirements. Any PSO who does not submit their Audited Reports, Annual Report,

Strategic Plan or review their Organization's registration as an Incorporated Society will not be eligible to the Grant.

The Criteria and reporting form have been reviewed to simplify the reporting requirements and assist the Ministry in assessing each report on a timely manner for the Cabinet's consideration.

Response to Recommendation 4:

The Committee's recommendation is noted. The Ministry continues to work with the Public Service Commission in reviewing the Ministry's restructure proposals and endorsed additional personnel to ensure the Ministry has sufficient personnel support in place to assist in its Operations. Our development partners continued to provide short term funding for additional personnel support to assist with the Seasonal Employment operations.

Response to Recommendation 5:

The Committee's recommendation is noted; The Government is looking at continuing to benefit from the Australia and NZ Labour mobility schemes, while also ensuring the most safe and secure opportunities for its people, together with safeguarding the interests of Samoa's domestic industries. In the regard, the Ministry under the guidance of a Cabinet Subcommittee has developed Samoa's Policy for Temporary Labour Migration under the Labour Mobility Schemes of Australia and NZ. The intention of the policy is to guide Samoa's commitments and participation in the Australia and NZ labour mobility schemes as well as the Government's expectations for Australia and NZ. Furthermore, this policy would guide the reviewing of in-country labour mobility operations, and the re-negotiating of existing labour mobility Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with the Governments of Australia and NZ.

In addition, the policy document will present the existing policy framework, processes and procedures currently followed by the seasonal employment division of the Ministry, with sections of proposed changes by the Cabinet Sub-committee responsible for reviewing the labour mobility facilitative arrangements in Samoa. One of the proposed changes endorsed by Cabinet is the implementation roll out of recruitment and selection of seasonal workers to the constituents and district councils (Constituency Committees) in April 2023.

Response to Recommendation 6:

The Committee's recommendation is noted by the Ministry; The Ministry is appreciative of the support from our development partners such as the Governments of Australia and NZ, the International Labour Organization (ILO) & the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), to name a few, in providing technical and financial assistance for the various Projects and Programmes where the Ministry was the leading implementing Agency. The Ministry was able to procure assets and consumables from these development partners to support the

implementations of the projects and programmes and became the custodian of such assets upon completion of the assistance.

**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 SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tauiliili Tuivasa – Member for Vaimauga 1

The member greeted Mr. Speaker and commended his leadership and efforts to ensure the smooth progress of the Assembly's business. Afioga SULAMANA expressed his support for the report however, raised concern regarding (point 3.2) 1-4 (in the report) which reflects the lack of legislations and policies in place to authorize the Ministry to enforce strict penalties on Businesses/Companies that do not comply with the Ministry's rules and regulations of operations. The member noted that this does not reflect well for the Ministry as it has been established for a long time, yet there are no effective legislations to enforce these penalties on businesses that breach rules and regulations during the Ministry's site visits. He then suggested to the Government to establish 1 place where all members of the public and business owners can go to register their businesses for more convenient access for the public. He continued by commending the Minister on plans to roll out the recruitment and selection processes to district committees in April as the village and Village Council can effectively monitor its seasonal workers to ensure good performance. He concluded by acknowledging the Committee Chair and his Committee for the report presented.

Tofa Hon. OLO Fiti Vaai- Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure

The Hon Minister reasserted his point in regards to submission of annual reports without all required documentation, such as audited financial statements and clarified that this is not the fault of Ministries rather political influence and tactics used by the previous Government. Thus, the Minister urged the Speaker and Parliamentary Committees to refrain from these practices that would disrupt the works of Parliament.

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

The Opposition Leader stood to clarify annual reports for previous FY's were submitted to Parliament on time however, the delay in its consideration was due to other numerous matters the Government at the time and Parliament dealt with. Thus, it has now only been included in the Order Paper for progress of the Assembly. He advised the Minister to avoid such statements, as no good would come from any delayed work.

