

Keynote address by the Honourable Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi at the Official Handover Ceremony of Sports Equipment, Vehicles and Fireworks.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the Official Handover Ceremony of the Sports Equipment, Vehicles and Fireworks donated by the Government of the People's Republic of China for the Samoa 2019 Pacific Games that will be held in our Beautiful Samoa this July.

Two years ago, Samoa submitted our bid to host the 16th Pacific Games when Tonga opted out of their commitment. With the Government of Samoa providing financial backing, Samoa received the green light from the Pacific Games Council to host the 2019 Games.

In March 2018, the Government established the Pacific Games Office as the focal point for all matters relating to Samoa 2019 Pacific Games and they continue to work alongside the Organising Committee Directors to ensure a successful Games this year.

As you are all aware, the Pacific Games is the Pacific Region's largest quadrennial games and an event of this scale requires a lot of money to ensure its success.

Last year, we approached the Government of the People's Republic of China for assistance and we were very fortunate to receive a positive response.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1975, the friendship and ties between Samoa and China have grown from strength to strength.

We continue to enjoy mutual benefits between our two countries. Our close partnership with China is helping in the development of many sectors of Samoa's economy including education, health, sports, agriculture, tourism, human resource development and infrastructure.

Samoa and China have also worked together to promote issues of mutual interest such as international peace and security, climate change, trade and sustainable development through the United Nations and other international fora.

Over the years, we have seen an increase in the number of high-level visits and people-to-people exchanges between our two countries, deepening a mutual understanding of our cultures, traditions and systems. The launch in Samoa last month of the China Pacific Tourism Year 2019 is another important step in the cooperation between China and the Pacific.

Today, we celebrate another wonderful partnership between our two Governments. The Government of Samoa through the Pacific Games Office will receive 48 containers carrying 87 vehicles. These will be used for visiting Heads of State and Ministerial delegations as well as the transport of athletes and officials between sports venues and premises.

The donation also includes world class sports equipment to be used for Archery, Athletics, Badminton, Basketball, Boxing, Football, Judo, Powerlifting, Swimming, Table Tennis, Taekwondo, Tennis, Indoor and Beach Volleyball and Weightlifting.

The Government of China has also donated fireworks for the Opening and Closing ceremonies of the Games, similar to the display our country witnessed on New Year's and the launching of the China Pacific Tourism Year.

These gifts will serve Samoa well, not only for the 2019 Games, but beyond.

They will improve the performance of our current and future stars - our athletes, coaches, umpires and all the talent required to develop sports. Samoa is now fully equipped with the right equipment and will be winning gold.

On behalf of the Government of Samoa, I would like to thank the Government of the People's Republic of China for the kind assistance given to Samoa, to support us in hosting what has now been deemed the 'Miracle Games.'

We are eternally grateful for your kind assistance. Samoa will continue to work closely at the regional and international fora in pursuit of our common interests to promote prosperity, peace and security in our two countries and our region.

Soifua.