19th Micronesian Presidents' Summit

February 20-21, 2019
Koror, Republic of Palau

Palau Demul Communique

1. The President of the Republic of Palau, the President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the President of the Republic of Kiribati, and the Heads of Delegation for the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Nauru convened the 19th Micronesian Presidents' Summit (MPS) in Koror, the Republic of Palau on February 20, 2019.

2. As host, His Excellency, Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr., President of Palau, welcomed the Presidents and Heads of Delegation from the Micronesia region and thanked them for their attendance.

3. President Remengesau expressed appreciation to President Hilda C. Heine of the RMI and congratulated her for her excellent leadership during her tenure as Chair of the 18th MPS.

4. President Remengesau acknowledged the presence of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), and . further acknowledged the presence of the Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific (CROP) Agencies, including:

   The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC);
   The Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP);
   The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA);
   The Pacific Aviation Safety Organisation (PASO); and
   The Pacific Power Association (PPA).

5. President Remengesau acknowledged the presence of the representatives of our development partners, including the United States, Japan, Australia and the Republic of China (Taiwan).

6. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation expressed their collective appreciation to President Remengesau, the government and the People of Palau for the excellent hosting of the 19th Micronesian Presidents' Summit and the warm hospitality accorded to the Delegates.

Update from the CROP Agencies

7. The PIF and CROP Agencies delivered updates with respect to ongoing issues referred to their attention and offered perspectives regarding emerging issues in the region.

8. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation welcomed the PIF and CROP Agency updates to the Summit on regional issues and incorporated their recommendations as follows:

9. PIF

- Reaffirmed support to current Forum initiatives particularly the Forum Review of Meeting Processes, the Review of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, and the Boe Declaration Action Plan;
- Acknowledged the support of the Secretariat to Pacific delegations at the 2019 UN Summits and related meetings premised on the 1st Quadrennial Pacific Sustainable Development Report as the recognized one Pacific report to these global summits;
- Committed to submitting a Micronesia representative to the Pacific Steering Committee for Sustainable Development prior to the 1st March deadline; and
- Acknowledged the work of the Office of the Pacific Oceans Commissioner in ensuring effective integrated oceans governance and in coordinating efforts towards the sustainable management, use and conservation of our oceans as responsible stewards of our Blue Pacific continent.

10. SPC

- Agreed to make the fight to eliminate violence against women and girls a priority for inclusive sustainable development and social inclusion in their countries; and
- Agreed to actively advocate with development partners for additional funding support for Pacific led data and statistics, particularly in order to meet the funding gap for collecting the data required to report on the SDGs.

11. SPREP

- Endorsed the proposed strategy for establishing the SPREP Northern Office;
- Agreed that all Members will make annual financial contributions, however symbolic, reflecting their commitment to the on-going operations of the office;
- Agreed to apply to the GCF for Readiness funding for 2019 and 2020, where eligible, and not otherwise committed as per the agreed strategy; and
- Provided a national contact to work with the RMI Desk Officer, RMI officials and the Secretariat to develop a business plan and revised budget for the Office, to be reported to the 29th SPREP Meeting scheduled for September 3-6, 2019.

12. FFA

- Underlined the importance of our Strength through Cooperation;
- Supported the pursuit of innovative ways to enhance solidarity, maximize economic returns, combat IUU fishing, and enhance social benefits, all which support the vision and priorities of each of the Presidents; and
- Welcomed the celebration of 40 years of Cooperation of the FFA.

13. PASO
    - Noted that the Pacific Aviation Safety Office is strengthening and stabilizing;
    - Endorsed in principle the proposal for the re-instatement of a Regional Aviation Minister's Meeting, recognizing that it remains subject to established Forum meeting processes; and
    - Committed to investing in regulatory aviation frameworks to enable economic growth.

14. PPA
    - Noted that PV will continue to be the focus of RE development (especially for smaller nations);
    - Noted that private sector investment is crucial and governments need to facilitate regulatory reforms to remove any perceived barriers to investment;
    - Noted that energy storage will play an important role as countries explore the means to achieving their energy targets; and
    - Recognized that utility ownership models will need to evolve to respond to the changing energy markets.

On-Going Issues, New Issues and Updates

Climate Change Initiatives

15. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation discussed, with great concern, the ever-growing threat of climate change, in particular, sea-level rise and natural disasters. Recent reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and other authorities show continued escalation in global emissions, warming and sea levels, with the Paris agreement goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius now unlikely to be met. The atolls and low-lying island communities of Micronesia face exceptional threats. The Presidents discussed the need for CROP agencies to develop a clearer framework for coordinating their support for climate change efforts. Support for mitigation and renewable energy will remain important, and legislation to enable and support renewable energy is needed in our countries. Kiribati has represented Micronesia in the Pacific Resilience Partnership and this effort has been progressing well.

