First high-level official Palau delegation visits Cuba

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The first high-level official visit by a Palau delegation since the establishment of the Palau-Cuba diplomatic relations in 2015 was led by Minister of Health Dr. Emais Roberts.

They arrived in Cuba on Feb. 23, 2018. The purpose of the visit was to further strengthen the relationship between Palau and Cuba in the area of health.

This partnership between Palau and Cuba was initiated in 2012, when a young high school graduate, a native of Peleliu, Jason Arurang, had a dream of becoming a doctor and was offered the Cuban scholarship to attend the Latin American School of Medicine or in Cuba.

The Palau delegation toured the University of Havana. Seventy percent of the medical students are women. Photo shows 2nd year pre-dentist students. Palau Ministry of Health photo

Besides Arurang, the Palauan medical students studying in Cuba are Terebkul Ngiraingas, Jade Adelbai, Demei Yobech, Remeldil Bells, Jun Rafael, Lara Reklai, Mya Siang, Ngesmus Hosei, Irikl Masters.

The Palau delegation that visited Cuba included Minister of Education, Sinton Soalablai, Sen. Aric Nakamura, Chief Justice Arthur Ngirakelsong, Palau Ambassador to the U.N. Olai Uludong, Ambassador-designate to Cuba Dr. Greg Dever and Dr. Lala Lalavalevu.

The delegation visited the Palauan students attending the Latin American School of Medicine, toured the various medical facilities, and met with Cuban medical and foreign affairs officials.

Cuba is the only Small Island Developing State to offer free health care and education from the elementary level to PhD level. For Palau, this trip was an opportunity to foster and strengthen South-South cooperation between Small Island Developing States across the Oceans — from the Pacific Ocean to the Caribbean Sea.

According to Roberts, "This trip has opened my eyes. I have learned new things: culture and innovation with small resources. The strengthening of our partnership bilaterally and the success of it, will benefit the people."