

**Votes and Proceedings
of the
Eighteenth Parliament**

No. 27

**Second Sitting of the Fifteenth Meeting
Thursday, 15th October, 2009**

10.00 a.m.

1. The House met at 10.00 a.m. pursuant to adjournment.
2. Hon. Riddell Akua, M.P., Speaker of Parliament, took the Chair and read Prayers.
3. **Statement From the Chair**

Hon. Speaker made the following statement to the House –

‘Honourable Members, as was my statement at the last sitting on Tuesday, October 13, I mentioned in respect to Ms. Margaret Cazabon being on-island to produce the parliamentary website. I also pinned a notice on the door going from the Chamber into the main lounge in regard to all members being welcomed to attend a briefing on the same the following day, that is Wednesday October 14 at 11 a.m.

I kindly remind all Members, especially those who are not aware that the website will consist of everything that is pertinent to our national Parliament would be disseminated to the public and into the cyber-world. Members are kindly asked to contact the Parliamentary Counsel if they wish to input any additional that they think might be relevant.

Your wish as to how your identity be portrayed is important so I urge all members to attend with the Parliamentary Counsel to discuss this point and any other matters that they think are important to the subject.

Honourable Members, I submit.’

4. **Question on Notice**

Question No 16 was not yet ready.

5. **Questions Without Notice** were asked.

6. Ministerial Statement and Tabling of Papers

(a) His Excellency the President made the following statement on *Nauru Broadcasting Technical Upgrade*: -

‘Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to provide yourself and Hon. Members with an update on the recently completed technical upgrade of Nauru’s radio station FM105.

The radio studio upgrade follows the earlier technical enhancement which enabled all Nauruans to finally receive a clear and strong radio signal right around the island. I believe the importance of this upgrade was obvious as recently as last week when FM105 was able to inform its audience of the tsunami warnings and their subsequent cancellations.

This time last year, Mr. Speaker, we had very little in the way of an effective radio service, which for too many years had been restricted to a very weak output through 88.8FM and which could only be effectively heard around the confines of the studio location here at Yaren, along with isolated pockets of a well below acceptable standard of receivership in the adjoining districts of Aiwo and Meneng.

Then in December last year, after extensive planning and preparation, a new 500 watt radio transmitter was commissioned at Command Ridge which linked the studio with Command Ridge and enabled the required signal to go out on the new frequency of FM105, at the same time retaining the 88.8FM signal for localised reception and for redundancy purposes.

Mr. Speaker, the 2 major considerations in this exercise were –

- To give all Nauruans an effective radio service for the most cost-effective price*
- And to simultaneously provide Nauru Media technical staff with a higher level of training in the installation and maintenance of equipment, not previously available to them on Nauru.*

Both of these objectives were achieved, and ongoing technical training was provided in the latest phase which was to upgrade the studio facilities, virtually from the ground up. This included the installation of a new announcer’s console to replace the worn-out and unreliable fixture which was on its last legs.

New, professional microphones were installed to allow better quality of studio sound for both the announcer and studio guests. The full effect of this will be more evident with the studio sound-proofing measures about to be undertaken, hopefully before Christmas.

The final piece of the studio upgrade was the installation of a dedicated broadcast computer and high-end programming software designed to assist the announcers in attaining a better standard of on-air presentation. Training is also ongoing in this area which will soon result in a more suitable and professional station format, designed to better reflect a wider musical appreciation in the radio audience and reduce repetition through tighter format programming.

Mr. Speaker, a lot has been achieved over the past 12 months in our overall objective to restore local radio and television services to our country, and the studio upgrade represents the latest phase of that exercise.

However, it would be remiss of me if I didn't acknowledge the fact that there is still a fair way to go before all the pieces of this major work are put together.

Thanks to the combined funding assistance from AUSAID, UNESCO and our own significant Government of Nauru budgetary contribution, we will be commencing a similar technical upgrade in January and February which will transform the current television station into a professional facility with the capacity to produce more local programs to reflect the cultural, lifestyle, sporting and entertainment interests of our people in both live to air and recorded formats.

Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased with the progress we have made in restoring our radio and television services to our country and I look forward to updating you regularly as the remainder of the work is rolled out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(b) Hon. Mathew Batsiua (Minister for Justice, Health and Sports) made the following statement on an **Update on Health Ministry Activities:-**

'Mr. Speaker and Members, the recruitment and retention of specialist medical staff continues to present challenges. However, I am pleased to report the recruitment of the following expatriate staff – a surgeon, 2 general medical officers, a dietician, a physiotherapist, a laboratory technician, 1 radiographer and a nurse supervisor.

Two members of the brigade arrived in July, the team leader is a physician and pharmacist. The ministry is currently finalising logistics for the remaining members which consist of a paediatrician, surgeon and laboratory technician.

Recognising the need to ensure the public receives specialist medical care the Ministry places priority in ensuring specialist teams visit Nauru on a regular basis. The AUSAID funded Pacific Islands Projects managed by the Royal Australian College of Surgeons and the AUSAID MOU resulted in the following visits –

- *Renal – 7 to 14 September;*
- *ENT – 21 – 30 November;*
- *Cardiovascular – 27 October to 3 November*

Nauru continues to benefit from its bilateral programme of assistance with the Republic of China (Taiwan) whereby a Mobile Medical Team will visit from the 14 to 30 November 2009.

The Taiwan permanent medical mission on Nauru has been fully established with a surgeon visiting on a rotation basis for 2-3 months assignment. The Ministry will continue to work closely with the Taiwan Embassy to strengthen this initiative.

The Ministry will host an Israeli ENT specialist for 3 months in November and has been planned to coincide with the visiting RACS team.

Eight students departed for Cuba on 25 September to commence preliminary medical studies, this will bring the number of Nauruan students studying medicine in Cuba to 17.

The Ministry is currently processing advertisements for its 2010 Health Trainee intake.

The Ministry further expects the return of 7 nursing graduates at the end of 2009 and positions have been made available for them to commence their employment.

The oxygen plant continues to pose challenges and a compressor has been purchased through assistance from the Government of Italy and is expected to arrive on the November ship. The technician will subsequently arrive after that to service and repair the plant. As a further back-up 20 plus cylinders have been filled with oxygen in Australia and will also arrive on the October ship. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.'

Hon. Baron Waqa (Boe) moved that the statement be noted

(c) Hon. Dr. Kieren Keke (Minister for Finance) made the following statement on his recent overseas trips on government business:

'Mr. Speaker and Honourable Colleagues, I returned last Monday from a one week trip overseas. The primary purpose of this travel was to attend the EU-Pacific ACP Seminar hosted by the EU in Nadi, Fiji.

The EU's practice for many years has been to simply have an internal seminar. This year was the first time that the EU decided to invite all Pacific ACP countries to attend the seminar together with EU Member States as well as the European Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) in the region (New Caledonia, French Polynesia, Wallis & Futuna and Pitcairn).

The EU has allocated 95 million Euros for the Pacific regional program under the 10th EDF for the period 2008 to 2013. The funds will be focused on two agreed focal sectors; "Regional Economic Integration" and the "Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and the Environment". This regional funding is in addition to the national program of funding Nauru receives directly from the EU and which we have been successfully progressing primarily in our energy sector.

The meetings in Nadi covered a range of issues including updates on progress in implementing the regional projects funded under the 9th EDF, the EU's support of the Pacific Aid-for-Trade Strategy, progress on the Pacific Plan and regional integration, closer cooperation between the Pacific Island countries and the European OCTs, climate change and coordination of development partners.

Of course a good deal of attention was given to progressing the regional projects under the 10th EDF. None of these projects have commenced but a number have now been approved and following the Pacific Trade Ministers approving the Pacific Aid-for-Trade Strategy, there should now be progress on approving more regional projects on focal sector 1, being "Regional Economic Integration".

The discussions also looked at the political dialogue between the Pacific and the EU and ways to further strengthen this aspect of the relationship both on a bilateral level and regionally.

There were also very useful presentations by the European Investment Bank on their activities in the Pacific and what may be available to Pacific countries through the European Investment Bank. There were also discussions on the EU move to simplifying their assistance thru direct budget support, and the EU's support available under "Vulnerability FLEX" to support countries in coping with the impacts of the Global Economic Crisis.

