

Austronesian Forum – 2019 Executive Council Meeting in Palau, Vice President Raynold Oilouch Attended and Delivered Remarks Six-Year Plan to be Implemented in Collaboration

On behalf of R. O. C (Taiwan), CIP representatives hosted the Austronesian Forum – 2019 Executive Council Meeting at Ngarachamayong Cultural Center in Palau, morning of September 30. Chair of Executive Council is Minister Icyang • Parod, and the full text of his opening speech is as follows:

His Excellency Raynold Oilouch, Vice President of the Republic of Palau, her Majesty Bilung Gloria, Queen of Koror and Palau, Taiwan Ambassador to Palau Wallace Chow, guests from all over the world, good morning everyone, nga'ayho!

The Council of Indigenous Peoples, R. O. C. (Taiwan), began promoting exchanges among the Austronesian peoples 17 years ago. In 2002, CIP invited traditional leaders of the Austronesian peoples to convene the Assembly of Austronesian leaders in Taipei, and during the meeting, the concept of establishing a permanent organization to promote exchange between the Austronesian peoples was proposed. Later on, our government adopted the Indigenous Peoples Basic Law in 2005, among which, Article 33 stated that the government must actively promote international exchanges and cooperation of indigenous peoples.

In 2006 and 2007, R. O. C. (Taiwan) signed the Majuro Declaration and Palau Declaration with our Pacific allies, the declarations include an agreement to establish the Austronesian Forum and dedicate our efforts to the heritage of the Austronesian cultures. Then comes 2008, 11 years ago, on behalf of the R. O. C. (Taiwan) government, I initiated the Austronesian Forum as permanent organization right here with the representatives of 8 other members, and we held the 1st Executive Council meeting.



Regrettably, party alternation in R. O. C. (Taiwan) took place shortly after the establishment of the Austronesian Forum, thus operations were ceased. Until 2016, Taiwan legislators participated in the 46th General Assembly of the APPU hosted by the Republic of Palau. During the meeting, our legislator Kolas Yotaka proposed the motion to "establish the Austronesian Forum", which was supported by legislators Huang Chao-Shun and Wang Hui-Mei, and adopted by all members. This was an important opportunity to reactivate the Austronesian Forum. After more than a year of preparation, we finally gathered all 13 members in Taipei last year (2018) on August 1, and reactivated the Austronesian Forum as a permanent organization. On that day, in addition to our President Tsai Ing-Wen, President Heine of the Republic of Marshall Islands, and former Governor Eddie Calvo of Guam also attended in support.

After its activation, all members of the forum immediately held a round table to discuss the future directions of the forum development, and the priority working projects for 2019, including preparations to establish the forum Headquarters in Palau and the Secretariat in Taipei, provide training for youth talent, promote linguistic and cultural exchange, and host exchange events for Austronesian traditional skills. Supported by each member, we have completed the various working projects for this year, and we will be elaborating on the detailed results in the Executive Council meeting this afternoon.

Furthermore, I accompanied President Tsai Ing-wen on her state visit to Palau this March. President Tsai specifically announced during the appreciation banquet that our government has adopted the 2020-2025 Mid and Long-term Plan of the Austronesian Forum. This means that the forum will have a concrete and specific plan to follow with a stable budget and manpower for at least the next six years. I also hope that all members can work together to develop multi-lateral collaborations with further stability, promote the preservation of the Austronesian languages and cultures, talent cultivation, and the development of the cultural creative industry.

I would like to especially thank the Republic of Palau for continued support towards the Austronesian Forum. 11 years later, back here in Palau again to convene the Executive Council meeting, I am more than glad that all of us could come back to Palau again to witnessing this moment. I would like to thank Bilung, Queen of Palau, for again



providing the venue for the Headquarters of the Austronesian Forum, and I would like to thank the representatives of all members for coming to Palau to attend the Executive Council meeting this year.

Finally, I would like to quote what President Tsai Ing-wen once said here as an encouragement to us all, "from the perspective of continental land, the Pacific islands are scattered and small. But from the perspective of the ocean specific to the Austronesian peoples, we share the largest ocean territory in the world, with vast horizon which could contribute to the whole world significantly." Thank you again for participating, and I wish you good health and all the best. ARAY! Thank you!

His Excellency Raynold Oilouch, Vice President of the Republic of Palau, also attended in support of the Executive Council, and stated in his speech that this year marked the 25th Independence Day of Palau and 20th anniversary of the diplomatic relations of R. O. C. (Taiwan) and Palau. It's a significant milestone that the Austronesian Forum came to Palau for its Executive Council Meeting. After the Headquarters was established in here, it will be followed by more diversified interactions. He also wished that the Austronesian culture and substantial development could be achieved through Asian-pacific regional exchanges under the Austronesian Forum.

Members of the forum continued with this year's Executive Council meeting in the afternoon, hosted by Icyang • Parod, chair of Executive Council. Meeting agenda include an update on the implementation progress for 2018 roundtable resolutions, Six-Year Plan for the Austronesian Forum, preparatory progress for the forum organization, and adopting the time, venue and theme for 2019 forum conference.

Minister Icyang pointed out that the Six-Year Plan for the Austronesian Forum was adopted by R. O. C. (Taiwan) March this year, demonstrating how our government recognizes the uniqueness of Taiwan indigenous peoples in the Austronesian region and the importance of preserving the Austronesian cultures. The Plan provides a stable foundation for the development and operation of the forum. The project has five strategies with language and culture as main pillars, including regional industrial development, academic and policy research, human resource development and the establishment of basic meeting affairs. Furthermore, the establishment and manpower allocation have been



completed for both the Headquarters in Palau and the Secretariat in Taiwan. Unanimous support was expressed by representatives of all members and will collaborate in implementing the various working projects in the future.

Another important issue for the Executive Council is discussing the time, venue and theme for the meeting next year. Minister Icyang stated that to promote exchange between members of the forum, meetings will be held by different members each year. The resolution was made by 2019 Executive Council to hold the Executive Council meeting in Hawaii from June 12 to 17 next year, and the biennial Austronesian Forum conference will be themed Harmonization of Austronesian Traditional Leader System and Modern Politics. Political leaders and government dignitaries of all members will be invited to share on the traditional cultures of the Austronesian peoples and its respective adaptation to the contemporary age.

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