

Thursday 20th April 2023, Apia, Samoa: Samoa – Aotearoa New Zealand signed the grant funding arrangement for the Savalalo Market Rebuild Project of NZ\$12million, and the general budget support grant contribution of NZ\$7million to support Economic Reform.

Honorable Nanaia Mahuta, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade represented the Government of Aotearoa New Zealand and Honorable Mulipola Anarosa Ale Molioo represented the Government of Samoa.

(Honorable Minister of Finance Remarks)

O le Fa’afetai ma le Viiga – Our Thanks and Praise

Lo’u agaga e, ‘ia e fa’amanū atu i le Ali’i, o mea uma fo’i o i totonu ‘iā te a’u, ‘ia fa’amanū i lona suafa pa’ia.

Lo’u agaga e, ‘ia e fa’amanū atu i le Ali’i, ‘aua fo’i ne’i galo se mea e tasi o ana mea alofa

Bless the Lord, o my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name.

Bless the Lord, o my soul, and forget not all His benefits:

Honourable Nanaia Mahuta, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade,
and the Government of Aotearoa New Zealand’s Delegation,
Government of Samoa’s Representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Talofa Lava and Warm Greetings to you all.

It is indeed my great pleasure to welcome you Honorable Minister Mahuta and your delegation to Samoa, which many people refer to as the heart of the Pacific.

Talofa Lava, Afifio Mai, Tala Mai Aao!

As the Minister of Finance, I am honoured to represent the Government of Samoa in this joint signing ceremony of the Grant Funding Arrangement for the “Savalalo Market Rebuild Project” endorsed by both the Governments of Samoa and Aotearoa New Zealand.

This signing ceremony today marks yet another milestone in the lifelong friendship between Samoa and Aotearoa New Zealand. As Samoa continues to celebrate our 60th anniversary of independence, I can also say that today’s event is significant to the 60th Anniversary of the Treaty of Friendship between Aotearoa New Zealand and Samoa celebrated in 2022, “Lifelong Friends – Uō Mamae”.

Today, I would like to recognize Aotearoa New Zealand’s continuous support in improving the social and economic benefits for Samoa. I would also like to acknowledge this friendship’s contribution to the development of Samoa, in terms of improving livelihood of the people and enabling access for communities to economic opportunities and sustainable living.

The Government of Samoa has been devoted to laying the foundations necessary to strengthen communities’ development, distribute prosperity, and foster resilience.

For Samoa, the Government's national development plan the "Pathway for the Development of Samoa" (PDS) has laid out the priorities with the theme "empowering communities, building resilience, and inspiring growth". It aspires to nurture growth that benefits all of Samoa, with an inclusive focus to widen community participation, enhance security and protect people and the environment.

The Government of Samoa has identified the reconstruction of the Savalalo market as one of its top priority infrastructure investments – with the focus on climate resilient infrastructure, cost effective and accessible for our people. The Savalalo Market Rebuild Project of NZ\$12million, would support local trades especially for our local people and small businesses, private sector development as well as the tourism industry. This project aligns with Government's key strategic outcomes which include, revitalising the tourism industry and increase support for families and community initiatives; develop innovative ways for business growth particularly micro, small and medium enterprises and the manufacturing sector; and to ensure resilient and sustainable economic growth.

Nowadays, we live in extraordinary times and under remarkable circumstances as the pandemic continues, natural disasters and impact of climate change threatening the lives of our people. In order to build and strengthen our people's resilience and ability to respond to crises, we should continue to build and sustain our economy and create better recovery opportunities, through support measures that reflect local needs and opportunities for people which enhances our national resilience.

Honourable Minister, as we celebrate these milestones today, we also continue to look forward and advance planning for ways to address some of today's vulnerabilities and challenges that threaten our livelihoods. Samoa's priorities remain; building fiscal buffers and strengthening national economic resilience, addressing impact of climate change, developing the private sector for economic initiatives, addressing social issues such as health and education as well as enhancing the standard of living for communities and vulnerable people.

For Samoa, successful program implementation is underscored by the importance of recognising country's priorities, national systems and processes. I would like to acknowledge the joint partnership with Aotearoa New Zealand and other development partners for the general budget support financing for Samoa through the Joint Policy Action Matrix (JPAM) arrangement. I am pleased to say that the general budget support modality under the JPAM is evidently one of the successful modalities utilised by Samoa to date to deliver the aid program, not only Government led policies are developed, but resources are allocated according to national priorities, utilising our national systems and processes.

I also recognise that today, the Government of Aotearoa New Zealand through the Honorable Mahuta would be presenting the contribution letter of the NZ\$7million budget support contribution to Samoa as declared in our main estimates for the financial year 2022/23.

Honorable Minister, I am also very appreciative of the efforts put in by both our Governments in the consultation processes, planning and the design of the new programs, the NZ MFAT staff especially the Apia post, Government agencies and stakeholders.

Honorable Minister Mahuta, on behalf of the Government and people of Samoa, I convey our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the Government and the people of Aotearoa New Zealand for the Lifelong friendship and the continuous support to our development and our priorities. Samoa looks forward to the ongoing engagement and friendship with Aotearoa New Zealand, to ensure both our priorities and important matters of mutual interests on development are consulted, addressed and achieved.

Fa'afetai tele lava and God bless.