

The 10th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM10)
Japan – Pacific Islands Forum Leaders’ Declaration

Overview of the Meeting

1. Leaders and representatives of Japan and the Pacific Islands Forum, including Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Fiji, French Polynesia, Republic of Kiribati, Republic of Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Republic of Palau, Independent State of Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Independent State of Samoa, Solomon Islands, Kingdom of Tonga, Tuvalu and Republic of Vanuatu (hereinafter referred to as the “Leaders”) met in Tokyo, Japan from 16 to 18 July 2024, for the 10th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM10). This 10th commemorative summit was co-chaired by Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio of Japan and Prime Minister Mark BROWN of Cook Islands, Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF).

Vision for the PALM Partnership towards 2050, Striding forward Together

2. Leaders reaffirmed the significant and pioneering role that the long-established PALM process has played and continues to play in promoting friendly and cooperative relations between Japan and the Pacific region in a transparent and inclusive manner, since its inception in 1997. Emphasizing the importance of mutual trust and respect, Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the PALM process through genuine partnership, greater cooperation and in the spirit of transparency and accountability to better support the Pacific Leaders’ vision for a resilient region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion and prosperity that ensures that all Pacific peoples can lead free, healthy and productive lives.

3. Recognizing the increasing complexity of the current geopolitical environment, Leaders emphasized the primacy of global peace and stability and reaffirmed the importance of shared values and principles, such as freedom, democracy, sustainable development, the rule of law, human rights, human dignity, the peaceful resolution of disputes, and respect for environmental integrity. Leaders also shared the importance of the free and open international rules-based order in line with international law including the Charter of the United Nations (UN), and recognized that the rights, freedoms, responsibility and sovereignty of all countries, regardless of size or power, are protected by international law, rules and norms. Acknowledging climate change as the single greatest existential threat to the livelihoods, security and well-being of the peoples of the Pacific, Leaders also committed to elevating their collaboration to support the Pacific region in mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

4. Prime Minister Kishida reiterated Japan’s long-standing commitment to the Pacific region as encapsulated in their Pacific Bond (*Kizuna*) Policy announced at PALM9 in 2021 and aligned to the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent (2050 Strategy) and its

Implementation Plan (2050 IP). PIF Leaders expressed their appreciation for Japan's enduring commitment and reiterated their willingness to deepen cooperation with Japan across mutually acceptable areas. Leaders committed to a partnership built on trust and *Kizuna* and underpinned by a vision for the future as outlined by the 2050 Strategy. Leaders reaffirmed the importance of unity and solidarity on matters of shared interest to tackle common challenges and to support progress towards the achievement of the 2050 Strategy. Furthermore, in line with the principle of "leaving no one behind" and recognizing the critical need to support the most vulnerable, Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to addressing the unique development challenges and vulnerabilities of the group of Smaller Islands States within the PIF.

5. Leaders welcomed the PALM10 Joint Action Plan as the basis for mutually acceptable projects for cooperation and exchanges based on the shared vision for the PALM Partnership moving forward. Leaders welcomed the multiple concrete projects for cooperation and exchanges, in line with the 2050 Strategy. Leaders concurred on the importance of ongoing monitoring of the progress of implementation on a regular basis through close communication between Japan and PIF Members.

6. Our relationship is underpinned by the values, principles, future vision that we share, as well as mutual respect and trust. PIF Leaders welcomed Prime Minister Kishida's announcement on the Government of Japan's commitment to the Pacific region through its "All Japan" efforts and to the continuation of its robust and sustainable development assistance and the implementation of people-to-people exchanges and human resource development programs benefiting more than 6,500 people for the next three years.

Reflecting on the PALM9 Commitments

7. Leaders welcomed Japan's delivery of its PALM9 commitments across the priority areas of cooperation: COVID-19 Response and Recovery, Sustainable Oceans based on the Rule of Law, Climate Change and Disaster Resilience, Strengthening Foundation for Sustainable and Resilient Economic Development, and People-to-People Exchanges and Human Resource Development. PIF Leaders commended the Government and people of Japan for Japan's consistent delivery of its commitments throughout the PALM process for nearly three decades.

