Bula Vinaka to you All.

I’m very grateful to be here today in your midst to officiate in the closing of the first regional workshop on an establishment agreement for the Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF).

My sincere appreciations and congratulations are extended to you all- delegates and participants from here in Fiji and around the region for making the time and efforts to be present in the workshop during the last day and half. I am encouraged by your collective determinations and contributions as we work towards strengthening the PIDF through the consultation process for an establishment agreement.

Ladies & Gentlemen,
As alluded to by my Prime Minister in his opening remarks yesterday, the outcome of this workshop marks another
significant step on the pathway to the creation of a regional organization designed by Pacific Islanders for Pacific peoples and moreover focused on the unique challenges and opportunities we face as island nations.

True to the vision of our Leaders, the PIDF was born to create a space and a forum where we can engage freely amongst ourselves to determine policy priorities of national importance to our respective island nations free from the influence of outsiders. To become a reality, this vision requires our collective efforts to work together in partnerships with all sectors of society and consult with you all on your views and ideas. The outlined processes mapped out before us and with the conclusion of the first workshop today is a step closer to the realization of this vision.

**Ladies & Gentlemen,**

The PIDF is a coalition of Pacific Governments, civil society and businesses, united by our goal of enhancing the welfare and prosperity of Pacific peoples through sustainable development. The PIDF heralds a new era of regional cooperation– one that is multi-sectoral and inclusive. It is a regionalism that reflects the interests of today to address the issues challenging our sustainable development efforts. It’s our primary goal and responsibility to shape the Pacific architecture. You have the opportunity to do so through this workshop and in future PIDF consultation process.

**Ladies & Gentlemen,**

Fiji has the honour of hosting the PIDF Secretariat here in Suva. A host country agreement is in place signed by me as Minister responsible and the PIDF Secretariat that has now being accorded immunities and priviledges. I am told that the workshop concluding today have enabled open discussions on an institutional arrangement and funding models of the PIDF.

As you participate in the development of the PIDF establishment agreement I therefore cannot over-emphasise
enough the importance of this consultation for our organization. You are determining the shape and structure of the PIDF by reviewing an institutional structure and budget model that would integrate governments, civil society groups and business in achieving green growth. This is key to the success of PIDF as we build a multi-stakeholder platform in our young organization that would enable the PIDF memberships to achieve their sustainable development objectives.

I have been informed that the workshop have progressed important discussions on the institutional arrangement, budget principles and models being proposed for the PIDF. True to the PIDF vision of multi-stakeholder engagements, civil society, private sector and government representatives discussed and debated these in details during the workshop.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In closing, let me reiterate the target of this consultation process and that is to have an Establishment Agreement signed and adopted by our Leaders in September. Your efforts and dedications in the last day and half is one of those in a series of consultations that would ensure our Leaders to successfully give an institutional life to the PIDF.

Finally, I would also like to convey my sincere appreciations and gratitude to all of you delegates for your participations and contributions during the workshop. For those of you travelling back home, my best wishes and safe travels back to your loved ones.

With these few remarks, I now declare the workshop close.

Vinaka Vakalevu & Thank you.