

Photos from the Chuuk State Joint Inauguration



Governor Alexander Narruhn



Lt Governor Mekioshy William



President of the Senate
Arno KONY



Speaker of the House
Lester Marsai

All photos by Lee Arkie Perez

[Click here to see more photos of the Chuuk State Joint Inauguration](#)

At FSM Postal Service request FSM auditors put Kosrae Post Office under a microscope

By [Bill Jaynes](#)
The Kaselehlie Press

October 2, 2021

Kosrae—The FSM Office of the National Public Auditor (OPA) has found significant discrepancies in recording and deposits of cash transactions at the Kosrae Post Office over a period of three months. The audit was requested by Postmaster General Ginger Mida after her office noticed problems in reporting from the Kosrae Post Office over the three-month period, including October 2020

through January 2021. The former Acting State Postmaster had resigned before the start of the auditors' inspection.

OPA discovered that during that time period, deposits were not always made at the FSM Treasury field office by the close of business on the following day as required by the Financial Management Regulations. 12 deposits were made as late as 11 days after collection, and averaged 5 days late.

Further, they discovered that for 29

business days there were no supporting documents covering the amounts deposited. Of the 29 days between November 12 and January 28, the Post Office reported having received no cash at all. Total cash for six of the days reported amounted to \$3,112.26 but there were no supporting documents to support those figures.

OPA concluded that the causes included "lack of commitment and high absenteeism of the former Acting Postmaster (Kosrae)", and "very poor filing system". It described a system

in which records were essentially strewn about the office. OPA said that the potential effects of the problems included risk of collusion; undetected theft, misuse and abuse of resources; low customer satisfaction; and unaccounted revenue collections.

Auditors identified other systemic problems. They said that not all services provided to customers were recorded in daily log sheets. They pointed out that the office key for the

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Auditors say the FSM SSA needs to increase ability to detect overpayment of benefits and better posting of contributions

By *Bill Jaynes*
The Kaselehlie Press

October 4, 2021

FSM—The FSM's Compliance Investigation Division received an anonymous complaint alleging that some FSM Social Security beneficiaries over 65 years of age are receiving 100 percent of benefits even while they are gainfully employed. As a result, the FSM Office of the National Public Auditor (OPA) conducted an inspection of the Social Security Administration's procedures.

Auditors found uncollected debt of over \$27,000 that was overpaid to beneficiaries that were reported to have continued to receive 100 percent benefits even after returning to active employment. They found that FSM SSA does not have sufficient measures in place to effectively monitor and adjust payment to beneficiaries who have passed. They finally found that unaccounted contributions indicate a lack of reconciliation and untimely posting to members' accounts.

"It is worth noting and echoing the observations in the single audit report for FY2019 on the FSM National Government that 'the Administration may be unable to meet its future benefit obligations which considering its total fund equity. This reflects the need to address and better manage the FSMSSA now and into the future,'" auditors wrote. As background to the inspection, OPA pointed out that for each of the last five fiscal years, Congress has seen fit to supplement contributions with appropriations of at least \$1 million each year with the exception of 2016 in which they allocated \$2 million to FSM SSA.

On the matter of the difficulty of recovery of overpayment of benefits, auditors said that causes were that beneficiaries have passed, and there are no surviving family members to make the repayment. Surviving family members are not in a position to make repayments to SSA as most do not have a stable income and mostly rely on benefits for their daily living. Lastly using legal means to recover the overpayments is uneconomical as

the legal fees would be greater than the overpaid benefit amount to recover.

OPA said that it is also difficult to detect beneficiaries who have returned to the active employment as independent contractors and have failed to file their sales and wages tax, as it will be impossible for SSA to discover their employment status unless it is known through complaints or word of mouth reporting.

They also said that the majority of employers in the FSM use the manual filing system, making it a challenge to have real-time reporting to SSA that can enable an automatic detection of beneficiaries that are evading Social Security tax.

