



The Embassy Of Papua New Guinea

Office Of The Ambassador



Remarks by H.Ex Mr Gabriel JK Dusava CBE, Papua New Guinea's Ambassador to Japan at the Seminar on Japan's Role and "Development Policy" towards the Pacific Island Countries (PIC) on 27 November, 2014, Sponsored by Japan's Sasakawa Foundation, Tokyo.

Salutations

1. Introduction

Thank you for inviting me to make a short contribution at this Seminar, as a Panellist.

The focus of the Seminar is on Japan's Development Partnership with, or as others may prefer, "*Japan's Aid Policy*" to the Pacific Island Countries (PIC) and if a review is needed, seemingly, due to "*Recent Trends in Pacific Regionalism*".

Naturally the areas of focus are important and thought provoking.

Indeed, the topics are as wide as the Pacific Ocean. So wide that the challenge of "*One Size Fits All*" is impossible to claim for small and large populations of Micronesia, Polynesia and Melanesia when discussing the form, type, quantum of development assistance and the platform for engagements with Japan.

It was that challenge to have a platform for all the voices of such diversity among PICs to be heard, supported and acted upon collectively, and in one voice in the "*Pacific Way*" that our Leaders, PIC's fore fathers, established the South Pacific FORUM (SPF), now renamed the PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM (PIF).

Papua New Guinea, of course, joined the PIF at Independence in 1975. Since then the PIF, together with its specialized Agencies, remains for us, the "Premier Regional Organization", and which we continue to cherish, and support as a strong Member, with founding PIC countries like Samoa, Fiji, and Tonga, and now, our friends from Micronesia, like FSM, Marshalls and Palau.

Currently, we too enjoy the PALM Process, as a specific Platform under which our PIF leaders can engage with the Prime Minister of Japan, on equal footing, going forward.

2. Japan's Foreign Policy Direction

So what is Japan's Foreign Policy under which the PICs are in partnership?

It is not easy to discern, but some recent declarations by Prime Minister Abe and his Foreign Minister Kishida give us some indication of what it is, and where PICs are placed in the global perspective in Japan's mind, philosophy and outlook.

On the global scene, Japan undertakes to *"upholding freedom, democracy, basic human rights and the rule of law"*, while endeavouring to *"contribute to world peace and prosperity"*.

Indeed, Japan's strategic diplomatic direction is to advance their "national interests" and "interests of the entire world", with a strong show of its diplomatic presence.

In a Foreign Policy that takes a *"Panoramic Perspective of the World Map"*, Japan's Foreign Minister Kishida said this of the PICs;

"Many of the Pacific Island Countries are friendly toward Japan and are important partners of Japan in terms of cooperation within the international community and in the supply of fisheries and mineral resources".

Referring to the outcome of the October 2013, the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM) Second Ministerial Interim Meeting which was held in Tokyo and Sendai, Minister Kishida reaffirmed the importance of cooperation between Japan and the Pacific region, particularly in the areas of ***"international maritime order, resource management and trade and investment"***.

3. PIC Foreign Policy Direction

We all know that the PICs Foreign Policy Direction as it were, has been manifested in the PIF FORUM COMMUNIQUEs over the years.

For PNG there can be no other politically cohesive and collective body like the PIF that is credentialed by its democratically elected Governments of our countries to engage freely among ourselves and with the rest of the world, including Japan.

The Suva, Fiji-based Forum Secretariat, despite its many challenges, is the sole administrative and implementation arm of PIF, headed by a Secretary General, who is appointed by the Leaders of the FORUM.

So, whether it is regional trade and investment, fisheries, environment and climate change, regional or global issues requiring a collective position, the PIF decides upon it, and the FORUM SECRETARIAT carries it out.

Papua New Guinea, like all other PICs, respects, adheres to and enjoys the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Decisions, its relationships with each of the PIC countries, and with Japan, and the global community, especially those "DIALOGUE PARTNERS" of the FORUM.

Indeed, it is public knowledge that PNG supports Japan's interest and desire to be further integrated into the workings of the PICs through the PIF, and will support the process that need to get Japan into a position within which all options, including full membership in the PIF are available for decision.

