



JOINT COMMUNIQUE

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

Introduction

The Chief Executives of the Governments of the Territory of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia and its States, Yap, Kosrae, Pohnpei and Chuuk, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Republic of Palau held their Twelfth Micronesian Chief Executives' Summit (MCES) in Tamuning, Guam, on December 3-4, 2009. 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, renewable energy, invasive species, health, transportation, workforce investment and tourism. The Summit also resulted in actions in miscellaneous areas of concern to the sub-region, including the development of the Micronesia Center for a Sustainable Future.

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

The Honorable Felix P. Camacho of Guam, as Chairman, expressed his appreciation to the five Governors, the two Presidents, and jurisdictional representatives for their attendance and active participation in the Twelfth Micronesian Chief Executives' Summit.

Following the opening ceremonies of the Summit, the Chief Executives heard reports and recommendations from 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 12th Communiqué.

Regional Workforce Development Council (RWDC)

The Chief Executives supported the following recommendations by the RWDC to respond to identified issues influencing the region's current and planned workforce development, policy and programs:

- Establishment and adoption of a Master/ Apprenticeship Program for Handicrafts as part of the RWDC manpower development strategy;
- Formal recognition of peer-to-peer training as a “best-practice” and the integration of this effort into a region-wide training plan;
- Review of the merger of the Regional Education Opportunities Committee and development of a final recommendation for consideration by the MCES;
- Establishment of a regional market identity for workforce development;
- Alignment and/or development of a common career assessment tool to determine career strengths and placement assessment, along with development of a workforce classification system to track specific programming areas of interest to the RWDC and the region;
- Development of a unified website for workforce development discussions to enhance the sharing of program information and data;
- Establishment of a Micronesian Veterans Initiative, and
- The exploration of additional funding opportunities.

Micronesia Regional Invasive Species Council (RISC)

At the two meetings since the 11th MCES, the Micronesia Regional Invasive Species Council (RISC) discussed support for the development of the Micronesia Biosecurity Plan. RISC also is addressing issues including funding needs, creation of an interagency biosecurity task force on Guam, ongoing efforts to prevent the spread of the brown treesnake, and various prevention and control activities in the nine RISC-member jurisdictions.

Based on the recommendations of RISC, the Chief Executives direct the following actions to support efforts to minimize damage due to invasive species and prevent the further spread of potentially harmful invasive species:

- Sign a joint letter thanking the U.S. Department of Defense for its commitment to developing the Micronesia Biosecurity Plan (MBP), and expressing their commitment to cooperate fully in the development and implementation of the MBP;
- Instruct their invasive species coordinators and other appropriate staff to actively participate in the development of the MBP;
- Identify, in writing to the Chair of RISC, two representatives to RISC from each state and national jurisdiction by the end of December 2009;
- Reaffirm their commitment to send RISC representatives to two workshop-style meetings per year, between Summits, to collaborate on invasive species issues and priority actions;
- Reaffirm their commitment to provide a minimum of \$2,500 from each jurisdiction to fund RISC's priority projects ;

- Reaffirm their commitment to provide a full-time permanent Invasive Species Coordinator for each jurisdiction; and
- Sign certificates of appreciation to organizations that have provided exemplary support to the USDA Wildlife Service efforts to prevent the spread of the brown treesnake.

Micronesia Challenge

Since the 11th Micronesian Chief Executive Summit, the Micronesia Challenge has completed a draft of the regional communications strategy, made strides in development of a regional monitoring protocol, worked on a draft MC business plan to ensure sustainable funding for the future, and submitted a \$6 million regional proposal for Global Environment Fund grant money. The Committee provided leaders with a brief overview of benefits associated with the MC. Since its launch in 2006, the MC has accomplished the following actions bringing direct benefit to member jurisdictions:

- The Micronesia Biosecurity Plan. This U.S. Department of Defense funded project was intended initially for Guam alone, but through the framework of the Challenge, the MBP now includes all the MC jurisdictions.
- Micronesia Challenge Young Champions. This internship program, which will build capacity within the region, was a Federated States of Micronesia program but has been expanded through MC to be available to young people from all five jurisdictions.
- New funding sources have become available to the region through the Challenge. These opportunities include:
 - LifeWeb (\$1.9 million received, request in progress for additional \$11 million)
 - GEF \$6 million proposal (pending approval)
 - Packard Foundation \$3 million (already received)
 - TNC/ CI pledge \$6 million (\$1million received; \$5 million pending match)

The MC Committee briefed leaders on challenges that continue to face this initiative as the region works to meet conservation goals. The key areas being worked on by the five jurisdictions include raising awareness of MC goals and needs within each jurisdiction and the region as a whole, access to financial resources, and political commitment to sustainable finance plans. Further, the MC jurisdictions must formalize agreements with the Micronesia Conservation Trust for the endowment, develop systems for using endowment funding and implement communication strategies at all levels.

