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**FY 2010 Connecting To Collections
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INSTITUTE of
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CNMI CARES C2C Statewide Planning Grant Project (Cultural Assets Restoration and Education Strategy) FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT LG-41-10-0016-10

Background

The islands of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) confront significant obstacles to the effective and sufficient care, maintenance, and preservation of its cultural heritage collections and resources. In April 2010, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) awarded the State Library of the CNMI (aka Joeten-Kiyu Public Library) and its partner institutions in the CNMI, a Connecting to Collections (C2C) Planning Grant, ***CNMI CARES (Cultural Assets Restoration and Education Strategy)***, to develop a plan that will assist in doing more to protect and preserve the Commonwealth's cultural heritage. The partner institutions are those offices and agencies that are also charged with or participate in caring, maintaining, and preserving the cultural heritage collections and resources in the CNMI.

The IMLS C2C Planning Grant was fueled by the *Health Heritage Index Report*, which described and provided a summary of the conditions of cultural heritage collections and resources throughout the United States and its territories. The CNMI participated in the survey for the report, but a more thorough assessment and review,

and a more specific identification of the nature and conditions of the islands' cultural heritage collections and resources were still necessary in order to fully develop a plan. A consultant – Dr. Cecilia L. Salvatore – assisted in this assessment, review, and identification, as well as in the development of a plan for a more effective management, maintenance, and preservation of the CNMI's cultural heritage. Dr. Salvatore, who grew up in the CNMI (specifically, the island of Saipan), teaches in the area of archives and cultural heritage resources and services in the United States and is a certified archivist (C.A.). This report is a final, overall summary of the CNMI C2C Planning Project, including a description of activities, events, institutions, and individuals involved in the project. Furthermore, it provides recommendations for the effective care and maintenance of the CNMI's cultural heritage resources and collections.

CNMI C2C Planning Project: A Chronological Description

The Joeten-Kiyu Public Library and its partner institutions acknowledge the fragile nature of the CNMI's archives and cultural heritage resources and collections. They acknowledge that just as in other states and territories, factors such as ***budget constraints, lack of awareness about the role of the different cultural heritage agencies, offices, and institutions, and lack of adequate training and resources*** have contributed to the condition of these resources and collections for years. The global economic decline has contributed to the worsening conditions of these collections and resources.

Besides budget constraints, lack of awareness about the role of the different cultural heritage agencies, offices, and institutions, and lack of adequate training and resources, one unique point about the CNMI puts its collections and resources in particular danger. As a group of very small islands sitting in the vast Pacific Ocean with a **fragile economy**, the CNMI has a **strong propensity to suffer more harshly from unpredictable natural and environmental disasters** as compared to the United States. The CNMI is **heavily dependent on outside resources** (including personnel expertise and materials and supplies) to be able to recover from disasters in an expedient fashion. There is no formal academic and training institution for archival work, preservation, and conservation in the CNMI. There is no local business that caters to archivists, conservationists, and preservation specialists.

There are several cultural heritage agencies and institutions that are widely-recognized as being responsible for the cultural heritage resources and collections in and of the CNMI. Specifically, these agencies and institutions are: The NMI Museum of History and Culture; the NMI Archives; the CNMI Division of Historic Preservation; the Catholic Diocese of the CNMI; the Commonwealth Recorder; the CNMI Division of Land Registration; the Hillbloom Law Library; the Commonwealth Recorder; and the NMI Council for the Humanities. As noted above, these agencies and institutions, which represent all the islands in the CNMI, served as partners in this CNMI C2C Planning Project. **[Brief description of the role of these offices, agencies, and institutions in**

cultural heritage maintenance and preservation in the CNMI, as well as their funding source, is described in Appendix A

There were other agencies and offices in the CNMI that provided input and guidance to this project; including CNMI Governor's Office, the Mayor's Office on the island of Tinian, the Tinian Public Library, and the Mayor's Office on the island of Rota (Rota did not have a public library as of the time of the assessment. In addition, the islands of Tinian and Rota do not have their own separate archives or museum).

