

Speech by H. E. Mr. Takuji Hanatani, Ambassador of Japan, At the Grant Contract Signing Ceremony for ‘The Project for Upgrading of Nadi School for Special Education, ‘The Project for Upgrading of Lovu Sangam School’, ‘The Project for Provision of School Bus to Sunshine Special School’, ‘The Project for Upgrading Levuka Seawall’ and the ‘Project for Provision of Garbage Compactor Truck to Nausori Town’,

Wednesday, 4 November 2015, 02.30pm, at the Embassy of Japan

Mr. Azam Khan, Chief Executive Officer, Nausori Town Council & Acting Chief Executive Officer, Levuka Town Council,

Mr. Shiro Mani Felix, Head Teacher, Nadi School for Special Education,

Ms. Angili Devi Ratnam, Head Teacher, Lovu Sangam School,

Mr. Josaia U. Selo, Head Teacher, Sunshine Special School,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies & Gentlemen,

Good Afternoon, Bula Vinaka, Assalam-Alaikum, Namaste and Konnichiwa.

I welcome you all to the Embassy of Japan. Today, we have gathered here to sign grant contracts and formalize Japan’s assistance to Nadi School for Special Education, Lovu Sangam School, Sunshine Special School, Nausori Town Council and Levuka Town Council.

I am very pleased to say that the Government of Japan will be providing funding assistance worth approximately;

1) One Hundred and Eighty Thousand Fiji Dollars (FJD180, 000) for the construction of three classrooms with furniture and a toilet block for Nadi School for Special Education;

2) One Hundred and Twenty Five Thousand Fiji Dollars (FJD125, 250) for construction of four classrooms with furniture for Lovu Sangam School;

3) One Hundred and Seventeen Thousand Fiji Dollars (FJD 117, 365) for the purchase of a new 30-seater school bus for Sunshine Special School;

4) Two Hundred and Forty Four Thousand Fiji Dollars (FJD 244, 000) for the upgrading of Levuka Seawall;

5) and One Hundred and Seventy Nine Thousand Fiji Dollars (FJD 179, 043) for the purchase of a new garbage compactor truck for Nausori Town. These projects will be funded through Japan's Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects Programme or GGP in short.

May I also take this opportunity to highlight that in February of this year, the Government of Japan revised its Official Development Assistance Charter and renamed it the Development Cooperation Charter. One of the key reasons behind this change is the shift towards development cooperation as a mechanism for mobilizing a wide range of resources aimed at securing peace,

stability and prosperity of the international community. The new Development Cooperation Charter gives special emphasis on the importance of collaborating with developing countries and their respective local governments, NGOs and private sector in equal partnership.

Lovu Sangam School lost four of its wooden classrooms including its furniture due to a termite infestation in 2013. The overcrowded and unsanitary state of three classrooms and toilet facilities of the Nadi School for Special Education risks the health and safety of its students. The deteriorated state of the two seventeen year old minibuses of Sunshine Special School also risks the safety of its students. Nausori Town, despite being the fourth most populous municipality in the country, has been using only one garbage compactor truck and two non-specialized trucks for waste management services. Levuka Town is also facing the threat of rising sea level due to climate change. This has placed an environmental strain on the town through erosion of its shoreline, loss of vegetation and even threatens its population, businesses and the UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

As such, I believe the formalization of our assistance is timely. Upon completion, these projects will deliver practical benefits and also address the difficulties currently faced by the recipient

communities. It is also encouraging to see that these projects are aligned to the Fiji Government's national development objectives. The implementation of our assistance in line with Fiji's development aspirations is fundamental to Japan's Development Cooperation.

Since 1990 Japan has been providing assistance to grassroots communities in Fiji through 332 GGP projects, with the total value exceeding US\$18 million. Japan is committed to providing continued assistance for the new phase of nation building in Fiji.

I acknowledge the distinguished recipient representatives present here, for the important role you play in serving your respective communities. I also wish to urge you all for your leadership and cooperation towards the successful implementation of your respective projects.

The nature of this occasion itself reflects the depth as well as our wide-ranging engagement with the communities of Fiji. I conclude with confidence that these five projects will further strengthen the friendship between the people and governments of Japan and Fiji.

Thank You, Vinaka Vakalevu, Shukryia, Dhanyavaadh, and Arigato Gozaimasu.

The End.