Based on the recommendations of the MC steering committee, the Chief Executives directed the following actions to ensure that the Micronesia Challenge continues its momentum to provide significant benefits to the people of our region:

- Continue planning efforts for the Fall 2010 U.S. Coral Reef Task Force meeting, to be hosted in the Pacific, as a way to showcase the MC's role in effective conservation;

- Coordinate participation in the UN Convention on Biodiversity COP-10 meeting in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010, to raise the profile of the region and work to secure additional funding to meet conservation targets by 2020;
- Promote closer collaboration between the MC and other key regional initiatives, including Green Energy Micronesia, the Micronesian Center for a Sustainable Future, and other environmental programs;
- Commit to ensuring MOUs between jurisdictions and MCT are signed, and further commit to developing mechanisms to disburse and manage MC endowment funds within each respective jurisdiction; and
- Continue to promote the MC at regional and international levels to sustain interest in the initiative and help fundraising efforts for both the endowment and ongoing regional work.

Renewable Energy Committee

The Regional Energy Committee reviewed highlights and successes since the previous Summit, including:

- The development of a National Energy Policy and Strategic Action Plan;
- The residential distribution of 20,000 CFL bulbs in Palau;
- The creation of an Energy Efficiency Subsidy Program;
- The development of an Energy Policy and Strategic Action Plan in the FSM, as well as major solar projects in all four States, including an assessment for mini hydro for Pohnpei State and a wind mapping study in Yap;
- The completion in the RMI of a 10,000-CFL bulb distribution project in Majuro and a streetlight retrofit project for Majuro and Ebeye to commence in January 2010;
- The receipt of federal funds in Guam through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) that included the weatherization of low income housing, retrofitting public buildings, parks, and highways for energy efficiency, and a consumer rebate program to dispose of old inefficient appliances as they are replaced with new Energy Star-rated appliances;
- The receipt of ARRA funding by the CNMI, with plans to use \$18 million to decrease the burden on the electric grid by upgrading utilities, implementing cooling and lighting retrofits and installing alternate energy in public schools;
- The change of the Committee name to the Micronesian Energy Association (MEA) with MEA serving as the central hub to implement energy policy and energy related matters.

The Chief Executives directed support of the recommendations of the Committee as follows:

- Guam will serve as the interim Secretariat for one year, with the permanent Secretariat to be established in the second year in FSM, RMI or Palau;
- The Renewable Energy Committee will rename itself as the Micronesian Energy Association; and
- The Committed should use existing funding sources and programmatic monies to further its activities and initiatives.

At the 11th Summit in the RMI the Chief Executives acknowledged State Energy Grant, OMB Control No. 1910-5126 (DOE F 540.1#, 03/09), provided to the Governor of Guam from the United States Department of Energy via the Guam Energy Office. The grant was provided from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The Grant was awarded directly to the Micronesian Center for a Sustainable Future. The Chief Executives directed the Administrator of the Guam Environmental Protection Agency to coordinate with the Secretary General on the use of the \$200,000 grant by the Center, and, if legally allowable, to transfer the funds to the newly developed 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation.

Pacific Island Regional Recycling Initiative Committee

The Pacific Islands Regional Recycling Initiative Committee reported the following accomplishments in line with the recommendations of the Chief Executives at the 11th Micronesia Chief Executives Summit:

- RMI and FSM have become official members of PIRRIC;
- During July 2009, PIRRIC representatives met and participated in the SPREP Sub-Regional Caucus in Guam to review the *Strategy for Solid Waste Management Pacific Island Countries and Territories*.
- PIRRIC Chairman John Ngiraked was selected during the Sub-regional Caucus to represent Micronesia during the meeting of the regional chairs in Apia, Samoa.
- The Solid Waste Management Plan in Pacific Island Countries and Territories was endorsed in November 2009 by the ministers to the SPREP Council.
- JICA has committed to support funding for the activities listed in the Solid Waste Management Plan.