8. Regarding the discharge of ALPS treated water into the Pacific Ocean from Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings (TEPCO)' Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, Prime Minister Kishida explained the Japanese Government's position that the discharge has been carried out in line with relevant international safety standards and practices, and committed to continue working closely with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Leaders recognized the IAEA as the authority on nuclear safety, noted the IAEA Comprehensive Report issued on 4 July 2023 and concurred on the importance of being based

on scientific evidence in this matter. PIF Leaders acknowledged the dialogue with Japan and recalled the 52nd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Communiqué, inter alia the importance of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Rarotonga Treaty).

9. Recognizing their shared commitment to safeguarding the health, environment and marine resources of the Pacific region, PIF Leaders acknowledged the Government of Japan's assurances of continuing to provide sincere explanations to Pacific Island Countries based on scientific evidence in a way that is highly transparent and to never approve the discharge in a manner that endangers the well-being and livelihoods of the peoples of the Pacific or adversely affect human health and the marine environment. Prime Minister Kishida explained the Government of Japan recently decided to contribute to the development of the regional scientific capacity on this matter through the IAEA. Bearing in mind the Pacific Island Countries' aspiration to build regional scientific capacity and monitoring capabilities to assess the health and well-being of Pacific marine eco-systems, including human health, PIF Leaders further requested that such assistance earmarked for the Pacific be delivered through engagement by the IAEA in the region, as appropriate, including with relevant Pacific regional organizations. Leaders concurred on maintaining the ALPS issue as a standing agenda item for PALM, supported by an ongoing dialogue process relating to the above matters.

Priority Areas of Cooperation

10. To further strengthen the PALM's robust and enduring partnership, Leaders committed to work in close collaboration on seven priority areas of cooperation for the next three years, in line with thematic areas articulated in the 2050 Strategy.

1.) "Political Leadership and Regionalism"

11. Leaders welcomed Japan's respect for regional leadership and regionally established mechanisms, including the Pacific region's determination to act in unity and solidarity in its engagement and advocacy with partners. Leaders committed to continue to strengthen its partnership through established mechanisms within the regional architecture including ensuring the appropriate level of representation and the realization of ambitious outcomes between Japan and PIF at the annual Pacific Islands Forum Dialogue Partners meeting and PALM-related meetings. Recognizing the importance of leadership, PIF Leaders welcomed Japan's continued support for regionally developed capacity building initiatives on leadership at all levels and across mutually acceptable sectors.

2.) "People-Centered Development"

12. Leaders reaffirmed the importance of ensuring safety, security, gender equality and access to education, health, sport and other services for Pacific peoples, so that no one is left behind.

13. Reaffirming their full commitment to support progress towards the achievement of the 2050 Strategy and recognizing the existing relevant regional frameworks and strategies and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Leaders stressed the importance of ensuring human security and incorporating the perspective of gender equality and social inclusion across all areas of cooperation to effectively respond to various development challenges. They reiterated their commitment to the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieving all Sustainable Goals. They expressed their commitment to addressing health challenges including for non-communicable diseases and mental health conditions, through strengthening healthcare system to accelerate progress towards universal health coverage (UHC).

14. Leaders emphasized their determination to promote education and human resource development throughout the region that encompasses economic and social well-being, including in areas of economic development, connectivity, rural development, infrastructure, government administration and law enforcement, to build a prosperous, equitable and secure society and foster shared values in line with the 2050 Strategy. Such human resource development will be supported through numerous programs and peer to peer exchanges, including JICA training programs and the Projects for Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS).

15. Leaders shared the recognition that active people-to-people exchanges between Japan and PIF Members, in particular among the youth population, as current and future leaders, is a cornerstone of the PALM Partnership. The Leaders underlined the importance of expansion of human exchanges through various programs and networks, including JENESYS, Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs) and sports exchanges. Leaders welcomed Japan's efforts to expand the opportunity for peoples of PIF Members to learn Japanese language and culture. Leaders also welcomed the role played by Parliamentary Friendship Leagues and PALM&G to intensify cooperation between Japan and PIF Members at all levels.

3.) *“Peace and Security”*

16. Leaders reaffirmed the importance of working together towards a peaceful, safe and secure Blue Pacific region that contributes to global peace and security. The Government of Japan recognized and supported the region's efforts to ensure coordinated responses to regional security challenges, that also respects national sovereignty. Prime Minister Kishida expressed his expectation that ongoing PIF's efforts in this domain will help further ensure peace and stability in the region and beyond. In terms of social inclusion, Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to advancing gender equality through the Women, Peace and Security agenda, including in alignment with the Revitalised Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED).