Tofa OLO Fiti Vaai - Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure

Hon. Minister clarified on is point, asserting that when reports are analyzed/examined it should include all relevant and required documents as the oversight role of Parliament is pertinent to ensure good governance principles are upheld.

SPEAKER's Ruling:

Mr. Speaker advised the Members to refrain from quarreling on the accuracy of information provided in the Annual Reports as it will prolong the proceedings, rather focus on the merits of the Report under consideration in detail.

iii. Tofa ALE Vena Ale: - Member for Faleata 4

The Member greeted the House and Samoa in all its honorific salutations and acknowledged all government officials and public servants for their continuous service to the country. He further commended the Committee for preparing the Report at hand. The member emphasized on a point made by the acting minister of MCIL regarding new guidelines around issuing Business Licenses directly to the owners of these businesses. The Member noted the importance of this matter, as most businesses tend to register under a different name/person from the official business owner who is behind the scene running the business. He then touched on the importance of liaison officers for our seasonal workers overseas to ensure our people have the necessary help needed when working in foreign countries and their foreign labour and employments laws. The member also advised the Government to use our government officials overseas such as our Consular in Auckland and Wellington to offer assistance to our seasonal workers where necessary. He also expressed support for the transferal of authority to respective Village Councils to select appropriate individuals to go for Seasonal Works. The member then concluded by acknowledging his constituency of Faleata 4 and all its honorifics. He further expressed that he was late to Parliament this morning as he attended his District Committee meeting. Additionally, the member informed Parliament that site visits for their entire constituency's projects is tomorrow and will immediately work to complete reports in support of the government plans.

iv. Susuga MAULOLO Tavita Aмоса – Member for Sagaga 2

The Member greeted the House and Samoa then touched on Recommendation 5 regarding the selection process of RSE workers by their District Committees. The member sought clarification whether a selection criteria will be provided by the Government and Ministry or each District Committee will be responsible for their selection criteria as this can create lapses for the selection process.

v. Afioga ALIIMALEMANU Moti Momoemausu Alofa Tuuau- Alataua Sisifo

The Member greeted Mr. Speaker, Deputy Prime Minister, Cabinet, Opposition Leader and Members of Parliament, she also extended greeting to government officials present in the House. She then touched on the financial assistance offered by UNESCAP for women entrepreneurs in the country and noted the amount of income/fund for this is quite small which \$27k USD. She then queried how many women have been eligible for this assistance, and whether the Minister has plans and policies in place to guide workplaces that have not yet met health and safety requirements. This is important given that the report highlights 66.7% of workplaces do not meet these standards. Furthermore, the member questioned whether there is a set timeframe for these Ministries and Corporations who are in compliance to improve their workspaces and meet the standards of the occupational, health and safety. Lastly, the member touched on the issue relating to Business Licenses and suggested whether it is possible to have all Commercial Businesses register through the MCIL together with all other Corporations and Non-Profit Organizations.

vi. Tofa Leanatai Victor Faafoi Tamapua- Vaimauga 2

The member greeted the Speaker and the House as well as the Clerk of the Legislative Office. He then expressed his gratitude to the Chairman and Deputy Chairperson for the preparation of the report and the Minister and Ministry for the responses offered. The Member also touched on the Recommendation and Response to Recommendation 5 and notified the House that the first rollout of Seasonal Workers would begin at Vaimauga 2.

Speaker – Point of Clarification:

Mr. Speaker read out Section 110 of the *Public Finance Management Act 2001* where it requires all Departments to submit its Annual Reports with statements of receipts and payments as required by Schedule 5 and should be certified by the Financial Secretary.

**Proceedings set aside at 10:48am; and
Resumed at 11:21am**

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

The Member conveyed condolences to Pastor Livingstone and the Congregation and Samatau for the passing of Fanaea and Leitufuga Tuua. He then commended the Government for transfer of authority to select individuals to be employed under RSE Scheme to respective districts. The Member however suggests having all these 51 districts as agents for the selected individuals as to be involved with issuing of contracts to these employees with the assistance of the Ministry. The Member also suggested Members to travel with individuals under the RSE scheme in order to easily deal with matters from overseas companies under this scheme.

viii. Afioga MASINALUPE Makesi Masinalupe: Lefaga & Faleaseela

In regards to recommendation 1 from the committee report, the Member noted that MCIL, Ministry of Customs and Revenue and Immigration need to collaborate and share information. He then highlighted the importance of sharing information between the abovementioned Ministries to ensure that Business License Registrations are accurate and avoid the differences between the people whose names are used for registration from those who actually run these businesses.

