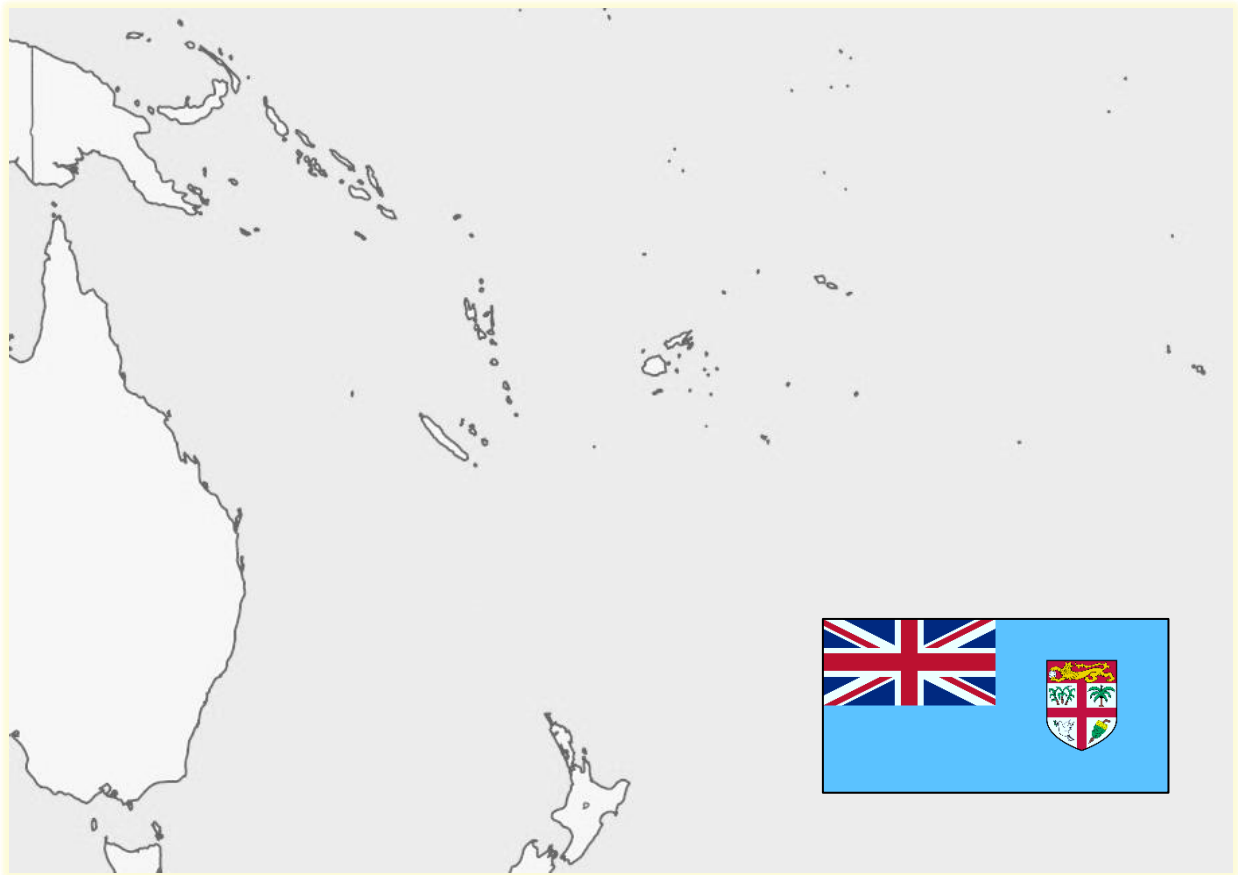


CPA UK Workshop on Standing Committees, Parliament of Fiji

5-11 November 2016



Report



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Background

1.1. In January 2015, CPA UK hosted the first parliamentary delegation from Fiji to the United Kingdom since the end of military rule. The delegation, led by the Hon. Speaker, Dr Jiko Luveni visited Westminster, the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly to explore the UK parliamentary system. Since then, CPA UK has been working with the Parliament of Fiji and the UNDP Pacific Centre to support its parliamentary programme in country. Activities have included the facilitation of the participation of a senior UK Clerk, Alda Barry, to a Committee and Table Office training programme in Suva in March 2016.

1.2. In 2016 CPA UK was successful in leveraging funding from the Magna Carta Fund for Human Rights and Democracy to work with the Parliament of Fiji to deliver a parliamentary project aimed at enhancing the capabilities of the Parliament of Fiji to undertake its functions. In particular, the activities aimed to build the effectiveness and efficiency of standing committees in scrutinising government activity and processes. The first stage of this parliamentary project consisted of a parliamentary workshop to support and enhance the capacity of committee Members and Clerks and took place over the period 5-11 November 2016 in Suva. Four UK parliamentarians and one House of Commons Clerk contributed to the workshop. The second stage, scheduled for 2017 will consist of a programme in Westminster for committee Chairs and members and will aim to enhance their understanding of committee work. This programme will address the outcomes and challenges identified during the in-country workshop.

