

Cutting-edge research surveys seabed minerals in Tongan EEZ

Written by Administrator

Wednesday, 13 April 2011 09:29 - Last Updated Wednesday, 13 April 2011 09:40



12 APRIL 2011 NUKU'ALOFA (GOVERNMENT OF TONGA) - A Korean research vessel will carry out scientific studies on seabed minerals in Tongan waters over the next several months.

The IBRV Araon arrived 9th April with the aim of investigating seabed massive sulphide deposits such as copper, silver and gold in Tonga's Exclusive Economic Zone.

At a special ceremony to welcome the new ship on Friday, Deputy Prime Minister Samiu Kuita Vaipulu, in his role as Acting Prime Minister, thanked the Korean Ocean Research and Development Institute (KORDI) for organising the visit.

"The Tonga Government highly values its collaboration with KORDI on mineral prospecting ... The valuable technical information and data collected by KORDI is the essential first step towards discovery of minerals," he said.

According to KORDI chief Mr Jang Wan Bang, a team of 27 researchers from Korea will spend the next four months collecting data from ocean beds within Tonga's jurisdiction, up to several thousand metres below the surface.

They will be accompanied by an observer from the Ministry of Lands, Survey and Natural Resources.

At the completion of the research, the team will submit an evaluation report to the Government of Tonga.

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During the launch ceremony, Korean Ambassador to Tonga Mr Kwan-il Noh noted that despite the “many challenges and dangers” involved in the Araon’s cutting edge work, he is confident that mutual support can boost potential benefits for both Tonga and Korea.

“I can say the Korean Government is ready to provide its utmost support and assistance for the development of this project, which will further promote cooperation between our two countries. I hold great hope that this project can bring tangible outcomes which will contribute to the economic development and prosperity of our two countries,” he said.

Opportunities for further exploration and mineral extraction will depend on the outcomes of the research...PNS (ENDS)

Source : <http://mic.gov.to/press-releases/2372-cutting-edge-research-surveys-seabed-minerals-in-tongan-eez>