

## Ninth Japan-Australia 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations

### Joint Statement

1. H.E. Mr. MOTEGI Toshimitsu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, and H.E. Mr. KISHI Nobuo, Minister of Defense of Japan, Senator the Hon Marise Payne, the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the Hon Peter Dutton MP, the Australian Minister for Defence held the Ninth Japan-Australia 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations on 9 June 2021 via video conference.

#### **Our shared strategic vision on the Indo-Pacific and beyond**

2. We reaffirm that our Special Strategic Partnership continues to grow stronger. Japan and Australia are united by our shared values, including an unwavering commitment to democracy, human rights, free trade and a rules-based international order. We are drawn ever closer by our shared strategic interests in the security, stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific and beyond, and deep economic complementarity. Together, we renew our determination to deepen cooperation to promote a free, open, inclusive and prosperous Indo-Pacific where disputes are resolved peacefully, without the threat or use of force or coercion, and where the sovereignty and rights of all states under international law are upheld.

3. We underscore the importance of a strong and enduring presence of the United States that underpins the peace, stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific. We welcome the strong commitment of the United States to the region and its emphasis on reaffirming and revitalising alliances and partnerships. We reiterate the importance of close cooperation with our common ally. We will continue working with like-minded partners, including with India and the United States under frameworks such as the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue and the Quad, to realise our positive vision for the Indo-Pacific. We reaffirm the importance of ASEAN and express our enduring support to its unity and centrality, as well as commitment to the principles underlined in the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, and to its practical implementation. We also reaffirm the importance of ASEAN-led architecture, particularly the East Asia Summit as the premier forum for leaders' discussion on strategic issues in the region. We reconfirm our strong commitment to continuously strengthening cooperation with Pacific Island countries, and recognise the important role of the Pacific Islands Forum. We welcome the increasing commitment of European countries and the European Union toward the Indo-Pacific and acknowledged the importance of strengthening cooperation with European partners.

4. We express strong opposition to coercive and destabilising behaviour in the region, which undermines the rules-based international order. We reiterate our serious concerns about the situation in the East China Sea. We reinforce our strong opposition to any destabilising or

coercive unilateral actions that could alter the status quo and increase tensions in the East China Sea. We will remain in close communication about the situation in the East China Sea. In this context, we express our concerns over China's Coast Guard Law and reaffirm that the actions of a state's coast guard must be consistent with international law. We underscore the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and encourage the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues.

5. We reiterate serious concerns about the situation in the South China Sea and reconfirm Japan and Australia's strong opposition to unilateral attempts to change the status quo. We express our objections to China's maritime claims and activities that are inconsistent with the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). We share serious concerns about the recent negative developments and serious incidents in the South China Sea, including continuing militarisation of disputed features, dangerous use of coast guard vessels and 'maritime militia', and efforts to disrupt other countries' resource exploitation activities. In this context, we reiterate our concerns over China's Coast Guard Law in the context of the South China Sea. We reaffirm that the 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Tribunal decision is final and binding on the parties. We reaffirm the importance of respecting freedom of navigation and overflight, and that all disputes should be resolved in a peaceful manner in accordance with UNCLOS. We call for any Code of Conduct in the South China Sea to be consistent with UNCLOS, not prejudice the sovereignty and legitimate rights and interests of non-parties to the Code of Conduct or the rights of all states under international law, reinforce existing inclusive regional architecture, and strengthen parties' commitments to ceasing actions that would complicate or escalate tensions.

6. We commit to opposing coercion and destabilising behaviour by economic means, which undermines the rules-based international system.

7. We share serious concerns about reported human rights abuses against Uyghur and other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang. We call on China to grant urgent, meaningful and unfettered access to Xinjiang for independent international observers, including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

8. We also urge the Hong Kong and Chinese authorities to uphold their commitments to the Hong Kong people. We share grave concerns about recent moves that weaken Hong Kong's democratic institutions and undermine the rights and freedoms guaranteed under the Hong Kong Basic Law and the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

9. We express our grave concerns about the ongoing crisis in Myanmar, and its implications for regional stability. We firmly condemn the violence being perpetrated against the people

of Myanmar and call on the military regime to immediately cease the violence and measures to curtail freedom of expression as well as to release all those arbitrarily detained. We underscore our strong support for ASEAN-led efforts to chart a course out of the current crisis and urge implementation of the "Five Point of Consensus" on the situation in Myanmar, agreed at the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting on 24 April. As long-standing partners of Myanmar and its people, both countries underscore their commitment to supporting efforts to return the country to the path of democracy, and to this end, encourage all sides to engage in dialogue.

10. We reiterate our commitment to achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of all nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction, and ballistic missiles of all ranges of North Korea. We urge North Korea to abide by its obligations under the UN Security Council resolutions (UNSCRs), and call on all United Nations Member States to continue to implement their obligations fully under relevant UNSCRs. We commit to deterring, disrupting, and ultimately eliminating the evasion of sanctions by North Korea, including illicit ship-to-ship transfers and direct shipments of sanctioned goods. We call on North Korea to end its human rights violations and immediately resolve the issue of Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea.

