

Statement by Mr. Norikazu SUZUKI,
Special Envoy of the Prime Minister and Parliamentary Vice-Minister for
Foreign Affairs of Japan, at PIF Forum Dialogue Partners Session
16th August, 2019 at Tuvalu

The Rt. Honourable Sopoaga, Prime Minister of Tuvalu,
Distinguished Leaders of the PIF,
Distinguished Representatives of the Forum Dialogue Partners,
Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, please allow me to offer my congratulations upon the hosting of the 50th PIF Leaders Meeting here in Tuvalu. 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 Tuvalu once again, upon organizing this meeting.

Japan and the Pacific Island Forum members are neighbors who have both enjoyed the rich blessings of the Pacific Ocean. "Combatting Climate Change, Protecting Our Ocean" are our common goals and the critical issue that all nations need to grapple together.

Last week, our Foreign Minister Kono made an important visit to the four countries in the Pacific, and delivered a policy speech in Suva, Fiji on "Three Pillars for We the People of the Pacific to Build an Active, Oppportunity-filled and Innovative (AOI) Future." AOI means blue in Japanese. As Foreign Minister Kono mentioned in the speech, Japan is resolved to increase commitment for Pacific Island Countries. More specifically, Japan will cooperate with Pacific Island countries based on the following three policy pillars: namely, 1) ensuring stability and safety, 2) supporting resilient and sustainable development, and 3) promoting active people-to-people exchanges.

Let me mention to some of the concrete examples of cooperation in the field of climate change. All the projects under the PEC fund have been successfully completed recently with the assistance of the PIFS. The PEC fund, worth approximately 66 million US dollars, was the assistance towards Pacific Island Countries, announced by Japan at PALM5 in 2009. Through the fund, such equipment as solar panels and desalination facilities were installed at each one of the Pacific Island Countries. I am pleased to hear the words of appreciation about the fund and its contribution responding to the common challenges such as climate change and environmental issues.

Japan also announced a commitment “the Action for Cool Earth 2.0 (ACE2.0)” in COP21, which we have been steadily implementing.

Japan will implement as much support as possible including capacity building assistance for officials utilizing Pacific Climate Change Center (PCCC), which will be completed soon in Samoa.

Marine plastic litter is an urgent issue requiring actions by all countries in the world. At the G20 Osaka summit which was chaired by Japan in late June this year, we shared, and called on other members of the international community to also share, the “Osaka Blue Ocean Vision” that aims to reduce additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050. To realize this vision, Prime Minister Abe launched the “MARINE Initiative” to support developing countries in the area of waste management, and promised that Japan will provide training for 10,000 officials engaging in waste management all over the world including, of course, Forum Member countries, by 2025.

The future of Japan and the Pacific Island Forum members are inextricably intertwined through the Pacific Ocean. Japan wishes to continue to be a reliable neighbor who can envision and build a common future with you all. By lending its ear to your voices and utilizing our strengths, Japan wishes to cooperate with you more closely for the resilient and sustainable development of the region. Thank you for your attention.