Sub Regional Multi-Country Office (MCO)

16. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation noted the updates from the RMI, and agreed that one of the five members of the MPS would host the MCO in the North Pacific. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation also agreed for further coordination in the respective capitals and United Nations Missions in New York regarding improved United Nations Development System effectiveness in the North Pacific.

17. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation firmly stated their support for the establishment of a physical presence United Nations Office in the North Pacific, not a representative office outside the Micronesian Region and directed all necessary actions to be undertaken to gain the establishment of this Office.

Pacific Women's Leaders' Coalition Conference

18. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation endorsed the upcoming Pacific Women's Leaders Coalition Conference hosted by the RMI on March 26-27, 2019, in Majuro, and its focus on gender equality and empowerment of women in terms of economic and political leadership. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation endeavor to support the participation of women leaders from their respective jurisdictions in the Conference.

Update on RMI's Candidature to the Human Rights Council

19. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation recognized and reiterated their strong support to the RMI' candidature for a term on the Human Rights Council beginning 2020-2022, with elections to be held in October, 2019.

IUU Free Pacific 2023

20. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation recalled the launch of the IUU Free Pacific by 2023 Challenge at the margins of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Technical and Compliance Committee meeting in Majuro last year. Noting the growing concern relating to IUU fishing and its adverse impact on the social and economic development of the respective jurisdictions, the Presidents and Heads of Delegation conveyed their support for the IUU Free Pacific by 2030 Challenge.

Micronesian Center for Sustainable Transport

21. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation welcomed the update from the Micronesian Center for Sustainable Transport and endorsed its ongoing program of work in general, and the preparation of a transition to sustainable sea transport proposal to GCF in particular, in order to enable the commitment from key strategic partners, including the United Nations and other international agencies. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation stressed the need for coordination of GCF submissions in order to avoid duplication. Members were also invited to nominate a representative to the governing board.

Memorandum of Understanding for the MPS

22. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation affirmed the success of the Micronesian Presidents' Summit since its creation in 2003 and committed to formalize the MPS through the developoment of an intergovernmental agreement formalizing the status and nature of the MPS as a sub-regregional organization and the development of rules of procedures to establish operational procedures for the Organization.

23. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation signed a Memorandum of Understanding directing the drafting of the Intergovernmental Agreement and the Rules of Procedure to be undertaken by the Chair of the MPS and to be completed by the next Summit. To that end, the Presidents and Heads of Delegation supported the inclusion of CROP Agencies presentations and

updates as a regular part of the MPS and that all proceedings, except for the Leaders' Retreat, be live-streamed and subsequently archived online.

Our Ocean Conference 2020

24. Palau gave a presentation on the 'Our Ocean Conference 2020', the success of which depends on commitments from participants that range from funding commitments to designated marine protected areas in order to demonstrate how the Pacific Islands, specifically the Micronesia Pacific Islands, work towards a common goal – improved livelihood for their people.

25. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation acknowledged the need to protect the region's marine environment and agreed to work to support this objective through country commitments to be presented at the 2020 conference.

Palau National Marine Sanctuary

26. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation noted the achievements of Palau in the establishment of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary, and the Presidents and Heads of Delegation committed to work with one another to support similar national and regional inititiaves that expand marine protection.

Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)

27. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation acknowledged that there continues to be a prevailing and serious epidemic of NCDs throughout Micronesia and the Pacific. They noted that the declaration of 2018 as the "Year of Health" was focused on identifying responsive initiatives throughout the region. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation stressed that these initiatives must serve as only a first step in establishing practical policies and applications that focus on diet, preventive medicine and frequent diagnosis. Above all, the Presidents and Heads of Delegation emphasized that this coming year must center on innovative thinking and the sharing of ideas and programs across jurisdictions. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation noted national initiatives already undertaken in each of the jurisdictions.

28. Presidents and Heads of Delegation called upon the PIF to give greater emphasis and funding to the issue of NCDs.

Belau Submarine Cable Corporation (BSCC)

29. The Palau BSCC provided a presentation on the progress of implementing Palau's new Submarine Cable. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation acknowledged the improvement in Palau's internet capacity and speed and directed appropriate officials to work together to improve regional cooperation, including potential interconnect and roaming agreements as well as potential pooling or resources.

