

FIFTH JOINT COMMUNIQUE
of the
FIFTH WESTERN MICRONESIAN CHIEF EXECUTIVES' SUMMIT

**The Territory of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the State of Yap
within the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau**

Introduction

The Chief Executives of the Government of the Territory of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the State of Yap within the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau held the Fifth Western Micronesian Chief Executives' Summit to follow up the Fourth Summit, held in Guam in April 2005. This Summit resulted in the adoption of regional programs of action in the focus areas of the Environment, Transportation, Regional Renewable Energy, Coral Reefs, Invasive Species, Health and Tourism. This evolved from the prior four Summits that identified focus areas for each of the participants and the development of regional programs and action plans.

The Summit reaffirmed the commitment of each of the participants, on behalf of their people and their governments, to establish closer ties, enhance existing ties, expand future discussions and agree on beneficial initiatives for the benefit of the entire Western Micronesian Region.

The Honorable Governor Robert A. Ruecho' of Yap extended his warmest welcome and greetings to President Tommy Remengesau of Palau and Governor Felix P. Camacho of Guam, expressing his appreciation for their attendance and active participation in the Fifth Western Micronesian Chief Executives' Summit and expressed the regrets of Governor Benigno R. Fitial of the Northern Mariana Islands, who was unable to attend the meetings because of pressing matters in the Commonwealth.

Environment

The Pacific Islands Regional Recycling Initiative Committee (PIRRIC) met in Palau from July 19-20, 2005. In the Regional Recycling Working Sessions, members of PIRRIC discussed two specific proposals for metal scrap removal from International Hilfsfonds, Germany and Mr. Alfred Lam/Hua Mei Enterprises, Guam Inc., for the removal of metallic scrap from the region, resulting in a decision that in the conclusion that a joint partnership with those businesses would be the most beneficial and effective in the goal of removing metallic scrap from the region. The Chief Executives encouraged that through this and other partnerships, PIRRIC members will expand their ability to develop and enhance national and regional capacity in the collection, processing/preparation and removal of metallic scrap over the short and long-term, contributing to the improvement and expansion of regional and national recycling efforts.

The Chief Executives have directed PIRRIC to invite the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the other states of the FSM (Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae) to join PIRRIC and to support the creation of a Comprehensive Regional Solid Waste Action Plan, to include comprehensive National and Regional waste assessments; the development of national institutional controls; development of improved waste management systems; improvement of environmental monitoring; improvement of infrastructure capacity; identification of regional funding opportunities; prioritization of metallic scrap removal over the next year, to include: establishment of a pilot project to remove metallic scrap from Palau and Yap within the next six months; and expansion of these initial pilot projects to the RMI, Guam, Saipan and the other states of the FSM over the next year, as appropriate and needed.

The Chief Executives committed to the coordinating of regional efforts with both the private sector and regional and international partners (SPREP, JICA, U.S. EPA, International Hilfsfonds Germany, International Help Fund Australia, etc.); Seeking support of the Presidents of the FAS States of the prioritization of waste management, which currently appears under the Security heading in the Pacific Plan, to be relocated to the area of Sustainable Development and to emphasize the importance of environmental issues; Endorsing continued efforts to work with International Hilfsfonds Germany and Mr. Lam/Hua Mei Enterprises, Guam Inc., to accomplish the removal of metallic scrap from the region; Endorsing the offer of International Hilfsfonds Germany to provide capacity-building activities relating to the collecting, processing/preparing and removal of metallic scrap from the region in conjunction with Mr. Lam/Hua Mei Enterprises, Guam Inc.; endorsing the offer of Mr. Lam/Hua Mei Enterprises, Guam Inc., or his duly-appointed representative, to provide machinery and transportation for the removal of metallic scrap off-island; Endorsing the participation of member PIRRIC states (the RMI, the FSM states of Kosrae, Pohnpei and Chuuk) in regional scrap metal removal efforts through the identification and transport of appropriate personnel to the Republic of Palau to gain knowledge and practical experience in the collection and preparation of metallic scrap; and Endorsing Palau's and Yap's efforts to develop the necessary "Scope of Work" criteria for removal of metallic scrap at the 3rd PIRRIC meeting at Yap State, FSM, to be scheduled in 2006.

Regional Invasive Species Council

The continuing threat of invasive species throughout the region is a critical issue that, if left unresolved, will result in severe consequences to the natural and human resources of member states. Consequently, diligent awareness and swift action by each government to potential problems remain the most important courses of response.

