

STATEMENT OF INTENT
BETWEEN
THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE OF JAPAN
AND
THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE OF NEW ZEALAND
ON DEFENCE COOPERATION IN MARITIME SECURITY, HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE &
DISASTER RELIEF AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION

Introduction

1. The Minister of Defense of Japan, H.E. Mr. HAMADA Yasukazu and the Minister of Defence of New Zealand, Hon. Andrew Little, met in Singapore on this, the 4th day of June 2023. The Ministers reaffirmed the close bonds of friendship and partnership between Japan and New Zealand which underpin their bilateral defence cooperation based on common values such as freedom, democracy, the rule of law and human rights, as well as a strong commitment to common areas of interests in defence such as peace and security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and the impact of climate change. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining and promoting the principles of a free and open Indo-Pacific, and a peaceful, stable, prosperous, and resilient Pacific.

2. In line with the Joint Declaration between the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of New Zealand on Cooperation in the Pacific Islands Region, and noting the Ninth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting ‘Leaders Declaration’ and its Joint Action Plan for Strengthening Pacific Bonds and for Mutual Prosperity, as well as the positive and collaborative nature of the bilateral defence relationship, the Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to working in close partnership with Pacific Island countries and regional institutions and further strengthening coordination and collaboration on defence activities in the Pacific region.

3. The ‘2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent’, recently adopted by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders as the long-term vision for the Pacific region, will serve as a guide in working together in support of Pacific priorities, and ensuring a peaceful, stable, prosperous, and resilient region.

4. The Ministers recognised that the future security and prosperity of Japan and New Zealand is inextricably linked to the security and prosperity of the Pacific and acknowledged the importance of the Pacific Islands region for the wider Indo-Pacific region. This Statement of Intent outlines the partnership objectives, priority areas for cooperation, and consultation processes for security and defence cooperation in the Pacific Islands region.

Objectives

5. The Ministers reaffirmed the following objectives toward maintaining and promoting a peaceful, stable, prosperous and resilient Pacific:

- To enhance regional stability and security, including maritime security, recognising the importance the region places on an expanded concept of security, in line with the Boe Declaration on Regional Security in 2018, and the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent;
- To enhance resilience of Pacific Island countries to the impacts of climate change, noting the *Boe Declaration on Regional Security*, which reaffirmed climate change as the single greatest threat to the livelihood, security and wellbeing of Pacific peoples;

- To enhance capacity to work in close partnership with Pacific partners on issues that are important to the Pacific, such as Women, Peace and Security, and developing resilience and sharing lessons learned in relation to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations; and
- To deepen mutual understanding of Pacific, Japanese and New Zealand cultures and priorities through people-to-people exchanges.

Priority Areas of Cooperation

6. The Ministers confirmed that they would prioritise working together in the following areas in conducting defence cooperation, in support of Pacific priorities and the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*:

- Maritime Security, including supporting Pacific Island countries to monitor and respond to activity in their maritime domains.
- Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, including building resilience of Pacific communities and sharing lessons learned from humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations.
- Climate Change, including disaster risk reduction, capacity building activities with our Pacific partners to mutually develop climate change response capabilities and policy support.

Consultation

7. The Ministers confirmed that they would seek to enhance coordination and cooperation related to their respective defence engagement, policy processes and defence assistance programs in the Pacific Islands region through regular consultation across defence authorities that enables information sharing and coordinated engagement. This may include:

- Regular Ministerial-level discussions.
- Annual Policy Dialogue between senior officials (Bilateral Defence Talks) and regular Military to Military Talks.
- Regular meetings between senior working-level experts at, or in the margins of, other multilateral fora that defence authorities of Japan and New Zealand attend.
- Liaison between Japan and New Zealand's defence authorities representatives and policy officials at Embassies and High Commissions throughout the Pacific as well as in Tokyo and in Wellington, among others.

8. This Statement of Intent and proposed priority areas of cooperation will be reviewed annually at the Bilateral Defence Talks.

Signed on 4 June 2023 in duplicate in the English and Japanese languages, both texts having equal validity.

For the
Ministry of Defense of Japan:

For the
Ministry of Defence of New Zealand
and
New Zealand Defence Force:

HE Hamada Yasukazu
Minister of Defense
Japan

Hon Andrew Little
Minister of Defence
New Zealand