

Ambassador Kusaka's Message No.63

## ***Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting – Renewing strong commitment to the robust partnership between Japan and PIF Members***

25 May 2018

Dear Friends,

This time around I would like to share with you the outcomes of The Eighth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM8), which just concluded with great success. PALM8 was held at a time when the Forum Island Countries are facing new global challenges. It was an occasion to renew the strong commitment to the robust partnership between Japan and the FICs, and take that commitment to the next level. Based on the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy, Japan will continue to support peace and prosperity of the seas and the region.



(Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)



Leaders and representatives from 19 countries and regions including Japan and Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Members met in Iwaki, Fukushima, Japan on 18 and 19 May 2018. Under the theme, “We are Islanders – Partnership Towards Prosperous, Free and Open Pacific”, the meeting was co-chaired by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan and Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi of Samoa, current Chair of the PIF.

At PALM8, discussions centred on the following four agendas:

- Maritime Order based on the Rule of Law, and Sustainability of Ocean Resources
- Strengthening the Basis for Resilient and Sustainable Development
- Connecting Pacific Citizens
- Cooperation in the International Arena

PALM8 leaders adopted the [Leader's Declaration](#) as the outcomes of the two day meeting.

Key points of PALM8 are as follows:

1. Based on the [Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy](#), Japan expressed its intention to further commit to the stability and prosperity of the region. PIF Leaders shared the importance of the basic view of the strategy, and welcomed Japan's commitment to the Pacific region under the strategy.
2. Based on the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy, Leaders discussed the free, open, and sustainable maritime as the most important agenda at PALM8. Leaders shared recognition on the importance of the rule of law at sea, as well as agreed to promote cooperation in areas including maritime law-enforcement, capacity building for maritime safety, and port improvement.
3. Regarding cooperation in the international arena, the Leaders had in-depth discussions, and for the first time, wording related to the issue of North Korea was included in the PALM Leaders' Declaration. Also, PIF Leaders expressed support for Japan's bid for permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council.
4. Based on the recognition that investment in human capital is the basis of development and prosperity, Japan expressed to implement human resource development and people-to-people exchanges of more than 5,000 people from the FICs over the next three years. Especially, in relation to "free, open, and sustainable maritime order" which is one of the important pillars of the PALM8, Japan announced to implement human resource development and people-to-people exchanges for 500 people for the next three years.

I also would like to share with you that our Foreign Minister, Mr. Taro Kono, had a meeting with Senator the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Minister for International Development and the Pacific of Australia, who attended PALM8. Minister Kono and Minister Fierravanti-Wells exchanged views on the situation of the Pacific island countries, and on Japan and Australia's efforts in these countries.

Yours sincerely,

/S/

Sumio Kusaka

Ambassador of Japan to Australia

