



9th Micronesia Chief Executives' Summit

P.O. Box 6051, Coror, Palau 96940 Tel: (680) (67-2403) 531/2341 Fax: (680) 767-2422 Email: rcs@president9thmicronesia.com

JOINT COMMUNIQUE

The Republic of Palau, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Territory of Guam, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Federated States of Micronesia and its States, Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae

Introduction

The Chief Executives of the Republic of Palau, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Territory of Guam, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and its states, Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae, held their Ninth Micronesia Chief Executives' Summit (MCES) in Koror, Palau on April 25-26, 2007. This Summit resulted in the adoption of regional programs of action in the focal areas of solid waste management, conservation through the Micronesia Challenge and related environmental programs, energy, invasive species, health, transportation, workforce investment, tourism zoning and communications. The Summit also resulted in actions in miscellaneous areas of concern to the sub-region.

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 Micronesia region. His Excellency President Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr. of Palau as Chairman, moved to include, and the other Chief Executives accepted, the Republic of the Marshall Islands as a full member of the Chief Executives' Summit, thereby recognizing the Republic of the Marshall Islands President Litokwa Tomeing, represented by Foreign Minister Tony A. de Brum, to participate in the 9th WMCES. President Remengesau also moved, and the other Chief Executives agreed to include the Chief Executives of the remaining states of the Federated States of Micronesia, along with Yap, as full members of the Summit.

President Remengesau extended his warmest welcome and greetings to President Emanuel Mori of the FSM, Governor Felix P. Camacho of Guam, Governor Benigno R. Fitial of the CNMI, President Litokwa Tomeing of the RMI, represented by Foreign Minister Tony A. de Brum, Governor Sebastian Anefal of Yap, Governor Robert Weilbacher of Kosrae, Governor Wesley Simina of Chuuk, who could not attend, and Governor John Ehsa of Pohnpei, represented by Director of Finance Thomas Pablo. President Remengesau expressed his appreciation for the Chief Executives' attendance and their active participation in the 9th Micronesia Chief Executives' Summit.

Following the opening ceremonies of the Summit, the Chief Executives heard reports and recommendations from the various sub-regional committees and presentations on a number of issues of interest in the sub-region and region and jointly directed action in their respective jurisdictions, as reflected in this 9th Communiqué.

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

The Pacific Islands Regional Recycling Initiative Council (PIRRIC) reported that continued headway has been made following the last Summit held in the CNMI. PIRRIC also reported that significant forward momentum has been maintained in the public-private partnerships designed to remove metallic waste from our islands.

PIRRIC stated that the concentrated efforts of the group, combined with the current market condition related to recovered metals, has made the removal of metallic waste an effective project. However, 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 further reported that Palau has instituted a pilot program to cost effectively remove tires. This provides an excellent opportunity to gain penetration into the Japanese recovered tire/refuse derived fuel (RDF) market. Prior to this program, Japanese markets have not shown interest in waste tires generated in the Pacific region. This penetration into the market by Palau may provide regional benefit by increasing the potential markets for used tires.

Palau also reported that a “tire cutter” will be delivered shortly to process tires into a more manageable form. The provision of this piece of equipment to Palau provides an excellent opportunity for regional partners to take advantage of the potential to share this equipment to meet local processing needs. PIRRIC feels this provides an excellent opportunity for regional sharing of processing equipment.

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.

To facilitate these activities and include additional environmental issues of regional concern, PIRRIC reported that significant progress had been made in developing the “Micronesian Center for A Sustainable Future” (MCSF). PIRRIC conducted an initial evaluation of potential sites for placement of the MCSF using a number of evaluative factors. These factors include: accessibility to air travel, communications infrastructure, availability of in-kind support, access to funding sources (private, international, donor countries), and political linkages. This evaluation led to the generation of a recommendation that the Republic of Palau is the most logical site for the MCSF.

