

# Palau National Day Special

## Shared challenges strengthen relations

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



*Alii*, and greetings from the people and government of the Republic of Palau! It's been a difficult year globally. We are faced with many challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, threats to our ocean's health, climate change and economic recovery and security. And like Japan, Palau has limited natural resources, but we recognize and acknowledge that we need our biggest and most important resource, our people, to address these issues.

Yet, these setbacks have not shaken the indomitable spirit of the people of Palau and Japan; rather our common challenges have drawn us even closer together, strengthening our friendship and cooperation.

As has been highlighted throughout our commitment together, Palau and Japan's alliance is based on our mutual belief in demo-

cratic principles, respect for human rights and our allegiance to the rule of law. These are the facets that forge the bedrock of our coalition.

Japan's commitment was further demonstrated during the Ninth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM9) held virtually due to the pandemic, when it launched the Pacific Bond (Kizuna) Policy — strengthening ties between Japan and Pacific island countries and reaffirming the Indo-Pacific region's vital role in the international arena.

PALM9 also produced a leaders declaration and a joint action plan calling for regional cooperation and collaboration to address shared challenges.

On the eve of Palau's 27th anniversary of independence, I wish to note that Japan was there on that historic day of Oct. 1, 1994, when Palau raised its flag and declared to the world its emergence as an independent country. Just hours later, Japan signed diplomatic notes signifying its recognition of Palau's political evolution, becoming the second nation to do so.

Today, just shy of its third decade as a member of the international community,

Palau counts Japan among its closest and steadfast allies.

I pledge to work with the new prime minister in addressing the myriad challenges confronting our people and further strengthen our bilateral engagement. I'm especially keen to reinvigorate our people-to-people exchanges to bolster Palau's tourism sector — our bread-and-butter industry. In a few months, Palau and Japan will celebrate the completion of the Palau International Airport's public-private partnership renovation project, the first of its kind in the region. With its opening and management conducted by a leading Japanese aviation firm, Palau hopes to welcome more visitors from Japan.

Allow me to avail of this opportunity to extend Palau's appreciation for Japan's

contributions to the seventh Our Ocean Conference slated for February 2022, and to formally extend my invitation for Japan to join me and like-minded world leaders at this important event.

I look forward to a personal meeting with the prime minister at the soonest opportunity, an occasion we will utilize to highlight the framework of our bilateral cooperation once again.

Finally, I extend my profound well wishes to the continued well-being of the people and government of Japan and join my fellow Palauans in extending an invitation to the growing Japanese community in Palau to join us on Oct. 1 to commemorate and celebrate Palau's 27th Independence Day.

*Arigatou gozaimashita and Mesulang.*



A 34-meter health-screening ship run by Peace Winds Japan, a nongovernmental organization, with funding from the Japanese government, will arrive in Palau to begin delivering *kenshin* (health-screening) services to remote islands by early 2022. PEACE WINDS JAPAN



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**FRANCIS MARIUR MATSUTARO**  
AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF PALAU



Today, the 27th Independence Day of Palau, on behalf of our newly elected President Surangel S. Whipps Jr., Minister of State Gustav Aitaro and the government and people of Palau, I relay warm greetings

to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and the government and good people of Japan. We also extend our best wishes for good health to Emperor Emeritus Akihito and Empress Emerita Michiko, who honored Palau and all our people with a historic visit on April 8 and 9, 2015.

Even under the dark cloud of COVID-19,

we celebrated notable landmarks. Foremost was the delayed but successful 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympics and Paralympics, with appreciation to Hamatomo Kanko Co. for donating training wear and training gear to Team Palau, and to Mayor Hideto Murakami of the town of Zao, Miyagi Prefecture, and Mayor Sadayuki Suzuki of the city of Hitachiomiya, Ibaraki Prefecture, for being our host towns. We also commemorated 25 years of Palau-Mie Prefecture sister-state relations.

We greatly appreciate Suga for co-chairing the ninth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting, which was held by videoconference on July 2. The leaders declaration reiterated cooperation embedded in our joint action plan toward the COVID-19 pandemic, ocean sustainability and maritime security, climate change countermeasures and economic and human resource development.