I have attached the brief outcome statement from the meeting, but if any Member is interested in further details on any of these issues I would be pleased to provide this upon request.

I was also requested to deliver a statement at this Seminar and I have attached a copy of my statement for the information of Members.

Mr. Speaker, on my way to the EU meeting in Nadi, I spent one day in Brisbane meeting with Our Airline's senior executives to discuss some of the financial issues facing the airline. This includes the issue of the heavy maintenance due on the second aircraft sometime next year.

The Global Economic Crisis has had a particularly profound impact on the aviation industry worldwide and we have seen a number of airlines in Australia and the region collapse and most of the major airlines reporting major losses, forcing them all to undertake drastic changes and cuts to ensure ongoing viability.

The Global Economic Crisis has also hit Our Airline hard. The regular but ad hoc charter work which was a main feature of Our Airline's revenues in recent years has almost totally evaporated and the impact of the loss of this revenue has been compounded by Solomon Airline's decision to cease the code share arrangement.

The airline overall is suffering from a major reduction in revenues.

Despite this, it is fair to say that Our Airline is weathering the crisis better than many other bigger airlines in the region and has been working on new services and strategies to secure new revenues, including the re-launch of services to Tarawa and Nadi. The airline management must be commended for their vision and work in developing new business for Our Airline.

Unfortunately, the new revenues can only do so much and do take time to start materialising, so the airline is projecting a rather tight financial period in the next 6 or so months and this has required Our Airline to identify cost saving measures to reduce overheads as well as direct operating costs.

Flowing from the meeting with Our Airline in Brisbane I travelled to Singapore. I was accompanied by Special Advisor to Cabinet, Mr. Manish Sundarjee, and we met up with President Stephen for one day who was on his way back to Nauru from the United Nations meetings.

Whilst in Singapore we had a series of meetings that have helped us crystallise a number of strategies to address Our Airline's financial issues as well as the aircraft maintenance requirements.

We also had meetings furthering matters on behalf of Minister Pitcher in relation to RONPHOS as well as updates on the proposed fisheries processing facility for Nauru and other potential projects.

Mr. Speaker, my travel from Nauru to Brisbane to Nadi and return was mostly funded by the Forum Secretariat using EU program funds and my travel from Brisbane to Singapore was funded by Government.

Mr. Speaker, I will be travelling overseas this coming Sunday and I will be off island for two weeks.

Firstly, I will be attending the Forum Trade Ministers meeting in Brisbane next week. The Secretary for Foreign Affairs & Trade, Mr.. Robert Sisilo, along with Lara Atto

from the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade and the staff from our Consulate in Brisbane will all accompany me to this meeting. The primary focus of this meeting will be to begin discussions on how we shall progress PACER Plus.

This is a very important meeting as PACER Plus holds a lot of potential for Nauru and the Pacific, but we need to get it right. Our focus needs to be on the “plus” to ensure that we eventually finalise a multifaceted agreement that is far more than a trade liberalisation agreement, but an economic framework that brings closer economic integration in the Pacific, facilitates trade of goods and services, enables easy access and movement of our people to other countries under the agreement for employment, attracts foreign investment to Nauru and brings with it concrete and effective development assistance that will ensure that our Nauruan private businesses can grow and participate effectively in regional trade.

Negotiating any trade agreement is a time consuming and complex matter, but when you have an agreement that involves a large number of countries in a region and that aspires to do so much more than the old style of free trade agreements, we must expect that the path to finalising PACER Plus is going to be long and full of twists and turns.

But our Government is eager that this process begin. It is a process that requires many different elements, including in-country national consultations, ongoing internal national assessments of issues and options as they arise throughout negotiations, development, refinement and ongoing re-assessment of our national positions, offers and demands, as well as coordination of Nauru’s position and requirements with all the other Pacific Islands, and then of course negotiating all of this with Australia and New Zealand. Given all that is required, we need to commence on this now and not delay any further.

Mr.. Speaker, following the Trade Ministers meeting in Brisbane, I will attend the Forum Economic Ministers meeting in the Cook Islands. The Secretary for Finance, Mr. Tim Drown, will accompany me to this meeting.

