

SPEECH BY MR SHIGERU SUGIYAMA

HANDOVER CEREMONY OF
“THE PROJECT FOR ROAD MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT”

11th March 2014

His Excellency, Mr. Hiroharu Iwasaki, Ambassador of Japan to PNG

His Excellency, Mr. Don Polye, Minister for Treasury

His Excellency, Mr. Francis Awesa, Minister for Works,

Mr. David Wereh, Acting Secretary for Department of Works

Mr. Roy Mumu, Secretary for Department of Transport

Mr. Ponege Poya, Chief Executive Officer, National Road Authority,

Mr. Reichart Thanda, First Assistant Secretary for Department of National
Planning & Monitoring

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning, on behalf of Japan International Cooperation Agency, it is a great honor and pleasure to be with you here today, on the handover ceremony of road maintenance equipment which are provided under Japan's Grant Aid through JICA.

At first, I would like to say that, JICA is taking a clear supportive stance to the PNG government, or Department of Works, in its aspiration to strengthen own capacity and equipment to maintain and develop roads especially in the rural areas where outsourcing to local contractors are not feasible.

It is always right that government body takes a step to be service oriented and pursue the way to do it, and take a proactive action to achieve the mandate.

In fact, in the road sector, PNG Government has decided to revitalize Plant and Transport Division (PTD) of DoW and re-fleet own construction equipment.

This Grant Aid project is designed and implemented closely in line with this policy re-engineering.

I have often heard from Works officers that, they are proud of building the nation WITH THEIR OWN HANDS.

I believe these equipment are among the most wanted, by concerned

Department of Works' staffs who are eager to rebuild and develop the nation with their own hands.

I am feeling privileged that JICA has been entrusted by both governments, and succeeded in jointly formulating this project, from the very beginning, in close consultation with our counterparts and having finally arrived at this stage.

I happen to be a team leader of the Preparatory Survey for this project which was conducted 2 years ago, when I was working at JICA Headquarters, not knowing I would be making a speech here as Chief Representative of JICA PNG Office.

But there is absolutely no change in my thinking from then that this project is extremely valuable, and will produce a great output to revitalize road maintenance with the ownership of Department of Works.

Today, my belief has been consolidated after looking at this spectacle view. Total 48 construction equipment in total. This magnificent view is only for today in the whole life of the equipment. Tomorrow, they will be equally divided into 4 fleets, and distributed to Department of Works 4 Provincial

offices in Morobe, Western Highlands, West New Britain and East Sepik. They are here to be witnessed and blessed by all of us, for today's ceremony.

I want to extend utmost thanks to Itochu Corporation for this special arrangement, the Supplier of the Project. Also to Ingerosec Corporation consultant of this Grant Aid Project. Of course to the manufacturers, as well. Because of their unremitting efforts, equipment was delivered to PNG without any delay.

One more thing. They are colored in yellow, Identity color of Department of Works. With that, people can recognize that the Department of Works is back on the road work.

Now 4 provincial Works offices have equipment good for road maintenance. What others are necessary for Department of Works to implement the road maintenance? Of course budget. I believe that Department of Works successfully set aside the budget for the operating and maintaining these equipment, at least for year 2014.

Among others, I want to highlight importance of capacity development of Department of Work. It is necessary because knowledge and skill of Works team have become somewhat outdated by continuous use of same equipment for over 20 year. Equipment displayed here today is manufactured with modern technology which require different knowledge and skill from old ones.

Therefore, in addition to this Grant Aid project, DoW and JICA jointly commenced Technical Cooperation Project for capacity development on road maintenance last year.

Through this project, a series of trainings will be provided to operators, mechanics and civil engineers in 4 Provincial Works Offices where these equipment are delivered and some parts of the road will be maintained with provided equipment and trained DoW staffs as a pilot project.

I'm strongly convinced that this collaboration of hard and soft type assistances will double and even triple the total outcome of these projects.

All the equipment are handed over to DoW today, however, this is not an end of our relationship but just a starting point to tackle big challenges in front of us.

As I mentioned, we have started Technical Cooperation Project in line with this Grant Aid Project.

The ultimate goal in these projects is to maintain the road properly, but more importantly, we focus on developing your own capacity to realize it.

Even though a capacity development is crucially vital in any area, it has been ignored for long time in PNG, unfortunately.

Japan does not turn eyes away from it.

Japan will tackle it as a first priority, as a close partner, who share same sense of value.

Our motto says “We do not provide you with a fish but we tell you how to catch a fish.”

Finally, I would like to mention the situation in Japan.

As you may know, great earthquake and following tsunami devastated northeast part of Japan just 3 years ago from today.

Although reconstruction and rehabilitation have been progressing quickly, still many people are forced to live far away from their hometown and find it difficult to make their livings.

We appreciate much if you could remember that all these equipment have

come from Japan, embracing such background.

At last, I thank all the persons concerned for your best efforts to realize today's wonderful event.