

**COMMUNITY SUBMISSION TO THE  
MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND NATIONAL PLANNING  
FOR THE 2010 BUDGET**



Compiled by the  
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## **Introduction**

This budget submission is based on the concerns and recommendations raised at three Grassroots Budgetary Workshops conducted by the Citizens' Constitutional Forum (CCF) at the Tailevu Hotel, Korovou from 23-24 April 2009, at the Fiji Sports Council, Lawaqa, Sigatoka from 28-29 April 2009, and at the Namosi Provincial Hall, Navua from 1-2 July 2009. A list of the organizations and villages represented at these workshops is in Appendix I. The CCF is responsible for the compilation of these concerns and recommendations for presentation to the Ministry of Finance & National Planning and to the relevant line ministries referred to in this submission.

The need for roads was a common concern of participants attending CCF's Grassroots Budgetary Workshops in Korovou, Sigatoka and Navua.

Many participants at these three very different localities in Fiji identified needs that were similar, and which had been in existence for many decades. These include: roads, regular transportation, health centre with qualified staff and equipment, water supply that is also clean, farming and agricultural assistance, vocational training schools, and stable electricity supply.

Roads were a root cause of their problems because without roads, they have difficulty accessing services such as health care, schools, jobs, and market for farm produce. Some participants proposed ways in which they could contribute to these problems being resolved, through fundraising and accessing donor funds.

The participants at Navua revealed that this was the first time an education workshop had been conducted in their area and requested for more. Navua and Sigatoka town are located next to big rivers and flooding and better bridges were another common concern. Tailevu participants expressed a need for assistance to get into commercial farming, as there was a feeling that their province was highly under-developed.

Many of the problems highlighted here are synonymous with similar problems in rural areas around Fiji, and many of these have been included in past submissions by CCF as well. We find that most problems highlighted have been in existence for the past few decades. We request the government to treat the problems highlighted in this submission as problems that are generally present in the rural areas and outer islands in Fiji.

## **About the CCF and the Grassroots Budgetary Workshops**

The CCF is a non-government organization and has been working in Fiji for the past 18 years to advocate and educate for good governance, democracy, human rights and multiculturalism in Fiji. The CCF assists communities, groups and individuals to understand and exercise their democratic and human rights. This democratic right includes the rights of citizens to understand the processes and content of the government's national budget, and why it is important for citizens' to scrutinise and participate in the national budget process. The CCF is grateful to the German-based organization Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED) for funding these workshops.

The first set of Grassroots Budgetary Workshops were conducted by CCF in June 2006 in Suva and Lautoka. The outcomes of these workshops were presented in a submission to the government. Following the December 5 2006 military takeover of government, the CCF conducted Post-Budget Analysis Workshops in Suva and Lautoka in January 2007. The CCF's 2006 submission was revised and re-submitted to the government for consideration in the 2007 Mini Budget.

The CCF conducted two Grassroots Budgetary Workshops in the North in May 2007 including one at the Scouts Hall in Labasa from 24-25 May 2007 and one at the Hot Springs Hotel in Savusavu from 29-30 May 2007. The CCF prepared a submission from the outcomes of this workshop and submitted it to the Ministry of Finance & National Planning in June 2007. Basically, the submission advocated for a 'Look North' policy. Last year, the CCF conducted a Grassroots Budgetary Workshop at the Levuka Parish Hall in Levuka, Ovalau, from 7-8 July 2008. Following the workshop, a submission was sent to the Ministry of Finance in July 2008.

This year's Grassroots Budgetary Workshops were organised by Mosmi Bhim, Communications and Advocacy Officer, and facilitated by Mosmi Bhim and Bulutani Matai, Education Support Officer - both staff of CCF. Guest speakers at the workshop were Dr Haruo Nakagawa, Fellow in Economics at the School of Governance and Development Studies at the University of the South Pacific, who spoke on the topic 'Governance in Public Finance'.

Mr Apisalome Tudreu, Senior Executive Officer at Transparency International spoke on the topic "Monitoring the Government Budget". Representatives from the Social Welfare Department - Director Ms Elisapeci Rokotunidau at the Sigatoka workshop and Akini Qauqau at the Korovou workshop, spoke on the topic "The linkage between Ministry of Women and Social Welfare projects and the Budget". Ms Nanise Vosayaco, a representative of the National Planning Office, took the session on "Introduction to the National Budget - What, Why and For Whom?" at the Navua workshop.