17. Leaders opposed any war of aggression and committed to seeking permanent and

sustainable peace consistent with international law including the UN Charter. They expressed strong opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by the threat or use of force or coercion anywhere in the world. They also reaffirmed the principle of customary international law that no territorial acquisition resulting from the threat or use of force shall be recognized as legal.

4.) “Resource and Economic Development”

18. Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to working towards an environmentally sustainable and resilient model of economic development that would support the improved social and economic well-being of all Pacific peoples. Leaders welcomed the commitment to regional cooperation and integration through promoting trade, investment, labor mobility and tourism, growing local industries such as the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors, enhancing financial integrity and inclusion including efforts to address the issue of correspondent banking relationship, as well as strengthening fiscal sustainability and resilience, including noting the work of the United Nation’s Panel on Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) with Small Islands Developing States.

19. Leaders further reaffirmed their determination to accelerate efforts to promote business matching and support peer to peer learning activities of private sectors, including startups, in the Pacific region. Prime Minister Kishida also welcomed the East New Britain Initiative which will enhance benefits from tuna fisheries resources by establishing collective and inclusive investment pathways.

20. Leaders committed to collaboratively devising a mutually beneficial and sustainable long-term plan for the Pacific Islands Centre (PIC) Tokyo office through continued close consultation between Japan and PIF, including continuing to ensure appropriate involvement in decision making and determination of priorities by Forum Island Countries.

5.) “Climate Change and Disasters”

21. Leaders underscored the importance of ensuring that Pacific peoples have improved resilience to the impacts of climate change and disasters. Leaders shared concerns following the findings of the 6th Assessment Report of the IPCC that human activities, principally through emissions of greenhouse gases, have unequivocally caused global warming of about 1.1°C.

22. Recalling the urgent need for intensified global efforts on climate change, Leaders renewed their commitment to strengthening their leadership role in climate change including actioning and advocating for peaking by 2025 and net zero by 2050 in line with IPCC pathways for limiting global average temperatures to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, taking into account the Paris Agreement and their different national circumstances, pathways and approaches. Leaders reiterated the need for urgent action to respond to climate change as the single greatest existential threat to the livelihoods, security and well-being of the peoples of

the Pacific. The Leaders confirmed their commitment to the COP28 call for all countries to submit 1.5°C aligned next nationally determined contributions.

23. PIF Leaders welcomed the announcement by the Government of Japan on its elevated efforts to address climate and disaster risks in the Pacific region under Japan’s new initiative (“Pacific Climate Resilience Initiative”). Japan will mobilize its technology, know-how and financial resources to strengthen its cooperation in climate action, disaster risk reductions and disaster risk financing through All Japan efforts based on the three pillars of “Strengthening disaster risk reduction and response capabilities”, “Promoting clean energy” and “Supporting Pacific-led efforts”.

24. PIF Leaders reaffirmed their call for support for the Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF) and the Weather Ready Pacific Decadal Programme of Investment (WRP), reinforcing the importance of partner support for regionally led and developed mechanisms that support Pacific peoples. PIF Leaders expressed their expectation for Japan’s cooperation with the PRF including to encourage Prime Minister Kishida to join global leaders in confirming a pledge to capitalize the PRF. Prime Minister Kishida expressed his preparedness to further explore cooperation with the PRF and his intention to strengthen collaboration with the WRP. PIF Leaders acknowledged Japan’s contribution of USD 10 million to the operationalization of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage, and invited financial contributions from other partners to support the early operationalization of the fund. PIF Leaders reaffirmed that the PRF is also an approved Pacific-owned regional mechanism for loss and damage financing.

25. Prime Minister Kishida reiterated Japan’s position that it is permissible to preserve the existing baselines and maritime zones established in line with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), notwithstanding the regression of coastlines caused by climate change related sea-level rise, therefore, supported the 2021 PIF Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones in the face of Climate-Change-Related Sea-Level Rise. Prime Minister Kishida also recognized the importance and urgency of international cooperation on the continuity of statehood in the case of states affected by sea-level rise and noted the 2023 PIF Declaration on the Continuity of Statehood and the Protection of Persons in the Face of Climate Change-Related Sea-Level Rise. Leaders committed to contributing to the discussion in the International Law Commission regarding the applicable international law to this unprecedented situation.