The Western Micronesia Regional Invasive Species Council (RISC) met in September 2005 and again prior to the current Summit to discuss progress on previous commitments and to design new projects and initiatives. Developments included the production of an invasive species calendar for 2006, based on the top ten invasive species submitted by each jurisdiction; agreement on action items to be included in this Communiqué; a commitment to charter RISC as a permanent organization; and creation of a website containing profiles of invasive species known in the region and links to references (<http://gisac.guam.net>).

In order to better facilitate the implementation of regional and local invasive species prevention and control, the Chief Executives agreed to create, fund, and fill a permanent, full time Invasive Species Coordinator position in each jurisdiction.

The Chief Executives also agreed that they would continue to send their RISC members to one workshop-style meeting between Summits in order to collaborate on invasive species issues and priorities.

The Chief Executives direct the RISC, PIRRIC, and Transportation Committees to collaborate towards the prevention of movement of invasive species in Micronesia.

The Chief Executives agreed to provide \$1,500 from each jurisdiction by January 31, 2006, for the printing of sufficient invasive species calendars for distribution within each jurisdiction. Palau agreed to coordinate printing of the calendar once funding has been secured.

The Chief Executives agreed that the RISC should be formally established through the development of a charter. The RISC is directed to develop a draft charter at their next mid-Summit workshop for consideration by the Chief Executives at the next Summit.

The Chief Executives welcomed the establishment of the Pacific Invasives Learning Network and encouraged the RISC to participate as fully as possible in this Network.

The Chief Executives, recognizing the urgent threat of marine and aquatic invasive species, agreed to strengthen preventive measures, and to require invasive risk analysis of any proposed introduction of marine and aquatic species by the importer to ensure that they do not create economic and/or environmental risks, prior to allowing any introductions.

Regional Renewable Energy

The Chief Executives agreed to continue their efforts to enhance the energy independence and reduction of the cost of energy in each of their respective states.

Governor Camacho and President Remengesau both indicated that they had passed Executive Orders mandating the limitation of energy use in their respective governments and indicated significant success thus far in achieving significant energy use reductions. The two Chief Executives offered to make their executive orders available to Yap and the CNMI.

In the 4th Communiqué, it was agreed that Guam would take the lead in developing home appliance standards for the region. In that effort, Guam has held a workshop to accomplish this standardization and has agreed to hold another such workshop in Palau in May of this year. The Chief Executives agreed that it is necessary that their governments take the lead in identifying energy efficient appliances, as well as other energy efficiencies.

The Chief Executives recognized that, while no headway has yet been made in establishing a regional Center of Excellence focusing on renewable energy, energy officers throughout the region would be assigned to work together to begin the process of identifying potential funding sources for such a Center.

The Chief Executives further agreed to continue their efforts to identify appropriate pilot projects for renewable energy and to share their findings with one another. Palau noted that it has received a grant from the GEF that will assess its potential for renewable energy which will then result in pilot projects in the appropriate areas.

Regional Tourism Council

Members of the Regional Tourism Council reviewed the highlights of the 4th Western Micronesian Chief Executives' Summit and outlined the current regional work with the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Micronesia Chapter. PATA is the leader of and authority of Pacific Asia travel and tourism. It is an advocacy embracing, knowledge-based, communication focuses and research driven travel trade organization. PATA combined a traditional role of product development and marketing support for destinations, with strategic initiatives for long-term vitality of the industry.

Regional Tourism Council Members continue to recognize the importance of continuing the promotional and marketing activities, while recognizing the need to further develop this work by raising international awareness of the Micronesia region as an inclusive destination package. Council members recognized that global awareness would focus on current core tourist markets and gradual expansion to markets in the Asian, North America, European and Australian continents. The program's goal is to develop and adopt a marketing them for the Micronesia regional destination campaign, similar in concept, for example, to the "Malaysia, Truly Asia" theme.

The Regional Tourism Council reconfirmed and agreed that more international competition is a challenge for us and that a regional brand/awareness marketing program is needed. This effort would allow our regional to be more competitive. The campaign will also provide Micronesia with more global awareness and allow for market diversification by presenting Micronesia as a regional destination.

The Chief Executive agreed to develop a regional awareness (branding) program to include the rest of FSM and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. This will foster "complete" regional awareness, spread the cost among the region, enlarge critical mass of our regional destinations and increase the size and diversity of regional attractions.

The Chief Executives also agreed to pursue funding for the start up for the awareness campaign.

The Chief Executives agreed to seek possible U.S. federal funding to assist in the funding objective as well as to ensure that such regional awareness campaign funding be separate from the national and state visitor bureaus' appropriations.

