
7th Western Micronesian Chief Executives ' Summit



Benigno R. Fitial
Governor, CNMI



Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr.
President, Palau



Felix P. Camacho
Governor, Guam



Sebastian Anefal
Governor, Yap

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

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

Introduction

The Chief Executives of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Territory of Guam, the State of Yap, within the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau held their Seventh Western Micronesian Chief Executives' Summit (WMCES) in Saipan, CNMI on March 20-22, 2007. This Summit resulted in the adoption of regional programs of action in the focus areas of Solid Waste, Invasive Species, Renewable Energy, Transportation, Health, Tourism, Workforce Investment, Zoning and the Micronesia Challenge.

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 initiatives for the benefit of the entire Western Micronesian Region.

The Honorable Governor Benigno R. Fitial of the CNMI extended his warmest welcome and greetings to President Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr. of Palau and Governor Felix P. Camacho of Guam. The Governor also recognized new Governor Sebastian Anefal of Yap and indicated that the Governor was unable to attend this Summit due to pressing matters at home. Governor Fitial expressed his appreciation for the Governor's and President's attendance and active participation in the 7th Western Micronesian Chief Executives' Summit.

The Chief Executives heard reports and recommendations from nine committees representing areas of critical importance in the Western Micronesia region and directed action in their respective jurisdictions, as set forth below.

Solid Waste Management – (Pacific Islands Regional Recycling Initiative Committee - PIRRIC)

The Pacific Islands Regional Recycling Initiative Committee (PIRRIC) reported that significant headway has been made following last year's Summit and following the last PIRRIC meeting held in August, 2006 in Guam.

The Committee reported that the market for recovered metallic material has significantly changed since the initiation of the 'Metallic Waste Removal Pilot Project' by the Western Micronesian Chief Executives. Because of the continued increase in the international price of recovered metallic material, the private sector has demonstrated an increased interest in solving this problem in all jurisdictions. Specifically, the CNMI, Yap and Palau have all identified private companies that are willing to remove recovered metallic material from their jurisdictions at little or no cost to residents. It has also been reported that the states of Kosrae and Pohnpei of the Federated States of Micronesia have identified similar private sector interest. The PIRRIC reported that, based on previous direction, Balli Steel Guam has expended considerable effort to meet its commitment to consolidate regional resources. The Committee recommended that the PIRRIC continue to move forward with the pilot project.

To provide a basis for program evaluation, the PIRRIC shared with the Western Micronesian Chief Executives statistics regarding recovery tonnage realized to this point. Governor Camacho's Island-Wide Cleanup on Guam is currently shipping one-hundred (100) containers per month. The average weight per container is fifteen (15) tons, resulting in one-thousand five-hundred (1,500) tons of metal recovery each month. On the island of Saipan, Balli Steel Saipan, has recovered three-hundred fifty (350) tons this calendar year. Palau's private partner, Samlo & Sons, has shipped three-hundred and twenty-five (325) tons of material in the preceding three (3) months. Yap's private partner, Island Paradise, has recovered and shipped approximately two-hundred (200) tons of material in the preceding three (3) months. The PIRRIC is encouraged by these recovery figures and feels that, while over time these figures are not sustainable, significant progress has been made and critical data has been gathered. This data will allow the PIRRIC to continue to develop regional recycling and solid waste management programs that are efficient and effective.

The PIRRIC noted that this current private sector interest involves the removal of recovered metallic material accumulated over years, but does not necessarily involve the future removal of such metallic material, where the economies of scale will be smaller. The PIRRIC also stated that we must be cognizant that recovered metallic material is a commodity driven by global market factors. Therefore, long-term management options must include public systems for metallic waste management. The PIRRIC therefore recommended that local authorities be prepared to consider the modification of existing public-private partnerships as necessary to address global market changes.

In the spirit of regional collaboration and capacity building, the PIRRIC reported that Samlo & Sons, the private partner of the Republic of Palau, will be conducting an assessment in Chuuk to determine the available quantity of recoverable metallic material. The PIRRIC further reported that the CNMI, acting in partnership with the U.S. Department of Interior – Office of Insular

Affairs, will also assign resources to conduct similar assessments in Yap, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Additionally, the PIRRIC reported that Balli Steel Guam, Guam's private partner, has committed to partnering with Island Paradise, Yap's private partner, to develop a Yap based system for sharing capital expense, processing and marketing activities.

