



# Celebrating the 64th Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan

It is with great joy that I extend this message to the people of Palau on the occasion of the 64th birthday of His Majesty the Emperor Naruhito. His Majesty spoke early January of his wish for the year 2024 to be a year of bright hope for all, where people support each other with compassion.

I am humbly honored to celebrate this national auspicious occasion with the people of Palau as a symbol of our close friendship, particularly when the year 2024 marks 30 years of diplomatic relations between Japan and Palau. Our two countries share the long-standing historical ties as well as common values such as democracy and the rule of law.



Every sovereign nation, including Japan and Palau, aims to obtain support from the international community for its national interests. The international environment is one in which all national agendas swirl around in a storm, making it challenging to see where and how we can work together. But over the past 30 years, Japan and Palau have been close partners in the international community working together on our shared interests. Palau has always played a leading role in supporting Japan, such as on the vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) and the ALPS treated water discharge, through bilateral meetings, summit and ministerial dialogues with the Pacific Island countries, and on the global stage.

I sincerely appreciate Palau's unwavering support, and the people of Japan are truly grateful for the friendship. I believe that this stable and vibrant diplomatic relationship stems from the understanding, kindness, and a sense of affinity towards Japan, expressed by successive Presidents, Traditional Leaders, Senators, Delegates, Ministers, Governors, Members of Legislature of the states and generations of Palauan people. I often use a word "tokubetsu" to describe our bilateral relationship as a "special and extraordinary" one. More than that, I consider it a miracle. I'm convinced that it is our duty to pass on this miraculous relationship to the generations to come. Japan and Palau will continue to stand in solidarity, and address what the future may bring in alignment with our shared interests. Japan's diplomatic agenda in the Pacific is clear — it is to work with the Pacific Island nations, including Palau, to realize the FOIP as we face those undermining the rule of law. Palau leads "Pacific regionalism" in the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and therefore, we look to Palau's leadership on this matter.

Under the strong initiative by Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio and Foreign Minister KAMIKAWA Yoko, I am doing everything in my capacity to achieve economic security assurance, the most important goal for Palau's national security, in collaboration with the people of Palau, the diplomatic corps, and members of the international organizations stationed in Palau. As President Whipps always mentions, economic security is a critical aspect to national security. Japan is determined to support our tokubetsu friend. To that end, the OEK is also pursuing the conclusion of a Palau-Japan Special Economic Agreement and tangible results in economic, social, cultural, and other areas.

Lastly, while change is the only constant in life, I believe that some things do not change between Japan and Palau; the importance of those who support the enduring bilateral ties. In this sense, I would say the future of our relationship lies in the "people." Let us continue to look far into the future with ambitions based on our common values to take our relationship to new heights. I would like to reiterate my sincere appreciation and express my ultimate determination to further advance the Japan-Palau relationship. And please let Japanese residents in Palau, including myself, continue to work together to enhance our bonds.

February 2024

ORIKASA Hiroyuki

Ambassador of Japan to Palau



Senate President and Speaker with Japan-Palau Parliamentary Friendship League Members



President Whipps with Prime Minister Kishida



Minister Aitaro with Foreign Minister Kamikawa