

**Embassy of Japan
Tonga**

PRESS RELEASE

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Japan's Non-Project Grant Aid Handover of Sports Equipment to Tonga

The Government of Japan through the Non-Project Grant Aid, NPGA handed over sports equipment valued at \$1.4million pa'anga to Tonga's Ministry of Internal Affairs on Friday, 2nd March 2018 at the Taufaiva Stadium. H.E Mr. Tetsuya Ishii, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Tonga handed over the equipment to Hon. 'Akosita Lavulavu, Minister for Internal Affairs of the Kingdom of Tonga. Present at the ceremony were Lord Vaea, President of Tonga Boxing Association along with Presidents of National Sports Association and Federations in Tonga.

His Excellency Mr. Tetsuya Ishii said, "on behalf of the people and Government of Japan, I wish to express our deep sympathy for the losses and destruction in Tonga caused by tropical cyclone Gita. I do wish that the relief goods from the Government of Japan, which arrived last week Friday, are fully utilized to meet urgent needs of the affected families throughout the country. I do also wish that by working together we will reach the earliest recovery possible."

"I vividly remembered the nationwide excitement during the Rugby League World Cup last November which united the people of Tonga in the field of sport, and I do wish that these provisions will again help unite the country, especially during these difficult times in the aftermath of cyclone Gita," stated H.E. Ishii.

The sports equipment is the first patch of Japan's Non-project Grant Aid for Economic and Social Development Program, providing products for athletics, weight lifting and boxing signed in March, 2016.

His Excellency noted that the sports equipment will contribute greatly to the Kingdom's goals of promoting exercise and healthy living for the people, especially in trying to combat non-communicable diseases. He entrusted that the equipment will be fully utilized to prepare Tongan athletes for regional and international sports competition, and for a successful representation of Tonga in the Rugby World Cup 2019 and the 2020 Summer Olympics and Paralympics in Tokyo, Japan.

Hon. 'Akosita Lavulavu thanked His Excellency and the Government of Japan for their generous assistance which will make an immediate difference in the life of Tonga's athletes. She also highlighted that having these proper equipment will improve athletics performance, lift their spirit and boost their commitments.

Japan's NPGA was introduced as a form of commodity aid to promote economic and social development of recipient countries. The NPGA handover hopes to also contribute to Tonga's efforts to meet its Strategic Development Framework and the nation's steadfast collaboration for sustainable development.

END.

Attached; photos



H.E Mr. Tetsuya Ishii, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Kingdom of Tonga handed over sport equipment funded through Japan's NPGA to Hon. 'Akosita Lavulavu, Minister of Internal Affairs on Friday, 2 March 2018 at the Teufaiva Stadium.



Inspecting of the sport equipment for boxing at the handover ceremony.



H.E Mr. Tetsuya Ishii with his remarks at the handover ceremony of the Sport Equipment.



H.E Mr. Tetsuya Ishii with Hon. 'Akosita Lavulavu and Presidents of Tonga's Sports Association and Federations at the handover ceremony on Friday, 2 March 2018.