Aim & Objectives

2.1. **Aim.** This project aimed to enhance the capabilities of Parliament by making the standing committee system more effective.

2.2. **Objectives.** Through briefings, roundtables and practical sessions, the workshop aimed to deliver the following objectives:

- a. **Objective 1.** Promote a broader understanding of the key features and functions of parliamentary committees in holding the Executive to account.
- b. **Objective 2.** Explore the role, responsibilities and relationships of the committee Chair, Members and Clerks in operating an effective committee.
- c. **Objective 3.** Develop the practical skills of Members and Clerks in conducting an inquiry: identifying witnesses, making best use of evidence, engaging with the public and reporting.
- d. **Objective 4.** Discuss the limitations in conducting efficient policy and financial oversight through standing committees
- e. **Objective 5.** Share experiences and identify solutions on how to address some of the challenges faced in conducting committee business.





Delegation

Delegation Leader: The Rt Hon. the Baroness Taylor of Bolton (Labour)
Craig Whittaker MP (Conservative)
Ian Murray MP (Labour)
Dr Lisa Cameron MP (Scottish National Party)
Nick Walker - *Clerk of the Justice Committee*

Delegation Secretary: Robert Harper - *Asia Pacific Programme Manager, CPA UK*
Mariam El-Azm - *Deputy Head of International Outreach, CPA UK*

Workshop Summary

4.1. The workshop on Standing Committees in the Parliament of Fiji was an undoubted success. The first two days of the programme saw a number of fruitful discussions on the effective conduct of oversight committees and culminated with an example committee hearing on day three of the workshop. The hearing successfully drew on the earlier discussions to highlight the requirements of individual Members and clerks to conduct effective committee oversight.

4.2. The project was particularly timely given the context in the Fijian Parliament. The Standing Committee System in the Parliament of Fiji was set up when the Parliament was reconstituted in 2014. While the Standing Committees have largely the same powers as select committees in the UK, their work has focused almost entirely on examining bills and reports referred by Parliament. This has restricted their impact as their work has been defined largely by Parliament rather than the individual committees.

4.3. There are six Standing Committees in the Parliament of Fiji and all are currently chaired by Government Members. A number of Members sit on multiple committees. The workshop took place at a time where the Speaker of Parliament had changed the criteria for committee meetings so that committees have to meet for seven hours a day for it to be constituted a meeting. This issue became a recurring point of discussion during the programme as it put increasing pressures on Members and Secretariat staff.

4.4. The workshop concluded with an example committee hearing that explored domestic violence in Fiji. The one-off evidence session, conducted in the style of a Westminster hearing, explored the impact of the Domestic Violence Decree - a 2009 decree that introduced measures to tackle domestic violence in Fiji. Fijian Members commented on how useful this exercise one in demonstrating the discipline and professionalism required to run an effective committee hearing. The UK delegation commented how the hearing provided an effective culmination of all the subjects discussed throughout the first two days of the programme.

4.5. The programme allowed Members and clerks to engage closely on a range of issues that impacted on both of them. The joint-discussions allowed both Members and clerks to understand better the

challenges that accompany each of their roles and identify a number of solutions, such as the sitting timetable of committees, to overcome these challenges.

4.6. Drawing on a wide range of experiences and case studies from the UK and Fiji, participants were able to discuss a range of topics that contributed to effective committee oversight. Before the workshop, the role of a Committee Chair and managing committee meetings were identified as two key areas for exploration and learning during the programme. Both of these areas were explored in detail during discussion sessions and were highlighted during the practical example hearing. Other areas covered during the programme included: how committees hold government to account; working cross-party in committee; effective questioning of witnesses; effectively conducting a committee hearing; how Parliament and committees engage the media and public; and agreeing reports and making recommendations as a committee.

Workshop Comments

5.1. The Role of Committees

5.1.1. The first session of the workshop explored the committee structure in the UK and Fiji and highlighted the role that oversight committees play in holding the Government to account. Ian Murray MP and Craig Whittaker MP, representing respectively the Opposition and UK Government, both emphasised how important the independence of committees is in the UK Parliament. The strength of select committees in the UK, both within Parliament and in the public eye, is that they are seen to be independent.