The PIRRIC further noted that the interest in recoverable metallic waste is unlikely to exist for other types of low value recoverable material due to global market demands. The PIRRIC, therefore recommended the continued exploration of alternative solid waste management solutions.

The PIRRIC requested the endorsement and approval of the draft charter developed pursuant to the directive of the Sixth Western Micronesian Chief Executives Summit. The charter establishes the PIRRIC as a regional inter-governmental organization with Articles and By-Laws, empowered to receive and distribute funds and resources from public, private, and other sources.

The PIRRIC also restated its goals to create a Comprehensive Regional Solid Waste Action Plan, including comprehensive local, national and regional waste assessments; the development of institutional controls; the development of improved waste management systems; the improvement of environmental monitoring; the improvement of infrastructure capacity; the identification of regional funding opportunities; and the continuation of the metallic scrap removal over the next year, where appropriate.

The Chief Executives congratulated the PIRRIC on its efforts since the last summit and on its development of a corporate charter, which the Chief Executive's signed at the Summit. The Chief Executives directed the following action:

1. The implementation of the Charter establishing the PIRRIC as a regional inter-governmental organization with Articles and By-Laws, empowered to receive and distribute funds and resources;
2. The follow-through on long-term projects identified by PIRRIC that support regional recycling, including capacity building, technical exchange and assistance, outreach and education and information exchange;
3. To improve communications and dissemination of information by fully implementing the PIRRIC in order to fulfill its' commitment to the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) – Green Island Alliance (GIA) website and using it to its maximum potential;
4. The continued funding by each jurisdiction of project and travel expenses in support of regional solid waste management planning activities, the expansion and sustainability of regional recycling initiatives and the nurturing of regional capacity building;
5. The establishment of a sustainable funding mechanism in support of the PIRRIC activities, including, but not limited to, member contributions and grants-in-aid from the United States Federal Government;
6. Continued pursuit by PIRRIC of Phase II implementation of the 'Metallic Waste Removal Pilot Project';

7. Implementation by PIRRIC of the steps necessary to implement Phase III -- the continued exploration of alternative solid waste management solutions for low value recoverable materials including, researching, evaluating and exploring the viability of potential market outlets;
8. Evaluation and recommendation by PIRRIC of public incentives that encourage local, national and regional recycling;
9. Development by PIRRIC of transportation modalities by collaborating with private industry;
10. Evaluation by PIRRIC of public-private partnership opportunities;
11. Facilitation of agreements by PIRRIC for the transportation of solid waste and recoverable materials; and
12. Identification by PIRRIC of inter-linkages with other international and regional organizations, governments, governmental organizations and other donor agencies, including, but not limited to the United Nations, the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, the Pacific Community, Pacific Island Development Committee, the Asian Development Bank and Committees of the Western Micronesian Chief Executive Summit.

Invasive Species – (Regional Invasive Species Council – RISC)

The Chief Executives once again recognized that invasive species represent a unique and dangerous threat to the Micronesia Region that, if not addressed in a coordinated manner, will result in severe and negative consequences to member states. They therefore confirmed prior commitments to take the necessary actions and to prevent the spread of invasive species between jurisdictions and from outside jurisdictions.

Consistent with prior Chief Executive funding commitments, the RISC met in the CNMI in January of 2007. In line with last year's directive to develop a five-year strategic plan, to include goals and timetables for goal completion, the RISC presented a draft strategic plan.

The RISC also reported on actions regarding last year's directive for each jurisdiction to provide \$2,500 to permit the publication of a 2007 calendar and a publication detailing the most dangerous invasive species in the region. While this directive is still in the works, the RISC indicated that they needed to establish a bank account to receive the funding, to be maintained by the Treasury of the RISC, in order to implement this recommendation. Without funding, no 2007 Calendar was created. However, the RISC indicated that if funding is provided in 2007 a Calendar will be developed for 2008, along with other priority projects. The RISC reported that, with funding from Guam, a 'Micronesia Invasive Species Guide' was developed and printed in October, 2006

The RISC also reported that the directive of the Chief Executives to attach brochures detailing quarantine risks to documents issued to government travelers had been implemented and requested that this directive be continued.

