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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

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**SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF LAUTOKA WHARF WAITING SHED**

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­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­Lautoka Wharf Mon. 2nd April, 2013

LAUTOKA 1200 Hours

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Salutations

It gives me much pleasure to be here with you today to open the Lautoka Wharf Waiting Shed.

A shed might seem like a small thing to some people. But to the people who travel between the Yasawas and Viti Levu, whether they do so for their living, to reunite with family, or to take care of personal business, a waiting shed is a very significant infrastructure.

It certainly is not a small thing for my Government.

To my Government, there are no *“small things”* when it comes to the welfare of the people of Fiji.

There are no *“small things”* when it comes to providing the infrastructure that allows our people to work and produce. There are no *“small things”* because there are no small people in Fiji.

Today marks a new beginning, because this structure will provide a decent place for the people who commute to and from Yasawa to rest after a long journey by sea and to wait in some comfort for the return trip. It also provides some enterprising women and men the opportunity to sell good, well prepared food to hungry travellers. It will also be a place from where art and handmade products can be sold. Here we can encourage people who visit on cruise ships to buy locally made products directly from the people who produce them. As you know my Government has launched the buy Fijian and Fijian made campaign.

So this shed will serve our rural outer islands population both socially and economically. And at a cost of **$40,000**, we can say two things. First, it is well worth the cost—a bargain, really. Second, why wouldn’t we build more of these? And the answer is that we will.

My Government plans to build other waiting sheds at strategic locations around Fiji to enable sea travellers and seafarers alike to rest and sell their goods.

But the shed is part of a bigger picture. Indeed, sheds like this are just one part of the infrastructure to support the entire wharf development in Lautoka--like the ice plant and the services provided by the Fisheries Department.

We dedicate this shed to the memory of the late Apolosi Boleanamate, who was then the Mata representing the Tikina of Waya, may he rest in peace. It was his idea and his desire to serve the people of Yasawa—and all Fijians--that led us to this day. He served his country with distinction as a soldier and a champion of social justice—a true son of Yasawa.

Ladies and Gentlemen, before I declare this shed open, I would like to remind you that our path to parliamentary democracy is before us. It is marked by a new Constitution and it will take us to elections next year.

We will always have to work to perfect our system. But we know where it begins. It begins here, with a Constitution.

I urge you all to comment on the draft constitution. Remember, you are now our Constituent Assembly.

Every Fijian holds in his or her heart and mind the ability to be part of a critical moment in our history—the moment when we chart a true democratic future.

And now, I am proud to declare that the *“Boleanamate Memorial Shed”* is open.

Vinaka Vakalevu, Thank you.

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