17th Micronesian Presidents' Summit

FSM Consulate Office
Guam, USA
May 3rd, 2017

JOINT COMMUNIQUE

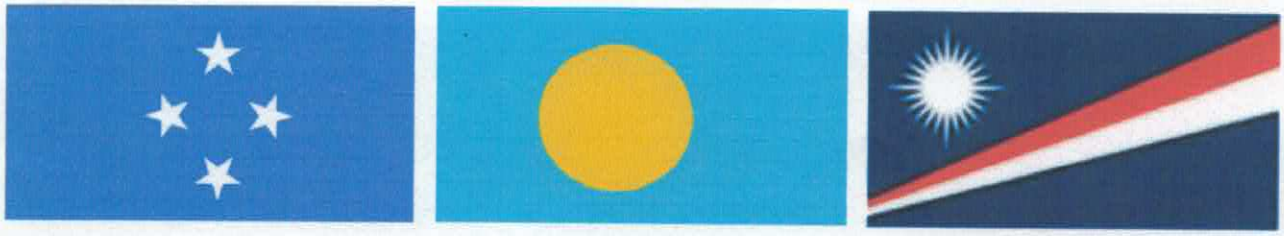
The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Republic of Palau (ROP) held their 17th Micronesian Presidents' Summit (MPS) at the FSM Consulate Office in Guam on May 3rd, 2017 to continue their ongoing discussions of issues of common interest. President Peter M. Christian as Chairman welcomed President Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr., and President Hilda C. Heine to FSM Consulate Office for the meeting. President Remengesau and President Heine, in turn, thanked President Christian for hosting the 17th MPS at the FSM Consulate Office and congratulated the FSM on the acquisition of its new Consulate facility in Guam. Together, the Presidents reaffirmed their commitment to continue collaborating on issues of mutual interest to further strengthen relations among the three countries.

Maritime Boundaries

The Presidents updated each other on the status of their respective efforts to address issues related to the delineation of their maritime boundaries, some of which have recently been concluded, while others remain to be determined. The Presidents reaffirmed their commitment to support one another on these maritime boundaries issues that impact each jurisdiction. In this regard, President Heine provided update to the MPS on the status of Enenkio and informed the meeting that RMI has deposited its maritime baseline coordinates at the United Nations.

Labor and Immigration Harmonization

President Heine requested the support of the ROP and the FSM to harmonize their labor and immigration laws so that citizens of each of the three nations have reciprocity to work in each other's jurisdictions without the necessity of obtaining labor and immigration permits, as that discourages immigration between citizens of the three countries. President Christian and President Remengesau expressed support and thanked the RMI for hosting their respective citizens who are working and residing in the RMI.The Presidents directed appropriate Ministers to ensure that regulations are promulgated for review by the next MPS.



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SPREP North Pacific Office

The Presidents discussed the need for CROP agencies and United Nations agencies to increase their presence in the North Pacific region. They agreed on supporting the bid for the RMI to host a sub-regional office of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP) and directed that SPREP be informed of their decision at the next SPREP Council meeting. They further requested for the United Nations agencies to expand and strengthen their presence in the North Pacific.

On a related matter, PIF Leaders last year directed SPC, including SOPAC, and SPREP to assist the RMI on the nuclear issue. The Presidents agreed to raise the non-performance of these CROP agencies at the next PIF Leaders' Meeting in Samoa.

Health and Drought Issues

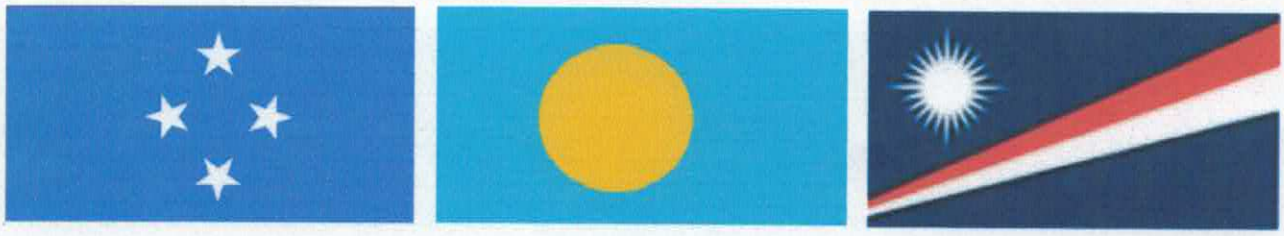
President Heine provided an update on the Zika, Hepatitis A and Mumps situation in the RMI. President Heine also updated the MPS on the recent State of Emergency on the drought affecting the northern and western atolls of the RMI. Both the FSM and the ROP expressed their readiness to provide assistance and support to the RMI should the need arise.

