The Prime Minister’s Exporter of the Year Awards celebrate Fiji’s top exporters and thank them for their contribution to our national effort to grow the economy and create opportunities for every Fijian.

My Government has been leading a drive to develop and promote *“Brand Fiji”* – making Fiji synonymous with quality and authenticity. Our exporters play a central role in this undertaking. Their products and services represent our island nation in foreign markets to foreign consumers. Each export forms a building block of our national brand, and helps shape perceptions about Fiji.

As a nation of our size, we have to focus on quality and adherence to internationally-accepted standards in order for our products and services to stand out. We also have to be strategic and clever about capitalising on opportunities, searching out new markets, and positioning our products within these markets.

To this end, my Government is here as a partner. We have formed a number of initiatives and policies to bolster our exports, grow markets in the region and further afield, and make Fiji internationally competitive.

A sincere “vinaka vakalevu” to all Fiji’s exporters for their role in our national development.

I hope you enjoy the awards ceremony this evening.