

Press Release Unit: Council of Indigenous Peoples

Contact Person: 高菱遠

Tel: (02)8995-3356; 0926-231469

Fax: (02) 8521-0209

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Email: tsairou816@cip.gov.tw

CIP Minister Icyang· Parod Visits Alele Museum in the Marshall Islands

Icyang· Parod, Minister of the Council of Indigenous Peoples (CIP), along with representatives from Austronesian Forum nations, visited the Alele Museum, the national museum of the Marshall Islands, on August 18th. This visit provided an opportunity to delve into the fruitful results of the Council's contributions to the "Marshallese Language Revitalization Project". The welcoming reception and informative guided tour were graciously conducted by Ms. Brenda Alik, Secretary of the Ministry of Culture & Internal Affairs of the Marshall Islands, who also holds the position of Chairperson of the Museum Board, along with the Museum Director, Ms. Wisse Amram.

The Alele Museum showcases an array of significant artifacts and records, encompassing traditional maritime fishing tools, wooden navigational charts, canoes, clothing, weaving, and tattoos. During Minister Icyang· Parod's attentive engagement with the guided tour and presentations, he repeatedly encountered the pronunciation of "Alele" in the Marshallese language. Upon inquiry, it was revealed that "Alele" in Marshallese refers to a place for safeguarding important items, a meaningful name that the museum bears. Minister Icyang· Parod noted that 'Ariri^(pronounced Alele) holds a similar meaning within the Amis community, signifying a location where crops and tools are stored. This reaffirms the strong connection among Austronesian nations. Despite the considerable 5,600-kilometer distance between Taiwan and the Marshall Islands, it is remarkable that there are pronounced similarities in language pronunciation and cultural aspects.

In February of this year, the Alele Museum received assistance from the Council of Indigenous Peoples for their language revitalization project. This encompassed training youth to become seed teachers, developing language learning manuals and videos, and providing summer language classes in Marshallese for children aged 8 to 12. The response was overwhelmingly positive, with

more than 30 children participating and parents expressing their approval. This initiative allows children, who are taught primarily in English at school, to learn Marshallese through this assistance program. Ms. Solynn Naptino, the project leader, became emotional as she spoke about this achievement, thanking Taiwan for its contribution that enables the preservation of the Marshallese language. Amid her sentiments, she also expressed a fervent aspiration for the seamless continuation of the project, fostering a future where the language remains vibrant and thriving. Minister Icyang Parod highly commended the outcomes of this endeavor and pledged ongoing support for Marshall Islands' efforts in advancing the language revitalization project. He emphasized the commitment to ensuring the sustainable development of Austronesian cultures.