Micronesian Shipping Commission

The Presidents discussed the work of the Micronesian Shipping Commission (MSC) and agreed that in order to be more efficient, the MSC needs to be properly assessed and reformed. They agreed to invite and engage the expertise of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) to undertake an independent assessment of the MSC and inform the MPS on options for necessary reform.

Joint Presidents' Visit to Washington, D.C.

The Presidents considered a Joint Presidents' Visit to Washington, D.C., to discuss issues relating to the Freely Associated States (FAS) jurisdictions. They further agreed to task staff of their respective embassies in Washington, D.C., to work on the possibility of a Joint Presidents' Visit. They also agreed to identify key priorities to raise with the U.S. Government, including the status of the ROP's



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Compact of Free Association, the roll back of U.S. commitments to the Paris Agreement, and joint census of FAS citizens residing in the U.S. to gauge the real dollar value on their positive contribution in their communities.

High Seas Bunkering

The Presidents reaffirmed their commitment to the decision of Pacific Island Forum (PIF) Leaders at the 47th PIF Forum in Pohnpei, FSM, relating to bunkering on the high seas. They noted the PIF Leaders called for action to end illegal unregulated and unreported fishing and related activities including high seas bunkering. They urged each other to implement the PIF Presidents' decision. The Presidents agreed that the issue would be presented and discussed at the PNA Presidential Summit.

Parties to the Nauru Agreement(PNA)

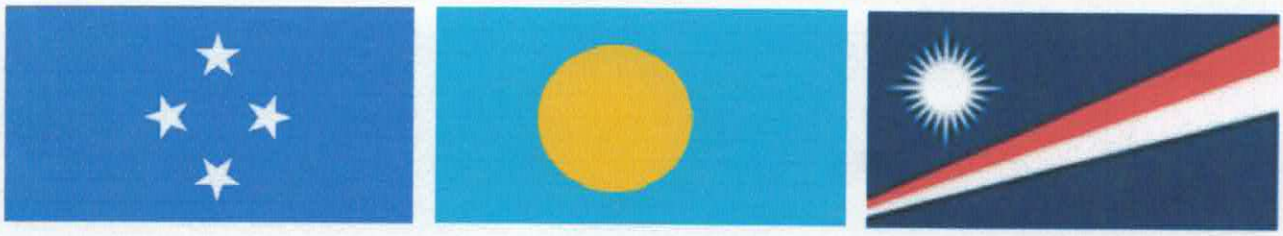
In order to support the PNA Office in Majuro, the Presidents agreed to provide funding support for the new PNA headquarters on the condition that the building be in the names of the respective donor nations. The Presidents noted the successful work of the PNA Office and agreed to further consider the need for PNA to become a CROP agency.

Transnational Crime Units

The Transnational Crime Units (TCUs) in the FSM, the ROP and the RMI originated from a 2002 initiative by the Pacific Transnational Crime Network to address the increased presence of transnational crime in the Pacific, including drug trafficking and human trafficking.

The Presidents discussed the need to support the continuation of the TCUs in each of the three jurisdictions. They agreed that further collaborative effort among the three countries is needed to combat transnational crimes in the Micronesian region. In order to enhance regional cooperation and secure sustainable funding to support the TCUs as a whole, the Presidents agreed to a formal agreement between the three countries to provide for oversight and coordination between the three TCUs.

The Presidents directed their Attorney Generals to begin taking steps to put in place a formal agreement that will result in a coordinated approach to transnational crime enforcement. The Presidents also call for a progress report to be presented at the next MPS.



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Smaller Island States Trust Fund

President Christian and President Remengesau remarked about the difficulties in accessing external financing available for climate change adaptation and mitigation such as funds available and awaiting disbursement from the Green Climate Fund. The Presidents acknowledged that the FSM has successfully been admitted as a member of the Smaller Island States (SIS), thereby allowing cooperation amongst the SIS members. The Presidents further acknowledged that the SIS leaders special meeting in Palau in 2016 identified critical issues in financing climate change initiatives and the need to strengthen access to, and deliver on, climate change financing.

The Presidents concurred the need for a collective, coordinated and targeted approach between SIS and relevant partners to identify options to improve and expedite access to climate change financing to achieve economies of scale, including through an SIS joint proposal to relevant climate change financing opportunities and support for its subsequent implementation. The Presidents acknowledged the SIS leaders special meeting concluded that there is a need for a regional climate change trust fund to accelerate access and expand financing options.

