



REMARKS BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF SAMOA
HONOURABLE TUILAEPA SAILELE LUPESOLIAI DURING THE BILATERAL
MEETING WITH HON. SHINZO ABE, WEDNESDAY, 2nd OCTOBER 2019 AT 10.00AM
PRIME MINISTER ABE'S OFFICE, TOKYO

1. Honourable Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, I am honoured to again have this opportunity to meet with you during these exciting times of the Rugby World Cup 2019. I extend to you our warm congratulations for successfully hosting the World Cup tournament in Japan, a first for Asia, and for your team's successes in the pool games. I will say that Samoa's record to date is somewhat checkered.
2. This year also heralds other historic moments for Japan with the abdication of Emperor Emeritus, the launch of the 'Reiwa' era marking the beginning of a new chapter for Japan under Emperor Naruhito and the subsequent Enthronement Ceremony in the coming weeks. Samoa is honoured to be represented at the enthronement ceremony through our Head of State.
3. Prime Minister, since our last meeting here last May, there have been a number of positive developments since the conclusion of the PALM8 meeting that we co-chaired. We have seen a strengthening and focused engagement between Japan and the region as evident in the recent high level visits to the region such as that by Honourable Taro Kono, your Defense Minister and the appointment of senior special envoys dedicated to the Pacific region. As well, we note the establishment of the Inter-Agency Committee for the Promotion of Cooperation Towards the Pacific earlier this year; these reflect your strong personal commitment for strengthened relations with the Pacific.
4. Japan-Samoa relations continue to grow with renewed partnerships and strengthened engagement at the bilateral level in infrastructural development in alignment with the implementation of the Indo Pacific strategy. I would like to express our sincere appreciation to you, the government and people of Japan for the assistance Samoa receives to support our country's sustainable development aspirations. Japan has provided assistance to the following sectors: transport and infrastructure, water and sanitation, education, environment and disaster management, and health through regional support.

5. Prime Minister, last month during the annual SPREP Ministerial meeting in Apia, the Pacific Climate Change Centre was officially opened, rendering a 'first of its kind' facility that will be vital to support regional and national efforts for a resilient Pacific to address the adverse effects of climate change and enhance capacity building, so crucial to our Blue Pacific continent.

6. The ongoing Vaisigano bridge reconstruction project enhances our climate change resilience, offers mitigation to the residents along the river banks inclusive of tourism infrastructure against severe flooding, and ensures connectivity between the central business district, industrial zone and the rest of the country's transport links. We look forward to its completion next year.

6. Honourable Prime Minister, on this particular occasion, we are grateful to have received approval for our request for a replacement interisland vessel which will assist with the transportation of our agricultural products to our neighbouring markets thus increasing significantly our export capacity; strengthening business and trade links with neighbouring countries and maintaining safe and efficient sea transport for our people and tourists between the islands.

7. The MOU for the new vessel to be signed today, reflects Japan's commitment to improving Samoa's maritime security, trade and business links and opportunities for growth through tourism development. For that we acknowledge with gratitude your readiness to assist.

8. We had the opportunity to discuss with JICA recently the possibility to consider co-financing with the ADB and others of a hydro dam in our efforts to address improved flood control management during natural disasters as well as consideration of renewable energy options to replace fossil fuels.

9. We acknowledge and appreciate the efforts your government and the international community are doing towards addressing security concerns surrounding North Korea in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, including resolving the abductions issue. These issues were strongly supported during the PALM8 meeting last year that we had co-chaired.

10. Prime Minister, I am looking forward also to visiting Toyota City this weekend to watch the match between our two rugby teams. I anticipate this to be a very exciting match and hope to see both Japan and Samoa reach the latter stages of the tournament.

11. It would be remiss of me not to underscore the important technical cooperation programs through which JICA experts and volunteers are assisting to buffer capacity gaps in Samoa.

12. To conclude my remarks, I would like to thank you and your officials for the thoughtful arrangements that have been made for me and my delegation since our arrival into Japan.

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