

# Embassy of Japan Tonga

## **PRESS RELEASE**

EOJ/2017/04

September 27, 2017

### **Farewell Reception for H.E Mr. Yukio Numata**

On the evening of September 27, a farewell reception for H.E Mr. Yukio Numata, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Kingdom of Tonga was held at the residence in 'Anana, who will conclude two years and a half tenure in the Kingdom, next month.

Hon. 'Akilisi Pohiva, Prime Minister of Tonga attended the farewell reception along with Hon. Lord Chief Justice Owen Paulson, H.E Sarah Walsh, High Commissioner of New Zealand to Tonga, H.E Andrew Ford High Commissioner of Australia to Tonga and Mrs. Ford, H.E Mr. Wang Baodong, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Tonga, His Eminence Cardinal Mafi and Reverend Semisi Fonau, President of the Free Church of Tonga. Present also at the reception were Lord Fulivai, Governor of Vava'u, Lord Dalgety, Cabinet Ministers, People's Representatives to Tonga's Legislative Assembly, Head of International Agencies in Nuku'alofa, Business Managers of both Public and Private Sectors, and close friends of Ambassador Numata and his wife, Mrs. Yukiko Numata.

Prime Minister Pohiva in his remarks extended his sincere admiration for all the efforts and commitments by H.E Mr. Yukio Numata in advancing relations between Tonga and Japan. "I have enjoyed your confidence in the many ways that Tonga and Japan can benefit from each other. You have been such a good Ambassador of Japan to our Kingdom and you have demonstrated an appreciation and understanding of our Tongan values and the needs of our people, which makes it all worthwhile."

The Prime Minister in particular emphasized two most vivid commitments of Ambassador Numata during his tenure which were; the visit of Their Imperial Highnesses, The Crown Prince Naruhito and Crown Princess Masako of Japan to Tonga for the Coronation of Their Majesties, King Tupou IV and Queen Nanasipau'u in 2015, and his vision to drive forward the infrastructural and economic development of the Kingdom by upgrading the Fuaa domestic wharf. "Both are remarkable and noteworthy achievements, and tonight, I have the pleasure of extending the gratitude of the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Tonga – to Your Excellency and the Government of Japan,"

"We thank you for your service, your commitment and your personal love for Tonga which shines through your short time with us. We do hope that you and Madame Numata will cherish the work, the memories and the many friendships that you have made in the Kingdom," expressed Prime Minister Pohiva before he proposed a toast for the good health and continued success of Ambassador Numata.

H.E Sarah Walsh warmly extended her admiration and pleasure to have served Tonga along with H.E Mr Yukio Numata and Mrs. Yukiko Numata. "On behalf of the Diplomatic corps, we have sincerely enjoyed spending time with such a collegial, kind, positive and experienced diplomat as yourself. We

have appreciated your warmth and openness, your coordination on aid projects and your discussion on issues important to Tonga and the broader Pacific.”

“We wish you both well for the future, thank you for your friendship and thank you to your family for lending you to us over these past few years,” she said.

H.E Mr. Yukio Numata arrived Nuku’alofa in May 2015 with his wife, as the third Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Kingdom of Tonga. During his tenure, both His Excellency and Mrs. Numata were honoured to witness significant moments in Tonga’s history including the coronation of Their Majesties King Tupou IV and Queen Nanasipau’u, the visit of Their Imperial Highnesses the Crown Prince and Crown Princess of Japan, Tupou College’s 150 Anniversary Celebration, the inauguration of His Eminence Cardinal Mafi, the Royal Funeral of her Late Majesty, The Queen Mother Halaevalu Mata’aho and more recently His Majesty King Tupou VI’s 58<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration in Vava’u.

He extended his heartfelt appreciation for everyone’s cooperation during this term in Tonga. “It truly has been a great pleasure for me and my wife, to have lived and worked here in the Kingdom of Tonga. Our memories are not only filled with experiences from my Embassy’s work but also with ones from my personal life, such as making and eating *‘umu* and swimming with the whales.”

“I developed some delightful impressions that have strengthened my warm friendship with you. I am overwhelmed by memories of each person, of challenges that we have overcome and accomplishments that we have shared.”

“I want to thank everyone for your kindness and I wish everyone a success in all future endeavour. I am sure that our warm relationship will continue with my successor, H.E Mr. Tetsuya Ishii,” he said.

Their love to Tongan lifestyle and culture was evident in both His Excellency and Mrs. Numata taking Tongan language classes, and their many various trips to the outer islands including Niuatoputapu islands. Mrs. Numata deepened her interest with Tonga by sharing her skills as a professional pianist while volunteering as a Music Teacher at the Tupou Tertiary Institute.

Mr. Shinji Yoshiura, Resident Representative of JICA Tonga office delivered the closing remarks at the reception and assured that Tonga is left with a vivid remembrance of the cordial friendship with His Excellency and Mrs. Numata. The guests took turns in bidding their farewells while also enjoying various Japanese cuisines prepared and Japanese wines served at the reception, and the surprised performance of the Tongan tau’olunga dance by Ambassador Numata.

Tonga and Japan have shared their cordial diplomatic and friendly relations for 47 years.

END

Attached: Photos

Photos:



H.E Mr. Yukio Numata, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Kingdom in his farewell reception on Wednesday, 27 September 2017 at his residence.



The toast proposed by Prime Minister 'Akilisi Pohiva for the good health and success of Ambassador Numata.





Farewell toast from Head of Missions lead by Her Excellency Sarah Walsh, High Commissioner of New Zealand to Tonga.



H.E Mr. Yukio Numata and Mrs. Numata with Prime Minister Pohiva, Cardinal Mafi, Rev. Semisi Fonua and Dr.Sione Ngongo Kioa during the farewell reception.



Invited guest at the farewell reception included Ken Walker and wife, Police Commissioner and wife and Hon. Mateni Tapueluelu, Minister of Police.



Sione Veikoso, Hon. Semisi Fakahau with Mr. Yasuhiko Kamata Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of Japan and Mr. Shinji Yoshiura, JICA-Tonga Resident Representative.





Head of Mission in Nuku'alofa, H.E Andrew Ford and Mrs Ford, H.E Sarah Walsh, H.E Mr. Yukio Numata and Mrs. Numata and H.E Wang Baodong.



H.E Mr. Yukio Numata and Mrs. Numata with some of their Tongan friends at the reception.



H.E Mr. Yukio Numata performing a local Tongan dance



H.E Mr. Yukio Numata with Lord Fulivai, Governor of Vava'u at the farewell reception on Wednesday.





H.E Mr. Yukio Numata and Mrs. Numata together with Prime Minister Pohiva and former Deputy Prime Minister Siaosi Sovaleni.



H.E Andrew Ford also enjoyed a glass of sake during the reception.





Mrs. Numata along with TTI Music Teachers during the reception.



Pleasurable moments with Lord Dalgety before he departed the reception.



H.E Mr. Yukio Numata with Mr. Shinji Yoshiura, JICA-Tonga Resident Representative and JICA Tonga staff.



Farewell Reception for H.E Mr Yukio Numata and Mrs. Numata on Wednesday 27 September 2017.