



TRANSPARENCY COMMITMENT RESPONSES: PART ONE

We present for public knowledge the responses from political parties on the questions posed to them relating to their commitment in upgrading and maintaining transparency within our Nation, if they won the General Elections of 2006. Part one shows the response from the two major Parties, namely the FLP and the SDL. The rest of the Parties appear in part two. Over the life of the next Parliament, TI Fiji will measure the actions made by our political leaders against the commitments they have now made, using the news media and the grassroots networks of our project partners.

Questions posed by TI Fiji	FLP Fiji Labour Party	SDL Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua
1. Does your Party believe there is corruption in Fiji??	Yes	Yes, Fiji has corruption. We have been concerned about this and commend Transparency International for its work of highlighting it.
a) If so, how serious is the problem?	It is rampant. We will pursue these as matters of urgency again	Fiji has an emerging corruption problem. It exists in all nations and no country has completely eradicated it. But the SDL is committed to curbing and controlling it, so that Fiji is recognised as a country with minimal corruption. Some people give the impression that only Government is affected by corruption. It also exists among private companies. Corruption in Fiji, however, is not deeply entrenched and virtually institutionalised, as it is in some countries. An independent assessment by the Australian National University published in November 2004 said there was no sign in Fiji of the widespread corruption which affects other Pacific Island countries
2. What will you do to create or enhance existing laws and policies against corruption?	The Labour Government in 1999/2000 had drafted legislations for a Code of Conduct and Freedom of Information. It was unable to table them in Parliament due to the Coup. We had also set up a Commission headed by Judge Fatiaki to inquire in to possible legislation against corrupt practices.	The SDL policy is very clear. Our Government frequently declared that it is committed to rooting out corruption and creating conditions that make it difficult to flourish. Corruption is a stain on the integrity of a nation. It hinders investment, slows growth, contributes to unemployment, leads to a lowering of living standards and reduces Government revenue. Anti-corruption measures taken in Fiji have been recognized internationally in a new report by The Commonwealth Business Council. The report surveyed 32 Commonwealth countries. Fiji was classified as one of the best five performers in 2005 for introducing measures to reduce and eliminate corruption. Fiji also came in at number four for the reliability and effectiveness of our justice system. We were almost level with New Zealand for having balanced and effective business regulation. Fiji also did well in the ratings for Government-business relations, free media, effective Government, efficient administration and future outlook. These good ratings, combines with those of the Australian National University, completely discredit the wild claim by the Fiji Labour Party that Fiji is one of the most corrupt countries in the world. This is a typical misrepresentation by Labour in its hunt for votes. The Government and the Public Service Commission have declared zero tolerance for corruption. The PSC has set up a special unit to investigate corruption reports and make inquiries if there is a suspicion of corrupt activity. There has been plenty of publicity about action against those implicated. Last year the SDL Government enacted a Financial Reporting Transaction Act to counter money laundering. This resulted in the setting up a Financial Intelligence Unit to monitor and implement the Act. The Unit collects information from banks and financial institutions to identify and investigate suspicious transactions. The SDL Government accepted and tabled in Parliament a report and review on corruption and bribery laws. The report was undertaken by the Fiji Law Reform Commission, through a committee chaired by Justice Fatiaki, who is now Fiji's Chief Justice. A high powered committee of public service officials was appointed to develop the most effective legal approach, based on the Fatiaki report. To speed up this process, the officials' committee was reorganized, reduced in number, and brought under the chairmanship of the Solicitor General. In another move, a study group went to Papua New Guinea to look at that country's system for addressing corruption and bribery. It made recommendations on its return, which have been referred to the officials committee.
3. Do you support a Leadership Code requiring Ministers and Members of Parliament to publicly disclose their assets?	Yes	Yes, we favour disclosure of assets, but more consideration is needed on how this should be done. We would like some more public debate on this. The options are for complete public disclosure, or for the relevant information to be given to an appropriate, newly-established authority, or perhaps to the Ombudsman. A Standards of Leadership Conduct Act will be made law. It will apply to all the holders of high State Office, including the president, the Vice President, Ministers, Members of Parliament, Chief Executive Officers and those who hold statutory appointments or executive positions in statutory authorities. These legislations will demand exacting

