

Government of the Republic of Fiji

QUESTIONNAIRE

Implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the MSI, BPOA for the Sustainable Development of SIDS

1. Legal/Policy/Institutional Arrangements for SIDS and/or the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway.

Does your entity/organization/government have a SIDS Strategy? If not, are there any plans to establish one, including with the appropriate resources for implementation. (1000 words)

Fiji recognises the transformative and the development ambition of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and considers that the 2030 Agenda, taken together with the Paris Agreement, and implementation of SAMOA Pathway provides a framework for achieving a sustainable, prosperous and peaceful future for the world and its peoples. While the SDGs represent a global response to global challenges, Fiji considers them to be nationally relevant and capable of having a transformative impact on the quality of life of all Fijians.

The 5-Year and 20- Year National Development Plan is aligned with the SDGs which is mirrored with the SAMOA Pathway. The sustainable development principles underpinning the SDGs have long been the underlying principles for Fiji's national development. In implementing the SDGs, Fiji has adopted a 'whole-of-Government' approach and has utilized national development planning as the primary instrument to drive forward SDGs implementation.

Mainstreamed and integrated within the various thematic areas of the NDP are the 17 SDGs—15 SDGs explicitly integrated into the corresponding 29 strategic priorities of the NDP while SDG 10 (reduce inequalities), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production) and SDG 13 (climate action) are treated as cross-cutting issues across the NDP. Consequently, the SDG implementation and its monitoring hinge on the NDP processes.

At the sector level, SDGs have already been integrated into sectoral strategic plans and policies in many sectors including but not limited to education, health and agriculture. Fiji also recognises that, while Government holds the important responsibility for achieving the SDGs, it is in everyone's interest and everyone's responsibility including private individuals, private enterprises, NGOs and CSOs to advance the sustainable development agenda. Working with these multiple stakeholders, the Fijian Government is helping advance socio-economic development and empowerment of all Fijians.

The strategy formulated in the NDP is well established to monitor the achievements and goals as a "Small Island Developing State" (SIDS). Fiji's contributions in launching the first Voluntary National Review outlined the achievements of SDGs and the future progress on future achievements.

2. Financial Arrangements

Please give an indication of the budget allocation to SIDS SAMOA Pathway programme areas in your government/organization/entity, if applicable, for the period Jan. 2019 to Jan. 2020 of the fiscal cycle that best fits this period. If the priority areas cannot squarely fit for this chart, please report as closely as you can.

Table 1.0 below provides a summary of the Fijian Government's annual budget allocations categorised by relevant thematic areas of the SAMOA Pathway. A detailed breakdown of these allocations by specific programmes can be found in the attached data sheets. These data sets have been compiled bearing in mind two key factors:

- i. The financial year of the Fijian Government is from 1 August to 31 July; and which began
- ii. The shift from calendar year (January to December) to the financial year began in 2016.

Therefore, the budget for 2015 was not considered and the 2016-2017 National Budget was taken as a starting point. Moreover, to capture the budget allocations for 2020, the national budget for the 2019-2020 financial year was used as an ending point.

Between August 2016 to June 2020, the Fijian Government has increased its allocation to programmes aligned to the SAMOA Pathway by FJ \$266.1 million, an increase of approximately 11.1 percent. Moreover, the budget allocation for SAMOA Pathway related programmes as a percentage of total national budget also increased from 66.23% in 2016-2017 to 69.75% in 2019-2020. This increase has been the result of renewed emphasis on achieving rapid economic growth and inclusive social development in line with the 5-Year and 20-Year National Development Plan.

As the Table shows, significant emphasis has been placed on enhancing social development with large scale spending on education, health and social security. Total allocation to social development projects for the period August 2016 to July 2019 is approximately FJ \$6.67 billion. This reflects the Fijian Government's commitment to ensure that no-one is left behind as Fiji moves towards a development trajectory that is well aligned with its 5-Year and 20-Year National Development Plan.

Amongst numerous regulatory and policy reforms, the Fijian Government has also invested heavily in infrastructure development. With an aim to curtail years of underinvestment, approximately FJ \$2.84 billion has been allocated over the past four financial years to improve roads, water reticulation and access to energy.

These investments are closely followed by investment to prevent the single greatest threat to our national development – climate change. With strong impetus from Fiji's Presidency of COP23, there has been substantial investment in adaptation and mitigation initiatives. From building back better after Tropical Cyclone Winston to investments in renewable energy solutions, the Fijian Government has allocated approximately FJ \$1.02 billion in climate change and disaster programmes. This allocation is expected to grow further as Fiji strives to fortify itself against the growing perils of climate change.

As much as the aforementioned investments have helped increase economic prosperity, employment rate and reduce poverty. The Fijian Government is cognisant of the need to create an enabling environment for long term socio-economic development. In this regard, significant emphasis has been placed on improving means of implementation for consistent sustainable development that includes, strong regional and global partnerships, seamless access to finance, abundance of capacity building opportunities, access to productive technology and credible data and statistics for informed decision making. For the period August 2016 to July 2020, approximately FJ \$719.4 million has been allocated on improving means of implementation in Fiji.

