



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

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

SPEECH AT THE UNVEILING OF THE PARADISE BEVERAGES NEW BREWHOUSE

Walu Bay
SUVA

Fri. 24 April, 2015
1400 Hours

The Group Managing Director of Coca-Cola Amatil,
The Management and Staff of Paradise Beverages (Fiji),
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bula vinaka and a very good afternoon to you all.

I'm pleased to help launch a major investment by Coca-Cola Amatil in Fiji – a new **\$18 million dollar** brewhouse here at the Paradise Beverages Brewery in Walu Bay.

This beer-making facility is part of an overall capital investment programme by CCA over three years totalling 44 million dollars.

So it is a significant investment in our economy and marks a significant expansion in the company's activities and those of its subsidiary Paradise Beverages.

Under the three-year programme, Paradise Beverages is modernising its facilities, improving the capability of its local staff and providing them with better working conditions.

I'm told that roughly half the investment has been spent here in Suva with a brewhouse that is now fully automated with the latest state-of-the-art technology to optimise the quality and consistency of the company's brands. They include beverages that are household names in Fiji: Fiji Gold, Fiji Bitter, Vonu Lager and Fiji Premium.

The other half of the investment – around **22 million dollars** – has been allocated to the company's distillery in Lautoka to double production of another household name - the award-winning Bounty Rum.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Any investment of this scale is naturally very welcome. And I'm also pleased to learn that as many Fijian businesses and local tradespeople as possible have been employed to work on these upgrades.

Significant investment by Paradise Beverages and other companies in Fiji, both Fijian and foreign, is demonstrative of the confidence they have in Fiji because of the policies and investment environment and conditions that my Government has created.

Paradise Beverages is among the region's largest employers, with around 300 staff across Fiji and Samoa. Of the four sites where Paradise makes beverages, the Suva site employs 119 people. So it is a significant contributor to the local economy and the financial well-being of many ordinary Fijians.

Following its purchase of Paradise Beverages in 2012, Coca-Cola Amatil is also now one of Fiji's largest contributors to tax revenue, helping raise approximately **66 million dollars** in 2014. So this is not only an important sector of economic activity but an important contributor to our ability to provide the Fijian people with the services they deserve across the board. Whether it is education, health or the full range of Government services.

The brewery currently produces around two million cases of beer each year for local consumption. But I'm told the company has plans, well advanced, to export some of its products into the regional and international marketplaces.

I want to commend Coca-Cola Amatil for this effort, which will be yet another addition to the Fijian-made collection of products and services that are taking Brand Fiji way beyond our shores. And earning us valuable export dollars, as well as a reputation for quality that is world class. I certainly hope that Paradise Beverages will have the Fijian

product labels on all products because it signifies collaboration with Government, a third party validation and certification that signifies authenticity, quality and uplifts brand '*Fiji*'. If the management has not done so, I urge you to do so urgently. The Ministry of Industry and Trade will facilitate.

I'm also pleased that Coca-Cola Amatil shares the Government's basic philosophy that alcohol consumption needs to be responsible to avoid both the health problems and social dislocation that excessive intake entails.

The Government is especially concerned about recent incidents in Suva and Nausori in which people who have consumed far too much liquor have behaved unlawfully and harassed ordinary people going about their daily lives.

The Police are quite rightly cracking down on these incidents and I repeat, as Prime Minister, that they will not be tolerated and the offenders punished with the full force

of the law. People have a right to enjoy alcohol but they must do so without impinging on the rights of others or creating unnecessary disturbances and violations of the peace.

Moderate consumption is also vitally important to prevent the huge burden that excessive alcohol intake - and the disease of alcoholism - is placing on our health system.

So the message from both the Government and Coca-Cola Amatil is for every Fijian to enjoy alcohol responsibly, to drink in moderation and avoid the excesses that often give drinking alcohol such a bad name.

I know that both the Government and the liquor producers in Fiji share the same philosophy— that a drink or two is fine but too much alcohol is not only a health risk to the individuals involved but a social risk to the stability and financial well-being of Fijian families. And if people can't

drink responsibly, they should definitely consider not drinking at all.

I urge anyone who has a problem with alcohol to seek help from the range of services best placed to deal with these issues.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With those few words of caution, I would like to thank Coca-Cola Amatil for its contribution to Fiji and the Fijian economy. And I now have great pleasure to formally launch its new Brewhouse here in Suva.

Vinaka vakalevu, thank you.
