

Fiji National Day Special

Mutual respect marks bilateral relationship

ISIKELI ULUINAIRAI MATAITOGA
AMBASSADOR OF FIJI



On the special occasion of the Republic of Fiji's 50th anniversary of independence, it is with great pleasure and honor that I extend on behalf of H.E the President of the Republic of Fiji,

retired Maj. Gen. Jioji Konusi Konrote, the Honorable Prime Minister Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, the government and people of Fiji, warm greetings to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako and the members of the imperial household. I also extend greetings to the government of Japan, the honorable Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and the people of this great nation.

To all Fiji nationals and friends of Fiji in Japan, I extend a big *bula vinaka* (hello) and best wishes of good health and much happiness.

Fiji-Japan bilateral relations are underpinned by our shared belief in the rule of law, democratic principles, respect for sovereign rights of states and multilateralism under the auspices of the United Nations.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and the Republic of Fiji, as well as our 50th independence anniversary. On this historic occasion, we can look back with pride because of closer bilateral relations between Fiji and Japan. Japanese development assistance to Fiji over the last 50 years has been directly responsible for much of the infrastructure development that today underpins Fiji's

socioeconomic development and makes it what it is today. In times of natural disaster rehabilitation, Japanese development assistance has always been available for rebuilding Fijian lives destroyed and building back better infrastructure to support Fiji's economic resilience.

The positive and close bilateral relations between our two countries have seen an increase in high-level visits between our respective leaders and people-to-people exchanges.

Japanese assistance toward the development of Fiji's skilled workforce and capacity development in graduate and postgraduate studies in Japanese universities and other higher-level institutes of learning has significantly contributed to Fiji's socioeconomic sustainable development achievements. For all this assistance, Fiji is deeply grateful to Japan for its support and understanding.

In the current coronavirus pandemic era, Japanese government assistance to Fiji has been early and focused on meeting the identified priorities of the Fijian government and people.

Fiji is committed to deepening relations through high-level engagements, particularly in key areas focusing on achieving the U.N.'s 2030 sustainable development goals. People-to-people exchanges, one of the pillars of this cordial relationship, have surged in recent years, increasing interest from regional Japan to establish sister-school relations and sports exchanges. We acknowledge Fiji's growing diplomatic footprint in Japan owing to the excellent work of our honorary consuls.

Fiji expresses its deep gratitude to Japan's government for its continuous support through its development assistance over the last 50 years. Japan remains one of Fiji's major development partners,

through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Through JICA, Japan's plentiful and generous support is evident in the form of loans, technical cooperation and volunteer programs in diverse areas such as infrastructure, maritime and fisheries, climate change, education and health.

We acknowledge the positive impact Japanese volunteers have had on the Fijian people's lives in the last 50 years. The volunteers' work and contributions have touched the lives of countless Fijians, who have benefited from their technical expertise and support.

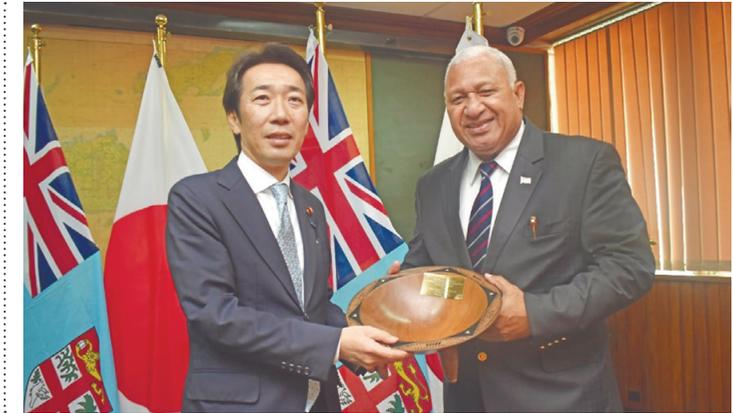
Technical cooperation is also ongoing in meteorology, electricity, water supply, disaster risk reduction, shipping and waste management. Fijian students are also studying under the Japanese government scholarship program. Fiji is grateful to the government of Japan for such enduring support, especially in our times of greatest need.

May I extend our sincere appreciation to the government and people of Japan for steadfast cooperation, to all our corporate sponsors, the honorary consulates of

Fiji in Japan for their support and genuine commitment to promoting goodwill between Japan and Fiji.

May God bless Fiji-Japan relations.

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.



Fiji Prime Minister, the Hon. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, receives then-Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, the Hon. Norihiro Nakayama, at his office in Suva.
GOVERNMENT OF FIJI



Congratulations
*to the People of
the Republic of Fiji
on the 50th Anniversary of
Their Independence*



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