

# Fiji National Day Special

## Progressing together, leaving no Fijians behind

**ISIKELI ULUINAIRAI MATAITOGA**  
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, Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Jioji Konrote, the government and

people of Fiji, warm greetings to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito, Empress Michiko and the members of the Imperial household, as well as to the government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and people of this great nation, Japan. I also extend warm greetings and *bula vinaka* to all Fijians and Friends of Fiji in Japan.

### Bilateral relations

The government and people of Fiji are grateful for the special bond that under-

lies its relationship with Japan since establishing diplomatic relations 48 years ago. This relationship becomes even more crucial in the face of the new challenges and complexities that each year brings.

The Fiji-Japan bilateral relations continue to soar to new heights every year. This was further solidified following high-level political exchanges between our two countries, including a meeting between Japan's prime minister and Prime Minister Josaia V. Bainimarama in May this year.

The relationship is expected to expand into new areas of cooperation and partnership, particularly covering climate change action, disaster risk reduction, U.N. peacekeeping, oceans and sea policy development and areas related to the U.N.'s 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Japan continues to be a vital development partner. Its official development assistance (ODA) program, channeled through the Japan International Cooper-

ation Agency provides valuable support for Fiji's human and physical resources, including valuable humanitarian assistance in times of natural disasters. This ODA program, anchored on Japan's vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific strategy, aims to provide an environment that is conducive to global peace and stability, through cooperation and inclusive quality growth for all its partners.

People-to-people exchanges, another major pillar of the Fiji-Japan relations, continue to strengthen every year. This is underpinned by the increasing interest from and exchanges with regions of Japan, coupled with the Fiji's very active honorary consuls in those regions. Sports exchanges and public diplomacy are now taking place regularly and are expected to shape and deepen our bilateral ties. Going forward, the global sporting events hosted by Japan, including the 2019 Rugby World Cup and the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, look set to take these exchanges and relationship to another level.

### Progressing together

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. Despite approaching the end of Fiji's presidency of the 23rd annual Conference of the Parties to the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Fiji will continue to advocate for the Blue Pacific's aspirations, that of making the fight against global warming and safeguarding the health of our oceans, the highest of priorities, and adopting an inclusive and caring approach to all parties concerned, to ensure that no one is left behind.

### Appreciation

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 contin-



Mana Island is one of the 27 islands that make up the Mamanuca archipelago to the west of Nadi, the third-largest city in Fiji. The archipelago's islands are popular tourist destinations. EMBASSY OF FIJI

ued 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 48th 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.*



Top: Prime Minister Josaia V. Bainimarama and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe attend a news conference after their meeting at the Prime Minister's Office in Tokyo on May 16. Above: A variety of Fijian beers are enjoyed by local residents and tourists. EMBASSY OF FIJI

*Congratulations  
to the People of  
the Republic of Fiji  
on the 48th Anniversary  
of Their Independence*



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