

PIF Readout of Meeting between Prime Minister Mark Brown and Japan Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi

Monday 6 February 2023

The incoming Forum Chair and Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, the Honourable Mark Brown, is leading a Forum delegation to Tokyo this week to convey concerns and requests of Pacific Leaders for deferral of Japan's planned discharge of treated nuclear wastewater into the Pacific.

Prime Minister Brown met today with the Japan Foreign Minister, Yoshimasa Hayashi. PM Brown was accompanied by the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum, Henry Puna.

Recalling related commitments at the PALM9, PM Brown emphasised ongoing Pacific concerns with the proposed plans for ocean release, based on PIF independent scientific assessment of the data.

The Prime Minister and Foreign Minister confirmed the importance of ensuring no harm to the environment and human health. PM Brown reiterated the need for assurance that release will not be undertaken without further exchange of information and satisfaction of all parties.

Prime Minister Brown emphasised that he will provide a report to Pacific Leaders on this matter at their upcoming Special session. He reaffirmed the current position of the PIF on the issue, and the importance of working together towards a common understanding on the scientific basis and implications of the release.

Prime Minister Brown and Foreign Minister Hayashi agreed on the need for further intensive dialogue, particularly between Japan and PIF experts, and the importance of science and data to guide the political decision on the discharge.

Prime Minister Brown welcomed the Foreign Minister's recognition and strong support for the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. These included the need for enhanced cooperation in an increasingly complex geopolitical and security environment, the need to accelerate efforts moving forward, climate change emissions reductions, the transition to net zero by 2050, and the opportunities for closer collaboration afforded by the PALM process.

Prime Minister Brown and Secretary General Henry Puna congratulated the Government of Japan on its planned announcement of support of the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones in the face of Climate Change-related Sea-level rise, recognising the permanency of maritime zones under UNCLOS.

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