



REMARKS BY H.E. FAALAVAAU PERINA J. SILA-TUALAULELEI
AMBASSADOR OF THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF SAMOA TO JAPAN
6TH JAPAN CONSTRUCTION INTERNATIONAL AWARD CEREMONY
TUESDAY 20 JUNE 2023, 3:00-7:00pm, MLIT

Minasama konnichiwa,

Talofa Lava. Good afternoon.

Your Excellency Honourable SAITO Tetsuo, Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism,

My fellow Ambassadorial Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to attend this 6th Japan Construction International Award Ceremony today and to offer my warmest congratulations to Konoike Construction Company Limited and the Central Consultant Incorporated, for being presented the “Award for the Construction Project Category” from the Japanese Government for the “Project for the Reconstruction of the Vaisigano Bridge” in my country, Samoa. I would also like to congratulate the other recipients of these awards today.

The Vaisigano Bridge is a vital transportation link that connects Samoa's international wharf and the city, the central business district, the industrial zone and residents. The original bridge was built in 1953, and having endured numerous natural disasters and sustained use over the years, it became structurally unsafe for our people.

Through the assistance of the Government of Japan and JICA, the construction of the new bridge began in 2018 and was completed in 2021. The new Vaisigano Bridge contributes to enhancing Samoa's climate and disaster resilience through quality infrastructure, to providing improved and safe transportation, promotes socio-economic development and to the achievement of our sustainable development goals in general.

During the construction of this project, the Japanese companies worked closely with the Samoa Land Transport Authority and Samoan

companies, thereby fostering knowledge transfer and sharing and the upskilling of our officials and local contractors.

Samoa and Japan enjoy a warm and friendly relations and it continues to grow with renewed partnerships and strengthened engagement at the bilateral and also at the regional and international levels. Japan is one of Samoa's key development partners and the ongoing support provided by Japan as evident in this important infrastructural project and others, is a testament of the continuous close relations and the genuine partnership between our two countries.

At the regional level, through the framework of the Japan-Pacific Leaders Meeting or PALM, Japan and Samoa and the Pacific region are committed to promoting our friendly and cooperative relations, one that is based on mutual trust and respect and shared values such as freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights and the environment.

As we commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Samoa and Japan this year 2023, I would like to seize this opportunity to express, on behalf of the Government and the People of Samoa, my sincere gratitude to the Government and the People of Japan and to JICA, for the assistance Samoa receives to support our development aspirations. Kanshashitei orimasu.

I would also like to make a special tribute today to the late Honourable Tapunu'u Papalii Niko Lee Hang, former Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure of Samoa, who led our consultations on this project with the Government of Japan and JICA and towards its full completion.

Thank you very much for your attention. God bless. Soifua.