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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**

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**SPEECH CLOSING THE SECOND SUMMIT OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS DEVELOPMENT FORUM (PIDF)**

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Sheraton Resort Friday June 20th, 2014

DENARAU 1315 Hours

**Your Excellency the President of Kiribati, Anote Tong,**

**Your Excellency the President of Nauru, Baron Waqa,**

**Your Excellency the Vice President of the Federated States**

 **of Micronesia, Alik Alik,**

**Your Excellency the Vice President of the Republic of Marshall**

 **Islands, Wilbur Heine,**

**Your Excellency the Prime Minister of Tonga , Lord Tuivakano,**

**Ministers and Distinguished Delegates from the Pacific,**

**Distinguished Representatives of Foreign Governments and International and Regional Organisations,**

**Your Excellencies, the a Ambassadors and High Commissioners, Members of the Diplomatic Corps,**

**Representatives from Civil Society Organisations and the Private**

 **Sector,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Bula vinaka and a very good afternoon to you all.

Once again our deliberations here in Nadi are drawing to a close, and it’s my task to formally close the Second Pacific Islands Development Forum.

I have to admit that after the success of the inaugural Forum last year – and the wonderful spirit that marked our first gathering – I wondered whether we could keep that spirit alive.

But I realise now that I needn’t have worried, judging from the feedback I’ve received from so many of you. This includes our Chief Guest, His Excellency the President of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who left here this morning to return home full of praise for what he’d witnessed even in his brief time with us.

Part of the attraction of the PIDF is still its novelty value, the fact that for the first time, we all have a genuinely Pacific gathering that is also genuinely inclusive – Governments, civil society organisations and business working together to forge a sustainable development path for us all.

We know now that this is an idea whose time has come but I must say that speaking personally, the real wonder is why it took so long. Why has it taken us so many years to officially recognise the need for this grand coalition, to recognise that Governments don’t have all the answers, don’t have a monopoly on wisdom?

Think about it. Where else can we all gather together under the one roof to exchange opinions and ideas?

Where else do we see Pacific leaders actually chairing sessions addressed by civil society and business representatives, as happened yesterday with the Presidents of Kiribati and Nauru?

Where else can we hear senior representatives from some of the world’s greatest nations outlining their own development ideas, as happened with the special envoys from China and Russia?

Where else can representatives of the grassroots in our societies benefit from the wisdom of a leader of the stature of our Chief Guest – His Excellency, the President of Indonesia?

Where else can the voices of ordinary Pacific Islanders - through their representatives – cut through and be heard?

Where else can we all gather together socially as equals – to make contacts and share ideas – to enjoy genuine Pacific hospitality and even hear the Fijian President sing?

All this has happened here in the past couple of days as, once again, this extraordinary dialogue strengthens our grand coalition and makes it more relevant.

It has been informative, it has been enjoyable and it has been important. Because it has drawn us closer to framing a viable and uniquely Pacific blueprint for the sustainable development of our region on land and at sea - Green Growth in a Blue World.

From the feedback I’ve received, most of you believe the contributions have been valuable and thought-provoking and I want to thank the various speakers for the effort they put into their presentations. You came and you were heard. And we all leave with fresh insights drawn from the ideas and experiences you shared.

I want to pay particular tribute to the Indonesian President for his keynote address. While pressing engagements at home have obliged him to leave before the formal closing, he left behind a lot for us to think about.

There were many highlights of his speech – his tour of the global horizon and his warning of a new cold war if nations don't put dialogue before confrontation and his explanation of Indonesia’s development philosophy, which is strikingly similar to our own.

But I was especially impressed by that portion of the President’s speech referring to climate change and the way in which Indonesia is responding to the challenge. Far from being reticent to embrace strong cuts in carbon emissions to reduce global warming – like its big neighbor to the South – Indonesia is committed to making significant cuts and also committed to paying the necessary price for doing so.

By 2020, the President said, Indonesia is prepared to cut carbon emissions by 26 per cent using its own resources and a whopping 41 per cent if it can get international assistance for such a program. This is bold and this is visionary. Because only with cuts of this magnitude can we in the Pacific hope to stave off the looming crisis we all face from rising sea levels caused by the global warming these carbon emissions are causing.

We deeply appreciate Indonesia’s strong commitment to broaden its cooperation with the PIDF countries to mitigate the impact of climate change. This includes the offer of various capacity building programs to Pacific nations, plus a financial contribution of US$20 million.

This is the act of a true friend who empathises with the crisis we all face and we are deeply grateful. We certainly hope that other countries follow Indonesia’s lead.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, as we bring the second summit of the PIDF to a close, I want to make an exciting announcement that Fiji hopes will have far reaching consequences for the way in which aid is delivered in our region in future.

Under the terms of a South-South Co-operation agreement, Japan is going to assist Fiji to establish regional training programs over a wide range of areas.

Through the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA), an initial amount of US$ 1.3 million will be provided to Fiji’s Public Service Commission over the next three years to establish capacity building programs for Kiribati and Tuvalu.

These training courses – lasting up to a month - will be conducted by Fijian personnel and be designed for the specific needs of the people of Kiribati and Tuvalu. And the great thing is that this is just the start.

Japan and Fiji share a long term vision to offer similar programs in all the PIDF countries. They include human resource training for senior and middle management, communications and writing courses, IT refresher courses and a broad range of technical courses.

The technical courses will teach practical skills and be tailored to specific needs. They include such things as marine electrical engineering, automotive maintenance, solar farm maintenance and medical attachments.

This program is a great honour for Fiji. It recognises our leadership in the region and the skills set of our people. And it recognises the empathy we have with our neighbours and our desire to work with them closely to raise their own living standards.

Fiji is deeply grateful to the Japanese Government for the confidence it has shown in us to finance such a scheme. It is a new paradigm in the delivery of aid. Instead of sending its own personnel to conduct these programs, Japan has placed its trust in Fiji to do the work, knowing that we are better able to understand local conditions in the Pacific and better equipped to deal with our fellow Pacific Islanders.

We already have a strong record of doing so. Under our Volunteer Program, Fiji already has eleven volunteers in Tuvalu and others in Nauru, the Marshall Islands and Vanuatu. They are all there to serve our fellow Pacific Islanders, just as we serve the global community through our UN peacekeeping and own people with the delivery of basic services.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen. In closing, I want to thank you all for coming and especially our overseas visitors. And in doing so, I extended an invitation to you all to join us in Fiji again next year for the third PIDF summit. Please enjoy the rest of the day and our special closing program this evening.

Vinaka vakalevu. Thank you. Moce Mada and Farewell.

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