The cultural heritage agencies, offices, and institutions in the CNMI are, for the most part, government-funded. This is unlike in the United States where private cultural heritage institutions have been established through private and foundation funding. This is an important point to make because it helps to underscore the financial constraints that these agencies, offices, and institutions face. One specific institution among the C2C Planning Grant Project partner institutions that is not government-funded is the Catholic Diocese or the Diocese of the Catholic Church in the CNMI. On the other hand, consideration of the Diocese as a crucial cultural heritage institution is somewhat unique to the CNMI, as will be explained later in this report.

In addition to the staff and administration of the various agencies and institutions that care and maintain the CNMI's cultural heritage resources and collections, many people on the islands played an important part in the project as well. It is important to acknowledge the role of the CNMI C2C Planning Project Task Force (which includes representatives from some of the stakeholder agencies and institutions), a group which

was specifically formed for this project. The group provided valuable input and feedback on various activities and in discussions. Other members of the communities on the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota provided input during various focus group sessions.

The C2C Planning Grant Project began with conversations between the Project Director and Project Consultant via long distance communication regarding strategies for the thorough assessment of the CNMI's cultural heritage collections and resources. The Project Director made initial contact with *prospective* members of the Planning Project who would help to guide the project. On July 24-30, 2010, the Project Consultant came to the CNMI and met with prospective task force members and other stakeholders. The consultant – working with the director – began the physical inspection (as part of the in-depth assessment) of the CNMI's cultural heritage collections and resources held and stored in the various partner agencies and institutions and interviewing the staff at these agencies and institutions.

One member of the community who was very valuable in the assessment and physical inspection and interviews was Dr. Liz Diaz Rechebei. Dr. Rechebei is a retired educator and Superintendent in the CNMI public schools, and who is a long-time advocate for the preservation of the CNMI's cultural heritage collections and materials. She is a well-respected leader in cultural heritage education in the CNMI. Dr. Rechebei eased the process of the consultant's re-entry into the CNMI community by

accompanying the consultant during this first consultant visit, thereby making the participation of prospective task force members and other stakeholders seamless.

Besides staff interviews, site observations, and physical inspections of resources and collections, the Project Consultant used selected publications to guide her in her assessment. She was able to develop a focused-survey or list of questions to use to gather additional information about the collections and resources.

The Project Consultant planned her second visit to the CNMI for November 6, 2010. Unfortunately due to budget shortfalls and the CNMI government's implementation of a government shutdown, a series of delayed release of payroll checks, and mandatory cuts in work hours for many government employees, this visit was until December 3-13, 2010. It is important to include this in this report because it helps to underscore the financial constraints that the agencies, offices, and institutions that are responsible for the cultural heritage collections and resources in the CNMI face.

After the consultant's first visit, the Project Consultant and the Project Director recognized that some action regarding the care of the CNMI's cultural heritage resources and collections needed to be taken immediately. The extreme shortage of formally trained staff in and resources for archives, preservation, and conservation made it very pressing that the Project Consultant conduct a mini-workshop on basic archival practices and preservation strategies. It was a rare opportunity to have someone (the Project Consultant) on-island to provide this basic training, and it made sense to take advantage of this opportunity. Thus, on the consultant's second trip to the CNMI, she

integrated a mini-workshop during specific focus group sessions on all three main islands – Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

By December 3, 2010, the CNMI C2C Planning Project Task Force was formalized. The task force began providing input to the assessment. This input was gathered through a series of focus group sessions. During this second trip and thereafter, the Project Consultant continued with her assessment of the CNMI's collections and resources using her list of questions (survey) as a framework.

The Project Consultant returned to the CNMI for the third time, on April 17-24, 2011. During this third trip, the Project Consultant, again, used the list of questions related to archival and preservation processes to gather further information in f2f meetings with stakeholders and some members of the task force. She continued her physical inspection of resources and collections. She continued to analyze data from these various activities. She also gathered more information about the CNMI community's perceptions of cultural heritage resources and collections and their care. She met with a focus group representing the *Manamko* (the elders) and a focus group representing the *Manhoben* (the youth). In the CNMI tradition and culture, the *Manamko* are highly respected and honored. If a member of the indigenous Chamorro and Carolinian communities of the CNMI is asked to list the top five features of her culture, no doubt, "respect for the *Manamko*" will be on that list. It was important, therefore, that the Project Consultant gets input directly from the *Manamko* and show respect for their role in identifying and preserving the CNMI's cultural heritage

collections and resources. The Project Consultant visited all three primary islands – Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

