

**The Seventh Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM7)**  
**Leaders' Declaration**  
**- Fukushima Iwaki Declaration -**  
**“Building Prosperous Future Together”**

**1. Introduction**

1. Leaders and representatives of Japan and Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) members including Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu (hereinafter referred to as the “Leaders”) met in Iwaki-city, Fukushima, Japan on 22 and 23 May 2015, for the Seventh Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM7). The Leaders expressed their appreciation to the co-chairs H.E. Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, and H.E. Mr. Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr., President of Palau, for leading PALM7 to success.
2. The Leaders expressed their appreciation to the Government of Japan for hosting PALM7 and to the people of Japan for the warm welcome extended during their stay. The Leaders expressed their gratitude to the Governor of Fukushima Prefecture, Mr. Masao Uchibori, and the people of Fukushima as well as to the Mayor of Iwaki-city, Mr. Toshio Shimizu, and the people of Iwaki, for their warm and generous hospitality.
3. Prime Minister Abe expressed gratitude to the Leaders visiting Iwaki-city, Fukushima for PALM7, and stressed the significance of holding PALM7 in Iwaki-city, Fukushima. Prime Minister Abe also expressed his deep appreciation for the considerable support from across the world, including the Pacific region, after the Great East Japan Earthquake. Prime Minister Abe illustrated the collective effort by the Government and people of Japan to recover from the Great East Japan Earthquake as well as the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. Expressing appreciation for the valuable opportunity to visit Iwaki-city, Fukushima, the Leaders acknowledged its steady reconstruction and commended the unyielding spirit and tireless efforts of the people of Iwaki and Fukushima.
4. The Leaders commended Fiji for successfully conducting the general election in September 2014 in a peaceful manner, and expressed high expectations for the steady consolidation of democracy in Fiji. Fully acknowledging the key role of Fiji in the Pacific region, the Leaders welcomed the participation of Rear Admiral (Retired) Hon. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji, in PALM7.

## 2. PALM Process

5. The Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the PALM process and its current structure as central to strengthening mutual trust between Japan and the members of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), as well as to enhancing steady and substantial development in the Forum Island Countries (FICs). Acknowledging the challenges that the FICs continue to face, the Leaders renewed their strong commitment to partnership and cooperation based on the PALM process.
6. The Leaders welcomed and expressed their support for the new vision of Japan's diplomacy toward the Pacific island countries, "*A Beacon for Diplomacy toward the PICs*", announced by Prime Minister Abe on 23 May, 2015. Taking into account the important role played by the FICs in the international community, the Leaders committed themselves to working closely with Japan based on shared values and rule of law through interactive partnership with the aim of ensuring peace and prosperity in the Pacific region.
7. The Leaders reaffirmed that the Chair of the PIF will be a co-Chair of the PALM, and welcomed Australia and New Zealand's acknowledgement of the centrality of the FICs to the PALM dialogue with Japan.
8. The Leaders of the Pacific countries welcomed and acknowledged Japan's continued efforts to advance sustainable development in the Pacific region. Prime Minister Abe expressed Japan's intention to support the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and the Pacific's regional efforts to strengthen effective development cooperation as espoused in the Forum Compact for Strengthening Development Cooperation. The Leaders of the Pacific countries appreciated this commitment and expressed their expectation for such efforts to be conducted in alignment with the priorities and needs of the FICs.
9. Recalling the importance of promoting coordination between the PALM process and the PIF to further enhance cooperation for the Pacific region, which was welcomed at the 2013 Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting and further reaffirmed in the PALM Second Ministerial Interim Meeting held in Tokyo in October 2013, the Leaders expressed their determination to continue consultations on possible means of widening and strengthening Japan's engagement with the PIF.

