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A Statement from the President Regarding the Test Results of Palau's First Person Under Investigation for COVID-19

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I, like all of the people in Palau, was relieved after we learned that the test results were negative. I would like to thank the Republic of China-Taiwan Government, their Centers for Disease Control, the Shin Kong Hospital, and our Ministry of Health's Emergency Operations Committee for the important work they have done and continue to do during this outbreak.

Although we hope that we never need to utilize the procedures we have in place for detecting and confirming a viral infection such as COVID-19, this recent case demonstrates the importance of planning and preparing. I am truly pleased not only that we have a system in place for us to test for COVID-19, but that it has now been proven to work effectively.

As this outbreak continues around the world, the Government will continue to work closely with the United Nations World Health Organization (UN-WHO), the United States Centers for Disease Control (US-CDC), the Republic of China-Taiwan Centers for Disease Control (TW-CDC). We will ensure that any further potential COVID-19 cases are treated with the highest-level of attention, and that all appropriate actions are taken to protect the patient and the public.

The health, safety, and well-being of our community is our top priority. I understand the concern and anxiety that people have about the COVID-19 virus, but I urge everyone to avoid spreading misleading information, especially online. Our greatest enemy is not the virus itself, but the fear we create by perpetuating rumors and falsehoods. The Ministry of Health is committed to providing the public with all significant information that is required to safeguard our health; I urge all Palauans to refer to its guidance and announcements when seeking information on the virus.

This is a time for our community and nation to show its resilience – to demonstrate the strength of our community ties, to support each other, and to be aware and proactive in practicing personal hygiene. The experts have told us that exercising basic personal hygiene is the best way to prevent this virus. We have recovered from similar influenza outbreaks in the recent past. Together, we will overcome and recover from this one as well.

Sincerely,

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