

Embassy of Japan
Tonga

PRESS RELEASE

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Japan's Emergency Grant Aid handover to Ministry of Health

His Excellency Mr. MUNENAGA Kensaku, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Tonga handed over a speedboat, funded through Japan's Emergency Grant Aid for COVID-19 Cold Chain system, to Hon. Saia Piukala, Minister for Health on Wednesday, 27 April 2022.

Japan's Emergency Grant Aid assists Pacific Island countries, including Tonga, with cold chain equipment such as cold-storage facilities and transportation for the swift distribution of vaccines to protect people from COVID-19. The grant aid of approximately 9 million US dollars for 10 Pacific Island countries, is channeled through the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Tonga's Ministry of Health received five HILUX vans in December 2021 and the speedboat as the final component for Tonga's cold chain.

The boat will be utilized to deliver COVID-19 vaccines as well as other critical health services to those who live in outer islands, H.E. Mr. MUNENAGA Kensaku said. "Considering the geographical conditions of Tonga, everybody would understand how useful it is," he said.

He appreciated the tireless efforts and devotions by involved stakeholders especially by MOH and its medical team in achieving a very high ratio of the vaccination before the arrival of COVID-19. He stated that it is a great achievement that everyone should be proud of.

Hon. Saia Piukala, Minister for Health acknowledged the generous donation from the people and Government of Japan. He said the boat will alleviate challenging tasks of medical teams in delivering services to isolate islands. "Japan has assisted Tonga in many ways and in many areas, and this donation from Japan is a symbol of good friendship between the two countries," added the Minister.

Officials from UNICEF currently in Nuku'alofa, were present at the handover ceremony. The speedboat is expected to arrive in the Vava'u islands this week to assist in the roll out of vaccination there.

END
Attached: Photos

Photos;



H.E. Mr. MUNENAGA Kensaku with Hon. Saia Piukala, Minister for Health with the speedboat handed over on Wednesday, 27 April 2022 funded by Japan's Emergency Grant Aid for COVID-19.



Inspection of the speedboat inside a container ready to aid in vaccination roll out in the outer islands.

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H.E. Mr. MUNENAGA Kensaku, Hon. Saia Piukala, Minister for Health along with UNICEF officials currently in Nuku'alofa present at the handover ceremony.



Handover ceremony to aid Tonga's cold chain project, on Wednesday 27 April 2022 at the Ministry of Health.