



PRESS RELEASE

*EC/2014/01
June 11, 2014*

Tonga - Japan Trade and Investment Symposium

The first Tonga-Japan Trade and Investment Symposium, co-hosted by the Government of the Kingdom of Tonga and the Government of Japan, in close cooperation with the Pacific Islands Centre, Tokyo and the Tonga Business Private Sector will be held in the Fa'onelua Convention Centre, Nuku'alofa on 18th – 19th June, 2014.

The symposium will be officially opened by Tonga's Minister for Commerce, Tourism, and Labour Dr. The Hon. Villiami Uasike Latu, with the presence of H. E. Ms. Tania Laumanulupe Tupou, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Tonga to Japan and H.E. Dr. Kazuchika Hamuro, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Kingdom of Tonga. The symposium will also be attended by officials of the relevant Government Ministries and Agencies, researchers, and private sectors of both countries.

Tonga was endorsed to host this symposium at the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting Second Ministerial Interim Meeting (PALM_MIM2) held in Tokyo on 26 October 2013, attended by the Honourable Prime Minister Lord Tu'ivakano.

The objectives of the symposium are to: (1) learn from the experiences of trade and investment between Tonga and Japan including sharing of good practices; (2) identify the obstacles and challenges that Pacific Island Countries (PICs) including Tonga face in order to expand trade and investment; and (3) discuss the possible ways and means to overcome the challenges toward future expansion of trade and investment in the Pacific region including Tonga. The symposium, the first of its kind to be held between the two countries, is expected

to be an opportunity to further develop existing friendly relationship between the two countries and to foster business relationships between Japan and the Kingdom of Tonga.

The Japanese Trade mission is organized with initiatives of the Pacific Island Centre to explore business opportunities between the two countries. Members of Japanese Trade mission will have an opportunity to pay a courtesy call on the Deputy Prime Minister, Hon Samiu Vaipuru.

The summary of the symposium will be submitted to the 7th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM7) to be held in Iwaki-city, Fukushima on 22nd May, 2015. The Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM) is a summit-level meeting which has been held every three years since 1997. In this Forum, leaders of the Pacific and Japan openly discuss various issues Pacific Island countries are facing in order to build close cooperative relationships and to forge the continuing bond of friendship between Japan and the Pacific Island countries.

END.