In summary, the methodology for the C2C Planning Grant Project included: 1) Site visits to the various cultural heritage institutions, offices, and agencies and physical inspection and survey of their resources and collections, as well as facilities; 2) Survey/interview of staff at cultural heritage agencies, offices, and institution; 3) Focus group sessions to identify the CNMI's existing archival and preservation resource and training needs, as well as to identify and gain a better understanding of what constitutes as a cultural heritage resource or collection; 4) Workshop integrated with focus group sessions to teach basic archival procedures and preservation strategies; and 5) Additional focus group session with the *manâmkö* (the senior citizens) at the CNMI Senior Center on Saipan, and with the *manhoben* (the youth) at a community center on Saipan. Additionally, the Project Consultant and Project Director paid courtesy visits and had conversations with the Governor of the CNMI on Saipan, the Mayor of the Island of Rota, and the Mayor of the Island of Tinian.

Throughout the C2C Planning Grant Project, the Project Consultant and the Project Director advocated for the great importance of caring, maintaining, and preserving the CNMI's cultural heritage collections and resources. One of the ways they did this was by continuing to initiate publicity about the project on an island-wide scale. For example, they appeared in a local radio talk show and they discussed the project and their activities with the two print media organizations in the CNMI.

Findings and Recommendations

In the assessment and review of the CNMI's cultural heritage collections and resources, made possible through an IMLS C2C Planning Grant, three (3) major themes emerged:

1. The need for the agencies, offices, and institutions to share knowledge of their mission, scope of collection, and specific holdings, and to share knowledge of how they can complement and supplement each other. Hence, what is needed is ***mutual sharing and understanding*** of knowledge and information by all agencies, offices, and institutions.
2. The need for a consensus about what constitutes cultural heritage collections and resources, and consequently, the need for a consensus as to how to prioritize these collections and resources, and which agencies, offices, and institutions will be responsible for them. Hence, what is needed is a ***holistic cultural heritage system*** that embraces systematic and formal recordkeeping.
3. The need for an understanding of the role of the CNMI's knowledge and cultural systems (such as a rich oral tradition) in current archival practices and preservation strategies, and thus the need for a greater understanding of various approaches to caring, maintaining, and preserving diverse cultural heritage collections and resources. Hence, what is needed is ***advanced training and education in archival concepts and principles, along with practices and***

preservation strategies, which address **diverse types and formats** of collections and resources.

By addressing these themes, the stakeholders involved in the care and preservation of the CNMI's cultural heritage collections and resources can come up with solutions that will assist them in their important work. The good news is that the caring and dedicated staffs at the various cultural heritage agencies, offices, and institutions are capable of addressing these themes and coming up with solutions. With adequate funding and outright support, the CNMI can even serve as a model of a small, United States protectorate that is effectively dealing with the care, maintenance, and preservation of this cultural heritage collections and resources.

Mutual Sharing and Understanding

The different agencies, offices, and institutions that are responsible for the care and preservation of the CNMI's cultural heritage resources and collections do not have a complete inventory of their holdings. In many archival institutions elsewhere, such as the United States, there is generally a backlog of materials that need to be processed, and therefore there is not a **finding aid** or a guide to the intellectual content of specific collections. This is true for the CNMI as well. However, the CNMI agencies, offices, and institutions also have not properly **accessioned** their collections and resources. Clearly, staff that are responsible for the care, maintenance, and preservation of the CNMI's

collections and resources are not sure of what they have in their collection. Two factors appear to contribute to this:

1. Some staff have not been trained in standard processes for **appraisal, selection, and acquisition** and **arrangement and description** of materials. Most of the staff at these agencies, offices, and institutions are hired from the community and have not had the opportunity to go off-island to get training. Additionally, a **manual** that **substantially** describes the steps that staff should take when they collect or receive materials is not available or have not been created.
2. Staffing of some of these agencies, offices, and institutions have been tenuous over many years. For example, at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, a Pacific Collection will provide great educational benefit to the public about the history and culture of the CNMI. However, there is no staff member specifically assigned to maintain and grow the collection. During the C2C Planning Grant Period, the administration of the Division of Historic Preservation was not very clear as staff were unsure of the renewal of their contracts. Throughout these agencies, staff hours and salaries have been cut. Examples of this include: a) At the NMI Museum of History and Culture, the current director has seen his salary cut by 25% in 5 ½ years and has lost his two other staff members; b) As a government repository, the NMI Archives should be receiving volumes of records from throughout the government of the CNMI. However, the number of staff at the archives has remained at two; c) The Division of Land Registration

has decreased in staff, from 23 to 13; and d) A librarian position to manage the Hillbloom Law Library and a line item budget for the library were never created. The Executive Director of the Law Revision Commission currently maintains the library, but she has seen her budget decreased from \$24,000 to \$6,000 and her staff decreased from six to three.

