Joint Leaders Statement between Japan and the Republic of the Marshall Islands: Jipañ droon–Kizuna Partnership

November 26, 2026, Tokyo, Japan

On November 26, 2026, Ms. TAKAICHI Sanae, the Prime Minister of Japan, and Her Excellency Dr. Hilda C. Heine, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) held a summit meeting in Tokyo.

On the occasion of the milestone visit by President Heine as an Official Visit Guest, the two leaders reflected on the past achievements and reaffirmed that Japan and the RMI had developed close and cordial relations as Pacific neighbors, over the years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1988, founded on longstanding historical ties for more than a century, mutual respect and friendship between their peoples.

Building on the outcomes of today's meeting, the two leaders hereby issue this joint statement to elevate their already robust relationship to an even more enduring and future-oriented partnership.

The Japan-RMI Cooperation: For Peace and Prosperity in the Region

1. Sharing the view that growing challenges and changing geopolitical situations in the region and the world necessitate even closer cooperation between the two countries for regional and global peace, stability, and prosperity, the two leaders affirmed their commitment in collaboration toward realizing a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP).

2. The two leaders reaffirmed that it is essential for countries in the region to enhance their resilience and capacity to exercise their freedom to decide for themselves across the economic, social, and security domains, so that they can determine their own future amid complex and interdependent relationships.

3. In this context, the two leaders concurred that Japan's Updated FOIP and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Ocean of Peace Declaration share a common vision of realizing a region that upholds freedom, openness, diversity, inclusiveness and the rule of law, where all countries, regardless of their size or power, can determine their own future and prosper in peace and stability. In this regard, the two leaders shared the consistent paths of Japan and the Marshall Islands as peace-loving nations since the end of World War II, as well as their determination to contribute more actively to the peace and stability of the international community to make the world better. In this regard, the Marshall Islands welcomed Japan's determination to revise its three strategic documents, among them the "National Security Strategy."

4. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to upholding a free and open

international order based on the rule of law, in accordance with international law, including the UN Charter, and expressed their strong opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion.

5. Recalling the PIF's 55th Leaders' meeting communique and the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, the two leaders reaffirmed that unity and solidarity among PIF members are essential to ensuring peace, stability and prosperity in the region, and underscored the importance of respecting national sovereignty and Pacific-led regional initiatives, free from external coercion or undue influence. In this regard, the two leaders shared their long-standing and consistent commitment to partnership, respectful of national sovereignty and fully aligned with the needs of Pacific Island countries.

Strengthening Bilateral Cooperation

6. Noting the continuation of more than 100 years of people-to-people exchanges between the two countries, and their important contribution to the peace and prosperity of the RMI, the two leaders concurred on further elevating bilateral relations to ever greater heights.

7. Noting the vital role of the Japan-RMI partnership built on mutual trust, the two leaders concurred on further aligning their views on collective priorities for the peace and prosperity of both countries and beyond, including through policy dialogues among relevant government stakeholders. The two leaders expressed their determination to further solidify political, economic, and cultural cooperation and exchanges between the two countries by identifying the following priority areas:

(a) Peace and Security

Recognizing the need for the two countries to address the increasingly complex challenges facing the region, the two leaders concurred on further efforts to address issues of common interest, in particular maritime security, as a critical element for fellow island nations. In this regard, the Marshall Islands appreciated Japan's continued support in strengthening the RMI's maritime security capabilities, including the recent handover of the Sea Patrol Headquarters building and access roads, as well as the capacity building support by the Japan Coast Guard and the provision of training programs by the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force.

The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to further expanding cooperation in the field of maritime security and other areas, and the Marshall Islands welcomed Japan's intention to provide further support including through Official Security Assistance (OSA).

(b) Fisheries

Affirming that cooperation in the fisheries sector has long been one of the crucial pillars of their bilateral relations, the two leaders welcomed their longstanding partnership, including Japan's support for fisheries research and surveillance capabilities and

improved fishery product transportation. The Marshall Islands welcomed Japan's continued assistance, particularly the provision of a fisheries research and surveillance vessel and related equipment as well as the handover of two fisheries transport vessels. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening cooperation in the sustainable management of fisheries resources, including combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, while expressing their support for the sustainable use of marine living resources based on scientific evidence.

(c) Development Cooperation

The Marshall Islands welcomed Japan's efforts to enhance the 'freedom to decide for themselves' and 'resilience' of each country and the region, noting that these efforts are fully aligned with sustainable development and prosperity for all Pacific peoples, as articulated in the Pacific Islands Forum's (PIF) 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent (the 2050 Strategy). To this end, the two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to continuing such cooperation, including by leveraging Japanese private sector expertise and technology.

In this regard, the Marshall Islands welcomed Japan's recent efforts, including through relevant multilateral development banks, to support areas such as agriculture, disaster and emergency response, mobility, public health, economic activities, domestic water storage capacity, the maintenance of correspondent banking relations, and strengthening capacities to implement international standards on anti-money laundering, countering the financing of terrorism and countering proliferation financing (AML/CFT/CPF), as cooperation that will bolster the RMI's prosperity and resilience.

