



# Pacific Newsbytes

Pacific Partners News Briefs

## Telecom News from the Pacific Islands



### Pacific Islands Academic Summit

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Government leaders of Japan and 16 Pacific Island nations met in Miyazaki, Japan, April 22, 2000, for a conference named Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM) 2000. The topics discussed included enhanced Japan-Pacific Island Forum cooperation in coping with advancing information technology, infectious diseases and other regional problems.

In his keynote speech at the conference, Prime Minister Mori of Japan announced the "Pacific Common Frontiers Initiatives," which indicates the Japanese commitment to engage actively in cooperation with the Pacific Island countries. Prime Minister Mori stated he wanted to promote Okinawa-based intellectual exchanges as well as cooperation in human resources development with the Pacific Island countries, including some sort of intellectual exchange program at the University of the Ryukyus.

The Pacific Islands Academic Summit convened on July 8, 2000, Okinawa. The Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education and the University of the Ryukyus co-hosted the Summit.

*"The Academic Summit was the first exercise of its kind in the history of the relationship between Japan and the Pacific Island countries."*

The aim of the Summit was to bring together the heads of major universities and colleges and policy makers from the Pacific Island countries and their Japanese counterparts to discuss ways to strengthen intellectual and academic ties between Japan and the region. The discussion centered around such topics as "human resources development, personnel and academic exchanges, environment and infectious diseases, and information technology."

The Academic Summit was the first exercise of its kind in the history of the relationship between Japan and the Pacific Island countries. It was a follow-up

event of PALM 2000 with the participation of 16 government leaders of the South Pacific Forum members and Prime Minister Mori from Japan.

Because the College of the Marshall Islands is keen to keep abreast with the information technology field, I accepted the invitation to the academic conference with open arms. I'm glad I did and I am grateful to Japan and the University of the Ryukyus. I'm sure my colleagues from the Pacific Islands feel the same. The hospitality and assistance provided by the University of the Ryukyus, the Japan Ministries of Education and Foreign Affairs, and the Okinawa Prefecture was outstanding.

The participants from the Pacific Islands were: Mr. Mario Katosang, Vice President of Palau Community College; Mr. Taneti Maamau, Permanent Secretary of Public Service Office (Kiribati); Mr. Lorin Robert, Assistant Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs (FSM); H.E. Aiwa Olmi, Ambassador, Embassy of Papua New Guinea in Tokyo; Dr. Futu Helu, President of Atenisi University (Tonga); Mr. Mauiliu Magele, Vice Chancellor of the National University of Samoa; Dr. Paul DE Deckker, President of the University of New Caledonia and myself.

The participants from Japan were: Mr. Moshin Morita, President of the University of the Ryukyus; Mr. Jiro Nemoto, Chairman of Nippon Yusen Kaisha; Mr. Hiroataka Makino, Vice Governor, Okinawa Prefecture; Mr. Isao Kiso, Director of International Affairs Planning Division, Science and International Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture; Mr. Akio Miyajima, Director of Oceania Division, European and Oceania Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and Mr. Yutaka Sasaki, Managing Director of Okinawa International Center, JICA.

The occasion provided an excellent opportunity to meet with Mr. Akio Miyajima. I expressed the great need for Japan's help in getting our respective colleges

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# Pacific Basin Telehealth Workshop

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in the region — especially in Micronesia — affordable access to the Internet for education in particular. He seemed very interested in providing whatever assistance he can in his capacity as the Director of Oceania Division, European and Oceania Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## **Pacific Islands Academic Summit Joint Declaration, July 8th, 2000 University of the Ryukyus, Okinawa, Japan**

The workshop was held based on the agreement reached at the Pacific Island Summit (the second SPF Summit) which took place on the 22nd of April, in Miyazaki, Japan. Accompanying the adoption of the Pacific Island Miyazaki Declaration “our common Future” and “Statement on Environment in the Pacific,” “Pacific Common Frontiers Initiative” was proposed, and to give shape to these, the “Miyazaki Initiative” was presented. As part of this, in relation to the “Promotion of Intellectual Dialogue,” the opening of a workshop, to be held at the University of the Ryukyus was announced.

The workshop is consistent with the activities to strengthen the partnership between Japan and the countries of the Pacific. The participants included seven countries, Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Kingdom of Tonga, Independent State of Samoa, Republic of Palau, Republic of Kiribati, as well as New Caledonia participating as an observer. From Japan, representatives from the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and President and Vice Presidents of the University of the Ryukyus as well as representatives from various related faculties took part. This workshop included a keynote speech given by Mr. Jiro Nemoto, Chairman of the Central Council for Education, presentations from the representatives introducing the current situation of educational and academic changes of the Pacific Island countries and that of the University of the Ryukyus, which lead to a deepening of mutual understandings.

At the General Discussion following this, as a result of the discussion and dialogue relating to the possibility of intellectual and personal exchanges between Japan and the Pacific Islands, the following points have been agreed upon:

- This workshop worked towards strengthening a continuing partnership based on trust and friendship, as developed in the Miyazaki declaration from the Pacific Islands Summit, and was held in order to promote mutual understanding of tradition. Cultural and academic exchanges, and contact between individuals.

- We the participants shall uphold as shared values, those of liberty, moral discipline and harmony in pursuit of intellectual exchanges emphasizing our common humanity.

- In terms of the exchange program, the exchange of students and researchers, and the support of education was pushed forward. In regard to collaborative research, there will be the exchange of academic research in areas related to Island Environments, Sub-tropical Agriculture, Marine Science, Information Technology (IT), Infectious Diseases, and Island Technology and Economy.

- The University of the Ryukyus will investigate co-operating with the promotion of IT of Pacific Island nations, and doing this in close connection with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

- As the only National Comprehensive University in Japan's southern extremity, the University of the Ryukyus, in terms of geographic and tropical climate, is situated in a similar environment to other Pacific Islands. Furthermore, Okinawa has long-standing historical and cultural links with South East Asia and the Pacific countries. The University of the Ryukyus will make increasing efforts to become a base for building bonds of friendship by making available education and research results that originate from its regional peculiarities to the Pacific countries through academic and personal exchange.

- This workshop, for the Pacific countries, the University of the Ryukyus and Japan, is a deeply significant exchange opportunity, worth commemorating. Moreover, concretely, there are many topics remaining for future workshops, leading to continuing discussion in the second Workshop and beyond. In regard to education, research and technology development for Pacific countries, there will be an investigation into the provision of a system for joint and cooperative promotion and development.

- The participants in the workshop have found this workshop to be greatly significant in achieving an understanding of the current educational and academic exchanges between Japan and the Pacific Island countries and a common recognition of the direction in which the strengthening of academic dialogue should take, and have agreed that another workshop should be held sometime next year here at the University of the Ryukyus.