



Department of Foreign Affairs Federated States of Micronesia

April 26, 2021
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The Department of Foreign Affairs of the Federated States of Micronesia presents its compliments to the Embassy of Japan in the Federated States of Micronesia, and has to honor to convey herewith a letter from H.E. David W. Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, addressed to H.E. Yoshihide Suga, Prime Minister of Japan.

The Department would greatly appreciate the Embassy's assistance in ensuring this letter reaches its esteemed destination.

The Department of Foreign Affairs of the Federated States of Micronesia avails itself of this opportunity to renew with the Embassy of Japan in the Federated States of Micronesia the assurances of its highest consideration.

Palikir, Pohnpei



Enclosure:



The President
Palikir, Pohnpei
Federated States of Micronesia

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

Kaselehlie and my deepest respect to you and your office. As you know, the People and Government of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) share a Kizuna, or special bond, with the People and Government of Japan. We deeply cherish our close friendship, and I am confident that our close relations will only become stronger in the decades and centuries to come.

Recently, our Government became aware about Japan's intention to solve the enduring problem of nuclear waste at Fukushima by releasing, in two years' time, 1.2 million tons of diluted—but still, to our understanding, contaminated—water into the Pacific Ocean. We understand that both the Chairman of the Pacific Island Forum and the Secretary General have written to your government expressing concerns over this decision by Japan. While some of these concerns are perhaps more provocative than others, the uniting theme is one of concern over both the possible environmental impacts of releasing this nuclear waste, along with the concern that the decision was not made in consultation with parties outside of Japan, particularly those close to Japan (politically, historically, and geographically).

With my deepest respect, our Government shares those same thematic concerns: both regarding anxiety, perhaps even fear, over possible harm to our environment, and frustration that other countries which share the same Pacific Ocean were not consulted over this decision or at least prior to the decision being made.

Our fear of the environmental impacts is founded, in part, on how our Nation's food and financial security is reliant on our maritime and oceanic resources; of all the reasons our Government champions environmental protection, conservation efforts, and sustainable fisheries, our continued survival is at the forefront.

We appreciate that Japan is presently facing a unique and difficult challenge. We recognize that the earthquake and subsequent disaster at Fukushima in 2011 was a heartbreaking tragedy for Japan and the World, and we are well aware and congratulate your Government for all of its untiring efforts to clean up and contain the dangerous nuclear waste left in its aftermath. We recognize that putting the nuclear waste product in water tanks was an effective and immediate solution for an urgently evolving problem, and we note, through your own assessment, that the current practice is unsustainable.

As a fellow leader, I can empathize that you're facing a difficult situation, domestically and internationally. I have confidence that you are doing everything you can to solve the problem in a way that sustainably, permanently, and safely addresses the situation. Understandably, Japan's decision takes into consideration its own national interests. It is therefore only proper that we ask Japan to take into account the potential impact the decision might have on countries like the Federated States of Micronesia.



His Excellency Yoshihide Suga

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In addition to the Pacific Island Forum's call for an independent expert review, and in line with the Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Island Countries of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes within the South Pacific Region (i.e. the Waigani Convention), I strongly believe it would be highly fruitful, and demonstrative of our close friendship and cooperation, for the Government of Japan to engage in a formal and multilateral dialogue with countries whose livelihoods depend greatly on the health of the Pacific Ocean. In the spirit of multilateralism and inclusivity, I would encourage you to consider having consultations with the Micronesian region. Such a consultative engagement will strengthen our partnerships and understanding with each other, and enable us all to hear from your Government why and how you have made this decision, and how you believe it will impact or not impact other countries. I believe it will be fruitful for your Government to hear, candidly and directly, our fears and concerns, so that they can be identified and then assuaged.

Mr. Prime Minister, I would like to emphasize once again how much the People and Government of the FSM cherish our Kizuna with the People and Government of Japan. We share your concern regarding the ongoing impact of the Fukushima disaster, and how we can find common solutions as people of the Blue Pacific Continent. I thank you for considering my suggestion for a formal and multilateral dialogue. I wish you and the People and Government of Japan prosperity and happiness.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David W. Panuelo".

David W. Panuelo
President

His Excellency Yoshihide Suga

Prime Minister

Japan