PIRRIC reported on the policy support available to assist in establishing the MCSF. These included action by the Guam Legislature through introduction of Resolution No. 140 (LS) by Senator Judy Guthertz. This piece of legislation provided a basis for the MCSF to perform a number of functions. Primary amongst these functions are:

- The provision of research and knowledge management, development and administration;
- Strategic “Think Tank” for sustainable development for the Micronesian Chief Executives, Micronesian Presidents, and the Micronesia Challenge; and
- Office of Research and Development at the University of Guam.

PIRRIC reported that additional policy support will be provided by Guam Congresswoman Bordallo, the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) and the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures (APIL).

PIRRIC further reported on the structure of an Interim Secretariat to develop the MCSF and its institutional framework. PIRRIC recommended that the Interim Secretariat create an interim board to perform the functions necessary for the permanent establishment of the MCSF. These functions will include research and negotiations related to the status of the MCSF and identification and negotiations related to funding. PIRRIC reported that the initial structure should provide 3-5 year terms of membership with options for removal. PIRRIC also reported that to increase international recognition and provide proven local leadership, that President Remengesau of the Republic of Palau be appointed as the interim Secretariat.

The Chief Executives congratulated the PIRRIC on its efforts since the last summit and directed the following actions:

1. Continue to monitor the progress of regional metallic material removal projects;
2. Be prepared to modify existing public-private partnerships as necessary to address global market changes;
3. Undertake a cost-benefit analysis of the alternatives available for tire management;
4. Develop a plan for regional use of tire cutting equipment provided to the Republic of Palau to share costs and develop consistent processing through cooperative use;
5. Continue to develop the foundations necessary for the establishment of a permanent Micronesian Center for A Sustainable Future in the Republic of Palau housing a permanent Secretariat; and
6. Continue to develop sources for policy and financial support for the MCSF.

In line with the PIRRIC recommendations, the Chief Executives also unanimously appointed Palau and Remengesau as the Interim Secretariat to establish the MCSF. Also in line with PIRRIC recommendations, the Chief Executives recommended that the Republic of Palau be the site for the future Center. Finally, the Chief Executives agreed to endorse the policies and proposals embedded in Guam Resolution No. 140.

The Micronesia Challenge

The Steering Committee reported to the Chief Executives on the progress that has been made to implement the Micronesia Challenge regional commitment to *“effectively conserve at least 30% of the near shore marine and 20% of the terrestrial resources across Micronesia by 2020.”* Since the 8th Summit, the following actions have been taken to forward the objectives of the Challenge:

- Office space in Palau for the Challenge Regional Office has been identified;
- The process to hire a Regional Coordinator is near completion and the position should be filled in May, 2008;
- The Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council has officially endorsed the Micronesia Challenge Sustainable Financing \$6 million grant for Palau, the Marshall Islands, and the FSM. Currently, the three jurisdictions are working with the United Nations Environment Programme to finalize the project document for final GEF CEO endorsement. CEO endorsement is expected in August 2008.
- The 10-Year Business Plan/Fundraising Strategy to be funded by the TNC is expected to begin in June 2008.
- The FSM Sustainable Financing Plan is expected to be completed by the end of April, 2008.
- Guam and the CNMI are currently developing sustainable finance plans that are expected to be completed by December of this year.
- Guam and the CNMI have already incorporated the Challenge into their NOAA and USCRTF grants.
- Palau recently received a \$500,000 donation from the Republic of China, Taiwan and also a \$1 million commitment from a Taiwanese donor who wishes to remain anonymous.
- The Micronesia Conservation Trust has officially gone regional and is currently working with the jurisdictions to identify potential executive board membership.
- The Joint Guam Program Office has indicated interest in supporting programs and activities that contribute to the goals of the Challenge and has invited Guam and the CNMI to present priority projects that specifically support the Challenge. This discussion will be furthered during the Partnering Session that is scheduled to take place in Guam in June 2008.

The Steering Committee indicated that the ‘next steps’ for the Challenge include:

- The finalization of the Micronesia Conservation Trust regional organizational structure and board membership;
- A meeting of the Challenge Regional Steering Committee and the Effectiveness Measures Committee in June 2008 to finalize outstanding issues and move implementation forward; and
- Development a regional grant for the newly launched German LifeWeb Initiative to support Protected Areas.