### **3. Japan's Cooperation Package**

10. Acknowledging the long-lasting close cooperation between Japan and the FICs, the Leaders affirmed their determination to elevate this partnership to a higher level.
11. Recognising that consistent effort is necessary to address the national, sub-regional and regional priorities, the Leaders decided to enhance cooperation with a central focus on the following seven areas, taking into account the achievements from the PALM process: (1) disaster risk reduction; (2) climate change; (3) environment; (4) people-to-people exchanges; (5) sustainable development (including human resource development); (6) oceans, maritime issues and fisheries; and (7) trade, investment and tourism.
12. Highlighting the importance of the FICs' leadership and ownership of development, Prime Minister Abe expressed Japan's intention to promote dialogue and extend further cooperation for self-sustaining development by utilising Japan's experiences and knowledge. Prime Minister Abe stated that Japan had fulfilled its pledge at PALM6 by providing more than 500 million US dollars over the past three years and announced to provide the cooperation to the extent of no less than 55 billion yen to the FICs over the next three years. Prime Minister Abe also announced that Japan aims to implement human resource development and people-to-people exchanges of 4,000 people from the FICs over the next three years. The Leaders of the FICs expressed their deep appreciation for Japan's generous support as well as their high expectations for Japan's continuous commitment.

### **4. Disaster Risk Reduction**

13. Recognising the vulnerability of the Pacific region to natural hazards, the Leaders stressed the importance of strengthening cooperation for disaster risk reduction, especially for building resilience. The Leaders also acknowledged the adverse impacts of natural hazards which hinder sustainable development, and underscored the need for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in development planning.
14. The Leaders stand together to face the tragic recent effects of Cyclone Pam and Typhoon Maysak in the Pacific. The Leaders are not only linked by their grief and prayers for the dead, injured and those who lost their precious properties but also in their resolve to work together to support the people in the affected areas.
15. The Leaders recognised Japan's commitment to supporting the development of Joint

National Action Plans (JNAPs) for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, at the national level, and to supporting efforts at a regional level to jointly mainstream climate and disaster risk consideration into national and sector development planning and budgets. The Leaders welcomed Japan's support for a Strategy for Climate and Disaster Resilient Development in the Pacific (SRDP), which is currently being developed.

16. The Leaders reconfirmed their commitment to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 adopted at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai-city, Miyagi, from 14 to 18 March, 2015. The Leaders, subject to the Sendai Framework being presented to the United Nations General Assembly later this year, reaffirmed their commitment for their Governments to cooperate closely toward the implementation of the Sendai Framework. The Leaders noted that action will be required at all levels, involving all stakeholders, to achieve the seven global targets of the Sendai Framework for the next 15 years.
17. The Leaders welcomed Prime Minister Abe's expressed intention for Japan to extend comprehensive, seamless and coordinated support for climate change and disaster resilient development in the Pacific region, guided by existing national and regional policies and combined with assistance such as development of economic and social infrastructure resilient to natural hazards and capacity building, as well as the Pacific Early Warning System for Natural Disasters.
18. Recalling the support by the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Insurance Pilot Program for Tonga and Vanuatu, the Leaders acknowledged the Pilot Program funded by Japan and the World Bank to provide post-disaster financial support. The outcomes from the Pilot Program will be important to improve understanding and to continue to appraise how insurance mechanisms can effectively support countries to enhance their financial capacities for investing in relief and recovery efforts. In this regard, the Leaders welcomed the renewal of the Pilot Program from 1 November, 2014 to 31 October, 2015 with the participation of Cook Islands, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu. The Leaders expressed appreciation for Prime Minister Abe's announcement of Japan's intention to continue to provide the financial support for the expansion of the Program in cooperation with the World Bank.
19. Recognising that the Pacific region is prone to natural hazards such as earthquakes, tsunamis, flooding, typhoons and cyclones, the Leaders reiterated the importance of sharing lessons learned from the past experience with disasters from such hazards and concurred on the need for continued collaboration in this area.