5.1.2. Select committees in the UK function independently from Government and operate in a consensual, cross-party manner. Committees also focus on outreach and seek knowledge and expertise from a range of sources. This allows them to produce evidence-based reports that strengthens the legitimacy of their recommendations. Craig Whittaker MP pointed out that no Member who has a paid role in Government will sit on a select committee, this is to ensure their independence.

5.1.3. Hon. Mosese Bulitavu MP commented on the current status of oversight committees in Fiji. He emphasised that the Parliament, and thus the committee system, is just two years old so there is still substantial amounts to be considered regarding privileges and the freedom and power of committees. Hon. Bulitavu outlined how committees in Fiji have essentially the same formal powers as those in the UK but the predominant area of work for committees comes from public petitions and bills referred by Parliament which differs from the UK select committee where an agenda for inquiries is set by the Committee itself at the beginning of each parliamentary session.

5.2. Role of a Committee Chair and relationship with Clerks and Members



5.2.1. Rt Hon. Baroness Taylor of Bolton led discussions on the role of the committee Chair, having herself chaired the Intelligence and Security Committee from 2001 until 2005 - a key issue in the Parliament of Fiji given the time and resource constraints faced by Members and committees. Three key points were discussed. Firstly, Baroness Taylor emphasised that Chairs are responsible for managing a meeting so preparation is vital. This is a substantial responsibility and, while they can rely on Clerks for support, individual Chairs must invest the time to prepare for every meeting, otherwise meetings will not achieve its objectives. To support this, Chairs should facilitate a private meeting before all public meetings so that the whole committee is aware of the aims of the session. Similarly, Chairs must be inclusive and considerate to the views of other committee members in those discussions.

5.2.2. Secondly, Chairs are responsible for keeping politics out of meetings. In Fijian standing committees both legislation and Government policy can be scrutinised. Baroness Taylor argued that the remit of select committees, with a focus on government policy, made it easier to keep politics out of meetings as committees aim to gather objective evidence in scrutinising specific policies. Dr Lisa Cameron MP emphasised that it is also the responsibility of individual members to be self-aware of their biases and ensure they are willing to challenge their own ideas. This, she argued, helped the committee act independently.

5.2.3. Thirdly, Chairs should ensure there is no conflict of interest within the committee. Individual Members must declare any relevant interests before the start of any inquiry or hearing. Failure to do so is a breach of parliamentary rules in the UK parliamentary system.

5.2.4. Fijian Members were also interested in understanding the status of committee Chairs in the UK, especially following the introduction of elected Chairs in the previous Parliament. The UK delegation agreed that the profile and status of committee Chairs has increased significantly since the introduction of elected Chairs. This higher-profile has allowed them to increase the coverage of some of their reports and recommendations, and this overall contributes to greater public scrutiny. It was also noted that Chairs get an extra allowance on top of their salary to serve as a committee Chair.

5.2.5. A number of Fijian Members commented that there isn't a template for the role of a committee Chair in Fiji and that committees were often run on an ad hoc basis. They suggested that guidance should be formulated to assist Chairs in running their committee. Nick Walker, Clerk of the Justice Committee in the UK Parliament, explained that, in the UK, there is no general guidance for Chairs.

5.2.6. The fundamental importance of the relationship between committee Members and Clerks was discussed in the Clerks only session as well as with Members. UK members and Nick Walker stressed the importance of mutual understanding between Members and Clerks. The panel emphasised the importance of Members trusting the advice that Clerks provide them. In the Fijian context, the structure of committee meetings - where committees will meet for seven hours each day - was a serious concern for UK Members and Clerks. Nick Walker emphasised that Clerks require time to prepare for committee meetings and if they are busy conducting meetings all week it puts undue strain on them and their ability

to properly prepare members for future meetings, compromising the efficiency and effectiveness of committees and therefore limiting their impact on Government scrutiny.

5.2.7. Committee Chairs in the UK also perform other functions, most notably sitting on the Liaison Committee. The UK delegation explained how the Prime Minister is questioned three times a year by the Liaison Committee and they are free to ask them any question they wish - just like they would with other witnesses. The Liaison Committee also performs other important functions, including: choosing select committee reports for debate in Westminster Hall; recommending which Government Departments' Estimates are allocated for debate in the House of Commons on Estimates Days; considering general matters relating to the work of select committees - agreeing guidelines and core tasks for committees and promoting effective scrutiny; and giving advice to the House of Commons Commission on select committee matters, as required, with responsibility for allocating funding for select committee travel.

5.2.8. Similarly, and important to the Fijian context, committee Chairs have regular correspondence with the Speaker to discuss matters relating to the committee system. This does not currently happen in Fiji and a number of Members and Chairs felt that it would be a positive step if the Speaker and committee Chairs organised regular meetings in order to be able to reflect on current processes and if needed, implement reforms to make them more efficient. It was felt that this would possibly alleviate some of the issues that led to the changes in committee structure that is currently putting unsustainable pressures on Clerks and Members.

