

Keynote address by Prime Minister, Susuga Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi for the official handover and launching of the new ferry “MV Lady Samoa III”
Funded by the Government and people of Japan under its Grant Aid Programme

Reverend Iupeli Ieremia

Your Highness the Head of State, Lau Afioga Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi and Masiofo Filifilia

Member of the Council of Deputies, Afioga Tuimalealiifano Vaaletoa Sualauvi II

Your Excellency the Ambassador of Japan for Samoa and New Zealand;
Mr. Toshihiro Takahashi

Honourable Ministers of Cabinet

Honourable Speaker of Parliament

Chief Justice and Members of the Judiciary

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Associate Ministers and Members of Parliament

Heads of Government Ministries, Corporation and the Business Community

Members of the Delegation from Japan

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

The MV Lady Samoa III we celebrate today its successful construction and safe delivery, is a wonderful addition to the fleet of the Samoa Shipping Corporation. Very importantly is the modernization and improvements it represents both in travelling comfort and load capacity available between Upolu and Savaii.

The most generous assistance of the Government of Japan made this project possible. It is well known that this is not the first time that Japan has helped with Samoa's shipping services and maritime infrastructure. Japan has previously provided the MV Lady Samoa II, MV Lady Naomi, tug boats for the Samoa Ports Authority and constructed the wharfs here in Apia, Mulifanua and Salelologa.

I wish therefore on behalf of His Highness the Head of State, the Government and our people to convey to the Government of Japan through His Excellency Ambassador Takahashi our gratitude and appreciation for the MV Lady Samoa III and for the tremendous

support provided to the maritime infrastructure of Samoa over the years as well as in other key sectors such as education and health. I would also like to register our appreciation to Ambassador Takahashi personally for the key roles he and his Office in Wellington as well as the Resident Representative of JICA carried out from the inception of this project up to its successful conclusion we celebrate this afternoon. We are deeply grateful.

The Ferry Project application was submitted to the Government of Japan in 2006. The Basic Design Study was completed in 2007 and approval was made in June 2008. The Exchange of Notes to formalize the agreement on the project between the two Governments was signed by Ambassador Takahashi and the Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure, Honourable Tuisugaletau Sofara Aveau.

The tenders for the project were vetted in September and the contract for the construction of the new MV Lady Samoa III was awarded in October to ISB Shipbuilding and Engineering Company.

The keel laying of the new Ferry was held in May 2009 and the vessel construction began immediately after until it was completed and launched on the 30th November 2009. Following sea-trials and inspections, the MV Lady Samoa III sailed from Japan on the 01st February 2010 and arrived in Apia on the 20th February 2010. The Samoa Shipping Corporation Captain and Chief Engineer attended the sea trials and helped sail the ship on its delivery voyage to Apia.

The vessel MV Lady Samoa III was built with the latest state of art technology. It is equipped with modern navigation and communication systems and fully fitted with the required life saving and safety equipments. The vessel accommodates 740 passengers and 40 vehicles including 280 comfortable seats in the economy air conditioned indoor cabin and 180 comfortable seats in the economy outdoor area.

A sick bed to accommodate patients transferred between Upolu and Savaii is provided as well as space for wheelchairs and special restrooms for the handicapped. An elevator to assist the old and the infirm is an important part of the ship's equipment. A canteen facility

to serve food is also available on board.

With the large capacity of the vessel, it has also been possible to incorporate a 48-seat business class section. The availability of this section provides the traveling public with an additional choice for those who are willing to pay extra. There are of course nearly 700 other seats available if a person does not want to travel business class.

Last year, tragic accidents involving number of ships in the Pacific Region cost many lives. Some of these incidents were the result of substandard and unsafe vessels unfit for sailing. Fortunately, Samoa was spared from such incidents and I would like to encourage the Samoa shipping Corporation to keep up the good work in maintaining the safety and seaworthiness of its vessels. I would also like to request our traveling public to support the efforts of the Samoa Shipping Corporation in maintaining good standards for the traveling comfort and convenience for everybody.

Many people contributed to the successful completion of this project and I would like to acknowledge with thanks;

The Project Consultant Mr Toyonori Watanabe of Fisheries Engineering Company.

The President of the ISB Shipbuilding Company, Mr Kohei Murashima

The Managing Director of ISB Shipbuilding Company, Mr. Isao Yoneguchi

The Managing Director of Pacific International, Susuga Papaliitele Oishi represented today by Mr. Tenshin Yazawa

Finally, I would like to thank the Chairman of the Samoa Shipping Corporation Ltd, the Board of Directors, Managing Director, Management and Staff and the various other agencies of Government that were involved in this project.

Fa'amalo le Galulue ma ia Manuia tele lenei Atina'e.

Soifua ma ia Manuia