

**Speech by Ambassador H.E. Mr. Ryotaro SUZUKI on the occasion of the
Handover Ceremony of the
Maintenance Vessel
under
Grant Assistance for Economic and Social Development Programme (ESDP)
23 October 2026**

Hon. Prime Minister, Laaulialemalietoa Leuatea Polataivao Fosi Schmidt
Hon. Cabinet Ministers,
Representatives of the Samoa Shipping Corporation,
Representatives from Yanmar and Nitto Seimo,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning. Talofa lava, everyone.

It is my great pleasure to join you today.

Today, we are pleased to witness the handover of a 17-metre maintenance boat and a mobile workshop truck funded under Japan's grant assistance.

This is yet an important milestone in the longstanding friendship and cooperation between Japan and Samoa.

For nearly 40 years, Japan has provided various ships to Samoa. Some are passenger ships; others are cargo vessels.

Samoa Shipping Corporation (SSC) has now own and operate such ships received from Japan, namely,

Lady Samoa II which came in 1988,

Lady Naomi in 1998,

Lady Samoa III in 2010, and finally,

Lady Samoa IV in 2022.

And today, we now have this 17-metre maintenance boat! Although smaller in size, it is sea worthy enough of traveling far, as far away as Tokelau Islands.

This assistance, as well as the assistance in the past decades, reflects Japan's commitment to contributing to Samoa's maritime transport. Not only by providing vessels and equipment, but also by strengthening SSC's capacity to maintain and operate them over the long term.

We also hope that the training to be provided will enhance the technical skills of SSC staff and enable them to operate and maintain the vessel independently.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As Japan and Samoa are both island nations, both of us depends on safe and reliable maritime transport to facilitate the movement of people, goods and agricultural products. Ensuring the safe and reliable operation of the ships is essential, and hence the vital need for regular maintenance and timely repairs.

The two assets handed over today, the boat and the truck, will help strengthen SSC's maintenance and repair capabilities to continue operation of its fleet.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Japan remains committed to supporting safe and reliable maritime transport in Samoa. We hope that this assistance will contribute to Samoa's economic and social development and further strengthen the enduring friendship and cooperation between our two countries.

I would like to congratulate the Samoa Shipping Corporation on receiving these important assets and extend my sincere appreciation to everyone who contributed to making this project possible.

Fa'afetai tele lava.

Soifua ma Ia Manuia