The RISC further reported that the funding identified by the Chief Executives to finance training for Yap in monitoring and sampling for live and dead birds for H5N1 avian influenza had been

used for the intended purpose. The RISC requested continued cooperation and information sharing on the issue of H5N1 avian influenza.

The RISC also reported that it had met with the Pacific Island Regional Recycling Initiative Committee (PIRRIC), as directed by the Chief Executives, to prevent the movement of invasive species. The RISC will review and comment on the PIRRIC plan prior to implementation to ensure that shipping of recycled materials will not contribute to movement of invasive species. However, the RISC indicated that meetings with the transportation Committee did not occur, as directed. The RISC therefore recommended that the Chief Executives maintain this directive to permit enhanced collaboration in the future, especially in regard to recycling programs.

The RISC recommended that each state strengthen existing statutes to regulate the movement of marine and aquatic species regionally. Within this context, RISC also recommends that states work together to develop baseline surveys of marine invasive species and to develop training to support this effort.

Following the 4th Summit, the Chief Executives sent a letter to the Presidents of the FSM and the RMI, inviting them to join the RISC. The FSM responded positively, and sent an observer (FSM Quarantine) to the 6th Summit. RISC therefore recommended the continuation of this invitation.

The Chief Executives congratulated the RISC on its organizational work and expressed the need to continue to make the work of the RISC a priority in each jurisdiction and as a sub-region. The Chief Executives took the following action regarding the RISC:

1. Endorsed the 5-year strategic plan in its entirety;
2. Agreed to continue to send RISC representatives to one workshop-style meeting between Summits;
3. Agreed to provide \$2,500 from each jurisdiction by April 30, 2007 to fund RISC priorities;
4. Directed the RISC to establish a bank account serving all members, to be maintained by the Treasury of the RISC;
5. Directed the continued attachment of quarantine brochures to documents issues to government travelers;
6. Sent a joint letter to the US-NISC to express gratitude for their assistance in developing 5-year strategic plan;
7. Directed the RISC to continue in efforts to collaborate with PIRRIC and Transportation Committees of the WMCES to prevent the movement of invasive species within Micronesia;
8. Directed the RISC to follow up on invitations to the FSM and RMI to join the RISC;
9. Sent a joint letter to the United States Departments of Interior, Agriculture and State, requesting expanded federal assistance in surveillance, monitoring and responding to Avian Influenza in the western Micronesian region; and
10. Sent a joint letter to the United States Department of Defense, with copies to the Departments of Interior, Agriculture and State, requesting continued support for comprehensive Brown Treesnake control and containment on Guam, in support of Department of Defense operations and proposed expansion in the Marianas.

Renewable Energy (Renewable Energy Committee)

The Chief Executives aggressively pursued the possibility of bulk fossil fuel purchases or shared procurement as oil industry representatives acknowledged that Micronesian demand will increase by a minimum of 25% within the decade. Oil representatives agreed that 75% of the existing costs are based on uncontrollable global events, with another 15% derived from taxes. It was suggested that the environmental movement from heavy to diesel fuel also increases these costs, and regional decisions to specify fuel grades might be achieved in consultation with oil companies to further reduce the prices. Hedging the market or locking in future fuel prices/purchases was also suggested. The Chief Executives strongly agreed that the regional suppliers should offer government discounts and invest profits into the region.

Within jurisdictions, public laws, executive orders and/or governmental initiatives are in place to force utilities to obtain energy from renewable sources - other than oil, gas, or coal; that offer tax exemptions for U.S. Energy Star product sales; and to reduce government building electric usage by 10%.

The Committee noted that the U.S. Department of Energy provided a grant for research for technology in deep ocean water (DOW) energy development in Saipan. The research data will be available by 2008, followed by pilot projects in Saipan, and the region. DOW technologies is successful in Hawaii, Bora Bora and the Mainland, and developers assured the Chief Executives that there is hope for further reductions in oil dependencies. It was agreed that “green developments” in sun, wind, and ocean energies also provide these benefits: long term affordable energy; local job creation; protects the environment; increased eco tourism; renewable energy constituents; and an opportunity to be a world leader of renewable energy.

The Chief Executives, in conjunction with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), are therefore launching a regional contest for the design of energy-efficient buildings (both retrofit and new design standards for Micronesia). Design criteria include aspects of: energy efficiency, renewable energy, water efficiency, typhoon resistance, termite resistance, native landscaping, use of locally available materials, indoor environmental quality (including thermal comfort, air quality, and lighting), stormwater and wastewater management, longevity and adaptability and deconstruction for future use of materials. The Chief Executives signed a resolution directing the implementation of the contest.

