

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

**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 2013 Vodafone Fiji FACT Soccer Tournament**

**ANZ Stadium Sat. 15th June, 2013**

**LAUCALA BAY 1430 Hours**

Greetings to You

I would like to congratulate the Fiji Football Association for the 23rd edition of the Vodafone Fiji FACT.

On this note the contribution of the past officials and players must not be forgotten as it is through their hard work that this prestigious event has been maintained and proven to be a success over the years.

After the events of 1987, Fiji Football Association was looking for ways to revive football to meet their increased financial commitments.

In 1988 Fiji FA organised an open tournament in a bid to initiate football in Fiji and a proposal submitted in 1990 was thus adopted to welcome the Fiji FACT, ( Fiji Football Association Cup Tournament).

Finance is a huge factor in running of the daily affairs of a sporting organisation and I must complement Fiji Football Association for taking this initiative which will no doubt generate the much needed revenue.

Football has grown over the years in the country. It is now one of the major sport in the country and an event like the Vodafone Fiji FACT is a positive nation building tool which will bring forward people of various races and culture under one roof.

This year Fiji Football Association has adopted a new format which will see only eight top teams in the main competition. A premier competition will coincide at the two weekend event.

At the end of the day all this needs to contribute towards the further development of the sport. Our national football side is yet to qualify for a FIFA World Cup event and I believe the current Executive members are seriously working towards achieving this in the not too distant future.

That I believe should be our ultimate goal. One can have the best administration and facilities but that means nothing at the end of the day if the national side does not succeed. The success of a sporting association is gauged by the success of the national side.

Important regional playoffs are lined up for the next few years and an event like the Vodafone Fiji FACT should set a perfect platform to work from.

I would also like to thank Vodafone who continuously contribute towards the development of the various sports in the country.

Vodafone coming back to sponsor the first major football event of the 2013 season goes on to show they are committed.

I would like to congratulate Fiji Football Association once again and would like to assure that the government supports this initiative.

To the football fans and the participating teams enjoy the Vodafone Fiji FACT and may the best team win.