

Joint Statement by Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Japan and Papua New Guinea
on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Diplomatic Relations
- 50 Years of Trust and Spirit of *Tomodachi* (friendship)
to Stride Forward Together toward the Future -

1. We, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Mr. IWAYA Takeshi, and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, Hon. Justin W. TKATCHENKO, CBE, BEM, OL, MP, celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Papua New Guinea as well as the 50th anniversary of the independence of Papua New Guinea, and reaffirm our determination to further develop the trust and spirit of *tomodachi* (friendship) between our two countries to stride forward together towards the future.
2. In 1975, Japan and Papua New Guinea celebrated the independence of Papua New Guinea and commended its people for making remarkable strides in building a new nation and for advancing their welfare. We recall our shared history that many battles had been fought and countless lives had been lost in Papua New Guinea during the World War II, and recognize our shared commitment for the peace and prosperity of Papua New Guinea. Admiring the successful progress Papua New Guinea has made in becoming a responsible and prosperous nation, we highly value the indispensable partnership between our two countries. We cherish our long-standing “*tomodachi* (friendly)” relationship bound by *kizuna* (bonds of trust) since we established formal diplomatic relations 50 years ago.
3. We acknowledge that Japan’s long-lasting and trusted cooperation has significantly contributed to the sustainable development and improved livelihoods of the people of Papua New Guinea across a wide range of sectors providing high quality impacts. Japan’s cooperation with Papua New Guinea began in 1974, a year before Papua New Guinea’s independence. The establishment of the National Fisheries College in Kavieng, New Ireland Province, was made possible by one of the first grant aid projects provided by Japan. Since then, the National Fisheries College has played a central role in developing capacity and the fisheries industry of Papua New Guinea. The Nadzab “Tomodachi (friends)” International Airport, which was refurbished with Japan’s assistance and named by Hon. James MARAPE, MP, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea in 2023, is another and most recent testament of our solid friendship, serving as a regional hub of connectivity to enhance local economy.
4. After 50 years, Japan and Papua New Guinea now enjoy complementary economic relations: Japan has cooperated to develop the national industries in Papua New Guinea and Papua New Guinea has become one of the important suppliers of LNG and fisheries to Japan. We reaffirm that Japan and Papua New Guinea will continue to work side by side to elevate the economic ties to even higher level through our mutual efforts including the promotion of trade and investment.
5. We mutually acknowledge that people of our two countries have profound appreciation for the beauty and variety of our cultures and nature. We are no less confident that the significant growth in cultural and people-to-people exchange have made our friendship solid over the five decades. We reiterate our intention to further enhance cooperation in various fields to boost interaction, promote mutual understanding and invest in youth for everlasting ties in the future generations between our two countries.

6. Recognizing education as a key for national development, we are committed to enhancing and elevating the quality of education in Papua New Guinea as an investment for the future generation. More than 800 JICA Volunteers have been dispatched in various areas of cooperation in Papua New Guinea to work hand in hand with locals, including the education sector. We are proud of being successful in producing and disseminating the mathematics textbook and teachers' manual developed with Japanese math education approach for all grades in primary schools in Papua New Guinea.

7. We reaffirm our shared values and principles such as freedom, democracy, sustainable development, the rule of law, human rights, human dignity, opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion, peaceful resolution of disputes, and respect for environmental integrity. We share our strong commitment to working hard for the peace, stability and prosperity for the region and the world, and renew our determination to work even more closely with each other to realize a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP).

8. We recognize the importance of our partnership in the regional and international arena, and mutually cooperate and support within regional and international frameworks. We reaffirm the importance of maintaining the unity and integrity of the Pacific region under the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and working together through our significant cooperation symbolized by the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM) since 1997 in fostering firm bonds of trust and *kizuna* between Japan and the Pacific Island countries and regions.

9. We appreciate the development in defense cooperation between Japan Self-Defense Force (JSDF) and Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) to demonstrate our commitment to peace, stability and security in the region. We are looking forward to seeing the PNGDF demonstrate their capabilities for national and regional security in the Pacific, and Japan will work shoulder to shoulder to support their effort, including through the provision of Official Security Assistance (OSA).

10. In celebrating the 50th anniversary of the independence of Papua New Guinea as well as the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries, we are pleased to hereby renew our determination to make utmost efforts to further develop and deepen our bilateral relations. Such cordial relations between our two countries are based on the long history of over the 50 years of cooperation and friendship, and at this juncture, we stride forward together towards the next 50 years, passing the baton on to the future generation who will take on this responsibility with trust and in the spirit of *tomodachi*.

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