The Committee further reported that by the next MCES, PIRRIC will develop an annual fee structure for member countries for consideration by the leaders. At a minimum, the structure will include the proposed fee, projected use and financing mechanisms.

Based on the recommendations of PIRRIC, the Chief Executives committed to the following in support of regional recycling initiatives:

- Endorsement of the *Strategy for Solid Waste Management Pacific Island Countries and Territories*;
- Extension of an invitation to Dr. Bob Barber, of the University of Guam's College of Agriculture, to speak at the next Summit and provide information on composting piggery waste and paper; and
- Extension of an invitation to the Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific (CROP) to attend future Summits.

Regional Transportation Committee

The Transportation Subcommittee reported on issues for consideration by the Chief Executives and identified needs for regional air and seaports to meet mutual challenges in the development of services and infrastructure. The group also discussed federal mandates and proposed federal legislation that would benefit the region.

Pursuit of federal funds and extension of eligibility to the Freely Associated States by the U.S. Government is critical. The Committee also reported that collaborative efforts regarding air service and shipping route development would be beneficial to the expansion of services for all Micronesian islands.

The Chief Executives committed to pursue action items and support the efforts of regional air and seaports in the development of infrastructure and services. The Chief Executives further endorsed the following recommendations:

- Establish a regional working committee to convene regularly and pursue action;
- Prioritize air and seaport infrastructure expansion with a regional approach to air/sea service/route development to include requesting charter services from existing carriers during peak seasons to provide added capacity for passengers and cargo;
- Joint efforts in pursuit of federal funds, including
 - Guam Port modernization and FAS eligibility for seaport development
 - Funding for security mandates outside of AIP/Discretionary funds
 - Inclusion of the FAS in U.S. H.R. 2200 (TSA Authorization Act) DHS security assessment; and
- Request from JGPO pertinent data to prepare for the military build-up.

Regional Tourism Council

The Regional Tourism Council, in cooperation with the Micronesia Chapter of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), reported to the Chief Executives on its latest regional marketing and promotions.

After acquiring sole ownership of domain names www.magnificentmicronesia.com and www.magnificentmicronesia.travel, PATA Micronesia Chapter re-launched the Magnificent Micronesia Website in October 2009 with the following new features:

- A detailed webpage on each island, including a photo gallery;
- Geographic maps showing Micronesia Region;
- Hyperlinks to each island destination's website via National and State Tourism Offices;
- Offering of destination travel deals for the islands;
- Chapter membership drive; and
- Advertising opportunities for local and foreign investors.

Based upon the Council's recommendations the Chief Executives supported the following:

- Development of a regional brand and of proposals through an appropriate selection process of professional branding agency;
- PATA Micronesia's efforts to
 - develop a Creative Brief to guide and outline the development and direction of the Micronesia Brand;
 - Develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) for solicitations of bids;
 - Establish a Selection Committee to review proposals;
 - Negotiate of a fee with the successful bidder;
 - Create a contract to include timelines and progress reports;
- Recognition of the Guam Micronesia Island Fair (GMIF) as a potential "Signature Annual Event" for the region and taking all actions necessary to promote and market the event.
- Development of programs in support of the Guam military buildup and pursuit of opportunities from the cruise-line industry as set forth in the Council's report;
- Implementation of recommended RTC initiatives, regarding the following:
 - Climate Change;
 - Geo-Tourism marketing;
 - World Heritage Sites;
 - Foreign Investments and business travel;
 - Tourism Satellite Accounts; and
 - Collaboration on joint marketing/promotion between PATA International and PATA Micronesia Chapter, to include social media (FaceBook, Twitter, etc) networking.

