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PRESS RELEASE

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CIVIC LEADERSHIP BY DIVINE GUIDANCE & INSPIRATION:

President Emanuel Mori Participates in National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, DC

President Emanuel Mori was in Washington DC recently to participate in the 56th National Prayer Breakfast, an annual non-official activity of the US Congress that drew prominent leaders not only from within the US government but also from the religious community, industry, academia, and the arts. Invitations in the recent past have also been extended to representatives of foreign governments, religious leaders, and other prominent personages from around the world. This year's National Prayer Breakfast was held 06 – 07 February 2008 at the renowned Washington Hilton Hotel.

The history of the National Prayer Breakfast goes back to the 1940s when various members of the US Congress would get together and hold informal prayer breakfasts in small groups. It was not until 1952, however, that the US Congress adopted a joint resolution, promptly signed by President Harry S Truman, declaring an annual National Day of Prayer. (It was also during the early 1950s that there was a push for the incorporation of the short phrase "under God" in the American Pledge of Allegiance).

Drawing on the private practices of most of the Founding Fathers, especially Thomas Jefferson, George Mason, and George Washington himself, and subsequent leaders, such as Abraham Lincoln, the Day of Prayer was set aside to enable government leaders to reflect on the importance and primacy of faith in the Divine Counselor as the ultimate source of guidance and inspiration in the exercise of civic leadership and execution of temporal duties and responsibilities.

Although the US Congress is the host of the annual event, the NPB is not treated as a government-sponsored activity, being mindful of the US constitutional doctrine of the separation of church and state. The NPB is considered non-official, non-denominational or ecumenical; in recent

decades, it has reached out to the other major religions, particularly Jewish and Islam. The NPB is Christian-based, however. It is organized by an evangelical Christian group known as The Fellowship Foundation.

Representatives of approximately 150 countries were invited. The heads of their diplomatic missions in both Washington and New York were also invited. The delegations from the FSM, Burundi, El Salvador, and Honduras were headed by their presidents and Bosnia and Samoa by their prime ministers.

President Mori was thus one of the foreign dignitaries among the approximately 4,000 participants in this year's National Prayer Breakfast. It was at the NPB that he met with President Bush before the latter addressed the gathering. The American president, beginning with Dwight Eisenhower in 1953, has always addressed the NPB.

The NPB is also non-partisan. Coincidentally, at dinner the first day, Mori shared table with Senator John McCain of Arizona, a candidate for US president who is leading among the Republic contenders. The other dinner partner was Senator Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut, a Democrat-turned-Independent who has been rumored as possible running mate for Senator McCain. The Arizona senator had visited the FSM before. His wife Cindy McCain used to help arrange donations of pharmaceuticals and hospital-related supplies to Chuuk.

Among the many speakers reflecting on the theme of the NPB were Senators Ken Salazar of Colorado and Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota; Admiral Michael Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Christian singer Michael Smith. The keynote speaker was Mr Ward Brehm, a businessman who became interested in Africa through his church. He's now head of a US government agency called US African Development Foundation which provides assistance to small business in Africa.

In his keynote speech, Brehm related that through his work in Africa he became convinced that all peoples, rich or poor, share one human spirit. "I will forever be indebted to Africa," he said, "Africa awakened me when I did not even know I was asleep."

President Mori also joined Senator Thomas Coburn of Missouri in his office on Capitol Hill for almost an hour of private reflection.

At the end, the FSM president expressed his satisfaction for participating in the National Prayer Breakfast activities. He also expressed his admiration of America's capacity for tolerance and accommodation - that, despite its church-state separation doctrine, opportunity can still be

preserved to reflect on the role of Divine guidance in the exercise of civic leadership.

It is his wish that similar prayer arrangements can be made in the FSM. There can be benefits, President Mori envisioned, to be gained by bringing together our leaders from throughout the Federation to reflect on their joint responsibilities in the secular domain.

While in DC for the NPB and prior to leaving DC for Rome for another meeting, President Mori had a full program of bilateral meetings with various members of the US Congress and senior officials in the Departments of State, Interior, and Defense. (See separate Press Release)

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