The Chief Executives also directed follow-up action by the Committee and the respective jurisdictions, as follows:

1. To formally appoint regional members to serve specific terms on the Regional Energy Committee (REC), authorizing and funding a minimum of two action meetings prior to the 8th Summit;
2. To communicate and route all conservation and energy policies, laws and island initiatives through Summit executives, regional legislatures, and REC members, with an emphasis on attaining “measurable” results;
3. To increase private sector action to provide ‘Energy Star’, solar and wind power products, enforcing regional standards for only the newest products or same or similar

regional products in each jurisdiction, technology repair & expertise centers and increased public education to convert to these products;

4. That regionally and individually, all jurisdictions shall mandate energy retrofits and Energy Star products for all government purchases for all government buildings;
5. That by April 2007, the Chief Executives will issue communications with the U.S. Census Bureau to include the topic of “alternate energy” in the next Census, regarding the usage of hybrid autos, Energy Star appliances alternate energy buildings; and
6. That through the REC, a subcommittee is immediately established for a Regional Fuels Summit that will focus on key strategies of individual or common purchasing laws, common grades and types of fuel for Utilities & Aviation, inner-island shipments and storage issues, and perhaps purchasing futures.

Transportation (Transportation Committee)

Aviation Matters

The Transportation Committee reported that they had heard of no response from the United States regarding a follow-up letter to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security regarding deplaning procedures and funding for improvements, including increased staffing. In addition, no updated status of the efforts of Chief Executives’ representatives on meeting with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and Continental Airlines to address these same issues.

The Committee indicated that tourism could be enhanced through the adoption of incentives and discounts to airlines for bringing more tourists into respective jurisdictions.

Maritime Matters

In the Sixth Summit, the Chief Executives confirmed that security and safety compliance of the region’s air and sea ports is critical to development. While the region has achieved standardization of port and vessel regulations, jurisdictions still need technical assistance from the United States Coast Guard in the areas of retention of compliance and certification. In response, the Chief Executives issued a formal letter of request for technical assistance in these areas. The Committee is unsure if any response was received from the Coast Guard.

The Committee recognized that, at the Sixth Summit, the Chief Executives urged uniform pilot rates in all Micronesian sea ports to enhance shipping in the region. As reported in the Sixth Summit, Chuuk, within the FSM currently has rates at least twice the rate of all other jurisdictions.

The Committee also recognized that the Chief Executives, at the Sixth Summit, agree to designate their respective transportation directors to develop universal licensing for piloting throughout the region and mandate pilotage in all ports. The Committee noted that, as yet, this goal has not been achieved. President Remengesau indicated that Palau had reviewed the issue and would have uniform rates by year end, either through legislation or regulation. The Committee further noted that the lack of compulsory pilotage was often due to the lack of

qualified pilots but noted that the transferability of pilots between jurisdictions was difficult due to restrictions in some jurisdictions in transferability of licenses between jurisdictions.

The Committee once again noted that there was no established group for work in the maritime area as recommended by the Chief Executives at the Sixth Summit and once again recommended the establishment of such a group to enhance regular communication and work in the area.

Finally, the Committee noted that the U.S. had yet to adopt regulations to allow citizens of Palau, the FSM and the RMI to become licensed merchant seamen that can become crew members of American flag ships. It was noted that investigation of the matter clarified that current restrictions were regulatory but uncertain if also statutory.

The Chief Executives took the following actions and directed the following actions in response to Transportation Committee recommendations:

1. Sent a formal request to the USCG (COTP, Sector Guam) for recurring training for safety and security and Aids to Navigation;
2. Asked Palau to request, at the next Presidents' Summit in Pohnpei, upon behalf of the WMCES, that the FSM establish consistent pilotage fees at the national level to ensure uniform rates in all of its states to enhance stability and transparency in the region and thereby improve shipping in the region;
3. Reiterated its directive to transportation directors to institute compulsory pilotage and recommended that Guam and Saipan advocate a change in current U.S. law to allow for multi-jurisdictional licensing and/or reciprocity in licensing and further recommended local training opportunities for foreign pilots;
4. Directed the creation of an official working groups in the areas of maritime and aviation matters and further directed:
 - Participation by the maritime group in the annual meetings of the Association of Terminal Operators, Stevedoring and Shipping Companies of Micronesia (ATOSSCOM) as well as the Micronesian Shipping Commission (MSC), and
 - Participation of the aviation group in the annual Pacific Aviation Directors Workshop sponsored by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA);
5. Directed the support of Palau, the FSM and the RMI to become licensed merchant seamen through the change of U.S. regulations restricting such licensing; and
6. Encouraged airports to adopt Airline Incentives and discounts for bringing more tourists to their respective islands.

