

**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, i-Taukei Affairs, Sugar Industry, Lands and Mineral Resources

**SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF NEW NABORO SAWANIKULA PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­Naboro Sawanikula Pri. Sch. Sat. 6th April, 2013

NAITASIRI 1200 Hours

* **Vunivalu i Naboro;**
* **Vunivalu Navunitivi;**
* **Turaga na Railevu;**
* **Tui Nakurukuruvakatini;**
* **Tui Vanuaca; kei na**
* **Vunivalu Nawairua.**

Bula Vinaka and a very good afternoon to you all.

I’m very pleased to be here to open the new Naboro Sawanikula Primary School. New school openings are always a highlight for me.

As Prime Minister, I consider providing access to education as one of my Government’s most important tasks. Nothing is more important to me than ensuring that our young people receive an education that allows them to get a head start in life.

Education is the foundation upon which our children will build the rest of their lives. It is the greatest gift we can give them, and it is the greatest hope we have for their future, and the future of our nation.

Perhaps nothing is more important for the success and development of our children than the education they receive in their earliest years.

The knowledge and skills that children learn at primary school will serve them as they grow into adulthood and enter into a world that has changed significantly since when their parents were primary school students. The modern world is a global world. It is a world that is very competitive and demanding.

We must serve our young people as best we can by teaching them the skills they will need to succeed in such a world.

With new challenges also come new opportunities, and we must do everything that we can to help our children take advantage of these opportunities.

I’m not just talking about primary school education. I’m also talking about secondary school education. And even tertiary education.

The right to education – at all levels – is not something that should depend on one policy or another.

This is one of the reasons I am so proud of the draft constitution. For the first time in Fiji’s history, the constitution guarantees a person’s right not only to early childhood education, but to primary education, to secondary education and, to further education.

As we saw in many of the submissions to the Constitutional Commission, the issues that mattered most to ordinary Fijians were not the affairs of politicians, but were day-to-day concerns. Issues such as access to clean water. Access to electricity. Access to transportation; adequate food; social security schemes; health; sanitation; and – of course – education.

For Fijians, nothing is more important than having these rights protected in the new constitution. For my Government, nothing is more important than making sure these rights are upheld and these needs are provided for.

But to return to today’s celebrations. I am grateful to everyone who has had a hand in the construction and establishment of the Naboro Sawanikula Primary School.

Although Government has contributed close to $100,000 for the construction of the ablution block, the library and the teachers’ quarters, it is not through this funding alone that we are here today.

The local community has contributed close to $20,ooo in kind. This is a remarkable achievement and something you should all be proud about.

Of course, it’s not just a matter of dollars and cents. A school is more than bricks and mortar. It is the combined hard work and dedication of the teachers, the parents, the community, the students and even the local businesses that truly make a school what it is. And that is why I believe this school has such a bright future.

With those words, ladies and gentlemen, I now have much pleasure in officially declaring the school open.

Vinaka vakalevu. Thank you.

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