



SPEECH BY H.E. MR. KAWAKAMI FUMIHIRO, AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN

**At the World Tsunami Awareness Day Official Launch
Friday, 5 November 2021**



H.E. Mr. KAWAKAMI Fumihiro, Ambassador of Japan

Firstly, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Honourable Minister and his team for hosting this event, as well as for the warm hospitality accorded to us today.

The experience of tsunamis is neither a distant memory nor an isolated event for the Japanese.

Japan is one of the countries, which has endured the highest number of Tsunamis, and most recently in March 2011, the Great East Japan Earthquake triggered a massive tsunami that devastated our north-eastern coastal regions. These experiences and lessons learnt are our source of inspiration to raise tsunami DRR awareness both, domestically and internationally.

At the 70th UNGA in 2015, Japan, together with other countries, succeeded in designating “5th November” as the annual “World Tsunami Awareness Day”.

I’m honoured to acknowledge the immense progress we have collectively made since then, in promoting tsunami DRR awareness.

This event today is a practical example of such accomplishments. I commend the Honourable Minister for his initiative to hold this event in addressing Tsunami DRR.

This event promotes tsunami

awareness, which is a key component of the broader disaster preparedness and DRR, making it a crucial investment for saving lives as well as in creating a more secure future.

I am pleased to say that Japan funded the project titled “Partnerships for Strengthening School Preparedness for Tsunamis in the Asia Pacific region” which is implemented in partnership with the UNDP.

Based on its DRR significance, I would like to briefly highlight the merit of this partnership. Since 2017, Japan and UNDP have collaborated to enhance Tsunami preparedness and awareness outreach in the Asian and Pacific region. The total funding provided by Japan is approximately 3.6 million USD, with Fiji being one of the initial beneficiaries, since the commencement of this partnership.

Through this project, around 9 schools and more than 4000 participants from Fiji have undergone practical training through Tsunami drills.

This exercise also tested their disaster preparedness capabilities, to validate its level of effectiveness and identify pathways for further development.

In addition to this partnership, Japan has worked on raising more awareness by hosting the “High School Students Tsunami Summit” since 2016. From Fiji, 4 High Schools have been invited to participate in Japan and been given the opportunity to acquire crucial knowledge on Tsunami DRR.

Upon participation at such an international meeting and exchange with students from other countries, discussions with leading experts and scholars, the students emerge from the Summit as “Youth Ambassadors for World Tsunami Awareness Day”.

At this juncture, I wish to enlighten Japan’s bilateral contribution to DRR of Fiji, including Tsunami DRR. Japan has provided advanced



From left: Ambassador of Japan, H.E. Mr. KAWAKAMI Fumihiro, Minister for Lands & Mineral Resources, Jone Usamate and Australian High Commission Regional Overseas Security Manager Andrew Provan cutting the cake to mark World Tsunami Awareness Day 2021.

technology and improved critical hardware, such as meteorological facilities, seismological equipment and radio network.

Japan has also extended technical cooperation which includes the dispatch of experts and provision of training courses through JICA.

Recently, in response to the request from the Honourable Prime Minister of Fiji, Japan provided funding for 2 projects aiming at strengthening resilient infrastructure against natural disasters.

The 2 are namely, the Project for Tsunami Early Warning System that is currently undergoing procurement preparation stage, and the Project for Reconstruction of the Tamavua-i-wai Bridge, which is progressing at the detailed design stage.

Our cooperation in this area and in wider DRR, reflects the tangible realization of Japan’s actions for its initiative titled; “Climate Change and Disaster Resilience”.

This is one of the prioritized cooperation areas under the Japan-Pacific Bond Policy or KIZUNA Policy that was announced by the

former Japanese Prime Minister, Mr. SUGA Yoshihide, at the 9th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM9) in July 2021.

It gives me great happiness to say that these actions and accomplishments are in line with Target F of the Sendai Framework as well as in the spirit of the World Tsunami Awareness Day.

As natural disasters become more severe and frequent due to climate change, the need for DRR is further increasing.

Based on the need for DRR efforts, together with the urgency of environment and climate action, I am honoured to reaffirm Japan’s commitment to continuing its cooperation with Fiji, the Asia/Pacific nations as well as the international organizations, towards accomplishing such goals in solidarity.

I conclude with confidence that this event will meaningfully contribute in promoting Tsunami Awareness in Fiji and strengthen friendship between the Governments and peoples of Japan and Fiji.

Thank You and Vinaka Vakalevu.