

## Development Unit Started In Palau

PALAU (MNS)—In an effort to bolster economic development, the Palau Community Action Agency has organized a Palau Economic Development Corp. to provide loans and technical assistance to existing and new ventures in farming, fishing and other production-oriented fields that directly involve and benefit low-income people.

Operating under a grant of \$249,000 from the Office of Economic Opportunity, the PEDC will operate for two years, according to Deputy Director Otoichi Besebes. Services will include feasibility studies, organizational, marketing, production, personnel, administrative, accounting, research and development and public relations assistance needed by its client businesses.

During the funding period, PEDC intends to make loans and to provide technical assistance under management contracts to a reef fishing cooperative and a commercial agriculture enterprise. The new organization also intends to recognize promising ventures and put them through the feasibility study process. The feasible ventures will be financed by PEDC's investment company scheme. An investment company will be organized toward the end of funding period to attract local investment and savings into useful economic use.

PEDC's board of directors will be composed of one representative from each of Palau's municipalities. Persons 15 years or older living in each of these municipalities are eligible for membership.

The long-range intention is to work closely with government offices and legislative committees in bringing about a fast and balanced economic development in Palau. It will also help low-income people into the mainstream of this development.

PEDC will be headed by a U.S. executive director and a Micronesian deputy director who will take over the executive director's position within 18 months.