

**Commodore J. V. Bainimarama, CF(Mil), OSt.J, MSD, jssc, psc**

**Prime Minister of Fiji and Minister for Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics, the Public Service, People’s Charter and Change and Progress, Information, iTaukei Affairs, Sugar Industry and Lands and Mineral Resources**

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**SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF THE NEW TAVEUNI CORRECTIONS CENTRE \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Waitavala Thurs. 14th Mar., 2013
TAVEUNI 1500 Hours**

The Divisional Commissioner Northern;

Traditional Leaders of the Vanua of Cakaudrove & Taveuni;

Members of the Business Community;

Commissioner of Corrections and your Staff;

Invited Guests.

Ni sa bula vinaka mai.

Thank you for the Guard of Honour accorded to me. Thank you also for the invitation to open this facility. I am indeed honoured to officiate at this occasion, even though it has taken over two years to complete.

Today marks a new era in Corrections work on Taveuni. It also marks the close of a chapter that was initiated in 1994. That chapter saw the then 10-men Police holding cells for remand prisoners converted into prison cell blocks for the Fiji Prison Service.

Likewise, the former Police Station was also converted into the Prisons Administrative Office to oversee the inmates. 10 Officers were assigned to Taveuni to manage the new *“Prison”.* Under that arrangement, 15 acres of land was allocated for their use for farming. This had been the situation for almost two decades.

However, over the years, the number of people from Taveuni in our Corrections institutions has continued to increase.

There has also been an increase in the number of crimes on Taveuni with various degrees of severity. Further, Taveuni has immense tracts of unutilized land that could be developed to supply the other institutions in Viti Levu and Vanua Levu.

With the island playing the lead role in dalo exports, it provides the ideal extension of the Fiji Corrections Service commercialization programme currently centred in Naboro.

Now, with a number of resorts on and around Taveuni, the development of commercial vegetable farming to supply these is a definite possibility on the Island.

Additionally, there has been severe over-crowding encountered within the other Corrections institutions in the country.

All these issues had provided the rationale for the push to expand the Corrections set-up in Taveuni; and capitalize on these positive elements.

As a consequence, discussions were held with traditional Leaders on the island and the Ministry of Lands for the expansion of the Corrections site.

The positive outcomes of those discussions in 2010 saw the beginning of what we now witness here today.

It is not easy to allocate major resources like land for the use of a Department like the Corrections Service. After all, they are supposed to look after the *“drags, the ill-disciplined and the outcasts”* of our society.

This facility is a testimony of the good heart, foresight and support of the traditional leaders for their own sons who will patronize this facility.

My Government will reciprocate this goodness by ensuring that all those who enter any Corrections Centre in the country will be provided all the necessary care, to change him or her into a responsible citizen upon release.

Vinaka vakalevu to all the Leaders for your support and goodwill.

At a total cost of $275,000, Taveuni today boasts one of the more modern Corrections facilities in the country. I would also like to commend the efforts of the contractor, Mr Taylor, for his excellent handiwork.

This new Facility has the capacity to accommodate 50 inmates, a five-fold increase from the original set-up. It will also need an extra 20 Officers to man the facility. Cabinet had already approved the staffing for this, last year.

The Centre comes with 22 acres for farm development. This would indeed bring to fruition the dreams that birthed the rationale for the development of this facility.

To the people of Taveuni, the Fiji Corrections Service would need your total support in all aspects of their operation here.

More particularly, support is needed in the rehabilitation programmes for all those that will be housed in this facility.

That they all change into responsible citizens for the betterment of our nation.

To that end, Distinguished Guests, I am honoured to declare the Taveuni Corrections Centre open.

May it in future produce many successful citizens of Fiji.

Vinaka vakalevu.

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