(d) Climate change, sea-level rise and energy transition

Prime Minister Takaichi reiterated her shared understanding with Pacific Island countries that climate change remains a severe and irreversible threat to the region, and the two leaders affirmed the importance of strengthening cooperation to address this challenge. President Heine expressed the Marshall Islands' appreciation for Japan's disbursement of approximately USD 3 million to the Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF) in 2025. In this context, the two leaders concurred on expanding efforts to enhance climate resilience and disaster risk reduction, as well as deepening cooperation on renewable energy and the energy transition.

They also welcomed the recent approval of a comprehensive support program for 14 Pacific Island countries, including the RMI, by the Green Climate Fund (GCF), to which Japan is a major contributor, with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as the accredited entity, with a total scale of approximately USD 1.06 billion, including a GCF grant of USD 250 million. Also, the two leaders highlighted the necessity of the stability of maritime zones and reaffirmed that, once established in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), States can accordingly maintain their maritime zones in the face of physical changes resulting from climate change-related sea level rise. In this regard, they welcomed both the 2026 Pacific Islands Forum Leaders

Meeting Communique and the 2026 UN Declaration on Sea Level Rise.

Taking into account the particular vulnerabilities and priorities of the RMI as an atoll country, the two leaders concurred on exploring measures aligned with its needs and circumstances, including the potential use of nature-based solutions (NbS) such as utilizing coral reef ecosystems for coastal protection, with a view to enhancing the resilience of island communities to the impacts of climate change and sea-level rise.

(e) People-to-people exchanges

Reiterating that active people-to-people exchanges across various levels and sectors are essential as the foundation of their amicable bilateral relations, the two leaders concurred on further promoting such exchanges in a wide range of fields, including youth, education, culture, tourism, and sports. Furthermore, the two leaders welcomed the recent promotion event of baseball—or *yakyu* in Marshallese—and other sports exchanges, which provided valuable opportunities for young people and communities in both countries to deepen mutual understanding and friendship.

Recognizing the long-standing and profound contributions made to the development of bilateral relations through exchanges among the governments, local authorities, the private sector, civil society, and the peoples of Japan and the RMI, the two leaders encouraged further exchanges at various levels, including among parliamentarians, local governments, businesses, academics, cultural organizations, and youth.

(f) Promoting Future-oriented relations

Prime Minister Takaichi welcomed continued cooperation of the Government of RMI in addressing issues related to their past including the repatriation of the remains of the Japanese war dead from World War II, and maintenance of government-built monuments for the Japanese war dead in the spirit of maintaining friendly ties and building future oriented bilateral relations.

Cooperation in Regional and International Fora

8. The two leaders concurred on leveraging the already strong bilateral partnership between Japan and the RMI to promote collective efforts for peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region and the international community.

9. The two leaders reaffirmed their shared commitment to working closely together for the success of the Eleventh Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM11), to be held in Yokohama in summer 2027, building on the outcomes of the upcoming PALM Interim Ministerial Meeting in Fiji. They emphasized the importance of PALM as a key driver of dialogue and cooperation between Japan and PIF members, and expressed their determination to work together toward meaningful outcomes that address the shared priorities and challenges of both Japan and PIF members. President Heine confirmed her

attendance at PALM11.

10. Recalling the PALM10 Joint Declaration, they committed to ensuring a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Asia-Pacific region. They noted with concern the rapid and opaque military buildup that is not conducive to this end, and called for proactive, responsible, and transparent engagement to uphold regional peace and security. In this regard, recalling the 55th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting Communique, the two leaders registered concern over the recent submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) test without adequate notice and reaffirmed the importance of ensuring transparency and reassurance in line with international practice.

11. The two leaders reaffirmed the importance of efforts to achieve North Korea's complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement of all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges in accordance with UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions and called on North Korea to take concrete actions toward that goal. They expressed grave concern over North Korea's malicious cyber activities, and IT worker activities, which fund North Korea's unlawful weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs. They also emphasized the importance of addressing humanitarian concerns, including the immediate resolution of the abductions issue.

12. The two leaders expressed concern regarding non-market policies and practices (NMPPs) that affect resilient supply chains and cause excess capacity, as well as economic coercion, including through arbitrary export restrictions, that seeks to exploit economic vulnerabilities and dependencies in the region and beyond. The two leaders concurred on collaborating on strengthening supply chain resilience and diversification with trusted partners, while maintaining a rules-based, free, open, and fair international economic order.

13. Furthermore, the two leaders stressed the urgent need to reform the UN Security Council, including expanding the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership, which is supported by a majority of Member States. To this end, the Marshall Islands affirmed its longstanding support for Japan and other G4 countries to achieve permanent membership on the UN Security Council, which was warmly welcomed by Prime Minister Takaichi.

Way Forward

14. The two leaders welcomed the Marshallese concept of "Jipañ droon", meaning "to help each other", and the Japanese concept "Kizuna", meaning "a deep and unbreakable bond between people", which embody the spirit of mutual support and solidarity, as a valuable expression of the friendship between Japan and the RMI. Looking ahead to 2028, the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, and guided by the spirit of "Jipañ droon," and "Kizuna", the two leaders expressed their firm determination to further advance the bilateral relationship and contribute to the peace, stability, resilience, and prosperity of both countries, the Pacific,

and beyond.

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Prime Minister of Japan	President of the
	Republic of Marshall Islands