
**Speech by Mr. TANAKA Kenichiro, Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission,
Embassy of Japan, at the Signing of Exchange of Notes for the Procurement of Oil
Spill Equipment**

11:00, Friday, 06 October 2023, Ministry of Works and Transport Conference Room,
Suva

Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau, Minister for Public Works, Transport and
Meteorological Services,

Mr. Taitusi Vakadravuyaca, Permanent Secretary for Public Works,
Transport and Meteorological Services,

Mr. Simon Gravenall, Chief Executive Officer for Maritime Safety
Authority of Fiji,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Bula vinaka, Good Morning and Ohao Gozaimasu

May I first extend a big vinaka vakalevu to the Ministry for
hosting today's signing ceremony and for the warm reception
accorded to me and my colleagues. At the outset, I would like to
congratulate the Fiji Water Flying Fijians for their outstanding
performance in this year's Rugby World Cup so far. I wish them
well in their last pool match against Portugal next Monday....Toso
Viti Toso!

Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Government and people of Japan, I am honoured to be here today for this auspicious occasion as we formalise Japan's commitment for the procurement of Oil Spill Prevention Equipment worth approximately \$1.6 million Fiji dollars, equivalent to 100 million Japanese Yen through Japan's Economic and Social Development Program. This is the first Japanese grant assistance provided to the Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji.

For Pacific Island Countries, the ocean has been our source of life. It has provided us with food, income for our fisheries communities and facilitated international trade. We simply cannot ignore the importance of the ocean in our everyday lives. It is for this reason that Japan maintains the view that preserving and maintaining a healthy ocean is an important pillar to promote sustainable socio-economic development.

Today, I am pleased to announce that the Marine Safety Authority of Fiji through this funding will be receiving the oil spill equipment and related accessories including towing its vehicles.

We are very mindful that the items procured are aligned to Fiji's regulatory standards and most importantly it meets the operational requirements of MSAF. For this reason, our team will work closely with MSAF and the relevant stakeholders to ensure the successful delivery of this important project. I understand that the new oil spill equipment will be utilised in Levuka, Labasa, Lautoka and Suva ports to support one of MSAF's mandated responsibilities which is protect Fiji's marine environment. The devastating impact of an oil spill to the marine environment is catastrophic and will have long-term consequences to the marine ecosystems and consequently it will affect the communities who depend on the ocean for food and income. The project aims to support MSAF's core responsibilities to minimise the impact such incidents in the future.

I am very pleased to note that this project aligns to Fiji's National Development plan that promotes safe, efficient, affordable, environmentally sound, and sustainable inter-island transportation services and ensures environmental concerns such as risk of oil spills, waste discharge and damage to Fiji's marine

ecosystem is properly regulated, enforced, and prevented.

It further strengthens the Government of Japan's new vision for a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP) as announced by Prime Minister KISHIDA earlier this year, under Pillar 4 which specifically promotes Blue Economy for Fisheries, in an Indo-Pacific Way. Such alignment in development priorities is key to Japan's support for this project.

Japan is pleased to continue working with the Government of Fiji and provide consistent support to help address priority areas of the Government of Fiji and promote Fiji's development aspirations through this grant.

Together with this assistance to MSAF, Japan has extended its support to various sectors including Education, Infrastructure development, Water, Border Security and Fiji's COVID-19 response and recovery worth over Four Hundred and Fourteen Million Fiji Dollars (FJD\$414M) to the Government and the people of Fiji over the last two years.

I am also pleased to note that our existing project with the

Ministry, namely, the reconstruction of Tamavua-i-wai bridge worth approximately Sixty Million Fijian Dollars (FJ\$60M) is progressing well and I encourage the Ministry of Transport, FRA and JICA to continue to work together to ensure the successful completion of this important project.

Lastly, ladies and gentlemen, I take this opportunity to again congratulate MSAF for today's signing and I conclude with confidence that this project will further enhance the friendship shared between the Governments and people of Japan and Fiji.

Vinaka Vakalevu.

END