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Speech by Mr. IKEDA Hirotsugu, Chargé d'affaires ad interim of Japan to the  
Republic of Kiribati at the Handing Over Ceremony for Ministry of Fisheries  
and Marine Resources Development in Kiribati  
28<sup>th</sup> February 2023, at 3:30 pm at Aquaculture Hatchery Centre at Tanaea

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The Honourable Ribanataake Tiwau, Minister for Fisheries and Marine  
Resources Development,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Kamna Mauri, E rabwa te kaitibo, Konnichiwa and a very Good day to  
you all,

1. Firstly, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Hon.  
Minister and the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources  
Development, for hosting this ceremony as well as for the warm  
hospitality extended to my colleagues and me today.

2. On behalf of the Government and people of Japan, I am honoured to  
hand over to Tanaea Aquaculture Hatchery Centre, the rehabilitated  
Aquaculture Hatchery. This rehabilitation project, worth 230,000 Aus  
dollars, was implemented under Japan's Grassroots Grant Assistance  
scheme. In Kiribati, 64 Grassroots Grant projects of more than 4.6  
million US dollars in total, were conducted for sustainable  
development of local communities since 1995.

3. The relation between our two countries has, however, much longer history. More than 120 years ago Japanese engineers and miners worked for the phosphate company in Banaba. Then a Japanese trading company stationed its representatives in Butaritari for copra trading. There was an unfortunate time during the Second World War, as you know, but in 1970s Japanese fishermen started fishing in this region and since then Kiribati has been one of the most important food exporting countries for Japan.

4. With such backgrounds, the Japanese Government financed to establish this Centre in 1995 through Overseas Fishery Cooperation Foundation of Japan, OFCF. The mission of this Centre is to research mariculture and aquaculture development and also selective breeding of such as sea cucumber, giant clams, seaweed and pearl oysters.

5. After the establishment, some of facilities here needed rehabilitation despite the Ministry's efforts for maintenance. Upon the request from the Ministry, my Government provided the funds for this project, with

recognizing that not only the Centre but also 4,800 local residents and 1,200 fishing households would become beneficiaries through improvement of food security and livelihood situations.

6. This project is in line with the commitments made at Pacific Islands Leaders Meetings in Japan and also Kiribati 20 Year Vision 2016 – 2036 (KV 20) Pillar 1 ‘Wealth’, as well as United Nation’s SDG 14 about sustainable use of the seas and marine resources, by enabling the continual operation of aquaculture systems with reduction of risks.

7. Finally, I would like to commend the Ministry for its utmost efforts in the timely implementation of the project. From now on, the Ministry will have to secure good maintenance of the facilities for many years to come. I am looking forward to your next efforts, and also looking forward to seeing further strengthened friendship between our countries and peoples.

Kam rabwa, Arigatou Gozaimasu and Thank you so much.