

The Honorable Jese Saukuru, Minister for Youth and Sports,

Distinguished Guests,

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Afternoon, Bula Vinaka, Namaste and Konnichiwa.

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Hon. Minister Saukuru, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and Nasau Youth Training Centre for hosting this ceremony as well as for the warm hospitality extended to us today.

This is my first official occasion to be with the Minister today. May I take this opportunity to congratulate Honorable Saukuru on being appointed the Minister for Youth and Sports.

My most important mission as Ambassador of Japan to Fiji is to maintain and strengthen the close cooperation and friendship between Japan and Fiji, and in line with the policies of the new government, I will provide the support that Fiji truly needs. Honorable Minister, we, the Embassy of Japan look forward to working closely with you in forming a strong working partnership towards the advancement of the youth of Fiji as well as development of youth.

On behalf of the Government and people of Japan, I am honored to hand over a newly constructed and furnished learning facility to Hon. Minister Saukuru, worth approximately Two Hundred and Twenty Two Thousand Fiji Dollars (FJD \$222,204). Japan has provided funding for these facilities through the “The Project for Upgrading of Nasau Youth Training Centre” which is being implemented under its Grassroots Grant Assistance scheme or GGP. I am very pleased to say that since 1990, we have funded 423 GGP

projects for the sustainable development of Fiji, which are collectively worth more than 32 million US dollars.

It gives me great joy to see that the new facilities will provide a second chance at education to youths, especially to those who are not part of the mainstream education system or who, upon reaching employment age, have faced challenges in getting a decent job. The new training facility will cater for the newly introduced ‘Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation – Certificate 1’ program. The program is aimed at creating a better understanding of climate change strategies to ensure practical solutions are recognized and implemented in the grass roots communities. I commend Nasau Youth Training Centre for implementing this new curriculum, which covers the global issue of climate change.

As the new course has commenced in February 2023, I express my gratitude to the Ministry of Youth and Sports and all stakeholders for their efforts in ensuring the timely completion of this project.

In September 2022, the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Japan Embassy, through joint cooperation have implemented a livestock breeding facility project for Youth Clubs. We have already handed over a piggery to Naqaranikula Youth Club in September 2022 and then we also have handed over a poultry farming facility to Vacoko Youth Club last month(30<sup>th</sup> August). With our support, we strongly hope that youth activities will be positively impacted, not only for the good of the relevant youth club, but also for the improvement of youth livelihoods and their communities.

As the youth are our future, a key component of our engagement with this project is collaborating with the Fiji Government to empower the leaders of tomorrow.

I listened to the Honourable Minister's speech at the February 15th Parliamentary session and learned that your ministry is committed to ensure that youth have access to knowledge, skills and

training, so that they can effectively participate and contribute to nation-building.

I am very pleased to be able to hand over a project that will contribute to creating the conditions for learning, opportunities and experiences that will enable the youth to acquire knowledge, skills and competencies.

I express my gratitude to the Hon. Minister, the Ministry of Youth and Sports and all stakeholders for their efforts to complete this project. A key part of our engagement with this project is partnering with the Fijian Government to empower the leaders of tomorrow. As the Ministry continues its empowerment of the youth in the years ahead, Japan remains committed to providing assistance and continuing its partnership with the Ministry.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the past 50 years, Japan has provided an accumulated total of approximately 1.6 billion Fiji dollars of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Fiji up to last year.

All assistance is provided based on close dialogue with the Fiji government to understand their needs.

Fiji will continue to be a priority country for Japan, and we will continue to provide highly effective assistance.

I conclude with confidence that this project will contribute to the improvement of the lives of young people and their communities and to the empowerment of young people 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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