

## **PRESS RELEASE**

ODA /2022/10  
September 16, 2022

### **Handover of the Project for Capacity Development of ICU using Telemedicine under COVID-19 to Ministry of Health**

On 16 September 2022, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Tupouto'a 'Ulukalala opened the new Intensive Care Unit (ICU) telemedicine facility provided through the Project for Capacity Development of Intensive Care Unit using Telemedicine under COVID-19. The Project was funded by Japan International Cooperation Agency, JICA to Tonga's Ministry of Health.

His Excellency Mr. MUNENAGA Kensaku, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Tonga attended the ceremony, along with Hon. Samiu Vaipulu, Acting Prime Minister and Acting Minister for Health, Lord Tangi 'o Vaonukunuka, and Mr. TAKASHIMA Hiroaki, Resident Representative for JICA Tonga Office. Present at the ceremony were CEOs of Government Ministries, including Dr. Siale 'Akau'ola, CEO for Ministry of Health, Dr. 'Ana 'Akau'ola, Medical Superintendent of Ministry of Health and staff of the Ministry of Health, and consultants and engineers from Japan.

The Project, valued at USD\$3.5million, installed ICU containers with telemedicine system to the Vaiola Hospital, to support and strengthen services for patients with COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.

His Excellency Mr. MUNENAGA Kensaku, in addressing the ceremony said, "For the fight against COVID-19, Japan has been supporting Tonga to be well prepared and well equipped in various ways. This Telemedicine system is very useful and relevant especially for island countries, which are inevitably remote areas. By fully utilizing these facilities, we can expect steady improvement in the medical services here in Tonga not only for the Pandemic but for many other areas of our medical system. I hope that this project will play a significant role in Tonga's Medical Science for the people of this Kingdom."

Mr. TAKASHIMA Hiroaki, Resident Representative for JICA Tonga Office said the Project intensifies to overcome the COVID-19 crisis and strengthen health systems that will contribute to preparedness for future health crisis and ensuring health security. The telemedicine system connects specialist doctors and nurses in Japan with the doctors and nurses in Nuku'alofa sharing advices and knowledges into the operation of ICU units. The facility is made up of 14 containers with 5 ICU beds, which are equipped with medical equipment vital for ICU operation.

Dr. Siale 'Akauola, CEO for Ministry of Health in his vote of thanks acknowledged the significant assistance from Japan for the ICU facility and the great opportunity for development of medical technology in Tonga. He also thanked Japan for supporting the Ministry for many years and in many areas.

END

Attached: Photos

Photos;



The new ICU telemedicine containers opened by HRH Crown Prince Tupouto'a 'Ulukalala for Tonga's Ministry of Health on Friday, 16 September 2022.



HRH Crown Prince Tupouto'a 'Ulukalala and guests at the ICU containers funded by Japans International Cooperation Agency, JICA



H.E. Mr. MUNENAGA, Ambassador of Japan addressing the ceremony on Friday, 16 September at the Vaiola Hospital.



Dr. Yutaro Setoya, WHO Country Liaison Officer with Dr. Siale 'Akau'ola, CEO for Ministry of Health along with Rev. Taniela Tamo'ua at the handover ceremony for the ICU Telemedicine facility.





Inside the ICU containers handed over for Tonga's Ministry of Health funded by Japan through JICA.



The Project for Capacity Development of ICU using Telemedicine under COVID-19 Pandemic.