

Fiji National Day Special

A renewed, inclusive, united nation

FILIMONE WAQABACA
AMBASSADOR OF FIJI



It is with great pleasure and honor on this memorable occasion that I extend, on behalf of H.E. President of the Republic of Fiji Ratu Wiliame Maivalili Katonivere, the government and

the people of Fiji, warm greetings to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, members of the imperial household, as well as the government of Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and the people of Japan. I also extend warm greetings and *bula vinaka* (hello) to all Fijians and friends of Fiji in Japan.

The government and people of Fiji are grateful for the special bond that underlies the relationship with Japan since establishing diplomatic relations 52 years ago. This relationship becomes even more crucial in the face of the new challenges and

complexities that each year brings.

Fiji-Japan relations continue to soar to new heights every year. This was further solidified following high-level political exchanges between our countries, including recent informal talks between Prime Minister Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama and Kishida on Aug. 2 in the United States this year.

Japan continues to be Fiji's vital development partner. Its overseas development assistance program, channeled through the Japan International Cooperation Agency, provides valuable support for Fiji's human and physical resources, including valuable humanitarian assistance in times of natural disasters. Since 1983, JICA has dispatched 740 volunteers to Fiji through the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers program.

People-to-people exchanges, another major pillar of Fiji-Japan relations, continue to strengthen every year. This is underpinned by the increasing interest from, and exchanges with, various regions of Japan, coupled with Fiji's very active honorary consuls in those regions. Education and sports exchanges, as well as public diplomacy, are now resuming and are expected to further

shape and deepen our bilateral ties.

Fiji's commitment as a good global citizen is manifested through its ongoing engagement with the United Nations and the leading role it continues to play in various international forums. Fiji is the first Pacific Island country that has been invited to be part of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework. We also continue to advocate for the Blue Pacific's aspirations, the fight against global warming, the safeguarding of the health of our oceans, and the adoption of an inclusive and caring approach to all parties concerned to ensure that no one is left behind. We have also legislated a net-zero commitment by 2050 through the Climate Change Act that will make us more energy-secure, protect us from energy-price shocks, and provide us with cleaner air, better health and better jobs.

With our partners' support, we achieved the nearly universal COVID-19 vaccination of our adult population. Fiji reopened its borders in December, and we have since welcomed hundreds of thousands of visitors and earned back part of our tourism revenue. More of our people are working again,



Prime Minister Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama poses with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida during informal talks in the United States on Aug. 2.

EMBASSY OF FIJI

and we are set for record-breaking double-digit growth in the Fijian economy this year.

May I extend our sincere appreciation to all our corporate sponsors, Fiji's honorary consular corps in Japan, the Japan-Fiji Parliamentary Friendship League, friends of Fiji in Japan and members of the Fijian community for their continued support and commitment to the promotion of goodwill between Japan and Fiji.

Finally, my sincere gratitude to The Japan Times for allowing us this tremendous opportunity to celebrate Fiji's 52nd anniversary of independence with its readers.

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.

Congratulations to the People of the Republic of Fiji on the Anniversary of Their Independence



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