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PRESS RELEASE

Minister Sengebau Signs Contract Agreement for the Construction of the Palau Mariculture Demonstration Center

The Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Tourism has entered into an agreement with Iwata Chizaki Inc., a Japanese based company, for the construction of the new Palau Mariculture Demonstration Center in Malakal, Koror.

On August 24th, Minister Umiich Sengebau and Mr. Masayoshi Morita, General Manager of Iwata Chizaki Inc.'s Overseas Operation Division signed the contract agreement during the signing ceremony held in Japan. The contract signing signals the implementation of the project entitled "The Project for Renovation of Palau Mariculture Demonstration Center Facility" awarded through a grant by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to the Republic of Palau on October 12, 2016.

In his special remarks during the signing ceremony, Minister Sengebau expressed his appreciation to the People and Government of Japan for this generous grant aid and their long withstanding friendship and partnership with Palau. He further added, "This project will help address our food security by providing readily available clam meat through restocking efforts of wild clam populations and further support local clam farmers livelihood with income through sales of their cultured clams."

The project valued at \$6.6 million will significantly enhance Palau's clam seedling production capacity from its currently 200,000 seedlings annually to approximately 1 million, which is anticipated to provide more opportunities and resources to farmers and the public alike. Additionally, through this project, the Center will be fully equipped with a Marine Resources Library, two research laboratories and additional office space to house staff and technicians.

Minister Sengebau and Public Works Director/CIP Manager Brian Melairei represented the People and Government of the Republic of Palau to Japan in attendance of the signing ceremony hosted by Iwata Chizaki Inc.

The construction of the new Center is scheduled to commence in October 2017 with completion in the summer of 2018.