Tourism (Regional Tourism Council – RTC)

The Regional Tourism Council (RTC) re-emphasized their previous recommendation, from the Sixth Western Micronesian Chief Executives' Summit, the importance of promoting all Western Micronesian Islands of CNMI, Guam, Palau and Yap and the inclusion of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) as one regional destination. They also re-emphasized the need for Micronesia to be more competitive regionally with a continued emphasis on the importance and the need for a regional branding/marketing statement.

In addition to unifying and branding the Micronesian Islands, the RTC formulated new ideas to help the tourism industry flourish. The RTC focused on utilizing Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Micronesia Chapter as a vehicle to market the region, on allocating funding, and hiring a public relations firm.

The PATA International is the leader of and authority of Pacific Asia travel and tourism, which develops and markets support for destinations, with strategic initiatives for long-term vitality of the industry. The PATA Micronesia Chapter is an existing organization with all NTO's as members of this chapter. This membership institutionalized relations with PATA International and its resource base. Regional airline and other private companies support the quarterly Chapter meetings. Palau, Guam and the CNMI currently hold seats on the PATA Board.

PATA Micronesia Chapter, composed of the tourism national and state visitor bureaus, meets on a quarterly basis in Micronesia to discuss, plan and implement regional marketing and educational programs for the benefit of the region.

The Council also focused on allocating funding for Regional Awareness Campaigns, as the tourism industry is the largest non-government employment sector. The RTC proposed two options for fund allocation. Option A, a proposed \$2.00 allocation per capita allows for an estimate of \$800,000 for a three (3) year program paid out in 3 installments over an agreed time schedule. Option B would allocate \$1.00 per capita to allow for an estimate of \$400,000 for a three (3) year program paid out in 3 installments on an agreed time schedule. The RTC also requested the FSM and RMI Presidents to provide funding under one of these two allocation options to maximize regional marketing effectiveness.

Finally, the RTC emphasized that Public Relations is important to all our marketing efforts in the region. Therefore, the RTC expressed their desire to procure a professional PR Agency to develop the regional awareness and image message for appropriate use. If sanctioned by the Chiefs, all NTO's of the region will be involved in the selection process and the Guam Visitors Bureau (GVB) has volunteered to take on the responsibility to follow the Request For Proposal (RFP) process.

The Chief Executives agreed that the tourism industry continues to be vital to the region's economy and agreed to collaborate with the RTC in implementing the following recommendations:

1. Develop to regional program involving the rest of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, as recommended by the RTC;
2. Have the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Micronesia Chapter be the vehicle for regional marketing initiatives, as recommended by RTC;
3. Allocate funding to support a Regional Awareness Campaign, as recommended by the RTC;
4. Procure services of a PR Agency to promote the region as recommended by the RTC; and
5. Support current funding of www.magnificentmicronesia.com, as recommended by the RTC.

Health (Regional Health Council)

The Committee provided an overview of PIHOA's mission in the region and underscored one of PIHOA's priority needs to address human resource for health issues, as outlined in its Nahlap HRH Action Plan (Nahlap Island, Pohnpei State, FSM, August 2006). The Nahlap HRH Action report focused on: 1) strengthening the pipeline for the new workforce; 2) career ladder and bridging training programs for the current workforce; 3) management training; 4) overall HRH planning; and 5) partnerships with local institutions for higher learning for delivery of needed accredited curricula. Examples of successful bridging training programs to upgrade the current workforce conducted by regional Area Health Education Centers (John A. Burns School of Medicine, University of Hawaii) were provided.

