
Speech by KAWAKAMI Fumihiro, Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Fiji,
At the Grant Contract Signing Ceremony for Ministry of Agriculture
Friday 19th March 2021, at 9.00 am at Ministry of Agriculture, Suva

The Honorable ^{マヘンドラ} Mahendra ^{レディ} REDDY , Minister for Agriculture,
Waterways and Environment,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning, Yandra Vinaka, Namaste and Ohayo Gozaimasu.

Firstly, I wish to express my sincere appreciation for the Honorable Minister and the Ministry for the warm hospitality accorded to us today as well as for hosting this Grant Contract Signing Ceremony.

On behalf of the Government and people of Japan, it is my honor to have formalized with the Honorable Minister, the Japanese Government's Grant Assistance for the Provision of an Excavator and Tip Trucks for the Northern Divisional Office of the Ministry of Agriculture.

I am very pleased to say that the Government of Japan will provide One Hundred and Eighty Nine Thousand USD (USD 188,780) to the Ministry for procurement of a new excavator and two tip trucks, through its Grass Roots Grant Assistance.

In his request for assistance, the Honourable Minister prioritized this project as essential for boosting economic growth in the Northern Division, through development of agriculture. Our Embassy decided to provide assistance in line with our development cooperation policy of strengthening the pillars of economic growth. The heavy machineries, which will be provided to the Ministry, are expected to effectively enhance agricultural earthmoving works and construction of farm access roads. This is in line with the Ministry's objective of creating better agricultural infrastructure and land development in the northern division. We sincerely hope that, the Ministry as well as other stakeholders, farmers will be able to add value to their agricultural yield, as a livelihoods income-generating source, and lead themselves towards prosperity.

At this juncture, I'd like to highlight our recent assistance to the Northern division. In July, 2019, the Embassy of Japan handed over new equipment for disaster preparedness, response and resilience. The equipment is currently being utilized for the development of the Northern Division. Also, in February this year, Japan disbursed its Stand-by Loan to Fiji, approximately worth 55million FJD through Japan International Cooperation Agency, to assist in recovery from TC Yasa and Ana. The Northern Division was severely impacted by these two natural disasters. We strongly hope that our assistance contributes to the recovery from such disasters as well as to the revitalization of the Fijian economy, especially in the northern division.

It is my privilege to reaffirm the Japanese Government's commitment to provide continued assistance for the sustainable and inclusive development of Fiji. Since 1990, Japan has implemented 398 Projects under Grass Roots Grant Assistance (with the total value exceeding USD 28 million).

I am happy that Japan's assistance to this project is in harmony with Fiji's Twenty Year and Five Year Development Plan, particularly

in line with its respective objectives namely, “Food and Nutrition Security” as well as “Competitive, sustainable and value-adding agriculture”. I would like to praise the Honourable Minister for your leading role in achieving these objectives.

I look forward to the Excavator and Tip Trucks serving the people of Northern Division for many years to come under the care and timely maintenance of the Ministry of Agriculture.

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

Thank You, Vinaka Vakalevu, Dhanyavaadh and Arigato Gozaimasu.

END