However, as the global economic slowdown dawns upon the world and the Fijian Government increases its focus on fiscal sustainability, the Government Budget has reduced by 17.4% from FJ \$4.65 billion in 2018-2019 to FJ \$3.84 billion 2019-2020. This has implicitly reduced spending on SAMOA Pathway streams from 73.27% to 69.75% over the same period.

Table 1.0

SAMOA Pathway Priority Areas	Budget Allocated (\$) 2019-2020	Budget Allocated (\$) 2018-2019	Budget Allocated (\$) 2017-2018	Budget Allocated (\$) 2016-2017
Sustainable tourism	39,104,430	44,389,430	75,232,860	190,000
Climate change & Disaster risk reduction	112,146,842	252,485,519	318,859,394	338,800,000
Sustainable energy	22,133,254	64,797,063.0	44,452,940	19,800,000
Oceans and seas	4,610,405	7,018,451	5,929,825	3,080,000
Food security and nutrition	105,273,430	124,453,994	117,851,927	50,750,000
Water and sanitation	258,715,007	238,881,211	217,400,000	138,500,000
Sustainable transportation	343,595,295	525,681,909	548,640,044	421,600,000
Management of chemicals and waste, including hazardous waste	10,478,995	8,486,200	4,177,129	0
Health and non-communicable diseases	351,665,455	337,741,455	322,841,455	196,700,000
Gender equality and women's empowerment	8,480,000	13,040,100	2,898,000	1,900,000
Social development				145,950,000
youth and culture	20,165,626	26,504,273	185,577,006	18,900,000
Promoting peaceful societies and safe communities	272,922,000	296,800,300	245,500,000	374,505,000
Social Security	180,498,222	211,285,449	23,236,750	145,950,000
Education	765,614,913	1,023,733,033	889,343,545	383,300,000
Biodiversity				
Desertification, land degradation and drought	6,006,885	11,707,871	28,514,300	12,100,000
Forests	6,710,223	3,824,523	4,166,059	2,780,000
Invasive alien species	2,000,000	5,882,540	10,164,206	9,000,000
Means of implementation, including partnerships				
Partnerships	84,916,712	98,491,106	86,746,958	94,930,000
Financing	12,695,938	53,024,444	55,170,959	22,000,000
Capacity-building	3,413,075	4,817,439	4,093,339	7,891,000
Technology	62,287,366	52,037,573	29,867,580	16,440,000
Data and statistics	5,533,785	2,461,636	14,756,757	7,882,000
Total	2,678,967,858	3,407,545,519	3,235,421,033	2,412,948,000
Total Budget	3,840,928,900	4,650,546,000	4,356,830,800	3,643,360,000
Percentage of Budget Allocation	69.75%	73.27%	74.26%	66.23%

3. Implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and support to SIDS over the remaining life of the SAMOA Pathway

Based on the call for action and other priority areas contained in on A/Res/73/4, please provide an indication of your entity's/organization's/government's proposed focus in the remaining life of the SAMOA Pathway. What outcomes are you seeking to achieve? (1500 words)

The Fijian Government continues to work towards its commitments as per the Samoa pathway, United Nations conferences and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Fijian National Development Plan (NDP) bears a statement of intent and provides an aspirational vision for “Transforming Fiji” towards a progressive, vibrant and inclusive society. The 20 year development plan 2017-2036 outlines a framework that incorporates strategic policy maneuvers and new approaches to development.

The plan consists of two approaches, designated as: “**Transformational Strategic Thrusts**” and “**Inclusive Socio-economic Development**” which are mutually inclusive and reinforcing. To begin with, *Inclusive Socio-Economic Development* is essential to further improve the living standards of Fijians. Sustained economic expansion supported by private sector investment and trade and the enhanced provision of social services and public goods will be paramount. A wide range of sector policies and programmes have been identified with detailed plans for implementation to achieve these goals and targets. Outcomes which the government seeks to achieve via this plan include:

Fourfold increase in GDP per Person

Current per capita income stands at \$10,000.00 however based on projections on current trend, population growth and economic outlook; this is predicted to increase four fold by 2036. This projection however relies on the sustained GDP growth averaging 4-5%, investments of 25% GDP and an inflation rate of 2-3% as per current trends.

The Fiji Bureau of Statistics will undertake the Household, Income and Expenditure Survey: to complete the 2019/2020 HIES which is carried out to collect information about the social economic reality of the country by collecting household's annual income and expenditure, this data will then allow government to ascertain current progress of the country towards the outcome targeted and help realize gaps and constraints to increasing GDP and possible methods (if required) to maintain said increasing GDP. The FBOS will also undertake the Employment and Unemployment Survey in 2021, the only national survey that can assess the employment and unemployment rate of the country, providing in-depth information on *inter alia*, patterns of employment and unemployment, geographical distribution of the working population and general conditions of work.

Reduction of Government debt to 35% of GDP

With more than fourfold growth in nominal GDP expected, government debt will be reduced to 35 percent of GDP over the next 20 years. This commitment will be achieved

through an expansion in the overall size of the economy resulting from transformational shifts rather than by constraining the development budgets of government.

