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Rear Admiral Hon. J.V. Bainimarama, CF (Mil), OSt.J, MSD, jssc, psc

**Prime Minister of Fiji and Minister for iTaukei Affairs and Sugar Industry**

**REMARKS AT THE BILATERAL MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, H.E. MR XI JINPING**

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**Orchid Room, Sheraton Resort Sat. 22nd Nov., 2014**

**NADI 1015 Hours**

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**Your Excellency, Mr Xi Jinping, President of the People’s Republic of China,**

**Honourable Ministers and Members of His Excellency’s Delegation;**

**Honourable Members of the Fijian Cabinet;**

**Senior Officials;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Ni sa bula vinaka. Ni Hao.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome Your Excellency, Mr Xi Jinping, President of the People’s Republic of China, to our shores.

Your Excellency, today marks a significant moment in the history of our relations. It is thirty-nine (39) years since we entered into diplomatic relations in 1975. It is the first time that a Chinese President is visiting Fiji and the Pacific Islands. We are very honoured to be hosting you here.

Our joint achievements not-withstanding, Your Excellency’s mere presence in Fiji, has made our meeting today a memorable one and our relations all the more worthwhile and exciting as we head into the future.

I am indeed pleased, as I am sure you are too Excellency, to note that significant achievements have been made to strengthen relations, particularly at the Government-to-Government level during the past few years.

In the last eight years, there have been heightened bilateral exchanges of Senior Government Officials, Ministers and at the level of the Head of State and Government.

Under your Government’s South-South Co-operation platform, technical assistance and capacity building programs have been delivered in the primary sectors of agriculture, fisheries and forestry with far-reaching implications to the socio-economic upliftment and well- being of our women and youths, particularly in rural Fiji.

In the same vein, I wish to acknowledge your Government’s support, specifically during Fiji’s reporting to the International Labour Organisation’s governing body at its 322nd Session in Geneva earlier this month.

**MOU**

I am pleased, Your Excellency, that we shall be witnessing the signing of several MOUs shortly. These should add to those previously signed by our Ministers concerned in 2012 for co-operation between our Police Forces and those in the areas of social affairs and poverty alleviation and women’s affairs. There are several other drafts I am advised that are in various stages of finalisation to cover the other sectors.

The signed MOUs, once implemented, should set in motion closer and more direct collaboration between the relevant Ministries so as to lift our co-operation to another level. It is my sincere hope that our officials will ensure that with their commitment and concerted efforts, the MOUs are made living documents commensurate with the growing and healthy relationship that our two countries and peoples are now enjoying and can continue to enjoy.

**WAY FORWARD**

We can now safely say that at the Government level, the activities of the past 39 years have set the foundation from which we can venture into strengthening existing relations and establish new partnerships in the private sector and the business fraternity, as well as the ever-important, on-going people-to-people contacts.

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**May I now invite Your Excellency to offer your remarks, please.**

**(President Xi Jinping makes his remarks)**

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PM: Thank you, Your Excellency.

(PM briefs on Fiji Political developments/National Election)

Allow me please before we close, to update Your Excellency with our latest political developments.

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**Brief on Fiji’S National Election AND PARLIAMENTARY SESSION**

Allow me please before we close, to update Your Excellency with our latest political developments.

Fiji’s preparations toward our national election in September this year laid a strong platform for the achievements todate. I would like to thank the Chinese Government for the understanding and support provided to Fiji to facilitate those preparations.

I am pleased to convey Fiji’s successful elections on the 17th of September, the culmination of Fiji’s roadmap to democracy. Thousands of Fijians took to the polling stations to elect their government through a one person, one vote, one value system.

Our elected Government conducted its first Parliament sitting on the 6th of October. Three political parties make up Fiji’s Parliament. The Fiji First Party, which I lead, forms the Government of the day. The Opposition is made up of two political parties, namely the Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA) and National Federation Party.

Our former Minister for Women, Dr. Jiko Luveni, relinquished her seat as an elected Member of Parliament and was appointed as Fiji’s first female Speaker-of-the House. The Leader of Opposition, Hon. Ro Teimumu Kepa, is another lady who was appointed during that first Parliamentary session.

We are confident that this election has ushered in a new phase of Fiji’s political development.

(PM invites HE President Xi to respond if the latter wishes)

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(President Xi responds)

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(PM closes with “Closing” remarks)

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**CLOSING REMARKS**

As we wrap up Your Excellency, I wish to commend your genuine desire to help and my Government will continue to play its part in support as appropriate.

I sincerely thank you again Your Excellency, the First Lady and the esteemed members of your delegation for the honor and the privilege to host you; and for the welcome and timely opportunity to say, VINAKA VAKALEVU, XIE XIE, for being an understanding and dedicated friend of Fiji and indeed the small and developing of your Pacific island neighbours.

May I offer on behalf of my Government, on my own behalf and that of my wife, our sincere good wishes to Your Excellency and the First Lady Madam Peng Liyuan, for the Almighty’s continued guidance and protection in your leadership.

Vinaka vakalevu, Xie Xie.

May I now invite Your Excellency to the stage where we can witness the signing of our MOUs.

(PM escorts HE President Xi to the Signing stage)