

# Embassy of Japan

## Tonga

### **PRESS RELEASE**

CE/2018/02

March 22, 2018

#### **Soroban Education a bond of friendship between Tonga and Japan**

The 8<sup>th</sup> National Soroban Competition for the Kingdom of Tonga was held on Thursday, 22 March 2018 at the Queen Salote Memorial Hall. Top pupils were awarded prizes by Hon. Penisimani 'Epenisa Fifita, Minister for Education and Training and His Excellency Mr. Tetsuya Ishii Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Kingdom of Tonga. Mr. Masao Fujii, Director General of the International Soroban Diffusion Foundation (ISDF), visited Nuku'alofa for the event.

His Excellency Mr. Tetsuya Ishii in his address expressed his sympathy for the people in the aftermath of Cyclone Gita, yet he was grateful that parents and teachers cooperation highlights the value of education for children, and teaching Soroban in the Math subject of primary schools.

He emphasized to the pupils the principal merits of learning Soroban which is exhibited by the 3C's. "Through Soroban, the first advantage for pupils and all of us is improving our capability for Calculation "fai fika". Secondly we can enhance our Concentration "masila e tokanga" and the third but not the least we have greater Confidence "loto to'a."

"Soroban is widely recognized as not only a way to improve the mathematical skills of children and young people, but also to foster self-confidence, concentration and memory retention," stated the Ambassador.

Hon Penisimani Fifita in his keynote address said that the National Soroban Competition has continued to be one of the significant events in the Ministry's annual calendar of events, bringing together teachers and pupils not only to compete and showcase their mathematical ability and skills but also to renew and strengthen cultural and educational bonds between Japan and the Kingdom of Tonga. He acknowledged and appreciated Japan's commitment and support in the development of Soroban in Tonga for over forty years, and thanked Mr. Masao Fuji for passing on soroban skills to local education officers.

In the competition, pupils competed each other in a written, oral and flash problem, and every year since 2011 the winner of the written category for class 5 wins also a trip fully funded by the International Soroban Diffusion Foundation, ISDF to participate in the annual Soroban camp in Oze, Gunma Prefecture, in August. Vai Mafi from Mu'a Government Primary School won the prize this year. (Kindly refer to the complete result of the completion attached herewith)

Before the competition, a moment of silence was observed in tribute to Professor Toshio Nakano who passed away in last May at the age of 96. Professor Nakano introduced Soroban education to Tonga with His Late Majesty King Tupou IV as its Patron. Mr. Fujii was one of the earliest members of the Professor Nakano's team to visit Tonga in the late 1970s.

Later in the evening, a reception was hosted by H.E Mr. Tetsuya Ishii at his residence in recognition of their joint effort whereby their vision and commitment in Soroban enhanced friendship between the people of Tonga and Japan. In his welcoming speech, he noted that he was impressed by the pupils' confidence, skills and loveliness at the competition.

Soroban education is now compulsory in Maths subject for Primary Schools throughout Tonga, also at the teachers training courses of the Tonga Institute of Education. The annual National Soroban Competition is co-hosted by the Ministry of Education and Training and the Embassy of Japan, with the collaboration from JICA and ISDF.

END

Photos:



Hon. Penisimani Fifita, Minister for Education and Training with H.E Mr. Tetsuya Ishii and Mr. Masao Fujii with the first and second winners in the Class 5 written category of the National Soroban Competition on Thursday 22 March 2018, Vai Mafi and Sulia Hu'ahulu



H.E Mr. Tetsuya Ishii with Vai Mafi of Mu'a GPS with her prizes in being top in the Class 5 Oral category.



Top three in the Class 5 Written category.



Overall top school was won Teachers and Soroban pupil from Vahe Hahake District



Soroban Pupils during the National Soroban Competition on 22 March 2018.



Soroban Teachers of Tonga enjoyed the reception for soroban.

## RESULT – Tonga National Competition (March 22, 2018)

### Written/Class 4

Prize	School/ District	Name
1	Tongatapu Vahe Kolo / Falakiko Asisi	'Alipate Tausinga
2	Ha'apai / GPS Pangai	Sesilia Vaha'i
3	Tongatapu Vahe Hahake/ GPS Mu'a	Middlemore Ma'umalanga

### Written/Class 5

Prize	District	Name
1	Tongatapu Vahe Hahake / GPS Mu'a	Vai Mafi
2	Vava'u / Liviela GPS	Sulia Hu'ahulu
3	Tongatapu Vahe Kolo/Falakiko 'Asisi	Likamoana Kautoke

Oral/Class 4

Prize	District	Name
1	Tongatapu Vahe Kolo / Falakiko Asisi	'Alipate Tausinga
2	Vava'u / GPS Neiafu	Siueti Longani
3	Vava'u / GPS Neiafu	Tangimesia Toke

Oral/Class5

Prize	District	Name
1	Tongatapu Vahe Hahake / GPS Mu'a	Vai Mafi
2	'Eua / GPS Angaha	Mafi Vakauta
3	Ha'apai / Tongoleleka GPS	Francis 'Ungo'unga

Flash/Class 4

Prize	District	Name
1	Vava'u / GPS Neiafu	Siueti Longani
2	Tongatapu Vahe Hahake / Ha'amonga GPS	'Ofa ki Manono Finau
3	Tongatapu Vahe Hahake / Hoi GPS	Rosary Tangifua

Flash/Class 5

Prize	District	Name
1	Tongatapu Vahe Kolo / Falakiko Asisi	Likamoana Kautoke
2	Tongatapu Vahe Hahake / GPS Mu'a	Vai Mafi
3	Tongatapu Vahe Hihifo / Tokomololo GPS	Tupou Seini 'Ungo'unga

Teachers

Prize	District	Name
1	Tongatapu Vahe Hahake / GPS Hoi	Lesieli Tu'itupou
2	Ha'apai / GPS Faleloa	Filisi 'Uto'one Mafi
3	Tongatapu Vahe Hihifo / Tokomololo GPS	Kolianita 'Ungo'unga

Schools

Prize	District
1	Vahe Hahake (Eastern Tongatapu)
2	Vava'u
3	Vahe Kolo (Central Tongatapu)