****

**Rear Admiral 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 OPENING OF ADDITIONS TO THE NADI MARKET AND WOMEN VENDORS ACCOMMODATION**

**Nadi Market Fri. 5th Sept., 2014**

**NADI 0900 Hours**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**The Attorney General and Acting Minister for Local Government,**

**The Special Administrator of Nadi,**

**Distinguished Guests,**

**My fellow Fijians.**

I’m delighted, as usual, to be to be back in the West and the thriving town of Nadi, where later this morning, wearing a different hat, I’ll be launching the manifesto of my political party, Fiji First.

Before that, I’m delighted as the head of the Government and your Prime Minister to open a facility here in Nadi that will mean a great deal to the people who will use it – those mothers, wives, sisters and daughters who are the backbone of our nation and who we are here to serve and care for.

I’m very proud of what we have been able to achieve for our women – not only the hundreds of self-help projects that we have started all over the country to empower them but the laws that we have brought in, or toughened, to protect them from violence and sexual assault.

Today, I am here to officially open not only a general upgrade of the Nadi market, including 300 new stalls, but a facility that will transform the lives of women from outside Nadi who travel here to sell their produce and crafts to raise money for their families.

This Women Vendor’s Accommodation will provide about 30 women from rural areas with a home away from home in Nadi – decent sleeping facilities, a place to eat and wash, and other amenities.

No longer do you have to sleep on the pavement next to your produce. No longer do you have to worry about the weather or your personal security. No longer do you have to struggle to find a toilet or to wash. All this is now available to you here. And you can sleep soundly at night knowing you are safe and your families at home can sleep soundly at night knowing that their precious wife, sister, mother or daughter is secure and protected.

Among the many things that my Government has done- – and we have made serving the people our most important priority – few have given me such pleasure than to see these facilities built here in Nadi, along with similar ones in Lautoka and other parts of Fiji.

All this is about empowering our people, encouraging those in outlying areas to grow more crops and make more handicrafts in the knowledge that they can come to Nadi to earn a living at this modern facility.

Here they can be properly sheltered from the sun and rain, conduct their business in a pleasant environment and, if they are women, to be secure if they need to stay the night.

And there’s a new incentive to sleep over, because we now have a night market to cater for workers in the tourism industry who don’t have time to do their shopping during normal hours.

I’m also very pleased to see that this new complex includes disable- friendly toilets, because empowering the disabled is an important part of my Government’s program. And nursing mothers now have a proper area where babies can be breastfed and put to sleep.

As Nadi grows and especially our tourism industry, so do the opportunities for many of you to take part in that growth because of the increasing demand for local produce. I want to see many more people take up the farming of cash crops, not only to benefit themselves and their families but to reduce Fiji’s dependence on imported food.

We have everything we need in Fiji to grow more and there is no reason not to be doing so. And I will be outlying more incentives for small- scale farmers shortly when I unveil the Fiji First manifesto.

Now, of course, here in Nadi, you have a wonderful new market from which to sell your produce and goods – one that is clean, hygienic and has a pleasant atmosphere.

Take good care of it and I wish you all the very best of luck in business and prosperity for yourselves and your families.

As I keep saying, there has never been a better time to be Fijian. But this all depends on us being united as a nation, caring for each other, loving each other, rather than listening to those who want to divide us.

As I also keep saying, my Government is in the business of growing the national cake so that every Fijian can get a better slice, rather than cutting off bigger pieces for some and leaving a smaller portion for others.

And in growing that cake, we are being very successful, as you will see in the coming days when our forecast economic growth rate for this year is upgraded yet again.

The figures are still being finalised but they tell a wonderful story of a country finally on the move.

Yes, my fellow Fijians, Fiji is on the move and every single one of you is part of it. I am determined to leave no-one behind. So look to the future and not the past when you make your choice on September 17. Because that future has never been brighter.

I now have great pleasure to declare the new Nadi Market and Women Vendors Accommodation open.

Vinaka vakalevu. Thank you.