パラオ政府主催昼食会　林外務大臣ご挨拶

Ungil suelb.（こんにちは）

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of Palau for hosting this luncheon with distinguished guests. This luncheon will be a great opportunity for me to deepen my understanding on Palau with OISHII foods and beverages.

I have to admit it is a pity that I can stay in this beautiful country for only 19 hours this time. As you are aware, my staff does not allow me to even have enough time for lunch. It is too short to fully enjoy Palau's beautiful blue ocean and its intact wild nature or visit southern islands such as Peleliu and Rock Islands, but it is also true that I have been spending fruitful time so far by paying a courtesy call to President Whipps, DAITORYO, having a bilateral meeting with State Minister Aitaro and celebrating the Grand Opening of Palau International Airport.

Connected by TAIHEIYO and a long history, Palau is a TOKUBETSU friend to Japan. Sharing values of democracy, human rights, the rule of law and even Japanese originated languages, Japan and Palau have nurtured a strong bond, KIZUNA. Considering these commonalities, I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that we are families of the TAIHEIYO. Through exchanging frank opinions with President Whipps and Minister Aitaro on a wide variety of issues this morning, I reaffirmed my determination to build even more TOKUBETSU bilateral relations on the solid foundation our predecessors and ancestors had laid.

Finally, I would like to mention one thing. The year of 2024 marks the 30th year

anniversary of the diplomatic relations between Japan and Palau. The 10th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting will also be held in the same year. This will be a huge opportunity to raise the bilateral relations to a higher level. There is just two years to go. I look forward to working together with all of you to build a momentum toward the milestone and celebrating in a big way.

Anyway, I hope to come back to Palau soon for a longer stay!

ARIGATO

Kom kmal mesúlang.（皆様ありがとうございました。）