

**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**

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**SPEECH AT TAPPOO CITY LAUTOKA GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY**

**Churchill Park Wed. 20th Nov., 2013**

**LAUTOKA 1300 Hours**

The Lautoka City Council Administrator;

The Tui Vuda;

The Chairman and CEO of Tappoo Limited and the rest of the Tappoo family;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Bula vinaka and a very good afternoon to you all.

After my two hour Budget speech and lengthy addresses in recent days at the Exporter of the Year Awards and the SPC Conference, I’m going to keep my remarks this afternoon as brief as possible.

I want to say first of all how delighted I am to be here in Lautoka to launch something that is going to be such a big boost for the city and all its people.

Anyone who has been fortunate enough to visit Tappoo City in Suva knows what it has done for our capital city.

It’s not just a world class shopping experience and a jewel in the retail crown of Suva. It has done a huge amount to lift the overall tone and image of the capital.

Now the same standard, if not the same size, is coming to Lautoka. And every resident of the city and the surrounding area looks forward to the same experience.

In some ways, Lautoka has been eclipsed by Nadi over the years. But it remains one of the nicest places to live in Fiji as well as being an important pillar of the economy – our Sugar Capital. And this new development, approved by Cabinet following a transparent selection process, is going to be a wonderful addition to the city.

I also want to say how much we appreciate yet another major investment in Fiji by the Tappoo family – both the Government as a whole and me personally as Prime Minister.

Kanti Tappoo has *detailed/will detail* the full range of the company’s activities across many sectors of our economy. By any standards, it’s an impressive performance.

The Tappoo Group is not only one of the great business houses of Fiji but a major Fijian investor in our economy.

The Government values that investment and confidence greatly. And I’d like to pay tribute today to the Tappoo family and thank them for their contribution to Fiji over the years.

They are not only a great example to the rest of the business community about the value of Fijian investment in our economy and the returns that can be made.

They are also among the best of our corporate citizens – Gold Card holders at the Fiji Revenue and Customs Authority for their exemplary tax compliance.

I especially want to thank them on behalf of every Fijian for the jobs they have created and their contribution to numerous charitable causes through the Tappoo Foundation.

We need more corporate role models like Tappoos willing to contribute to our vision of putting Fiji First and making Fiji Great.

So Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to be here at the ground-breaking ceremony for Tappoo City, Lautoka. When it is finally built, of course, Fiji will have had its first genuinely democratic election, with all the promise that holds for a better future for all of us.

I have every confidence that what emerges from the ground here will also be a symbol of a better future for every resident of this wonderful city – Lautoka.

Vinaka Vakalevu. Thank you.

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