

Japan to fund Palau's solar energy project



By Aurea Gerundio-Dizon
Reporter

The government of Japan is granting 480 million Japanese Yen or approximately \$5 million to Palau for the “Project for Introduction of Clean Energy by Solar Electricity Generation System.”

On Dec. 24, Japan Embassy Charge d' Affaires Masayuki Takashima and State Min. Sandra Pierantozzi signed the exchange of notes for the project.

A grant agreement was also signed between the minister and Japan International Cooperation Agency (Palau office) setting forth the implementation of the project.

The embassy said that the grant is a result of recent discussions between the two governments regarding Japan's economic cooperation focusing on promoting the Government of Palau's efforts to address climate change with special emphasis on the adaptation to and the mitigation of climate change as well as improving access to clean energy.

Based on the “Cool Earth Partnership” initiative of the Government of Japan, the grant aims to mitigate the effects of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and taking adaptive measures against disasters related to climate change. The project is

also in line with Japan's endeavor for the reduction of greenhouse gas emission of 25% by year 2020, compared to 1990 levels.

The embassy explained that the grant will be used to purchase products and services necessary to put into service, solar electricity generation system at the Palau International Airport. Once in place, the generation system is projected to produce 180-kilo watt of electricity, which is about 15% of the electricity demand for the airport facilities.

“This project is not only good for the environment of Palau; it will also assist airport management by reducing their dependence on fossil fuel power generation thus saving money,” the embassy said.

The embassy added that JICA will dispatch engineers who will monitor the installation of the project until its completion. In the interest of capacity building, the engineer will also work closely with local counterparts to transfer skills and knowledge regarding operation and maintenance of the generation system.

Upon completion of the project, the assets will transfer to Palau Public Utilities Corporation therefore, the transfer of skills and knowledge is very necessary to ensure to success and long life of this significant project.

JICA is also tasked with conducting the preparatory survey for the design.

In February, JICA Resident Representative Makoto Noda studied possible sites for the establishment of solar power project.

Noda said that the project is scheduled to complete in June 2011. In order to facilitate consultation and procurement process, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Industries and Commerce will head the Consultative Committee made up of representatives from Office of the President, Ministry of State, Office of Environmental Response and Coordination (OERC), Palau Energy Office, PPUC and JICA office.

Takashima said that “the signing of the Exchange of Notes for the project shows Palau's commitment to the mitigation of the effects of global warming, improving energy capacity, and to taking proactive steps against disasters related to climate change including disaster prevention by enhancing disaster risk management policies. This

emphasizes the long-term cooperation between our two nations that is now extended to climate change issues and was further demonstrated at the recently concluded COP15 held in Copenhagen, Denmark.”