4. Individual PIC Foreign Policy Directions

It is a given that all PIC countries have their own and respective Foreign Policy Directions, based on their national interests.

One has to take it that within that policy direction, each country sets out its priority areas, affiliated organizations and countries, for international and regional co-operation, including on global issues like environment, climate change, etc.

No doubt, Japan, the PIF, PALM and its Process, etc feature in PIC policy considerations in that context.

5. Development Cooperation Partnership with Japan: The case of Papua New Guinea

Speaking for Papua New Guinea, I can say we are clear with our Foreign Policy Direction of "*Selective Engagement*" under which we apply "**Papua New Guinea Connect**" to the world and retain priority over our "**core relations**" with our closest neighbours, the Melanesian Spear Head Group (MSG), the PIF, the European Union, and of course, Japan, China, the United Kingdom, the USA and the United Nations Network.

Papua New Guinea believes we are a reliable bridge between ASIA and the PACIFIC and we try our hardest to demonstrate that fact.

Japan will continue to enjoy a prominent place by virtue of our national interests, as a core strategic partner, not least because with the importation from June this year of PNGs LNG, it will become our No.1 trading partner by 2015.

But significantly Japan's development partnership value with PNG stands up to Yen 900 billion since Independence.

And as declared by Prime Ministers Abe and O'Neill during Mr Abe's visit in July this year to PNG, the two countries are engaged in a much mutually valued, "*strategic and comprehensive partnership*" that has seen ODA, JICA, business and social and cultural exchanges grow, with so much promise still, for the future.

6. Challenges-Going Forward

But, all is not smooth sailing with Japan.

Papua New Guinea, would like to help and contribute towards resolving challenges arising from Japanese processes, consultations and communication

issues, both under our bilateral program, just as much as under the PALM process.

On the whole, our relations with Japan is positive, constructive and intensifying.

But we do also believe that as a region, we the PICs need more inter-PIC and inter PIC/Japan consultations, especially in implementing Japan's PALM commitments, to allow transparency, as well as timely access to PEC Funds, and others.

Finally, it would also help if truly knowledgeable "*experts*" of the Pacific region and PIC countries are co-opted as advisors, and to provide advice relating to PIC issues between Japan and our respective countries.

7. Conclusion

Japan is a good, trustworthy friend and partner for PICs generally, and for Papua New Guinea bilaterally.

Indeed, PNG values Japan's sincere, generous and comprehensive partnership with PNG, and the PIC Region.

It is incumbent upon us, the PICs to organize, act collectively, where necessary through the Forum SECRETARIAT, and speak in one voice, to properly access PALM, and other related funds.

Of essence is that, through solidarity among PICs on issues most critical to us, like climate change and natural disasters as well as issues effecting the so called "**green blue Pacific economies**" we can do a lot more together than pursuing our regional concerns as individual countries or Governments.

On Japan's part, it has to get more aggressive, pro-active and maintain its "*comparative advantage*" in the region.

Japan must understand PICs, our peoples, our environment, our strengths and weaknesses and needs and engage a lot more directly than relying too much on unproven, and on, "**desk top**" Japanese experts on PIC matters.

In our view, Japan's NPOs too have a duty to be positive agents for solidarity among PICs, so that Japan's engagement is clear, decisive and mutually beneficial.

On the architecture of the Pacific region's regional organizations, as our Prime Minister, Hon Peter O'Neill stated to his PIC colleagues and the *Chinese President, Mr Xi Jinping* last week in Fiji, Papua New Guinea accepts, believes and wishes to continue in the present format, where the PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM remains the "premier" regional body.

All other emerging development concerns can be cost-effectively handled by the Pacific Islands Forum's present framework.

Anything to the contrary is a demonstration that we are kidding ourselves, and the founders of the PACIFIC FORUM.

On the other hand, we also respect the democratic rights of colleague PICs who propose other challenges for free debate, and for arriving at decisions in a democratic way, through consensus.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I rest my case, and thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gabriel JK Dusava'. The signature is stylized with a large initial 'G' and a long, sweeping line extending upwards and to the right.

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Papua New Guinea's Ambassador to Japan