
**Speech by H.E. Mr. KAWAKAMI Fumihiro, Ambassador of Japan, at the Exchange of
Notes Signing for the “Project for Supporting Digital Health System for Infectious
Diseases Control in the Pacific Islands Countries” and handing over of cold chain
equipment ceremony**
15:00 PM, 6th March 2023, FPBS

Honourable Dr. Atonia Lalabalavu , Minister for Health and
Medical Services,

Mr. Jonathan Veitch, UNICEF Pacific Representative,

Mr Jeremaia Mataika, Head of Fiji Pharmaceutical and
Biomedical Services

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

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

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the
Honourable Minister and the Ministry of Health and Medical
Services for hosting today’s Ceremony as well as for the warm
hospitality accorded to us today.

I also thank UNICEF for the excellent coordination and

support.

May I also take this opportunity to congratulate the Honorable Lalabalavu on being appointed the Minister for Health and Medical Services, In the new democratically elected Government of Fiji seated after the 2022 General Elections.

I would like to extend my best wishes to the Government and people of Fiji for collectively striving towards a brighter future based on the tenets of democracy and its accomplishments. 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 health and medical areas.

Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of the Government and people of Japan, it is my honor to formalize with Mr. Jonathan Veitch, UNICEF Pacific Representative, the Japanese Government's Assistance for the Project for **“Supporting Digital Health System for Infectious Diseases Control in the Pacific Islands Countries”**, witnessed by the Honourable Minister.

This project aims to effectively support the management of post-vaccination data collection, digitization, storage, and accessibility. Through this project, Japan will be providing approximately USD\$9 Million US Dollars to **Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.**

The creation of such digital health ecosystem ensures that frontline health care workers improve service delivery and quality of primary care. The new system will not only capture COVID-19 vaccination details but it will also be rolled out to include routine immunization programs.

Listening to His Excellency the President's speech at the opening of the Parliament on 3rd February as well as the Honourable Minister's speech at the February 15th Parliamentary session, I have deepen my understanding of the lessons learned from the pandemic and the challenges Fiji faces in the medical health sector.

This project will help to draw lessons from the pandemic for improved surveillance, prevention, response, and protection

programs against infectious diseases, and will help to improve Fiji's health care services. I am very pleased to be able to provide assistance to the new administration shortly after its establishment, which is in line with the policies of the administration.

I hope that key stakeholders involve in both Governments and UNICEF will continue to work together to ensure the successful completion of this project.

In January 2021, I signed on a project that will provide \$9.6 million USD to UNICEF and WHO's project of “Strengthening Immunization in the Pacific Island Countries”. This project targets five countries, including Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands and Palau.

Last March, I handed over cold chain equipment to the Fiji Ministry of Health to assist in the delivery of the COVID-19 vaccine provided by this project.

Following this speech, I will hand over additional cold chain equipment, including walk-in cooler, to the Ministry of Health. I

am very pleased that this delivery completes the provision of equipment under this project.

Over the past two years, we have focused our support for Fiji's COVID-19 response and recovery.

The Japanese government provided 56,000 doses of AstraZeneca vaccine through the COVAX Facility to Fiji. We also provided emergency financial assistance totaling about FJD 400 million. In addition, we provided medical equipment such as ultra-low temperature freezers and vehicles worth approximately \$10 million Fiji dollars, as well as two cooler trucks worth \$374,310 Fiji dollars.

I must commend the resilience of the people of Fiji in the face of the world's deadliest pandemic in recent memory. The Government and the people have worked hard to get us to where we are now. I am pleased that Japan was able to provide assistance to Fiji to help it overcome the COVID-19 pandemic.

The new government of Fiji is working hard to develop new policies for sustainable development.

As Ambassador of Japan to Fiji, I am honoured to reaffirm that the Japanese Government will be working with the new Government to provide the support that Fiji truly needs.

I conclude with confidence that the assistance provided by the People and Government of Japan will facilitate the delivery of quality health care services to the people of Fiji as well as further strengthen the friendship between the Governments and peoples of Japan and Fiji while enhancing collective working partnership with the UNICEF.

Thank You, Vinaka Vakalevu, Dhanyavaadh and Arigatou Gozaimasu.

END