**

**COMMODORE JOSAIA VOREQE BAINIMARAMA, CF(Mil),OStJ,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**

**REMARKS AT THE WELCOME RECEPTION IN HONOUR**

**OF OVERSEAS HEADS OF MISSIONS**

**Borron House Tues. 23rd July, 2013**

**SUVA 1845 Hours**

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Bula vinaka and a very good evening to you all.

It is my great pleasure to welcome our Heads of Missions home.

I do not wish to give a long address this evening, as I will be officially opening the consultations tomorrow morning.

I would just like to say that this year’s annual examination of Fiji’s Diplomatic Strategies may be the most important since we gained Independence. We are in the midst of an unprecedented expansion of our international relations and trade.

For the Heads of Missions, our discussions over the next few days will provide us an opportunity to take stock of all that has been accomplished during the past year.

It is also an important chance for us to collectively review, recalibrate and refine our policies and strategies, to make sure that we are meeting our international commitments, delivering tangible results to the Fijian people, and best representing Fiji’s interests amongst the community of nations.

This is a time for us to ask tough questions and produce honest answers and practical solutions. If there are areas where we can be doing a better job, we need to identify them and fix the problem.

Your stay in Fiji also affords you the opportunity to establish direct links with Ministries and agencies here that will assist you as you work to sell *“Brand Fiji”* to the world.

For the members of the business community, I encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to develop relationships with your representatives overseas. My Government is committed to creating trade opportunities for your products, as well as opportunities for sourcing better materials, attracting investment and boosting tourism. Our Heads of Missions play an important role in these endeavors.

I hope you enjoy yourselves this evening. To the Heads of Missions, I look forward to seeing you all bright and early tomorrow morning.

Vinaka vakalevu. Thank you.

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