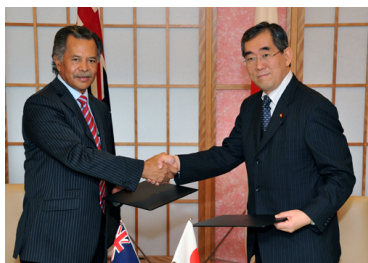


**Establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and the Cook Islands and a courtesy call by Mr Takeaki Matsumoto, Foreign Minister of Japan to Hon Henry Puna, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands.**

June 20, 2011



On 16 June 2011, Mr Takeaki Matsumoto, Foreign Minister of Japan, signed and exchanged diplomatic notes with Hon Henry Puna, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, for the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, and held discussions with Prime Minister Puna. The overview of the meeting are as follows.

- 1 At the start of the meeting, Foreign Minister Matsumoto welcomed the visit of Prime Minister Puna to Japan and reiterated Japan's gratitude for the warm expressions of sympathy and solidarity from Prime Minister Puna on the occasion of the Great East Japan Earthquake. In response, Prime Minister Puna expressed his appreciation for the decision of the government of Japan in March to recognise the Cook Islands as an independent state, and offered again his condolences for the people of Japan.
- 2 Foreign Minister Matsumoto articulated his intention to build on the establishment of diplomatic relations to further strengthen bilateral relations, including exchanges and economic cooperation. Prime Minister Puna responded by expressing his wish to receive Japan's support in the area of the environment.
- 3 Prime Minister Puna and Foreign Minister Matsumoto exchanged their views on bilateral cooperation in the international arena, including their thoughts on the upcoming 6<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM6) in May 2012.