Other topics covered at the workshop were "Importance of community participation in the budgetary process" by Bulutani Matai. The session on "What is Advocacy? Module on advocacy methods", and, "Analysis of the 2009 Fiji Government Budget was taken by Mosmi Bhim. A community submission outlining the needs and concerns shared by participants, is contained in this submission to the Ministry of Finance.

### **About the workshop participants**

At the Korovou workshop, 42 people attended the workshop on the first day of which 36 were male and 6 were female. On the second day, 33 people attended the workshop of which 27 were male and 6 were female.

At the Sigatoka workshop, 27 people attended the workshop on the first day of which 19 were male and 8 were female. On the second day, 19 people attended the workshop of which 11 were male and 8 were female.

At the Navua workshop, 27 people attended the workshop on the first day of which 23 were male and 4 were female. On the second day, 21 people attended the workshop of which 14 were male and 7 were female. The participants came from mainly village organisations, and also from the government and non-government sector.

A mixed group of Fijian and Indo-Fijian participants attended the workshop, although the number of Indo-Fijian participants were significantly smaller than Fijian participants.

### **Justifications for the Submission**

Budgets are formulated by policy planners and budget officials based in the Ministry of Finance and National Planning in government. This means that on most occasions, the concerns of grassroots people do not manage to reach the right office in government, for them to be considered. The tight process of formulating the budget and liaising with all the different departments within government means that little time or resources may be left for the government to hold consultations with the grassroots communities.

The government has been calling for submissions from the public. However, the reality is that the majority of people at the grassroots level do not have the necessary skills and resources to put their concerns in a written submission to the government. The CCF has prepared this submission after having workshops with grassroots communities, so that we can relay their needs and concerns directly to the government. This submission provides a window to policy and decision makers to gain an insight into the concerns and suggested ways of addressing these concerns, by the grassroots people themselves.

We believe that Government should listen to the views and recommendations of grassroots communities during its budget formulation process for the following reasons. Grassroots communities have a good idea of what their major concerns are, as they have been living in that situation for their entire lives. Majority of grassroots people know how their problems can be resolved and what minimal assistance they would need from government in order to solve their problems. Listening to grassroots communities recommendations could entail a faster resolution of problems by the government.

## **Special Concern by CCF**

While making this submission, the Citizens' Constitutional Forum (CCF) acknowledges that a military coup occurred on 5 December 2006 and currently, there is an un-elected government leading the country. CCF expresses its concern that without a parliamentary democracy, some mechanisms of accountability and transparency in the government budget process are disabled. For instance, the budget is not tabled in Parliament (as there is no parliament!!) so there is no opportunity for a scrutiny of the draft budget by opposition parliament members, and there is no opportunity for the public to hear about the draft budget in the media before it is passed. Secondly, the budget does not go through a parliamentary approval process, and thirdly, parliamentary approval and scrutiny of government expenditure does not take place.

CCF strongly recommends the holding of democratic elections as soon as practicable so that an elected government can run the country, and so that the parliamentary processes of accountability and transparency can be operational again. CCF also expresses concern that the 1997 Constitution was abrogated on April 10 2009. That Constitution had mechanisms for participation, legislation, execution, accountability, and transparency for the budget process.

CCF wrote to the Auditor General and the Minister for Finance seeking the Auditor-General's reports that have been pending since 2007. CCF is concerned that these reports were not released to the public in Fiji, as requested.

## **Content of Submission**

This year, the CCF conducted three similar workshops in three different localities. Therefore, the concerns and recommendations have been organised according to the three localities below:

1. Navua
2. Korovou
3. Sigatoka

## **Grassroots Concerns and Budget Recommendations**

### **1. Navua**

The Navua workshop received participants from the Serua and Namosi provincial areas. Participants at the workshop identified priority concerns for their province.

