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Speech by H.E. Mr. CHIBA Hirohisa,  
Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Vanuatu,  
at the Handing Over Ceremony for  
“The Project for Provision of Emergency Response Vehicles  
to Vanuatu Red Cross Society”  
at the VRCS Headquarters, Port Vila, at 2:00p.m., 4 March 2021  
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- **Mr. Moses Stevens Jenery, President of the Vanuatu Red Cross Society,**
- **Mr. Ati George Sokomanu, Former President of the Republic of Vanuatu and Former President as well as Honorary Member of the Vanuatu Red Cross Society,**
- **Mr. Dickinson Tevi, Interim Secretary General of the Vanuatu Red Cross Society,**
- **Mr. Johnston Tau, Treasurer of the Vanuatu Red Cross Society,**
- **Former Secretary General of the Society, Madame Jacqueline de Gaillande,**
- **Representatives of Ministry of Internal Affairs, NDMO (National Disaster Mitigation Office) and DESPAC (Department of Strategic Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination),**
- **Board members, volunteers and staff members of the Society,**
- **Invited Guests,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Konchiwa and Very Good Afternoon to you all,**

**I wish to express my sincere appreciation for the warm hospitality accorded to us by the Vanuatu Red Cross Society.**

**On behalf of the Government and the people of Japan, it is my great honour to officially hand over two brand new four wheel drive vehicles to the Vanuatu Red Cross Society or the VRCS in short, this afternoon. The procurement of these two vehicles which are worth over 6 million Vatu has been realized under Japan's Grant Assistance for Grass-Roots Human Security Projects or GGP in short.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**As we all know, amongst the South Pacific nations, Vanuatu is one of the most vulnerable to natural disasters including earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions and cyclones. Many people were affected by category 5 TC Harold which devastated the northern part of the country last year.**

**It is impossible for us to avert natural disasters, but we can reduce the risk and mitigate the effects of the disasters on us. We can also work together to support victims and assist their efforts for recovery and reconstruction.**

**The people of Vanuatu continue to remain resilient against such adversities, but it is crucial to deliver prompt and appropriate emergency relief supplies to the victims, especially to those who are most affected in the remote areas.**

**In this conjunction, I admire the VRCS for its tireless services and endeavours to support the most affected victims of natural disasters. As one of the first responders of emergency assistance in the aftermath of natural disasters, the VRCS always plays a critical role in delivering necessary aid, and in many cases lifesaving assistance, to the most remote households in dire need of relief.**

**The close cooperation with the VRCS has become more significant not only for the central and local governments of Vanuatu but also for international donors to realize effective supply of emergency relief aid to people especially to those who are in remote areas, given the current restrictions brought about by COVID-19 pandemic.**

**I look forward to these new vehicles, being deployed at the respective VRCS branches in Santo and Pentecost, and further boosting the emergency response capabilities of the VRCS, for the benefit of the grassroots communities of Vanuatu.**

**It gives me great happiness to highlight that, through this assistance we are not only enhancing the VRCS, but on a broader scale for the nation as a whole, we are meaningfully strengthening its ability to save lives and care for its people, in times of national emergencies caused by natural disasters.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**On this auspicious occasion, I sincerely request you, the distinguished representatives of the VRCS to exercise proper care and timely maintenance of these vehicles ensuring their longevity in the service of the people of Vanuatu.**

**I conclude with confidence that this project will further strengthen the cooperative relations and friendship between the governments and the peoples of Japan and Vanuatu.**

**Arigato Gozaimashita.**

**Tangkyu tumas.**

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