5.3. Working cross-party in committee

5.3.1. Rt Hon. Baroness Taylor of Bolton chaired an example committee hearing that explored the 'Impact of the Domestic Violence Decree (2009)'. As Chair, Baroness Taylor led committee proceedings, ensuring that all members were able to contribute. Members were not allocated seats on the committee and the government and opposition Members naturally sat on opposite sides of the committee table. Baroness Taylor emphasised that the committee must be seen to be consensual and cross-party as this can increase its legitimacy and effectiveness. Baroness Taylor asked for the Fijian members to swap sides so that the government and opposition were mixed during the mock evidence session, similarly to what would happen during a sitting in the UK Parliament.

5.4. Effective questioning and conducting a committee hearing

5.4.1. In advance of the example committee hearing, all Members were provided with a briefing note and suggested questions to ask two separate witness panels during the evidence session. The size and structure of the evidence session was relatively new to Fijian Members and Clerks but they contributed fully to the session with great enthusiasm. A number of Fijian Members commented that it was helpful to have the questions prepared in advance but equally as important was the ability of all Members to hear how the session was progressing and to have the opportunity to ask relevant supplementary questions. The Fijian Members requested that future meetings of their committees have this type of prepared material.

5.4.2. However, the ability of Clerks to provide this written material was limited by the structure of the committee meetings, as discussed during the first two days of the workshop. Following a discussion between Fijian Members and Clerk it was pointed out that UK select committees meet for as little as two hours a week and this gives Clerks the opportunity to prepare briefings for future meetings during the rest of the week. Until meetings are structured differently Clerks in the Fijian Parliament will not be able to provide as detailed briefs. This limitation was perceived to be one of the greatest challenges for committees to overcome to increase their efficiency.

5.4.3. The length of the committee hearing was another key consideration for the Fijian members. The private pre-hearing meeting and the evidence session took two hours to complete - much less than typical meetings of standing committees. A number of Fijian members commented on the discipline of Members and the Chair that allowed for the session to be completed in two hours. They mentioned that witnesses to standing committees often present for 15 minutes and then Members are limited to 15 minutes of questions. This differs from the UK where all written submissions are dealt with separately and are not covered during evidence sessions.

5.5. Committee reports and recommendations

5.5.1. Following the evidence session, discussion focused on how UK committees drafted and agreed reports. Nick Walker outlined the process whereby Clerks draft the report on the instruction of the Chair and Members and a copy is shared with Members for comment prior to publication. Committees will strive to agree recommendations unanimously as this adds greater weight to the recommendations.

5.5.2. The example committee discussed a number of recommendations that Nick Walker, who clerked the committee, had identified during proceedings. While there were different viewpoints on a number of the conclusions the committee, formed of four government and four opposition Members from Fiji and three UK Members, were able to unanimously agree a set of ten recommendations based on the evidence gathered from witnesses during the example committee hearing. The recommendations are detailed in Annex A.

5.6. Committee influence and engagement with the media and the public

5.6.1. The workshop session on day one of the programme explored sources of committee influence and how committees can use this influence to support their oversight objectives. Craig Whittaker MP had a fruitful discussion with his group of Fijian Members and they focused on how committees operate. The rules regarding meetings and work of Standing Committees in the Parliament of Fiji had recently changed so that committees had to meet for a set time each day and had a shorter timeframe to report to Parliament on bills or reports that had been referred to a committee. Concerns were raised in the discussion that these changes would limit the influence of committees and their ability to hold Government to account. Craig Whittaker MP emphasised that it would take a cross-party effort to ensure that committees were structured in a way that enhanced their effectiveness.

5.6.2. Dr Lisa Cameron MP's group used the case study of the Select Committee on Business, Innovation and Skills' inquiry into working practices at Sports Direct as a basis for discussion. The founder of Sports Direct, Mike Ashley, had refused to appear before the Committee as a witness and his refusal was played out in the UK media before he was threatened with a formal summon. Some Fijian Members felt that the formal powers of the committee should be strengthened in their own legislature so that scenarios like this do not occur. Although a number also felt that the Chair of the committee had handled the situation well and had utilised the 'soft power' of the committee and the influence of the media to achieve its objective of hearing evidence from Mike Ashley. In the Fijian context, the committees had not yet experienced this sort of refusal from a high profile figure so the extent of their committees' 'hard' and 'soft power' had not been fully tested.

5.6.3. Dr Cameron's group also emphasised the importance of a positive relationship with the relevant Government Minister. Dr Cameron sits on the International Development Committee and she explained that committee meets with the Secretary of State for International Development every month. This allows the committee to question the Minister regularly while maintaining a positive relationship.