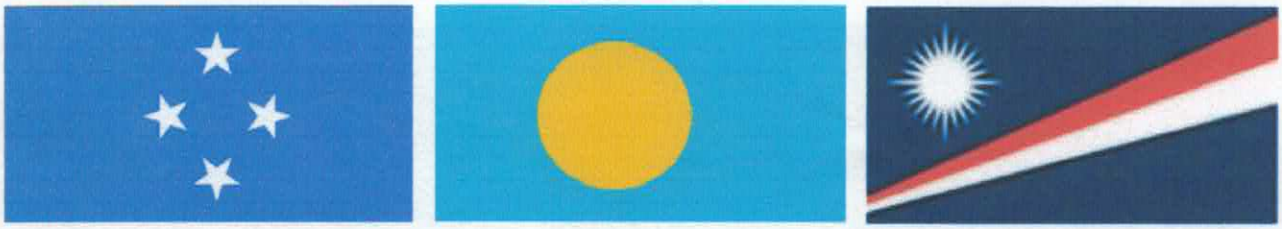
The Presidents agreed to direct the Micronesian SIS Desk Officers to work with their counterparts and the SIS Programme Officer to engage the Forum Secretariat to determine the feasibility of establishing an SIS Trust Fund aimed at mobilizing global resources to support the implementation of climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives in line with the SIS Regional Strategy.

United Airlines

The Presidents expressed concerns over customer services, pricing and frequency of flights to smaller jurisdictions by United Airlines and requested assistance from SPC and other appropriate agencies to undertake a study comparing these issues between different regions.

University of Guam

The Presidents expressed support to the University of Guam (UOG) and expressed appreciations for the UOG's contribution to higher education in the Micronesian region. They discussed the need for the UOG to administer its placement exams in the islands to avoid the expensive cost of traveling to Guam for the sole purpose of taking the placement examination or to consider utilizing in-country institutions.



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Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle

The Presidents acknowledged the growing threat of the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) to our region, as this pest devastates coconut palms in Guam, Palau, and other Pacific island nations. Insecticides have been shown to be ineffective in controlling CRB, and therefore a regional project is urgently needed to develop an effective biological control for CRB. The Presidents further acknowledged the high risk of spread to other islands in Micronesia and beyond, and there is no effective control with the newly discovered, highly invasive form of CRB. Therefore, the Presidents concurred there is urgent need to take preventive action to prevent this destructive insect from spreading to other islands.

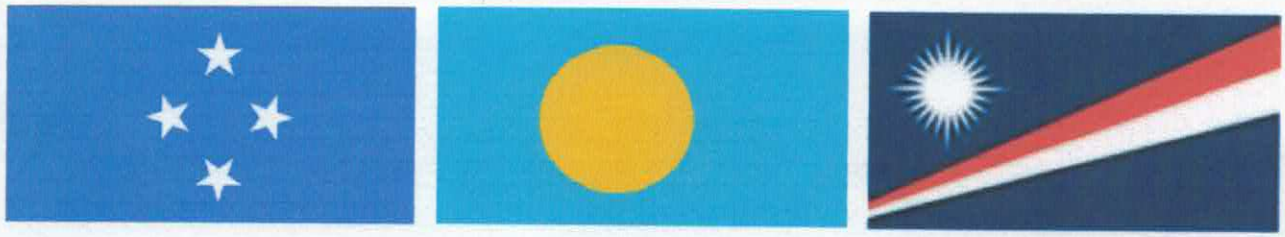
Recognizing the urgent and serious threat of the CRB to food security, tourism, and other sectors, the Presidents agreed to a two-pronged approach to prevent the spread in the short term, and in the near-term to develop an effective biological control as the only feasible long-term solution to this problem. First, the Presidents agreed to explore options to implement interdiction in Palau and Guam and step up surveillance of airports and seaports in the FSM and the RMI to prevent CRB from entering those countries. Second, the Presidents agreed to sign a joint letter to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), requesting financial support for a Pacific-wide project to develop an effective biological control agent for CRB.

Micronesian Women's Conference in RMI

The RMI informed the Presidents of its plan to host the Micronesian Women's Conference in August, 2017. President Heine extended an invitation to both the FSM and the ROP to participate at the Conference. This sub-regional Conference will be held leading up to the Pacific Regional Women's Conference in Fiji in October 2017. The Presidents of the FSM and the ROP endorsed RMI's host of the Conference.

Micronesian Youth Services Network Conference

The RMI also informed the Presidents of its plan to also host the Micronesia Youth Services Network Conference scheduled for 24 – 28 July 2017, in Majuro. President Heine also extended an invitation to the FSM and the ROP to participate at the meeting. President Christian and President Remengesau expressed appreciations for the invitation and endorsed RMI's hosting of the Conference.



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Invitation to Nauru and Kiribati to join MPS

The Presidents agreed to invite Nauru and Kiribati to participate at the next MPS. They noted the need to further collaborate on sub-regional issues that includes Nauru and Kiribati, and have agreed to have the current Chairperson of the MPS issue the invitation on behalf of the Presidents.

PNA Presidents Summit & Next MPS

The FSM proposed a follow up discussion of the issues discussed at the 17th MPS and agreed to consider holding a meeting in July prior to the PNA Presidents' Summit and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Presidents meeting.

H.E. Peter M. Christian
President
Federated States of Micronesia

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

H.E. Hilda C. Heine Ed. D
President
Republic of the Marshall Islands