Looking ahead, Palau will host the seventh Our Ocean Conference on Feb. 16 and 17 next year, which will coincide with a full moon as depicted on the national flag on the 17th.

To achieve Palau's target of having 45% of its energy provided by renewable sources by 2025, we are collaborating with Tsuneishi Facilities & Craft Co. on Japan's Green Hydrogen initiative to support the development of hydrogen-powered generators and inter-island boats. Additionally, with Oita Prefecture's T-Plan Inc., we are working on a plan to introduce solar- and battery-powered electric vehicles in the ecotourism sector.

The nongovernmental organization Peace Winds Japan, in partnership with the Palau government, is poised to support primary health care, including the prevention of non-communicable diseases. This project will provide and make use of a 34-meter ship from early 2022 to deliver *kenshin* (health-screening) services to remote islands.

As the end of my eight-year posting approaches, I appreciate and experience anew the fulfilling challenges and opportunities toward deepened relations of peace and friendship with Japan, our host country.

Best wishes to the next ambassador for

success. I am optimistic that our bilateral relations will build further on our history of close ties.

For their continued friendship and partnership, I relay my heartfelt appreciation to our presidential appointees:

Honorary Consuls General Kohta Fujiki, Norihiko Tsukui, Naehyeong Kyeong and Goodwill Ambassadors Antonio Inoki, Takao Yasuda, Minako Tanaka, Shiro Kiyokawa, Tamiyuki Tsubonuma, Midori Oka, Jun Kambara, Kenichi Asahara, Naoyuki Iwata and Michie Iwata, as well as Special Advisors Nanae Singeo and Masao Kikuchi.

I would like to acknowledge the extraordinary maritime support and related aid to Palau over the years from the Nippon Foundation and Sasakawa Peace Foundation. It is deserving that on this national day, we take the opportunity to recognize chairman Sasakawa with utmost depth of gratitude.

We celebrate this National Day looking forward to an even richer relationship in the future.

**Congratulations**  
to the People of  
the Republic of Palau  
on the Anniversary of  
Their Independence



Ongoing exchanges between Japan and Palau

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**Naoyuki Iwata**  
Goodwill Ambassador of the Republic of Palau to Japan  
President, Nihon Kensetsu Kougyo Co., Ltd.



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**Iwata Ladies Clinic**  
**Dr. Michie Iwata**  
Goodwill Ambassador of the Republic of Palau to Japan

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# Palau National Day Special

## Working to bolster economic development

**GUSTAV AITARO**  
MINISTER OF STATE  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF PALAU



As we celebrate this 27th anniversary of our independence, I extend warm greetings and best wishes to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako.

On this occasion I express our gratitude to the government and people of Japan for a wide range of assistance extended to Palau over the years, which has contributed to the remarkable development and progress we have made since our independence in 1994.

The people of Palau and Japan are connected by shared history, values and our belief in the fundamental democratic principles underlying our form of government. Our heritage is greatly influenced by Japanese as so many of our people are Japanese descendants, and Palau was the headquarters of the South Seas Agency under Japanese administration. We also share a common geographical link, the Kyushu-Palau Ridge, which connects our two countries under the vast ocean.

We applaud Japan's leadership in regional affairs in the areas of maritime

security, climate change and sustainable development, among other areas of assistance, and we also support Japan's vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Through the Pacific Islands Leaders Meetings, Japan extends development assistance in this area, and I am looking forward to working with Japan to implement commitments to Palau. One such form of assistance, which is fitting for Palau at this time, is support for development of the domestic agriculture and fishing industries as it is in line with President Surangel S. Whipps Jr.'s vision for economic development prioritizing

these areas. The president has created a new Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment to jump-start this undertaking.

Another notable form is the long-standing collaboration Japan and Palau have conducted through cultural and people-to-people exchange programs. Another aspect is the student exchanges between Japan and Palau, which have allowed participants to experience living in different cultures. This brief cross-cultural experience gives participants priceless and lasting memories, and all these contribute to the further strengthening of

relations between our countries.

With the formulation of the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting and Governors' Meeting (PALM & G), governors from various prefectural governments in Japan have been included as part of the PALM process. This new arrangement opens vast opportunities for exchanges and collaboration with new partners, and I am eager to expand Palau's engagement to the prefectural governments to initiate new relations.

