
Statement by H.E. Mr. Rokuichiro MICHII, Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Fiji, At the Handing over Ceremony for the “The Project for Procurement of Boat with Outboard Engines for Tamusua Village” to Buasali Development Committee, 22 November 2024, at 9:00 am

Honourable. Alitia Bainivalu, Minister for Fisheries & Forests,

Honourable Semi Koroilavesau, Opposition Member of Parliament and Former Minister for Fisheries,

Mr. Apolosi Lewaqai, Commissioner Western, Government Officials,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Yadra/Bula Vinaka, Good Morning and Ohayo Gozaimasu .

Firstly, I would like to convey my appreciation to Tamusua Village for the warm hospitality extended to us, as well as for organizing this auspicious occasion today. I also, extend my sincere gratitude to Honourable Minister Bainivalu, Honourable Semi Koroilavesau, Opposition Member of

Parliament and former Minister for Fisheries, and Mr. Apolosi Lewaqai, the Commissioner Western for your gracious presence at this event along with the rest of the community here.

This is indeed an auspicious occasion as the difficulties faced by Tamusua villagers in selling their catch and generating livelihoods as well as their challenges in accessing emergency transportation will be a thing of the past. Over the past few years, Tamusua Village had no proper transportation, especially when delivering their catch which consists of a variety of seafood, to the main market in Lautoka and when transporting people during emergencies. We all know that fish and other seafood fetch the top dollar when it is in the freshest condition hence reliable transportation is needed to access the major markets. The need of a boat in

such circumstances has a direct bearing on the income generating ability and socio-economic development of the people here. Furthermore, the lack of emergency transportation significantly raises the risk to life and limb for the Tamusua villagers.

Recognizing the difficulties faced by the village and the importance of improving livelihoods, we decided to provide funding for the procurement of a new boat with two outboard engines.

Today, on behalf of the Government and people of Japan, it is my great honour to hand over a new ten metre boat with 2 outboard engines to Tamusua Village worth approximately Two hundred and sixteen Thousand Fijian dollars (FJ\$ 215,728.75).

This project has been implemented by the Government of Japan through its Grassroots Grant Assistance Projects Program or the GGP. Since 1990, Japan has funded 423 GGP projects for the sustainable development of Fiji, which are collectively worth more than 32 million US dollars.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude for the significant support from the Honourable Minister Bainivalu and her team as well as the Tamusua village community towards the successful completion of this project.

I wish to further acknowledge the support extended by the Honourable Minister Bainivalu towards strengthening fisheries cooperation with Japan and jointly enhancing the

sustainable development of Fiji's Fisheries Sector. Earlier this year, in the month of September, Honourable Minister Bainivalu and I signed the Exchange of Notes and formalized "The Project for Provision of Fishery Research Vessel and Ice-Making Machines to the Ministry of Fisheries". I am very pleased to say that the Government of Japan will be providing funding worth approximately \$10.6 Million Fijian Dollars for this project. I reiterate my sincere gratitude for all the cooperation extended by the Honourable Minister Bainivalu and look forward to working in close partnership with her towards practically enhancing Japan-Fiji Fisheries Cooperation in the future.)

As the Ambassador of Japan, I am honoured to reaffirm that Japan is committed to providing continued assistance for Fiji's sustainable development for many years to come. I

intend to work to the best of my ability with my Fijian colleagues and counterparts to jointly elevate the Japan – Fiji relations to a higher level. , It gives me great joy to see that this project is in line with the Fiji Government’s development objectives in leaving no one behind which is further aligned to SDG 14, namely with Target 14.7; “increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States, through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism”.

To the ‘Vanua’ (iTaukei equivalent of people) of Tamusua Village, I am very pleased to say that Japan’s strong commitment towards improving livelihoods in your village and wider Fiji formed the basis for our decision to provide funding for this project which holds great potential for enhancing

livelihoods and socio-economic development of your communities.

I urge you and all the stakeholders to please take good care of the new boat and carry out timely maintenance, so that it serves the daily lives of the people of Tamusua Village for many years to come.

I conclude with confidence that this project will help to meaningfully brighten up the future of this village as well as further strengthen friendship between the Governments and peoples of Japan and Fiji through our newly established bond with the people of Tamusua, who are the custodians of the ivory white beaches, pristine reefs and lagoons and beautiful landscapes, here in the Yasawa Islands.

Vinaka Vakalevu, Thank You and Arigato Gozaimasu.

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