

20 May 2009

**The Pacific Islands Leaders' Roundtable Meeting on Water and Sanitation
Chair's Summary**

H.E. Mr. Yoshiro Mori
**Chairman of the Pacific Islands Leaders' Roundtable
Meeting on Water and Sanitation**
President of the Asia-Pacific Water Forum
President of the Japan Water Forum

The Pacific Islands Leaders' Roundtable Meeting on Water and Sanitation was held in Tokyo on May 20, 2009, under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the World Bank. It was attended by the Heads of State and Government who were visiting Japan to participate in the fifth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM5), which aims at strengthening ties between Japan and Pacific island states, and fostering collaboration towards the development of the region.

The main objectives of the roundtable meeting were to review national strategies and the various efforts taken by Pacific island states towards the resolution of water issues, and to share a strong determination to implement concrete actions one and a half years after the 1st Asia-Pacific Water Summit.

Ten Heads of State and Government of small island states in the Pacific participated in the meeting: H.E. Mr. Anote Tong, President of the Republic of Kiribati, H.E. Mr. Emanuel Manny Mori, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, H.E. Mr. Marcus Stephen, President of the Republic of Nauru, H.E. Mr. Litokwa Tomeing, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, H.E. Mr. Johnson Tribiong, President of the Republic of Palau, H.E. Mr. Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of the Independent State of Samoa, H.E. Mr. Feleti Sevele, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Tonga, H.E. Mr. Derek Sikua, Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, H.E. Mr. Ratu Inoke Kubuabola, Ambassador of the Republic of the Fiji Islands in Japan and H.E. Mr. Gabriel Kapris, Minister for Commerce and Industry of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea.

The participating Heads of State and Government acknowledged that there are several impediments to economic development caused by their countries' geographical features, such as a lack of resources and land and their isolated location.

Furthermore, the region is very vulnerable to the disturbing effects of global climate change and is faced with serious problems such as an increasing number of cyclones and storm surges, saline groundwater, erosion, and recurring inundations of coastal areas, all caused by rising sea levels. These factors pose threats to people's livelihoods and food production. In addition, rising sea temperatures are causing a degradation of coral reefs. This is in turn responsible for a decline in tourism, the islands' main industry.

The participants discussed the fact that in Pacific island states, the number of people with access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, which is indispensable for life, comprises less than half of the population, and that the area is still the least developed in Asia and the Pacific. Most residents and infrastructures are concentrated in low coastal areas, which are susceptible to damage by disasters caused by global climate change.

Based on the serious current situation of small island states in the Pacific, the participants resolved to accelerate their efforts initiated after the 1st Asia-Pacific Water Summit (APWS) in order to achieve the targets of the Millennium Development Goals and the commitments made at the 1st APWS.

The roundtable meeting called for "water security" to be mainstreamed in national development agendas, with the recognition that more investments and regional cooperation are needed.

In addition, participants agreed to facilitate cooperation and coordination among various sectors involved in water in each country as well as promoting the Ministers for Water Security Initiative, which aims to send a strong message regarding regional water issues to the international community. Furthermore, each Head of State and Government will demonstrate strong leadership as a responsible actor in order to mobilize all efforts towards achieving "water security".

Finally, upon expressing appreciation to the Japanese government and its people for their assistance and cooperation, the participating Heads of State and Government of Pacific island states requested Japan's continued support in tackling the worsening water issues in their nations. They also voiced hope that the results of the Roundtable Meeting would be utilized at the fifth Pacific Islands Leaders' Meeting (PALM5).