Government maintains a domestic and foreign borrowing mix of 70:30 (+/- 5 percent). In July 2018, domestic debt comprised 72.1 percent of the total public debt portfolio with the remaining 27.9 percent as external debt. Discussions are in the advanced stages with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank for the refinancing of the US\$200 million global bond due in October 2020 through a policy-based operation. As of July 2019, the domestic debt to GDP stands at 34.2%.

Reducing employment rate to below 4%

With sustained economic expansion and the implementation of new job creation policies, the unemployment rate will be reduced to below 4 percent. All Fijians will be empowered with education and skill sets so that they may be easily absorbed into the workforce. A key focus will be on skills development and turning job seekers into job creators. With the establishment of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) Council and Central Coordinating Agency, greater support and incentives will be provided to small and medium enterprises. New growth sectors with high labour absorption capacity will be nurtured and expanded. Seasonal employment opportunities overseas will also be effectively utilized.

To address this, The Ministry of Employment, Productivity & Industrial Relations in collaboration with the Australian Government, has introduced the Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS) that will increase labor mobility opportunities in Australia. The PLS scheme will assist the Government's National Development target to reduce the unemployment rate to below 4% by 2021. The scheme will allow Fijian citizens to work for longer periods from one to three years, as opposed to just nine months under the Seasonal Work Program.

Eradicating Poverty

With ever-increasing economic and social development over the last decade, poverty is now on a decline. A new measure of poverty that incorporates relevant and measurable social determinants will be developed to help guide improvements to service delivery. Extreme poverty and hardship will be eradicated, and well-being improved for all. This will be addressed through a multi-sectoral approach, sustainable growth and better access to social services. Targeted social protection will continue to be provided for the vulnerable through new initiatives to empower Fijians so that they may graduate out of poverty.

The Fiji government through the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation has dedicated \$25,000 for the review of the social protection programme processes and systems. Government has recognised the critical role that social protection can play in reducing poverty, improving living standards and providing a better future for the country. The review is essential for efficient operation and administration of the programmes and address areas of leakages and gaps within its operations.

100% access to clean and safe drinking water and Proper Sanitation

Every Fijian has a right to clean and safe water in adequate quantities. For the urban areas, 100 percent access to clean and safe water will be realised by 2021 and for the rural and maritime areas by 2030. Resources will be allocated for sustained maintenance and construction of new water treatment plants, reservoirs and reticulation systems, rural water schemes, development of groundwater sources, setting up desalination plants in the maritime region, and distribution of water tanks in rural areas. To support low-income households, a free water programme has been implemented. To meet the long-term demand, new dam sites including Sovi river catchment, upper Waimanu River and Waibogi in the upper reaches of Navua River have been identified. Other potential sites in the Western and Northern divisions will be identified in the future, and feasibility studies will be undertaken for new dam development. Consideration will be given to joint development of both water supply and hydro-power. Innovative technologies will be adopted for industrial recycling, rainwater harvesting and storage, storm water and aquifer management and use of renewable energy for desalination plants.

The water authority of Fiji continues its efforts to provide clean water and proper sanitation to people all over Fiji through projects such as:

- **Water Distribution System Project:** improves and expands WAF's ability to distribute clean and safe drinking water to a growing customer base.
- **Wastewater Treatment Plant:** continually upgrades wastewater treatment plants by expanding capacity in line with sewer extension projects.
- **Improvement and Upgrade of Wastewater Distribution System:** extends wastewater reticulation systems in line with capacity improvements at wastewater treatment facilities.
- **Rural Water Supply Programme:** covers the provision of safe drinking water to upwards of 32 schemes, which includes villages, settlements, schools and health facilities (\$11.3 million).

Electricity for All

90% of Fijians have access to electricity whereas electrification in the rural and maritime areas has been expedited to ensure the entire population has electricity by 2021. Grid extensions will be done in Viti Levu, Vanua Levu, Ovalau and Taveuni. Government will continue to fully fund rural electrification projects, including connections for households near the grid lines. For the rural and outer islands, decentralised renewable energy sources such as solar, mini hydro, hybrid biofuel/ diesel operated generators and wind systems will be adopted where feasible.

The Department of Energy in its efforts to electrify Fiji continues to do Installation and maintenance of solar home systems for rural off grid communities enabling access to renewable and affordable electricity around Fiji. This includes rehabilitation of solar home systems damaged by natural disasters.

Food and Nutrition Security

Food and nutrition security will be improved by ensuring increased local production, raising farm efficiency and productivity and developing more effective distribution systems. Agriculture and fisheries programmes will be enhanced, and local produce made available to all Fijians. New technology, mechanisation and better production practices will be adopted. Large-scale production will be encouraged and supported to achieve greater economies of scale. Organic farming will be promoted, and production of traditional crops and niche agricultural and fisheries products will be pursued. Production will be made more climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable. To adapt to climate change, increased funding will be directed towards agriculture research into crop varieties that can be more resilient to expected changes in weather patterns. In addition, extension training will evolve to ensure that farming practices adapt to changes due to climate change.

The Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation continues efforts to support the vulnerable in society through:

- **Poverty Benefit Scheme:** targets households living below the Basic Needs Poverty Line by providing them with a monthly allowance of \$30 - \$127 and a food voucher of \$50 to sustain themselves (\$36.0 million has been set aside for this project).
- **Food Voucher Programme for Rural Pregnant Mothers:** improves maternal health and reduces infant mortality by supporting expecting mothers in rural areas. The allocation will cater for a monthly food voucher of \$50 (\$900,000 in total).

