



*Embassy of Japan*

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## **JOINT PRESS RELEASE**

### **OPENING CEREMONY FOR “The Project for Reconstruction of Vaisigano Bridge” under JAPAN’S GRANT AID**

The Governments of Japan and Samoa celebrated the successful completion of the Vaisigano Bridge Project through a handover ceremony held this evening (28 August) at Apia.

Honourable Prime Minister, Tuilaepa Fatialofa Lupesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Samoa, H.E. Mr. TERASAWA Genichi were the chief guests of the event. The event was also attended by Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, Members of Diplomatic Corps and International Organisations, Head of Government Ministries and Agencies, NGOs and the business community.

In 2017, the two Governments signed an agreement for Japanese grant assistance of to be provided for major infrastructure reconstruction for the Vaisigano Bridge. The project amounting to JPY 1.86bn equivalent to SAT 44 million was initiated to support speedy reconstruction and recovery from consecutive cyclones in past years with the most recent severe Cyclone Evan in 2012, and Cyclone Gita in 2018, which significantly damaged the country’s infrastructure.

The project type is a 75m three-span PC interconnected pretension hollow slab bridge with an estimated 40m depth designed for up to 100 years scale. Its structure is less prone to adhering salt and higher clearance from the surface of the sea.

Additionally, with its height of 1.5m higher than the old bridge and its structure design will ensure an effective approach in reducing disaster risks and effects of climate change such as floods and storm surges and eliminate its extension to inland communities.

The design was constructed using Japanese advanced technology and executed by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). With JICA’s supervision, the

construction completed successfully through cooperation between a Japanese construction company and local construction companies. Such cooperation facilitated technical transfer from Japanese company to local companies.

Japan has been cooperating for development of maritime transportation and related infrastructure to strengthen connectivity in the Pacific including Samoa. This is because oceans can be a constraint for development of the Pacific island countries where people are separated by the oceans causing so much inconvenience.

As the people who share the Pacific, Japan feels that connecting people and goods is an important task for the social and economic development of island countries.

Furthermore, with the successful extension of the Matautu wharf that enables the safe entrance of large freight and passenger ships into the port likewise, the opening of the new bridge will allow tourists of cruiser ships and goods to have an easy access to downtown of the capital in the foreseeable future.

It is expected that the local communities and businesses around this area will benefit at large with this new development of accessibility.

It is hope that this new bridge will help expedite recovery in the surrounding communities in times of natural disasters and also stands firm as a symbol of friendship between Japan and Samoa.

Ends.