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

**Prime Minister of Fiji and Minister for Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics, the Public Service, People’s Charter and Change and Progress, Information, iTaukei Affairs, Sugar Industry and Lands and Mineral Resources**

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SPEECH FOR THE FAREWELL OF FIJI VOLUNTEER TEACHERS TO THE REPUBLIC OF NAURU

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**PSC Berkeley Crescent Thurs. 10th Jan, 2013**

**DOMAIN 1100 Hours**

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* Your Excellencies;
* PSC Commissioners and Management;
* Volunteer Teachers;
* Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. It gives me great pleasure to be here at Berkeley Crescent to mark a milestone in one of my Government’s initiatives.
2. We are here to farewell volunteers under the Fiji Volunteer Service who will be leaving our shores later this month for the Republic of Nauru.
3. I acknowledge the Government of the Republic of Nauru for coming forward and identifying their human resources needs in the Education Sector and we are glad that we could assist through our Senior Volunteer Scheme. I am grateful for the role which His Excellency Mr Jarden Kephas, the Nauruan High Commissioner and his Office played in realisation of this initiative.
4. My Government supports the development of our neighbouring countries, especially to assist in their human resource needs.
5. This has been possible through the initiation of the regional component of the Volunteer Service. We are pleased to note that there are Fijians already working in these Pacific Island countries and are contributing positively towards enhancing the economic and social life of their host countries.
6. With the lowering of retirement age to 55 and the existence now of three (3) Universities in Fiji, it is anticipated that Fiji will have sufficient supply of qualified labour in the market in the near future.
7. Therefore, my Government has come up with initiatives to allow for labour mobility and the provision to cater for this is under the National Employment Centre Decree.
8. Fiji has sufficient and proven capacity in areas of education, public administration, disaster management, peacekeeping, social protection and environment.
9. As such, my Government would like to have volunteers in every part of the Pacific in the next three to five years. We would like to share our skills with our Pacific neighbours as part of our *“Engaging with the Pacific”* commitment.
10. We are committed to assisting those who request our help as we have strong links in areas of trade, investment, education, transportation, culture and people to people relationships and contacts.
11. To the Volunteers, I must thank you all sincerely for coming forward to serve in the Republic of Nauru.
12. You have shown your desire to share your knowledge and teaching skills. You are going to leave behind your families and the comfort of your homes to serve in a country that needs your service.
13. When you reach Nauru, I want you to be good Ambassadors for Fiji and go that extra mile to help in Nauru’s education needs.
14. As the Fijian Government’s representative, you will be required to uphold the values and principles of your profession and achieve your objectives.
15. As a group, look after one another and look after yourselves well.
16. At this juncture, I also would like to acknowledge the many volunteers who are working tirelessly in relief, restoration and rehabilitation works following cyclone *“Evan”.*
17. I thank these volunteers for their efforts in helping the Fijian people.

You have shown resilience in your work and your efforts has led to people helping each other regardless of their respective backgrounds. We are all Fijians working for a better Fiji.

1. With those few words, I wish the volunteers safe travel to Nauru, and we look forward to keeping in contact with you.

Thank you and vinaka vakalevu.

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