



COMMISSION ON DECOLONIZATION
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
February 7, 2023 | 3:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order at 3:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call

- a. Hon. Lourdes Leon Guerrero (**excused**)
- b. Hon. Therese Terlaje
- c. Hon. Tina Muña-Barnes
- d. Hon. Frank Blas
- e. Hon. Jesse Alig
- f. Hon. Eddie Duenas
- g. Dr. Michael Bevacqua (**absent**)
- h. Adrian Cruz
- i. Dr. Mary Cruz
- j. Dr. Kenneth Gofigan Kuper
- k. Ty Whitaker (**excused**)
- l. Victoria “Lola” Leon Guerrero (**absent**)
- m. Dewey Huffer (**absent**)
- n. Others Present
 - a. Alan Cepeda (TRMB)
 - b. Mike Carlson (TRMB)
 - c. Chirag Bhojwani (TRMB)
- o. **In the absence of Governor Lou Leon Guerrero, Vice Speaker Tina Muña-Barnes served as the Vice-Chairperson for the meeting.**

III. Old Business

- a. Decolonization Resources Printing & Mixed Media Campaign
 - a. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Updated the Board on the Commission’s educational resources printing and distribution. The Commission on Decolonization (COD) has printed additional copies of the *Unincorporated* magazine (n=1,500) and educational insert (n=5,000).
 - b. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Shared that COD has posted an educational material distribution map to their social media and website. Distribution sites include the



Hågat, Hagåtña, and Dededo Public Libraries, UOG, GCC, COD Office, Guam Museum, and private businesses (10 sites total). In addition to the reprints, COD has designed and printed an informational brochure for each of the political task forces. Copies (n=200) have been given to each task force for their distribution during outreach events. The brochures are uniform in style and differ only in the information about how each status would address topics (ex. Immigration, foreign affairs, individual rights, etc.).

- c. **Adrian Cruz:** Shared that the Free Association Task Force has been distributing the brochures and the educational insert at their outreach events. Suggested having an educational contest with a raffle as a way to interact with the community and get more people interested.
- d. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Noted that COD is strategizing on different levels of engagement to educate the voter base. This includes an upcoming project to work with local t-shirt/ branding companies to produce educational messaging on shirts. COD plans for the shirts to be distributed with an educational event. COD has also created the *Giha Mo'na: At a Glance*, a condensed version of the original study that will appeal to a larger audience. Once printed, it will be distributed to the schools and the same distribution points as the other material.
- e. **Adrian Cruz:** Inquired about the current distribution sites and suggested having different distribution locations for the reprinted material, such as grocery stores and gas stations.
- f. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Explained that COD initially distributed to the Board approved sites, which included the schools. COD has now reached out to interested private businesses to distribute educational material. Agreed that distribution to larger sites, such as Payless and gas stations, would be ideal. COD will reassess current distribution sites.
- g. **Kenneth Gofigan Kuper:** Inquired about the distribution of *Giha Mo'na* to the United Nations (UN) and to dignitaries.
- h. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Confirmed that COD has distributed the study to UN dignitaries. However, one challenge is having the UN formally recognize the study. The issue has been raised with the United States United Nations (USUN) and the State Department. Based on their guidance, COD will submit a letter to the USUN



ambassador prior to the next C24. Guam must garner vested interest from member states for their request to be adopted by the Committee.

- i. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Informed the Board that COD has distributed to the eight schools involved in the Fanhita Manhoben youth conference. The students are planning follow-up events. COD is supporting their efforts. The Commission also plans to distribute educational material to Father Dueñas Memorial School. Finally, the Commission provided an update on the inventory for *Giha Mo'na* (n=32 softcovers, n=432 hardcovers), the Unincorporated magazine (n=120), and the educational insert (n=3,600).
- b. Plebiscite Update & Strategy Discussion
 - a. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Explained that the Commission's draft plebiscite bill was sent to the Governor's legal counsel for review. Suggested revisions from legal counsel are pending. The bill also requires input from the Board and the Legislature.
 - b. **Therese Terlaje:** Noted that the Vice Speaker has jurisdiction. Followed up on suggestions discussed at the previous special meeting with the Attorney General on the plebiscite law. Requested information on political categories, CLTC language, and eligibility to vote in other jurisdictions. This information will help the Board in making decisions/ determinations before a new bill is drafted.
 - c. **Chiraj Bhojwani:** Recognized that Vice Speaker Muña-Barnes is a member of the UNPO Presidency. The Board can tap on the UNPO advisors and legal counsel to assist with the bill. Vice Speaker Muña-Barnes's policy team can also help.
 - d. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Explained that the special meeting, which was canceled last month, was intended to discuss the 9th Circuit Court ruling and available options moving forward. The Government of Guam cannot use public funds to hold a referendum with the current eligibility definition. If there is a vote using public funds with the current definition, the vote may have to be opened to all. The alternative is to rewrite the law and adhere to the concerns of and guidelines provided by the 9th Circuit Court. Explained that the judge was concerned with the inconsistency in the way the definition was applied but they were not against the time-based definition. However, the term "Native Inhabitant" cannot be used, a new term and definition must be created.