I will provide a report to the House on these meetings upon my return. Thank you Mr.. Speaker.’

Hon. Baron Waqa (Boe) moved that the statement be noted

(d) Hon. Mathew Batsiua (Minister for Justice, Health and Sports) made the following statement on the ***Arrival of Nauru Team from SPG Mini Games:-***

‘Honourable Speaker, the Nauru Team for the 8th Pacific Mini Games safely arrived home on Our Airline in the early hours of Monday, the 12th of October 2009. Of the 17 members that attended the games only 13 returned home while 4 others, 2 boxers and 2 weightlifters, extended their travel to attend other tournaments.

The team was greeted on arrival at the airport by His Excellency the President, the Minister for Sports and other VIP guests from government and the Nauru Olympic Committee.

The welcoming reception with light refreshments was co-hosted by Nauru Olympic Committee and the Ministry of Sports was held in the VIP Lounge.

The highlight of the function was the exchange of speeches by the Minister for Sports on behalf of the government and the Chef-de-Mission, Mrs. Marissa Cook,

including the presentation of a special gift from Rarotonga by the team to the Minister for Sports.

Mr. Speaker, at the Games Nauru won 12 medals in 2 sports, boxing and weightlifting,. Two Gold Medals were won in the sport of boxing achieved by Colan Caleb and Joseph Deireragea, 1 Silver Medal was won also in boxing by Jake Ageidu. In the sport of weightlifting 6 Gold Medals were won, 3 by Yokio Peters and 3 by Itte Detenamo and 3 Silver Medals were also won in the sport of weightlifting by young Elson Brechtefeld.

I also wish to make mention of other athletes who also represented Nauru at the Pacific Games. They were all in the sport of athletics, A-One Tannang, Joseph Dabana, Bremner Adumur and J. Togogae.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that all Members will join me in conveying our most sincere congratulations to the team and their officials for not only performing magnificently but also for being great ambassadors for Nauru at these Games.

Also my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Chef-de-Mission, team managers and respective coaches for guiding and leading the team in such an excellent manner. Tubwa kor.

(e) Hon. Frederick Pitcher (Minister for C.I.E) made the following statement on CIE activities:-

‘Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to provide the House with a brief update on CIE activities.

1. Environment Division – Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC)

Mr. Speaker, the main objective of PACC project is to assist islands adapt to the effects of climate change, one of which, in Nauru’s case in particular, is severe drought. This project’s main objective is to design an alternative water supply system to enhance resilience to drought events. The project is worth USD750,000 over 3 years and is managed by our newest project officer, Mrs. Mavis Depaune.

This important project is only a few months old but already much of consultation work has been undertaken to inform stakeholders of the details of the project and its annual work plan. A socio-economic survey is currently being designed to assess the use of water in the 3 districts identified as the most vulnerable in accessing potable water at the national level, they are Anabar, Aiwo and Location. The results of this study will allow the project to build a strategy to address the problems identified.

Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) – Mr. Speaker, the IWRM project is designed to assist with enhancing water security for Nauru through better management practices and greater water use efficiency through the reduction of ground water pollution and use of grey water. The project is worth USD500,000 over 3 years. IWRM has also conducted a stakeholder analysis on key sectors (public health, utilities, NRC, RONPHOS and Eigigu). The public consultations were conducted between the 13 to 14 August this year in conjunction with PACC at the Meneng Hotel, introducing IWRM and the Nauru demonstration project. The actual pilot project is anticipated to be commenced early next year.

National Biodiversity Strategy of Action Plan (NBSAP) – Mr. Speaker, the NBSAP project is in its final phase aiming to hold its final consultation from the 9th to 13th November, 2009. The final document will then be reviewed by the national steering committee and submitted to Cabinet for endorsement. If the policy is adopted by Cabinet we intend to initiate a nation-wide awareness program prior to the official launching of the Action Plan on Biodiversity slated for the 25th of November.

Sustainable Land Management (SLM) – The SLM project has just recently commenced and its main objective this year is to work with donors and stakeholders to prepare a draft National Action Plan (NAP) to assist Nauru address the problems associated with deforestation and desertification. SPREP is providing technical assistance for the national consultations and drafting.