Auditors suggest that the Board of Directors and Management of the FSMSSA should reinforce the requirements of the law for the employers to report to SSA when they recruit employees 65 or over, thoroughly review the processes in place and make relevant changes to ensure timely detection and prevention of ineligible beneficiaries. They should promote more active awareness through the use of the local newspaper, local radio stations, website and social media to spread the messages and reminders on policies in place that should encourage employers and employees to be aware of their roles.

In terms of law changes, auditors suggested that the FSM SSA should promote revisions to require beneficiary's surviving spouse, children, or next of kin to report beneficiaries' death to SSA no later than 30 days after passing, and impose penalties or fines on responsible individuals for unreported death. There currently is no requirement that deaths be reported. OPA suggested that FSMSSA should lobby for a law that mandates the issuance of death certificates and real-time reporting of death certificates through data-sharing between SSA and the hospitals. It also suggests that FSMSSA should consider hiring sufficient staff members for enforcement of current laws and detection of tax evaders.

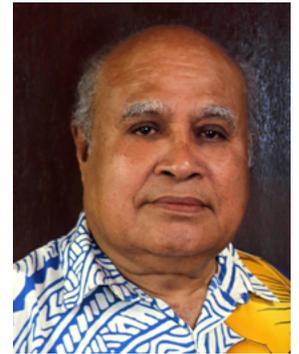
Yap governor summoned to impeachment hearing

Senators question the timing of AGO's reopening

By *Joyce McClure*
Pacific Islands Times

October 4, 2021

Colonia, Yap—Yap senators have summoned Gov. Henry Falan to appear before the Yap Legislature for the committee of the whole's Oct. 15 hearing that will begin their drive to impeach the state's chief executive.



On Sept. 23, seven senators of the 10-member Yap Legislature signed a resolution, seeking to remove Falan from office on charges of "misfeasance and malfeasance" that stemmed from his Sept. 16 move to shut down the Office of the Attorney General.

Article 5 Sec. 20 of the Yap State Constitution requires that three-fourths of the members must vote to oust the governor.

Falan will be represented by Marstella Jack, an attorney from Pohnpei.

"The governor's duty is to faithfully execute the law which does not provide for the closure of the office unless the relevant provisions of the act are effectively amended by law. There are no current laws (or amendments) that provide for the closure of the office," the resolution reads.

"The closure of the Office of the Attorney General substantially affects the successful performance of the duties of the Office of the Governor."

The resolution states that Falan "gravely

Click for continuation on page 10

The Kaselehlie Press

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Bill Jaynes
Managing Editor

**THE NEXT ISSUE OF
THE KASELEHLIE PRESS
WILL BE RELEASED ON:
October 20, 2021**

**Deadline for submission of articles or
advertisements for this issue is the end
of working hours on:**

Monday, October 18, 2021

President Panuelo submits Freedom of Information Act to 22nd FSM Congress

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), has transmitted a proposed bill—the FSM Freedom of Information Act—to the 22nd FSM Congress for their review and consideration. As originally described during his Inaugural Address in July 2019, President Panuelo’s proposed Freedom of Information Act intends to institutionalize the disclosure of public information by establishing suitable procedures, and appropriate remedies, that ensure the implementation of the principles of transparency, openness, and accountability in public service.

Of all the rights FSM citizens do and do not have, as laid out in the FSM Constitution, there is no explicit right for citizens to receive information from their Government. The Freedom of Information Act would seek to explicitly state that right, and to provide the appropriate mechanisms, people, processes, funding, and tools to support that right.

The legislative intent of the Freedom of Information Act is to enhance transparency in public service, establish a culture of openness and accountability in Government, and encourage the disclosure of public information.

The scope and objectives of the Freedom of Information Act are

to state that the right to access information is granted to citizens and persons defined in the act; and to provide that citizens and persons are accorded the right to consultation and information, and to be aware of Government decisions affecting them, subject to certain exceptions, such as matters of national security, and diplomatic relations with foreign nations.