#### ***Priority Concerns of Serua Province:***

##### **i) Need for Health Centre and Hospital facilities.**

###### ***Recommendations***

- Upgrade the Navua Health Centre.
- Provide a mortuary at Yanuca Island.
- Upgrade the mortuary at Navua Town.
- Provision for a health centre on Yanuca Island.
- Navua is prone to flooding. Therefore, the Navua Hospital and health centre need to be relocated.

##### **ii) Water**

- there is a shortage of water supply due to frequent FEA power failure.
- water tends to be contaminated.

###### ***Recommendations***

- Improve water supply system.
- relocate the Vakabalea reservoir.
- analyse water intake requirements so provision can be made accordingly.

##### **iii) Farming and fishing assistance**

- there is a lack of machineries.
- there is a problem of drainage.
- there is a problem of roads.

###### ***Recommendations***

- advice needs to be provided to farmers for crops, farming practices, and machineries.
- better roads need to be provided for farmers to have access to the markets.

##### **iv) Roads and Transportation**

- there are a lot of potholes on roads.
- Yanuca Island does not have good shipping service to the main land.

###### ***Recommendations***

- better roads need to be provided to encourage commercial farming.
- road maintenance should be done well and regularly.
- tarsealed roads should be provided where possible.
- shipping services needs to be improved from Yanuca Island to the main land.

##### **v) Vocational schools and training institutions**

- there is a need for training in the area of hotel, hospitality, catering, agriculture and engineering in Navua area.

Recommendation

- the possibility of vocational training institutions in Navua, for the above fields should be explored.

**vi) Other**

Other concerns identified were:

- poor drainage system which contributes to flooding.
- poor sewerage facilities leading to poor sanitation.
- due to lack of water supply, villagers are using pit toilets
- lack of proper waste disposal.

***Recommendation***

– A means of transportation needs to be provided whereby waste can be properly disposed, so that there can be a better living standard and a healthy environment.

***Priority Concerns of Namosi Province:***

**i) Roads**

- a lack of roads in the interior, and of good roads generally, is the main concern of majority of the population in the Namosi Province. This problem has existed since colonial times.
- the general public face big difficulties during the wet weather to catch the bus and reach their destination on time.

***Recommendation***

- Roads need to be upgraded, tarsealed where possible, and the pot holes repaired.
- Better and regular modes of transportation should be provided in the Namosi area.
- Bus shelter should be provided.

**ii) Health**

- a health centre is necessary in the interior of Namosi Province.
- the Navua hospital is close to the river and a lot of heavy rains causes problems of flooding.

***Recommendations***

- a health centre should be built on high ground in the interior of Namosi.
- the Navua Hospital should be relocated to avoid flooding problems.

**iii) Electricity**

- without informing the public, electricity gets shut down for hours.

***Recommendation***

- Availability of electricity for 24 hours.
- improve the service provided by FEA.

**iv) Water**

- without informing the public, water cut-offs occur.

**Recommendation**

- quality of water and water service needs to be improved.
- assistance should be provided to increase water storage capacity.

## **2. Korovou**

At the Korovou workshop, participants expressed a concern that there has been very slow progress in the Tailevu province area over the past few decades. This was very worrying and many participants felt that Tailevu was the least developed province in Fiji. Below are concerns and recommendations for Tailevu province area, identified at the Korovou workshop.

### **i) Water Supply**

#### ***Concerns***

- availability of a reliable, regular and safe water supply is a major problem for villages.
- lack of safe water supply is contributing to cause of diseases such as diarrhoea, scabies and ringworms.
- lack of a self-sufficient water supply system for Korovou town.

#### ***Recommendations***

- a solution was identified where statistics of numbers of households and populations affected would be collected. The District Officer's office and the Provincial Council office could be informed for funding assistance. A request for a survey could be made from the rural water supply authority and the Ministry of Health.
- community fundraising could be done to fund the project.
- assessment needs to be carried out for possible sources of water. Assistance needs to be sought from the provincial office to notify the relevant authorities such as the Mineral Resources Department and the rural water supply. Assistance needs to be sought from donor agencies and government departments for fundraising.
- the status of Namau Water Treatment Plant should be reviewed for regeneration purpose.
- set-up a communal reservoir which could be properly chlorinated.