The Chief Executives applauded the accomplishments of the Steering Committee and directed the Committee to continue to work towards the implementation of the goals of the Micronesia Challenge and the accompanying fundraising from private and public sources.

Regional Energy Committee (REC)

The Energy Committee recognized the focus, as directed by the Chief Executives at the 8th MCES, to begin seriously researching various technologies that are viable in the Micronesian Islands and to offer solutions to reduce the region's dependence on fossil based fuels. The Chief Executives, at the 8th MCES, directed the Committee to follow up on previous directives, as follows:

1. To formally appoint regional members to serve specific terms on the Regional Energy Committee, so that the REC has full standing; and
2. To work cooperatively to pursue all viable options of renewable/alternative energy technologies (solar, wind, ocean, tidal, deep ocean water, etc.) through a team or task force created and coordinated by the REC for all member nations in Micronesia.

Recognizing the need for immediate action and long term solutions, the 9th Regional Energy Committee urged the Chief Executives to adopt the following recommendations:

- President Mori affirmed the FSM's keen interest to host or co-host the Secretariat;
- Declare the current host state (Palau) as the interim chair until a formal Energy Committee is established;
- Every member should appoint two representatives from their energy sectors to the Energy Committee.
- The Chair for the Energy Committee should come from the host state and be appointed during the MCES meeting, for a term of a year. The Co-chair should be from the state that will host the following Summit to ensure continuity.
- Each jurisdiction should provide sufficient funding to hold quarterly meetings;
- Establish a Regional Energy Association;
- Develop and implement a regional sustainable energy policy that will:
 - Address the immediate energy crisis;
 - Progressively reduce the reliance on fossil fuels.
- Implement a regional capacity building program in each member jurisdiction;
- Promote joint regional awareness campaigns;
- Immediately initiate a regional feasibility study and assessment on different potential renewable energy sources in the region including wind mapping, ocean energy and solid waste energy;
- Mainstream renewable energy and energy efficiency design and consideration and include in all future infrastructure and development projects in the region; and
- Investigate the possibility of establishing a regional petroleum purchasing cooperative.

The Chief Executives supported the recommendations of the Committee. However, regarding the frequency of regional meetings, the Chief Executives recognized that the frequency of meetings is subject to funding availability.

Governor Camacho updated the Chief Executives on an initiative by the United States Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources requesting support for funding of feasibility studies identified by the Territorial Energy Update. At the urging of Governor Camacho and Governor Fitial, the Senate Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development has been asked to allow for the exploration, development and implementation of alternative energy solutions to the islands through the Energy Policy Act of 2005. The Senate Subcommittee also has been asked to support the updating of the Territorial Energy Assessment and consider an add-on of \$500,000 to the U.S. Department of Energy's budget to exploit local renewable energy resources in the islands and lessen the dependence on fossil fuels in the Insular Areas.

The Chief Executives endorsed a letter of support of the Senate Energy Committee's efforts and requested that the RMI, Palau and the FSM be included with the U.S. Island Territories in the development of the feasibility studies of the strategies and projects identified in the Territorial Energy Assessment.

Governor Fitial also recommended that Guam serve as the host for the regional fuel farm to address the immediate energy crisis.

Micronesia Regional Invasive Species Council (RISC)

Since the creation of The Micronesia Regional Invasive Species Council (RISC) at the 4th WMCES, RISC has been very active. The Chief Executives received the RISC report, thanked the council and adopted its recommendations, as follows.

- The Chief Executives approved and signed the Statement of Commitment to Combat Invasive Species for presentation at the 9th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Bonn, Germany in May 2008.
- The Chief Executives agreed to issue Executive Orders for each jurisdiction, designating appropriate agencies or offices within their governments to stand as representative members of the RISC non-profit organization.
- The Chief Executives agreed to identify representatives to RISC from each state and national jurisdiction.
- The Chief Executives reaffirmed their commitment to provide a permanent and full-time Invasive Species Coordinator for each jurisdiction. Further, the Chief Executives confirmed their commitment to establish a full-time Invasive Species Coordinator in each of their jurisdictions.
- The Chief Executives agreed to 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 confirmed their commitment to provide \$2,500 from each jurisdiction to fund RISC priorities. The Chief Executives agreed that Guam, as a part of its funding commitment to RISC, will advance the needed funds for the purchase of a business license

and the incorporation of RISC as a non-profit organization. The Chief Executives thanked Guam for this assistance.