20. The Leaders supported the proposal by Prime Minister Abe to designate 5<sup>th</sup> of November as “World Tsunami Day”, with the aim of deepening understanding of tsunamis and raising awareness of the importance of taking precautionary measures against tsunamis.
21. The Leaders reaffirmed the need to provide the international community with all the information related to and lessons learned from the accident at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, including its effect on the ocean and marine environment.

## **5. Climate Change**

22. The Leaders reaffirmed that climate change poses a continuing and urgent threat to the peoples of the Pacific and has negative effects on their efforts for achieving sustainable development, and acknowledged that urgent and concrete action is required. Recalling the *Majuro Declaration for Climate Leadership* adopted at the 44<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Forum in 2013, the Leaders stressed the importance of demonstrating leadership to address climate change at the national, regional and global levels. The Leaders welcomed Japan’s participation in the *Majuro Declaration for Climate Leadership*, and reiterated the need for the solidarity and action of the international community to confront the challenge of climate change.
23. The Leaders took note of the outcome at the 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP20) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Lima, Peru, in December 2014, and reaffirmed their commitment to closely cooperate toward the adoption of an ambitious protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force applicable to all Parties under the UNFCCC at COP21 in Paris to be held at the end of 2015.
24. The Leaders took note of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage Associated with Climate Change Impacts.
25. The Leaders expressed their concern that the Pacific region is particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and enhanced impacts of natural hazards, and stressed that adaptation to climate change should be addressed as a matter of urgency. In this regard, Prime Minister Abe reiterated Japan’s “Adaptation Initiative” and expressed Japan’s intention to continue to assist adaptation efforts.
26. Stressing the importance of mitigation, the Leaders welcomed Japan’s intention to

further address emissions reduction. The Leaders recognised the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) as a potential tool to contribute to low carbon and sustainable growth in the region, in pursuit of the ultimate objective of the UNFCCC. The Leaders noted the need to learn and share experiences with the JCM, while safeguarding environmental integrity, to consider the future use of market based mechanisms for emissions reduction in the region.

27. The Leaders recognised the urgent need for Japan and other development partners to continue to provide and mobilise financial support from a wide variety of sources, public and private, bilateral and multilateral, including alternative sources of finance, to support the efforts of the Pacific developing countries to mitigate and adapt to the adverse effects of climate change.
28. The Leaders welcomed Japan's commitment to contribute USD1.5 billion toward the USD10.2 billion collectively committed by 33 countries as the initial resource mobilisation of the Green Climate Fund (GCF). The Leaders stressed the need for the Fund to support special consideration to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to allow for improved access to the Fund and in so doing deliver practical and effective support for climate action in the Pacific region. The Leaders welcomed the GCF Board's decision to direct 50 per cent of funding to adaptation, and noted the availability of readiness support for vulnerable countries including SIDS. The Leaders also welcomed the accreditation of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) as a regional implementing entity to the GCF, as an important measure to improve access to the Fund for Pacific island countries. The Leaders of the FICs appreciated Japan's initiative to hold the Climate Change and Development Forum in cooperation with the GCF Secretariat and other international organisations in Tokyo on 21 May, 2015.
29. The Leaders underscored the necessity of taking a holistic and long-term approach to addressing climate change. To this end, Prime Minister Abe announced Japan's intention to provide comprehensive assistance, in collaboration with SPREP, including the development of the Pacific Climate Change Centre and capacity-building which supports the efforts for tackling climate change by the Pacific region as a whole. The Leaders of the FICs expressed their appreciation for Japan's commitment and tangible support.
30. Recognising that dependence on fossil fuels for meeting energy needs has been a major constraint to sustainable development in the Pacific region, the Leaders stressed the importance of transition to a sustainable energy future. In this regard, the Leaders

reaffirmed their commitment to the SIDS Lighthouses Initiative launched at the UN Climate Summit last year. Prime Minister Abe expressed Japan's intention to cooperate with Pacific countries for the reduction of fossil fuels consumption in the FICs with the aim of improving their energy security and contributing to reduction of greenhouse gases (GHG).

