

Embassy of Japan
Tonga

PRESS RELEASE

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Exchange of Notes on Japan's Additional Assistance for the "Introduction of the Nationwide Early Warning System and Strengthening Disaster Communications Project"

His Excellency Mr. MUNENAGA Kensaku, Ambassador Designate of Japan to Tonga and the Honourable Rev. Dr. Pohiva Tu'i'onetoa, Prime Minister of Tonga signed on the Exchange of Notes for the additional assistance to the "Introduction of the Nationwide Early Warning System and Strengthening Disaster Communications the NEWS Project" on Tuesday 27 April 2021, at the Prime Minister's Office, Nuku'alofa.

The signing ceremony was witnessed by Hon. Poasi Tei, Tonga's Minister for MEIDECC and responsible for the NEWS Project, along with Chief Executive Officers of involved Government Ministries.

"Today, I am happy to announce that an additional \$207 million Japanese Yen, which is around \$1.9million US dollars has been provided by the Government of Japan to carry on and complete the Project," stated H.E. Mr. MUNENAGA. The NEWS Project was launched to strengthen the capabilities of disaster risk management and to improve the quality of domestic telecommunication throughout the Kingdom, including Niuafu'ou and Niuaotupapu islands, and was expected to be completed late last year. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic this Project was suspended and the arrival of technicians from Japan for the installation of antennas, emergency radios and early warning systems was delayed. His Excellency MUNENAGA added that even though both countries are facing a lot of challenges due to COVID-19, the Project must be completed so that Tonga could be well prepared against natural disasters.

Hon. Rev. Dr. Pohiva Tu'i'onetoa, Prime Minister of Tonga, expressed his gratitude to the Government of Japan in lending the additional assistance to ensure that the NEWS Project is successfully completed. He emphasized that the Project "is a high priority mission to carry out early action, to save lives and to protect livelihood and property, during the most difficult times of disaster and emergencies."

The NEWS Project is in progress with a Grant Aid Assistance from the people and the Government of Japan with an original worth of \$25million US dollars. Now being provided \$26.9 million US dollars with an additional assistance of \$1.9million US dollars.

END

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The Exchange of Notes for Japan's Additional Assistance to the NEWS Project signed by H.E. Mr. MUNENAGA Kensaku, Ambassador of Japan to Tonga and Hon. Rev. Dr. Pohiva Tu'i'onetoa the Prime Minister of Tonga on Tuesday, 27 April 2021.



The Exchange of Notes signing on Tuesday, 27 April 2021.

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H.E. Mr. MUNENAGA Kensaku, Ambassador of Japan and Hon. Rev. Dr. Pohiva Tu'i'onetoa the Prime Minister of Tonga with Hon. Poasi Tei, Minister for MEIDECC and guests at the exchange of notes signing ceremony, at the Prime Minister's Office in Nuku'alofa.