



## CABINET MEETING

Office of the President

Ngerulmud Capitol | 9:14 am – 11:05 am

Monday, December 11, 2017

In Attendance:

1. President Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr.
2. Vice President Raynold B. Oilouch
3. Minister Faustina Rehuher-Marugg
4. Minister Umiich Sengebau
5. Minister Emais Roberts
6. Minister Charles Obichang
7. Director Brian Melairei
8. Director Melson Miko
9. Exec. Director Keobel Sakuma
10. COS Secilil Eldebechel
11. Press Secretary Olkeriil Kazuo
12. Postmaster General Timothy Sinsak
13. NDBP President Claire Harvey
14. Norbert Villanueva, NDBP
15. PNCC Chair Norman Ngiratecheboet
16. PNCC AGM Leo-Ben Teriong
17. Daniel Klopper, Legal Counsel

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Prepared by Rolynda Jonathan, Office of the President

| AGENDA                    | DISCUSSION  |
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| <b>Ministry Briefings</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Ministry of State:</b> An Executive Order has been drafted to organize a committee to implement the \$1.3 million Japan grant. The Committee membership will compromise of various Bureau Directors. Director Gustav Aitaro and Director Casmir Remengesau to co-chair said committee. The President notes a Japanese representative who usually provides assistance to Palau on matters of grants is set to visit on December 15<sup>th</sup> and the President requests for the committee to meet him. Charles Mitchell of Palau Embassy in Japan and Grants Coordinator met with the Minister regarding the arrangements of funding assistance to Palauan students in Cuba. Challenges in currency exchanges from USD to Yen. Grants Coordinator Dean is spearheading this. The President asks for immediate follow-up to ensure fund transfer to the students quickly. Minister Rehuher-Marugg requests for MPIIC's assistance in beautifying the walkway between the Office of the President and the rest of the Executive Building at the Capitol and further suggests for beautifying and decorating the Capitol halls with local artwork.</li><li>• <b>Ministry of Health:</b> On Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> MOH was awarded a \$250,000 grant for opioid crisis prevention. Minister Roberts reports of some abuse in Palau, but not in the scale as the U.S. MOH is gearing up to launch community awareness campaigns in January 2018. Discussion has been made with representatives of the Tripler Army Medical Center to allow referral cases from Palau despite closure on Tripler's side. There are 23 cases pending in Palau for referral to Tripler. Tripler has agreed to accommodate 5 urgent cases from Palau. Emergency Operations Center has been closed as of last week. There were 4 cases of dengue fever recorded in November 2017 and so far, zero for December. MOH continues to raise awareness within the community. Cuban Ambassador Castano has communicated with Minister Roberts and offered his assistance to help Palau arrange its trip to Cuba. MOH continues to look towards planning of trip to Cuba with members of the leadership, including representatives from the OEK. First Palauan student in Cuba scheduled to graduate in May 2018.</li></ul> |

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|                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>PNMS Update:</b> National Geographic representatives visiting Palau. The team is installing satellite receivers in FADs to track fish movements and collect data. Preliminary reports are available; however at the end of the round, a presentation will be made of its findings. Micronesian Presidents’ Summit confirmed to be held in the Marshall Islands in February 2018 to coincide with the proposed PNA Leaders Meeting. Palau’s domestic fishery plans to be promoted.</li> <li>• <b>Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Tourism:</b> A special meeting was called during the recent Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) meeting. Most conservation measures expire this December 2017. PNA took a strong stand against the implementation of FADs in the high seas during the meeting. PNA threatened to pull out of WCPFC should this proposal for high seas FADs is implemented. The original agreement is to not allow FADs in the high seas. Discussion was stalled. Minister Sengebau anticipates follow-up meetings on the issue will be arranged. FFA and WCPFC forwarded report of vessel that recently spent over 50 hours in Palau. It was speculated as a transshipment vessel. The matter has been forwarded to the AG’s attention. OEK bill looking into opening a harvest season for maml and kemedukl. The President urges for local consumption only and prohibiting the exportation, and sale of kemedukl and maml in the local market. MNRET along with PICRC produced and submitted its recommendations to the Senate in regards. MNRET also requested for special license from foreign fishers wishing to participate in the harvest season. Concerns expressed of opening harvest season for maml due to their low numbers.</li> <li>• <b>Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Industries and Commerce:</b> Minister Obichang instructed to look into incinerators from Japan to determine if they meet standards. The President brought back brochures of such equipment. These incinerators are portable, odorless, smokeless and affordable. Minister Obichang reports from December 21-23, the Sojitz Team will be on island to meet with Palau on finalizing and approving the basic design of the airport expansion project. Once signed off and approved the project will then move on the detailed design phase. Bureau of Public Works Two trips made to Southwest Islands. 13 houses repaired in Sonsorol. Houses were built in Tobi as houses were torn down. Director Melairei instructed to provide information to produce a press release. Minister Obichang and COS Eldebechel to meet the Southwest Islands transportation taskforce today. CIP projects for 2017 are all under advertisements. CIP expected to receive bidding until after Christmas this year. <b>Ngerulmud Maintenance:</b> The President requests for MPIIC to look into repainting the Executive Building, hoisting the flag on the Senate dome and to utilize Capitol offices that are under-utilized.</li> <li>• <b>Ministry of Justice:</b> The MOJ to continue to increase police presence during the holiday season. Police presence to increase by December 20<sup>th</sup>. The NEA to conduct radio programs to remind the public of safety. Marine Law to partner up with MPIIC to begin work on buoys. The National Emergency Committee (NEC) has lifted Palau from El Nino watch, however Palau is under La Nina. P.S.S KEDARM departed Japan on December 8<sup>th</sup> to arrive in 7 days. The handover ceremony to be held on February 13<sup>th</sup>. Office of the Vice President/MOJ to host Children’s program this evening. The President requests for more aggressive action against major drug traffickers in Palau, and asks for the NEA to push for increased efforts in regards.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>PNCC Progress Update</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Impact of Service since Launching:</b> Data usage usually averages 250 MB, but since the launch of fiber connectivity on Dec. 7, data used has increased to 850 MB. Speed is 1</li> </ul>   |

