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Speech by Mr. IKEDA Hirotsugu, Chargé d'affaires ad interim of Japan to the Republic of Kiribati, at the Contract Signing Ceremony with Mr. Eritai Kateibwi, Project Manager, Te Meau Projects at 10.00a.m. on Wednesday, 1st March 2023, at MOE, Tarawa

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Mr. Eritai Kateibwi, Project Manager, Te Meau Projects

Ms. Reetina Katokita, Director, Ministry of Education

Distinguished guests; and

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ko na Mauri, Ohayo Gozaimasu and a very Good Morning to you all,

First of All, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Mr. Kateibwi, and the Ministry of Education team for hosting this Grant Contract Signing Ceremony. My embassy just opened its office in Tarawa two months ago and is honoured to be given this outstanding occasion to formalize our assistance to a local school and students in remote island.

Nikierere Primary School is the biggest primary school in Marakei Island, but its toilets have poor structure and maintenance and smell problem and also are built close to water sources, increasing the risk of water contamination.

Therefore, Mr. Kateibwi of Te Meau Project made the request to my government to address these problems by providing a compost facility with six toilets, which is comfortable, hygienic, rigid and environmentally friendly. My government decided to give this project more than one hundred thirty one thousand Australian dollars under Grassroots Grant Assistance scheme, which started in Kiribati in 1995 and assisted 64 projects, totaling 4.6million US dollars, since then.

I shall assure that, with this assistance, the problems

which this school is facing will be a thing of the past and, as a result, even school attendance will increase. In fact, we had done the same project at another school in 2021 with Te Maeu Project and since then no student is suffering from the same problems. I am happy that my country contributes to reduction of these challenges and improvement of school environment in Kiribati through this kind of assistance.

My country conducts assistance programmes in line with the intentions of the recipient country itself and also the international society. This project will help Kiribati to achieve its Kiribati 20 Year Vision 2016 – 2036 (KV 20) in terms of quality education, and also help the world to attain the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 about water and sanitation. Please note

that the success of this project can help the human community a little bit.

Japanese people started visiting Kiribati more than 120 years ago, first as phosphate mine workers and then copra trading businessmen, and unfortunately soldiers and after the World War 2 as fishermen and nowadays as cooperation experts and volunteers. Japan remains committed to walk together with Kiribati hand-in-hand for the socio-economic development of Kiribati.

Kam Rabwa and Arigato Gozaimasu and thank you very much.

The End