5.6.4. During a question and answer session, a number of Fijian MPs commented on the difficulty of engaging with the media, especially as they were concerned about breaching privilege by discussing proceedings from a committee hearing. Baroness Taylor empathised with this position and stressed the importance of committee hearings taking place in public so that the media can view committee proceedings. It was also stressed that individual Members should wait for the committee to agree a position before speaking to the media. However, all UK Members emphasised how important the media is in disseminating the work of committees and interest from the media is a good thing.

5.6.5. The Head of the Communications team in the Parliament of Fiji presented to the workshop to outline the role his team plays in media engagement. A number of members were unaware of the work of the team and explained that they would feel more confident in engaging with the media if they had the assistance of a dedicated Communications team. Suggestions were made for media training to be offered to Members so they could engage with the media more successfully.

Outcomes and follow-up activities

6.01. The example committee hearing proved very effective in highlighting some of the issues that were discussed during the first two days of the workshop. For instance, numerous Fijian MPs commented on the discipline that was required from the Chair and Members during the hearing. The level of professionalism and preparation required to effectively run a hearing is substantial and many of the MPs in attendance pledged to instil this into their work. They also commented that due to the small size of the Parliament of Fiji it only takes a certain number of MPs to create the momentum for change.

6.02. Hon. Ashneel Sudhakar MP commented that committees in Fiji traditionally allow the public to present to the committee but he would prefer a structure where the committee asks questions and

controls proceedings. He was keen to adopt this structure for the committees that he chairs. Hon. Sudhakar was also keen to adopt a convention that saw the government obliged to respond to committee reports within two months.

6.03. Another strong outcome revolved around the relationship between Members and Clerks. Hearing from Clerks gave Members a different perspective and appreciation of the work undertaken by committee Clerks. A number of members pushed for Fijian standing committees to reduce the length or number of meetings so that Clerks can prepare fully for hearings and meetings. Baroness Taylor emphasised that the work pattern and timetabling must be considered to allow this. The UK delegates raised this point with the Speaker of the Parliament of Fiji.

6.04. The workshop produced a number of recommendations relating to the committee system in the Parliament of Fiji:

- Following the example of the Liaison Committee in the UK and regular meetings with the Speaker of the House of Commons the workshop discussions recommended that *standing committee Chairs have regular meetings with the Speaker of the Parliament of Fiji.*
- The structure and length of committee meetings was a regular talking point in the workshop and many felt the current structure was unsustainable. The workshop participants recommended that *Parliament should evaluate the sitting patterns of committees in order to relieve time pressures on staff.*
- To maximise the impact of the work of committees it was recommended that *time was allocated in the Chamber to debate committee reports.*
- The importance of a positive relationship with the media was highlighted repeatedly during the programme so it was suggested that *Members receive media training to engage with the media but also to provide training to journalists to increase their understanding of parliamentary processes.*

6.05. CPA UK's monitoring and evaluation framework identified a significant increase in knowledge among both Members and Clerks who attended the programme. Rating their knowledge on a scale of 1-5, with 5 indicating 'expert', the Fijian members and clerks saw an increase in their understanding from an average of 2.8 to 4.27.

6.06. The increase in knowledge occurred in all categories measured in CPA UK's evaluation framework. However, the role of the committee Chair and the effective questioning of witnesses saw the largest increase in knowledge, increasing by 1.61 points - or a percentage increase of 56%. How committees hold government to account - at a 1.17 increase - saw the lowest increase in learning. These measurements were broadly supported during the workshop's verbal feedback session where members felt the example evidence session had been effective in increasing their knowledge of effective chairing and questioning.

6.07. The learning categories measured were: The role of a committee chair; how committees hold government to account; working cross-party in committee; how committee manage their work; effective

questioning of witnesses; effectively conducting a committee hearing; how Parliament and committees engage the media and public; agreeing reports and making recommendations as a committee.

6.08. CPA UK will follow-up the workshop with a study visit to the UK for committee Chairs and Members. This visit will explore in more detail some of the issues discussed in the workshop and expose the Fijian members to the UK Parliament as well as a devolved legislature in the UK. This visit will take place during FY2017/18.

