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**Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics, Public Service, Peoples Charter for Change and Progress, Information, iTaukei Affairs, Sugar Industry and Lands and Mineral Resources**

**Speech at the Opening of the Lomary Secondary School Telecentre**

**Lomary Secondary School Monday, June 10th, 2013
Serua/Namosi 11.00AM**

Attorney General and Minister for Communications;

Principal;

Teachers, Parents; and

Students.

Bula vinaka and a very good morning to you all.

It’s a great pleasure to be here today as we open yet another of the Government’s Telecentres at Lomary Secondary School. Vinaka vakalevu for your warm welcome.

I’m personally very proud of these Telecentres. They play a key role in my Government’s work to empower all Fijians by providing them access to the digital world. How? Because for the first time Telecentres provide free access to one of the great advances of the modern age, the Internet.

It wasn’t long ago that computers and the Internet were only for wealthier people in our town and cities. The opportunity to benefit from the information revolution was for them, not for ordinary people.

Not anymore. Every Fijian, no matter where they’re from or how much money they make, deserves equal access to the benefits of technology. That’s why my Government is bridging the divide – the digital divide – between the rich and poor, the urban and rural.

As a result of our reforms, more Fijians now have access to computers and the Internet than ever before.

We’ve liberalised the Industry and introduced genuine competition for the first time, making phone calls and texts cheaper.

We’re working towards 100% mobile coverage in Fiji by giving Government subsidies to companies that provide services in remote and rural areas.

We’re bringing 4G to Fiji, which will deliver super-fast Internet directly to people’s smart phones.

And every time I open another one of these Telecentres, hundreds – if not thousands – more Fijians are plugged into Fiji’s telecommunications revolution.

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 across Fiji.

10 of these Telecentres are already up and running. Close to 20,000 Fijians are now using these facilities to connect with friends and family in Fiji and abroad, to search for jobs, to do school work, to research, and to print, scan and photocopy. And some are using them just for fun, exploring new worlds!

Today, you will be joining their ranks. This Telecentre will give ordinary Fijians in Serua and Namosi access to all aspects of the telecommunications revolution that is transforming people’s lives the world over.

This Centre will provide free internet and data access for hundreds of people in the twelve (12) surrounding villages.

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

Please don’t worry if it all sounds too hard, there will be someone here to help you. 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. No longer. My Government is connecting Fijians to the world as part of its commitment to deliver services to ordinary people everywhere in Fiji.

As I keep saying wherever I go, service delivery is my Government’s most important task – to not just promise better access to things like electricity, clean water, affordable housing, education and transport, but to deliver it.

And soon, under a new constitution, many of these things won’t only be services dependent upon one Government’s policy or another’s, but rights accorded to every Fijian no matter what.

For the first time, the constitution will include permanent rights to housing and sanitation, reasonable access to transportation, adequate food, clean water, a just minimum wage, social security schemes, health and sanitation.

But perhaps most importantly of all, it will include a Fijian’s right to education at all levels: primary, secondary and university. This means that Government will have to do everything in its power to make education accessible to all and at all levels.

For ordinary Fijians, nothing is more important than having these rights protected in the new constitution. For my Government, nothing is more important than making sure these rights are upheld and these needs are provided for.

With those few words, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is now my pleasure to declare the Lomary Secondary School Telecentre open.

Vinaka Vakalevu. Thank you.