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OPENING OF THE TECHNOLOGY BUILDINGS

I AM VERY PLEASED TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY TODAY TO VISIT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC. THE UNIVERSITY IS A STRIKING EXAMPLE OF THE POSITIVE BENEFITS WHICH CAN FLOW FROM COOPERATION BETWEEN THE NATIONS OF THE REGION.

I AM PROUD THAT AUSTRALIA SHOULD BE AS CLOSELY ASSOCIATED AS IT IS WITH THIS IMPORTANT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION, AND THAT WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE TO ITS DEVELOPMENT.

AUSTRALIA HAS A GREAT AFFINITY WITH THE NATIONS OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC REGION. WE ARE IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS; WITH THESE COUNTRIES WE FEEL AT HOME. WE SHARE YOUR INTERESTS AND HAVE MANY ASPIRATIONS IN COMMON.

WE ALL, FOR EXAMPLE, HAVE A KEEN INTEREST IN THE MAINTENANCE OF CONDITIONS OF PEACE AND STABILITY WITHIN THE REGION. HENCE THE PRIORITY WE ATTACH TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE REGION AS A NUCLEAR FREE ZONE.

WE ARE ALSO COMMITTED TO THE REGION'S DEVELOPMENT, AT ITS OWN PACE, AND WITH THE NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF ITS PEOPLE.

WE SEE IT AS BEING IN OUR OWN INTEREST AND THAT OF ALL COUNTRIES WITHIN THE REGION THAT WE CONTINUE TO CONTRIBUTE WHAT WE CAN TO REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT. A HEALTHY, GROWING REGIONAL ECONOMY FOR AUSTRALIA AND ITS NEIGHBOURS IS THE BASIS ON WHICH OUR FUTURE DEPENDS.

THE CURRENT DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AUSTRALIA HAS WITHIN THE REGION IS A VISIBLE DEMONSTRATION OF THE INTIMACY OF THE RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS GROWN UP BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION. THE VERY CONSIDERABLE \$300 MILLION WE HAVE COMMITTED THROUGH THAT PROGRAM IS THE OVERALL FIVE YEAR SUM FROM WHICH ARE DRAWN THE INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY COMMITMENTS, THE SPECIAL PROJECTS, THE TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, AND THE SPECIAL FLEXIBLE ALLOCATIONS SUCH AS ACCOUNTABLE CASH GRANTS.

THE CONTINUED FLEXIBILITY OF THE PROGRAM - FLEXIBLE TO MEET THE REGION'S NEEDS - IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT. THE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC REQUIRE IT. THE JACKSON COMMITTEE REPORT ON AUSTRALIA'S OVERSEAS AID PROGRAM MADE SOME USEFUL RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS REGARD. FLEXIBILITY TO MEET THE REGION'S NEEDS IS SOMETHING WE PRIZE HIGHLY.

IN THIS SPIRIT MY GOVERNMENT HAS APPOINTED A TEAM OF PROFESSIONALS IN THE FIELD OF AGRICULTURE, ECONOMICS, EDUCATION AND ENGINEERING TO WORK EXCLUSIVELY IN THE PACIFIC. THE TEAM WILL ENHANCE AUSTRALIA'S CAPACITY TO PLAN ASSISTANCE FOR KEY SECTORS, AS DESIGNATED BY THE REGION'S GOVERNMENTS AND IN CONJUNCTION WITH OUR AREAS OF EXPERTISE, AND TO APPRAISE, MONITOR AND IMPLEMENT PROGRESS MORE EFFECTIVELY.

WE HAVE ALSO INITIATED A MULTI-COUNTRY PROGRAM, PROVIDING FUNDS FOR PROJECTS APPLICABLE TO MORE THAN ONE COUNTRY IN THE REGION. TO DATE 6 PROJECTS HAVE BEEN FUNDED UNDER THIS PROGRAM.

SO FAR I HAVE SPOKEN ONLY OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION. THE CLOSENESS THAT HAS DEVELOPED BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND THE SOUTH PACIFIC HAS A MUCH WIDER BASIS THAN THIS. IT FLOWS FROM AN UNDERSTANDING OF EACH OTHERS' ASPIRATIONS, INTERESTS AND SENSITIVITIES. AND THAT UNDERSTANDING GROWS FROM PERSONAL CONTACT AT ALL LEVELS - FROM THE PRIME MINISTERIAL DISCUSSION TO THE TOURIST VISIT, AND ALL MEETINGS IN BETWEEN: ACADEMIC, JOURNALIST, BUSINESS, GOVERNMENT, CHURCH, SPORTING, STUDENT.

WE ARE ALL SO NEAR TO EACH OTHER NOWADAYS - THE MEANS OF MODERN COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORT ENSURE IT. THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND THE NATIONS OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC HAVE STOOD THE TEST OF THE CLOSEST CONTACT: AND WE ARE THE BETTER FOR IT.

I WAS SPEAKING OF ACADEMIC AND STUDENT CONTACTS A MOMENT AGO; THE OVERSEAS STUDENT DEBATE IN AUSTRALIA HAS, I BELIEVE, BEEN A SUBJECT OF INTEREST IN EDUCATION CIRCLES REPRESENTED HERE TODAY.

