

## **The Sixth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM 6)**

### **Okinawa “Kizuna” Declaration**

**Okinawa, Japan, 25-26 May 2012**

1. Leaders and representatives of Japan, Pacific Island Forum (PIF) members including, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, as well as the United States (hereinafter referred to as the “Leaders”) gathered for the Sixth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM6) on 25 and 26 May 2012 in Okinawa, Japan. The Summit was co-chaired by the Prime Minister of Japan, H.E. Mr Yoshihiko Noda, and the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, Hon Henry Puna.
2. The Leaders expressed appreciation to Prime Minister Noda and to the people of Japan for their warm welcome and courtesies extended during their stay. The Leaders of Forum Island Countries (FICs) expressed particular appreciation for Their Majesties’ audience that was granted on 24 May in Tokyo.
3. The Leaders also expressed gratitude to the Governor of Okinawa Prefecture, Mr Hirokazu Nakaima, and to the people of Okinawa for their warm hospitality. They noted the possibility of further utilizing Okinawa’s unique knowledge and experiences for the development of FICs, based on their geographical and climatic similarities.

## **PALM Process**

4. The Leaders reiterated the principles of mutual responsibility and ownership of the PALM process. They reaffirmed that Japan, the host country of the PALM, is an equal and important partner sharing the Pacific Ocean, and renewed their commitment to the PALM process. In this connection, reaffirming the strengthened “Kizuna” (strong bond) in the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami, the Leaders welcomed that PALM6 was held under the banner of “We are Islanders - For Growing “Kizuna” in the Pacific.”
5. Recognising the centrality of FICs to the PALM process, the Leaders welcomed the consensus reached for the Cook Islands, the next chair of the PIF, to co-chair PALM6.
6. The Leaders from PIF countries noted with satisfaction that the PALM process had greatly contributed to the development of their cooperation with Japan. They welcomed Japan’s initiative to invite the United States to PALM6. Recognising the United States’ deep historical ties to the Pacific region, they expressed appreciation for steps the United States has taken to further strengthen its regional engagement.
7. Building on previous commitments of the PALM process, including Japan’s support in line with the Pacific Plan, the Leaders discussed ways to enhance cooperation with particular focus on the following five areas: (1) response to natural disasters; (2) environment and climate change; (3) sustainable development and human security; (4) people-to-people exchanges; and (5) maritime issues.

## **Response to Natural Disasters**

8. The Leaders expressed deep sorrow over tremendous losses caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami and reaffirmed their solidarity with Japan and its people. They expressed full confidence in Japan's ability and efforts to overcome the disaster. In this spirit, they welcomed the appointment of "Hula Girls" (a dancing team from Iwaki, a disaster-stricken city) as Goodwill Ambassador for PALM6.
9. Prime Minister Noda expressed deep appreciation for the support and expression of sympathy extended to those affected by the great disaster. He renewed his determination to return the favour to the international community by making utmost efforts to achieve an expeditious reconstruction open to the world.
10. Prime Minister Noda underlined his resolve to share with the Leaders the lessons learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami, and expressed the following initiatives: (1) improving the Pacific Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System in cooperation with the United States and other development partners; and (2) holding an international conference on disaster risk reduction in the Tohoku region this summer as well as proposing to host the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2015. As a joint endeavour with FICs, he also referred to a pilot programme which will be implemented in November for developing catastrophe-risk insurance in cooperation with the World Bank.
11. Acknowledging Prime Minister Noda's reference to the development of the pilot programme for catastrophe risk insurance scheme for the FICs, the Leaders emphasised the critical importance of support to sustainable national programmes to manage disaster risk and adaptation to climate change including slow on-set disasters such as sea-level rise and droughts. They expressed appreciation for Japan's support on this.
12. Prime Minister Noda reiterated his determination to provide the international community with all the information related to and lessons learned from the accident at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station of Tokyo Electric

Power Company, including its effect on the ocean and marine environment. He further expressed his resolve to contribute to strengthening international nuclear safety.

13. Recognising Prime Minister Noda's determination and resolve, the Leaders commended Japan's initiatives in response to natural disasters and expressed their intention to make the best use of the lessons shared by Japan.