The Ministry of Agriculture also works towards encouraging local food markets through initiatives such as:

- **Food Security Programme:** with \$800,000 allocation, this programme provides continued support for selected locally produced fruits and vegetables for food security purposes, with a broader aim of reducing imports and creating livelihood opportunities for rural communities.
- **Rotuma Island Development Project:** distributes planning materials and establishes nurseries to support food security and commercial agriculture development on the Island of Rotuma (\$90,000 allocation).
- **Agriculture Research Services - Root Crops:** \$350,000 has been allocated to conduct research on root crops for better and resilient varieties that can support food and income security

Protecting Culture, Heritage and Natural Environment

Local culture and heritage will be promoted as part of Fiji's vibrant tourism industry. Intellectual property rights for protection of traditional knowledge will be developed and strengthened. There will be an increased focus on proper management of local forests, mangroves and coral reefs because of the complex natural biodiversity that these systems support. These natural systems are critical for food and nutrition security, sustaining

endemic flora and fauna, and maintaining the natural balance in nature whilst simultaneously maintaining the allure of Fiji to tourists.

To ensure the Fiji's local flora and fauna is safe from pollution and its lakes, rivers, forests and biodiversity is protected, The Ministry of Waterway and Environment has taken the following steps:

- **Implementation and Enforcement of the Environment Management Act:** caters for the implementation of the Environment Management Act and raises public awareness on the Act's provisions.
- **Litter Awareness:** funds assistance; approximately \$70,000; to the Municipal Councils to conduct quarterly clean-up campaigns that ensure the safe and proper collection of unwanted white goods, such as damaged television sets, washing machines and old refrigerator machines, which are particularly harmful to the environment when disposed improperly.
- **3R Awareness Programme:** supports the Reduce, Reuse and Recycle (3Rs) programme by raising awareness in primary and secondary schools, allowing Fijians of all ages to be active climate warriors and participate in the international environmental campaign. Funds will be used to purchase 3Rs bins for all schools located within the boundaries of municipal councils (\$60,000 has been allocated for this project).

Under *Transformational Strategic Thrusts* the following outcomes have been predicted:

Nurturing new and Emerging Growth sectors

Moving forward, new growth sectors will be nurtured to enable the economy to thrive and create more jobs. Existing sectors will be expanded and modernised. Large-scale commercialisation will be pursued together with Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) development. Development of niche products and services for export will be pursued. This includes organic agricultural produce, agro-processing, premium-quality garments, increasing the range of tourism products and many other new sector initiatives.

The Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism continues to work with respective stakeholders to encourage small, micro enterprises through initiatives such as:

- **Micro and Small Business Grants:** encourages micro and small-scale economic activity and boosts income capacities by improving the quality of products and services of MSMEs (\$300,000 allocation).
- **Northern Development Programme:** provides business training and technical support to improve livelihoods and facilitate growth in rural communities, generating funds from business owners and financial institutions through partnerships (\$441,056 allocation).
- **Young Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES):** provides grants of up to \$30,000 to young and budding Fijian entrepreneurs between the ages of 18-30 who have innovative and

bankable ideas, but lack the collateral required to receive loans from financial institutions.

- **Research and Innovation Scheme for Enterprises (RISE):** encourages Fijian entrepreneurs to elevate their enterprises by engaging in research and development, particularly in the areas of science and innovation. Proposals that commit to the socio-economic development to Fiji by aligning to the national, regional and international Green and Blue economy agenda will be preferred (\$500,000 allocation).

Improving Digital Connectivity and Transport

Greater connectivity is central to transforming Fiji. Transportation networks within the country and connectivity to the outside world will be enhanced. The Government will continue to modernise Fiji's air, maritime and land transport networks and weather recording, forecasting and reporting services to meet Fiji's long term needs and aspirations. Apart from transport connectivity, there will be a major focus on digital connectivity. All this will support human capital development, commerce and trade which will be attained by initiatives by The Ministry of Communications such as:

- **Digital Government Transformation:** \$39.1 million has been allocated to fund digitalFIJI, the Fijian Government's digital transformation programme, to bring key Government services online, thereby easing access, cultivating inclusivity, and improving the quality of life of Fijians everywhere while keeping the national economy abreast in a rapidly-evolving and highly-competitive global landscape.
- **Bringing Schools Online:** provides internet connection to a total of 50 schools scattered along rural interior and maritime areas, giving teachers and students the many benefits of internet connectivity and allowing schools to participate in future e-learning initiatives (\$200,000 allocation).

Vibrant cities and towns and stronger rural economy

To create vibrant urban centres, existing city and town schemes will be reviewed, and new growth centres will be identified and developed. Government is exploring options to decentralise some of its offices currently based in Suva to the Western and Northern divisions. Rural development will be prioritised with improvements in infrastructure and provision of adequate public utilities. Agriculture and other sectors will be supported to generate income opportunities for people in rural and maritime areas. The Ministry of Agriculture will create better linkages to enhance the marketing, promotion and value addition of local agricultural produce.