A fundamental requirement for the effective management of a collection is the understanding of the **mission** and **scope of collection** of the agency, office, and institution that holds that collection. We have established that the various cultural heritage agencies, offices, and institutions in the CNMI do not have a sufficient inventory of their holdings. But in addition, they are not sure as to the holdings, mission, and scope of collection of other institutions. Staff have speculated on what others have. For example, the staff at the Hillbloom Law Library speculated that they had some of the *TT Code* while the NMI Archives had the complete series. Staff at both agencies/institutions will benefit from knowing who should be responsible for the complete series. Staff at the Commonwealth Recorder have considered transferring hard copies of birth and death certificates to the Commonwealth Health Center, but are not sure if it would be safe to do so. At the time of the C2C Planning Grant Project, the administrative status of the Commonwealth Health Center was tenuous. It may be that the scope of collection for the Commonwealth Recorder, after all, includes storage of all hard copies of certificates. The Commonwealth Recorder also has land records from the

1980s on, which the Division of Land Registration does not have. It may be that the scope of collection of the Commonwealth Recorder does not include land records.

The mission and scope of collection of each agency, office, and institution should be easily retrieved and publicly stated. This will greatly help the agencies, offices, and institutions themselves so that – and especially with a poor economy – unnecessary duplication of holdings and improper acquisitions are avoided. Furthermore, the agencies, offices, and institutions will know the extent of training and education that they need for their particular collections. Staff at the Commonwealth Recorder, for example, will benefit greatly from training in effective digitization of records and electronic records management more so than training in paper conservation. On the other hand, staff at the NMI Museum of History and Culture could benefit greatly from general, standard preservation and conservation training.

The accessibility of the mission and scope of collection of each agency, office, and institution will also greatly benefit the general community. As we will elaborate later in this report, the CNMI community will greatly benefit in knowing who is taking care of their cultural heritage collections and resources and how they are doing it.

There are tools and technology that can aid in the standard creation and maintenance of cultural heritage collections and resources. **Microsoft Excel** and **Filemaker Pro** can help with creating a list of holdings. More specialized tools, such as the museum software, **PastPerfect** will enable an institution like the NMI Museum of History and Culture to carry out advanced cataloging of its holdings. The NMI Archives

could benefit from the open source archival management program, **Archon**, to effectively manage its collection. These specialized tools will also benefit public users of the collections who will be able to easily retrieve information created by these tools. It may be, however, that a network tool or technology, in which the various agencies, offices, and institutions share their holdings, will be sufficient. Before this tool or technology can be applied, however, sharing of information about each other's holdings and knowledge and understanding of each other's mission and scope of collection must take place.

Towards a Holistic Cultural Heritage System

The mutual sharing and understanding of knowledge and information by all agencies, offices, and institutions, with regards to their cultural heritage collections and resources is the first step towards a **holistic cultural heritage system**. As explained above, this knowledge and information includes an inventory list as well as adopted or legal mission and scope of collection. The additional step is to come to a consensus about what constitutes cultural heritage collections and resources and consequently, come to a consensus about how to prioritize these collections and resources, and which agencies, offices, and institutions will be responsible for them.

We have acknowledged the poor condition of the existing cultural heritage collections and resources. ***It is important to reiterate, however, that there are dedicated staff at the various cultural heritage agencies, offices, and institutions***

who want to properly take care of these collections and resources. In the competitive global economy, small islands and communities with fragile economies like the CNMI are desperately vulnerable to further marginalization and displacement. And as discussed earlier, there are various factors that make the collections and resources of the CNMI particularly fragile. But even if with the provision of adequate resources, the care, maintenance, and preservation of existing collections and resources is not sustainable unless there is a culture that appreciates systematic and formal memory-keeping and recordkeeping. It is not sustainable unless a systematic and formal memory-keeping and recordkeeping system is adopted. This system is particularly important for the **NMI Archives**, the **Joeten-Kiyu Public Library**, and the **NMI Museum of History and Culture**.