The Member further stated the similarities and differences in seasonal works in New Zealand and Australia and noted there is a longer period of employment in Australia as the country is a continent and would further complicate discussions and contacts between the Ministry and companies/employers of employees under the RSE Scheme. Therefore, the Member suggested reducing the period of employment for RSE workers working overseas from 3 years to 7-9 months. In regards to RSE workers and issues that arose from the schemes, the Member stated that we have had challenges from Australian works and he feels that the length of employment (3 years) may have contributed to these issues as 3 years is a long time.

ix. Afioga AIONO Tile Gafa : Member for Aana Alofi 2

The Member greeted the House, and everyone present. The Member also commended the Chairperson and Committee and the Minister for the Report and Responses provided. The Member then queried the selection process for individuals who are eligible to work at Rest Homes as care-givers overseas. He further sought clarification for this, as the public are mostly aware of RSE as fruit-picking work, thus urged the Government and Ministry to clarify the process and availability for Caregivers overseas so people are aware of such opportunities.

x. Afioga PESETA Vaifou Tevagaena – Member for Faasaleleaga 5

The Member urged the Minister to clarify the differences between Foreign Investors and those who Operate and establish businesses in the country through a spouse who is a citizen of Samoa. The Member also requested for clarification in a scenario whereby the spouse who is a citizen of Samoa passes away thus, the Business is registered under his/her spouse who is a foreign citizen. He emphasized that this is imperative in order to avoid confusion in the Ministry as well as to business owners when registering their Business Licenses.

Afioga NIUAVA Eti L Malolo, Chairperson of the Economic Sector Committee.

The Chairman commended the Member of Vaimauga 1 for the matters and queries raised that would be of assistance with the works of the Committee and Ministry; however, in regards to the Member's query on the lack of legislations and policies in place which allows the Ministry to enforce strict penalties on Businesses/Companies that do not comply with the Ministry's rules and regulations of how they should operate; clarified this is a challenge faced by the Ministry not a

recommendation of the Committee. On the matter of business licenses, the Chairman clarified that the work cannot be done by MCIL alone, as there are important information from other ministries before a decision can be made. However, he has noted recommendations raised by Members for the committee's consideration. The Chairperson also commented on questions regarding RSE and asserted that the main goal is to avoid issues from RSE workers having employed overseas and this is why they had to refer the vetting process to the village councils, as they know best on their people and their abilities and behaviours.

In regards to the query by the Member of Alataua West on how many women have been eligible for the assistance by UNESCAP, he asserted that as of now, there are 30 women/females included in this assistance, but an in-depth response will be provided in the upcoming reports of the Ministry. In regards to the question posed by the Member of Faasaleleaga 5 on foreign investors, he accentuated that the Deputy Prime Minister will provide a response accordingly.

) **Afioga Hon TOEOLESULUSULU Cedric Pose Salesa Schuster, Acting Minister for the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour (MCIL).**

The Hon Minister commended all Members who raised questions and provided advises for the Ministry in regards to its report. He then emphasized on the matter raised by the Member for Alataua West and elaborated that the grant for women/female mainly focuses on Capacity Building for Women in Business and Entrepreneurship. In addition, the first course under this program has been completed, and it focused on Digital Marketing whereby 30 women entrepreneurs took part in this course. In regards to issues raised by some Members regarding the lack of legislations that mandates the Ministry to enforce strict penalty on Businesses who do not abide by the regulations of operating businesses; he clarified that if a business breached rules and regulations set by the Ministry, such business will be issued a warning and a report on how to improve their service that reflects the Ministry's regulations. However, if they continue to breach then the Ministry will use the law through their existing legislations, and deal with such businesses where necessary.

