

Title: 3rd National Environment Symposium looks inward at Self-reliance to Build Resilience

On Tuesday, August 18 the 3rd National Environment Symposium (NES) will take place at the Ngarachamayong Cultural Center. The event, which is free and open to the public, goes from 8:45am to 4:15pm with registration starting at 8:00am. Remote access will be available via PWFm radio, Facebook livestream on pwfstaff, or live on TV on Channel 24.

This Symposium will feature a diverse group of fishers, small business owners, policymakers, and service providers who will discuss ways to improve the lives of Palauans. They will showcase solutions to strengthen the economy, increase food production, and use renewable energy in ways that channel environmental benefits to communities. Held every two years, the Symposium is a unique national platform that brings together communities, NGOs, businesses, and government to share ideas and select solutions.

This year's Symposium addresses the existential challenges of the Covid-19 crisis. The 3rd NES focuses on improving three areas of national security (Economic, Food and Energy). Minister Umiich Sengebau, Chair of the NEPC, acknowledged that, "These three areas demonstrate both our vulnerabilities and strengths as a nation, and impact us all. By focusing on national security, we can jointly find practical ways to build our resilience against threats and identify environmentally-sound solutions that will benefit everyone. "

The shared premise among the three areas of security is to build national resiliency by increasing our self-reliance and reducing our dependency on external factors. Discussions on economic security have revolved around diversifying and supporting small businesses, while rethinking who benefits from the current tourism industry. With regards to food security, the aim is to increase local food production to alleviate our dependency on imported foods. Finally, discussion in the energy security area is directed at building national resilience by increasing availability of and access to renewable energy to reduce our dependence on imported, greenhouse gas-emitting fossil fuels.

The 3rd NES is co-hosted by the National Environmental Protection Council (NEPC) and Palau Conservation Consortium. Similar to the previous NES, this 3rd Symposium relied on various funding source to carry out. A wide variety of partners are using aligned programmatic funds and donating their time to make the Symposium a success. Sources of financial support so far include: the Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment & Tourism, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, Palau International Coral Reef Center, Palau Conservation Society, Environmental Quality Protection Board, UN Joint Presence Office and GEF Small Grants Program. See the full list of partners at:

<https://sites.google.com/view/gef6palau/national-environment-symposium>.