Agriculture Division – Mr. Speaker, the agriculture division is again preparing for World Food Day to be held this Friday, 16th October. Financial and technical support for the event has been provided by FAO, ROC Technical Mission, Capelle & Partner and Rehab. There will be cooking and horticultural demonstrations and prizes will be on offer for a variety of events and competitions. The general public is invited to attend and participate in this annual event.

The division has recently commenced an exciting new project on the culturing and cultivating of breadfruit trees. With the assistance of SPC the department has been able to work with the Breadfruit Institute to facilitate the supply and culture of different varieties of breadfruit. The first batch of breadfruit tissue culture will be arriving on the 26th of October and we have arranged with the Taiwan Technical Mission the storage and technical assistance required.

This will be the initial phase of the project while we aim to mobilise national resources from the agriculture division's DSAP and Banana Project personnel for technical capacity. The SLM project will also be tasked to assist the Breadfruit Project in local land access and planning as well as in accessing regional technical expertise.

The FAO-funded Banana Project has been completed and almost 4,000 tissue cultured bananas were delivered to Nauru for propagation and planting out in the first. The first banana bunches from those plants were harvested in October last year. Unfortunately, not many local farmers continue to farm and maintain their banana plants today and the project has been closed.

Commerce & Business Development Division – Mr. Speaker, within the Commerce Division the Business Incubator has signed off the contract for the short term consultant and is waiting for the release of funds from UNDP whilst the division is still going back and forth on the contract for the long term consultant.

Analysis on the proposed Fish Processing Plant continues with the division working on collecting potential catch rate data, land leases and freight rates.

The Ikirara Group made up of 25 women from various communities did an export of local handicraft items in 2007, another one in 2008 and the latest order is expected to go out this month. Trade Aid NZ conducted an in-country visit to assist the group in improving the quality of their products and assist in marketing their wares in New Zealand. We hope there will be scope to improve the range of products to be exported and expand the markets where they can export to.

Members will be aware that the Central Market has moved to the Civic Centre and is progressing exceptionally well. Data collection is still ongoing but it appears clear that there is a very strong demand for a larger and more permanent site for the Central Market project. Thank you.'

(f) His Excellency the President made the following statement on update Report of NPRT:-

'Mr. Speaker, Hon. Members, I wish to make a brief statement in relation to the Trust, for the purpose of informing the House that pursuant to subsection (8) of Section 29 of the Nauru Phosphate Royalties Trust Act I have granted my approval for an extension of time for the Trust to submit its Annual Report and that in accordance with the Ministerial approval of an extension of time, the Trust is now to submit its annual report on the activities of the funds and the accounts of the funds on or before 30th November 2009.'

7. Motion:

His Excellency the President moved that Motions Nos. 1,2, 3, 4 and 5 be deferred to the next sitting.

Hon. Dr. Kieren Keke (Minister for Finance) seconded.

Question Put and Passed.

8. Motion: Nauru Finance Corporation (Repeal) Bill 2009

Hon. Dr. Kieren Keke (Minister for Finance) moved to present the Bill.

First Reading

The Bill was presented and read a first time.

9. Motion: Second Reading

Hon. Dr. Kieren Keke (Minister for Finance) moved that the Bill be now read a second time.

His Excellency the President seconded.

Second Reading speech ensued.

'Mr. Speaker, I have introduced to this House today a short Bill for an Act to repeal the Republic of Nauru Finance Corporation Act 1972-1998.

The Republic of Nauru Finance Corporation, known as RONFIN, is a statutory corporation that was established in 1972 under the Republic of Nauru Finance Corporation Act 1972. The RONFIN Act was amended several times and the current citation of the short title of the Act is the Republic of Nauru Finance Corporation Act 1972-1998. RONFIN ceased to operate approximately 5 years ago and no longer has any staff or directors.

The object of this Bill is to officially abolish RONFIN by repealing the Republic of Nauru Finance Corporation Act 1972-1998. As RONFIN is a statutory corporation that is not subject to the provisions of the Corporation Act 1972, it is not necessary to undertake winding up procedures under that Act, but rather the abolition of RONFIN can be effected by repealing the Act under which it was established.