The NMI Archives, by government public law, serves as the repository for all government archival records. However, it has not been able to fulfill this important responsibility due to staff shortage. What this means is that current government records are not being properly transferred to the NMI Archives. Materials that are already in the archives are not being stored properly following archival guidelines for temperature and relative humidity. We will discuss the **environment, facilities**, and **emergency preparedness** later.

Archives have the central function of serving as societal and cultural memory. The NMI Archives have the central responsibility of gathering, collecting, and preserving records that represent and account for the CNMI's societal and cultural memory. To be

sure, additional staff is needed at the NMI Archives, but along with that – and as discussed earlier – a mutual understanding of the mission and scope of collection of the various agencies, offices, and institutions in the CNMI is also needed. The NMI Archives holds government archives, as well as particular historical, research, and cultural collections. As the mandated archives for the NMI, it is important that the NMI Archives does not give precedent to the latter over the former. Furthermore, because it is situated on the campus of the Northern Marianas College, it is important that the NMI Archives does not see itself as serving primarily scholars and researchers and students. The NMI Archives, as the State Archives, must always see itself as serving the general public, especially those who seek government accountability through its public records. It is critical that the NMI Archives works diligently to collect and acquire, arrange and describe, and preserve and provide access to these records.

The Joeten-Kiyu Public Library also holds materials in its Pacific Collection and is attempting to grow this collection. Through special programming, such as programming related to the CNMI's indigenous Chamorro and Falawasch cultures, the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library has attempted to document different aspects of the Chamorro and Falawasch cultural heritage. This is good news and very meaningful because the CNMI's cultural heritage resources and collections should include those that had not been previously adequately documented, particularly by the indigenous communities themselves. The CNMI's cultural heritage resources and collections should not be limited to historical and print materials from groups outside the indigenous

communities. We will discuss this notion of local documentation later in this report. However – and again, as discussed above – the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library must still identify its mission and scope of collection pertaining to the CNMI’s cultural heritage so that it focuses on the relevant materials and it doesn’t unnecessarily duplicate the work of other agencies, offices, and institutions.

The NMI Museum of History and Culture has suffered greatly due to a staff shortage and a budget shortfall. As of this report, there is currently a staff of one (the museum director) at the museum. There is no curation taking place at the museum as there is no designated and professionally trained museum curator. Additionally, there is no professionally trained exhibits specialist. While museums elsewhere are proving their cultural relevance through interactive programming and user- or viewer- friendly activities, there is hardly any programming at the NMI Museum of History and Culture. Finally, and most importantly, the museum facility is inadequate for the preservation of the valuable cultural artifacts at the museum. This is a sad state of affairs for a community that is working hard to preserve its dying indigenous cultural heritage. Again, we will discuss the **environment, facilities**, and **emergency preparedness** later in this report.

Cultural heritage is an evolving concept. In the CNMI, a United States protectorate that has become home to a significant immigrant population, the notion of cultural heritage has evolved. As the community changes, so does its culture. To be sure, the immigrant population in the CNMI has an impact on its cultural heritage. Leaders and

stakeholders must consider this in terms of a holistic cultural heritage system. By paying attention to this aspect of cultural heritage, the various cultural heritage agencies, offices, and institutions such as the NMI Archives, the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, and the NMI Museum of History and Culture will be in a better position to develop a holistic cultural heritage system. For example, in paying attention to the CNMI's evolving culture, the NMI Archives can systematically gather, collect, and preserve records of societal and cultural memory as they are created, and the NMI Museum of History and Culture can gather artifacts that represent all aspects of the culture in the CNMI, as well as develop exhibitions and programming that make explicit all aspects of the culture.