In regards to issues raised by the Members on business licenses, the Hon Minister asserted that the Ministries, MCIL and MCR are continuously collaborating for information sharing and working on ways to make the process easier for the general public. In regards to preparations for RSE workers, the Minister stated that the Cabinet is still reviewing processes of this scheme as it raised numerous issues in the past years. The Minister also noted that they will also use recommendations from companies overseas to ensure challenges are prevented. The Minister then stated that the plan to use village councils in the vetting process emanated from the Ministry's belief that the Village Councils know their people well. The Hon minister then concluded by acknowledging the Ministry for the well-prepared report and operations as well as the Chairperson and Members of the Committee for its Report under considerations in detail.

Afioga SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tauiliili Tuivasa – Member for Vaimauga 1

The Member commended the Minister for clarifying one of the issues he raised where he questioned the existence of legislations that mandates the Ministry of Commerce to enforce strict penalties on Businesses that do not follow rules and regulations of the MCIL.

) Afioga NIUAVA Eti L Malolo, Chairperson of the Economic Sector Committee.

The Chairperson moved a motion for the Assembly to approve *P.P. 2022/2023 No.114, Report of the Economic Sector Committee on the P.P. 2021/2022 No.50, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour, Annual Report for FY 2020/2021*; motion seconded and approved.

) Afioga Hon TOEOLESULUSULU Cedric Pose Salesa Schuster, Acting Minister for the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour (MCIL).

Moved a motion for the Assembly to approve the Governments Responses presented earlier on the Committee's Recommendations; motion seconded and approved.

ii. P.P. 2022/2023 No.94, Report of the Standing Orders, Electoral, Petition and Constitutional Offices Committee on the P.P. 2021/2022 No.23, Office of the Attorney General, Annual Report for 2019/2020;

- P.P. 2022/2023 No.173, Government Responses on P.P. 2022/2023 No.94

) Afioga AUUAPAAU Mulipola Aloitafua Mulipola, Chairperson for the Standing Orders, Electoral, Petition and Constitutional Offices Committee.

The Chairperson moved a motion for the Assembly to consider *P.P. 2022/2023 No.94, Report of the Standing Orders, Electoral, Petition and Constitutional Offices Committee on the P.P. 2021/2022 No.23, Office of the Attorney General, Annual Report for 2019/2020* which comprises its findings, recommendations and resolution; seconded and approved.

The Chairperson delivered a summary of its findings and read out the following recommendation:

Recommendation 1:

Provide more scholarship opportunities for lawyers to be able to travel overseas for legal training, as observed in its evaluation in the year 2013 where there were changes made by the Public Service Commission which provided that only one lawyer is able to qualify for scholarship opportunities for the period of 1 year. The Committee believes that this opportunity is very

important, in order to develop the skills of new lawyers and to solve the issue of the lack of lawyers to carry out the work in the Office.

Recommendation 2:

Government to explore options on another structure or framework to be used to carry out the Office's Annual Reports, especially the Details of the projects that were achieved and the Estimated Results of the Planned Projects (KPIs) to ensure that they are clear correct and completed before submitting to Parliament. The Committee believes that the Annual Reports of all Government Ministries and Offices should include not only the framework used, but also information on the projects that have been achieved and have not been achieved in order to avoid presenting and marking achievements in color-coded or in percentages but there are no information or proof to show accountability and honesty in such areas.

) **Afioga Hon TUALA Tevaga Iosefo Ponifasio, Acting Minister for the Office of the Attorney General (OAG).**

The Hon Minister called out the Governments Responses in accordance to the Committee's Recommendations:

Response to Recommendation 1:

The Attorney General Office appreciates and fully supports the recommendation of the Committee for consideration by the Cabinet and the Scholarship Committee. A recommendation has been made in a Cabinet Submission for the savings in the Office of the Attorney General to be used to fund partial scholarships for law students working as Clerks in the Office. The Paper was referred to the Scholarship Committee for consideration in December 2021.