Midterm Review of the SIS Strategy

30. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation welcomed the PIF update on SIS issues and incorporated their recommendations as follows:

- Reaffirmed their support to the Mid-Term Review of the SIS Regional Strategy 2016-2020, particularly the rationalization of priorities and activities in a more honest and discerning manner in order to deliver a set of tangible results on the Leaders' vision by the Strategy's sunset period in 2020;

- Acknowledged the importance of Pacific sub-regional groupings with prominent SIS membership, such as the Micronesian Presidents' Summit, as potential drivers of the SIS agenda within the wider Forum membership; and

- Recognized the need to formalize relations between the Micronesian Presidents' Summit and the PIF Secretariat.

Medical Care

31. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation supported efforts to coordinate medical care as a region along with the sharing of all resources and facilities to meet the health care needs of Micronesia's people. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation strongly welcomed the continuation and expansion of good will medical missions at the country and regional levels and the improved coordination of these services across jurisdictions.

Encouragement of Diverse Environmental Responses

32. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation recognized that every jurisdiction has unique environmental issues and programmatic responses and applauded its members for their creative solutions: the RMI through its focus on Climate Change solutions including reduction of greenhouse gasses and sustainable transport; the FSM's focus on fisheries and electronic monitoring; Palau's emphasis on ocean protection through small and large set-asides along with implementation of renewable energy alternatives; and Kiribati's lead in the fisheries and corals sustainability as part of the Commonwealth Blue Charter.

33. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation encouraged members to continue to initiate innovate programs and strive for excellence on behalf of their people and their children.

Renewable Energy

34. Recognizing the environmental impacts of greenhouse gasses precipitated by the use of fossil fuels and the high costs of fossil fuels in providing power generation in Micronesia, the Presidents and Heads of Delegation endorsed renewable energy in all forms and welcomed Private Public Partnerships and invited Independent Power Providers to the region to discuss the needs of the region and to work with country power providers to implement renewable energy projects.

Pollution

35. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation expressed their strong support for the elimination of non-essential plastic products to reduce pollution in Micronesia, including the elimination and replacement of plates, plastic bags, plastic bottles, and the like from the islands and replacement with renewable products. The Presidents and Heads of delegations encouraged initiatives to address the elimination of plastic products that could also be an encouragement for regional joint action.

Upper air space management

36. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation expressed their strong support on the importance of progressing the PIF policy on upper air space management as an important tool to strengthening greater efficiency and to recognize the potential economic returns for the countries and people. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation also endorsed the recommendation from PASO for an annual meeting of airport transport ministers and for closer collaboration on upper air space management.

37. Presidents and Heads of Delegation, recalling resolutions adopted at the 2017 and 2018 MPS, reaffirmed their commitments in this important area and reiterated their call on the United States Government, as the appropriate authority of the three (3) Freely Associated States members of the MPS, to provide full disclosure on the management of air traffic services and all revenue streams associated with these services since attempts to obtain these information has been unsuccessful.

Port State Measures

38. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation committed to the accession to the Port State Measures Treaty but noting the importance of the capacity needs to be in place.

Pacific Islands Forum – Equitable Treatment of all Jurisdictions

39. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation strongly encouraged that the PIF and the Secretariat establish a more respectful and fair policy regarding the conduct of the PIF activities relating to the participation of the Peoples' Republic of China and the Republic of China (Taiwan), mindful that PIF meetings are held in Pacific Island Countries and should reflect Pacific hospitality. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation therefore recommended that starting in Tuvalu and moving forward, meetings with post forum dialogue partners be held in the same venue.

Anti-Corruption Regional Meeting

40. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation noted that Kiribati is hosting the Anti-Corruption Regional Meeting and conveyed support through their representation.

Sustainable Development Steering Committee

41. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation agreed that the Marshall Islands will represent the Micronesia Region as a member of the Pacific Islands Forum Sustainable Development Steering Committee, and Nauru shall serve as the alternate representative, and that the current Chair shall notify the PIF of this decision, to be followed shortly thereafter by notification by the RMI and Nauru of their selections.

Trade Issues in the Region

42. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation acknowledged the existing trade issues and agreed to work together in addressing these issues in light of the opportunities such as the PACER Plus, including trade between the MPS Member Countries.

Appointment of Micronesia as the Pacific Island Secretary General

43. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation confirmed that it is Micronesia's rotational turn to appoint the next Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum. They therefore committed to jointly agree on a qualified candidate for this position and to announce that choice at the next PIF Annual Leaders Meeting to be held in Tuvalu.

Next Meeting

44. The Presidents and Heads of Delegation welcomed Nauru's offer to host the 20th MPS.

For H.E. Baron D. Waqa
David Adeang
Minister Assisting the President
Republic of Nauru

H.E. Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr.
President
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For H.E. Peter M. Christian
The Honorable Lorin S. Robert
Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs
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H.E. Taneti Maamau
President
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H.E. Hilda C. Heine, Ed. D
President
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