### **ii) Agriculture and Markets**

#### ***Concerns***

- need for equipment and machines.
- need for advice on the right plant variety and chemicals.
- need for markets.
- currently, there is mainly subsistence farming in the area.
- lack of funds

#### ***Recommendations***

- there needs to be a change to commercial farming.
- Training and assistance need to be provided to farmers at the grassroots level.
- Machines need to be identified and made available for land cultivation.
- Subsidy of costs for fertilisers and chemicals should be made initially.
- Increase the budget for the agriculture department.
- increase the number of field officers per district.
- Markets should be identified for produce. More international markets should be found.
- introduce export oriented crops. Fiji should be sufficient in agriculture.

### **iii) Health Service**

#### ***Concerns***

- need for a village dispensary.
- need for drugs awareness programmes and healthy living awareness programme.

- need for village visitations by the Ministry of Health.
- need for qualified staff, equipments
- need transport for sick people.

***Recommendations***

- lobby the Ministry of Health regarding the above needs.
- seek funds from donors and assistance from NGOs.
- increase the number of health centres.
- educate more village nurses.
- build more health centres in rural areas.

**iv) Education**

***Concerns***

- lack of scholarships and assistance for tuition fees.
- need for improvement in quality of education.
- problem of regular and reliable transportation, lack of school bus.
- lack of planning for goals for child's future.
- lack of income, which means cannot afford bus fares and school fees, books, etc.

***Recommendations***

- increase employment in the area to increase income availability.
- government needs to increase the education grant.
- identify and provide markets so people can sell produce to pay for education.
- school bus service should be provided eg. from Korovou to Rakiraki return, and from Korovou to Dawasamu return.

**v) Roads**

***Recommendations***

- Concerns were raised at the lack of good roads. Roads need to be upgraded and maintenance should be done regularly.
- proper drainage system should be created so that roads don't get washed away during heavy rain.

**vi) Electricity**

***Recommendations***

- All villagers should have access to electricity, with proper power poles and power lines.
- a back-up system should be provided in case of power-cuts.

**3. Sigatoka**

The Sigatoka participants the need for more education, employment, business and recreation opportunities as well as farming. Roads was a key concern of those from the interior.

**i) Education Standards**

***Concerns***

- need for upgrading of school facilities such as the library, classrooms, computers, mode of communication, welfare of students, school quarters, management, provision of flush toilet for hygiene.
- Need for more vocational centres.

### ***Recommendations***

- school fundraising and other alternative sources of donors should be explored.
- building fund fees should be strengthened, especially in district schools.
- management staff need to be trained on how to run the school management.
- school grant should be better utilised.
- school facilities should be upgraded.
- Tertiary education through a university centre in Sigatoka should be explored.
- Sports facilities need to be provided for extra curriculum activities.

### **ii) Water**

#### ***Concerns***

- clean water supply for drinking is not available.
- lack of availability of bore holes and water tanks.
- safe water is needed for village, schools, settlement, health centres, and toilets.
- need for piped water pipe facilities with purified water.

#### ***Recommendations***

- build more or bigger reservoirs and treatment plants.
- community and government contributions together can help achieve this.
- proper water tanks and/or reservoir system needs to be installed.

### **iii) Health and Medical Facilities**

#### ***Concerns***

- medical facility is too far away.
- need for reliable people to work.
- availability of facilities and medication.

#### ***Recommendations***

- more health centres need to be built and more facilities provided to meet the demand of the public.
- the government needs to build a hospital in the interior of Navosa, such as in Keasi, to cater for the Navosa province, rather than them having to come right to Sigatoka.
- each village needs to have a dispensary, especially in remote areas.
- village nurses need to be well trained.

### **iv) Agriculture**

#### ***Concerns***

- Farmers are not well educated on use of chemicals in farming and how to develop to improve their farming skills.
- idle land needs to be developed to cater for social issues and productivity.
- Environment impact assessments are not carried out to see the effect of development.

#### ***Recommendations***

- The ministry must facilitate more agricultural training on practical ways to improve farming skills and development of lands.
- Machinery and proper equipments need to be provided to cater for farming needs.
- The communities must be well educated on environmental issues and factors that affect the environment.

### **v) Roads and Transportation**

#### ***Concerns***

- The condition of roads need to be improved to have more tarsealed roads.
- there is no good roads to access the main road from the interior.
- A very lengthy period of time is required for repairs and no financial assistance is given to maintain road repairs up to standard.
- The buses are in poor condition that operate locally.
- Vehicle prices are too high.
- drainage problems contribute to bad roads.

