

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

Thursday, 16 July 2015, 10:00 a.m. at Navakawau Catholic School

Mr. Anil Shankaran (アニル・シャンカラン), Principal, South
Taveuni Secondary School,

Mr. Semi Lalama (セミ・ララマ), Head Teacher, Navakawau
Catholic School,

The Management Committee,

Teachers, Parents and Students,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning, Yadra Vinaka, Namaste and Ohayō Gozaimasu.

I wish to thank Navakawau Catholic School for the warm welcome extended to me and my colleague. I began my term as Ambassador of Japan in May 2014 and this is my first visit to Taveuni. I have to acknowledge that I am taken by the friendliness of the people here, the natural beauty of Taveuni, the rich agriculture and greenery all round. Definitely, this is the ‘Garden Island of Fiji’.

Today, I am very pleased to hand over the new three-classroom block equipped with furniture to Navakawau Catholic School.

The Government of Japan has provided funding worth One Hundred Seventy Two Thousand Fiji Dollars (FJ\$172,000) for this project implemented through its Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects Programme, or GGP in short.

Navakawau Catholic School has faced difficult challenges as a result of the deteriorated state of the old facilities. I am very positive that through construction of a new three classroom block, equipped with new furniture, this project will help contribute towards the delivery of quality education for the benefit of the Navakawau Community. This project is in line with the Fiji Government's overall national development initiative for education. Such alignment is one of the main underlying reasons for Japan's contribution to this project.

Responsive to national needs and aspirations, education is the most important element in nation building. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the prioritization and huge commitment for the development of the education sector undertaken by the Fiji Government. It is through education that everybody has the equal opportunity to make accomplishments for themselves, their countries and beyond, for humanity.

I urge all students of Navakawau Catholic School, to work hard and be diligent students. Hopefully, through education, one day you also get to be successful in your lives and create our own recognition, just like your world famous 'Tagimoucia' (tangee – mow – theea).

2015 is the last year of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The second goal of MDG is to achieve universal primary education. The number of out-of-school children of primary school age worldwide has fallen almost half, to an estimated 57 million in 2015, down from 100 million in 2000. In harmonization with the MDG, Japan provides continued assistance to deserving countries across the world.

Our commitment to 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