IN AUSTRALIA, A SMALL MINORITY HAVE QUERIED THE CONTINUED ACCESS OF STUDENTS FROM OUR REGION - ASIA AND THE PACIFIC - TO PLACES AT OUR UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES. WITH SUCH A FINE FACILITY AS THE USP, THIS DOES NOT OF COURSE CONCERN THE SOUTH PACIFIC AS MUCH AS IT DOES SOME OF OUR OTHER NEIGHBOURS. BUT THERE ARE STILL SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF STUDENTS FROM THE REGION WHO ARE RELYING NOW ON PLACES AT AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTIONS; I HAVE NO REASON TO DOUBT THERE WILL BE SIMILAR NUMBERS OF STUDENTS IN THE FUTURE.

RECOGNISING THIS, MY GOVERNMENT IS DETERMINED THAT AUSTRALIA SHOULD CONTINUE TO RESPOND TO THIS REGIONAL DEMAND. THIS COMMITMENT WILL BE MAINTAINED NO MATTER WHICH SYSTEM - THAT RECOMMENDED BY PROFESSOR GOLDRING IN HIS STUDY, THAT OF THE JACKSON COMMITTEE, OR ANY OTHER APPROACH, MAY BE CHOSEN BY THE GOVERNMENT. DECISIONS ON THESE IMPORTANT MATTERS WILL BE MADE IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

ALL COUNTRIES, BOTH DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING, FACE THE BURDEN OF THE HIGH COSTS OF EDUCATION. AUSTRALIA ACKNOWLEDGES THE NATIONAL ASPIRATIONS OF GOVERNMENTS IN THE REGION TO DEVELOP THEIR POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS. OVER THE YEARS, WE HAVE PROVIDED SUBSTANTIAL ASSISTANCE TO REGIONAL COUNTRIES IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS, THROUGH CAPITAL WORKS, THROUGH DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER TRAINING AND TECHNICAL OR TRADE-RELATED PROGRAMS AND THROUGH THE PROVISION OF A RANGE OF SCHOLARSHIPS.

THE TASK FACING THE AUTHORITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, ASSEMBLING TEACHING STAFF, FULFILLING THE DIFFERENT NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS OF ELEVEN NATIONS IS IMMENSE. IT IS TO THE CREDIT OF THE UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES THAT IT HAS MANAGED TO MEET DEMANDS PLACED UPON IT. IT DESERVES SUPPORT FROM THE REGION AND I WOULD LIKE TO ASSURE YOU HERE THAT AUSTRALIA WILL REMAIN WILLING TO CONTINUE TO ASSIST THE UNIVERSITY IN MEETING THE PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS.

OUR COMMITMENT TO THE UNIVERSITY IS REFLECTED IN OUR LEVEL OF SUPPORT, WHICH HAS BEEN ESTIMATED TO AMOUNT TO \$18 MILLION IN THE FIVE YEAR PERIOD TO JUNE 1988. AUSTRALIA IS THE LARGEST DONOR TO THE USP AND IN 1983/84 PROVIDED \$2.62M FOR STAFFING ASSISTANCE, ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT, PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, CAMPUS UPGRADING, PHYSICAL PLANNING AND CAPITAL WORKS.

THIS TECHNOLOGY BUILDINGS COMPLEX, WHICH I AM HONOURED TO OPEN TODAY, PROVIDES A NEW HOME FOR THE DISCIPLINE OF INDUSTRIAL ARTS IN THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION. HERE TEACHERS WILL BE TRAINED, SO THAT IN TURN THEY CAN GO OUT INTO THE LOCAL CLASSROOMS OF THE REGION AND PASS ON THE SKILLS OF WORKING WITH WOOD, METAL, AND THE ARTS AND SCIENCE OF DRAUGHTING, RURAL TECHNOLOGY AND ASSOCIATED FIELDS. THEY WILL BE WELL EQUIPPED TO TEACH IN BOTH SECONDARY AND TERTIARY INSTITUTES.

I UNDERSTAND THAT PLANS ARE NOW BEING DISCUSSED, TOO, FOR THE USP TO UNDERTAKE NEW TRAINING PROGRAMS IN MECHANICAL, CIVIL AND CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGIES AND OTHER AREAS REQUIRING MIDDLE MANAGEMENT OR SEMI-PROFESSIONAL TRAINING. THE IMPORTANCE WHICH ALL COUNTRIES ATTACH TO TRAINING SUFFICIENT YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN IN THESE FIELDS IS WELL KNOWN. I AM VERY PLEASED THAT AUSTRALIA HAS BEEN ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE IN THIS AREA AT USP.

MR CHANCELLOR, IN CONCLUSION, MAY I SAY THAT IT GIVES ME PARTICULAR SATISFACTION TO DECLARE THESE BUILDINGS OPEN, AND TO WISH ALL WHO WORK IN THEM EVERY SUCCESS AND SATISFACTION. THESE BUILDINGS ARE I BELIEVE A STANDING DEMONSTRATION OF AUSTRALIA'S CONTINUING COMMITMENT TO WORK WITH ITS FRIENDS IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION. THAT COMMITMENT IS AMONG THE MOST IMPORTANT AUSTRALIA HAS ANYWHERE.