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|                             | <p>megabyte per second. Lowest speed of internet is 128 kilobytes per second (Kbps) prior to fiber connection. After the launch, the lowest speed of internet with fiber connection is 1 megabit per second (Mbps). Within this week, PNCC hopes to eliminate all hick-ups and bottlenecks in the system. PNCC is 100% under fiber connectivity since the launching. PNCC to maintain O3b satellite connection for the next 2 years, as a back-up plan. Should the fiber disconnect for whatever reason, PPUC reports it will take 30 seconds to transfer over to satellite connection. PNCC to consider scaling down its bandwidth subscription following completion of the current 2-year contract with O3b.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PNCC has been meeting with the OEK almost daily over the course of the past couple of weeks. OEK insists for reinstating the 2G system. PNCC is trying to reach out to customers still facing challenges due to 2G service disconnection. The cost of reinstating the 2G system is \$555,000. PNCC is working with A-GrandTech to reduce the cost of reinstallation, so far the latest reduced figures is \$350,000. PNCC are set to meet with the OEK at 2:00 pm today and states no promise was made to the OEK to reinstate 2G. Cellular coverage expansion ongoing in Babeldaob in particularly Aimeliik, Ngchesar, Ngeremlengui. Progress to move slowly and aimed for completion in mid-2018. PNCC working with vendors to negotiate for service availability of photo texting (mms) and video calling along with cellular service that should be made available with 4G service.</li> <li>• The President requests and urges for a community awareness program to educate the public of the services available by smartphones and internet capacity through the 3G/4G system, and to seek realistic solutions to address challenges faced by customers impacted by the 2G service disconnection.</li> <li>• <b>Telecommunication Regulatory Framework:</b> The President requests for PNCC to seek strong position to avoid being overrun by the market and to consider establishing public-private partnership. PNCC reports the Board’s goal is to look into such partnership next year. All service providers to pay 15% to BSCC, according to the Framework.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Miscellaneous/Others</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NDBP Progress Update:</b> From December 1-8, no new applicants were approved. 75 loans approved as of date with the value of \$1,171,682. The Bank is looking forward to a \$500,000 to \$1 million loan application in the first quarter in the next year. The President requests the Bank to formulate an alternative plan of action for implementation of the remaining \$4 million.</li> <li>• <b>The Palau Pledge:</b> Launching of Palau Pledge Visa Stamp reported successful. First to sign were Japanese visitors. Havas filmed and covered the launching. Leonardo DiCapri showcased his support via social media. The Office of the President Facebook has reached more than 10,000 people online not including DiCaprio’s social media post that has also reached more than 10,000 people online. There are still some questions regarding the legal requirement of signing the pledge stamp. Information was provided through press release and statements in regards, including a directive signed by the President directing Immigration to administer the stamp. The President requests for the Cabinet’s support in signing the pledge and sharing it on social media to further raising awareness. Vice President Oilouch reports the Immigration continues to monitor the stamps process and so far, the agency has yet to receive a passenger who refuses to sign the pledge. The in-flight video explaining the project is available online at <a href="http://palaupledge.com">palaupledge.com</a>.</li> </ul>   |

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|                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Kabeas Eradication:</b> Road and ground crew continues with eradication efforts. The crew has identified an effective strategy in eradicating the kabeas. Results to be seen by January.</li> <li>• <b>Post Office Update:</b> USPS to implement new rates on January 21, 2018 for first class mail, priority and express. The Postmaster General reports the four additional digits following. Local inspectors and international inspectors working on assessment.</li> <li>• <b>‘Our Ocean’ Handover Meeting:</b> COS Eldebechel recently attended the handover ceremony from EU to Indonesia of the hosting of the ‘Our Oceans’ Conference held in Brussels. COS Eldebechel reports the preparation for Palau’s hosting will require time, including arrangements for protocol, logistics, communication and other details.</li> <li>• <b>Operation Clean Business:</b> Some business activities have been identified businesses operating outside of the scope of their licenses approved by FIB. Labor has also cited businesses or individuals violating labor laws. The taskforce is working closely with the AG in regards in terms of monitoring citations issued. The President requests for the taskforce to produce a report on progress made and work conducted. The report to be published once completed.</li> <li>• <b>Funding to CNMI:</b> The President announces the \$75,000 funding assistance to Palauan victims of Typhoon Soudelor in CNMI has been issued and released to Consul Eileen Kintol who will distribute.</li> <li>• <b>Government E-Readiness Assessment:</b> Challenges with IT Officials. The team led by Conrad Ellechel continues to conduct assessment.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Reminders</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Ministers are reminded to “follow up” and “think outside the box” on all initiatives.</li> <li>• All Ministers are requested to note current events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annual Children’s Christmas Program: Dec. 11-13 in Ernguul and Dec. 14-15 in Ngerulmud.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |

**\*Meeting minutes subjected to change and approval**