

# **JIIA Public Symposium: Strengthening Japan-Pacific Islands Countries Partnership**

## **Executive summary**

### **(1) Overview: Japan's Necessary Initiatives in the Medium to Long Term**

- Given factors such as the changing generation of people of Japanese descent in states in Micronesia (Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Palau), the expanded influence of neighboring countries and Japan's reduced ODA budget, friendly relations between Japan and Pacific Island Countries can no longer be taken for granted. Hence, it is essential that Japan adopt a medium to long term outlook in making efforts to maintain and strengthen relations with Pacific Island Countries.

### **(2) Intensifying Official Visits to Pacific Island Countries**

- To maintain and strengthen relations with Pacific Island Countries, Japan needs to increase the number of political-level visits to these countries. It is essential to ensure that there is attendance by political-level officials in the PIF Post-Dialogue Forum.
- In particular, Japan must strengthen relations with the geographically proximate Micronesia region. In such regard, attendance of political-level officials, with observer status, at the yearly Micronesia Presidents' Summit and other international conferences of the region is desirable.

### **(3) Support, with Respect for the "Pacific Way"**

- With a foundation in the concept of equal partnership, and in respecting the "Pacific Way" which conforms to the tradition and culture of island countries, support of each country's self-help efforts and social economy reform is essential.
- For example, in the case of Fiji, considering it is in the early stages of democratization, continuing the pressure to engage in interactive dialogue would be a valid contribution.
- Considering the actual state of affairs in the locations in question, rather than strictly "good governance" as seen from the perspective of an advanced country, perhaps we should be considering support from the idea of "good enough governance."

### **(4) Strengthening People-to-People Exchanges**

- Based on the changing generation of people of Japanese descent in the Island Countries, and particularly the three countries of Micronesia, there is a necessity for promoting Japan as part of the medium to long term outlook for island countries. For example, under the current government-financed exchange student program, securing scholarship support is difficult for students of Pacific Island Countries. Japan must therefore implement initiatives targeting Pacific Island Countries specifically, such as an exchange student fund.

### **(5) ODA to Pacific Island Countries**

- Considering that ODA directed towards Pacific Island Countries is an extremely effective tool for maintaining and strengthening friendly relations with the region, Japan must avoid the reduction of ODA to the Pacific Island Countries to the best of its ability.
- In Pacific Island Countries, where infrastructure is not maintained, Japan's provision of sustainable aid, such as infrastructural improvements of highways, airports and harbors, remains indispensable in the medium to long term.

## **(6) Climate Change**

- The Pacific Island Countries are in a vulnerable position when it comes to the issue of climate change. It is therefore important to keep in mind ongoing correspondence over the issue of climate change.
- Cooperation between Japan and Pacific Island Countries is also essential for the success of the COP16 (The 16<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change).