

**WE SIGNED IT!
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University of Guam students and faculty, SGI-USA members from Guam and neighboring islands, and leaders and high chiefs from throughout the Pacific Islands signed a New Pacific Peace Resolution at the 1st Pacific Islands New Millennium Peace Conference. Many mentioned how happy they were that such a diverse body of common people had come together to make this resolution and that a Pacific island, although small and distant from the rest of the world, had been chosen as the site for this historical resolution signing.

Peteriko Pelep, a new member from the island of Pohnpei, remarked, "This is the first time I ever attended a gathering like this, and I now believe that peace is possible." Ioanida Apel, another new member from Pohnpei, said, "Everything they said at the conference was true, and it's starting to work."

University of Guam students, many of whom were learning of the SGI's peace movement for the first time, were also enthusiastic. Tafny Fritz, a student majoring in tourism, commented: "I really feel welcome, and it's good to have this kind of conference. I believe that there is a chance that we can all be as one and live together." Richard Villanueva, a nursing major, noted that "there has been great interest worldwide in the Pacific—this conference will help ensure peace in our region."

Leaders and high chiefs from Saipan, Tonga, Yap, Kosrae, Chuuk, Palau and Pohnpei all signed the resolution and reiterated their commitment to peace in this region and the world. The lieutenant governor of Yap, Andrew Yatilman, liked what the resolution had to say about the spiritual path of seeking human harmony that the islanders call the Pacific Way. "Using the Pacific Way to promote peace through the extended family and the community is the first step in creating world peace," he said.

Likewise, Langi Kavaliku, deputy prime minister of Tonga, said that what the resolution meant to him was that "you can only promote peace if you have peace within yourself. And once you have peace within yourself, you can start working with others, who are also doing it themselves."

Marlyn Mobel, a University of Guam student from Kiribati, majoring in anthropology and politics, commented on the conference:

"The speakers emphasized a lot about culture and to respect. Speakers that came up respectfully acknowledged each of their colleagues. I really liked Mr. Eiichi Wada's speech and several of the other speakers' speeches. The conference was very interesting."

Marcelino Umwech, former governor of Chuuk:

"Our islands are small. Culturally, we are used to having followers and leaders—given a strong leader, if that organization's leader prioritizes peace, in whatever organization he runs, peace will be advanced. There are other aspects of our great island life that we can make the most use of:

"We are used to the custom of reciprocity. We can use the same situation for peace. If I offer from my heart, you will offer it back. We can explore our lifestyle and see that there are things that are unique to our situation.

"What do I foresee as far as the islands continuing this type of dialogue in the future? I am sure that everyone here is sincere, and I am sure it will continue. I am confident that

good will prevail, especially since it is peace that we are seeking.”

John Gonzales, executive assistant to the governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands:

“The holding of this conference on Guam is very fitting and timely given that this is the location of the most tragic war that was waged in this part of the world. The initiative that has been taken by the visionaries and dreamers for world peace—the SGI, the Pacific Islands leaders and the peoples of the Pacific, in this global village—is to be commended. It is through understanding cultures, creating a culture of peace and respecting the individualities and dignities of people that we can work toward that lasting legacy of creating a new world order for our generation and for other generations to follow.

“The uniqueness and the strength of us Pacific Islanders are the tight-knit families and bonds that we so commonly share. That basic strength we hold is called *inafa’ maolek*, which means togetherness, harmony, cooperation. When one family or clan has an event that is coming up, all the families, not only the immediate members but the extended family members as well, come together through word of mouth to share in planning and organizing and in celebrating the uniqueness and the bonds we all have. I think that is a primary moving force here in the Pacific that we should nurture—strength of family and togetherness—so that we can hold hands and create a chain across the Pacific and amplify our voices for world peace.”

Rivka Millhoff, a student at the University of Guam:

“I hope this conference is the start in bringing the cultures and islands together—not necessarily mixing them but just uniting the people.”