
**Address by: His Excellency, Mr. Rokuichiro MICHII, Ambassador of Japan, at the
(First Pouring Ceremony.....Ground Breaking Ceremony??) for the Construction of
Footbridge in Saliadrau Village.
at 10 am on 8th February 2025**

ヴァヌア of ナモシ - トウランガ ナ トウイ ナ モ シ
Vanua of Namosi - "Turaga na Tui Namosi"

サキアシ デイトカ
The Honourable Sakiasi Ditoka, Minister for Rural and
Maritime Development and Disaster Management,

イソア タレマインブア
Mr. Isoa Talemaibua, Permanent Secretary for Rural and
Maritime Development and Disaster Management ,

チョセファ ナ ブ ク
Mr. Josefa Navuku, Commissioner Central,

ウライア ナ イ ニ マ
Mr. Uraia Nainima, Commissioner Northen,

アポロシサ レワンガイ
Mr. Apolosi Lewaqai, Commissioner Western.

ビタレ バ ロ
Mr. Vitale Varo, Commissioner Eastern,

Mr. Richard Chow, Director of Silverstone PTE Limited,

Members of Saliadrau Community,

Government Officials, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and

Gentlemen,

Bula Vinaka, Good Morning and Konichiwa.

Firstly, I wish to convey my sincere appreciation to the “Turaga na Tui Namosi” Vanua of Namosi 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 Honourable Minister Ditoka, for his gracious presence here this morning despite his demanding schedule.

Ladies and Gentlemen, today on behalf of the Government and people of Japan, it is my great honor to join you all in the (first pouring..... groundbreaking ceremony) of the “Project for Construction of Footbridge for Saliadrau Village”. This occasion exemplifies Japan’s commitment to the sustainable development of Fiji, which includes prioritizing support for the growth and prosperity of rural and remote communities. I am pleased to say that the Government of Japan provided funding worth Two Hundred Forty Four Thousand Fiji Dollars (FJD \$244,014) for this project which is implemented under

its Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects Program or the GGP Program, in partnership with Fiji's Ministry of for Rural and Maritime Development aimed at improving the everyday commute and accessibility of Saliadrau villagers to the outside world which will tangibly enhance the daily lives of this 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, health, education, fisheries, 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 commencement of construction for the footbridge, but the beginning of a new chapter devoid of the dangers and risks associated with river crossing, in the livelihoods of the Saliadrau community. The people of Saliadrau through the regional Commissioner office, requested the Japanese

Embassy for funding assistance for construction of the footbridge. Upon seeing the determination by Saliadrau villagers towards seeking safety and security in their daily commute, improving their livelihoods, education and efforts to better access medical treatment when needed as well as in sympathizing with the community based on the difficulties they faced in their daily lives, the Government of Japan committed to provide assistance for construction of this footbridge. It gives me great joy to see that the implementation of this project has significant support from the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and the Office of the Commissioner Central which surely adds greater confidence and raises the spirit of goodwill amongst all the stakeholders.

On that note, I would like to address the timeline of challenges faced by our team at the Embassy and the Ministry of Rural and Maritime on the delay of implementing the activities. In 2023, the project site was shifted from the original siter due to the high risk of flooding and soil erosion. To address this, the team scope and constructed a road to allow accessibility of contractors to the new project site.

Moreover, due to the limited resources such as 30mm cable wire and the extreme cost of procurement from the external markets. This supply chain issue, the team opt to tender the scope of work for the construction of the New SALIADRAU FOOT BRIDGE. At this moment I would like to take a special appreciation to the Commissioner Central & his team, the Ministry of Rural and Maritime team. Without your hard work and commitment this project has materialized today.

Currently, the children of the community risk their lives and limbs when crossing the river to attend school on a daily basis and the same hazard is faced by the wider community whenever they travel out of the village in their daily lives. While urging all the stakeholders of the project to ensure the timely and successful completion of this project, I am sure the new footbridge will guarantee greater safety and security to the lives and livelihoods of people using the footbridge bringing peace of mind and reducing anxiety in the entire community for many years to come.

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 Ditoka and the people of Saliadrau at the center stage of this newest avenue of ascending Fiji-Japan relations.

VINAKA VAKALEVU, ARIGATO GOZAIMASU and THANK YOU.

The End.