

**Speech by H.E. Mr. Takuji Hanatani, Ambassador of Japan,  
At the Signing of the Exchange of Notes for  
“The Project for Reconstruction of the Nippon Causeway”  
funded by the Government of Japan**

Monday, 11 July 2016, 3:15 pm

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His Excellency Taneti Maamau,  
Te Beretitenti (President) of the Republic of Kiribati,  
Honourable Tetabo Nakara,  
Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources Development (P),  
Officials of the Government of the Republic of Kiribati,  
Distinguished Guests,

Mauri Nte Bakantaai Aei, Good Afternoon and Konnichiwa.

To begin with, in order for me to suitably address this auspicious occasion, may I extend my congratulations threefold.

Firstly, as I am visiting Kiribati for the first time after the general election, I congratulate His Excellency Mr. Taneti Maamau, on being elected the new President of the Republic of Kiribati. Excellency, I look forward to closely working with you towards building yet stronger relations between our countries.

Secondly, I convey my sincere congratulations to the people and government of Kiribati on the 37<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary being celebrated by the whole country this week.

Thirdly, I congratulate the people and government of Kiribati on the formalization of Japan's assistance for the reconstruction of the Nippon Causeway today.

I am pleased to say that the government of Japan will be providing funding worth 3.8 Billion Japanese Yen equivalent to 49 Million Australian Dollars for this project, under its Grant Aid Programme.

In any country, roads are like the arteries of an economy and also the lifeline for the people. The importance of roads both, in our daily lives and the prosperity of a country cannot be exaggerated. 30 years ago in 1986, Japan agreed to construct the Nippon Causeway linking Bairiki to Betio, which was inaugurated in 1989. Over time and through encroachment of the sea, the causeway has deteriorated, placing difficulties on the people, transportation and commerce.

This is why upon the request of Kiribati, Japan has decided to support the reconstruction of the causeway. I am quite positive that upon completion it will not only deliver practical results in the socio-economic development of the country but also become source of pride for the people here. This project is aligned to Kiribati's national development framework, which is key to Japan's Development Cooperation with this country.

Japan's relationship with Kiribati is not simply a donor recipient association. It is far more deep rooted and broad based on equal partnership. Some of our major projects in Kiribati include 'Tungaru Central Hospital', 'King

George V (the Fifth) and Elaine Bernacchi Schools', 'Betio Port' and 'Power Supply in Tarawa'. However, our assistance is not limited to cooperation between governments. Besides our Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects Programme implemented annually which reaches out to villages and local communities, we also contribute to the capacity building of the people of Kiribati through JICA training programmes for the workforce and by the JENESYS Youth Exchange Programmes for university students of this country. Based on the common values shared by Japan and Kiribati, our countries closely cooperate on the regional and international stage, in areas such as climate change, environment conservation and sustainable development. I am happy to mention that we have also assisted Kiribati in the fisheries sector through initiatives such as training of fisheries personnel and also by OFCF implemented projects. This major sector is one of the crucial areas that we look forward to enhancing our cooperation with Kiribati.

It is my sincere hope that this project is completed successfully and my best wishes to all the stakeholders.

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

Ko rabwa, Thank You, and Arigato Gozaimasu.

**THE END.**