If passed by the FSM Congress, the Freedom of Information Act would require that each national agency publish information about its organization and functions. Each agency or office within the Government would be required to hire or designate one or two employees as Information Officers to handle

applications for information requests. These Information Officers, in addition to their duties to the general public, would also provide meaningful assistance in inter-agency exchanges in an effort to eliminate the practices of stove-piping and operational silos. In order to promote accuracy of information being disclosed, and to attain efficacy of the intent of the act, handling of information shall be centralized to the extent possible for consistency purposes, and to minimize any misinformation.

Citizens may find the proposed Freedom of Information Act here: https://gov.fm/files/FSM_Freedom_of_Information_Act_as_submitted_Sep_2021.pdf

Positive COVID cases in quarantine found to be negative

*By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press*

September 24, 2021

Pohnpei—According to Pohnpei Enginkehlap News, two repatriated travelers of 85 who arrived in Pohnpei on September 16 who tested positive for COVID-19 on day seven (September 23) of the quarantine both tested negative on the following day.

The opening sentence of the news article made no mention of the subsequent negative test. That statement was not made until the end of the second

paragraph in the article. The article was headlined, “Positive Travelers in Quarantine” with no mention there either that the cases later turned out to be negative.

After the positive test at the oft criticized quarantine site, the two travelers were placed in isolation as per protocol. Three of their contacts, who all tested negative were also placed in isolation. They will remain in isolation for 14 days as a purely precautionary measure.

The positive test and isolation was an example of the quarantine protocol

working as it should and nothing more.

At the time of the Pohnpei Enginkehlap press item, which was September 24, there remained 33 repatriated travelers who would be completing 14 days of quarantine.

The release announced: We ask the public to remain calm and remind everyone to take every action to minimize the potential spread of COVID-19:

- If you have not been vaccinated, please get vaccinated as soon as possible

- Wash your hands frequently and properly
- Practice proper hygiene and sanitation, including cleaning and disinfection of regularly touched surfaces

The Office of the Governor continues to work with the Department of Health Services and COVID-19 Emergency Task Force to keep the public updated on Pohnpei’s COVID-19 response efforts. Please contact the COVID-19 hotline at 320-3109 for any questions or concerns.

...Kosrae PO

continued from front page

Post Office is rotated among the clerks, posing a risk of lack of accountability when unexpected incidents occur, especially if cash which is kept overnight or equipment go missing from the office. Further, the money safe box has not been in use for years because the combination had been forgotten. As a result, valuable stamps and cash collected were kept in the postal clerks’ drawer at the service area, and the total cash deposited was placed in the Postmaster’s drawer for overnight safekeeping.

There are only two clerks responsible

for customer service. If one clerk is absent, the other clerk has to serve customers at the front service counter for outgoing mail, and at the same time, distribute mail to be picked up at the back office. Auditors said that scenario poses a risk of undetected theft as the cash drawer at the service counter is left unattended. Further staff attendance records are unknown as there is neither a timecard machine nor a log book to reliably capture attendance during business days. Working hours are merely reported aggregately for each payroll period.

“High absenteeism by the former Acting Postmaster affected operations as the daily collection (cash and checks) that had to be deposited had to be kept with the postal clerk until

he (the Acting Postmaster) returns to work when he would then prepare and make the deposits,” auditors noted.

Input of daily sales revenue into the monitoring sheet that is accessible by headquarters is not consistent, the auditors said. Sometimes, they simply weren’t done at all.

Auditors listed as potential effects of the many shortcomings that staff work under pressure in an environment that does not recognize their potentials or needs and therefore may force them to rationalize committing unethical acts. The shortcomings can lead to the skimming of cash before recording it in the books. Disorganization of files and records leads to the misplacing of documents and frustration of staff and

customers.

FSM Postmaster Mida wrote in her response that her office had made attempts by email and phone with the Kosrae Post Office for justification in the discrepancies she noted on their monitoring documentation. “Given the restriction of travel, headquarters could not send staff on site to look into the matter.” It’s one of the reasons she contacted OPA to conduct an audit of that period.