- The Chief Executives agreed to instruct MCES coordinators to provide a list of Chairs of the other committees with contact information to RISC and to designate a “MCES Facilitator” to aid communication between MCES sub-committees at the end of the Summit. The Chief Executives also agreed to instruct the PIRRIC subcommittee to collaborate with Lisa Fiedler from JGPO in order to explore military and regional coordination of invasive species protocols.
- The Chief Executives signed a joint letter to the Continental Air Micronesia CEO requesting the development of an in-flight video reflecting the importance of preventing unwanted invasive species introductions into the islands of Micronesia.

Health Committee (HC)

The Health Committee reviewed recommendations from previous Summits. The Committee reported that there is progress on several issues since the last Summit. For example, regarding support for CDC’s Pacific Emergency Health Initiative, at the direction of the 7th Summit recommendations, Palau President Tommy Remengesau, Jr., formally petitioned select members of the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Secretary of Health & Human Services to provide funding for PEHI. At the Pacific Island Health Officers Meeting in Honolulu last week (14-18 April 2008), PIHOA, which formally represents the Ministers, Secretaries, and Directors of Health of the U.S.-Associated Pacific Islands (including five Summit-member countries), formally presented the PEHI funding issue to the Assistant Secretary of Health, who is in charge of Preparedness and Emergency Response for the United States. The Assistant Secretary indicated that he would look into funding for PEHI.

In line with the recommendations of the Committee, the Chief Executives:

- 1) Regarding plans to develop a tertiary care hospital on Guam for the region, request that a comprehensive feasibility study be undertaken to evaluate the cost effectiveness of creating and maintaining a regional tertiary health care center on Guam.
- 2) In order to respond to in-country and neighbor country disasters, direct their respective country National Emergency Management Offices (NEMOs) to coordinate with their relevant in-country agencies to develop and maintain country specific Emergency Responder Personnel Registries. The Registries will be used to marshal in-country Emergency Responder Personnel for local disaster needs and member countries to determine who is available, upon an emergency request, by other Summit-member countries, to assist member countries in addressing regional disasters. The separate country NEMOs are also to coordinate the development and implementation of rapid credentialing and rapid licensing mechanisms to quickly credential and/or license out-of-

country Emergency Responder Personnel who have been invited from other Summit member countries to assist in addressing disasters.

- 3) In order to better coordinate Human Resources for health planning in the region, direct its Regional Workforce Development Council to include health workforce planning and training needs in its overall workforce agenda.
- 4) Regarding the Summit petitions to develop a new Institute of Medicine report on the health status of the U.S.-Associated Pacific Islands, petition U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye and the U.S. Congress for a new IOM report be developed for the USAPI.
- 5) Regarding emerging infectious diseases such as the threat of SARS and Avian Influenza, petition the United States Government so that Summit-member countries be allowed to utilize Guam Naval Hospital's Medical Laboratory as a Level-2 Regional Reference Laboratory for both human and veterinarian specimens. The Chief Executives also urged regional health care systems to achieve Level-2 laboratory capacity that is appropriate for their needs.
- 6) In order to address emergency preparedness in the region, once again petition select members of the U.S. Congress and other executive health officials (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Health Resources & Services Administration) to find ways to financially support CDC's Pacific Emergency Health Initiative to continue its Disaster Preparedness training among the USAPI.
- 7) Regarding Tripler Army Medical Center's Pacific Island Health Care Program (Honolulu), strongly endorsed the Pacific Island Health Officer's resolution (18 April 2008) to thank the United States Government, the U.S. Congress, U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye, and the U.S. Department of Defense for their humanitarian assistance in making TAMC's Pacific Island Health Care Program available to Summit country residents. The Chief Executives further supported PIHOA in requesting the United States to commit continued, long-term funding for the PIHCP and look forward to TAMC's succession planning for its current PIHCP Director who is about to retire.
- 8) Recognizing the CNMI's inability to medically transport emergency and critically ill patients by air to Guam and beyond, strongly urged Continental Airlines to work with CNMI to mutually resolve this urgent problem.
- 9) Regarding Summit member participation in the Health Committee, directed members to attend the Summit Health Committee meetings. The Chief Executives strongly endorsed the Pacific Island Health Officers Association, which plays a strong role in supporting the Health Committee and its initiatives.

