

## 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of FSM-Japan Diplomatic Relations

Tokyo, Japan—His Excellency Peter M. Christian, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, accompanied by the Honorable Speaker Wesley Simina and other members of the FSM Congress, the Honorable Speaker Innocenti Oneisom and other members of the Chuuk Legislature, and other members of the FSM Government, celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of formal FSM-Japan diplomatic relations at the Hotel New Ohtani on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018. Attended by over 800 participants, including distinguished leaders in the Japanese Government and private sector, including the Honorable Masanao Ozaki, Governor of Kochi Prefecture, Madam Akie Abe, wife of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the Honorable Keiji Furuya, House Representative and Chairman of the Japan- FSM Parliamentary Friendship League, the Honorable Mikio Shimoji, House Representative, the Honorable Toshiko Abe, State Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honorable Yoshiro Mori, and more, the event was widely regarded as one of, if not *the*, largest celebration of diplomatic relations the FSM has ever had.

President Christian gave a compelling speech, noting that “This year marks the 32<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of our Nation’s Independence, an occasion of pride that is being celebrated throughout our nation...I decided that on this anniversary of our independence, we would celebrate it here in Japan to showcase, and reconfirm, the special relationship Micronesia has with Japan as we mark another milestone in our 30 years of diplomatic relations.”

“Ladies and gentlemen,” the President said, “as we celebrate the diplomatic relations that were formalized 30 years ago, I would like to point out that the history of our relations stretches more than 100 years—starting when people from Japan traveled further from their shores in search of opportunities, both in business and in romance.” The President remarked that he was happy that so many in attendance were a testament to the people-to-people interchange that began so many decades prior.

“In this modern day of metropolises, jet planes, and super trains, we have been able to continue these wonderful people-to-people programs, under the leadership of Mori sensei and the Parliamentary Friendship League, and which I hope will continue under the new relationship of Micronesia and the Prefectural Governments of Japan,” President Christian said, with a special thanks to Governor Ozaki of Kochi Prefecture for his leadership in this area.

“As we celebrate these occasions,” the President continued, “let me quickly say thank you to the Government and People of Japan for their strong support and assistance to Micronesia’s effort to establish for the people of Micronesia a better standard of social growth.” President Christian emphasized the depth of Japan’s assistance to the FSM,

adding that the partnership between our two countries “has been most useful to Micronesia, and one of which Micronesia is most grateful to Japan.”

During the Meiji era, when the Japanese first began settling in the FSM, a Japanese businessman named Mori Koben established trade between Japan and our islands. There are over 2,000 of Mori’s descendants in the FSM today, and approximately 20% of the FSM’s population is of Japanese descent. Citizens can witness Japanese assistance in many forms on our islands, from the volunteers in our schools and departments of education to infrastructural projects such as gymnasiums. It was in no small part due to assistance from Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers that Nan Madol received grant aid and support as it became registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

President Christian concluded his speech by saying “One weakness of man is to not acknowledge that which we don’t know, and to never give up a position of great esteem and power to those who could carry on. I take this festive occasion to humbly declare the people of Micronesia’s very best wishes and acknowledgement to His Majesty, Emperor of Japan upon his personal decision to abdicate his role as Emperor.” His Majesty, the Emperor of Japan, plans to abdicate his throne in April 2019.

In addition to the formal celebration of the FSM-Japan 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of diplomatic relations on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, President Christian also had the opportunity to meet with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. The meeting included discussions on issues of mutual interest to the FSM and Japan, including regional security and cooperation.

The Government of the Federated States of Micronesia is proud of our long history with the Government of Japan, and will endeavor to ensure that the relationship between our two countries remains close, friendly, and supportive.