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**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 TELECENTRE AT TAILEVU NORTH COLLEGE

Tailevu North College **Wed. 6th Feb., 2013**

**TAILEVU 1300 Hours**

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**The Attorney General;**

**Distinguished Guests;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Ni sa bula and a very good morning to you all.

Vinaka vakalevu for your warm welcome.

Today, we open yet another of the Government’s Telecentres here in Tailevu.

My Government has promised a world of difference for ordinary Fijians.

We ARE delivering a world of difference for ordinary Fijians. We don’t just talk about providing services. We deliver.

We also want to empower ordinary Fijians, to give you the basic things you need to improve your lives and the lives of your families.

This includes better roads, better access to electricity and water and better access to telecommunications, which is why we are all here today.

My Government has brought about a telecommunications revolution in Fiji. We liberalised the Industry and introduced genuine competition for the first time.

That is why so many Fijians now enjoy the convenience of mobile telephones and cheaper calls. And we want that revolution to continue.

Today, we’re celebrating an important step forward. We’re giving ordinary Fijians in Tailevu access to all aspects of the telecommunications revolution that is transforming people’s lives the world over.

From today in Tailevu, this centre will provide free internet and data access for hundreds of people in the surrounding area.

It will be used by schoolchildren during school hours and by the rest of the community after hours and on weekends.

Many of you – the ordinary Fijians who are the backbone of our nation – have never had Internet access before.

Well today we have bridged that divide – the digital divide – at the Tailevu North College and given everyone in this area the opportunity to gain knowledge and access the same services.

To our schoolchildren here today, I say:

Make the most of this opportunity. Use the Internet to broaden your horizons. You can immediately be part of a bigger world, a world of knowledge and of contact with people in other places. You may come from a small place but it is One World and you are now fully part of it.

To your parents, I say: Encourage your children to be part of that wider world. And use this place for your own benefit. You are never too old to learn.

To Teachers:

This radically increases the number of teaching tools at your disposal. Use them to prepare our children for a life that is only as limited as their imagination.

To all of you:

This Centre will become a game changer in your daily lives. You can come here to type your CV or a letter. You can scan any document such as your birth certificate, save it on a computer and send it over the Internet without having to go to town to copy it. You can also get photocopies and documents printed here.

And you can get instant access – through web chat services such as Skype – to your loved ones in Fiji and overseas.

Imagine how much this means to Fijians with family members spread out all over the world.

There is someone here to help you so please don’t worry if it all sounds too hard. Like anything new, you will get used to it.

Before we started this program, Fiji lagged behind the rest of the world in accessing the latest telecommunications technology.

By the end of this year, 60-thousand more Fijians – including five thousand students – will have access to the Internet at more than 20 community Telecentres all over Fiji.

My Government is connecting Fijians to the world as part of its commitment to deliver services to ordinary people everywhere in Fiji.

They are no longer isolated, no longer starved of information.

The days of being isolated are fast drawing to a close and I urge you all to make the most of it.

I now have the greatest pleasure in declaring the Tailevu North College Telecentre open.

Vinaka vakalevu.

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