### **Enhancing bilateral security and defence cooperation**

11. We embrace the growing depth and complexity of our bilateral security and defence cooperation and commit to building on our achievements to further deepen and broaden this cooperation while continuously sharing and updating our strategic vision and awareness. We highlight the growing interoperability and familiarity our forces share through increasingly sophisticated air, ground, and maritime exercises and operations. We underscore the importance of coordinating strategic approaches, enhancing capability, and deepening real-world defence cooperation in line with the increasingly challenging security environment. We commit to undertaking targeted, effective, and practical defence activities in support of a secure and stable region. We reinforce our ambition to increase the complexity and sophistication of bilateral exercises and operations between the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) and the Australian Defence Force (ADF), including through air-to-air refuelling. We reiterate our shared intention to deepen engagement in capacity building, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and personnel exchanges. We instruct officials to pursue relevant discussions in these respects.

12. We reaffirm the enduring importance of our respective alliances with the United States, and our strong commitment to further enhancing trilateral cooperation to support a free, open, inclusive and prosperous Indo-Pacific region, including through deeper and broader defence cooperation, such as conducting complex and frequent joint training. We reiterate our determination to enhance cooperative activities to defend the open, democratic, and human-

rights-based foundations of the multilateral system, and underscore our countries' commitment to working closely with regional partners and like-minded nations.

13. We reconfirm the strategic imperative of a reciprocal access agreement between Japan and Australia ("Japan-Australia RAA"), which will further strengthen the foundation of both countries' commitment to the peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region and further enhance our strategic cooperation. We welcome the good progress made to date after reaching the agreement in principle in November 2020 and commit to accelerating all outstanding tasks to sign the RAA at the earliest possible opportunity. We underscore the importance of ensuring the safety of JSDF and ADF assets. We welcome the creation of a framework to protect ADF assets by the JSDF personnel under Article 95-2 of the JSDF Law, following the instruction by Defence Ministers in October 2020. The JSDF is ready to provide protection under this Article upon request from the ADF, whenever the appropriate opportunity arises.

14. We pledge to further strengthen cooperation in the area of economic security. We express concern over coercive economic practices and will work with partners to address economic challenges to support a free, open, inclusive and prosperous Indo-Pacific. We will explore deeper collaboration, including to address illicit technology transfer, build resilience in relevant supply chains, increase defence industrial base collaboration, and promote the application of international law and agreed norms in state conduct in cyberspace. We will deepen cooperation on cyber and critical technology, including to develop our bilateral partnership, with a view to advancing collaboration on relevant themes such as research and development, regional capacity building, and industry resilience. To this end, we will enhance information sharing and coordination on standards setting in various multilateral fora.

15. We underscore our commitment to UNSCR 1325 Women, Peace and Security and agree to explore practical collaboration including through training and exercises.

16. We recognise the value of strengthening cooperation to facilitate the secure and timely exchange of information and analysis and improving information security between the foreign and defence agencies of our countries. We instruct officials to enhance cooperation, including working towards updating the Japan-Australia Information Security Agreement, and exchanging views on best practices in information sharing and security between our relevant agencies.

17. We recognise the increasing importance of space security in ensuring peace and prosperity and will promote cooperation on space domain awareness, including through information-sharing, and collaboration on space science and technology. We commit to

working closely together to promote responsible behaviours in outer space, including through the UN. We confirm that science and technology is vital to deepening our defence relationship and instruct officials to commence the necessary coordination to create an enduring framework to further this cooperation between Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA) and Defence Science and Technology Group (DSTG).

18. We reaffirm the crucial importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the success of the tenth NPT Review Conference. We welcome the five-year extension of the New START Treaty, which represents important progress in nuclear disarmament by the United States and Russia, and express our strong hope that this progress would lead to the development of a broader framework of arms control, which involves not only the United States and Russia, but other countries and covers a wider range of weapon systems.

19. We acknowledge the COVID-19 pandemic has brought great suffering and insecurity, and the recovery of our region holds great promise and potential. We will cooperate with our Southeast Asian, South Asian and Pacific Island partners to promote regional resilience in response to the pandemic, including by coordinating our vaccine related assistance through the Quad, and additional contributions to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC) including dose sharing. We welcome Japan's leadership in hosting the 2 June COVAX AMC Summit, and Japan's ongoing work towards universal health coverage in the region. We commit to supporting sustainable development in the Mekong sub-region and reaffirm our intention to closely collaborate on strategic issues, critical infrastructure, development, clean energy and health, including through an initial focus on ACMECS, the Mekong-Australia Partnership (MAP) and Partnerships for Infrastructure (P4I) and Japan-U.S.-Mekong Power Partnership (JUMPP). We will continue to deepen cooperation, including with the United States under the Trilateral Infrastructure Partnership, to facilitate financing for sustainable quality infrastructure development in the Indo-Pacific. We also remain determined to work together to enhance transparency of creditor lending practices in line with the international rules and standards, underlining the importance of information-sharing and the comparability of treatment principle among creditors as well as debtors' diplomatic autonomy.

20. We commit to supporting sustainability and resilience in the region, including by: sharing lessons learned from humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations during the COVID-19 pandemic; exploring new capacity building opportunities with Indo-Pacific partners, including in maritime security; and working together to counter disinformation. We welcome the progress to date through our defence cooperation.

21. United in our ambition, and with a sharp focus on contributing to peace and stability in the region, we will further elevate our security and defence cooperation, ensuring our Special

Strategic Partnership is positioned to respond to the challenges and opportunities of the future.