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**Address by: His Excellency, Mr. Rokuichiro MICHII, Ambassador  
of Japan, at the Handover Ceremony for The Project for Naceva District  
School**

**at 2.00pm on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2024 – Naceva, Kadavu Island**

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**Honourable Lenora Qereqeretabua, Deputy Speaker & Assistant  
Minister for Foreign Affairs,**

**Her Excellency Ms. Charlotte Darlow, New Zealand High  
Commissioner,**

**Ms. Mary Blakelock, Head of Naceva District School,  
**Government Officials, Parents, Teachers, and Students,****

**Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Bula Vinaka, Konichiwa and Good Afternoon.**

**Firstly, I wish to convey my sincere appreciation to the ‘Tui Naceva’,  
Naceva District School and the Naceva Community for the warm  
hospitality extended to us as well as for organizing this auspicious  
occasion today. I further express my gratitude to all of you for the  
traditional protocols and for making us feel at home with your**

friendliness since our arrival here. I also extend my warm greetings to the Honourable Deputy Speaker and Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs as well as to Her Excellency the New Zealand High Commissioner to Fiji for your gracious presence at this event despite your busy schedules.

Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of the people of Japan, it is my honour to handover the newly constructed and furnished classroom facilities worth three hundred and seventy- eight thousand, Fiji dollars (\$377,764.81) to Naceva District School. I am pleased to say that the Government of Japan provided funding for this project through its Grassroots Grant Assistance Projects Programme or the GGP Programme.

The Governments of Japan and Fiji are committed to providing facilities and necessary assistance which help create an environment conducive to the delivery of quality education. As Japan's Ambassador to Fiji, I am here to closely work with the Fijian grassroots communities right up to my counterparts in the

**Fijian Government and with all stakeholders to enhance Japan-Fiji relations, support sustainable development of Fiji and help strengthen Fiji's position as the hub of the region.**

**Over the past 10 years, through the GGP Programme, Japan has provided funding for assistance in areas of Education, Health, Water, Public Infrastructure and Fisheries. To date, we have implemented 423 GGP projects which are collectively worth approximately USD \$32 million, equivalent to Sixty Four Million Fiji Dollars. I am happy to see that through this GGP project we have successfully progressed from the point of recognizing that there is a *“need of a new classroom”* to its fruitful completion which symbolizes prosperity, new and better learning opportunities as well as increased personalized attention for our students.**

**Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the support of Her Excellency the New Zealand High Commissioner and the New Zealand Government's valuable funding for procurement of solar energy equipment for the school.**

**Your support and our joint cooperation exemplifies how donor agencies and development partners can prioritize areas of assistance, pool resources and with the recognition that education is the most important pillar of nation building, work in solidarity towards the common goal of supporting the Education Sector.**

**I also extend my sincere appreciation to the Government of Fiji for putting great emphasis on the development of the Education Sector. The 2024-25 National Budget allocation for the Education Ministry as well as the government initiatives, grants assistance programs and subsidies for the Education Sector speak volumes of the Government's special emphasis on education in Fiji.**

**To the teachers and parents, your unwavering devotion and support plays a pivotal role in the development of our students and in giving them the right tools to be resilient. The guidance and support of teachers and parents will pave the way for today's youth and students to become leaders of tomorrow and the future.**

**Lastly, to the students of Naceva, this classroom will be your gateway to the world. With the guidance from your Parents and Teachers, this will be your steppingstone to bring positive change and leadership to your Village and Vanua. The government, the teachers, your parents and development partners such as us, are doing our part to bring the best opportunities to you. The handing over of new facilities today is tangible result of our efforts. I urge you to try your best at your studies, at sports as well as at arts and music. Such efforts will make your education balanced and you will probably discover that you are naturally good at one of the subjects, sport or art. This way you can hone your academic skills as well as develop your special talents which will help you become successful in the future.**

**At this juncture, it gives me great joy to highlight that since 2020, we have been actively engaged with the people of Kadavu through funding GGP projects for the upgrading of six schools on this island which are collectively worth approximately Four Million Fiji Dollars (FJD4m). Furthermore, earlier this month, a Japanese university**

**professor was dispatched to Kadavu for several days as a JICA Expert to carry out relevant research and surveys under a broader project titled; “Disaster Risk Reduction of Widespread Volcanic Hazards in Southwest Pacific Countries”. I am sure that all of you present here are happy just like me to see that this cooperation is not only an expansion of the scope of our assistance to Kadavu but it is quite timely, given the unprecedented volcanic eruption in Tonga, terrifyingly heard and felt in Fiji not long ago.**

**I thank all the tireless and hard-working individuals and stakeholders that have made it possible to see this project come to reality. Let this classroom become a beacon of hope for the future generations to come. I conclude with confidence that this project not only serves to enhance education in Fiji but also strengthens friendship between the Governments and peoples of Japan and Fiji, with the people of Naceva being at the centre stage of this newest avenue of ascending Japan-Fiji relations.**

**VINAKA VAKALEVU, ARIGATO GOZAIMAS and THANK YOU.**

**ENDS.**