The Chief Executives have accepted the Regional Tourism Council's recommendation to procure a Public Relations Agency to develop the regional awareness /image message for appropriate use as well as to support the www.magnificentmicronesia.com web site, the ONLY high-tech marketing tool available worldwide covering Micronesia.

Transportation

The Chief Executives recommended that contact be made with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to provide assistance and explanation on following items:

- a. U.S. Coast Guard
 - i) Marine terminal security compliance;
 - ii) Marine terminal safety;
 - iii) Proper aids to navigation and maintenance of same; and
 - iv) Work with Fisheries and Maritime Institute to develop the standards for pilots and seamen throughout the region.
- b. T.S.A.
 - i) Provide assistance to improve the screening process for transit passengers throughout the region; and
 - ii) Provide training for security screening personnel in the FAS.
- c. Customs
 - Provide updated training on inspection procedures and electronic filing requirement.

The Chief Executives agree that security and safety compliance of our air and sea ports is critical to our economic development. The Chief Executives also urged for uniform pilot rates and regulations at all Micronesian sea ports.

Regional Health Council

The Committee on Health Issues met at the Yap State Hospital to discuss several issues which have been identified by the Western Micronesian Chief Executives as priorities in health. These issues included:

- 1) The creation of a regional tertiary health center on Guam;
- 2) The development of a regional Health Professional Act;

- 3) The development of health professional licensing during emergencies;
- 4) A new Institute of Medicine Report; and
- 5) Pandemic influenza preparedness.

The Chief Executives agreed with the Committee recommendation that they request for a comprehensive feasibility study to evaluate the cost effectiveness of creating and maintaining a regional tertiary health center on Guam. The feasibility study should include specific financial analysis to evaluate the cost effectiveness for each of the member countries. This study should provide the necessary information on whether to move forward with this proposal or to find alternative strategies in meeting regional tertiary health care needs.

Regarding the Committee's proposal to create a regional legal framework for the licensing of regional health care professionals, the Chief Executives agreed that each island work together to establish an appropriate Professional Licensing Act that would not only include clinical professionals but also health administrators. Within this context, the Chief Executives agreed to support the creation of a regional data base for continuing professional and administrative education.

In the area of licensing during emergencies, the Chief Executives agreed to create a system of temporary licensing of health professionals (including administrators) during declared emergencies.

In 1998, the Institute of Medicine Report, "Pacific Partnerships for Health: Charting a New Course" made four recommendations, all which are critical for the development of primary, preventive and population based health care systems in the Pacific. These recommendations were as follows:

- 1) Adopt and support a viable system of community- based primary care and preventive services;
- 2) Improve coordination within and between jurisdictions and the United States;
- 3) Increase community involvement and investment in health care; and
- 4) Promote the education and training of health care workforce.

Noting that these activities, based on these recommendations, have been sporadic and in many instances have been through unilateral efforts in each jurisdiction, the Chief Executives agreed to recommend that PIHOA create an inventory of all the efforts that have been carried out based on the 1998 IOM Report. This inventory should then be made available by the next Western Micronesian Executive Summit to provide the platform for the recommendation to do another IOM Report, if necessary.

The Chief executives were given a special report on pandemic influenza preparedness. In this report, it was indicated that in January 2006, a Department of HHS Regional Strategic Planning Meeting was held in the CNMI between all U.S. Affiliated Jurisdictions to deal with the potential destructive results of Avian Flu. It became clear from this meeting that the level of Pandemic Influenza Preparedness varied widely among the various Jurisdictions and that most Jurisdictions

were significantly behind schedule. The Chief Executives therefore recommended that the level of preparedness in our region be pushed higher on island agendas to make sure that our influenza plans are implemented. At the very minimum, the Chief Executives agreed that the region implement animal surveillance and response plans while vigilantly creating and implementing human surveillance and response plans for influenza-like illnesses.

Pacific Workforce Investment Workgroup

The Chief Executives endorsed the creation of a Workforce Strategy Taskforce Team. The Team would adopt strategic goals for Year One actions and decisions. The Chief Executives agreed to these goals that speak to the essential elements for carrying out the Taskforce's vision and mission.

The Chief Executives endorsed the establish a Regional Workforce Development Council; the alignment of Workforce Development, Vocational Education and other training programs and leverage resources; the collaboration, integration and formation of partnerships with the private sector; and the creation and implementation of training programs for demand-driven occupations.

Shipping Lines

Matson Navigation and Palau Shipping described investments made in ships and supporting materials made by the company that will soon be implemented into deliveries to the ports of the participants. They described Matson's priorities in serving the various participants, and emphasized their service, planning and cooperative efforts in carrying goods. In addition to some numbers and figures, Palau was applauded for its pre-clearance procedure for streamlining efficiency in the process. They called for continued cooperation and expressed some ideas for long term solutions to the concerns of volume and costs, including a call for greater responsibility and regulations by the Micronesian Shipping Commission.

