



# Strengthening collaboration and coordination of community based projects and national government initiatives and programs.

National Dialogue on environment issues in Palau

## **NATIONAL DIALOGUE REPORT**

Ming's Hall, Palasia Hotel, Koror Palau 5/10/2018



## Title

Strengthening Collaboration and Coordination of Community Based Efforts and National Initiatives and Programs

## Executive Summary

The Belau Watershed Alliance and GEF Pacific Ridge to Reef –Palau Project collaborated with partner agencies and organizations to conduct a national dialogue on environment issues in Palau. As a result, over 80 national government, state government, and local community based representatives from the environment sector participated. The purpose of this dialogue was to engage community members with national government agencies to discuss pertinent environment issues and to help increase knowledge of current policies and programs at the national government level to address such issues. An output of the event was for the participants to have increased their knowledge of how to link efforts to state and national objectives. A desired outcome of the dialogue is to have an established understanding or process of developing environment focused projects that are aligned with the state, national, regional, and/or global objectives.

## Morning Session:

**Presentations on 1.Environment Issues in Palau, 2.National Policies in place to address these issues, and 3.Efforts implemented at the state and local community level.**

### Presentation 1: State of Palau's Environment

Ms. Charlene Mersai – National Environment Coordinator – presented on the State of the Environment in Palau.

Presentation Objective: To build awareness of current environment threats affecting Palau. These threats were identified by environment professionals in 2016. The environment threats are as follows:

1. Overfishing/ overharvesting
2. Leaking sewer/pollution
3. Tourism impacts (negative impacts)
4. Climate change impacts
5. Degraded land and cultural features and loss of traditional knowledge
6. Unregulated/unsustainable development and poor uses of land
7. Problems with water management
8. Lack of awareness
9. Lack of protocols to share or update data or information

### Top Environmental Threats & Issues

(1<sup>st</sup> National Environment Symposium, 2016)

1. Overfishing/overharvesting
2. Leaking sewer/pollution
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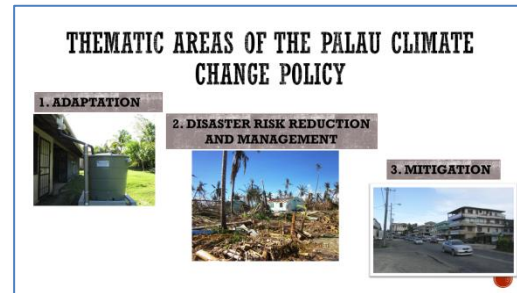
## Presentation 2: Palau's Climate Change Policy Framework

Ms. Lorraine Rivera – Climate Change Mitigation Coordinator – presented on behalf of the Climate Change Office.

Presentation Objective: To present on Palau's Climate Change Policy.

Listed below are the 3 thematic areas identified in the Climate Change Policy :

1. Enhance adaptation and resilience to the expected impacts of global climate change across all sectors,
2. Improve Palau's ability to manage unexpected disasters and minimize disaster risk, and
3. Mitigate global climate change by working towards low carbon emission development, maximizing energy efficiency, protecting carbon sinks, and minimizing greenhouse gas emissions.



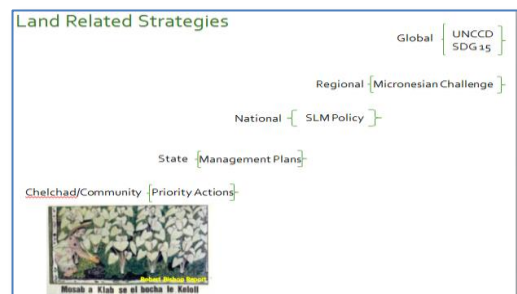
## Presentation 3: Land Degradation Strategies

Ms. Leena Muller - GEF Ridge to Reef IW Project Specialist – presented on land management strategies such as UNCCD, SDG 15, Palau's SLM Policy, and other relevant land management initiatives.

Presentation Objective: The main objective of the presentation was to share some of Palau's efforts in addressing land degradation issues from the community level and linking them to state, national, and global objectives.

