

**COMMODORE JOSAIA VOREQE BAINIMARAMA, CF(Mil), OStJ, MSD, jssc, psc**

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

**SPEECH AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE MODERNATISATION OF NADI AIRPORT TERMINAL**

**Nadi Airport Wed. 6th Nov.,2013**

**NADI 1400 House**

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**Turaga na Tui Nadi;**

**Turaga na Taukei Naua;**

**Turaga na Tui Sabeto;**

**The Attorney General & Minister for Civil Aviation &Public Enterprises.**

**The Chairman of Airports Fiji Limited,**

**Distinguished Guests,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Bula vinaka and a very good afternoon to you all.

(I don’t think I’ve ever had such a short distance to travel between appointments).

It’s been an exciting day at Nadi Airport – the arrival of our third and final Fiji Airways A330 and now this ceremony to mark the commencement of our program to modernise the airport facilities.

A common thread links both events – my Government’s determination to make the necessary investment to keep Fiji competitive.

It also reflects our vision to make Fiji a true hub. We are already one through my Government’s efforts to create a telecommunications hub. Our reform of our sea ports is already positioning us as a sea transportation hub. Now, we want to focus on creating ourselves as an aviation hub.

World-class planes demand a world-class airport. And visitors and the travelling public of Fiji now have the choice of flying on brand new state-of-the-art aircraft with the only airline to provide a genuine Fijian experience even before they leave home.

When they get here, we also want to give them a genuine Fijian welcome and departure in surroundings that are also world class.

They are valued guests to our country. We know they can choose to go elsewhere. But they have chosen Fiji. And as far as we’re concerned, they deserve the very best.

That means a quick and hassle-free airport experience in the most comfortable facilities we can provide. That means world-class performance at security and immigration. That means bars and restaurants that are also-world class. That means a shopping experience in our duty free stores that is enjoyable and offers the best value.

And when they leave the airport, a smooth passage to our major resorts on the new four-lane road.

This is not luxury for luxury’s sake. The experience of other countries is that providing a pleasant airport experience is the key to gaining repeat business and creating a lasting impression.

Excellence is good for business – the business of attracting more visitors to Fiji and making Fiji the holiday destination of choice. With all that means for the health of our economy and the welfare of every Fijian.

The work here is part of my Government’s modernisation program across the board – in infrastructure such as our ports, airports and roads, in telecommunications to connect Fijians with each other and the world, in our essential industries like sugar and mahogany. We not only want them to compete better but value add to ensure sustainable employment and prosperity for all Fijians.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I’ll be having a lot more to say about all of this in Friday’s Budget speech, in which I’ll be announcing a raft of measures to fulfill this vision.

In the meantime, the Chairman of the AFL is going to give you specific details of the scope of the work to be undertaken here in the coming weeks and months.

There have been some wonderful days at Nadi Airport since it was first established during World War Two.

This has been another wonderful day at our gateway to the world and one we will long remember.

Vinaka vakalevu. Thank you.

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