Again, my warmest greetings with gratitude to the government and people of Japan for standing by our side over the past 27 years.



The Rock Islands Southern Lagoon is registered as a mixed UNESCO World Heritage Site. The limestone islands between Koror and Peleliu are among Palau's world-famous diving spots. DAVID KIRKLAND

## Maritime security remains a priority

**YOHEI SASAKAWA**  
CHAIRMAN OF THE NIPPON FOUNDATION,  
HONORARY CITIZEN OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
PALAU



On the occasion of the Republic of Palau's Independence Day, I extend my sincere congratulations to President Surangel S. Whipps Jr. and all the people of Palau. I also wish to express my appreciation for the assiduous efforts of the president in dealing with the coronavirus crisis that confronts us all today, as well as his actions to protect the ocean for the sake of the future of his nation and the entire world.

Palau has presented the global community with numerous proposals addressing problems that affect the oceans, a public asset that belongs to all of humanity. Notable among these initiatives is the establishment of marine sanctuaries. Japan has long enjoyed a strong fraternal bond with Palau and shares its status as an island nation. Together, we have been working on various marine-related issues that have such serious implications for the future of humanity. However, the crises that beset the oceans, such as pollution, maritime security and warming associated with climate change demand action without delay, and this action requires commitment on a global scale.

Given these circumstances, I wholeheartedly commend Palau for hosting the Our Ocean Conference in February 2022 under

Whipps' leadership. I believe this conference is a pivotal one that will impact humanity's chances for survival 1,000 years from now. On behalf of The Nippon Foundation, I would like to convey our prayers for the success of the conference, as well as our great pleasure in being able to contribute to it through such projects as the completion last year of the Global Village, which will serve as the conference venue.

In closing, let me reiterate my admiration for the path the nation of Palau has taken in the 27 years since its independence, as well as the strong desire of The Nippon Foundation to continue our cordial relationship in a private capacity with Palau, as well as to help further strengthen the ties that unite Palau and Japan. May Palau continue to prosper, and may the friendship between our two countries continue to grow.

## Celebrating long-lasting bonds of friendship

**NOBUTERU ISHISHARA**  
CHAIR OF THE JAPAN-PALAU  
PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP  
LEAGUE, MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES OF JAPAN, HONORARY  
CITIZEN OF THE REPUBLIC OF PALAU



As chairman of the Japan-Palau Parliamentary Friendship League, I would like to extend my sincerest congratulations on the 27th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of

Palau. The Republic of Palau has been a long-time friend to Japan, and together we have nurtured that special bond — *kizuna* — over 100 long years of history.

The ninth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM9) was held on July 2 via videoconference, with participation by leaders and representatives of Pacific island countries, including Surangel S. Whipps Jr., president of the Republic of Palau. At the meeting, Japan announced that under its Pacific Bond (Kizuna) Policy, it will strengthen efforts toward promoting support for Pacific island countries by using Japan's strengths through its "all-Japan" efforts.

Prior to that meeting, the leaders of Japan and Palau held a videoconference on June 29 in which both expressed their commitment to continued close cooperation toward the realization of a free and open Indo-Pacific, and Japan's continued support for Palau's COVID-19 countermeasures, improvements to Palau's maritime security capabilities and overall infrastructure development.

The Japan-Palau Parliamentary Friendship League will do its utmost to ensure that such cooperation progresses steadily and that our *kizuna* is further strengthened.

I am aware that next February's Our Ocean Conference will be held in Palau. In hosting this conference, where a wide range of maritime issues are up for discussion, Palau has an opportunity to further strengthen its presence in the international arena, and I look forward to the event's success.

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend your Independence Day ceremony this year because of COVID-19, but I very much look forward to visiting Palau again in the near future.

I send this letter with the sincere hope for further exchanges and strengthened bonds between Japan and Palau. *Mesulang. Arigatou gozaimasu.*

## The blue economy is the key to our future

**ATSUSHI SUNAMI**  
PRESIDENT, SASAKAWA PEACE  
FOUNDATION



I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the people of the Republic of Palau on the occasion of their 27th independence anniversary. I believe that people are filled with joy and happiness across the country.

