
Address by H.E. Mr. Rokuichiro MICHII, Ambassador of Japan to Tuvalu, At the
Handing over Ceremony for the “The Project for Procurement of Backhoe loader in
Nui Island” to Nui Kaupule, 15 August 2024, at 15:45

The Honourable Dr. Maina Vakafua Talia, Minister for Home
Affairs, Climate Change & Environment,

Esteemed Members of the Nui Kaupule,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Talofa, Good Afternoon, and Konnichiwa to you all.

Firstly, I wish to convey my sincere appreciation to the
Honourable Minister Dr. Talia , and Nui Kaupule for the warm
hospitality extended to us as well as for organizing this
auspicious occasion today. I would also like to convey my
gratitude to the people of Tuvalu for making us feel at home
with their genuine friendliness since our arrival here.

Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of the Government and people of Japan, it is my great honour and pleasure to hand over a backhoe loader to Nui Kaupule. I am also very pleased to say that the Government of Japan has provided funding worth approximately One Hundred and Seventy One Thousand Australian dollars (AUD \$ 170,950) for procurement of this backhoe loader.

Upon recognizing the difficulties of food security faced by the Nui island community, the Government of Japan decided to provide funding for this project.

Tuvalu is one of the smallest and most vulnerable countries in the world and together with other Small Island Developing States (SIDS) it has contributed the least towards climate change yet today it is at the forefront, facing the brunt

of climate change. Due to the harmful impacts of the past two cyclones, namely TC Pam in 2015 and TC Tino in January 2020, Nui island has been experiencing severe food shortage. For that very reason, Nui Kaupule is encouraging the community to practice agroforestry in order to boost food security. This combination of agriculture and forestry to create productive and sustainable land use is beneficial for the community, livestock and the environment. The crops yielded from such efforts will help address food security, the trees and shrubs grown will help with livestock grazing and support wildlife besides preventing soil erosion, not to mention providing a barrier to strong winds and tidal surges. This is where the role of a backhoe loader comes into play, as it will be needed to clear land and debris from the cyclones for planting in addition to digging proper drainages as well as carrying out earthmoving and excavating works in cases

where building embankments or barriers are needed to keep out the encroaching sea water.

This project has been implemented by the Government of Japan through its Grassroots Grant Assistance Projects Scheme or the GGP. I am pleased to highlight that since 1992, Japan has funded 51 GGP projects in Tuvalu, which are collectively worth more than 3 million US dollars.

May I also take this opportunity to convey on behalf of the Government of Japan, my sincere appreciation for the esteemed participation of the Honourable Prime Minister Teo and the gracious presence of the Honourable Foreign Minister Panapa at the Tenth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting or the PALM10 held in Japan from 16th to 18th July. This Summit was a gathering of the Leaders of Pacific Island

Countries and Japan. I am pleased to say that the valuable contribution made by Tuvalu, just like other participating countries, was very important in making the PALM10 truly successful.

I wish to highlight that upon the successful conclusion of PALM10, our Leaders jointly released the Japan-Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Declaration. Under the auspices of this Declaration, the Leaders committed to work in close collaboration on seven priority areas of cooperation for the next three years, in line with thematic areas articulated in the '2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent'. From amongst the seven priority areas, it is very heartening to see that this project is in line with Priority Area 5 namely; "Climate Change and Disasters" and Priority Area 6 namely; "Ocean and Environment" which is further aligned to the Tuvalu

Government's National-Development-Strategy for
Sustainable Development 2021-2030.

Such close harmonization of our projects and its objectives with Tuvalu's National Development aspirations is key to Japan's Development Cooperation with Tuvalu. Therefore, we are extremely pleased to be able to provide this meaningful and tangible support for the sustainable development of Tuvalu.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to emphasise that, when offering assistance, Japan respects Tuvalu's sovereignty and its needs to the fullest extent possible. Our relationship is not that of a mere donor-recipient arrangement but one that is based on equal partnership.

We remain committed to assisting Tuvalu's socioeconomic development and addressing common challenges by elevating cooperation through both, in the Pacific way as well as in coherence with Japan's new plan for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific.

I conclude with confidence that today's handing over ceremony will be fondly cherished by all of us present here which serves to strengthen economic and climate resilience of Tuvalu while contributing meaningfully to its sustainable development nation and further enhancing friendship between the Governments and peoples of our two countries.

Fakafetai Lasi, Thank You and Arigato Gozaimasu.

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