Response to Recommendation 2:

The Recommendation of the Committee is duly noted. The office continues to improve the structure and presentation of information in its Annual Report. The nature of the Attorney General's office is also different from all Government Ministries and Corporations as we do not implement projects. Our work is primarily to advice and represent Government in Legal matters, provide legal advice and opinions, legislative drafting services, prosecution services, review and clear legal agreements and contracts for all government agencies in the best interest of Government. The Office will review its key performance indicators to more accurately reflect the legal work provided for all government agencies and prosecution services.

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

i. Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauiliili Tuivasa – Member for Vaimauga I

The Member commended the Chairperson and Committee as well as the Minister and Office for preparing the report. He touched on the issues regarding the high number of resigned lawyers from the Office and thus requested the Government to review the salary of these lawyers and if appropriate to give them a pay-rise. He then expressed his disappointment on the high staff turnover rate for the Office in the reporting period. The Member also commended the Attorney General for the effort and commitment as there continues to be sufficient revenue/income received. In regards to the high number of crimes such as illegal drugs, the Member suggested to have more penalties for those charged in using illegal drugs. He then mentioned the absence of signatures of certain Committee members on the report and sought the reason for this. The Member then expressed his support for the recommendation to fund more scholarships for law students, and those who work at the Attorney General so they can acquire law degrees.

ii. Afioga NIUAVA Eti L Malolo – Member for Vaisigano I

The Member queried the possibility of re-establishing the National Prosecution Office (NPO) to avoid conflicting roles carried out by the Office of the Attorney General.

iii. Afioga ALIIMALEMANU Moti Momoemausu Alofa Tuuau, Member for Alataua West

The Member expressed her support for Recommendation 2 and further highlighted the need to provide outputs of the Office to better reflect their achievements and status of certain activities. She further recommended setting activities and objectives to align with the Pathway for the Development of Samoa (PDS) and also the importance of providing their performance for each FY and achievements recorded.

iv. Afioga LUPEMATASILA Galumalemana Tologata Tofia Tile – Member for Falelatai & Samatau

The Member for Falelatai & Samatau also raised a concern with the high number of lawyers who resigned from the Office and queried the Committee's Chairperson whether they brought in the Scholarship Committee during their consultations to clarify whether they are at fault for the decreasing number of lawyers in the country and at the Office of the Attorney General. The Member further noted that the majority of these resignations were senior lawyers; therefore, the Member suggested to have programs or other measures in place to address these issues.

) **Afioga AUUAPAAU Mulipola Aloitifua Mulipola, Chairperson for the Standing Orders, Electoral, Petition and Constitutional Offices Committee.**

The Committee Chairperson clarified to the Member of Vaimauga 1 on why other Members did not sign the report; asserted that Afioga TEA Tooala Peato has given in his resignation from the Parliamentary Committee due to health conditions and Hon LAUOFO Fonotoe Laufofo was on duty travel overseas as well as Afioga FUIONO Tenina Crichton who also traveled to Tasmania for Parliamentary work. In regards to reviving the NPO, he clarified that it was established by an Act in 2015 and was repealed in 2016 but its duties are carried out by the Attorney General's Office.

In regards to the issue raised by the Member of Falelatai & Samatau on the high turnover rate, he accentuated that they have their rights to leave as they please when they find opportunities elsewhere. He further highlighted that they are looking into the scholarship opportunities and whether this will enhance further opportunities for our locals to take law.

Tofa Hon Laufofo Fonotoe Nuafesili Pierre Laufofo – Member for Anoamaa 2

The Hon Member clarified on matters raised by the Member of Vaimauga 1 for Members who did not sign on the report and stated that he was away for duty travel and he also did not receive any allowance as he was not present.

