



Honourable J.V. Bainimarama, CF(Mil), OSt.J, MSD, jssc, psc

Prime Minister of Fiji and Minister for iTaukei Affairs and Sugar Industry

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## **SPEECH AT THE MILK LAUNCHING PROGRAMME AT DAMA DISTRICT SCHOOL**

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Dama District School  
BUA

Tues. 7 April, 2015  
1145 Hours

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The Minister for Education,

Representatives of Vanua O Dama,

The Head Teacher and Staff of the Dama District School,

Parents and Friends of the School,

Boys and Girls,

Bula vinaka and a very good morning to you all.

When I launched the national Free Milk Program for Year One students in Nakelo on Viti Levu two weeks ago, it was one of my happiest days as Prime Minister.

Because I could see from the excitement of the children there just how much this programme means to them and what a difference it will make to the lives of every Year One student throughout Fiji.

Well, today is another very happy day as I launch the Free Milk Initiative on Vanua Levu here at the Dama District School in Bua.

I want to begin by thanking the Vanua for your wonderful traditional welcome.

It is always a great pleasure for me to come to the North- a part of Fiji I hold very dear in my heart and which my Government is doing everything we can to further develop.

I'm especially pleased to be here among the people of Bua, who are benefitting more and more from my Government's programme of service delivery in so

many areas that have been neglected by previous Governments over the years.

Whether it is access to better health services, better education, better roads, access to electricity, water or telecommunications, my Government is determined that all of you will eventually have the same level of services as anyone in Viti Levu.

It is something you deserve and something that we intend to deliver. It may take time. But as I have said all over Fiji, this *FijiFirst* Government will not rest until ordinary people everywhere have the same benefits as any other Fijian living in our cities and towns.

Today, we bring you a landmark initiative to improve the health of our children and give them the best possible start in life. By building their bodies in Year One so we can also help build their minds for their lifetime of learning throughout their years at school and beyond.

You children in Dama are joining more than 20,000 Year One children across Fiji who are benefiting from this program- a 250 millilitre package of free milk plus a serve of Weet-bix to give you a nutritious breakfast everyday of the school week.

It is a partnership between my Government and the CJ Patel Group and Fiji Dairy Limited, who have generously provided the Weet-bix and your bowls and spoons. So I want to thank CJ Patel and especially its former Managing Director, Mr. Sandip Patel - who recently passed away - for their generosity and for sharing our vision to give every Year One student the best possible start to their day.

I appeal to everyone to make sure that this program is not abused and goes to the children it is meant for - Year One students at the start of their school lives.

We intend to come down very hard on anyone who diverts these supplies elsewhere. Because we owe it to

our children - as well as Fijian taxpayers - to honestly uphold the integrity of this scheme.

To every Year One student I say; enjoy your milk and your Weet-bix. I can tell from your smiles and your beaming faces how much you appreciate what you have been given. But also use it to stay fit and healthy in every other aspect of your daily lives.

Don't eat sweets - or too many sweets. Eat more fruit. Don't drink soft drink- or too much soft drink. Drink water or fresh fruit juice and drink milk.

And eat more fresh fish and fresh vegetables because those are the best foods to make you big and strong.

And always remember this; that to keep fit you need to do as much exercise as you can. Get hold of a ball and kick or pass around. Run as much as you can. And make sure you get involved in those sporting activities your school or community offers you.

Use this free milk and Weetbix to start your day and get plenty of exercise. And you can avoid some of the health problems many older Fijians are suffering because they haven't looked after themselves properly.

As I say at schools all over Fiji, you have better futures ahead of you than any other child in Fijian history. My Government has given you the opportunity to learn more than your parents or grandparents ever had the chance of doing.

So please think carefully about the things I have said today and make the most of the opportunities my Government is giving you. To finish Primary School, go on to High School and then perhaps do a University course or a Technical College course to achieve whatever dream you may have for yourself now or as you get older.

I said it two weeks ago in Nakelo and I'll say it again today: I couldn't be more happy as I look out at all your shining faces- the future of our beloved nation.

Because nothing makes my job as Prime Minister more worthwhile than to give you the leg up you deserve. And to help fulfil your parents dreams for you and your own dreams for yourselves.

I now have great pleasure to launch the Government's Free Milk Initiative- and free Weet-bix- in Vanua Levu. And to all Year One students in the North I say: Drink up. Eat up. And here's to a happy and healthy life to you all.

Vinaka vakalevu, thank you.