## **Assistance Plan by Japan**

14. Prime Minister Noda expressed his commitment to pursuing the shared vision of a more secure, resilient and prosperous Pacific region in line with the Pacific Plan for Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Integration in cooperation with the PIF Secretariat and other development partners and international organisations. To this end, he reiterated the importance of consultation with each FIC in implementing assistance in order to maximise benefits to the people of the Pacific. He also expressed his intention to pay consideration to the special needs of each Smaller Island State.
15. Prime Minister Noda stated that Japan had fulfilled its pledge at PALM5 by providing 493 million US dollars (approximately 50.8 billion yen) over the past three years, which strengthened measures: (1) to address environmental issues and climate change; (2) to overcome vulnerabilities and to promote human security in FICs; and (3) to enhance people-to-people exchanges.
16. Prime Minister Noda also committed to making maximum efforts to provide the assistance of up to 500 million US dollars over the next three years.
17. Prime Minister Noda reiterated the importance of promoting investment in and trade with FICs by Japanese businesses including small and medium-sized enterprises. He also emphasised that Other Official Flows such as through Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) would play a positive role, in particular, for the development of natural resources in FICs.
18. The Leaders of FICs expressed deep appreciation for Japan's continuous support as an integral part of their nation building.
19. The Leaders acknowledged Japan's support to the principles of the Cairns Compact on Strengthening Development Coordination in the Pacific (Forum Compact), guided by the principles of aid effectiveness and donor harmonisation as espoused in the Busan, Accra and Paris Declarations.

## **Environment and Climate Change**

20. The Leaders reaffirmed that climate change poses one of the greatest threats to the life, security and well-being of the people of the Pacific. They emphasised the need to take a comprehensive approach to climate change adaptation and disaster risk management for building climate-resilient communities in FICs.
21. The Leaders noted the outcome of the COP17 held at the end of 2011, including in relation to the basic design of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the decision to launch a process to negotiate a protocol, another legal instrument, or an agreed outcome with legal force, applicable to all Parties. They acknowledged the importance of operationalising the GCF in an expeditious manner, as requested at the COP17. The Leaders also acknowledged that a number of critical issues need to be advanced toward COP18, including to launch a workplan on enhancing mitigation ambition to identify and to explore options for a range of actions that can close the ambition gap with a view to ensuring the highest possible mitigation efforts by all Parties. The Leaders urged all countries to raise the level of ambition on green house gas emissions reductions. The Leaders acknowledged the need of significantly increased efforts to reduce global emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>, which is the main contributor to climate change. They also recognized the importance of a comprehensive approach to reduce all GHGs in an integrated manner including efforts to reduce the global emissions of Short-Lived Climate Pollutants (SLCPs).
22. Prime Minister Noda emphasised the need for global efforts to achieve low-carbon growth referring to Japan's Vision and Actions toward Low-Carbon Growth and Climate-Resilient World including the steady implementation of Fast-start Finance up to 2012. He further expressed continuous support for the most vulnerable FICs beyond 2012 with sufficient consideration for adaptation, including strengthening of the national capacity to respond to the impacts of climate change and the policy dialogue on climate change, and called on the international community to follow suit. Expressing support for Japan's efforts in this regard, the Leaders reiterated that while GHG emission mitigation and achieving low carbon growth are important, the immediate concerns are to ensure climate resilient islands and

communities for the future.

23. The Leaders highlighted the importance of renewable energy and energy efficiency for reducing green house gas emissions as well as for achieving sustainable development. In this connection, they welcomed Japan's initiative in hosting an international workshop for promoting renewable energy in FICs in cooperation with the International Renewable Energy Agency on 26 May in Okinawa.
24. The Leaders underlined the importance of FICs' diversifying their energy sources and reducing their dependence on imported fuels through such ways as developing energy roadmaps, energy efficient technology and skills transfer, and facilitating private sector involvement. In this connection, Prime Minister Noda also expressed his commitment to the Small Island Developing States Sustainable Energy Initiative (SIDS-DOCK). The Leaders expressed appreciation and stressed the importance of Japan's support for related efforts in the region with a view to increasing energy security for FICs.
25. The Leaders noted with appreciation the progress in the projects of the Pacific Environment Community (PEC) Fund, initiated by Japan at the last PALM. This is currently providing funding for solar power generation systems and sea water desalination plants to FICs. They expressed appreciation to the PIF Secretariat for the way the organisation has managed the Fund. The Leaders of FICs requested Japan to replenish the Fund as well as expand its scope to cover other areas of PEC and other priorities of FICs, taking into account lessons learnt from the first phase and the different levels of socioeconomic development and capacity challenges to maximise Japan's assistance to the region.
26. The Leaders reaffirmed that the ecosystems, biodiversity and living resources in the Pacific region represented invaluable assets for the lives of Pacific peoples and reiterated determination to cooperate in ensuring their conservation and environmental sustainability. Prime Minister Noda underscored that Japan would continue to support FICs' efforts in addressing environmental issues including waste and water management as well as conservation of maritime and forest resources. The Leaders of FICs expressed appreciation for Japan's assistance to this end.