Regional Health Committee (HC)

The Health Council reported on progress made toward recommendations from previous MCES Communiqués. The Health Council addressed three key issues: 1) The Micronesian Health District; 2) Emergency Preparedness and 3) Health Workforce Development. To this end, the Micronesian Chief Executives direct the following:

1. **Micronesian Health District.** That the Health Council (PIHOA) draft a briefing paper to be distributed prior to the 13th MCES, summarizing the background, opportunities, and recommended next steps for the development of the Micronesian Health District endorsed at the 10th MCES. This briefing paper shall address the impact of a Micronesian Health District on policy, governance, collaboration, resource development and management, the continuum of care, and other key areas. The paper shall also describe current regional initiatives and objectives consistent with the concept of a Micronesian Health District, such as the development of a regional level two public health reference laboratory in Guam, the development of shared epidemiological and disease surveillance infrastructure, and the creation of regional health professions inventory for emergency mobilizations. We also direct the Health Council to undertake this task in consultation with key partners, including U.S. Federal Agencies.
2. **Emergency Preparedness.** That the Committee continue to develop a Regional Level-2 Public Health Reference Laboratory in Guam by December 2011 to address the threat of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases in the U.S. affiliated Pacific islands (USAPI). To this end:

- Urge U.S. Federal Agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to provide immediate technical and financial assistance to assist the region with a feasibility study and plan by March 2010, for improving both Level 1 and Level 2 laboratory capacity in the USAPI.
- Urge the newly-formed Association of USAPI Laboratories to participate fully in the development and implementation of such a plan.
- Thank and commend the Government of Guam for its leadership on this issue and—at the recent 47th Meeting of the Pacific Island Health Officers Association (PIHOA)—for committing approximately \$1.2 million to the development of a Level-2 Public Health Reference Laboratory in Guam.
- Urge the Health Council (PIHOA) to continue to work in close partnership with the Government of Guam, the Association of USAPI Laboratories, U.S. Federal Agencies, International NGO's, and other PIHOA member states, to assist with development of a Regional Level-2 Public Health Laboratory within the timeline proposed by the Guam Department of Public Health and Social Services at the 47th PIHOA Meeting.
- Request that the Health Council provide the Micronesian Chief Executives with draft language and recommendations for the health-related components of a USAPI Mutual Aid Agreement. Such an agreement would address the effective sharing among MCES member states of human and material resources from health and other sectors during emergency situations. We also request that the draft language and recommendations be provided at least one month prior to the 13th MCES, for full consideration by each member state, so that a USAPI Mutual Aid Agreement may be signed at the 13th MCES.

3. **Health Workforce Development.** Support the Health Council (PIHOA) as it develops its regional strategic plan for Human Resources for Health (HRH). More specifically:

- Fully endorse the development in each USAPI health agency of appropriately staffed, trained and resourced HRH Management Offices capable of providing the focus, expertise and strategic coordination that is essential for addressing the critical health workforce needs in each MCES member state.
- Request that the Health Council develop recommendations and a draft regional agreement, which can assist the region with effectively managing the migration of health workers among the USAPI, particularly in light of the U.S. military buildup in the region and that the recommendations and a draft agreement be provided at least one month prior to the 13th MCES, for full consideration by each member state, so that a final agreement may be signed at the 13th MCES.

The Chief Executives expressed their respect and gratitude for the compassionate leadership of U.S. Congressman Neil Abercrombie for his historical advocacy on behalf of U.S. Affiliated Pacific Islands and, most recently, for sponsoring legislation that would re-extend Medicaid eligibility to citizens of the Freely Associated States residing in the United States.

Micronesia Center for Sustainable Future

The Secretary General (SG), with the assistance of the Strategic Design and Planning Team, reported the following accomplishments in line with the recommendations of the Chief Executives at the 11th Micronesia Chief Executives Summit:

- A grant proposal has been developed with the Department of Interior to fund the launch of the MCSF. Expected outcomes include:
 - Establishment of the organization and its operating systems and protocols;
 - Initial program delivery, including the launch of the MCSF information portal; and
 - Significant progress toward a strategic framework that involves all nine jurisdictions.
- Completed the Alliance Agreement with the Micronesian Empowerment Center (CME), which was signed by the Secretary General;
- Preliminary discussions have begun with AMEC and Bechtel regarding a teaming agreement with the CME and the development of a teaming agreement for the regional energy assessment (the Strategic Design and Planning Team will work with the Guam Representatives of Core Tech);
- Completed a draft *Teaming Agreement with the University of Guam* – the Secretary General and UOG President Underwood have engaged in direct dialogue to finalize the Agreement;
- Completed development of Non-Profit 501 (c) (3) documents;
- Completed a fundraising letter which shall form the basis for continued requests from identified potential donors, which will be sent out by the end of January 2010;
- Identification of other Regional Partners and Opportunities – The Secretary General attended the European Development Days conference and held discussions with the President of the European Commission and the European Union;
- Drafted a Teaming Agreement with The Graduate School to be finalized within 30 days;
- Began discussions with Island Research Educational Initiative (IREI) and are near completion of the development of a strategic alliance, to serve as the focal point for science research for the MCSF;
- Began discussions with Women's President Organization in order to initiate the Save our Sisters program in conjunction with IREI (BOGO Solar Flash Lights); and
- Began discussion with the Micronesian Seminar regarding the development of a teaming agreement.

