
**Speech by Mr. IKEDA Hirotsugu, Chargé d'affaires, Embassy of Japan in Kiribati, at the
Signing and Exchange of Notes for the Economic and Social Development Programme,**

28th February 2023, 10:00AM, MFMRD Boardroom, Kiribati

Dr. Agnes Yeeting, Secretary for Ministry of Fisheries and
Marine Resource Development,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Ko na Mauri and Good Morning

On behalf of the Government and the people of Japan,
it is my great honour to participate in the auspicious signing
of the Exchange of Notes for additional funding from Japan
for the procurement of Fish Collection Vessel which will
support livelihood of outer islands' fishermen.

At the outset, I would like to extend my sincere
appreciation to the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
Development (MFMRD) for hosting today's signing ceremony.

Today's ceremony is indeed a special occasion for my
Embassy in Tarawa as this is the first occasion of signing an
official document since opening of my embassy here.

In May 2022 the initial grant, worth approximately 5.5 million Australian Dollars, for this procurement was signed between Japan and Kiribati. After that, both parties found that, under current global situation, additional funding is required in order to secure the capacity of the vessel. In this regard, Japan decided to provide additional funding worth about 1.6 Million Australian Dollars. As the result, the total cost of this project becomes 7.1 Million Dollars. This is a significant investment to your country's fisheries sector and will support to achieve Kiribati 20 year vision (KV20).

It has been so unfortunate that Kiribati did not have any special vessel assigned for the transport of the catch caught by outer-island fishermen to Tarawa, where the demand for fish and other seafood is high. Such transport takes time and without refrigerator the catch will go bad and must be thrown away at times. So many outer-island fishermen had difficulties in trading with Tarawa and international markets. Now, the fish collection vessel to be provided will realize timely and efficient shipment of fresh fish caught in the outer islands and

access of Kiribati's fisheries products. Therefore, the outer-island residents can get alternative income and livelihoods opportunities. Japan wishes to realize the world where no one is left behind, which the United Nation's SDGs aims at, and this project will help Japan to realize that.

I am sure that you are aware that, since the independence of Kiribati, Japan has been providing various kinds of cooperation to the Government of Kiribati, such as the Nippon Causeway, Betio Ports, electric power supply, donation of health and medical service equipment, special vehicles, farming and aqua-cultural equipment, various training programs and scholarships. Japan has also donated to Kiribati 56,000 doses of AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine manufactured in Japan. Furthermore, through international organizations such as UNICEF and WHO, Japan also provided support to Pacific Island Countries including Kiribati for strengthening immunization capacity and enhancing COVID-19 preparedness and response efforts. Japanese people are

pleased that the friendship with Kiribati has been strengthened through these projects.

I promise that this project, and future projects with my country, will enhance the peacefulness and happiness of the society of Kiribati. My Government will walk forward together with your Government hand in hand. Our friendship and mutual cooperation will contribute to making the whole world better in future.

Ko-Rabwa (ko-rabba) and Tekeraoi.

END