- 10) Regarding the development of regional health professional registries, directed PIHOA to develop and maintain a regional health professionals' inventory to include emergency responder personnel and physician, nursing, and public health specialists so that Summit-member countries, upon request, may utilize their services.
- 11) Regarding regional Human Resources for Health planning and progress, requested PIHOA to continue to brief the Summit Chief Executives on its successes and challenges in carrying out the Human Resources for Health agenda set by PIHOA's Nahlap Island HRH Action Plan in 2006.

Transportation (Transportation Committee)

The Committee reported that the region has received substantial assistance from the United States Coast Guard, through the International Port Liaison Officer Program and port security visits, and other helpful projects, such as maritime search and rescue training. In addition, the United States Coast Guard Sector in Guam, the FSM and Palau jointly conducted the Operation Rai-Balang from March 21-27, 2008. The Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the Pacific Islands Maritime Association have conducted maritime security audits to ensure compliance with the ISPS Code and provided training on access control. The United States Congress is expected to deliberate, in its next session, the measure to make certain Micronesians eligible for merchant marine licenses so they can serve on United States flagged ships.

In the area of aviation infrastructure improvement, the Committee reported that the Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) building in Palau was completed this month. The ARFF building projects for Yap, Kosrae and Pohnpei recently broke ground, and the project in Chuuk will break ground in May 2008.

The Transportation Committee made the following recommendations for the Chief Executives:

- Dialog should be commenced with the United States Government to seek technical assistance from the United States Coast Guard to help Kosrae and Palau fix and improve Aids to Marine Navigation.
- Discussions should be commenced in the FSM to review the immigration clearance procedures for container ships calling into consecutive FSM ports, with an aim of alleviating the burden of the multiple immigration clearance requirements at all FSM ports being visited on a single voyage.
- Discussions should be commenced with the United States Government, Department of Homeland Security, to provide financial assistance under the International Port Security Program, to help improve security infrastructure in the ports located in Member States.
- In the spirit of cooperation, a dialogue should be commenced with the Government of Guam and its Port Authority to lower or waive the transshipment fee being charged against Micronesian bound cargoes. In addition, Member States should strive to establish

transparent and equitable port charges and pilot fees, to make Micronesian ports more attractive to the cruise ship industry.

- Dialogue should be commenced with operators of commercial vessels calling into ports of MCES Member States to consider taking on cadets from Member States.
- Alternate arrangements of transport should be explored, to assist MCES Member States to develop the export of their domestic agricultural and aquaculture products.
- Member States should be encouraged to make Pilotage mandatory, in appropriate cases, for all its ports and to establish regional minimum standards of training and qualifications of pilots.
- Member States should be encouraged to enhance regional cooperation to ensure airport security personnel are properly trained and certified in security methodology and use of firearms.

The Chief Executives considered these recommendations, thanked the Transportation Committee, and adopted the recommendations. It was further recommended that aviation issues be further explored with representatives from that industry.

Regional Workforce Development Council (RWDC)

Pursuant to the 8th Chief Executives Communiqué, the Chief Executives endorsed the development a 5-year regional workforce strategic plan. The following aligns the strategic planning sessions in the development of the 5-year plan:

- Alignment of workforce development, vocational education and other training programs, and leveraging of resources;
- Collaboration, integration, and formation of partnerships with the private-sector; and
- Creating and implementing training programs for demand-driven occupations.

In line with the 5-Year plan, the RWDC agreed to pursue the Regional Innovations Grant intended to emphasize the need to address critical regional information and data gaps, exploring options such as, but not limited to:

- A regional data plan;
- Workforce, education and other asset maps; and
- Strategies to improve and enhance regional communications and collaboration infrastructure.

