

# **Micronesia Center for a Sustainable Future**

## **Notes from Designated Representatives MCES Conference Call**

*(November 23, 2010)*

### **I. Participation**

Participants of the conference call included:

Designated Representatives:

- Stephen George (Kosrae)
- Marion Henry (FSM)
- Victor Yano (and lead staff: Gustav Aitaro, Palau)
- Shawn Gumataotao (Guam)

Design Team Members:

- David Bell
- Conchita Taitano

Graduate School & Support Staff:

- Jason Aubuchon
- Larry Goddard
- Kevin O'Keefe
- Jay Merrill

Absent invitees for the conference call included:

Designated Representatives:

- Yumiko Chrisostomo (RMI)
- Churchill Edward (Pohnpei)
- Jesse Mori (Chuuk)
- Sebastian Anefal (Yap)
- Esther Fleming (CNMI)

### **II. Agenda**

The conference call was organized into four general issues:

- (A) Updates Since Last Meeting
- (B) MCES Meeting Preparations
- (C) Discussion of MCES Jurisdictional Delegations and Committee Participation
- (D) Other Issues

## **A. Updates Since Last Meeting**

Shawn Gumataotao reported on participation and outcomes of the Federal Regional Council (FRC) meeting that took place in San Francisco on November 17<sup>th</sup>. Shawn described the meeting as “historic”, with three governors from American Samoa, Guam and the CNMI in attendance, as well as representatives from the FSM, RMI and Palau. 19 federal agencies were represented at the meeting from the US.

Shawn indicated that as a meeting outcome, a resolution was signed in support of the Outer Pacific Organization, and he agreed to forward an e-copy of the resolution to the Designated Representatives.

Shawn further suggested that Palau consider inviting members of the Federal Regional Council to the MCES in Palau. An invitation from President Toribiong might assist in securing their participation, given the likelihood of a continuing resolution in the US and the difficulty that presents in authorizing travel at this time. This invitation might be sent through Ambassador Reed-Rowe. Minister Yano from Palau agreed to send a letter to the Ambassador, but asked Shawn to assist in drafting invitation language. Minister Yano also indicated that the FRC was already represented on the agenda, and their participation had been anticipated. Shawn estimated that up to 10 members of the FRC might attend the MCES, including representatives from the Department of Labor, Defense, Health and Human Services and the U.S. EPA.

In addition, Shawn recommended that an MCES letter of invitation be sent to the Chief Executives to secure participation and dates of travel. Palau agreed.

Finally, Shawn indicated that CNMI Governor Fitial had invited American Samoa to become a member of the MCES, and suggested that Palau consider inviting Governor Tulafono to attend the meeting. FSM Secretary Marion Henry reminded the group of past discussions around the inclusion of Kiribati and Nauru, and suggested that the issue of membership be discussed as a policy issue among MCES principals. Given this, it was recommended that American Samoa, together with Nauru and Kiribati, be considered by President Toribiong to initially be invited to the meeting as observers.

## **B. MCES Meeting Preparations**

Palau shared a draft conference agenda with the Designated Representatives. Palau agreed to revise the agenda based on feedback received from the group, incorporating the following elements:

1. Clarification of MCES meeting days and times;
2. Correction of repeated Committee presentations;
3. Specification of locations of MCES Committee Meetings. (Palau indicated that Committee meetings will generally be held in the offices of appropriate Palau officials, and the MCSF Committee Meeting will take place at the Secretariat's location at the Cultural Center.)
4. Further review of the National Regional Ocean Council agenda item. (Larry Goddard agreed to share NROC support documentation with the Designated Representatives. Given the concern expressed regarding the nature of the proposed organization in relation to existing institutions in the Pacific and Freely Associated States, it was suggested that this issue be reviewed by Designated Representatives as part of MCES preparatory meeting discussions, and a recommendation be put forward to the Chief Executives; however, in the first instance, Palau, as host nation, awaits feedback and suggestions in relation to including NROC as a potential presentation in the proposed agenda.)

