

Embassy of Japan  
Tonga

**PRESS RELEASE**

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February 25, 2021

**His Majesty, Emperor Naruhito of Japan's 61<sup>st</sup> Birthday celebrated in Nuku'alofa**

On 25 February 2020, His Excellency, Mr. MUNENAGA Kensaku, Ambassador Designate of Japan to Tonga hosted a reception in honour of the 61<sup>st</sup> Birthday of His Majesty, Emperor Naruhito of Japan. His Royal Highness Prince Ata, graced the occasion as the guest of honour.

The Prime Minister of Tonga, Honourable Rev. Dr. Pohiva Tu'i'onetoa attended the reception along with Cabinet Ministers, Lord Fakafanua, Speaker of Tonga's Legislative Assembly and Lady Fakafanua, Lord Tevita Tupou and Lady Tupou, and Heads of Diplomatic Mission. Also present were Lord Vaea and Nobles of the Realm, Hon. Lord Chief Justice Michael Whitten, Police Commissioner, Attorney General, People's Representatives to the Legislative Assembly, Honorary Consuls, International Organizations Representatives, Government Executive Officials, Public and Private Business General Managers, Japan related alumni representatives and many other guests.

In addressing the occasion H.E. MUNENAGA surprised his guests by welcoming them partially in Tongan language. He said, "*Oku ou fiefia 'aupito 'i ho 'omou me'a mai ki he talitali fakapule'anga ko 'eni, 'o e 'aho fakahifo 'a 'ene 'Afi, 'Emipola 'o Siapani. Ko ho 'omou me'a mai ko e fakamo'oni ia 'o e mafana mo e loloto e va 'a hotau ongo fonua 'i he tapa kotoa pe.*" ("I really appreciate your attendance in our national day reception to celebrate the Japanese Emperor's Birthday. Your presence in this evening is proof of the solid nexus between our countries in every level.)

Tonga and Japan share many similarities and Ambassador MUNENAGA stated that, "Like Tonga, Japan also faces various natural disasters every year. This year is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami in 2011 and I'd like to express our deepest thanks to the disaster relief fund from Tonga to Japan at that time, which symbolized the true friendship and mutual assistance." He emphasized that based on many experiences, both countries have acquired resilience against disasters and can exchange insights, knowledge and effective measures on disaster prevention and management, which will be valuable for both of them.

Japan commits to ongoing projects for Tonga with the current Introduction of Nationwide Early Warning System, or NEWS Project, and new rounds of the Non-Project Grant Aid or NPGA for the provision of equipment for practical disaster management, as well as medical equipment to combat disruptions caused by COVID-19 arriving next month to Tonga.

Hon. Prime Minister Dr. Pohiva Tu'i'onetoa in his keynote address extended best wishes to His Imperial Majesty Emperor Naruhito on the occasion of his 61<sup>st</sup> Birthday. "May His Imperial Majesty the Emperor continue to enjoy good health, prosperity and profound happiness." He continued to state that the occasion "reiterates our Government-to-Government commitments to each other having achieved 50

years of diplomatic relations. We have a strong bond that continues to grow from strength to strength. The Tonga – Japan relations is based on the positive foundation of our people to people exchanges. It is a unique partnership that we have all enjoyed and mutually respect.”

“Tonga appreciates all the assistance from Japan including the assistance to enhance the disaster warning and response systems and to support disaster recovery and resilience,” stated Prime Minister Tu’i’oneoa.

The addresses were followed by the toasts, to honour His Majesty Emperor Naruhito, and for the prosperity of both the Kingdom of Tonga and Japan. The guests were invited to enjoy Japanese cuisines cooked by the Ambassador’s chef, using Tongan ingredients, with a selection of Japanese sake.

END.

Attached: Photos

Photos:



His Royal Highness Prince Ata with His Excellency Mr. MUNENAGA Kensaku and Mrs. MUNENAGA at the occasion to honour the 61<sup>st</sup> Birthday of His Majesty, Emperor Naruhito of Japan, in Nuku'alofa.



H.E Mr. MUNENAGA Kensaku welcomed guests at the reception partially in Tongan language.

*For further enquires please contact: Mr. Fujiwara Issei, Second Secretary, Embassy of Japan in Tonga.  
Level 5, National Reserve Bank of Tonga Building / Telephone: 22-221 / Fax 27-025*



Prime Minister Hon. Rev. Dr. Pohiva Tu'i'onetoa in addressing the occasion.



H.E Mr. and Mrs. MUNENAGA with Speaker of Tonga Legislative Assembly Lord Fakafanua and Lady Fakafanua.

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Hon. Lord Chief Justice Michael Whitten with Mr. & Mrs. MUNENAGA.



Tupou College Principal, Rev 'Alifeleti 'Atiola and Mrs. 'Atiola with H.E Mr. and Mrs. MUNENAGA.

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Photo exhibition of the relationship between the people of Tonga and Japan viewed by guests.



The reception on Thursday, 25 October 2021 to honour the 61<sup>st</sup> Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor Naurhito.

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The reception was held at the Ambassador's residence in 'Anana.



US Peace Corps Country Director, Mrs. Anna Todorova with staff joined the reception.

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Hon. Tu'ilakepa with Deputy Police Commissioner Tevita Vailea attended the reception.

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