



16TH MICRONESIAN CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S SUMMIT

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), the Territory of Guam (Guam), the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and its States, Yap, Kosrae, Pohnpei and Chuuk, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) and the Republic of Palau (Palau).

I. INTRODUCTION

The Chief Executives of the Governments of the CNMI, Guam, FSM and its States (Yap, Kosrae, Pohnpei and Chuuk), RMI and Palau held their Sixteenth Micronesian Chief Executives' Summit (MCES) in Tofol, Kosrae, FSM, on December 10-12, 2011.

Following the official posting of the flags and the recognition of the Chief Executives present, the Honorable Lyndon Jackson, Governor of Kosrae State accepted Chairmanship of the 16th MCES with great honor from FSM Vice President Alik Alik.

As part of the opening of the 16th MCES, the participants were welcomed with a special chant from the Kosraean national treasure, Tadao Waguk, who is one of the very few remaining local historians and keeper of the Kosraean traditional chants. The purpose of the chant is two-fold. First, the chant is to invoke deep respect to the land and the ancestors of the people of Kosrae. Second, the chant is to give sanctity and the spirit of courage and solidarity to the purpose and objectives of the Summit.

In his opening speech, Governor Jackson expressed his humble appreciation to the Chief Executives and the members from their respective delegation for their attendance and active participation in the 16th MCES.

Governor Jackson recalled the decision during the 15th Summit in Pohnpei to host the 16th MCES in Kosrae and expressed his initial concerns to host this Summit in light of the limited infrastructures. The Governor congratulated the organizers and their efforts in overcoming the challenges in making this Summit a success. He also encouraged the

leaders to reflect on the progress made in advancing greater regional economic integration, environmental stewardship and common key issues facing Micronesia. The Governor added his support of the efforts of His Excellency President Mori and his administration on providing fiber optic connectivity to all the States of Micronesia.

A review of the agenda was conducted and a motion was made to adopt the agenda, which was approved unanimously. After acknowledgement of fellow Excellencies, Governors and everyone who were present, His Excellency Jurelang Zedkaia, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands stated that the RMI declared a state of emergency in response to the dengue fever outbreak, and is earnestly addressing this real threat with partners and allies. His Excellency stressed the importance of the cooperation between the Micronesian Islands in sharing medical resources and doctors to provide the needed help that shows the solidarity, commitment and the Micronesian way of life and expressing their gratefulness for the help that has been provided to them. As to the decision that was collectively made at the 15th MCES, His Excellency reported that RMI has done its part in declaring RMI a shark sanctuary and calling on those who have not done so to expedite their efforts to make their resolution a reality. His Excellency President Zedkaia further reported that the enhancement of national efforts on invasive species remains a top priority for the RMI Government, and touched upon the common challenge that all of Micronesians have, which is the quality of water.

His Excellency Alik Alik, Vice President of the Federated States of Micronesia took a few minutes to acknowledge the People of Kosrae in the Kosraean language; and then went on further to acknowledge the MCES participants. Following His Excellency's recognitions and congratulatory acknowledgements, His Excellency assured the Governor of Kosrae of the National Government's support to the current summit. His Excellency particularly stated the sisters-brothers-building-together concept of Palau as one concept the MCE should consider during the current MCES, with the need to revisit the proposals on fundraising for the organization. His Excellency also extended his appreciation to Guam, CNMI, Palau and RMI for hosting the FSM citizens in each respective jurisdiction.

Chief of Staff Isaac Soaladaob representing Palau relayed the heartfelt regret of the President and the Vice President for not being able to personally attend the 16th MCES. Nevertheless, Mr. Soaladaob brought warm greetings from Palau. In his opening remark, he acknowledged His Excellency, Vice President Alik Alik and the Honorable Governor Lyndon Jackson and the

people of Kosrae for being gracious host of the 16th MCES. He also acknowledged the exciting agenda before the Chief Executives. Mr. Soaladaob relayed the readiness of the President, the Government of Palau and its People in upholding the shared common values and commitments with the august body, and supported the Governor and the State of Kosrae as the Chair of the 16th MCES.

Chief of Staff Ms. Esther Fleming represented the Honorable Governor Benigno Fitial to the 16th MCES. Following acknowledgement of the MCEs, Ms. Fleming relayed to the body the Governor's deep regrets for not being able to attend due to pressing matters back home that warranted his full attention. Ms. Fleming stressed the importance to continue upholding a strong sense of partnership and the common goal of helping respective communities to combat current economic challenges; and the need to address critical matters such as: economic development, climate change, renewable energy and adequate health care. In her remarks, Ms. Fleming highlighted the need to ensure considerable progress of regional self-sufficiency and prosperity for the island communities to continue.

The Honorable Raymond S. Tenorio, Lieutenant Governor of Guam, extended his appreciation to the Governor for hosting the 16th MCES and marveled at the incomparable natural beauty of the island and graciousness of the people. The Lieutenant Governor reaffirmed Governor Eddie Baza Calvo's commitment to continue Guam's partnership with the region in fulfilling and maximizing its potential. He discussed developing opportunities together and envisioning the future outlook for the region and changes needed to reach it. The Lieutenant Governor recognized the struggles associated with limited federal funding to support health, education and public safety due to the impact of the *Compact of Free Association*. He provided an example that the government of Guam spent close to \$113 million assisting the Micronesian community and in return, the U.S. government repaid Guam only \$14.5 million.

The Lieutenant Governor added that Guam has seen a rise in unemployment and residents are experiencing an increase in the cost of living. He further elaborated that multiple solutions are being sought to stimulate Guam's economy, such as providing tax refunds. Last week, the Guam