The Department of Town and Country Planning plans to relive pressure on basic infrastructure and environment in urban centers by developing smaller urban centers. Initiatives include:

- **New Town Development:** establishes town centres in high-growth areas within rural and remote areas at Nabouwalu in Bua, Korovou in Nausori, Seaqaqa in Macuata and

Keiyasi in Nadroga/Navosa, which includes zone creation for future development (\$1.5 million allocation).

- **Municipalities Master Plan – Singapore Cooperation Enterprise:** funds the Ministry’s ambitious urban planning programme, which will forever change the face of Fiji’s urban areas for the better as the nation transforms to suit a modern economy. In 2019-2020, work will commence on master plans for the Greater Suva Area and Nadi, laying the groundwork for more efficient, affordable, and attractive Fijian cities.
- **Urban Policy Action Plan Implementation:** supports the development of town planning schemes and action plans for development of urban centres.

What specific actions, if any will your entity/organization/government take to address any of the gaps and challenges identified in the political outcomes (paras 15 ~ 29), section on “ Call for Action” in the document A/RES/74/3? (1500 words)

Gender equality and Women Empowerment

The department of Women under the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation works to increase women’s participation in decision-making, eliminate violence against women, improve women’s access to basic services, and address women’s issues in new legislation. The Department works with other Ministries to ensure that gender perspectives are addressed in all Government policies and initiatives and to promote gender equality. Projects that seek women empowerment in society are:

- **Women’s Plan of Action:** establishes a taskforce that seeks to review the Women’s Plan of Action, conduct activities under its five thematic areas, and establish a new thematic area, ‘Gender and Climate Change’. The new thematic area will focus on programmes that will address gender issues during natural disasters, and spearhead women’s activities for promoting resilience, mitigation and adaptation (\$900,000).
- **NGO Grants:** provides grants to various non-government organizations to advance the interests of women and children (\$150,000). Furthermore, \$450,000 is allocated to 3 women institutions that complement the work of Government to advance gender equality and women empowerment.
- **Fiji National Women’s Expo:** supports women’s economic empowerment through the hosting of the National Women’s Expo. The Expo provides a platform for rural women to sell their produce and gain access to potential urban markets (\$500,000).
- **Domestic Violence Helpline:** funds the operations at the 24-hour toll-free Domestic Violence Helpline, which provides a free reporting and referral platform for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault (\$200,000).

Financing

The implementation of the National Development Plan as discussed prior is expected to inject over \$50 billion of government investment over the next 20 years. This includes both funding for capital expenditure and expenditure for provision of social services. To finance

this, government will mobilise its domestic revenues, both tax and non-tax, and access international financial resources, including funding from multilateral development partners. Self-funding of projects undertaken by State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and municipal councils will complement funding from the central government. Financing through private sector partnerships and climate finance will increasingly be a core source of financing.

Energy and Connectivity

Electricity generation from renewable energy sources will be increased to 100 percent by 2036. Apart from the ongoing hydro projects such as the Qaliwana/Upper Wailoa Diversion Hydro Project and Lower Ba Hydro Project, new areas will be identified for feasibility studies. Other renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, biomass, geothermal and wave and tidal energy will be developed where they are viable and affordable. Future electricity infrastructure projects will be climate resilient, and opportunities for underground cables for electricity distribution will be explored and adopted where feasible. Carbon credits under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) will be employed as part of the financing arrangements. Other sources of climate finance will also be accessed. 5-Year and 20-Year National Development Plan 4 Independent power producers of both small and large-scale electricity production will be supported with fair pricing for sale of electricity. The Department of Energy has installed and maintained solar home systems for off-grid communities enabling access to renewable and affordable electricity to rural communities around Fiji. This includes rehabilitation of solar home systems damaged by natural disasters. (\$8.4 million).

Information and communication technology (ICT) has transformed the lives of people by raising productivity and growth, creating more employment, improving connectivity between urban and rural areas, enhancing service delivery and promoting innovation. Fiji has a competitive edge in the region because of our access to the Southern Cross Cable fibre optic network (SCCN), which provides fast (240Gbps), direct and secure connectivity with Australia, New Zealand, and the USA and reduces reliance on satellite capacity, which can be congested and costly. Our telecommunications and internet capabilities have seen marked improvements, with 95 percent of the country connected through wire and wireless network. Fiji has also developed the region's first national broadband policy. Mobile phone penetration and mobile broadband access have increased with the extension of 3G and 4G network coverage. Government services are being provided on the digital platform, and Community Telecentres have been developed.

Technology and Climate Change

Appropriate new technology will be adopted to raise overall efficiency and productivity and to improve service delivery across all sectors. Adoption of new technology will be supported in areas like transportation, renewable energy, manufacturing, agriculture, ICT, education and other service-related sectors. Innovation, research and implementation of new ideas will also be incentivised. A facilitative environment will be created to assist the importation of new and modern technology. Government will explore options to provide

the necessary infrastructure to embrace new technology. This will include installing chargers for electric vehicles across the country, supporting vehicle upgrades to accommodate better fuel standards and promoting technology transfer.

