

Joint Statement between Japan and the Republic of Palau

9 September 2022

1. Prime Minister of Japan His Excellency Kishida Fumio and President of the Republic of Palau His Excellency Surangel S. Whipps, Jr. held a meeting in Tokyo on 9 September 2022.
2. Noting that the year 2024 will mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and the Republic of Palau, the two leaders emphasized their commitment to further develop the traditionally, friendly and cooperative relationship between the two countries, which has been founded on common fundamental values and principles including freedom, democracy, the rule of law and human rights.

Advancing a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific”

3. Amid growing challenges to the fundamental values and principles shared by the two countries and their partners, the two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to realize a Free and Open Indo-Pacific, where the rights, freedoms and sovereignty of all countries, regardless of size or power, are protected by international law, rules and norms. They recommitted to opposing all forms of military, economic and political coercion and to countering harmful disinformation.
4. The two leaders remain seriously concerned about the situation in the East and South China Seas and reiterated their strong opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force and increase tensions that could undermine regional stability and the rules-based international order. They emphasized the importance of non-militarization and self-restraint in the conduct of all activities by claimants and all other states in the South China Sea. They reaffirmed the critical importance of respecting international law, in particular the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and maintaining freedom of navigation and overflight. The two leaders emphasized the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.
5. In view of the cross-cutting impact between security and economy, the two leaders decided to strengthen bilateral cooperation in promoting economic security. The two leaders expressed concern for and strong opposition to economic coercion to achieve political ends, stressed the importance of an international law-based economic order,

and highlighted the importance of close coordination in dealing with economic coercion.

Russia's Aggression against Ukraine

6. The two leaders reaffirmed Russia's aggression against Ukraine constitutes a blatant violation of international law, in particular a grave breach of the United Nations Charter, and is a serious threat to the rules-based international order, with ramifications well beyond Europe, including in the Indo-Pacific. They reiterated Japan's and the Republic of Palau's unequivocal condemnation of Russia's aggression against Ukraine and demanded Russia's immediate withdrawal. They strongly condemned Russia's inhumane acts including the killing of civilians. They affirmed their consistent support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and their intention to align their support for the Ukrainian people.

7. The two leaders shared the view that the security of Europe and of the Indo-Pacific is inseparable, and expressed strong opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion anywhere in the world.

Regional Cooperation

8. The two leaders emphasized the importance of the unity and solidarity of Pacific Island countries in addressing common challenges such as climate change. Prime Minister Kishida welcomed that the PIF leaders were committed to continuing dialogue towards a resolution to restore the unity of the PIF Family.

9. President Whipps expressed his deep appreciation for Japan's continued commitment and support to the Pacific Island countries through the process of Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM). Prime Minister Kishida reaffirmed the commitment to further strengthen cooperation between Japan and Pacific Island countries through "All Japan" efforts under Japan's Pacific Bond (KIZUNA) Policy. The two leaders reaffirmed the commitment to working together on five priority areas of cooperation: (1) COVID-19 Response and Recovery, (2) Sustainable Oceans based on the Rule of Law, (3) Climate Change and Disaster Resilience, (4) Strengthening Foundation for Sustainable and Resilient Economic Development, and (5) People-to-People Exchanges and Human Resource Development.

Bilateral Cooperation for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Palau

10. The two leaders recognized advancement of the bilateral maritime cooperation

including maritime security as a part of their efforts for realizing a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific”. President Whipps showed his appreciation for the assistance and cooperation by the government and relevant organizations of Japan for the enhancement of the coast guard capability of the Republic of Palau.

11. The two leaders welcomed the signing of an Exchange of Notes concerning the Project for the Development of Power Transmission Network, which would contribute to stable power supply in the Republic of Palau. President Whipps appreciated Japan’s long-standing development assistance to the Republic of Palau through official development assistance in areas such as socio-economic infrastructure, human resources development and education.

