

JOINT DECLARATION

BETWEEN

THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF JAPAN

AND

THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF NEW ZEALAND

ON COOPERATION IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION

1. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs for Japan and New Zealand, Mr. HAYASHI Yoshimasa and the Hon. Nanaia Mahuta, met in Tokyo on this, the 27th day of February 2023. Recalling the Leaders' Joint Statement at the Japan-New Zealand Summit Meeting last year on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations, the Ministers reaffirmed their ambition to further enhance the Strategic Cooperative Partnership between Japan and New Zealand and reaffirmed our shared commitment to realise a free and open Indo-Pacific based on the rule of law, to ensure that the region remains inclusive, stable and prosperous, and free from foreign interference and coercion, and that the rights, freedoms and sovereignty of all countries regardless of size or power are protected.
2. The Ministers acknowledged the complex range of challenges the Pacific Islands region is managing, including recovery from the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the growing effects of climate change, and the ongoing need to advance sustainable development outcomes. The Ministers reaffirmed Japan and New Zealand's commitment to supporting Pacific priorities, especially those endorsed by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders in the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent* in support of a peaceful, stable, prosperous, and resilient Pacific.
3. This Joint Declaration reaffirms Japan and New Zealand's commitment to strengthening coordination, alignment, and partnership in the Pacific region, as shown in the Leaders' Joint Statement, and outlines areas for cooperation, shared objectives, and the processes for Japan-New Zealand Pacific Consultations. Both countries will work together with other like-minded partners in the Pacific to enhance positive outcomes as opportunities arise. The Joint Declaration will be guided by the vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific and the Pacific Resilience approach.

Objectives

4. Given the scale and complexity of the challenges facing the Pacific Islands region, Japan and New Zealand reaffirm the following objectives toward advancing Pacific priorities to ensure a peaceful, stable, prosperous, and resilient Pacific:
 - To advance Pacific well-being, prosperity and resilience through inclusive and sustainable development initiatives;
 - To deepen relationships with Pacific Island countries through active people-to-people exchanges and human resource development;
 - To enhance regional stability and security, recognising the concept of regionalism and a family first approach to peace and security endorsed by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders;

- To assist Pacific Island countries to address and respond to economic security issues including risks of economic coercion, and to ensure debt sustainability and transparency.

Priority Areas

5. Japan and New Zealand's priority areas for engagement in the Pacific are set out in Japan's Pacific Bond (KIZUNA) Policy with Pacific Island countries and New Zealand's Pacific Resilience approach. In seeking alignment between these existing frameworks, Japan and New Zealand will prioritise working together in an open and transparent manner in the following areas:
 - **Economic Recovery** from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, including through increased support for public financial management and revenue collection etc....;
 - **Oceans**, including the promotion of sustainable fisheries, maritime security, maritime law enforcement, and maritime domain awareness;
 - **Climate Change**, in areas such as disaster risk reduction, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, quality infrastructure, water security, renewable energy, and regional climate change capacity building and policy support;
 - **Infrastructure** for regional connectivity and health, such as airports, ports, hospitals, and information and communication technology;
 - **People-to-People Exchanges and human resource development** for various areas above and through cultural, education, youth and academic exchanges.
6. The Ministers welcomed recent efforts to work together in support of Pacific priorities, such as supporting the Pacific Climate Change Centre in Samoa, assisting Tonga's recovery following the volcanic eruption and tsunami in January 2022, and helping Samoa to strengthen its maritime security capability.

Way forward

7. Japan and New Zealand seek to enhance policy coordination and alignment, as well as greater development assistance program coordination in the Pacific through regular bilateral consultations, both in each capital, and between embassies and high commissions throughout the Pacific.
8. This Joint Declaration will be reviewed annually at the Japan-New Zealand Pacific Consultations and revised as mutually decided by both Japan and New Zealand.
9. New Zealand supports Japan's cooperation with Pacific Island countries towards the Ministerial Interim Meeting of the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM) in 2023 and PALM 10 in 2024.