Programme

Saturday 5 November	
16.45	<i>Meet at SkyTeam Lounge, Opposite Gate 10, Heathrow Terminal 4</i>
18.50	<i>Depart London Heathrow Terminal 4 on Korean Airways Flight KE908 to Seoul</i>
Sunday 6 November	
14.45	<i>Arrive Seoul Incheon International Airport</i>
<i>Delegates have access to the KAL Prestige Class Lounge, Opposite Gate 11</i>	
18.45	<i>Depart Seoul Incheon on Korean Airways Flight KE121 to Sydney</i>
Monday 7 November	
06.55	<i>Arrive at Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport</i>
12.45	<i>Depart Sydney on Fiji Airways Flight FJ910 to Nadi, Fiji</i>
18.40	<i>Arrive Nadi International Airport</i>
20.30	<i>Depart Nadi on Fiji Airways Flight FJ25 to Suva, Fiji</i>
21.00	<i>Arrive Suva Nausori Airport, Fiji</i>
22.00	Arrive in Suva Check-in to: Grand Pacific Hotel Location: Victoria Parade 584 - 628, Suva, Fiji Islands Telephone: +679 322 2000
Tuesday 8 November - Committees' Powers and Responsibilities	
07.45	<i>Assemble in Hotel Lobby and transfer to British High Commission</i>
08.00	Breakfast Briefing Meeting with HE Melanie Hopkins, British High Commissioner to Fiji HE Melanie Hopkins, <i>British High Commissioner to Fiji</i> Dyfan Jones, <i>Effective Governance Team Leader, UNDP Pacific Centre</i> Location: Residence of British High Commissioner, Suva
09.00	<i>Depart British High Commission and Transfer to Grand Pacific Hotel</i>
10.00 - 10.30	Opening Ceremony Welcome and Introduction Hon. Dr Jiko Luveni, <i>Speaker of the Parliament of Fiji</i>

	<p>The Rt Hon. the Baroness Taylor of Bolton, <i>CPA UK Delegation Leader</i> HE Melanie Hopkins, <i>British High Commissioner to Fiji</i></p>
10.30 - 11.30	<p>Session 1: The Committee Systems in Fiji and the UK This session will introduce the standing committee system in the Parliament of Fiji and provide a comparison with the departmental select committee system in the UK Parliament. It will also identify some of the key challenges faced by both legislatures. Areas for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overview of the standing committee system in Fiji - Overview of work undertaken by standing committees in the current Parliament - Overview of the select committee system in the UK - History and recent developments with select committees - Constraints and challenges faced by committees <p><i>Suggested Panel:</i> <i>Craig Whittaker MP - Session Chair</i> <i>Fijian Committee Chair</i> <i>Nick Walker</i> <i>Fijian Clerk</i></p>
11.30 - 12.00	<p><i>Break</i></p>
12.00 - 13.00	<p>Session 2: Role of Committees in Holding Executive to Account This session will explore the powers and role of standing committees within the broader parliamentary context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Privileges, powers and independence of committees - Scrutinising government policy - Balancing party affiliation with committee work - Resources and administration - Type of work undertaken by committees <p><i>Suggested Panel:</i> <i>Ian Murray MP - Session Chair</i> <i>Dr Lisa Cameron MP</i> <i>Craig Whittaker MP</i></p>
13.00 - 14.00	<p><i>Lunch</i></p>
14.00 - 15.00	<p>Workshop Session 1: Sources of Committee Influence The Standing Orders of the Parliament of Fiji gives standing committees the ability to summon individuals and compel the production of documents but how can committees use</p>

	<p>both ‘hard’ power and ‘soft’ power to achieve its objectives? This workshop session will explore the various sources of power that a committee has, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Status - Formal powers - Relationships - Expertise - Respect - Communications <p><i>Suggested Panel (Workshop A):</i> <i>Nick Walker</i> <i>Dr Lisa Cameron MP</i></p> <p><i>Suggested Panel (Workshop B):</i> <i>Rt Hon. Baroness Taylor of Bolton</i> <i>Ian Murray MP</i></p>
15.00 - 15.30	<i>Break</i>
15.30 - 16.30	<p>Workshop Session 2: Challenges of Operating an Efficient Committee System in a Small Legislature</p> <p>The final session of the day will be a roundtable workshop to explore the difficulties faced by committees in small legislatures and how to address these issues, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The small number of committees - Conducting effective oversight alongside MPs other roles and responsibilities - A lack of committee Infrastructure and resources - The small number of legislators available to serve on committees <p><i>Suggested Panel (Workshop A):</i> <i>Fijian MP</i> <i>Dr Lisa Cameron MP</i></p> <p><i>Suggested Panel (Workshop B):</i> <i>Fijian MP</i> <i>Rt Hon. Baroness Taylor of Bolton</i></p>
16.30	End of Programme Day One
18.30	Reception hosted by Hon. Dr Jiko Luveni, Speaker of the Parliament of Fiji
Wednesday 9 November - Managing Committee Work and Relationships	
08.00	<i>Breakfast at hotel</i>
09.00 - 10.00	<p>Session 3: Managing Committee Business</p> <p>Oversight committees have to manage a number of competing priorities when planning and conducting their work. This session will explore the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Committee mandate - How do committees reach a consensus on strategy that takes into account Members’ time constraints? - Subject of inquiries - Resources available to the committee - Preparing for committee meetings

