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Speech by H.E. Mr. KAWAKAMI Fumihiro, Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Fiji,  
at the Grant Contract Signing Ceremony with the Honourable Sakiasi Ditoka, Minister for Rural,  
Maritime Development and Disaster Management

Tuesday, 21th February 2023, at 3:00 pm at the Ministry Office Complex, Suva

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The Honorable Sakiasi Ditoka - Minister for Rural, Maritime  
Development and Disaster Management,

The Honorable Jovesa Vocea - Assistant Minister for Rural, Maritime  
Development and Disaster Management,

Mr. Mitieli Cama, Acting Permanent Secretary, for Rural, Maritime  
Development and Disaster Management

Mr. Taitusi Vakadravuyaca, Permanent Secretary for Public Works,  
Communication, Transport and Meteorological Services

Mr. Joseva Navuku Commissioner Central,

Mr. Vitale Varo, Commissioner Eastern,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bula Vinaka, Namaste, Good Afternoon and Konnichiwa to you all,

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Honorable  
Minister, and the Rural, Maritime Development and Disaster

Management team for hosting this Grant Contract Signing Ceremony as well as for the warm hospitality accorded to us.

May I also take this opportunity to congratulate the Honorable Ditoka on being appointed the Minister for Rural, Maritime Development and Disaster Management, in the new democratically elected Government of Fiji seated after the 2022 General Elections. Honorable Minister, I look forward to working closely with you in forming a strong working partnership towards helping address the development needs of Fiji's rural and maritime areas as well as enhancing Fiji's resilience against natural disasters.

On behalf of the Government and people of Japan, it is my honor to formalize with the Honorable Minister, the Japanese Government's Grant Assistance for "The Project for Construction of Footbridge in Saliadrau Village". I am pleased to say that the Office of the Commissioner, Central Division will implement the footbridge project through the technical and professional assistance of the

Ministry of Public Works, Communication, Transport and Meteorological Services.

The people of Saliadrau through the office of the Commissioner, Eastern division, made the request for assistance towards the construction of the footbridge to the Embassy. Upon seeing the determination by Saliadrau villagers towards improving their livelihoods, education and efforts to better access medical treatment when needed, the Government of Japan committed to provide FJ \$248,000 for the construction of the 60 meter long suspension footbridge.

This project will be implemented through Japan's "Grassroots Grant Assistance scheme" (or the GGP). I wish to take this opportunity to highlight that since 1990, Japan has implemented 420 GGP projects, which are collectively worth more than US\$32 million, to assist grassroots communities of Fiji.

It gives me great joy to see that the implementation of this project will improve the lives of the people of Saliadrau village through improving accessibility. Currently, the villagers especially the children risk their lives and limbs when crossing the river on a daily basis. But upon completion of the project, we hope that the livelihood and safety of people crossing the footbridge will not be compromised, guaranteeing peace of mind for the entire community.

On another note, His Excellency Ratu Wiliame Maivalili Katonivere, President of the Republic of Fiji, during his speech of the Opening of the 2023-2024 Session of Parliament, highlighted that the revival of the Rural and Outer Island Development Programme will boost socio-economic development in the rural setting through the improvement of infrastructure.

In this occasion, I am very pleased to assist Saliadrau village, just after the establishment of the new government. I believe that

Saliadrau Village will have a quality new infrastructure to strengthen its development and it's strive into a brighter future.

I conclude with confidence that the assistance provided by the People and Government of Japan will boost socio-economic development in Fiji as well as further strengthen the friendship between the Governments and peoples of Japan and Fiji.

Thank You, Vinaka Vakalevu, Dhanyavaadh and Arigatou Gozaimasu.

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