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**Speech by H.E. Mr. Takuji Hanatani, Ambassador of Japan, at the Grant Contract Signing Ceremony for Fiji National Blood and Ambulance Services, Habitat for Humanity Fiji and Hilton Organization,**

Friday, 3 March 2017, 2.30pm, Embassy of Japan

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Mr. Josefa Bolaqace, National Manager, Fiji National Blood and Ambulance Services,

Mr. Masi Latianara, National Director, Habitat for Humanity Fiji,

Mr. Ritesh Dass, Board President, Hilton Organization,

Ladies & Gentlemen,

Good Afternoon, Bula Vinaka, Namaste and Konnichiwa.

A warm welcome to you all. Today, we have gathered here to sign grant contracts and formalize Japan's assistance to Fiji National Blood Service, Habitat for Humanity Fiji and Hilton Organization.

I am very pleased to say that the Government of Japan will be providing;

- One Hundred Ninety Five Thousand Fiji Dollars (FJD195, 023) to Fiji National Blood Services for the purchase of a new blood donor bus for the Northern Division,
- Seventeen Thousand Fiji Dollars (FJD17, 300) to Habitat for Humanity Fiji for rehabilitation works on water supply to Marou Village on Naviti Island,

- Ninety Five Thousand Fiji Dollars (FJD 95,207) to Hilton Organization for upgrading works at Hilton Special School and Hilton Early Intervention Centre.

These projects will be funded through Japan's Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects Programme or GGP in short. Fiji National Blood Services is part of the Health Ministry whereas Habitat for Humanity Fiji and Hilton Organization are NGO's, but all three are united in their service to humanity.

You play an important role in saving lives, providing shelter and basic facilities to those disadvantaged as well as caring for the young with special needs. Your work is commendable and it reminds us of the goodness that exists within the human spirit. Upon implementation, these projects will address the difficulties your organizations are facing and help accomplish your respective goals.

These projects are in line with Fiji government's national development objectives. Such harmonization is key to Japan's development cooperation with this country.

Since 1990, Japan has been providing assistance to grassroots communities in Fiji through 345 GGP projects, with the total value exceeding Twenty Million US Dollars (US\$20.6 million).

According to a recent study, the World Bank has praised Fiji for the way it provided assistance to its people after TC Winston. The World Bank says Fiji's example could be a useful lesson for disaster recovery efforts in other Pacific nations. As such, I also wish to highlight that your organizations hold practical importance in the national efforts for Fiji's disaster recovery.

Please ensure the timely and successful completion of your respective projects. It is my honour to reaffirm Japan's commitment for providing continued assistance for the sustainable development of Fiji.

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

Thank You, Vinaka Vakalevu, Dhanyavaadh and Arigato Gozaimasu.

**The End.**