

Vanua Kabuna na Turaga Bale na Tui Kaba na Vunivalu
The Honourable. Aseri Radrodro, Minister for Education,
Ministry of Public Works Representative (TBC)
Mr. Ilaitia Ratuwere, Head of School,
Senior Government Officers,
Parents, Teachers, and Students,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a profound honour to be here today at Bau District School to celebrate the completion of these much-needed new facilities. My sincere gratitude goes to the school administration, parents, teachers, and the Honourable Minister Radrodro for your warm welcome and unwavering support throughout this project. We also appreciate your understanding regarding the slight adjustment to the schedule.

This occasion marks a significant milestone in the enduring friendship between Fiji and Japan. Today, we celebrate the official handover of a newly constructed classroom building, dormitory, and fully equipped infirmary—all furnished to provide a comfortable and conducive learning environment.

This was made possible through a generous grant of FJ\$308,480 from the Government of Japan.

Bau District School serves a wide area, including Bau Island, Viwa Island, Lasakau, Soso, Nakoroivau, Naiqiriqirilali, and Taro Settlement. More than 40 students from these surrounding communities commute by boat, starting as early as 7 a.m. each day. With the completion of the new dormitory, half of these students will now be able to stay at the new dormitory, eliminating the need for daily boat travel. Additionally, the school previously faced overcrowding due to limited classroom space. The new classrooms, now in use, have effectively resolved this issue.

The construction of these new facilities directly addresses these challenges. This initiative reflects Japan's continued commitment to supporting Fiji's education sector and aligns perfectly with our Grassroots Grant Assistance Programme (GGP). Since its inception in 1990, the GGP has funded over 423 projects across Fiji, contributing more than US\$32 million to sustainable development.

The successful completion of this project is a testament to the collaborative spirit and dedication of all stakeholders. We are immensely grateful for the invaluable support from the Fijian Government—particularly the Ministries of Education and Public Works—and the tireless efforts of Bau District School’s staff and community. While we encountered some challenges and delays along the way, the collective commitment of everyone involved ensured we reached this momentous occasion.

To the students of Bau District School: These new facilities represent more than just bricks and mortar—they represent a brighter future. Embrace the opportunities before you. Work diligently, pursue your goals with unwavering determination, and use your education to build a better tomorrow for yourselves, your families, your community, and Fiji.

Finally, let us all pledge to maintain these valuable resources. By working together, we can ensure these facilities continue to serve the children and aspiring scholars of this community for generations to come. This project stands as a powerful symbol of the enduring friendship between Fiji and Japan—a

friendship built on mutual respect and a shared commitment to progress and prosperity.

Vinaka Vakalevu, Thank You and Arigato Gozaimasu.

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