

---

**Speech by H.E. Mr. KAWAKAMI Fumihiro, Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Fiji, at the  
Signing of Exchange of Notes for the Procurement of Medical Containers for Fiji's Ministry of  
Health and Medical Services.**

10:00 am, Monday, 21 August 2023, Ministry of Health Conference Room, Suva

---

Dr. James Fong, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of  
Health and Medical Services,

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bula Vinaka, Namaste, Good Morning and Ohayo Gozaimasu

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Dr.  
Fong and his Ministry team for the warm hospitality accorded to  
us and for hosting the formalization of Japan's assistance to Fiji  
this morning.

Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Government and  
people of Japan, I am honoured to be here today to formalize,  
together with Permanent Secretary Dr. Fong, Japan's funding  
assistance to Fiji, for procurement of two Medical Containers  
worth approximately \$2.5million Fijian dollars. Japan will be  
providing this funding through its Economic and Social  
Development Program or ESDP in short.

The Government of Japan has been providing assistance to

Fiji in various areas. The Health and Medical Services sector is one of the priority areas of our assistance.

As Permanent Secretary Dr. Fong is well aware, 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. 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.

In January 2021, I signed on to provide \$9.6 million USD to UNICEF and WHO's project of “Strengthening Immunization in the Pacific Island Countries”. This project targets five Pacific island countries, including Fiji. Last March, I handed over to the Ministry of Health the cold chain equipment provided by the project, and in March of this year, I handed over additional equipment, including walk-in coolers.

I understand that Fiji has overcome the pandemic and is striving for economic recovery and further development. The foundation of economic development is the health of the people. In this sense, the mission of the Ministry of Health, which is responsible for providing quality medical services to the people in order to maintain their health, is extremely important.

After the pandemic, the Government of Japan has continued to support Fiji in addressing the challenges it faces in the medical and health sectors, such as improving the quality of medical services and medical facilities. In March of this year, I signed on to UNICEF's Project for “**Supporting Digital Health System for Infectious Diseases Control in the Pacific Islands Countries**”, which covers five Pacific island countries, including Fiji. Japan will provide approximately US\$9 million for this project, which aims to effectively support the management of post-vaccination data collection, digitization, storage, and accessibility

management. The project will enable frontline medical personnel to improve service delivery and quality of primary care.

And today I am signing a project to provide two fully equipped state of the art Medical Containers, the first of their kind for Fiji. These Containers are designed and built on the frame of shipping containers, allowing them to be effectively mobilized to be stationed as medical centres in disaster-affected areas where usually travel and access to critical services is limited. The containers can also be used in under-populated areas or rural and maritime localities which usually have lower access to such services due to remoteness and socio-economic dynamics of areas like informal settlements as well as squatter communities. With built-in negative pressure equipment to prevent the spread of infections, these containers are designed to reduce the risk of infection to healthcare workers to the greatest extent possible.

I am very pleased that this project will help to improve the health and medical infrastructure in Fiji.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Japan established diplomatic relations with Fiji in 1970, shortly after Fiji's independence. I am very pleased that today Fiji is one of Japan's closest partners in the Pacific region. 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. Japan has consistently provided assistance to the priority areas of the Fiji Government.

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 improve the quality of health and medical services in Fiji as well as further strengthen the friendship between the Governments and peoples of Japan and Fiji.

Vinaka Vakalevu, Dhanyavaadh, Thank you and Arigato Gozaimasu.

**END**