**Address by Mr. TANAKA Kenichiro Chargé d'affaires ad interim of Japan to the Republic of Fiji,**

**at the Handover Ceremony for The Project for Construction of Navurevure Primary School Building**

**at 10:00 am on 13 of October 2023, Navurevure Primary School**

Mr. , the Minister for Education

Mr. , Head of School,

Government Officials,

Parents, Teachers and Students,

Members of the Media

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Konichiwa Bula vinaka and Namaste

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Navurevure Primary School for the hospitality and warm traditional welcome extended to me and my colleagues today. In addition, I extend my warm greetings to the Minister for Education, Hon. for attending this event despite your busy schedule.

On a different note, I would like to congratulate the Fiji Water Flying Fijian on their performance in the Rugby World Cup in France and for reaching the Quarter Final. I cannot say the same for Japan’s rugby team as we had lost to Argentina in the deciding pool match but overall I am still happy with the Japanese team’s performance as well.

On behalf of the Government and people of Japan, it is my honor to handover a newly constructed and furnished three classroom building, worth almost Three hundred and eighty thousand Fijian Dollars (FJ$377,764) to Navurevure Primary School.

This project was made possible through one of Japan’s Official Development Assistance initiatives - Grant for Grass Roots Scheme or GGP in short. Since 1990, the Embassy of Japan has funded 423 projects through its Grassroots Grant Assistance scheme, with the total value exceeding $32 million US dollars. Out of that 423 projects, 83 projects were for the education sector, in the last 10 years, amounting to $12 million USD (approx. $26million FJD).

Over the past few years, the school roll had increased drastically without the necessary school infrastructure expansion and in addition, the deteriorating conditions of classrooms over the years has affected the learning space for students. As a result, students had to utilize the dining hall as a classroom which is an inadequate learning space and had made it difficult for teachers to conduct proper classes.

In recognizing the difficulties faced by the School, the Government of Japan decided to provide this Grassroots Grant Assistance. I am pleased to say that this project will not only provide the students with an opportunity to study in a conducive learning environment, but also ensure that there is a reliable evacuation center for the surrounding communities in the near future. Moreover, this is in line with the Fiji Government’s development objectives in leaving no one behind and complements SDG 4, *“ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.*

I would also like to take this opportunity to applaud the efforts of the Minister, Hon. for his leading role on the various developments and improvement carried out through the Education sector in Fiji so far. Such initiatives by the Fiji Government empowers all children and even those from poor and disadvantaged backgrounds to access quality education. I am sure that with the leadership of the Minister and the Ministry of Education in the years to come, Fiji will be able to foster a much brighter future for all Fijians.

Dear Students and Teachers, Education has become even more important now than before. The world needs new thinkers, new ideas, better solutions, and innovations as humanity is facing increasing challenges. Through the guidance of teachers and delivery of quality education, students will become future leaders and professionals of Fiji who will help tackle these increasing challenges. Apart from your own success, your country will need your leadership and your skills to strive ahead. A famous educator in Japan, Yukichi Fukizawa once said, *“Learning without application is no learning at all”*

Therefore, I encourage you all to work hard and do your best to utilize what you have learnt for the benefit of your families, your classmates, your villages, your communities, your country and the world and maybe for the universe.

Finally, I urge all stakeholders to please look after the new facility and carry out the necessary maintenance when needed so that it serves future students of Navurevure Primary School.

I once again reaffirm that Japan is committed to assisting Fiji through development initiatives such as this and I conclude with confidence that this project will further strengthen friendship between the people and Government of Japan and Fiji.

Vinaka Vakalevu ,Thank You, Arigato Gozaimasu and Toso Viti Toso.

**The End.**