Blue Prosperity and Fisheries Partnership

12. Recognizing the Republic of Palau’s Blue Prosperity Plan, which aims to achieve holistic management of the Republic of Palau’s ocean, balancing protection of its marine resources with sustainable use of those resources for the benefit of Palauan people, Prime Minister Kishida expressed his commitment to continue promoting the bilateral cooperation in various fields, including infrastructure, tourism, fisheries and agriculture towards the recovery of the Republic of Palau’s economy. In this regard, the two leaders welcomed the signing of the Memorandum of Cooperation in Transportation and Tourism Sectors.
13. The two leaders acknowledged the long history of Japanese fishermen fishing in offshore waters of the Republic of Palau. Recalling the access the Republic of Palau has provided to Japanese fishermen to fish in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the Republic of Palau in partnership with Japan, they shared the view that the partnership could be enhanced to provide mutual socio-economic benefits to the people of the Republic of Palau and Japanese fishermen. Considering that the Republic of Palau embarked on its process to balance production and protection of its waters, they shared the intention to continue working together for enhancing the partnership.

People-to-People Exchanges

14. The two leaders welcomed the recent high-level mutual visits between the two countries and shared the intention to maintain such high-level mutual visits and dialogues as well as to promote exchanges between the two countries’ Parliamentarians including friendly parliamentary leagues.

15. The two leaders reaffirmed that people-to-people exchanges should be facilitated in various fields to further strengthen the friendly ties between the two countries. In light of the high potential for tourism exchanges between the two countries, the two leaders affirmed the importance of mutually facilitating tourist traffic, including through actively pursuing the reinstatement of direct flights, for enhancing tourism cooperation.

Recovery of the Remains of Japanese War Dead

16. The two leaders renewed their determination for peace. Prime Minister Kishida expressed his deep appreciation for the Republic of Palau's generous support for recovery of the remains of Japanese war dead, and maintenance and management of monuments to the war dead. President Whipps expressed his willingness to continue to cooperate with Japan especially for promoting the recovery of the remains of the war dead.

Global Cooperation

17. The two leaders acknowledged the need for intensified global efforts to counter climate change, and committed to working together to build on the outcomes of the COP26 and the latest related reports of the International Panel on Climate Change. They emphasized the existential threat that climate change poses to the world, including Pacific Island countries.
18. The two leaders stressed the importance of transparent and fair development finance to achieve sustainable development in developing countries and called on all actors to adhere to international rules and standards, such as debt sustainability and transparency.
19. The two leaders strongly condemned North Korea's ongoing development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles in violation of UN Security Council resolutions (UNSCRs), stressing the importance of efforts to achieve North Korea's complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges in accordance with UNSCRs. They urged North Korea to comply fully with its obligations under the relevant UNSCRs and reaffirmed their commitment to fully implementing these resolutions including addressing North Korea's sanctions evading tactics such as "ship-to-ship transfers". They also urged North Korea to end all human rights violations and to resolve the abductions issue

immediately.

20. The two leaders reaffirmed their support to multilateralism based on the rule of law. They renewed their determination to work together with a view to strengthening the United Nations as a whole, including early reform of the Security Council, in order to deal with serious issues the international community is facing. Prime Minister Kishida expressed his gratitude to the Republic of Palau for its consistent support for Japan's permanent membership in a reformed Security Council.
21. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to realizing a world without nuclear weapons. The two leaders reaffirmed that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The two leaders stressed that the 40-year long decline in global nuclear arsenals must be sustained and not reversed.

ALPS Treated Water

22. Noting the points expressed by the PIF Leaders with regard to the discharge of ALPS treated water into the sea in the PALM9 Leaders Declaration, Prime Minister Kishida reiterated that the discharge of the ALPS treated water would be conducted while firmly ensuring no harm to the environment and human health, and reassured that Japan would continue its efforts in a transparent manner in accordance with the domestic and international safety standards in cooperation with the international community including the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). President Whipps noted the efforts that Japan has made since PALM9 and welcomed Japan's intent of continuing close dialogues through the framework of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) as well as through bilateral relations, based on its commitment at PALM9.

Conclusion

23. President Whipps expressed his gratitude to the Government and people of Japan for the warm welcome to him.
24. Looking ahead, the two leaders reiterated their commitment to further developing the long-standing friendly and cooperative relationship between the two countries.