) **Afioga Hon TUALA Tevaga Iosefo Ponifasio, Acting Minister for the Office of the Attorney General (OAG).**

The Hon Deputy Prime Minister clarified that the common reason for lawyers resigning from the AG Office is owed to better salaries offered in the private sector. Other lawyers leave for experience and some have travelled overseas for better opportunities. In regards to questions raised by the Member for Samatau and Falelatai about programs that can incorporate all lawyers from different Ministries with the Attorney General; he noted that the Attorney General oversees all lawyers in Ministries and Corporations therefore, they are collaborating for the betterment of the country. With reference to NPO, he asserted that the Government has plans to establish an independent NPO to carry out the functions of prosecution separately from the Office of the Attorney General.

Afioga LUPEMATASILA Galumalemana Tologata Tofia Tile – Member for Falelatai ma Samatau

The Member suggested the possibility to have lawyers work at Ministries and SOEs but monitored by the Attorney General, as this will save money for the Office given that these lawyers are paid by their respective Ministry's and SOEs but can assist with the workload of the Attorney General.

) **Afioga AUUAPAAU Mulipola Aloitafua Mulipola, Chairperson for the Standing Orders, Electoral, Petition and Constitutional Offices Committee.**

Moved a motion for the Assembly to approve *P.P. 2022/2023 No.94, Report of the Standing Orders, Electoral, Petition and Constitutional Offices Committee on the P.P. 2021/2022 No.23, Office of the Attorney General, Annual Report for 2019/2020*; motion seconded and approved.

) **Afioga Hon TUALA Tevaga Iosefo Ponifasio, Acting Minister for the Office of the Attorney General (OAG).**

The Hon Deputy Prime Minister moved a motion for the Assembly to approve the Governments Response to the Committee's Recommendations as presented earlier; motion seconded and approved.

) **Afioga Hon TUALA Tevaga Iosefo Ponifasio: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Customs and Revenue.**

The Deputy PM commended all Members for their efforts and contribution to the consideration in details of all Committee Reports. He noted that although there were some differences in opinions regarding certain reports and issues raised, he understands and values all Members' opinions for a more effective consideration of Committee Reports given that these are important functions of Parliament. With regards to the issues raised against issuing of Businesses Licenses, the Deputy Prime Minister noted that there is only 20% left of Business Licenses currently under review which means 80% of Business Licenses have been reviewed, renewed and issued to businesses owners.

He conveyed apologies on behalf of the Ministry to all business owners who encountered poor service for the past weeks when they wanted to renew their licenses from the Ministry, and asserted that this will not happen again. He further clarified on requests regarding the transition of Business Licenses from the MCR to the MCIL clarifying that issuing of Business License is related to the collection of tax and the Revenue Management System; which is therefore required to put these licenses and tax under the same Ministry as the issuing of licenses for Corporations are under the MCIL. He then accentuated that businesses issued under Samoan Citizens are not affected when they travel overseas.

Tofa Hon Laufo Fonotoe Nuafesili Pierre Laufo – Leader of Opposition and Member for Anoamaa 2

The Member addressed the House and Samoa in all its honorific salutations, acknowledged the Government, Cabinet and all Members for all their effort and contribution to the consideration of reports. He also commended all Government Heads and public servants of all Ministries and

Government Corporations for their continuous service to the country as evident with the considered Committee Reports on Annual Reports. The Member proceeded to wish everyone in the House well and best wishes for all their respective duties and responsibilities. He further acknowledged the presence of the Church Minister and his wife in the House for their support throughout this session. He also expressed gratitude to Mr. Speaker and the OCLA for servicing Parliament and concluded by wishing Members who are facing court petitions all the best with their cases and acknowledged the omnipresent guidance of the Almighty God throughout all the Parliaments proceedings.

Mr. SPEAKER

Hon Mr. Speaker concluded the proceedings by conveying his acknowledgement to all Members for their commitment to fulfill their Parliamentary duties as well as the support from Government Officials who were present in Chamber throughout all proceedings to ensure immediate support is given to Ministers when needed. He further acknowledged the presence of the Church Minister and his wife in Chamber to support the parliamentary proceedings and commended the supporting services from Kooline in servicing the Maota as well as the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly for their service to the Parliament.

Proceedings adjourned at 1:26pm and will reconvene on Tuesday, 30 May 2023 at 9:30am.