The Ministry of Economy through the Climate Change and International Cooperation Division has undertaken the common Sensing project targeted to support and build climate resilience using remote sensing software. The project also seeks to strengthen the country's capacity to access climate finance and assist with reporting on climate funds; strengthen national and regional climate action policy; reduce the impact of natural disasters and improve risk management and food security. The project is led by the UNITAR's Operational Satellite Applications programme (UNOSAT) working with the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Satellite Applications Catapult, Devex International, Radiant Earth, the United Kingdom's Met Office, Sensonomic and the University of Portsmouth (\$200,000).

Oceans has taken centre stage at recent UN conferences, highlighted specially at COP 25 which was ideally labelled as the Blue COP. The Fijian Government has taken a proactive approach to address ocean issues as a climate champion within the Pacific. \$100,000 is allocated for the Ocean and Blue Economy Initiatives. This program will explore ways to finance blue economy projects whereby the Fijian Government will develop projects to support its blue economy and protect the ocean, reefs and sea life.

The Ministry of Disaster Management and Meteorological Services launched 2 major initiatives in efforts to provide better services to the public in terms of disaster preparedness, they were: **Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite System Upgrade**: funds hardware upgrades to improve the monitoring of severe weather conditions such as flash floods, hail storms and hurricanes (\$138,000) and the **Disaster Risk Reduction Policy**: supports the awareness costs at Divisional levels, support the development of risk strategies and planning and mapping of monitoring documents. In addition, Fiji's becoming the first country to ratify the Sendai Framework through the National Disaster Management Office (\$50,000).

Data and statistics remain a significant challenges for SIDS. It hinders the ability of SIDS to report on key international commitments. Most SIDS are currently able to report on less than 50% for the SGD indicators. Please give an indication of any proposed targeted action at national or sub regional levels, to address this area in SIDS. (1000 words)

At present, most ministries and organisations in Fiji collect and input data into independent databases which are not linked to other ministries thus causing a gap in shared information. The digitization of data is a relatively recent venture undertaken by the current government to ease access of information for its people; however the project is still in its preliminary stages with some ministries only having recent data (10 years prior) online while others have just initiated the project. The level of progress in digitization is sometimes highlighted when reporting on respective projects is required with some reports having incomplete data due to the taxing nature of collecting and consolidating data manually.

Therein lies an opportunity for The Fijian Government to create a consolidated platform which addresses each of the SDG's with respective data filtered in through the respective line ministries. This venture would require greater collaboration between ministries and MOU's with the private sector so as to have access to otherwise private information which can be utilized for **national** generalized level reporting. It has started this venture with the **Digitisation Programme**; in cooperation with Singapore Corporation Enterprise, works to digitise all Ministry companies, titles and BDM records under the Ministry of Communications digitalFIJI initiative, a move that will better preserve information, improve public access, and facilitate other business through e-government services (\$281,906).

Despite the challenges faced in collecting data, Fiji is grateful to its development partners for the continued support in meeting its commitments as per the Samoa Pathway and national development priorities. Donors have continued to provide support in key areas such as general administration and infrastructure development ranging from direct budget support to program funding.

4. Financing for Sustainable Development in SIDS

Access to low cost development financing is a longstanding concern and priority for SIDS. Please indicate any plans or approaches which your entity/organization/government may have to support or enhance SIDS access to concessional finance, including the broadening partnerships, to address capacity constraints and enhance SIDS ability to mobilise, manage and spend financial resources from a wider array of sources. (1500 words)

Please elaborate on any specific plans or programmes at national and or sub regional levels to support SIDS to explore approaches and financial instruments that can help SIDS maximise resources for sustainable development from a broader array of resources, in particular through innovative financial instruments such as green bonds, blue bonds, and blending arrangements. (1500 words)

Note: Both the questions has been addressed below.

As a Small Island Developing State, the single greatest threat to Fiji's sustainable development aspirations is climate change. As articulated in Fiji's National Climate Change Policy 2018-2030, failure to achieve targets under SDG 13: Climate Action will have detrimental knock on effects on Fiji's progress across all other SDGs. Over the past 3 years, Fiji has set strong policy foundations to guide and strengthen its climate actions with formulation of various adaptation and mitigation centric national documents¹. These is in with Fiji's development aspirations outlined in the 5-Year and 20-Year National Development Plan that recognises climate action and sustainable development as cornerstones for a prosperous future for all Fijians. Going forward Fiji will be focusing on

¹ <http://www.economy.gov.fj/index.php/resources-main/publications/climatechangeresources/climate-change-resources>

operationalising these national documents by accessing affordable and transformative climate finance through a range of bilateral, multilateral, private and philanthropic sources.

Quantifying Development Needs

A crucial prerequisite for effective mobilisation of development finance in the context of sustainable development is the need to quantify and cost development needs. Without which, it becomes increasingly difficult to justify national priorities, take a country driven approach to development and attract involvement of non-state stakeholders to invest in matters of national interest. To address this, Fijian Government is undertaking three key initiatives in the adaptation, mitigation and climate finance space.

