

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

24 July 2015, 10.00a.m. at Waicoba District School

Mrs. Sera Saladuadua, Senior Education Officer, Nadroga,

Mr. Epi Seru Waqa, Head Teacher, Waicoba District School,

Mr. Asaeli Nayaya, Manager, Waicoba District School,

The Officials of Ministry of Education,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning, Cola Vina, Namaste and Ohayo Gozaimasu.

I wish to thank Waicoba District School for the warm welcome extended to me and my colleague. This marks my second visit to this area as I was here in Febraury this year to hand over Japanese funded facilities at Sigatoka Valley High School. Today, on behalf of the people and Government of Japan, I am very pleased to hand over the new classroom block with furniture to Waicoba District School. The Government of Japan has provided funding worth FJ\$162, 990 for this project and it is implemented through Japan’s Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects Programme or GGP in short.

I sympathize with Waicoba District School community for the suffering you had to go through when there was no choice but making use of the old building, with its worsening condition was the only option. Well, today is a new beginning. I am hopeful that such challenges have been addressed through this project. My optimism is based on the fact that the new facilities will provide a safer environment for the School Community as well as help contribute towards the broader delivery of quality education.

For this project, the shift from good to excellence, lies in its harmonization with the objectives of the Fiji Government's overall national development framework for education, particularly in two key areas. These are, improvement of school infrastructure; and prioritization of education in rural, maritime and remote areas. Being aligned with Fiji's aspirations in the Education Sector is the basis for Japan's commitment to this project.

In most countries, amongst all the key pillars, education is the driving pillar of nation building. It is at the heart of enlightenment, prosperity and success of individuals and nations alike. At this juncture, I wish to praise the Government of Fiji for laying strong educational foundation, such as its 'free education

programme', aimed at providing equal opportunities to all the children of Fiji.

To the students, I urge you to listen to your parents, follow the advice of your teachers and work hard at your studies. It is through education that you will be able to unleash your potential and be successful yourselves.

The second UN Millennium Development Goal (MDG) and the Education For All (EFA) movement are global commitments made by the international community for achieving universal primary education as well as to provide education to children, youth and adults, respectively by 2015. The Government of Japan, in line with such objectives, has been providing continued assistance through its Official Development Assistance (ODA), to countries all over the world.

Though we are yet to complete 2015, I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the Government of Fiji in advance, for being well ahead in achieving the Millennium Development Goals as well as for already achieving ninety per cent (90%) of the Education For All goals. Commendable indeed.

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 am honoured to have an opportunity to play an important role in developing Fiji's education sector through our GGP Projects.

In concluding, I am confident that this project will serve to further strengthen the friendship between the people and governments of Fiji and Japan.

Thank You, Vina Valevu, Dhanyavaad and Arigatou Gozaimasu.

The End