31. The Leaders acknowledged the need for capacity-building in the development and implementation of sustainable energy policies in the Pacific island countries. The Leaders welcomed Japan's initiative to host various events for promoting renewable energy in the Pacific island countries in cooperation with the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) with a number of programmes to be held in 2015.

## **6. Environment**

32. The Leaders reaffirmed the importance of sustainable development, management and conservation of the region's natural resources, recognising the importance of these assets to the lives of the Pacific peoples. The Leaders committed to continued cooperation to address environmental issues, including waste management, tackling biodiversity loss, and conservation and sustainable use of terrestrial and marine biodiversity, and emphasised the need for cooperation to sustainably develop and manage the region's natural resources.
33. The Leaders underlined the importance of taking a comprehensive and integrated approach to addressing environmental challenges. In this connection, the Leaders welcomed the expansion of the initiative of "Comprehensive Support for Island Countries" announced by Japan at the International Conference on Climate Change and Coral Reef Conservation held in Okinawa in 2013. The Leaders affirmed their cooperation in the areas such as adaptation and mitigation, conservation of ecosystem, waste management and energy through the initiative.
34. The Leaders recognised the significance of the Pacific Environment Community (PEC) Fund, initiated by Japan at PALM5, which has provided development assistance to increase access to renewable energy and safe water. The Leaders expressed satisfaction with the progress of projects and noted the important outcomes of projects that are now benefiting vulnerable communities. The Leaders took note of the role of the PIF Secretariat for the coordination and management of the PEC Fund. The Leaders recalled the request at PALM6 to replenish the fund, as well as expand its scope, to cover various areas in line with national needs, building upon the first phase and the different levels of socioeconomic development and

capacity challenges.

## **7. People-to-People Exchanges**

35. Emphasising the importance of personal bonds for strengthening mutual trust between countries, the Leaders expressed their intentions to facilitate people-to-people exchanges, in particular, the reciprocal visits of the youth who will bear the future of the Pacific region. In this regard, the Leaders of Japan and the FICs reaffirmed their intentions to continue to consider introducing the relaxation of visa requirements on a reciprocal and bilateral basis based on the commitment of PALM6.
36. Recalling that more than 1,000 youths from the Pacific region visited Japan under frameworks such as “JENESYS2.0”, the Leaders expressed their appreciation to Japan for these initiatives, and underlined the importance of continuing frameworks such as “JENESYS2015”. Prime Minister Abe took note of a proposal by the Leaders of the FICs for a student exchange programme between Japanese universities and the University of the South Pacific.
37. The Leaders welcomed Japan’s hosting of the Rugby World Cup 2019, and the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and affirmed their determination to strengthen personnel exchanges and cooperation in the field of sports toward the year of 2020. In this regard, the Leaders appreciated Japan’s efforts through its initiative “Sport for Tomorrow”.
38. The Leaders appreciated the vital roles played by the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) and Senior Volunteers as bridges between Japan and Pacific island countries. The Leaders reaffirmed the importance of fostering a wide-ranging mutual understanding at grass-roots level through such interactions.

## **8. Sustainable Development**

39. The Leaders reaffirmed the commitments in the “SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (S.A.M.O.A) Pathway” adopted at the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) held in Apia, Samoa in September 2014. The Leaders reaffirmed their resolve to make a contribution to shaping the post-2015 development agenda, and underscored the need for taking into account the special circumstances of SIDS and a people-centred approach.



