

Statement by Mr. Iwao HORII,  
Special Envoy of the Prime Minister and Parliamentary  
Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, at PIF Forum  
Dialogue Partners Session  
4<sup>th</sup> September, 2018 at Republic of Nauru

President Waqa,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, please allow me to offer my congratulations upon the hosting of the 49th PIF Leaders Meeting here in Nauru. Also, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for giving me this precious opportunity to take the floor as Prime Minister Abe's special envoy at this important forum. I would also like to pay tribute to the strong leadership of Nauru once again, upon organizing this meeting.

Japan and the Pacific Island Forum members are historical partners who have both enjoyed the rich blessings of the Pacific Ocean. Today, I am pleased to be able to discuss our common goal of "Building Strong Pacific" with our important friends.

At the 8th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM 8) in May, Japan pledged to become further committed to the peace and prosperity of the region based on the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy", in light of the diversification of the strategic environment and challenges surrounding the Pacific Island Countries.

Especially, "maritime security" is an important pillar of future cooperation in the framework of PALM. The ocean which gives us the rich blessings is now facing various

challenges such as environmental destructions, natural disasters and illegal fisheries. In PALM 8, Prime Minister Abe reiterated that Japan will spare no effort in improving the ability to "protect the ocean". As we have promised, Japan will work on supporting capacity building in the field of maritime security including maritime law enforcement, cooperation in maritime bio- resource management and environmental conservation, and strengthening of connectivity through improving the maritime transportation network, and so on.

Cooperation in the field of maritime security also has a significant importance in regards to the North Korean issues which requires united action by the international community. In particular, it is extremely important to prevent the Pacific Island Countries from being used as "loopholes" for sanctions such as "ship to ship transfer". In this light, Japan welcomes the PIF's commitment to de-register North Korean related vessels. Also, Japan will offer capacity building training for implementation of sanctions on North Korea, targeting government officials in the Pacific Island Countries, together with the South Pacific University.

The future of Japan and the Pacific Island Forum members are inextricably intertwined through the Pacific Ocean. Japan wishes to be a reliable neighbor who can envision and build a common future with you all. By lending its ear to your voice and utilizing our strengths, Japan would like to cooperate with you more closely to realize a free and open maritime order based on the development of a resilient and sustainable region and the rule of law.

Thank you.