

Mr. Ioapo Tapumanaia, President of Fishermen on Funafuti Association,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Talofa, Konnichiwa and a Very Good Afternoon to you all.

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Fishermen on Funafuti Association for hosting this ceremony as well as for your warm welcome accorded to us today. Due to Covid-19 pandemic travel restrictions, unfortunately we were unable to organize the formal handing over of this project when it was completed. Nevertheless, I am happy to be here, my first time in Tuvalu, with the esteemed presence of you all.

On behalf of the Government and people of Japan, it is my honor to hand over the new fish market facility worth One Hundred and Forty-Nine Thousand Four Hundred and Thirty-Five Australian Dollars (AU\$149,435). This project was made possible through the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security

Projects or GGP in short. Since 1992, we have funded 50 Grassroots Grant projects for the sustainable development of Tuvalu, which are collectively worth more than 3 million US dollars.

Due to the lack of space, the support to fishermen here on Funafuti Island provided by the Fishermen on Funafuti Association was limited. I hope that this new facility will enable the local fishermen to provide the best quality of fish to their customers, and at the same time improve resource management to ensure the sustainability of the local fishing industry. This new fish market has separate stalls for fishermen who wish to sell their fresh catch, as well as a processing room equipped with freezers. Water supply is also very important for cleaning and processing fish, so this grant also includes funds for the purchase of water tanks.

I am pleased that this project is aligned with the Tuvalu Government's National-Development-Strategy for Sustainable Development 2021-2030, in line with the Strategic Priority Area 2 Economic Development: *Fisheries Contribution to Socio-economic Development and Quality of Life*. Such harmonization

of our project objectives with Tuvalu's national development aspirations is key to Japan's Development Cooperation with Tuvalu.

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

Fakafetai lasi, Thank You and Arigato Gozaimasu.

**END**