



P R E S S R E L E A S E

Prime Minister of Tonga, Hon. Hu'akavameiliku, meets with the World Bank Vice President, Ms. Manuela V. Ferro, at the Bank's 2022 Annual Meeting

On Monday 10th October, 2022 at Washington, D.C., U.S.A. the Prime Minister, Hon. Hu'akavameiliku, met with the World Bank's Vice President for East Asia and the Pacific, Ms. Manuela V. Ferro, during the Bank's Annual Meeting 2022, at which he led the Kingdom's delegation, in his capacity as Acting Minister for Finance, and thus the Governor for Tonga in the Bank's Board of Directors.



Prime Minister, The Hon. Hu'akavameiliku:-

At the outset he acknowledged the strong partnership and expanded portfolio with the World Bank for over 27 years, and thus thanked the Bank for their robust and timely support during these unprecedented times – COVID-19, Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai eruptions and tsunami, through CATDDO (Catastrophe Deferred Drawdown Option) and extra budget support, in addition to their development funded projects. The Bank's swift, diligent and committed staff were able to deliver according to World Bank standards.

The Prime Minister updated the Vice President and her team on the current economic challenges confronting Tonga, including recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai (HT-HH) volcanic eruption and subsequent tsunami, and rising inflation due to rising global commodity prices. (Two weeks after his Administration started, they dealt with the tsunami and the aftermath of the tsunami / damage to the cable, following the covid community transmission. Now the government is strengthening its rebuilding efforts for communities, albeit inflation is not helping.

He was pleased that this meeting was convened, in order to see how the Government and the Bank can work together, to minimize all those competing challenges with which Tonga is currently confronted. He thus reassured the World Bank on the Government of Tonga's ongoing commitment to the reform program, linked to budget support and the

Government's economic recovery, and the ongoing commitment and renewed efforts to boost implementation of IDA 18,19 with a view on IDA 20.

World Bank Vice President, Ms. Manuela V. Ferro:-

The Vice President responded by congratulating the Prime Minister and the government on their efforts in protecting the population and the recovery amid the difficult situation, but believed that the strong partnership and strong team, and the desire to put these resources to work, and help with the reconstruction and Covid recovery, and not forgetting the long term development of the country. She added how crucial it was, to look at the human development side, and investing in the people of Tonga, to make a difference.

The Vice President very much supported the government's plans, and the need to continue consolidating the Bank and the Government's mutual efforts to deliver results.

She added that the bank is committed to help Tonga, to use existing resources, and the upcoming IDA20 resources, and to bring more resources to the table particularly supporting the government's three priorities - Resilient Tonga, Affordable and Accessible Services, Progressive Economic Development.



The Hon. Prime Minister also met with the World Bank Executive Director of EDS16 (the Constituency Group to which Tonga, Fiji and other Asian States), Mr. Mohd Hassan Ahmad, and the World Bank Global director, and discussed potential support towards the Government's Resilience Agenda, including Education and Digital Transformation.



The Hon. Prime Minister also met with the Tongan communities in Washington D. C. and Virginia, and deliberated on potential assistance to Tonga.