The Chief Executives supported the recommendations of the Workforce, as follows:

- Approve the charter for the RWDC to assist in formalizing the administrative structure of the Council;

- Gather the following information from PWIW partners & stakeholders for the Regional Innovations Grant application:
 - Information on the availability and quality of regional internet and other communications access;
 - Provision of available economic and other data analyses (employment, demographics, etc.) that could prove useful to inform the proposal;
 - Assessment of opportunities and challenges that individual stakeholders are likely to face in light of the regional military build up;
 - Identification of regional higher education institutions and economic and workforce development agencies that may engage as partners in long-term regional innovation efforts; and
 - Identification of existing innovation efforts and other funding that may be leveraged in support of the grant.
- Merge the Regional Educational Opportunities Committee, which was established at the 8th Summit into the Pacific Workforce Investment Workgroup (PWIW).

Regional Tourism Committee (RTC)

The Regional Tourism Committee reported that it made progress in its initiatives since last year, with PATA Micronesia Chapter assisting in implementation. The Committee highlighted diverse and numerous projects for the Chief Executives.

Due to cost constraints, the “Magnificent Micronesia” website project must be downsized from the \$30,000 cost estimate. In the short term, it is recommended that PATA Micronesia Chapter be tasked to follow up and report at the next meeting of its Chapter in June 2008 on these issues:

- Acquiring sole ownership of the domain name www.magnificentmicronesia.com
- To solicit proposals to redesign the webpage.
- To purchase an additional URL address under “dot travel” domain name.
- To link to www.micronesiamarketplace.com.

With respect to the Regional Awareness Campaign, it was reported that it would cost \$423,383 (divided proportionately) for a three year program, based upon the assumption of spending \$1.00 per capita. This cost would be paid in three (3) installments. PATA Micronesia Chapter has taken the responsibility for the procurement process of attaining a professional PR Agency to develop the regional awareness and image message for appropriate use. The agency’s responsibilities will include (but are not limited to):

- Identifying a regional branding strategy;

- Generating and issuing press releases to various media outlets worldwide regarding the region;
- Arranging media and travel agent familiarization tours;
- Developing press kits;
- Conducting sales calls and seminars to media outlets and travel agents;
- Coordinating with PATA Micronesia Chapter Marketing Committee on regional activities, programs, events, etc.

The ACTION PLAN for the respective National Tourism and State Tourism Offices include:

- Securing funding in FY2009 to FY2011 budgets;
- Providing the necessary information for the development of media press kits, press releases, calendar of events, special packages, etc.;
- Hosting media and travel agent familiarization tours to include sponsoring accommodations, meals, optional tours, etc., as well as, solicitation of airlines to sponsor air transportation;
- Participating in numerous and diverse annual tradeshow, exhibitions and events to showcase Micronesia as a region.

The Regional Tourism Committee recognizes PATA Micronesia Chapter's initiative to identify the need for trainings and workshops to benefit the tourism industry. To further this goal, it recommends:

- Each National Tourism Office and/or State Tourism Office that is hosting the Chapter's quarterly meetings should conduct 1 to 2 trainings for their respective islands. Such trainings should occur during the Chapter's meeting or beforehand.
- A list of available trainers in the region should be established.
- A list of training needs for each island should be established.
- Training calendars should be created.

The RTC has identified its next challenges to include the following:

1. Recognize the impact of Global Warming (climate change) as it relates to the industry;
2. Maximize the presence of Micronesia Region on the worldwide web;
3. Encourage National Tourism Offices and State Tourism Offices to produce "Destination eGuides" for their respective islands, as well as production of a "Micronesia eGuide" for the whole region;
4. Explore the opportunities to increase arrival of cruise ships to the region;
5. Tap into the Military buildup in Guam throughout Micronesia with multi-island packages.

The Regional Tourism Committee sought the support and endorsement of the Chief Executives for its report, and in particular:

- Approval of the three year Regional Awareness Campaign;
- Financial support for production of “Destination eGuides” for the jurisdictions for the efficient and less costly marketing and promotion of the region.