The Chief Executives supported the recommendations of the Secretary General to continue to work on the following activities in support of the Center:

- Undertake, in cooperation with the Department Of Energy, via the Governor Of Guam, through the Guam EPA, an energy needs assessment in support of the RMI's Green Energy Micronesia initiative;
- Move forward on the development of a multi-jurisdictional pragmatic assessment of current social and economic data, including MDG indicators for the Freely Associated

States and the nearest proxies to the MDG indicators for the CNMI and Guam (This data will be compiled in a regional analytical framework that will prove useful in the development of the MCSF program of action);

- Establish the MCSF Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG), with membership by every MCEC jurisdiction, to drive the development of the MCSF Strategic Framework and to implement the MCEC Summit communiqué directives;
- Move forward in negotiations with the APIL regarding the development of a framework of consensus building and cooperation;
- Continue to move forward in discussions with the Bank of Guam to pursue the development of a Micronesian Monetary Fund;
- Take such other actions on behalf of the Chief Executives as will move forward, with all due expediency, the development of the Micronesia Center for a Sustainable Future;
- Pursue the development of a Teaming Agreement with The Graduate School to enhance regional capacity building and strengthen the administration of the Center;
- Pursue a strategic alliance with the Pacific Post Secondary Education Council (PPEC);
- Collaborate with other regional and national initiatives;
- Finalize 501(c)(3) documents to create MCSF capacity to receive private sector donations;
- Pursue relations with traditional women's organizations; and
- Pursue a strategic alliance with the Island Research and Education Initiative (IREI).

A motion was made by the Governor of Yap to nominate Governor Benigno Fitial as Assistant Secretary General of the MCSF, which was seconded by the Governor of Chuuk. The motion was passed unanimously.

The Chief Executives recognized the accomplishments of the Secretary General, President Emanuel Mori and the Strategic Design and Planning Team (Larry Goddard, Special Representative – Corporate Affairs and Strategic Planning, Conchita S.N. Taitano, Special Representative – Research and Knowledge Management and David Bell, Special Representative – Strategic Design, Public Affairs and Communications).

Guam Military Buildup Program

David Bice, Executive Director of the Joint Guam Program Office, gave a presentation providing updates on the Guam Military Buildup Program and the anticipated move of the III Marine Expeditionary Force from Okinawa to Guam.

Regional Response to the Military Buildup

Western Regional Director of the U.S. Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment Gary Kurabara gave a presentation on the regional response to the military buildup.

Conclusion

The Thirteenth Summit of the Micronesian Chief Executives will be held in the CNMI. The Chief Executives closed the 12th Summit and once again stressed the need to move forward on prior and new initiatives. There was also a recommitment by the Chief Executives to the implementation of these sub-regional initiatives endorsed since the start of the Micronesian Chief Executives' Summits. They agreed to greater coordination and communication to accomplish the goals set out since 2003. They also committed to fully integrating regional issues into ongoing governmental planning and budget processes within each jurisdiction.

Governor Camacho thanked all the participants for their attendance and attention to these pressing issues before the Summit.

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

Jurelang Zedkaia
President
Republic of the Marshall Islands
By Kenneth A. Kedi, Minister of
Transportation & Communication

Emanuel Mori
President
Federated States of Micronesia

Johnson Toribiong
President
Republic of Palau

Felix P. Camacho
Governor
US Territory of Guam

Sebastian L. Anefal
Governor of Yap State
Federated States of Micronesia

John Ehsa
Governor of Pohnpei State
Federated States of Micronesia
By: Thomas Pablo
Secretary of Finance

Robert J. Weilbacher
Governor of Kosrae State
Federated States of Micronesia

Wesley Simina
Governor of Chuuk State
Federated States of Micronesia

