

Role of Speaker and Members of Parliament

Honourable Otinielu T Tausi,
Speaker,
National Parliament of Tuvalu

Presentation Outline

- Understanding the Role of the Speaker
- Understanding the Role of Members of Parliament
- Tuvalu's System as derived from the Westminster System of Parliament

The Role of the Speaker

- In every parliament, whether Westminster or presidential, there is a person who takes on the role of a Speaker, or presiding officer.
- In the Westminster system of Parliament, this role is effectively known as the Speaker of Parliament

Roles of the Speaker

- The key role of the Speaker is to impartially oversee the procedures of debate in Parliament.
- As per the rules of the Parliament, the Speaker is seen as an impartial authority conducting the proceedings of the House
- The Speaker basically maintains the order and authority of all undertakings of the Parliament as its Presiding Officer.

Functions of the Speaker

- Allow Members who are speaking to express their views
- Ensure that Members adhere to the rules of the debate, that is, as required by the Standing Orders of the House
- Regulates the time allocated for debate and ensure that parliamentary time is not wasted
- Provide ruling on any dispute as to the procedure to be followed by the House
- Protect the rights and interests of every member of the House as per the Rules

Role of Members of Parliament

Summarised under three key areas:

- MPs as Representatives
- MPs as Legislators
- MPs as Scrutinizers

MP's as Representatives

- MP's are representatives of the people who elect them
- MP's are required to exercise their judgement to support motions and other Bills in Parliament in the interest of their people
- Meet their constituencies commitments by regular meetings

MP's as Legislators

- Most visible and critical role that MP's are expected to play is legislating, or in other words, law-making
- Law-making is also one of the areas in which MP's are ill-equipped with most of the times
- MP's must always remember to be transparent and accountable during the law-making

MP's as Scrutinizers

- Backbench MP's have several opportunities to help people achieve their desire for effective, accountable government
- Well informed MP's can support or scrutinize draft legislations
- MP's undertake this role usually in the House or in Parliamentary Committees
- As scrutinizers, MP's are able to examine whether the government has correctly used the public funds

End

- Fakafetai Lasi and Thank You Very Much