

Palau National Day Special

Close allies in battle against climate change

SURANGEL S. WHIPPS JR.
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF PALAU



Alii!
I join the people of Palau in extending warm greetings to Their Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and the national leadership, and the people of Japan on this 29th anniversary of Palau's Independence Day.
It was such an honor to meet the imperial family twice last year and it is our sincere hope that they will be able to join us next year for Palau's 30th Independence Day anniversary, which will also mark 30 years of the remarkable partnership and friendship between our countries.
As the world emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative for allies to strengthen cooperation in addressing challenges that still threaten to upend our economic gains and pose existential threats to communities across the globe.

This shared responsibility belies the indomitable spirit of the people of Palau and Japan, and has drawn us even closer together, strengthening our friendship and cooperation.
As has been demonstrated throughout our long history, Palau and Japan's alliance is based on our mutual belief in democratic principles, respect for human rights and our allegiance to the rule of law. These are the facets that forge the foundation of our friendship.
Our friendship goes back many years. You see it in our language, our names and our faces. Indeed, our two nations are bonded by family ties and shared history and values, as well as our commitment to regional peace and prosperity.
At the top of our shared threats is the issue of climate change. Unfortunately, both of our countries have seen the ill impacts of climate change, including more frequent and catastrophic weather events. While the challenges we face can sometimes seem daunting, Palau is confident that by working together we will overcome what is perhaps the greatest challenge of our time.
Allow me to also thank Japan for its continued support of Palau. Your assistance has

been invaluable in helping us to build a better future for our people. From the people-to-people exchanges conducted through the Japan International Cooperation Association's Volunteer Program and the Kyoto Sangyo University Palau International Career Development Research program, to the assistance rendered to improve our infrastructure — including the Palau-Japan Friendship Bridge and the Minatobashi Bridge, the power grid upgrade in Babeldaob and the construction of the Palau International Coral Reef Center — Japan remains an indispensable partner, and the Palauan people are grateful.
In August, the largest parliamentary delegation from Japan visited Palau under the Japan-Palau Parliamentary Friendship League, further underscoring the close ties between our governments.
And in endorsing Japan's release of treated nuclear reactor wastewater into the Pacific Ocean, Palau is assured that Japan took all the necessary measures to

ensure there is no threat to either marine or human life.
Palau is a small country, but we are rich in culture and heritage, which was made richer by our ties with Japan. As much as we call Japan our neighbor and partner, we truly are family.
We are also a nation of peace and sustainability. We are committed to protecting our environment and ensuring that our future generations can enjoy the same beautiful land and ocean that we do today.
Finally, I extend my profound well wishes to the continued well-being of the people and government of Japan, and further join my fellow Palauans in welcoming the imperial family and Japan's prime minister to the 30th Palau independence commemoration next year.
Until then, we are deeply honored to share this momentous occasion marking Palau's 29th Independence Day anniversary with our friends from Japan.
Arigato gozaimasu and mesulang.



President Surangel S. Whippis Jr. and Prime Minister Fumio Kishida pose to mark their summit in Tokyo in June. EMBASSY OF PALAU



The Japan-Palau Friendship Bridge connects the islands of Koror and Babeldaob. EMBASSY OF PALAU

GUSTAV N. AITARO
MINISTER OF STATE OF PALAU



Alii and konnichiwa!
I would first and foremost like to convey my warmest greetings and best wishes to Their Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako.
Today, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude as we celebrate the 29th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Palau. On Oct. 1, 1994, Palau embarked on a

remarkable journey toward sovereignty as a free and independent nation, and just a month and a day later, on Nov. 2, Palau and Japan established diplomatic ties. Since then, Palau and Japan's *tokubetsu na kizuna* (special bond) has grown stronger and closer in the years since.
We have been very grateful to the people and government of Japan for all the support extended to Palau over the years that has helped develop and shape our nation since independence in 1994. We are deeply grateful to Japan's leadership in our shared geographic region, in the areas of maritime security, territorial integrity, rule of law, climate change and sustainable development, among others. We also support Japan's

vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific.
In June, I had the honor to accompany President Surangel S. Whippis Jr. to meet with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida after the president visited the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear plant. Whippis expressed our trust and support to Kishida and Japan in their decision to release water treated with the advanced liquid processing system. We also requested Japan's support in re-establishing direct flights between Japan and Palau to help continue to revive our tourism industry.
Most recently, we had the honor in August to host the first organized visit of the Youth Division of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party and the Japan-Palau Parlia-

mentary Friendship League led by league Chairman Hakubun Shimomura. The visit marked the largest organized visit since we established our independence.
Next year will be even more monumental as we celebrate 30 years of independence and 30 years of diplomatic ties between Palau and Japan. I would like to invite as many of our friends from Japan as possible to visit our beautiful home to celebrate this milestone in the history of our country and our *tokubetsu na kizuna*. May our friendship and cooperation continue to flourish and be mutually beneficial.
Again, my heartfelt gratitude to the government and people of Japan for supporting Palau for the past 29 years.

Congratulations

to the People of

the Republic of Palau

on the Anniversary of

Their Independence

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Honorary Consul General of the Republic of Palau

Special Adviser of the Embassy of Palau to Japan

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Goodwill Ambassador of the Republic of Palau to Japan

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