
**Address by: His Excellency, Mr. Rokuichiro MICHII, Ambassador of Japan, at the
Handover Ceremony for the Construction of Tilapia Fishpond for Nasautoka Village.
at 11.30 am on 17th January 2025**

Na Vanua Nasautoka - "Turaga Sau na Vunivalu"

The Honourable Alitia Bainivalu, Minister for Fisheries & Forests,

Government Officials,

Members of Nasautoka Community,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bula Vinaka, Konichiwa and **HAPPY NEW YEAR!!**

Firstly, I wish to convey my sincere appreciation to the "Turaga Sau na Vunivalu" Vanua Nasautoka for the warm hospitality extended to us as well as for organizing this auspicious occasion. 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 would also like to extend warm greetings to the Honourable Alitia Bainivalu, Minister for Fisheries and Forests, for your gracious presence here this morning despite your busy schedule and having returned from a business trip just yesterday from Kadavu.

Ladies and Gentlemen, today on behalf of the Government and people of Japan, it is my great honor to handover the successfully completed Tilapia Fishpond project to you, the people of Nasautoka. I am pleased to say that the Government of Japan provided funding worth Forty Seven Thousand Fiji Dollars (FJD \$47,068) for this project which is implemented under its Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects Program or the GGP Program, in partnership with the Ministry of

Fisheries aimed at addressing food security challenges and promoting grassroots development in your Nasautoka community.

It gives me great joy to highlight that since 1990, the GGP Program has been extensively implemented in key sectors of Fiji such as public infrastructure, fisheries, health, education, climate change, disaster management, agriculture, and water supply. To date, we have implemented 423 GGP projects, which are collectively worth approximately Thirty-Two Million US Dollars (USD \$32 million), equivalent to sixty-four million Fiji dollars (FJD64m).

Ladies and Gentlemen, today, we celebrate not just the completion of this project, but the beginning of a new chapter in the livelihoods of the Nasautoka community. The Tilapia Fishponds represent more than just a source of sustainable food; they embody our commitment to empower this community to generate alternative livelihoods, strengthen self-reliance and boost economic well-being towards improving the daily lives of the people here. By increasing local tilapia production, we are ensuring a steady supply of nutritious protein for families in this community and creating additional income earning opportunities for local farmers, / fishermen and entrepreneurs.

As we hand over the Tilapia Fishponds to you, the members of the Nasautoka community, we trust that you will continue to nurture and further develop this initiative. Let us work together to ensure its success, for the benefit of our present and future generations. The responsibility now lies with you to make the most of this opportunity and to build a brighter, more sustainable future for your community.

I conclude with confidence that this project will serve towards strengthening friendship between the Governments and peoples of Fiji and Japan, with the Honorable Minister for Fisheries and the people of Nasautoka at the center stage of this newest avenue of ascending Fiji-Japan relations.

VINAKA VAKALEVU, ARIGATO GOZAIMAS and THANK YOU.

The End.