Micronesian Challenge

President Remengesau presented, for consideration by the Chief Executives, a Declaration of Commitment entitled the "Micronesian Challenge." The Micronesian Challenge recognizes the need for Micronesian Islands to commit to the conservation of marine and terrestrial resources in order to:

- Sustain our unique island biodiversity;
- Ensure a healthy future for our island people;
- Protect our unique island cultures;
- Guard the foundations of our future development, our pristine island environments;
- Sustain the livelihoods of our island communities;

- Contribute to global targets set out in the Millennium Development Goals, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Mauritius Strategy for Small Island Developing States and the relevant Programmes of Work of the Convention on Biological Diversity; and
- Agree to undertake an expanded commitment to preserve our marine and terrestrial environments.

Taking into account these vital interests, the Challenge commits the Federated States of the Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to agree to “effectively conserve at least 30% of the near-shore marine and 20% of the forest resources across Micronesia by 2020.”

Upon gaining the signature of the respective Chief Executives of these Micronesian states, the Declaration would serve as a common commitment to implement these ambitious goals through domestic sustainable domestic strategies, local partnerships between government agencies and NGO’s engaged in conservation and sustainable use biodiversity and through domestic biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans.

The Declaration would also serve as the centerpiece for a High Level Event to be held in Brazil in March of 2006 at the Eighth Conference of the Parties (COP8) of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. This High Level Event would bring together donors and NGO partners with island countries and countries with islands in order to build a Global Island Partnership and would result in the announcement of significant commitments for achieving the conservation of island and marine biodiversity in Micronesia and throughout the world.

Clearly recognizing the value of the continued marine and terrestrial biodiversity on all of the islands of Micronesia, the Chief Executives agreed to support the Declaration and to support and participate in the High Level Event held later this year in Brazil. In this effort, President Remengesau and Governor Camacho agreed to sign the Declaration and Governor Ruecho agreed to work with the President of the FSM to gain his signature of the Declaration. The three Chief Executives also agreed to work together to gain the support, participation and signatures of the President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Related to the above, the Chief Executives adopted the following statement of support for adoption of the Programme of Work on Island Biodiversity at the 8th Conference of the Parties in Brazil in March 2006:

“The Western Micronesia Chief Executives’ Summit looks forward to the adoption of the Programme of Work on Island Biodiversity as a fundamental platform for the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in all islands; encourages members to participate at the highest level in COP8; and urges parties to the CBD to provide guidance to the GEF that will ensure its full and effective implementation.”

High Seas Bottom Trawling

President Remengesau elicited the support of the Chief Executives for Palau's and the international community's efforts to prohibit the practice of High Seas Bottom Sea Trawling. In the past year, Palau has requested the United Nations to act so that the nations of the world end this unregulated practice, in line with Palau's domestic efforts, through introduced legislation to prohibit the practice in Palau's Exclusive Economic Zone. The United Nations responded by calling for a rigorous yearlong worldwide review of this unsustainable fishing practice which will culminate in 2006, when countries have pledged to take action to address the destructive fishing practice.

In addition, Palau has called for support of the Pacific Island Forum, whose leaders have agreed to develop an appropriate framework over the next year for addressing the issue.

The Chief Executives agreed that high seas bottom trawling was of no benefit to their respective states and was clearly a threat to the health of the world's coral reef resources. They consequently agreed to work, within the limitations of their political status, to gain the ban of the practice within their Exclusive Economic Zones and to support the ban internationally.

Conclusion

The Chief Executives stressed the need to adopt practical regional initiatives to protect and preserve the natural resources of each participant while also striving to strengthen the economic development of each of the participants. They agreed that greater coordination and communication among the participants and outside entities was necessary to accomplish this goal. They also committed to better integrating regional issues into ongoing national governmental planning and budget processes.

Governor Felix P. Camacho briefed the other participants on its progress on drug enforcement in the Territory of Guam, and invited executive, law enforcement and judicial officers to an upcoming drug summit in Guam in 2006.

Governor Ruecho' thanked all of the participants for their attendance and attention to these pressing issues before the Conference.

The next meeting was scheduled for July 8-11, 2006, in Yap.

Benigno R. Fitial
Governor of the Commonwealth
Of the Northern Mariana Islands

Felix P. Camacho
Governor of Guam

Robert A. Ruecho'
Governor of Yap State
Federated States of Micronesia

Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr.
President of the Republic of Palau