

Kayangel, Ngarchelong sign agreement to co-manage northern reefs of Palau

Kayangel leaders including Rdechor Isimang Bandarii, Governor Jeffrey Titiml, and Speaker Ruluked and Ngarchelong leaders including Uongerchetei Victor Joseph, Governor Brownly Salvador and Vice Speaker Erbai on November 22 signed a co-management agreement for managing the northern reefs of Palau.

The northern reefs of Palau consists of the reefs of Ngarchelong, such as Ebiil Conservation Area, Ngebard, Ngerael and the reefs of Kayangel such as Ngesoll, Ngeruangel, and Velasco.

The co-management agreement recognized the traditional cooperation between the two States and recent State resolution calling for increased cooperation between the States in improving management of their resources.

With the co-management agreement, the leadership of Kayangel and Ngarchelong will work to cooperate on establishing sustainable fisheries management and integration with



PAN sites management, cooperate on establishment of a joint monitoring, surveillance and enforcement program, cooperate on empowering fishermen and communities to become active participants in fisheries management and be the main beneficiaries of sustainable harvest programs, and cooperate on other related topic of interest.

The co-management agreement will establish an informal Co-management Advisory Group

to help guide and facilitate the above efforts. Members will include the governors of Kayangel and Ngarchelong, and fishermen representative from each state. Natural Resources, Environment and Tourism Min. Umich Sengebau and Dr. Yimnang Golbuu, CEO, PICRC will also be requested to join. In addition, TNC Fisheries' Chuck Cook will be invited to serve on the committee.

The co-management agreement results from The Nature Conservancy's work in engaging the State of Kayangel and Ngarchelong toward improvement of fishermen management in the northern reef.

In August 2012, The Nature Conservancy introduced a new technique, data poor stock assessment, to assess fisheries stocks. The technique has showed that



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60% of fish being caught have not had a chance to reproduce. This is believed to be causing a continued decline in fisheries despite efforts to conserve marine resources in Palau.

The Nature Conservancy has committed to assist the States of Kayangel and Ngarchelong in the process of recovering fish stocks through improving fisheries management and development in the northern reefs of Palau. The lessons learned in this effort will help provide guidance for improving fisheries management in Palau and Micronesia in support of the protected areas efforts and the Micronesia Challenge.

Witnessing the signing ceremony included President Tommy Remengesau, Jr., Senate Vice President Philip Reklai, NRET Minister Umich Sengebau, Finance Minister Elbuchel Sadang, members of Kayangel and Ngarchelong State Legislatures, and fishermen from Kayangel and Ngarchelong.