Advanced Training and Education

A very telling aspect of cultural heritage care, maintenance, and preservation in the CNMI is the reality that it has a rich oral tradition, and the tradition and practice of preserving written and recorded material is not inherent in the CNMI indigenous culture. It is not surprising, therefore, that the agencies, offices, and institutions that are responsible for written and recorded materials (i.e., cultural heritage resources and collections) were formed by the government – i.e., the United States government – and are government-funded. It is not surprising that a culture of formal and systematic memory-keeping and recordkeeping has not fully developed in the CNMI. This is one of the factors behind the fact that personal papers and personal collections from indigenous community members are hardly found in cultural heritage institutions

(another factor – as explained by focus session members – is the fact that the CNMI community, in general, is not very familiar with the responsibilities of the various agencies, offices, and institutions, and the numerous individuals who have collections that may have archival and historical value are unable to trust the transfer of these collections to any government agency). On the other hand, in the United States, groups, corporate entities, foundations, and individuals have been responsible for facilitating the building and maintaining of many of the country's cultural heritage institutions.

One of the cultural heritage institutions in the CNMI is the Catholic Diocese. It is easy to see, such as through ceremonies and rituals, that the Catholic Church has greatly influenced the cultural heritage of the CNMI. The Church holds valuable resources that represent this cultural heritage. For example, if one wants a birth record from any year prior to 1954, he will not find it at the Commonwealth Recorder; instead, he will have to obtain the information from the baptismal records at the Diocese. The Diocese also holds Volumes I and II of the 1856 baptismal records (the oldest volume of baptismal records for the Diocese). These volumes are in poor condition and must, at once, be diligently preserved. The Diocese has not adequately digitized its holdings of valuable materials. Because it is not government-funded, the Diocese is one cultural institution that could benefit from outside assistance.

It should be pointed out that even though archives and cultural heritage institutions in the CNMI have been formed by the government and are funded by the government, and are thus borne out of Western archival and preservation practices,

principles, and tradition, there has always been indigenous systems of memory-keeping and recordkeeping and knowledge and cultural systems in the CNMI. The oral transfer of cultural traditions is one form of memory-keeping and recordkeeping. To be sure, there is great need for an understanding of the role of the CNMI's knowledge and cultural systems (such as a rich oral tradition) in current archival practices and preservation strategies. To be effective and sustainable, a culture of systematic and formal memory-keeping and recordkeeping in the CNMI must be one that integrates indigenous knowledge and cultural systems.

The CNMI's indigenous cultural heritage resources include less tangible and intangible cultural heritage resources. Participants in focus group sessions stressed the importance of preserving rituals, ceremonies, and language expressions. Modern archival and preservation practices and procedures are cognizant of and are applicable to non-print and non-material culture. Various, much-improved, and relatively inexpensive recording and digital archiving tools and equipment are available now.

The CNMI has a wealth of cultural heritage resources, besides those that are already in existing cultural heritage agencies, offices, and institutions. These include those in various formats that still have to be documented. We stressed the importance of a culture of systematic and formal memory-keeping and recordkeeping earlier. Such a culture will inevitably facilitate further, local documentation. It will in turn require advanced training and education of stakeholders and the community. Advanced training and education will focus on concepts and principles, practices and strategies

that integrate diverse and complex formats and types of cultural heritage resource and collection.

Additional Recommendation: Storage Environment and Facility

With a poor and fragile economy in the CNMI and a worldwide economic decline, it seems now is not the time to discuss the building of proper storage facilities for the CNMI's cultural heritage resources and collections. We noted earlier that the NMI Archives need to effectively gather and collect records of the CNMI Government. It also needs to gather and collect records of other organizations and business entities, as well as "personal papers" (in archival terms) and special collections of individuals in the CNMI. At the present time, the NMI Archives is housed in one facility adjacent to the library at the Northern Marianas College. In a few years, if government records are transferred to the Archives, the facility will have to be expanded. In the meantime, the current facility does not consistently have the proper temperature and relative humidity (RH). The Archives has no specified off-site facility where it can store fragile archival materials.