	<p><i>Suggested Panel:</i> <i>Dr Lisa Cameron MP - Session Chair</i> <i>Craig Whittaker MP</i> <i>Nick Walker</i></p>	
10.00 - 11.00	<p>Workshop Session 3a: Role and Responsibilities of Committee Chairs This split session will explore the importance of an effective committee chair and discuss the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selection/election of committee chairs - Role of the chair - Managing the committee’s work plan - Relationship with other members and clerks - Challenges of party politics in committee work <p><i>Suggested Panel:</i> <i>Craig Whittaker MP - Session lead</i> <i>Rt Hon. Baroness Taylor of Bolton</i></p>	<p>Workshop Session 3b: Role of the Committee Clerk This split session will examine the role of a committee clerk, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The remit of standing committees in the Parliament of Fiji - The responsibilities of a committee clerk - How to manage the relationship with the chair and members - Tools for researching and writing briefs <p><i>Suggested Panel:</i> <i>Nick Walker</i> <i>Fijian Clerk</i></p>
11.00 - 11.30	<p><i>Break</i></p>	
11.30 - 12.15	<p>Session 4: Relationship between the Chair, Members and Clerks This joint session will explore how committees manage the relationships between the chair, members and clerks. Discussion will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The relationship between the committee chair and other members - How does a committee agree on its work plan? What input can individual members provide to a committee’s strategy and approach? - What support can chairs and members expect from a committee’s clerks? - How can members and clerks develop a positive relationship? <p><i>Suggested Panel:</i> <i>Ian Murray MP - Session Chair</i> <i>Craig Whittaker MP</i> <i>Nick Walker</i></p>	
12.15 - 13.15	<p>Workshop Session 4a: How to Conduct a Committee Hearing</p>	<p>Workshop Session 4b: How to Brief Members and Conduct a Committee Hearing</p>