***Recommendations***

- overseas aid funds should be used for road development in rural areas. If the roads are in good condition, it would be easy for people, including school students to travel back to the villages. It will also make it easier to access urban development in rural areas.
- Tarsealed roads need to be provided.
- The government must provide liability to passengers if accident occurs.
- The government could decrease on taxes to suit common cost of living.
- The government needs to allow manufacturers of vehicles and machinery to operate locally to cut down costs.
- Media can be used to highlight these problems such as infrastructure and many other that we face daily.

**vi) Bridge**

***Concerns***

- dredging of Sigatoka river needs to take place.
- higher bridge needs to be built to cater for adverse weather conditions that cause flooding.

***Recommendations***

- Build a better bridge
- Upgrading the bridge to broaden it to allow easy movement of vehicles.
- Build higher bridges.

**vii) Communication**

***Concerns***

- need for transmitters to cater for communication services.
- Information technologies are expensive and must be reduced.
- Television services does not cater for all areas but is only limited to a few.
- More free to air channels to cater for low income earners and the poor.
- TV subscriptions are very expensive.

***Recommendations***

- transmitters need to be installed for easier communication so that mobile phone will be available for use everywhere. This will be useful when needing to make emergency calls.
- Analysis

**viii) Crime and Income Generation for Youth**

***Concerns***

- ethnic differences, unemployment, and no street lights contribute to crime.

***Recommendations***

- Electricity – install solar system in rural areas.
- crime by youth can be reduced by more involvement by the town council, and organising more activity for unemployed youths.

- Government must contribute through tax concessions to starting new businesses such as entertainment centres. Written proposals and petitions can be presented directly to the Ministry of Finance and copied to the Prime Minister.
- more awareness on the budget process and rule of law in rural areas.
- Organise more workshops where each individual participates openly to raise their concerns.
- Youth rallies and conventions to publicly raise awareness on issues.
- Building of entertainment centres.
- Building of vocational centres and sports academy.
- developing land.

## **Conclusion**

CCF noted that issues to do with crime, law and order were raised as serious concerns in Sigatoka only. The problems of roads, lack of clean water supply, transportation, health services, as well as commercial farming opportunities and markets for goods remained as the common concerns of people from Korovou, Navua and Sigatoka. We remain optimistic that these concerns could be successfully addressed in the near future.

The participants at the three workshops were hopeful that the government would listen to their concerns and make allocations in the 2010 national budget, to address some of these concerns.

## **Appendix 1**

### **i) Organisations represented at the Grassroots Budgetary Workshop, Tailevu Hotel, Korovou**

1. Sawakasa Tikina
2. Water Supply Department
3. Ministry of Health
4. PYFFI
5. Tailevu Provincial Office
6. Department for Women
7. Waidalice Advisory Councillor
8. District Office Korovou
9. Provincial Development Office
10. Farmers

### **ii) Organisations represented at the Grassroots Budgetary Workshop, Lawaqa Park, Sigatoka Town**

1. Tubeinuqi Youth
2. Christ Ambassadors Youth
3. Women's Ministry
4. Nadroga Youth Council
5. Malomalo Tikina Youth Council
6. Narata Youth
7. Tubairata Youth
8. Ejuba Youth
9. Emuri Youth
10. Delaniyavu Youth Club, Narewa
11. NNPYC
12. Naqalimare Youth
13. Narata Village Youth
14. Dreke Youth Rep
15. Nabau Youth
16. Tavulo Youth
17. Namada Youth
18. Sigatoka Youth League & Business House
19. Toga Village Youth
20. Nadroga / Navosa Provincial Youth Council
21. Togobula Youth
22. Bemana Catholic

**iii) Organisations represented at the Grassroots Budgetary Workshop, Namosi Provincial Hall, Navua Town**

1. Retired Police
2. Viwawa Police Community
3. Rampur College
4. Namosi School
5. Serua Youth
6. Namosi Provincial Office
7. Deuba Village
8. Tikina Wainikoroiluva
9. Serua Provincial Office
10. Yanuca Island