The Committee also addresses matters that were referred to PIHOA by the Chief Executives at the 6th Summit, as follows:

- Supported by PIHOA funding, the Pacific Basin Medical Association is conducting a study to inventory existing health licensing legislation and process in the region. The study will make recommendations for jurisdictions where such legislation does not exist or needs to be strengthened.
- CDC's Pacific Emergency Health Initiative is assisting the jurisdictions in implementing the Emergency System for Advanced Registration-Volunteer Health Registration (ESAR-VHP) required by the National Hospital Bioterrorism Program (HRSA/DHHS). This system, designed to register "volunteers health professionals", could be used to register all regional health professionals.
- The Medical Reserve Corps is a national network of locally based medical, public health and other health related volunteers who are formally mobilized to address emergencies. It provides the framework to organize local health volunteers and link them, when necessary, to other MRC units outside of their country or jurisdiction. Officially registered MRCs are part of the White House's U.S.A. Freedom Corps initiative and the Department of Homeland Security's Citizen Corps. There are 460 units throughout the U.S. and its territories and Pacific allies with 85,000 registered volunteers. Guam was formally registered in 2005 and the Republic of Palau in 2006. Benefits locally include access to MRC technical assistance (MRCcontact@osophs.dhhs.gov or 301-443-4951), access to MRC (www.medicalreservecorps.gov), and participation in regional MRC meetings and conferences. The ESAR-VHP registration of health volunteers and the mobilization of the MRC units are complementary processes in developing an organized response to local and regional disasters.
- Regarding the 1998 Institute of Medicine "Pacific Partnership for Health," no inventory of progress has been made regarding IOM's four recommendations: 1) to adopt and support a viable system of community-based primary care and preventive services; 2) to improve coordination between jurisdictions and the United States; 3) to increase community involvement and investment in health care; and 4) to promote education and training of the health care workforce. PIHOA is inviting one of the IOM Board Members to its next PIHOA Board meeting in April 2007 to discuss the feasibility of the IOM, repeating its assessment of health services among the U.S.-Associated Pacific Islands.

- CDC's Pacific Emergency Health Initiative has provided emergency preparedness and response training since 2001. PEHI's efforts in the region have been funded through the U.S. Department of Interior and Health Resources & Services Administration. Because of lack of funding from CDC, PEHI ceased its Pacific operations in October 2006. Republic of Palau President Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr., and PIHOA have repeatedly written CDC and select U.S. Senators petitioning support for PEHI's continued efforts in the region. To date, there has been no positive response.

Taking into account the report of the Health Committee, the Chief Executive's directed the Health Committee membership and appropriate personnel in the respective jurisdictions, and sub-regionally, to:

1. Assist the Region to develop sustainable, reliable laboratory and patient transport mechanisms;
2. Support workforce development through human resources for health programs and require PIHOA to report on the status of its Nahlap HRH Action Plan;
3. Support all efforts to reduce obesity and tobacco use in the region;
4. Support the Pacific Basin Medical Association in its efforts to inventory, assess and develop a needs assessment of current Regional Health Professions and Licensure legislation to include health workforce planning and training needs in its overall workforce agenda;
5. Request PIHOA to assess the feasibility of developing a regional health professions registry;
6. Request PIHOA to review the utility of the ESAR-VHP registration process and MRC development to address emergency preparedness and response for the region;
7. Work, through the Chief Executives, with select members of the U.S. Congress to insure line-item funding to support and sustain ongoing emergency preparedness training and development for the region by CDC's Pacific Emergency Health Initiative; and
8. Petition relevant members of the U.S. Congress to conduct a new Institute of Medicine study with recommendations to assess the region's progress since its 1998 report - "Pacific Partnerships for Health".

Workforce Investment (Pacific Workforce Investment Workgroup)

The creation of the Workforce Strategy Taskforce Team was mandated in the Fifth Summit. The Regional Workforce Development Council (RWDC) was created following the Sixth WMCES to provide overall development and guidance of the Regional Workforce Development Plan (RWDP). The RWDP workgroup is comprised of various technical workgroups representing the regions and includes both government and private sector representation. The workgroup has developed interim by-laws for the RWDC to serve as the governing guidelines for program development. The workgroup has also developed a 5-Year Strategic Plan. Year's 1 and 2 of the Plan focus on:

- Capacity Building – Focusing on technical team development, cross-planning and working with workgroups and collaborators;

- Locality Based Entrepreneurship – Focusing on collaboration in all jurisdictions and support for youth entrepreneurship; and
- Regional Data for Economic and Community Solutions – focusing on the gathering of data from all jurisdictions and integration with program design.