	<p>This split session will look at how members approach committee hearings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The role of clerks in effectively briefing members - Gathering information: written submissions and external evidence - Structure: the importance of an agreed approach to questioning among committee members - Effectively eliciting information from witnesses: bridging the gap between the information needed and the information available <p><i>Suggested Panel:</i> <i>Lisa Cameron MP - Session Lead</i> <i>Rt Hon. Baroness Taylor of Bolton</i></p>	<p>This split session will look at how clerks prepare for committee hearings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agreeing terms of reference and objectives of an inquiry - Identifying witnesses and other sources of evidence - The role of clerks in effectively briefing members - Effectively eliciting information from witnesses: bridging the gap between the information needed and the information available <p><i>Suggested Panel:</i> <i>Nick Walker</i></p>
<p>13.15 - 14.15</p>	<p><i>Lunch</i></p>	
<p>14.15 - 15.00</p>	<p>Session 5: Effective Questioning in a Committee Hearing</p> <p>This practical session will consider which questioning techniques can be most effective for the Chair and Members in Committee hearings. Discussion will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Types of question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information gathering - Clarifying - Probing - Hypothetical - Open/closed questions - Questioning techniques - How Clerks can assist Members with questions <p><i>Suggested Panel:</i> <i>Nick Walker</i> <i>Ian Murray MP</i></p>	
<p>15.00 - 15.30</p>	<p><i>Break</i></p>	
<p>15.30 - 16.15</p>	<p>Session 6: Public Engagement, Civil Society and the Media</p> <p>This session will explore how committees can engage with the public and the media to further their objectives, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The relationship between committees, the public and the media 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How the media can be used to strengthen parliament’s role in oversight, including social media - Explore the methods that can be used to engage the public, creating awareness of calls for evidence, committee reports and government’s responses <p><i>Suggested Panel:</i> Rt Hon. Baroness Taylor of Bolton - Session Chair Craig Whittaker MP Parliament of Fiji Communications Manager</p>	
16.15 - 17.00	<p>Peer-to-Peer Exchange for Members</p> <p>This open session will provide an opportunity for members to discuss any topic of their choosing with their UK colleagues.</p>	<p>Peer-to-Peer Exchange for Clerks</p> <p>This open session will provide an opportunity for clerks to discuss their roles with the UK committee clerk.</p>
17.00	End of Programme Day Two	
18.00	<p>Roundtable Dinner with Women’s NGOs</p> <p>Hosted by HE Melanie Hopkins, <i>British High Commissioner to Fiji</i></p> <p>Location: Residence of the British High Commissioner, Suva</p>	
Thursday 10 November - Committees in Action		
08.00	<i>Breakfast at hotel</i>	
08.45	<i>Transfer by foot to Parliament of Fiji</i>	
09.00 - 09.30	<p>Session 7: Preparing for and Chairing a Committee Hearing</p> <p>Often, committees will meet in private before a public evidence session. This session will introduce how the chair and members prepare for a committee hearing, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Structure and format of the session - Questions to be asked to witnesses - Role of each member in the hearing 	
09.30 - 10.00	<p>Session 8: Pre-hearing Private Committee Meeting</p> <p>The appointed chair will lead a meeting of committee members in advance of the ‘Westminster-style’ committee hearing.</p>	
10.00 - 11.30	<p>Session 9: ‘Westminster-style’ Committee Hearing</p> <p>Witnesses will be questioned in front of a committee of UK and Fijian MPs at a ‘Westminster-style’ committee hearing.</p> <p>Subject: The Impact of the Domestic Violence Decree (2009)</p>	
11.30 - 12.00	<i>Break</i>	
12.00 - 12.45	<p>Session 10: Reports and Recommendations</p> <p>This session will explore good practice for report writing and produce recommendations based on the evidence heard in the morning’s hearing:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good practice for report writing: how does a committee create an effective report with tangible recommendations for Government? - Expectations of the chair, members and clerks in developing reports - Building consensus and agreeing recommendations - Draft recommendations from the evidence session on the ‘Impact of the Domestic Violence Decree’ <p><i>Suggested Panel:</i> <i>Ian Murray MP - Session Chair</i> <i>Craig Whittaker MP</i> <i>Nick Walker</i> <i>Fijian Committee Chair (tbc)</i></p>
12.45 - 13.45	<i>Lunch</i>
13.45 - 14.30	<p>Session 11: Report-back</p> <p>Following the evidence sessions members will discuss the outcome of the hearing, exploring the approaches that worked well and the difficulties faced.</p>
14.30 - 15.00	<i>Break</i>
15.00 - 16.00	<p>Session 12: Government Responses and Committee Follow-up</p> <p>This session will explore what committees can expect from government following the publication of a report and how committees can follow-up on reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does the government respond to committee reports? - How can committees follow-up reports to ensure they have long-term impact? <p><i>Suggested Panel:</i> <i>Dr Lisa Cameron MP - Session Chair</i> <i>Fijian MP</i> <i>Craig Whittaker MP</i></p>
16.00 - 16.30	<p>Review and Assessment</p> <p>This final session will review the programme and provide an opportunity to discuss outcomes and areas for follow-up work.</p>
16.30	<i>End of Workshop and transfer to the British High Commissioner Residence</i>
17.30	<p>De-Brief Meeting with British High Commissioner</p> <p>HE Melanie Hopkins, <i>British High Commissioner to Fiji</i> Location: Residence of British High Commissioner, Suva</p>
18.00	<p>Reception Hosted by British High Commissioner</p> <p>Location: Residence of British High Commissioner, Suva</p>
20.00	End of Fiji Programme



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About CPA UK

9.01. CPA UK is one of the largest and most active branches in the CPA community and delivers a unique annual international outreach programme in Westminster and overseas. CPA UK works to encourage parliamentary diplomacy and build parliamentary capacity on behalf of the UK Parliament and the wider CPA. Through activities such as conferences, seminars, delegations and parliamentary strengthening teams, CPA UK provides Members with a practical, current and first-hand perspective on international issues facing fellow parliamentarians across the Commonwealth. Working with CPA UK's international outreach programmes also enhances Members' understanding of issues facing diaspora communities in their own constituencies.



Annex A - Recommendations from Evidence Session on ‘The Impact of the Domestic Violence Decree (2009)’

1. A full review of the Domestic Violence Decree should be undertaken
2. A lack of data has undermined efforts to measure the success of the decree or the level of domestic violence in Fiji. It is not clear who is responsible - be it the police, NGOs of the justice system - for collecting and storing records relating to domestic violence. A clear system for recording instances of domestic violence should be introduced.
3. The Domestic Violence Decree should be amended to incorporate auditing provisions
4. Police must ensure that information on Domestic Violence Restraining Orders is available at all police stations
5. The quality and quantity of training provided to police officers should be reviewed and subsequently improved. The police should consider incorporating training on domestic violence into basic training for new police officers.
6. The toll-free helpline for victims of domestic violence should be properly resourced
7. Other agencies apart from the police should be given power and responsibility to monitor cases of domestic violence
8. The courts must enforce penalties for breaches of Domestic Violence Restraining Orders
9. The government, police and judiciary should consider the work of NGOs and also church groups and engage fully with them
10. The government and NGOs should consider the needs of older women when providing refuges for victims of domestic violence