



SPARTAN EVENT 2024

OPENING ADDRESS BY DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION HON VILIAME GAVOKA.

November 15, 2024

Koro Lawn, Hilton Fiji Beach Resort & Spa

4:30 PM

Nadi

First and foremost, I acknowledge the traditional owners of these lands which we now stand.

Na Vanua o Nadi, Were Levu i Navatulevu, na kea Viyagwane na Jui Nadi.

The traditional owners of the land hosting the Spartans Race 2024, Na Vanua o Betoraurau, Were Levu i Erenavula na Viyagwane na Jui Sabeto.

Their leaders – past, present and emerging.

Spartan Directors, Fernando Samaha, Robert Camilleri,
Permanent Secretary for Tourism and Civil Aviation,
Salaseini Daunabuna,
Mr. James Pridgeon, Representative of Fiji Airways,
Chief Executive Officer for Tourism Fiji, Mr Brent Hill,
Spartan Ambassadors,
Distinguished Sponsors,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Introduction

Bula vinaka, and a warm welcome to each of you!

It is an honor to be here today as we officially launch the 2024 Spartan event in Fiji. Today, we embark on a journey that is more than just a race; it's an experience that captures the essence of resilience, strength, and the Fijian spirit.

The Spartan Spirit and Wellness

Ladies and gentlemen, as we come together for this extraordinary event, we celebrate more than physical endurance. The Spartan philosophy is rooted in a holistic approach to health that balances body, mind, and spirit. This vision aligns with Fiji's values of community, wellness, and interconnectedness.

Embracing this philosophy means not only training hard but living a life that values resilience, balance, and purpose. From the focus on nutrition and physical fitness to mental strength, the Spartan ideal inspires us all to lead healthier lives, empowering us to contribute meaningfully to our families and communities.

Fiji's Commitment to Wellness Tourism

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we host this international event, we showcase our country's growing role in the wellness tourism sector. Fiji has emerged as a prime destination for travelers seeking health-conscious and adventure-filled experiences. The Spartan event reflects our commitment to wellness tourism and demonstrates Fiji's dedication to offering enriching and transformative experiences.

In 2023, the inaugural Fiji Spartan Trifecta drew over 3,370 participants, with 65 percent arriving from overseas. This event's impact extends across various sectors, stimulating local businesses—from accommodations and dining to transportation and more. We are immensely grateful to our event partners, local landowning units, and communities whose support has made this possible. Their involvement has amplified our mission to make Fiji a beacon of health tourism.

Fiji Government's Investment and Vision

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Fiji Government has dedicated substantial resources to this event, supporting its growth and fostering opportunities that drive economic benefits and lasting change locally. Through our Memorandum of Understanding with Events PTY Limited and close collaboration with sponsors, we are ensuring that Fiji fully benefits from this event.

The direct return on investment from last year's event alone was estimated at over FJ\$7 million, with economic activity spanning flights, accommodations, food, and services. Beyond the economic gains, the event brings invaluable global exposure to our beautiful islands, with extensive media coverage reaching millions worldwide.

Reflections and Future Aspirations

Ladies and Gentlemen

Reflecting on our experience from last year, we have learned valuable lessons. In planning the 2024 event, we aim to make logistical improvements, enhance

collaboration, and broaden community engagement. These efforts will not only elevate the Spartan experience but ensure that Fiji remains a competitive and attractive destination on the global stage.

In addition, we aim to make this year's event even more inclusive, engaging more local youth and families in the festivities. Through programs like the Spartan Kids Race, we are nurturing a future generation that values fitness, teamwork, and resilience.

Call to Action

Ladies and Gentlemen

To conclude, I encourage all of you—participants, supporters, and volunteers—to fully immerse yourselves in this event. Whether you're here to compete, cheer, or lend a hand, know that your presence and energy make this event extraordinary. Together, we are strengthening Fiji's standing as a world-class wellness destination.

As we enter this 2024 Spartan journey, let us move forward with determination and unity, proving once again the strength that lies within Fiji and each one of us.

Thank you, and may the best team WIN!

Vinaka vakalevu!