Year's 3-5 of the Strategic Plan focus on:

- The feasibility of establishing a Micronesia Job Corp and
- Life long learning through talent development.

Within this context, the Workgroup recommended the following to the Chief Executives:

- Innovation Micronesia – A Regional Partnership –
 - Localizing the U.S. DOL federal regional economies within the Workforce Innovation for Regional Economic Development (WIRED), including the following elements:
 - Definition of the regional economy;
 - Development of a leadership group that can create a regional vision and strategy;
 - Regional assessment to fully map the area's assets; and
 - Development of a regional strategy and implementation plan;
 - Continued adoption of the framework of the Power of E3 plus1; and
 - Creation of a regional workforce training consortium.
- Military Impact and Growth to Regional Communities – In light of the expansion of the U.S. Military in Guam, the Workgroup recommends that the Chief Executives support, in respect to the Department of Defense, the planning efforts of the workforce to respond to the impacts of this troop increase.
- Regional Asset/Resource Mapping – This involves a year 1 and 2 comprehensive regional asset mapping aligned to defined program areas.
- Communications Framework for Collaboration – This involves implementing regular training and communications protocols for all Workforce Strategy Teams to continue dialogue in support of Chief Executive initiatives.

The Chief Executives recognized that the region needs to be practical in its approach to training its workforce. Within this context, the Chief Executives focused on providing the skills to the work force that deal, not only with long-term training, but also short-term training as well, based on real opportunities, such as the expansion of the military in Guam. The Chief Executives also emphasized that training should focus on the use of existing institutions in a coordinated and regional manner. With this as an overall directive, and based upon the recommendations of the Workforce, the Chief Executives recommended the following:

1. The implementation of Innovation Micronesia – A Regional Partnership as recommended by the Workforce;

2. The support of Guam in its planning efforts to respond to the military expansion in Guam, as recommended by the Workforce;
3. The establishment of a regional asset mapping program, as recommended by the Workforce; and
4. The adoption of the Communication Framework for Collaboration, as recommended by the Workforce.

Zoning (Zoning Committee)

The Zoning Committee met for the first time at the 7th WMCES. Only Palau and the CNMI were represented. The Committee reported that jurisdictions are currently at different stages of planning and zoning. In Palau, only a few states have begun zoning in conjunction with land use master planning, and only one state has formalized zoning laws. However, Palau has received a grant from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to assist states and the national government to develop land use master plans. Yap has also received assistance through the Asian Development Bank to develop zoning. Guam has had coastal and land use plans and zoning for a number of years. CNMI has had coastal planning and zones for over 20 years. CNMI adopted an upland zoning program in 1993 but it was suspended in 1994 and then restarted in 2004.

Because the different jurisdictions are at different stages of planning and zoning implementation, the Committee focused on the following issues, which are applicable to every jurisdiction:

- Throughout the region, the public needs to be educated about and involved in planning and zoning in order to improve acceptance of these practices. The public includes the business community, community groups, land owners, and individuals. Public education and involvement can be conducted through village/town hall meetings, informal and formal events and the media.
- Each program needs to be very sensitive to cultural and environmental issues, although the specific issues vary across the region.
- All jurisdictions in the region are trying to develop their economies, especially their tourism sectors. Economic development can be assisted by the predictability and other benefits provided by land use planning and zoning.
- Once plans and the zoning code are adopted, compliance will be essential. Public education can achieve a good degree of voluntary compliance but there needs to be a credible enforcement program for the rest.
- All jurisdictions face difficulty in obtaining and keeping technical planning staff.
- There will be an ongoing need to coordinate among the variety of government agencies that regulate land development, that manage public lands, that directly develop land and that provide services to support land development.

Taking these regional and jurisdictional issues into consideration, the Committee recommended that the following actions could be implemented to assist all of the jurisdictions in their respective efforts to improve zoning and planning efforts:

- Share experience and advice across the region by keeping each other informed about current activities and of past mistakes and solutions;
- Share training events across the region;
- Participate in regional land use programs and projects, such as the Micronesia Challenge;
- Create a regional association of professionals, board members and lay people who are interested in land use planning and zoning and support the association with shared funding; and
- Establish a professional planners' association for the region to support capacity-building and networking.