## **Sustainable Development and Human Security**

27. Noting unique challenges facing FICs such as their scarce land mass, geographical location and limited capabilities and resources, the Leaders reaffirmed the importance of promoting sustainable development and human security by delivering social services including health and education with a view to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. They also emphasized that high quality infrastructure would continue to play a fundamental role in securing reliable transport links and access to energy as well as the sustainable development of agriculture, fisheries and tourism.
28. The Leaders underscored the potential of tourism as a key development sector in light of FICs' unique and diverse cultures, arts and crafts as well as eco-tourism the region has to offer. The Leaders of FICs urged Japan to explore ways to increase number of Japanese tourists to the region.
29. The Leaders reaffirmed the importance of maximising and securing long-term flow of benefits from the region's fisheries resources through enhanced participation by FICs in the industry, and conservation and sustainable management initiatives. The Leaders welcomed fisheries-related development cooperation provided by Japan that supports these efforts.
30. Acknowledging that the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) would provide an opportunity to secure renewed political commitment to sustainable development, as well as strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development, the Leaders expressed hope for substantive outcomes on the transition to green economy and recognised the significant global value and contribution of the Pacific Ocean to sustainable development.
31. The Leaders highlighted the importance of responsibility, effectiveness, accountability, and transparency in economic assistance as well as improvement of debt sustainability to ensure sustainable development of FICs. In this vein, the Leaders shared the view that Japan's assistance would significantly support the region's effort to strengthen effective development cooperation as espoused in the Busan, Accra and Paris Declarations as well as the Forum Compact. They also reiterated the importance of involving

emerging donors in such existing aid-coordination mechanisms.

32. The Leaders reaffirmed the importance of good governance as an essential premise for sustainable development. In this regard, they underlined respect for the traditions and customs of FICs, the importance of firm establishment of democracy and rule of law as well as political stability.

## **People-to-People Exchanges**

33. The Leaders highlighted the importance of people-to-people exchanges to enhance their friendly relationships. In this context, they expressed appreciation to Okinawa Prefecture for hosting Young PALM, held in Miyakojima on 25 May.
34. The Leaders recalled their traditional ties and renewed their determination to reinvigorate mutual visits, in particular by young people who are future leaders.
35. Prime Minister Noda announced the “Kizuna Project”, which would invite over 300 young people from FICs to Japan this year, to promote understanding on Japan’s recovery in response to the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami. He also referred to the expansion of the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme (JET) to cover FICs, through which six English teachers had already been invited. Leaders of FICs welcomed these initiatives by Japan.
36. The Leaders of FICs highly valued the roles played by the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs) in the development of FICs as well as in enhancing mutual understanding at a grassroots level. Prime Minister Noda expressed Japan’s continued commitment to dispatching JOCVs for grassroots cooperation and exchanges.
37. Prime Minister Noda expressed his intention to pursue cooperation between defence authorities of Japan and FICs, in particular, in the areas of personnel exchange. The Leaders welcomed the initiative in light of Japan’s role for peace and security in the Pacific region.
38. The Leaders recognised the importance of business-to-business communications in promoting investment to and trade with FICs. The Leaders of FICs noted with satisfaction their meeting with Japanese business leaders on 24 May in Tokyo. They also valued the role played by the Pacific Islands Centre.
39. Recognising the real potential of enhancing the relationship between Japan

and FICs through an appropriate visa facilitation arrangement, Prime Minister Noda announced his commitment to introducing, on a bilateral basis, a new type of multiple-entry visa for short-term FICs travellers as well as visa exemption for diplomatic and official passport holders. The Leaders of FICs welcomed the initiative and expressed their hope for the prompt introduction. The Leaders of FICs and Japan expressed mutual commitments to considering arrangements to further facilitate people-to-people exchanges towards PALM7.

## **Maritime Issues**

40. Recognising the region's unique reliance upon the Pacific Ocean in every aspect of their livelihood including trade and investment, food security and environment, the Leaders reiterated the critical importance of ensuring the sustainable development, management and conservation of the ocean and its resources. In this regard, the Leaders commended PIF's efforts in developing the Pacific Oceanscape which is an integral component of the Pacific Regional Oceans Policy. They looked forward to strong outcomes on these matters in Rio+20.
  
41. In order to sustainably utilise the potential of the Pacific Ocean, the Leaders acknowledged the importance of promoting maritime cooperation, in such areas as marine environment, maritime security, maritime safety, maritime surveillance, marine scientific research and observations and, sustainable fisheries management to promote economic growth, improve livelihoods and food security.
  
42. Recognising the role of international law for the maintenance of peace and security in the Pacific Ocean, the Leaders underlined the importance of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and its relevant Implementing Agreements reflecting the principal legal framework with regard to maritime order.

## **PALM6 Follow-Up Mechanisms**

43. The Leaders welcomed the role of the first Ministerial Interim Meeting held in October 2010 in the preparatory process for PALM6. In addition to Post-Forum Dialogues and other occasions, they decided to hold the second Ministerial Interim Meeting in 2013 in order to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the key PALM6 outcomes. They looked forward to the convening of PALM7 in Japan in 2015, the specific dates and venue of which would be announced at the second Ministerial Interim Meeting.