The following are SLM Policy Priorities

1. Nationwide Coordination
2. Development Guidelines
3. Sustainably Financed Agencies



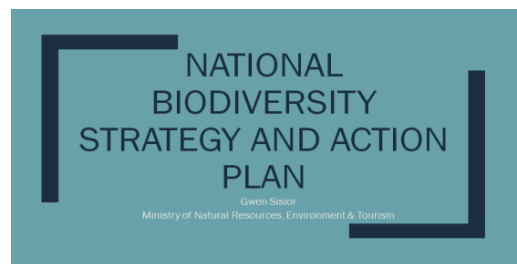
## Presentation 4: National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan

Ms. Gwen Sisor - Senior Projects Manager with MNRET – presented on the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

Presentation Objective: To create awareness of the NBSAP's strategic areas and goals Palau must adhere to.

The following are the NBSAP Strategic Areas:

1. Protected/Managed Areas
2. Species Protection



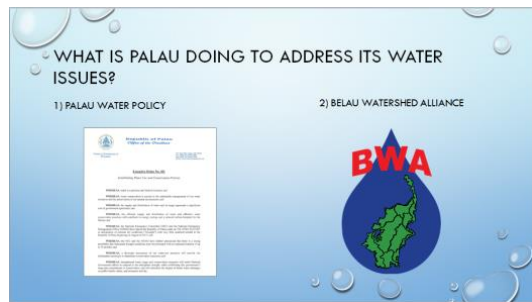
3. Biosecurity /Invasive Species and Bio-safety
4. Integrating Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services into Development Policies
5. Reducing Direct Pressures on Biodiversity through Sustainable Use
6. Ensuring Food Security Through Maintenance Of Agricultural Biodiversity
7. Mainstreaming Conservation

### Presentation 5: Palau's Water Management

Mr. Jonathan Temol – BWA Chairman – presented on Palau's water policy.

Presentation Objective: Increased awareness of solutions to issues and threats to Palau's freshwater resources as listed in the water policy. The goals for the Palau Water Policy are as follows:

1. The protection and conservation of Palau's water resources
2. Access to safe, affordable, sustainable water supply and wastewater services for all Palau's population
3. Effective and sustainable planning, managing, and operation of water supply and wastewater services.



Mr. Temol suggested that state leaders require home owners to install water tanks as a strategy for ensuring water security.

### Presentation 6: Stockholm Convention on POPs

Ms. Roxanne Blesam - Environmental Quality Protection Board(EQPB) Executive Officer - delivered a presentation on behalf of the EQPB .

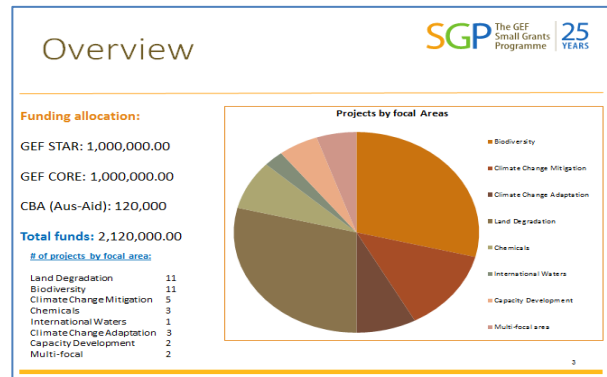
Presentation Objective: To raise awareness of projects implemented by EQPB to reduce and manage persistent organic pollutants such as chemicals and plastics in Palau. The efforts implemented at the EQPB to manage the proper disposal of and importing of POPs are linking Palau's efforts to the Stockholm Convention on POPs.



## Presentations on State, Community, and PAN efforts to address environment issues

### Presentation 7: SGP Country Program Strategy

Ms. Kiblas Soaladaob – National Coordinator for the Small Grants Programme – delivered the SGP country program strategy. The presentation objective is to raise awareness on the SGP Grants Process and Cycle with focus on projects that have received grant funding based on target environment issues. Ms. Soaladaob further stated that there are grant opportunities that can be accessed with the appropriate proposals linking efforts to existing state, national, and global objectives.