40. Reaffirming the importance of promoting sustainable development by giving due consideration to the special circumstances of small island developing states in the Pacific, such as vulnerabilities to international economic fluctuations and changes in the environment, the Leaders reiterated that quality infrastructure is indispensable for securing resilient, reliable and durable transport and communications links and access to energy as well as the sustainable development of agriculture, fisheries and tourism. The Leaders also emphasised the importance of a people-centered approach in empowering women, in delivering social services including education, health, water and sanitation, and in participating in economic life.
41. The Leaders recognised the importance of fostering young generations who would play a vital role in creating the future of their countries. To this end, Prime Minister Abe announced to launch “Pacific-LEADs (Pacific-Leaders’ Educational Assistance for Development of State)”, a new training programme for young leaders in the Pacific. The Leaders of the Pacific countries encouraged Japan to consider the promotion of its cooperation for undergraduate and graduate studies.
42. The Leaders called for giving due consideration to the economic, social and environmental vulnerabilities of the Pacific SIDS, when considering their graduation from the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). The Leaders reaffirmed the importance of ensuring that the graduation of a country from a LDC status does not disrupt the development progress which that country has achieved. The Leaders also reaffirmed the need for a smooth transition of recently graduated small island developing states so as to mitigate the possible loss of concessionary financing and reduce the risk of falling heavily into debt. The Leaders of the FICs requested Japan to support, as appropriate, their advocacy for a review of current graduation criteria for LDCs.
43. Prime Minister Abe expressed Japan’s intention to extend necessary cooperation to countries such as Pacific SIDS that are faced with special vulnerabilities, based on individual development needs.

## **9. Oceans, Maritime Issues and Fisheries**

44. Recognising that the Pacific Ocean provides the foundation of prosperity for the Pacific countries, the Leaders reaffirmed the critical importance of integrated approaches to sustainable development, management and conservation of ocean resources and the marine environment. In this regard, the Leaders took note of the Palau Declaration on “The Ocean: Life and Future” (2014), the Framework for a

Pacific Oceanscape (2010) and the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy (2005). The Leaders underscored their resolve to further enhance both bilateral and multilateral cooperation in such areas as marine environment, maritime security, maritime safety, maritime surveillance, marine scientific research and observations, conservation of ocean resources, and sustainable fisheries management to promote economic growth and to improve livelihoods and food security.

45. Taking note of the latest fisheries stock assessment that the sustainability of some of the tuna stocks in the Pacific region are and remain at risk, the Leaders committed to improved collaboration in the interests of developing effective conservation and management measures under the framework of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) including cooperation on the high seas, in cooperation with relevant entities, including the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).
46. The Leaders expressed their grave concern about illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing that undermines a major source of revenue for FICs and threatens the sustainability of fisheries stocks in the Pacific region. As countries that benefit from the sustainable use of fishery resources in the Pacific, the Leaders affirmed their commitment to closely cooperate for taking necessary measures to eradicate IUU fishing.
47. The Leaders of the FICs appreciated the fisheries-related assistance provided by Japan and emphasised that continued assistance, including through regional organisations, is important for improving the robust and sustainable management of the Pacific fisheries for long-term economic development. The Leaders highlighted the importance of the long-term and cooperative relationship in the fisheries area between Japan and the FICs, such as for improving the sustainability of fisheries resources as well as promoting mutually beneficial fisheries relationships with Japanese vessels in the region, as appropriate.
48. The Leaders recognised the right of Pacific island countries to develop their own maritime resources as appropriate, including through the legitimate introduction of modern tuna fishing vessels into Pacific island flag fleets. The Leaders of the FICs emphasised the need to explore cooperative relationships in fisheries between Japan and the Pacific islands.
49. Reiterating the importance of peace and security in the Pacific Ocean, the Leaders reaffirmed that maritime order should be maintained in accordance with the

universally recognized principles of international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and its relevant Implementing Agreements. The Leaders underscored the importance of exercising self-restraint and peacefully resolving international disputes without resorting to the threat or use of force, and reaffirmed their intentions to promote cooperation in such areas of maritime safety and security.