The Chief Executives appreciated the report and the progress made, and endorsed its recommendations.

Zoning (Zoning Committee)

The Zoning Committee had its first meeting at the 7th WMCES. The 9th MCES found all of the recommendations of the 8th MCES Committee to be still pertinent. These recommendations were that the jurisdictions:

- 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;
- Establish a professional planners’ association for the region to support capacity-building and networking; and
- Explore the feasibility of loaning experienced planning staff from the more developed areas for short term visits (1 or 2 weeks) to help jurisdictions such as Yap to organize their data resources and scope out their planning process.

The Zoning Committee commented and recommended that:

- All jurisdictions face difficulty obtaining and keeping technical planning staff.
- All jurisdictions face difficult funding issues.
- The military buildup in Guam will have consequences in the entire Micronesian Region and appropriate planning and zoning will help to insure these impacts will be positive.
- Impact fees need to be addressed so that impacted countries will be able to develop the necessary infrastructure to handle the change.
- The regulatory staffs and the planning staffs need to cooperate and work together;
- Micronesia will benefit from sharing information, training and expertise. The Pacific Urban Agenda under the Pacific Plan has begun organizing a planning and zoning group. The Micronesian area should create a subgroup to facilitate sharing of expertise, experiences and perhaps regional funding.
- Member nations should bring planning and zoning expertise to the next WMCES meeting with a prepared agenda.

The Chief Executives noted that there appeared to be little progress in achieving concrete goals in the area of zoning and land use planning and supported the member recommendation that greater expertise be brought to the next MCES meeting, with a prepared agenda and effective action plan.

Governor Camacho committed the resources of his government for training and information to the other jurisdictions as they develop zoning and land use plans.

Telecommunications Committee

Representatives from the Governments took advantage of the opportunity of two meetings occurring at the same time in Palau: the Micronesian Chief Executives' Summit (MCES) and the Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association (PITA.) It was recommended that the Chief Executives approve a new committee, called the Telecommunications Committee and the Chief Executives received the report and agreed. The main purposes of the Telecommunications Committee will be to serve as a forum to (1) exchange information in the areas of telecommunications and ICT policy, planning, technology systems, and applications; (2) to identify and create opportunities for sharing e-government, e-learning, and e-health; and (3) to initiate joint projects such as roaming among the countries, share technical training in ICT and telecommunications.

The Telecommunications Committee enjoyed a fruitful exchange and covered topics ranging from the (1) the cross-cutting importance telecommunications to all sectors, including economic development, e-government, e-learning and e-health; (2) issues of competition in telecommunication services; (3) submarine fiber optics cable projects; (4) the participation of Freely Associated States in the National Exchange Carriers Association; (5) selection of both Palau and FSM to participate in the Japan Kizuna or WINDS satellite; and (6) discussion regarding the quality, cost-effectiveness and accessibility of telecommunication services.

The Telecommunications Committee also recommended that, prior to the next MCES, the following be done:

- Telecommunications related laws, regulations, and regulatory decisions be compiled for all the Micronesian countries;
- Briefing Papers be prepared that provide updates on the status of telecommunication services, including provider services, tariffs, and coverage and issues for the region;
- e-government, e-learning, and e-health sector meetings be held to assess the digital opportunities within the region; and
- Discussions be held among the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands regarding encouraging the U.S. to permit the Freely Associated States to join the National Exchange Carriers Association.

The Chief Executives adopted these recommendations and welcomed the new Telecommunications Committee.

Prior Service

The issue of Prior Service is an on-going issue for the Micronesian region. Prior Service refers to a program established in 1968 to provide supplemental retirement, disability, and survivor benefits to Micronesians who were employed by the U.S. Department of Navy and the former TTPI Government during the period 1944 through July 1968. These workers, some of whom served as marine scouts with the U.S. Military during the War in the Pacific, worked for extremely low wages without any benefits.

While the United States has recognized the obligation to fund Prior Service, they have done so on an annual basis rather than in a one-time-only appropriation. These annual appropriations have only been accomplished after significant lobbying by the states of the region on behalf of their people. Ultimately, these people would be better served through a final solution to this problem.