The Chief Executives adopted the recommendations of the Zoning Committee and directed zoning and planning representatives to move forward with the development of a regional land use planning and zoning association and a professional planner's association by the next Summit.

The Micronesia Challenge

President Remengesau reported on the recommendations of the Micronesia Challenge Action Plan Meeting held in Palau (December 4-7, 2006). The meeting resulted in a comprehensive report that was distributed to each of the jurisdictions prior to the Summit.

The Palau meeting outlined recommendations for the jurisdictions signatories of the Micronesia Challenge (MC) – the Republic of Palau (ROP), U.S. Territory of Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) – to work together as a Regional Body to implement the Challenge through: 1) Institutionalization of the Micronesia Challenge; 2) the creation of a Regional coordinating body/ mechanism and a process for regular review; and 3) the development of a regional financing mechanism(s) and a regional fundraising mechanism/strategy. The meeting also resulted in country plans to implement the MC in each jurisdiction.

Within this context, the following recommendations were forwarded for the adoption of the Chief Executives:

- The establishment of a Steering Committee, comprised of a focal point from each of the jurisdictions and one representative of the Micronesia Challenge Support Team and including participation by a representative of the Micronesia Challenge endowment.
- The recruitment of a regional coordinator and support staff in accordance with agreed terms of reference and a preliminary budget of up to USD200,000 per annum to be financed through contributions by each jurisdiction on an equal basis and fundraising from partners. The jurisdictions approved the recommendation to house the regional coordinating office in the ROP after the FSM withdrew their offer to house the coordinator in a show support of the ROP.
- An annual report on progress to implement the Micronesia Challenge by the Chair of the Steering Committee to the Chief Executives by the Eighth WMCES.

- The development of a regional fundraising strategy, in coordination with national strategies for public and private funds, to support the Challenge including joint action to maximize access to GEF funds through a high-level meeting.
- The Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT) to house a single endowment in support of the Challenge and that further consultations will be held to finalize the process and procedures to the satisfaction of each of the jurisdictions and donors.
 - The MCT is currently having discussions to convert the trust into a regional trust with representation from appropriate nations and states.
- Each jurisdiction of the Micronesia Challenge to take the appropriate steps to institutionalize the Challenge, including engaging traditional and community leaders.
- Support for a Regional Communication Specialist and the implementation of outreach and marketing strategies at regional, national and jurisdictional levels.

The Chief Executives agreed to adopt the recommendations set forth above.

President Remengesau also reported that the RMI, the FSM and the ROP are seeking expanded assistance from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the funding arm of many UN Conventions, as part of the country Resource Allocation Framework (RAF). The GEF Secretariat has expressed support of the Micronesia Challenge and is willing to assist in leveraging GEF funding for other support opportunities.

Deep Sea Bottom Trawling

President Remengesau reported that the Pacific Islands Forum, and other Chief Executives at previous meetings, agreed, within the limitations of their political status, to support a temporary ban on the destructive practice of deep sea bottom trawling, and to take a precautionary approach until measures are in place within relevant regional fisheries management organizations (“RFMOs”) to effectively manage and regulate such practices. The President further indicated that negotiations are ongoing with respect to inclusion of our geographic areas within the South Pacific RFMO, which is currently being formed, and which will conduct an important organizational meeting starting at the end of April 2007. The President requested that during this process or until the United Nations takes further action, which is not expected until 2009, our jurisdictions should continue to participate actively and advocate as a group for an interim prohibition on bottom trawling, to protect our fisheries and marine diversity.

The Chief Executives once again agreed to support the interim prohibition on bottom trawling and to advocate this commitment at appropriate national, regional and international forums.

Conclusion

The Eighth Summit of these Chief Executives will once again be held in Saipan under the chairmanship of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Chief Executives closed their summit and stressed the need to move forward on prior and new initiatives. They re-committed themselves to implement these sub-regional initiatives across the wide spectrum of issues endorsed over the duration of the Western Micronesia Chief Executive Summits. They agreed that greater coordination and communication among the participants, Summit committees 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 Fitial thanked all of the participants for their attendance and attention to these pressing issues before the Conference.

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

Felix P. Camacho
Governor of Guam

Sebastian Anefal
Governor of Yap State
Federated States of Micronesia

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