### Presentation 8: Ngaremlengui State Efforts

Honorable Ilong F. Remengesau – Governor of Ngaremlengui State – presented on the implementation of environmental efforts at the state level.

Governor Remengesau shared the history of environment efforts in Ngaremlengui State. A couple of the highlighted achievements was the designation of Ngermeskang as an (IBA) Important Bird Area and as a PAN site.

Governor Remengesau further shared her experience in implementing an SGP funded project only to find that environment efforts are hampered by the state's technocratic approach to address limited institutional and technical capacity. However, as a conservation champion herself, and to further strengthen the efforts, Governor Remengesau pointed out that the state of Ngaremlengui plans "to expand the PAN site beyond the Ngermeskang Swamp Forest to the old Ngerutechei village, a national registered traditional site." –Ngaremlengui State PAN Management plan 2018-19.

#### Ngeremlengui Conservation

- NPL 7-03 Protection and preservation of the Ngermeskang Forest Important Bird Area-2008
- NPL 7-04 Ngermeskang Nature Reserve-2008
  - Came about because of Belau Watershed Alliance
- Ngeremlengui Protected Areas Management Plan 2013 to 2017
  - 2018 to 2019 Ngermeskang Bird Sanctuary Mini Management Plan
  - Includes eco-tourism activity

### **Presentation 9: Community Based Efforts**

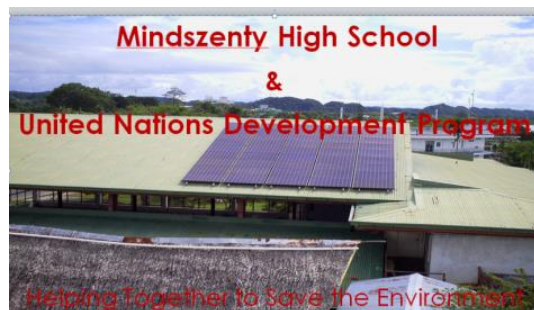
Ms. Kyoko April – Dilisor Agriculture Association of Ngarchelong President and Ms. Motil Timarong – Member – Shared on their Association’s efforts in implementing environment projects.

Ms. April shared on an effort that the Dilisor association was able to implement. This was a project to revive taro patches in Ngarchelong State. Their efforts were able to revive taro patches from approximately 83 in the beginning of their project to 144 active taro patches. As a result, a taro festival was organized by the association to celebrate the harvested taro from these taro patches. Both Ms. April and Ms. Timarong shared the importance of collaborating with the State Government and other community based organizations to conduct activities.



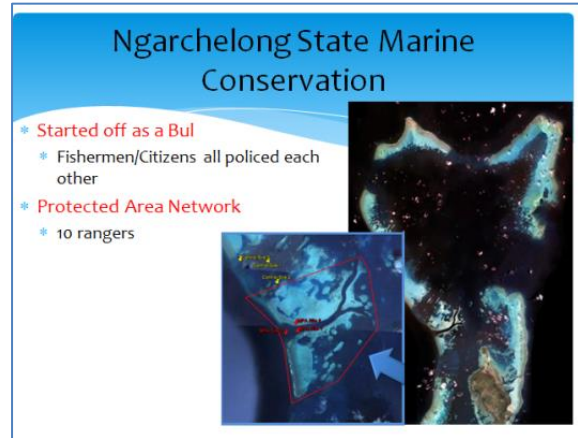
### **Presentation 10: Community Based Efforts**

Mr. Paul Cruz- MHS Science Class Instructor presented on the Mindszenty High School solar program. The objective of the presentation was to share on the success and challenges or lessons learned from the solar project. Mr. Cruz gave the background and shared on the efforts of MHS as a recipient of the SGP Grant. The purpose of the project was to reduce the school’s electricity bill and contribute to the reduction of carbon dioxide in the ozone by using solar panels. Mr. Cruz’s robotics class students were able to gain knowledge and skills in monitoring the electricity production and reduction of carbon dioxide by using the solar panels. Mr. Cruz also shared the challenges that were encountered. The facilitation of the power distribution with the Palau Public Utilities Corporation was apparently not properly conducted. As a result, the electricity bill for MHS has consistently increased.