		standards of integrity.
a) If so, when will you bring it into force?	As soon as possible	The legislation will be tabled as quickly as possible, and when all the issues have been clarified. Our party would want this to be sooner, rather than later.
4. Do you support a Code of Conduct requiring CEOs and members of the Senior Executive Service to publicly disclose their assets?	Yes	This has been addressed in the response to question 3
a) If so, when will you bring it into force?	As soon as possible	Please see the response to question 3
5. The Constitution requires the enactment of Freedom of Information legislation. A draft bill is already available. Will you bring this into law?	Yes	Yes. The Act will assist in creating a more open environment, which will discourage corruption.
a) If so, when will you bring it into law?	As soon as possible	As soon as possible in the new Parliament
6. Do you support the creation of a dedicated anti-corruption body?	Yes	In principle, yes, we do support such a body. But certain issues need to be clarified before final decisions are made. One of these is whether measures to prevent bribery and corruption should be included in a revised Penal Code. If that happens, close consideration would have to be given to the role, the purposes, the powers and the costs of a stand-alone authority. Consideration would also be given as to whether the functions and powers of the Public Service Commission should be strengthened for it to deal with administrative control mechanism for dealing with corruption. But whatever is finally decided, there will be a clear focus on reducing corruption. A dedicated anti-corruption body maybe the answer.
a) If so, when will you create it?	With urgency	As soon as all the issues have been resolved as mentioned here. But, again, the SDL would want this to happen sooner rather than later.
(b) How much money would you allocate to it, on a per capita basis to fund it?	This will have to be looked at, but we will allocate whatever is necessary.	This cannot be determined until the final legislative and administrative details are agreed on.
7. Do you support the teaching of ethics/civic education in the school curriculum?	Yes	Yes. Civic education, relating to responsible citizenship and attitudes, is already being taught in primary and secondary schools. Schools owned and managed by religious organizations also teach spiritual values. Tertiary institutions that come under the Ministry of Education, including Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) schools and the four teachers' training colleges, also teach moral values.
a) If so, how many hours of teaching per student per month should be included?	School curriculum will have to be changed to ensure this – at least one session per week	We understand that at the moment civic education and moral values are taught for about four hours a month. This may need to be reviewed. In some schools spiritual values are integrated into the total life of the school.
Authorised By	Mahendra Chaudhry	Jale Baba
Date submitted	21 st April, 2006	22 nd April, 2006

TRANSPARENCY COMMITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE: PART TWO

The responses from the rest of the Parties approached are listed here for public knowledge. PANU did not respond in the allotted time. The responses from the FLP and the SDL are listed in part one. Over the life of the next Parliament, TI Fiji will measure the actions made by our political leaders against the commitments they have now made, using the news media and the grassroots networks of our project partners.

Questions posed by TI Fiji	UPP United Peoples Party	NFP National Federation Party	NAP National Alliance Party	SVT Soqosoqo Ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei
1. Does your Party believe there is corruption in Fiji?"	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
a) If so, how serious is the problem?	Very Serious and Widespread	Very serious, last 5 years - \$50m annually has been wasted totaling \$250m.	Extremely serious	It has infiltrated government Ministries, high echelon of the police, business sector, and even lawyers, politicians and civil servants, Government Boards
2. What will you do to create or enhance existing laws and policies against corruption?	Improve their enforceability, maximize the penalties and reduce the timeframe in which offenders are investigated	Establish a corruption watchdog. Empower Auditor-General to initiate actions.	We will introduce anti-corruption legislation.	We will put in place an anti-corruption body and review the current law, and policies, make amendments where necessary to give this body the power to conduct its own investigations and freedom to access any government ministry information.
3. Do you support a Leadership Code requiring Ministers and Members of Parliament to publicly disclose their assets?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
a) If so, when will you bring it into force?	As soon as possible - 2006	Disclosure should be to Prime Minister	Soon after getting into office	We would like to see the introduction of this code in the first sitting of Parliament. Those elected must prepare all information before the session
4. Do you support a Code of Conduct requiring CEOs and members of the Senior Executive Service to publicly disclose their assets?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
a) If so, when will you bring it into force?	As soon as possible - 2006	CEO's Disclosure within Public Service Guideline	Following a job evaluation of the public service	This will be done as soon as we take office. All CEO and senior Executives will be required to adhere to new policies introduced to ensure transparency.
5. The Constitution requires the enactment of Freedom of Information legislation. A draft bill is already available. Will you bring this into law?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
a) If so, when will you bring it into law?	As soon as possible - 2006	Urgently	Following approval of legislation in Parliament	The purpose of drafting a bill is to take to Parliament. Its deferment by SDL speaks

				volume to deny people to access information on its transparency / accountability.
6. Do you support the creation of a dedicated anti-corruption body?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
a) If so, when will you create it?	As soon as possible - 2006	Urgently	Has to be approved by Parliament	The introduction of such a body is urgently needed given the record of corruption both in the Private and Public Sectors. As soon as we get into power.
(b) How much money would you allocate to it, on a per capita basis to fund it?	Whatever "adequate" funding level is required to do the job	Will depend on costing	On needs basis	A joint research and assessment of need by NGO/Government to determine the financial, staffing, based on its recommendation and budgeting proposals.
7. Do you support the teaching of ethics/civic education in the school curriculum?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
a) If so, how many hours of teaching per student per month should be included?	Whatever is deemed appropriate! Supported by literature and Lectures from organisation like TIF and other NGO's, funded by Government	Should be left to curriculum experts.	2 periods per day. Civic education is also part and parcel of other subjects.	The hours of teaching should be the same as allocated for each subject, but for secondary and tertiary, a one to one be allowed.
Authorised By	Mick Beddoes & Bruce Rounds	Pramod Rae and Kamal Iyer	Meli Waqa and Filipe Bole	Ema Druavesi
Date submitted	7 th April, 2006	24 th April, 2006.	5 th April, 2006	18 th April, 2006