

**Speech by H.E. Mr. Takuji Hanatani, Ambassador of Japan,
At the Handing Over Ceremony for “The Project for Upgrading
Uluibau District School” funded by the Government of Japan**

Friday, 3 July 2015, 10:00 a.m. at Uluibau District School

Mr. Sumiran Pratap (スミラン・プラタップ), Divisional Education
Officer Northern,

Mrs. Joyce Prasad (ジョイス・プラサッド), Head Teacher, Uluibau
District School,

The Management Committee,

Teachers, Parents and Students,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning, Yadra Vinaka, Namaste and Ohayō Gozaimasu.

I wish to thank all of you for your warm welcome extended to me and my colleague. This is my first visit to Vanua Levu, since beginning my term as Ambassador of Japan, in May 2014. I must admit that I am quite impressed by the beauty of Vanua Levu and the natural friendliness of its people. No-wonder this is Fiji’s ‘Friendly North’.

Today, I am very pleased to hand over the new toilet block and kindergarten classroom equipped with furniture to Uluibau District School. The Government of Japan has provided funding worth approximately Eighty Thousand Fiji Dollars (FJ\$80,000), for this project implemented through its Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects Programme, or GGP in short.

Uluibau District School endured a lot of difficulties due to the deteriorated state of the old facilities. I have great hope that through construction of a new kindergarten and a toilet block, this project will help provide an environment that is less hazardous as well as minimize the risk of diseases for the school community. Our main objective is not only to help make this school OHS compliant, but overall help the students of Uluibau Community receive better education.

At this juncture, I wish to acknowledge that the Government of Fiji continues to give one of its biggest commitments to the Education Sector. For 2015, Education received approximately 17% allocation out of the total National Budget. I also praise the Fiji Government for extending its free education program to pre-school students from the second term of this year. Not forgetting the bold initiative shown by Uluibau District School, I take this opportunity to convey my sincere compliments to the school for taking on the challenge, and

introducing Kindergarten in 2012. The alignment of this project with Fiji's national development framework for education, is a key factor for Japan's commitment to this project.

Whenever I get the opportunity to participate in events which are education related, such as this occasion, I have a great feeling of satisfaction and I am filled with optimism. This is because when we fund education we are also supporting all the eight Millennium Development Goals, the six goals of the 'Education for All' movement and directly or indirectly, support the respective national development aspirations. Education gives us the skills and knowledge through which people and nations alike, rise to make accomplishments in the three main areas that concern us as human beings. These are improving livelihoods, health, and care for the environment.

Such objectives are well reflected in Japan's ODA, through the concept titled 'Human Security'. It gives me great joy to say that since 1990 in Fiji, through our GGP Programme, we have provided assistance to grassroots communities by implementing 327 Projects, with the total value exceeding US\$18 million. As Fiji continues its nation building process in the years ahead, Japan remains committed to providing assistance for the socio-economic development of Fiji.

I conclude with confidence that this project will further strengthen the friendship between the people and governments of Fiji and Japan.

Thank You, Vinaka Vakalevu, Dhanyavaadh and Arigatō Gozaimasu.

The End.