The explanatory memorandum which accompanies this Bill explains the effect of each clause in the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2 cover the preliminary matters of short title, commencement and interpretation. Clause 3 would repeal the Republic of Nauru Finance Corporation Act 1972-1998, thereby abolishing RONFIN.

The Bill would vest any remaining RONFIN assets in the Republic and would also enable the Republic to claim any outstanding debts owed to RONFIN by debtors. These provisions are contained in clause 4.

Clause 5 of the Bill would require the Director of Audit, within one year of the Act coming into effect, to endeavour to conduct a final audit of the accounts of RONFIN. If the Director of Audit is unable to obtain sufficient records or information to undertake such audit then he would be required to report on his efforts and provide whatever information he was able to obtain. The Report of the Director of Audit would be submitted to the President for tabling in Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill is really just a straightforward administrative matter of tidying up the law to reflect the present reality that RONFIN is now defunct.

Mr. Speaker I commend this Bill to the House. Thank you.'

Debate was adjourned to a future date (S.O 159)

10. Order of the Day No.1: Civil Aviation Bill 2009

11. Motion:

His Excellency the President moved that Orders of the Day No.1 be deferred to the next sitting as the Minister in charge of the Bill is away overseas.

Hon. Dr. Kieren Keke (Minister for Finance) seconded.

Question Put and Passed.

12. Orders of the Day No 2: Births, Deaths and Marriages (Amendment) Bill 2009

Second Reading debate ensued.

Question Put and Passed.

The Bill was read a second time.

13. Leave Sought to move for the Third Reading of the Bill.

His Excellency the President sought leave of the House to proceed forthwith to the third reading of the Bill.

Leave was granted.

14. Motion: Third Reading

His Excellency the President moved that the Bill be now read a third time.

Hon. Dr. Kieren Keke (Minister for Finance) seconded.

Question Put and Passed.

Third Reading

The Bill was read a third time.

15. Orders of the Day No3: Criminal Justice (Amendment) Bill 2009

Second Reading debate ensued.

Question Put and Passed.

The Bill was read a second time.

16. Leave Sought to move for the Third Reading of the Bill

Hon. Mathew Batsiua (Minister for Justice, Health and Sports) sought leave of the House to proceed forthwith to the third reading of the Bill.

Leave was granted.

17. Motion: Third Reading

Hon. Mathew Batsiua (Minister for Justice, Health and Sports) moved that the Bill be now read a third time.

Hon. Dr. Kieren Keke (Minister for Finance) seconded.

Question Put and Passed.

Third Reading

The Bill was read a third time.

18. Orders of the Day Nos 4, 5 and 6

The House agreed that Orders of the Day No's 4,5 and 6 be deferred to the next sitting as the Minister in charge of the Papers that were to be noted is away overseas.

19. Orders of the Day No.7: Ministerial Statement and Tabling of Papers

That the statement made by Hon. Speaker on his recent trip to Tanzania, to attend a CPA Conference and other related Parliamentary activities be noted.

Debate ensued.

The statement was noted.

20. Orders of the Day No.8 : Ministerial Statement and Tabling of Papers.

That the statement made by the Minister for Finance on the *Department of Finance, First Quarter Activities* be noted.

Debate ensued.

The statement was noted.

21. Orders of the Day No.9 : Ministerial Statement and Tabling of Papers.

That the statement made by the Minister for Finance on the Demographic and Health Survey conducted in 2007 be noted.

Debate ensued.

The statement was noted.

22. Motion Fixing the Date for the Next Sitting

His Excellency the President moved that the House at its rising do adjourn until a time and date to be fixed by the Chair.

Hon. Dr. Kieren Keke (Minister for Finance) seconded.

Question Put and Passed.

23. Adjournment

His Excellency the President moved that the House do now adjourn.

Hon. Dr. Kieren Keke (Minister for Finance) seconded.

Adjournment debate ensued.

Question Put and Passed.

And then the House at twenty minutes past five o'clock p.m. adjourned until a time and date to be fixed by the Chair.

Members Present:

All Members were present at sometime during the sitting except -

Mr. Dabwido (leave of absence)

Mr. Amwano (leave of absence)

Mr. Adeang (suspension)

Frederick Cain
Clerk of Parliament

