

**Speech by H. E. Mr. Takuji Hanatani,
Ambassador of Japan,
During the Handing Over of the Project for Improvement of
Equipment for Disaster Risk Management**

at 10.30 a.m., 29 May 2015, at the Fiji Meteorological Centre, Korowai
Road, AFL Estate, Nadi.

Honourable Parveen Kumar (パルビーン・クマール),
Minister for Infrastructure and Transport,

Hon. Joeli Cawaki(ジョエリ ダウキ),
Assistant Minister for Agriculture, Rural & Maritime
Development and National Disaster Management,

Commander Francis Kean(フランシス キーン),
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport,

Colonel. Manasa Tagicakibau(マナサ タンギダキンバウ),
Commissioner Western,

Mr. Terry Atalifo (テリー アタリフォ)
Acting Director, Fiji Meteorological Service,

Officials of the Government of the Republic of Fiji,
Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning, Yadra Vinaka, Namaste and Ohayō Gozaimasu

On behalf of the Government and people of Japan, it is my great honour to hand over new equipment to the Fiji Meteorological Service.

I am pleased to say that Japan is providing meteorological equipment worth 5.7 million Fiji Dollars through this project, which is implemented under our Grant Aid scheme. This is aimed at promoting international co-operation in the field of disaster risk management by providing technologically advanced meteorological equipment and sharing knowledge of natural disasters.

Aligned with the Fiji government's national initiative for the comprehensive strengthening of disaster management in the country, we are happy to support Fiji in this very important area, by way of this project. For me, this is simply about saving lives. Not only in Fiji but also in other Pacific Island Countries because the Fiji Meteorological Service serves the wider South Pacific region.

Every nation faces natural disasters. It is what we do, how we prepare and how we unite in minimizing the risk of such disasters, is what matters the most.

This brings me to the other key factor for our assistance to this particular area which is Japan's willingness to share the lessons learnt from its own experiences of natural disasters. The Great East Japan Earthquake that struck in 2011 caused unimaginable suffering, destruction and loss of lives. However, with the resilience, hope and enterprise of its people, Japan's recovery is well underway today.

Fiji and the region also experience natural disasters. Cyclone Evan and the major flooding hitting Fiji in 2012 as well as Cyclone Pam causing devastation in Vanuatu Kiribati, Tuvalu and Solomon Islands earlier this year are some recent examples. We strongly hope that through the contribution made by this project, we will be helping Fiji and other Pacific Island Countries transform challenges into opportunities.

The technology provided by this project will enable the feed of real time weather information through the Japanese meteorological satellite, the "HIMAWARI". This will significantly raise Fiji's capacity for predicting and monitoring natural disasters such as floods, tsunamis, formation and path of cyclones as well as other weather anomalies more precisely. I am delighted that this project will help save more lives and aid people in preparing ahead for natural disasters.

I also wish to highlight the fact that some of the equipment being provided has been made in the Tohoku region, which was severely hit by the 2011 disaster in Japan. In a way, the victims have risen to contribute towards minimising the risk of natural disasters for the people of Fiji and the regional countries.

Over the years, the Government of Japan has provided continued assistance to the Fiji Meteorological Service through its ODA projects, such as construction of FMS at Nadi in 1996 and JICA's Technical Assistance for the capacity enhancement of the Disaster Risk Management, ongoing Meteorology Training, both in Fiji and Japan, from 1991, Strengthening Community Based Disaster Risk Management (from 2010 to 2013) and Strengthening the Capability of Weather Forecasting and Warning (2014 to Present).

May I also take this opportunity to emphasize Japan's commitment to disaster risk reduction globally. In March 2015 Japan hosted the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, a city which was the worst hit in the 2011 disaster. During this Conference, Japan's Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe announced the "Sendai Cooperation Initiative for Disaster Risk Reduction". Basically, this initiative is Japan's 4 billion US Dollar pledge for global

cooperation on Disaster Risk Reduction and training of 40,000 government officials and local leaders over four years starting 2015. We hope that the participants of such training will play a leading role in national efforts for Disaster Risk Reduction as well as in the post disaster recovery and reconstruction phase, outlined as "Build Back Better" in the Sendai Cooperation Initiative.

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

Thank you and Vinaka Vakalevu, Dhanyavaadh and Arigatō Gozaimasu

THE END