Costing the National Adaptation Plan: Climate adaptation is the highest priority for Fiji as climate induced adversities threaten to reverse decades of development progress in a matter of hours. Despite this, investments in adaption initiatives are currently almost completely done through Government fiscal spending with no voluntary investment contributions from the private sector. This can largely be attributed to a common prejudice that investments in climate adaptation does not result in viable economic returns. Having formulated the National Adaptation Plan (‘NAP’) that identifies key sectorial actions needed to improve national climate adaption, Fiji is working with the NAP Global Network to develop an innovative NAP costing methodology that is envisaged to identify national climate adaptation needs in a systematic and reliable manner. The costs will eventually be used to develop adaptation investment plans that would rationalise a blended approach to adaptation financing with equal involvement of Government and private sector stakeholders.

Formulating Nationally Determined Contribution (‘NDC’) Investment Plans: Fiji is committed to transitioning towards a low carbon future in line with its 5-year and 20-Year National Development Plan, its NDC commitments under the Paris Agreement and its Low Emissions Development Strategy 2018-2050. Enhancing investments in resilient renewable solutions now will reduce the need for increased climate adaptation in the future. Renewable solutions also have the potential to reduce Fiji’s overwhelming dependence on fossil fuels that currently are a burden on national balance of payments. Minimum dependence on non-renewable energy would ultimately free up fiscal resources for investments in climate adaptation and socio-economic development while improving macro-economic stability. In this regard, the Fijian Government is working with the Regional Pacific NDC Hub to develop NDC Investment Plans for the energy efficiency sector and the transport sector. The investment plans are expected to catalyse private sector interest in large scale renewable investments through a multitude of blended financing options.

Developing a Climate Finance Country Programme: The Fijian Government is working with the World Resources Institute to develop a Climate Finance Country Programme that will highlight key sectorial climate funding priorities for Fiji. The Country Programme will enable Fiji to communicate these priorities to donors, development partners and the private sector to better calibrate existing climate finance flows and attract new and additional

climate finance. The Climate Finance Country Programme will also create a GCF Country Programme as its subset which will be used to programme Fiji's GCF project pipeline and submissions. Ultimately, the Climate Finance Country Programme is expected to lay the foundations for a systemic approach to costing and communicating Fiji's development needs from a climate lens. This costing approach has the potential to transcend beyond the climate space to other cross cutting matters such as gender, sustainability, equity and inclusion, and social accountability.

Green Climate Fund ('GCF') Readiness Access: The GCF is the largest multilateral source of climate finance that has potential to catalyse transformative climate finance for Fiji as well as other SIDS with its dedicated share of financing for SIDS. Fiji secured a "Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme" (Readiness Programme) Funding support project worth USD 1 million from GCF in October 2017 that will assist the Fijian Ministry of Economy, in its capacity as the GCF National Designated Authority, to establish national coordination mechanisms to govern and manage climate finance through set guidelines and operating procedures. The funding is expected to also assist in institutional and capacity building for Fiji Development Bank ('FDB') in its role as the GCF Direct Access Entity. A detailed gap assessment will also be funded through the Readiness programme to prepare Ministry of Economy to become the second GCF Direct Access Entity similar to the FDB. This is envisaged to not only enable greater access to GCF funding but also improve long standing capacity constraints for limited access to non-state climate financing.

Access to International Development Association ('IDA') and International Bank of Reconstruction and Development ('IBRD') Funding from the World Bank: In April 2019, Fiji gained access to the IDA and IBRD funding mechanism of the World Bank which allows access of at least US \$21 million in concessional development and crisis support funding annually. This also allows Fiji to access funds at extremely favourable terms – notably at 0 percent interest, 10 years grace and 40 years maturity. Fiji plans to use these funds to facilitate crucial development initiatives in collaboration with the World Bank, establish tailor made climate and disaster risk indemnity solutions and access disaster recovery funds when needed.

Exploring Opportunities for Blue Bonds: As Small Island Developing State, Fiji's socio-economic well-being is intrinsically linked to its Ocean resources. As anthropogenic actions continue to enhance to have detrimental impacts on ocean resources, it imperative that Fiji takes a holistic approach to protect, preserve and sustainably utilise its Ocean resources in line with SDG 14: Life Below Water. In this regard the Fijian Government is developing a National Ocean Policy which will help achieve a healthy ocean that sustains the livelihoods and aspirations of current and future generations for Fiji. In this regard, the Fijian Government is exploring opportunities for the issuance of a blue bond based on the successful issuance of the US \$50 million Fiji Sovereign Green Bond in 2017. Discussions are ongoing between the Fijian Ministry of Economy, Reserve Bank of Fiji and the World Bank to identify the best possible modality for such an innovative undertaking that only been handful of times around the world.

Expanding the Environment and Climate Adaptation Levy: The Environment and Climate Adaptation Levy (ECAL) is a consortium of taxes on prescribed services, items and income. It helps fund critical work across Fiji to protect our natural environment, reduce our carbon footprint, and adapt our economy, our communities and our infrastructure to the worsening impacts of climate change. Since its introduction in the 2017-2018 financial year, the Environment and Climate Adaptation Ley has collected FJ \$362.9 million in proceeds. As of July 2019, we have used FJ \$255.9 from ECAL to finance 102 projects programmed in the National Budget to address climate change and environmental conservation. This innovative fiscal financing tool has helped raise unprecedented levels of public finance to support climate change and environmental conservation programmes.