The group discussed the need to meet with Secretary General Mori prior to giving an MCSF presentation to the MCES. Secretary Henry agreed to make the appropriate arrangements to facilitate the meeting, which would likely occur late in the day on Tuesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>).

Finally, In order to deal with the heavy agenda, it was recommended that the Designated Representatives try to arrive in Palau in time to begin work on Monday, December 13<sup>th</sup>. However, Secretary Henry indicated that he would not be able to arrive until the night of the 13<sup>th</sup> in time to work on Tuesday the 14<sup>th</sup>. It was therefore agreed that preliminary work would be undertaken on Monday by those DRs and staff that did arrive on Sunday, but that substantive decisions would be deferred to Tuesday, when full membership was present.

### **C. Discussion of MCES Jurisdictional Delegations and Committee Participation**

Given the absence of several Designated Representatives, it was recommended that Palau work through each jurisdictional Designated Representative for lists of delegations and committee representation. It was noted that the CNMI utilized a website and registration form to manage participation, which included detailed travel information. Larry Goddard agreed to share this form with Palau.

### **D. Other Issues**

#### ***1. MCSF Presentation to MCES***

Participants discussed the content and structure of the proposed one-hour presentation the MCSF Designated Representatives will make to the Chief Executives. Jason Aubuchon suggested that the content of that presentation focus on the outcomes of the Meeting of Designated Representatives in Palau, as well as any progress (and recommendations) that might be developed on-the-ground in Palau during the two days prior to the MCES. It was noted that this meeting will be the first opportunity for the Chief Executives to discuss, as a group, the outcomes of the Meeting of Designated Representatives, and as such, the presentation format should include time for discussion.

#### ***2. Revision to the MCES Agenda and Presentation Schedules***

There was an inquiry regarding the origin of reforms to the MCES meeting schedule and committee presentation format. Jason Aubuchon indicated that the reforms to the agenda—primarily to increase committee preparation time and shorten committee presentations—was being proposed by Palau as the MCES Host Country, and might be discussed further while together in Palau.

Minister Yano, in closing the conference call, indicated that Palau would work to get invitation letters out and to revise the proposed agenda. Jason Aubuchon indicated that he would prepare notes on the Conference Call and send to all participants and non-participating DRs. He also indicated that he would follow up with non-participating members via phone calls.

### **III. Summary of Action Items**

- Shawn Gumataotao to forward electronic copy of FRC Resolution in support of “Outer Pacific” organization.
- Palau to send MCES invitation to the Federal Regional Council (FRC) via Ambassador Reed-Rowe; Shawn Gumataotao to assist by drafting invitation language for Palau to use.
- Palau to send MCES invitation to other Chief Executives, confirming dates of meeting.
- Palau’s President to consider the inclusion of American Samoa, Nauru and Kiribati in the MCES and potentially invite Governor Tulafono, as well as the Chief Executives of Nauru and Kiribati, to participate as MCES observers.
- Larry Goddard to share supporting documentation of the National Regional Ocean Council (NROC) with Designated Representatives, and interested parties to provide feedback to Palau in relation to NROC slot for presentation at 14<sup>th</sup> MCES.
- Palau to share revised agenda with Designated Representatives
- Secretary Henry to make arrangements for the Designated Representatives to meet with President Mori prior to an MCSF presentation to the MCES.
- Larry Goddard to share MCES Registration Form used by Guam and/or CNMI
- Jason Aubuchon to distribute notes from conference call to all Designated Representatives.
- Jason Aubuchon to individually brief Designated Representatives who were not able to participate in the conference call.

### **IV. Additional Items**

- An additional item that wasn’t covered on the call but should be expected by the Designated Representatives is for Jason Aubuchon, per the MCSF approval protocols, to forward an email to the Designated Representatives outlining the planned expenditure of MCSF Inception Award resources against the currently approved budget, in support of the 14<sup>th</sup> MCES in Palau. This message will be distributed within the next 24 hours for approval on a five-day, no-objections basis.