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Office of the President

## **22<sup>nd</sup> Micronesian Islands Forum Called to Order in Guam**

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Micronesian Islands Forum was called to order on Monday, May 1 with President Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr., President Peter Christian of the Federated States of Micronesia, Chairman of this year's Forum Governor Eddie Baza Calvo, Foreign Minister John Silk of the Republic of the Marshall Islands representing President Hilda Heine, Governor Ralph Torres of the CNMI, Governor Johnson Elimo of Chuuk State, Governor Marcelo Peterson of Pohnpei State, and Lt. Governor James Yangetmai of Yap State at the Hyatt Regency Guam.

The Chief Executives' agenda of the day included committee reports delivered by the nine-standing committees including the Micronesian Challenge, Regional Invasive Species Council, Regional Workforce Development Council, Regional Tourism Committee, Regional Energy Committee, and the Committee on Communications, Regional Transportation Committee, Pacific Islands Regional Recycling Initiative Council, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education and the Micronesian Center for a Sustainable Future.

Calling for stronger regional partnership and cooperation, President Remengesau stated in his opening remarks, "While we have come a long way in the past sixteen years working with one another to identify sustainable development issues that merited our joint consideration and engagement, we seem to have hit a bit of a standstill. And that problem is our lack of follow-through on the initiatives that we have identified for our mutual action."

Furthermore, President Remengesau called for greater efforts to develop the Micronesia Center for a Sustainable Future, stating, "While we have made efforts in the past to develop the Micronesia Center for a Sustainable Future forward as the secretariat for the former MCES and now the MIF, our efforts have simply not borne fruit. In the spirit of the renaming of the Micronesia Chief Executives' Summit as the Micronesian Islands Forum, I would therefore like to recommend that we rename the Micronesia Center for a Sustainable Center as the Micronesia Islands Forum Secretariat. Along with this new name, I would request that you favorably consider the proposals being placed before our Micronesian Leaders to provide this Secretariat with the necessary structure to activate the bureaucratic arm of our regional body."

In closing President Remengesau expressed to the Chief Executives, "We are not separated by the ocean. We are connected by the ocean."