## **10. Industrial Development and Trade and Investment Promotion**

50. Acknowledging the potential of economic ties between Japan and the FICs as business partners, the Leaders reiterated the importance of business exchanges between Japan and the Pacific countries and encouraged information exchanges and business matching with the assistance of the relevant organisations such as the Pacific Islands Centre and the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO). In this regard, the Leaders expressed their gratitude to JETRO and the Japan Pacific Islands Association for holding “PALM Trade and Investment Promotion Forum” in Tokyo on 21 May, 2015. The Leaders affirmed their commitment to take necessary measures such as strengthening of national policies and legislative reforms to improve the business environment to support the promotion of trade and investment between Japan and the Pacific countries.
51. Recognising that many Pacific island countries do not have the economies of scale to undertake market promotion for their few products, the Leaders of the FICs expressed their desire for favourable market access for selected products from the region into the Japanese market. The Leaders appreciated the efforts by the Pacific Islands Centre to promote trade, investment and tourism between Japan and the Pacific region. In this connection, the Leaders appreciated the joint efforts by the Government of Japan and the Government of Tonga for organising the Japan-Tonga Trade and Investment Symposium held in Nukualofa, Tonga, on 18 June, 2014, in close cooperation with the Pacific Islands Centre, and welcomed a plan proposed by Japan of extending this initiative to others in the region with the cooperation of the Pacific Islands Centre and JETRO.
52. Fully recognising the potential of the Pacific region as tourist destinations, the Leaders stressed the need for development of the tourism industry as an effective means for sustainable economic growth. The Leaders affirmed their intentions to further strengthen cooperation for tourism promotion through sharing best practices of public relations as well as sustainable development and management of tourism

resources. The Leaders endorsed a plan to hold a Pacific Islands Tourism Ministers Meeting in Japan in 2015.

53. Acknowledging the on-going support from Japan toward national and regional priorities, the Leaders of the FICs sought further commitment from Japan to assist the FICs to realise sustainable economic growth through tangible private sector development initiatives. Prime Minister Abe committed to supporting the development and strengthening of the productive and export capacity of Pacific island countries, including the development of the private sector and supporting infrastructure and services of transportation, and infrastructure for development.

## **11. Recovery of the Remains of the War Dead**

54. Prime Minister Abe expressed his deep appreciation to the Leaders of the Pacific island countries for their generous support for recovery of the remains of the war dead from World War II in the Pacific region, and requested them to continue to cooperate for accelerating the recovery of the war dead. The Leaders of the FICs expressed their willingness to provide all possible support to assist Japan in their recovery efforts.

## **12. Clearance of Unexploded Ordnance**

55. Noting the continuing negative impacts of World War II unexploded ordnance (UXO) which pose a threat to human security and constitute an obstacle to the sustainable development of the Pacific island countries, the Leaders welcomed the efforts to undertake UXO clearance activities in the region and requested continuous support.

## **13. Reform of the UN Security Council**

56. Recognising that this year marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, the Leaders reaffirmed the need to further strengthen the effectiveness and enhance the credibility of the United Nations Security Council, including through its expansion of both the permanent and non-permanent categories. The Leaders noted the work of the intergovernmental negotiations on the UN Security Council reform and expressed their intention to engage constructively in the process.

## **14. Determination for Peace**

57. The Leaders appreciated Japan's consistent efforts after World War II to ensure peace and development in the international community including the Pacific region, and renewed their determination for peace. The Leaders supported Prime Minister Abe's determination for Japan to contribute even more actively to securing peace, stability and prosperity in the Pacific region under the policy of "Proactive Contribution to Peace" based on the principle of international cooperation. .

## **15. PALM7 follow-up**

58. The Leaders stressed the importance of strengthening the PALM monitoring process. The Leaders decided to effectively utilise the Ministerial Interim Meeting and other appropriate opportunities to ensure adequate follow-up, to address issues that impact on progress, and to ensure ongoing alignment with the region's priorities, including those identified through the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism*. The Leaders decided to hold the third Ministerial Interim Meeting in 2016 in order to follow-up and evaluate the implementation of the key PALM7 outcomes, as well as to start the preparatory process for PALM8. The Leaders welcomed Japan's proposal to suggest the timing and venue for PALM8 at the third Ministerial Interim Meeting.