
**Speech by H.E. Mr. Takuji Hanatani, Ambassador of Japan, At the Commissioning of the
REACH Mobile Service Delivery Buses**

Wednesday, 12 April 2017, 10:10 a.m. at the Albert Park, Suva

Honourable Dr. Jiko Luveni, Speaker of Parliament,
Honourable Mereseini Vuniwaqa, Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation,
Honourable Cabinet members,
Ms. Osnat Lubrani, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative,
Mr. Shahin Rafique Ali, Acting Director, Legal Aid Commission,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Yadra Vinaka, Assalam-Wa-Alaikum, Namaste, Good Morning and Ohayo Gozaimasu.

May I be excused for firstly speaking on a subject not directly related to this occasion, which is congratulations to you all on Fiji's magnificent victory at the Hong Kong Sevens!

The commissioning of the three REACH project buses today is a practical accomplishment for all project partners namely, Fiji's Ministry for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Legal Aid Commission, UNDP Pacific Office and Japan. Congratulations once again. As troops parade before deployment, these buses lined up before us, will take the fight for women's empowerment, access to legal and social services, and awareness on citizens' rights preserved in the constitution to all Fijians in the far and remote areas of the country.

I began my term here in May 2014. As such, I have been fortunate to witness the historic 2014 elections, democratization of Fiji and the vigorous nation building process initiated by the government. I believe the free education program and the access to education program right from primary to tertiary level for all Fijians regardless of ethnicity, race or religion will be an everlasting legacy of this government. This is a great leap towards securing the future of Fiji.

I hope a similar sweeping impact is created in the areas of women's empowerment, justice, law and order, as well as rights and civil liberties by the REACH Project once fully operational. The REACH Project particularly contributes to achieving Goal 5 of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that is, to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, and Goal 16 that is, to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies. The mobile services delivery by the REACH Project will also lift the spirit of Fijians, when they see that despite the remoteness of their dwelling and no matter what their race or religion is, the government cares for them and their rights. In this regard, the REACH Project is also in line with the pledge made by all UN Member countries for attaining the 17 goals which says; 'leave no one behind and reach first those who are furthest behind'. A time might come when the mere sight of a REACH bus will give hope to those needing its services and act as deterrent for those would-be offenders or those on the wrong side of the law.

I am pleased to say that the REACH Project is aligned to Fiji's development framework which is key to Japan's development cooperation with this country. It is my honour to reaffirm Japan's commitment for providing continued assistance for the sustainable development of Fiji.

In concluding, I hope that the partnership between Japan, the Government of Fiji and the UNDP Pacific Office strengthens with the REACH Project.

My best wishes for the longevity of these buses and for the overall success of the REACH Project.

Vinaka Vakalevu, Shukriya, Dhanyavaadh, Thank You, Arigatou Gozaimasu.

The End.