While the world has been facing health and economic challenges since last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Palau represents a COVID-safe society in which the conduct of certain economic activi-

ties can be upheld by wise and proper control of the virus under the leadership of President Surangel S. Whipps Jr. It is a ray of hope for people throughout the world.

In the meantime, the future of maritime and societal sustainability is under threat in the face of climate change and its impact on the marine environment and illegal, unreported and unregulated fisheries. To address such challenges, we will keep planning and implementing projects focused on coastal management, marine environment and resources, "blue" carbon, maritime security and sustainable tourism in the context of the blue economy with the people of Palau.

It is also our great honor to have the opportunity to work with the government of Palau toward the seventh Our

Ocean Conference, which will be held in person in Palau on Feb. 16 and 17. The conference will focus on six subjects: protected areas, clean oceans, climate change, sustainable blue economies, sustainable food from the oceans and maritime security. I expect that the global leaders and actors will share their achievements and commitments to strengthen collective actions, ensuring that resilient and healthy oceans will be inherited by the next generation.

As a "Think, Do, and Innovate-Tank," the Sasakawa Peace Foundation will keep working with the people of Palau to build a resilient and sustainable society. I strongly believe that our robust partnership will enable us to offer solutions to global challenges in the live-with-COVID and post-COVID eras.

## Sailing race, youth programs help build friendly ties

**KOHTA FUJIKI**  
HONORARY CONSUL GENERAL OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF PALAU IN YOKOHAMA



I heartily congratulate the Republic of Palau in celebrating its 27th Independence Day anniversary on Oct. 1.

The 2019-2020 Japan-Palau Goodwill Yacht Race was held from Yokohama to Palau in celebration of the 25th anniversary of independence and the establishment of diplomatic relations between Palau and Japan. This race was

unique, with seven yachts and a support sailing vessel arriving safely after approximately 10 days at sea. Research on microplastics was conducted during the voyage through the collection of water samples, and the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology has recently published its report on its discoveries. The 2023-2024 Japan-Palau Goodwill Yacht Race is being planned to continue this new tradition to promote yachting and relations between Palau and Japan.

In addition, a program to invite Palau youths to learn to sail and hold a friendship race with youths in Japan was also initiated in 2019. The youths have continued their training since, and a friendship race is being planned for early next year.

Bilateral relations between Palau and Japan are deepening year by year.

As the honorary consul general of Palau in Yokohama and president of Fujiki Transportation & Stevedoring Co., I am keen to provide my knowledge and experience in port operations, transportation, logistics, tourism and hospitality to contribute to Palau's development.

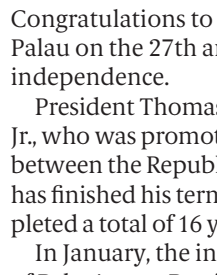
I look forward to continued cooperation between our two countries.

I hope to continue this everlasting relationship. Thank you.

*This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.*

## Ring in a new era with hopes for a bright future

**NORHIKO TSUKUI**  
HONORARY CONSUL GENERAL OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF PALAU IN MISHIMA



Congratulations to the Republic of Palau on the 27th anniversary of its independence.

President Thomas E. Remengesau Jr., who was promoting good relations between the Republic of Palau and Japan, has finished his term of office and completed a total of 16 years of presidential life.

In January, the inauguration ceremony of Palau's new President Surangel S.

Whipps Jr., was held. It is the dawn of a new era in Japan and Palau. At the young age of 53, the new president is very popular with the public and is looking forward to the future. I hope that the friendly relations between the two countries will become even stronger.

In Palau, the number of people infected with COVID-19 is close to zero, which is

a very safe situation. Quarantine upon entry is not strict and is easy for travelers to adhere to. In the Republic of Palau, you can forget about the pandemic and spend a relaxing time in a pristine paradise.

The honorary consul general of the Republic of Palau in Mishima, Shizuoka Prefecture, is also conducting public relations activities for the republic toward the Chubu region. If you are interested in the Republic of Palau, please feel free to visit us in Mishima. We look forward to your visit.

Thank you very much.

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to the People of the Republic of Palau on the Anniversary of Their Independence

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Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of Friendly Relations between Palau and Mie

**Mie Prefectural Government**

**CONGRATULATIONS**  
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