6.) “Ocean and Environment”

26. Leaders expressed their renewed determination to ensure that the Pacific region’s ocean and environment are sustainably managed and resilient to threats and welcomed the ongoing partnerships with regional agencies such as the Forum Fisheries Agency, the Pacific Community, and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme. Leaders committed to working together to enhance cooperation across various priority areas such as

the monitoring and sustainable use of fisheries and marine resources, capacity building and provision of equipment in the field of maritime security and safety, waste management and pollution reduction, combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and conservation of the Pacific's biodiversity environment and resources. Leaders recognized the impact of climate change on tuna resources and its related social and economic consequences for the region and called for enhanced ambition and action to ensure ongoing sustainability of, and benefit flow from tuna fisheries, in the face of climate change.

27. Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the free, open and sustainable maritime order based on the rule of law and in accordance with international law, as reflected in UNCLOS and the UN Charter. They also emphasized the importance of all states complying with the provisions of UNCLOS, including on freedom of navigation and overflight, and they reiterated the importance of resolving disputes by peaceful means, without resorting to the threat or use of force.

7.) "Technology and Connectivity"

28. Recognizing Japan's strengths and long-standing record of cooperation in the domain of technology and connectivity, Leaders expressed their willingness to reinforce their efforts for a well-connected region that ensures inclusive, affordable and accessible air, sea and land transport and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure and robust and enhanced oversight systems and services in line with the Lagatoi Declaration on Digital Transformation of the Pacific. PIF Leaders expressed their appreciation for Japan's cooperation on network modernization and subsea cables in the Pacific Islands region.

29. Leaders welcomed their continued cooperation in developing quality infrastructure and robust and enhanced oversight systems in line with the Pacific Quality Infrastructure Principles and international standards, with sustainable development at its core and that is beneficial to all. PIF Leaders further welcomed Japan's preparedness to consider support for the ongoing improvements of aviation facilities including safety and security systems, in compliance with the International Civil Aviation Organizations' requirements.

30. PIF Leaders welcomed Japan's commitment to support cybersecurity capacity building in the Pacific region. Leaders also concurred on the importance of ensuring a fact-based and resilient information environment and countering the spread of disinformation.

Cooperation in International Fora

31. Leaders reaffirmed their appreciation for the continued cooperation between Japan and PIF Members on initiatives and efforts at the multilateral level and in international fora.

32. Leaders committed to ensure a peaceful, stable and prosperous Asia-Pacific region, and

noted with concern the rapid military buildup which is not conducive to this end and called for proactive, responsible and transparent engagement to uphold regional peace and security. In this regard, Leaders stressed the importance of efforts to achieve Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)'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 DPRK to take concrete actions toward that goal. Leaders emphasized the importance of addressing humanitarian concerns, including the immediate resolution of the abductions issue.

33. Leaders reiterated their commitment to achieving a world without nuclear weapons. They reaffirmed the importance of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts to create a more stable and safer world as well as the importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament regime, alongside a wide range of treaties and arms control agreements, that contribute to this aim. Recognizing the Pacific region's long-standing dedication to a nuclear-free zone, PIF Leaders also underscored the significance of the Rarotonga Treaty, which remains a priority for PIF Leaders. They welcomed the efforts towards universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in the Pacific region, including the recent ratification of the Treaty by Papua New Guinea, and reaffirmed their commitment to promoting and pursuing the entry into force of the CTBT without further delay.

34. Leaders emphasized the importance of an expanded, democratic, equitable, transparent and accountable UNSC. To this end, they stressed the importance of an early reform of the UNSC, including expanding permanent and non-permanent categories of its membership, reaffirming the need to further enhance the legitimacy, effectiveness and representativeness of the UNSC to better reflect the realities and challenges of the international community in the twenty first century. They also reaffirmed the need to launch text-based negotiations without delay.

Way Forward

35. Leaders pledged that Japan and PIF Members will remain firm partners for each other in achieving together their shared vision in the Pacific region towards 2050, as it has always been. Leaders decided to hold the 6th Ministerial Interim Meeting before PALM11 to follow up on key outcomes of PALM10 in preparation for PALM11. PIF Leaders welcomed Prime Minister Kishida's proposal to host PALM11 in Japan in 2027.

36. This Declaration is made in respect of the competences of the respective governments.