## 11. State PAN Efforts

Ms. Paloma Swei- Ngarchelong State PAN Coordinator presented on the conservation efforts in Ngarchelong State PAN. The presentation was on the environment issues being addressed through the implementation of the NDRD Management plan. Ms. Swei expressed her appreciation for efforts being implemented in collaboration with the community based organizations such as Dilisor Agriculture Association of Ngarchelong, Mechas ra Dengitech, and Ebiil Society in implementing environmental projects forming the strong foundation for conservation in Ngarchelong state.



### Group Activity (1-3 pm)

The group activity was to identify examples of how local efforts can be linked to state and national environmental objectives. The main purpose for this activity was to enable the participants to understand the process of linking efforts to national frameworks. More importantly the added value to national and global efforts can be realized through this process. Those potential projects are listed as follows:

#### Group 1 Proposed projects:

- Cultural based adaptation reviving traditional features and practices to reduce carbon inducing actions.
- Crowd sourcing "fisheries compliance" data using fishers to help collect data.
- Project to build capacity at community based organizations, state PAN, and state government level. (Example learning targets include institutions, decision making, resource management)

#### Group 2 Proposed projects:

- Complete Streets (Landscaping, Carbon Sink, and to reduce NCDs by walking on sidewalks)
- Energy Audit: To enable PPUC to give each household a routine energy audit to help them monitor their energy usage and conserve electricity.
- Solar Panels for all Elementary Schools
- Developed recycling program for the entire Babeldaob
- Taro flour factory
- Northern Reef Fish Cannery
- Clearing Channels/Mangrove Management
- Emulating traditional sites in each state and developing them as eco-tourism sites. "Finding your treasures"

Group 3 Proposed a project for Ngiwal State:

a. Creating an Agriculture Zone in State Land to allow for interested farmers to have access to land to farm

Proposed benefits resulting from this project will include the following: food security, livelihoods, health, water security, and enhance state processes.

Linking this project to the State of Ngiwal's objectives: The proposed project links to the Ngiwal Master Plan, the KSCA Management Plan, the Mesei Project, Palau livestock association, Aquaculture Charter, Gender Mainstreaming Policy.

Group 4 proposed projects:

a. To conduct an "assessment study on demands of local produce" namely Taro (Kukau);

b. Forest Fire Prevention to address the threat to PAN Sites

Group 5 proposed projects:

BWA Proposals

a. Identifying major watersheds that are sources of water supply on each member state.

b. Water quality assessment, restoration, maintenance, and monitoring of watershed.

Proposed projects will be evaluated against two expected outcomes which are 1. Increased community resilience to drought; and 2. Improved water quality and supply.

This project is designed to link activities to the national and global goals or the SDG, specifically SDG #6- Clean water and sanitation; and SDG #13-Climate Action

Ngeremlengui PAN Proposals

c. Project to develop a baseline survey of existing conservation areas, in particular the marine protected areas.

d. To conduct a viability study for potential culturing of sea cucumber.

Projects c and d have increased understanding of sustainable livelihood as an expected outcome and linking it to the Sustainable Development Goal #14 life below water.

### **Key participant recommendations**

1. A directory of National Environmental Frameworks is developed and housed at the SGP Offices as well as a directory of agencies mandated to implement the frameworks.
2. SGP applicants must demonstrate the appropriate linkages between proposed projects and National Frameworks and wherever possible with state frameworks.
3. To strengthen Palau's reporting process, community and state led environment efforts can be captured in the state annual budget report to the national government.

### **Announcements**

1. Upcoming Results Based Management workshops starting in June 2018
2. Environment Symposium scheduled for June 2018
3. Grant funding opportunities are available for projects to revive Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) practices in Palau.