- e. **Therese Terlaje:** Recalled the explanations given to the Board from the AG's office during the special meeting. The Board was advised to look at the CLTC language, which is a time-based definition that the Department of Justice found acceptable.
- f. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Confirmed that COD will work with Dr. Kuper and Dr. Cruz to gather the information that was requested by the Board. Offered to facilitate a special meeting for the Board.
- g. **Kenneth Gofigan Kuper:** Asked about the delineation of responsibility between the Legislature and the other Board members/ COD.
- h. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Explained that COD has been focused on the educational campaign because it is permitted by the Ninth Circuit Court. The law also tasks COD with facilitating the plebiscite to execution. However, this mandate was placed on hold when the law was challenged. The Legislature is empowered to begin the work on the new plebiscite law.
- i. **Therese Terlaje:** Added that the Commission and Board members can assist in outlining/researching the options available and provide recommendations to the Governor and Senators on how to move forward. Invited others to recommend language for the definitions of political categories in the bill.

VI. New Business

- a. UOG Film Festival
 - a. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Highlighted COD's recent meeting with the University of Guam's Communication & Media Program. COD discussed a potential partnership with the UOG Film Festival. This type of outreach is intended to expand COD's educational campaign to a larger part of the community. The UOG program is open to doing a 48-hour or 72-hour film challenge.
- b. Legislative Informational Hearing/Community Roundtable
 - a. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Explained that the Fanohge Coalition has asked for a Legislative Informational Hearing and Community Roundtable with members of the 37th Guam Legislature. They would like to create presentations to provide basic education on decolonization, Self-determination, and COD's work to lawmakers and their staff and to create an opportunity for community input/ involvement. COD has



met with the offices of Senator Perez and Senator Quinata. The meetings can be broadcast on the Legislature's television channel.

- b. **Tina Muña-Barnes:** Noted that she will be available after February and is open to conducting the roundtable. COD will coordinate a meeting with the Vice Speaker's team.

VII. United Nations Updates

- a. UN C-24 Regional Seminar (~May 2023, potentially Indonesia)
 - a. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Noted that the Regional seminar is scheduled for May 2023 and will be held in Indonesia. Explained that the Governor is invited to the C24 but if the Governor or Lieutenant Governor is unable to attend, Melvin is designated to represent them. However, he cannot attend this year and will recommend a Board member represent them if needed.
- b. UN C-24 Substantive Session (~June 2023)
 - a. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Noted that the UN C24 Substantive Session is scheduled for June 2023. Engagement is similar to the regional seminar but provides more opportunities to engage the USUN.
- c. UN C-4 Regular Session (October 3-7)
 - a. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Noted that the UN C4 Regular Session is scheduled for October 3 - 7, there is no change.
- d. USUN Letter
 - a. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Explained that at the last UN C4 session, he had the opportunity to meet with the USUN and raise concerns about Guam's inability to receive approval for a visiting mission and recognition of *Giha Mo'na*. The USUN recommended having the Governor submit a letter to the U.S. Ambassador and State Department to assist Guam in pushing for approval from the United States. COD is waiting for the letter to be approved and signed before submitting it.
 - b. **Tina Muña-Barnes:** Shared that she will be meeting with two of President Biden's senior advisors. Offered to share and advocate any deliverables from COD.
 - c. **Therese Terlaje:** Requested a brief on the recent UN Resolution for Guam.
 - d. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Explained that the resolution had very little change from last year. The resolution continued to recognize Guam's request for a visiting mission. However, it did not recognize the study.



VIII. COD Office Updates

a. Procurement Updates

- a. **Nolan Flores:** Noted that COD has assisted Senator Dueñas in opening a video service PO. Requested the invoices once the project is complete. COD will also assist the other task forces in sending out RFQs to vendors and processing POs. The Free Association and Independence Task Forces have \$55,000.00 remaining in their accounts.

IX. Task Force Updates

a. Statehood

- a. **Adrian Cruz:** Noted that Mr. Dewey Huffer presented to Simon Sanchez High School.

b. Independence

c. Free Association

- a. **Adrian Cruz:** Noted that the Free Association Task Force is continuing their standard outreach and have distributed the brochures given by COD.

IV. Open Floor

- a. **Therese Terlaje:** Asked COD to formally include Senator Roy Quinata, the Chair of the Committee on Self Determination, be included in all notices and event invitations.

- b. **Melvin Won Pat-Borja:** Confirmed that COD will include Senator Quinata on all invites. Clarified that Board members can email COD to add items to the meeting agenda.

V. Adjournment

- a. Motion by Adrian Cruz to adjourn.
- b. Motion seconded by Speaker Therese Terlaje.
- c. Motion passed by consensus.
- d. Meeting adjourned by 4:01 p.m.