The Division of Historic Preservation is responsible for the identification, accessioning, processing, and holding of artifacts and remains retrieved from land-use development and marine sites. The goal of this agency is keep these artifacts and remains from destruction by uncontrolled land development, archaeological excavations, and marine-based activities. However, one visit to the agency's facilities

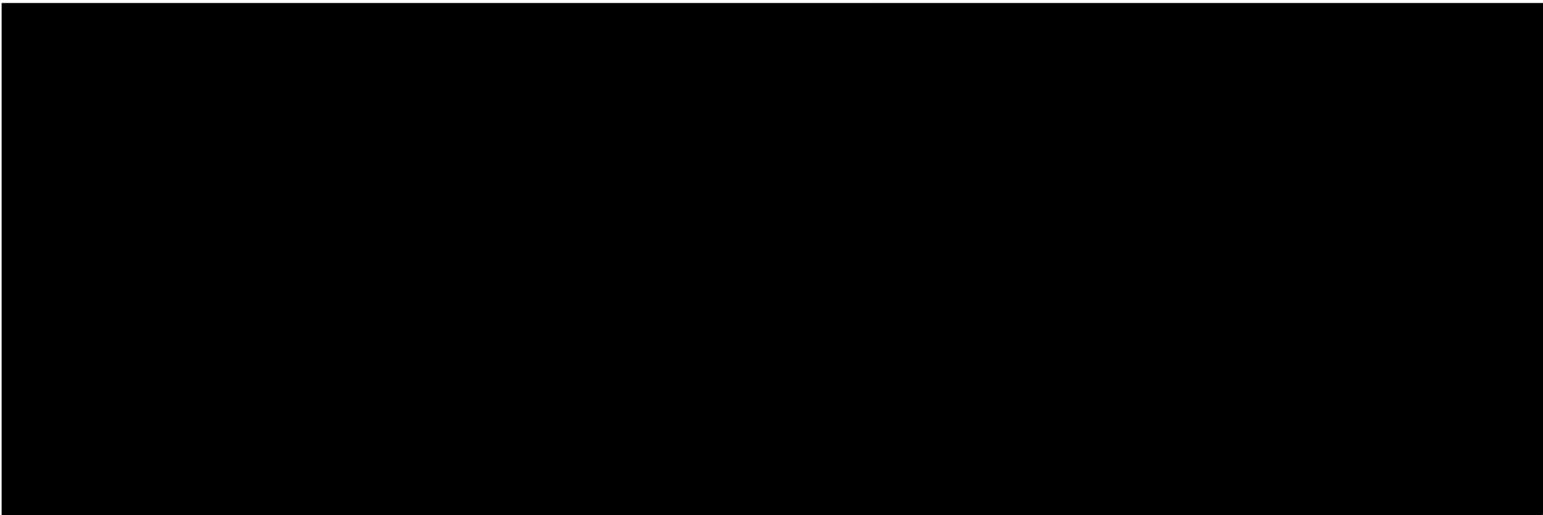
where these remains and artifacts are held quickly revealed that they are far too inadequate to protect them. Artifacts and remains are improperly housed and stored in buildings where temperature and RH are uncontrollable and where unwanted environmental elements seep through. Artifacts that have been processed by the Division of Historic Preservation are supposed to be transferred to the NMI Museum of History and Culture. However, the Museum itself has lacked storage space and staff. The Museum previously lost its lease on a storage facility where valuable and fragile resources are kept, due to a shortfall in its local budget. Materials that had been stored in this storage facility have filled the museum to capacity. The Museum was subsequently able to negotiate the funding of 1.2 million dollars towards a new storage and curation facility with the U.S. Department of Defense as part of the U.S. Military relocation from Okinawa to the CNMI neighboring island of Guam. As of the writing of this report, however, that funding is on hold as the overall budget for the relocation of the military is on hold.

In the absence of proper storage facilities, there are things that can be accomplished that will greatly help the CNMI in the care, maintenance, and preservation of its cultural heritage resources and collections. As pointed out earlier, a ***mutual sharing and understanding*** of knowledge and information about their holdings, mission, and scope of collection need to occur among all cultural heritage agencies, offices, and institutions. A ***holistic cultural heritage system*** that embraces systematic and formal recordkeeping needs to be developed. ***Advanced training and education***

in archival concepts and principles, along with practices and preservation strategies, which address *diverse types and formats* of collections and resources, need to be provided. This training and education should also focus on preservation and conservation strategies for a declining budget. In fact, the accomplishment of these things may well facilitate the building of more ideal storage facilities.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cecilia Lizama Salvatore, C.A., MLS, Ph.D.



JOSE T. LIMES, Chairman of CNMI Library Council
Name and Title of Authorized Certifying Official

NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
State

