

February 4, 2019

RENI – Palau Project
Ngatpang Community Consultation Report
January 29, 2019

Introduction

The RENI – Palau Project Community Consultation took place on January 29, 2019, at Ngatpang State in the Republic of Palau. Thirty – seven Ngatpang residents attended the meeting, 43% were women. It includes Governor Francisca Otong and some members of the State legislature, according to the registration record sheet. Forty-one (41) RENI folders with Palau Fact sheets were disseminated to all meeting attendees.

The meeting started at 6:30 pm at the Ngatpang State Summer House.

Welcoming Remarks

Governor Francisca Otong opened the event by thanking and welcoming all residents who were able to come to the meeting. She briefly informed the residents the purpose of this important community consultation. At the same time, she expressed her gratitude to the RENI – Palau Team for coming to Ngatpang to share the project’s progress and the way forward.

Opening Speaker

Waymine Towai, NEMO Coordinator, spoke after the Governor’s welcoming remark. He thanked everyone for taking his or her time to accommodate us. He briefly introduced RENI – Palau members who attended the meeting, including Lara Studzinski, SPC Micronesia Regional Director.

The RENI – Palau Team members were:

Waymine Towai	NEMO Coordinator
Dilwei Maria Ngemaes	NSC Chairperson
Maurice P. Termeteet	RENI – Palau National Coordinator

NEMO Staff:

- Tanya O. Rengulbai
- Dina Sandei
- Singeo Franz

RENI – Palau Project PowerPoint Presentation

A PowerPoint presentation by RENI – Palau National Coordinator, Maurice P. Termeteet, showed the residents the importance of water security and, why we need to secure our water resources ahead of the next drought. The lessons learnt from the 2015 – 2016 drought and the subsequent declaration of the state of emergency evidently reveal that Palau needs to focus on water security. It further clarifies why Palau decided on water security from RENI projects funded by the European Union. The plan to construct a 30,000 gallon tank, the purchase of two water tanker trucks, and a readily accessibility to water during droughts clearly became significant to the residents of Ngatpang.

The Ngatpang people raised many questions and concerns about the water storage system.

The following were some of the issues –

1. The exact location of the water storage system – the 30,000 gallon tank
2. Instead of water storage system, a dam would be another viable option
3. The water tanker trucks are utilized to deliver water to residents during non-emergency situation
4. Install water pipe connecting the water storage tank to residential areas
5. A request to add a Ngatpang State representative in the RENI National Steering Committee
6. Koksai location was highly recommended to build the water storage system due to its higher ground location.
7. The structural design of the water system.
 - Is it strong enough to withstand major earthquakes and other natural disasters?
8. A state consultation on the construction of water storage system and the use of Tabecheding River should have included all residents of Ngatpang.
 - The people of Ngatpang would have liked to be informed and consulted early on the project of this magnitude prior to its implementation.
9. Since the water storage system will be maintained by PPUC after the project is complete,
 - Will there be a nominal charge to use the water?
 - Will the water tank be available for use during non-drought period?
10. One participant, a state legislator, informs the RENI Palau team that he owned a parcel of land located at the proposed site for the water storage system
 - Is there compensation?
11. Who will benefit from the water storage system?
 - We clarified to the meeting attendees that the water storage system will benefit primarily all the residents of Ngatpang.

We, consequently, informed them that we have taken notes of their queries, and we will have the answers in our next community consultation.

In conclusion, the Governor and the people of Ngatpang were grateful that we had the meeting to address some of their concerns. Their concerns and questions were legitimate considering that the project may have unintentional environmental impact on the proposed site and hence the state. Many, if not all participants, eagerly request for another community consultation at a near future and before the construction of the water storage system commenced. Therefore, it is imperative that answers or resolutions to the above issues be readily available in the next community consultation.

Closing Remarks

In closing the meeting, Governor Otong thanked everyone especially the RENI – Palau Team. She then concluded the meeting with a prayer. The meeting ended at 7:45 pm.

Prepared by:

Maurice P. Termeteet
RENI – Palau National Coordinator