Due to the lack of funding, the former Prior Service Trust Fund Board was disbanded and their leadership in working to gain long-term funding was undertaken by the respective Social Security Administrations of the respective jurisdictions. These representatives reported to the Chief Executives on their continued efforts to pursue a final solution and recommended that:

- The Ambassador of the Republic of Palau take the lead amongst Washington D.C. embassies to pursue U.S. Department of Interior and Congressional support;
- Chief Executives sign letters to the U.S. President and the Secretary of the Department of Interior supporting long term funding for prior service;
- A meeting be convened as soon as possible amongst U.S. Ambassadors to develop a future strategy;
- Ambassadors meet with Secretary of Interior Kempthorne supporting the letter from Chief Executives seeking a stronger and more engaged solicitation of U.S. Congressional support of a long-term funding solution;
- Ambassadors enlist the support of Delegate Madeleine Bordallo to assist with Congressional activity in regard to long term funding;
- In any future Compact review and negotiation, attention be directed at a stipulation by the U.S. Government that people eligible to receive benefits shall continue to receive such payments after the effective end date of the Compact; and
- All jurisdictions be ready and willing to support state and national legislative resolutions to support our efforts to gain a long term funding solution.

The Chief Executives agreed with the recommendations presented and directed their respective Ambassadors, in coordination with jurisdictional Social Security offices, to implement the recommendations.

Pacific Telecom, Inc. Presentation

Pacific Telecom, Inc. made a presentation to the Chief Executives, highlighting the experience and expertise of this private, local Micronesian company. Pacific Telecom, Inc. offered its services to assist the Micronesian islands in improving their telecommunication systems through innovative solutions. The Chief Executives expressed appreciation for Pacific Telecom, Inc. coming to Palau to give this presentation.

Geothermal Energy

Dr. Quick presented a thought-provoking report, showing that preliminary testing in Saipan reveals promising results for future cost-effective geothermal energy development in that area. While there currently seems to be a high probability of significant geothermal resources in that region, more study is necessary, and a final report should be available in Summer 2008. It was strongly recommended that the availability of a variety of alternative energy sources should be studied formally. The United States Department of the Interior was identified as a possible source of funding for such a study.

Medical Referral

Dr. Johnny Y. Fong gave a presentation regarding the challenges of the regional medical referral programs. He presented a proposal on behalf Kaiser Group of Medical Clinics and Residential Facilities, Inc. The group includes many United States trained medical personnel, and offers many interesting options for cost-savings in medical referrals to the Philippines. The Chief Executives received the proposal with interest, voicing interest in improving the medical referral systems and bringing down the costs.

Review of Existing Committees

President Remengesau remarked that over the last four years there has been the establishment of a host of committees developed to address action plans for the focus areas established in the first Western Micronesian Chief Executives Summit in Palau in 2004. There is a sense that a renewed focus is needed to attain measured progress on matters of great importance for the peoples of Micronesia. The Chief Executives stressed the need of the Chairman to review the participation and work of the committees and will later decide which committees to eliminate or switch to others to implement.

Conclusion

The Tenth Summit of the Micronesian Chief Executives will be held in a member jurisdiction to be announced. The Chief Executives expressed their excitement and gratitude to the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Federated States of Micronesia, including the states of Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae for accepting the invitation to be the newest members of the Micronesian Chief Executives Summit.

The Chief Executives closed the 9th Summit and once again 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.

President Remengesau thanked all of the participants for their attendance and attention to these pressing issues before the Summit.

Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr.
President
Republic of Palau

Felix P. Camacho
Governor of Guam

Emanuel Mori
President
Federated States of Micronesia

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

Litokwa Tomeing
President
Republic of the Marshall Islands
by Tony A. de Brum

Sebastian Anefal
Governor
Yap State
Federated States of Micronesia

John Ehsa
Governor of Pohnpei
Federated States of Micronesia
by Thomas Pablo

Robert Weilbacher
Governor of Kosrae
Federated States of Micronesia