Given the phenomenal success of the ECAL and growing climate adaption needs, the Fijian Government has expanded the scope of the ECAL in the 2019-2020 financial year by placing a 10% ECAL on the importation of the following items, which use high amounts of electricity and emit chlorofluorocarbons:

1. Smartphones
2. Air conditioners
3. Freezer/Refrigerator
4. Television
5. Washing Machines
6. Dryers - Household
7. Dryers - Commercial
8. Dishwashers
9. Electric Stoves
10. Electric Lawn Mowers

Establishment of the Climate Relocation and Displaced Peoples (‘CRDP’) Trust Fund: Rising sea levels engulfing low lying coastal communities, saltwater intrusion reducing arable land, changing weather patterns impacting food security and catastrophic cyclones reversing years of development progress while threatening fiscal stability are major climate induced adversities faced by Fiji. These adversities tremendously impact socio-economic security through increased incidence of poverty and undue pressure on social services. In this regard, the Fijian Government has established the CRDP as part of a concerted national effort to avert climate induced loss and damage, protect the most vulnerable Fijians from the impacts of climate change and ensure that essential social infrastructures are resilient. The CRDP is being funded through seed funding from the Fijian Government using 3 percent of annual ECAL proceeds. Government’s commitment to the CROC is expected to attract financing from donors, development partners, philanthropic organisations and the private sector.

Establishment of the Fiji Rural Electrification Fund (‘FREF’): FREF was the brainchild of the Fijian COP23 Presidency and which was institutionalised a charitable trust to enable access to clean, renewable and affordable electricity to rural Fiji. FREF uses a revolving fund structure where affordable tariff payments from rural communities is placed into a trust fund used to electrify more rural communities throughout Fiji. FREF is envisaged to electrify approximately 300 rural communities over the next 10 years. Having received seed funding from the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation which was used to electrify the first pilot community of 47 households on the island of Vio off the coast of Lautoka,

FREF plans to electrify additional 10 communities in 2020 using additional financing from the British Government. The FREF initiative is expected to have direct impact of SDG 7: Affordable and Climate Energy, SDG 10: Reduced Inequality and SDG 13: Climate Action.

5. Climate Change and Disaster Risk Resilience

Please elaborate on any specific or planned programmes which your name entity/organization/government intends to engage to support SIDS to build climate resilience, including building back better in the aftermath of disasters? (1000 words)

In addition to the various initiatives mentioned in Question 4 above, the Fijian Government is working with the World Bank Group and the United National Capital Development Fund ('UNCDF') to develop various indemnity based climate and disaster risk solutions that are expected to improve the climate resilience of marginalised Fijians, reduce the recovery burden on Government and improve insurance penetration rates. These solutions are envisaged to be part of layered approach to climate and disaster risk financing combining micro, meso and macro level financing solutions.

Parametric Insurance for Low Income Households: The Fijian Government is working with the World Bank Group to establish a parametric livelihoods coverage for low income households that would be regarded as 'uninsurable' by conventional insurance providers. By establishing a parametric indemnity payment system, the Fijian Government envisages to provide insurance coverage at micro-premium rates for households under the social welfare programme and low-income farmers registered with farming cooperatives. This initiative is expected to minimise the need for the Fijian Government to recalibrate fiscal spending to accommodate for immediate financial relief to the most vulnerable Fijians.

Bronze Level Household Insurance: The Fijian Government is also working with the World Bank Group to develop trigger-based insurance coverage for bronze level households (households that could qualify for normal insurance coverage with minor modifications to housing structure). Under the proposed indemnity cover being developed, these households would have access to insurance payouts based on the occurrence of a predefined catastrophe, level of damage to individual households and rapid verification via mobile phones.

Parametric Unit Based Insurance Coverage for Vulnerable Fijians: The Fijian Government is exploring opportunities with to rapidly develop parametric weather-based index insurance solutions for the Pacific to cover catastrophic natural disasters like cyclones and flooding. Under this initiative, two specific product variants could be tested with target beneficiaries (small holder farmers, fishers, small businesses etc.) during a two-year inception phase. The first variant would offer FJ \$500 per unit of insurance for a maximum of 10 units, the insurance can cover any asset including agricultural produce and livestock. The second variant would test the feasibility for providing part of the benefits as a post-event lump sum and the remaining as a term loan with interest component subsidized by the insurance. Both variants could be pilot tested in a controlled group of beneficiaries to establish proof of concept.

Catastrophe Deferred Drawdown Option (“CATDDO”): Following its eligibility to access IDA and IBRD support, the Fijian Government is working with the World Bank Group to develop a tailored CATDDO facility. A CATDDO is a contingent financing line that provides immediate liquidity to IBRD eligible countries to address shocks related to natural disasters and/or health-related events (COVID19 is one such eligible event). It serves as early financing while funds from other sources such as bilateral aid or reconstruction loans are being mobilized. Such a facility could enhance Fiji’s capacity to plan for and manage crises by securing access to financing before disaster strikes. The facility is envisaged to be approved prior to a predefined disaster and disburses quickly once the disaster occurs and the drawdown trigger is met (ideally a declaration of state of emergency under Fiji’s Disaster Management Act). The CATDDO for Fiji would be most effective as part of a broader risk management strategy in countries highly exposed to natural disasters and including health related events.