

PRESS RELEASE

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September 25, 2025

Exchange of Notes on Japan's Grant Aid for the Introduction of the Electronic Machine Readable Passport, for the Kingdom of Tonga

On Thursday, 25 September 2025, the Government of Japan and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) formalized the Exchange of Notes on the Project for Enhancing Border Management through the Introduction of the Electronic Machine Readable Passport to be implemented in the Kingdom of Tonga.

His Royal Highness, Crown Prince Tupouto'a 'Ulukalala, Tonga's Minister for Foreign Affairs honored the signing ceremony between His Excellency Mr. INAGAKI Hisao, Ambassador of Japan to Tonga, and Mr. Solomon Kantha, Chief of Mission and Pacific Subregional Coordinator of the IOM with His presence.

The Project funded by the Government of Japan, provides a grant assistance of 882million Japanese Yen equivalent to approximately \$6 million US dollars.

His Excellency Mr. INAGAKI Hisao congratulated the collaborative efforts of the Japanese Government, the Kingdom of Tonga and the IOM, which will implement the Project in close coordination with the relevant authorities, including the Immigration Department of Tonga's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "The introduction of the e-passport system is a significant step towards achieving the goals outlined in the PALM10 Leaders' Declaration and the Joint Action Plan, particularly in the areas of "Peace and Security" and "Technology and Connectivity."

"The e-passport system will modernize Tonga's administrative services, providing citizens with faster and more efficient access to government services. The integration of this system will allow the Government of Tonga to manage data with high security standards in line with international norms. This not only mitigates the risk of identity fraud but also enhances the overall governance and transparency of immigration processes," said Ambassador INAGAKI.

"As we look to the future, let us continue to build upon this solid foundation of cooperation and innovation. Together we can ensure that Tonga remains secure, welcoming and prosperous, fostering an environment where its people thrives and engages with the world confidently."

Mr. Solomon Kantha, emphasized the Project being a shared commitment to strengthen border management in ways that are modern, secure, people-centred and sustainable. "This Project invests in people. It will equip frontline officers with the tools, skills, and standard operating procedures they need to make fast, fair and well-informed decisions at the border."

“This is a smart investment in the country’s connectivity and competitiveness in an increasingly digital world.”

IOM first established a presence in Tonga in 2018 and actively supported the Government of Tonga in a variety of efforts related to human mobility including the introduction of the Migration Information and Data Analysis System for Tonga in October 2024, which also was funded by the Government of Japan. The next phase of this partnership is the introduction of the e-passport system advancing from the manual and standard machine-readable passport system in Tonga.

END

Attached: Photos’

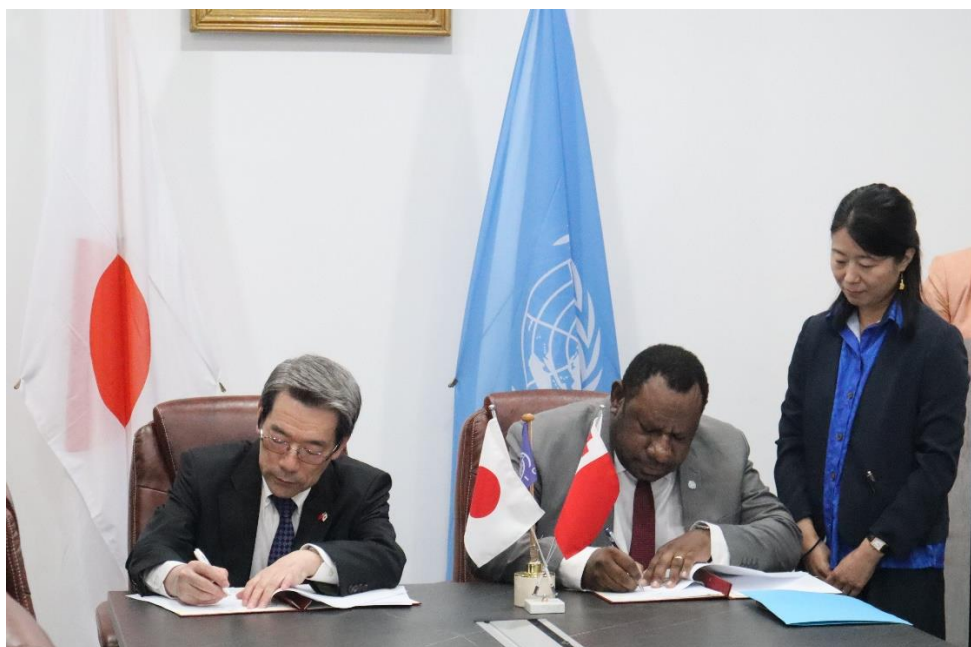
Photos;



His Excellency, Mr. INAGAKI Hisao, Ambassador of Japan to Tonga with Mr. Solomon Kantha Chief of Mission, IOM in signing the Exchange of Notes for the Project for Enhancing Border Management through the Introduction of the Electronic Machine Readable Passport, funded by the Government of Japan.



His Royal Highness the Crown Prince Tupouto'a 'Ulukalala with H.E. Mr. INAGAKI Hisao and Mr. Solomon Kantha of IOM after the signing ceremony for the e-passport Project for Tonga on Thursday 25 September 2025 in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tonga.



Signing the Exchange of Notes at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Tonga