OPA commended FSM Postal management for reaching out to their office for assistance to independently review the collections and relevant processes at the Kosrae Post Office.



Pacific Islands Development Bank

Pacific Islands Development Bank (PIDB) is a regional development finance institution with Headquarters in Guam. Information about PIDB is available on the Bank's website, www.pacificidb.com. The Bank is seeking qualified applicants for the following position:

PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO)

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Prepare action plans toward the accomplishment of the goals and objectives stated in the Bank's Strategic Plan and executing such plans with approval and under supervision of the Board of Directors.
2. Implement and enforce all policies, procedures, and regulations of the Bank approved by the Board of Directors and Board of Governors.
3. Manage the day-to-day operation of the Bank to ensure that the key functions are satisfactorily performed, which functions may include but not limited to:
 - a. Extending financing and finance-related facilities to prospective borrowers.
 - b. Administration of loan funds according to the criteria established for such funds.
 - c. Install and maintain proper accounting policies and procedures for all funds transacted through and by the Bank.
 - d. Engage in capital development activities to strengthen the Bank's capital structure while creating a favorable investment climate for the member nations and States.
 - e. Participate in the establishment and acquisition of other viable credit instruments that will generate financial facilities for investors in and of the member islands and nations.
 - f. Negotiate and implement credit borrowing from external sources with a view toward providing stronger development loan packages to borrowers in the private and public sectors.
 - g. Ensure timely production of required external and internal reports.
4. Recruiting, appointing, and hiring qualified persons to the Bank's staff and other professional staff as may be necessary from time to time; and provide staff training and timely performance review.
5. Organize and chair Board of Directors meeting and facilitate meetings of the Board of Governors.
6. Perform other functions as are customary and usual for the Chief Executive Officer of a financial institution.
7. Provide an operational and financial report on the state of the Bank's affairs to the Board of Directors at their regular scheduled meetings.

JOB REQUIREMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS:

1. College degree in Economics, Finance, Business Administration, Accounting, or related fields.
2. Minimum of 5 years work experience in banking and the financial industry or related experience.
3. Strong lending and credit background including experience in credit analysis and underwriting.
4. Good knowledge and familiarity on PIDB member nations and States.
5. Able to undertake high level dialogue with regional leaders on strategic and policy issues.
6. Strong management, analytical, presentation, and negotiation skills.
7. Proven interpersonal skills to lead and manage a team of highly professional staff.
8. Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
9. Able to travel to bank's member countries and markets.
10. Eligible to work in Guam.

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HOW TO APPLY: Submit current bio data with 3 reference letters to:
Pacific Islands Development Bank
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Mongmong, Guam, 96910

You may email the above to Manager of Administration at rosa@pacificidb.com

CLOSING DATE: **October 30, 2021**

Pohnpei Government expresses gratitude for compliance with COVID-19 protocols

Pohnpei Enginkehlap News

September 21, 2021

Pohnpei--On Thursday, September 16, 2021, another group of repatriated residents and citizens arrived in Pohnpei after 10 days of pre-quarantine in Guam. They are now in quarantine at Dekehtik.

A new and deadly COVID-19 virus strain, Delta Variant, is spreading at an alarming rate, affecting the world, across the US including Hawaii and Guam, our gateways to Pohnpei and our islands. Our only sure safeguard from this deadly variant to our families, friends, communities, states, and the nation is to fully comply with the established medical procedures to ensure protection through proper management of a quarantining process.

Doctors and medical experts have credited Pohnpei's success so far in preventing the virus from entering Pohnpei to its quarantine operation and process in Dekehtik. The basic premise of Pohnpei's quarantine success so far has been the hearts of those people who care and comply with the established procedures and rules. We thank you all for your patience and understanding.

For the latest group, Pohnpei State Government leadership extends reverence and sincere gratitude to Wasalalalap Isipahu, His Majesty Herbet Hebel, for his exemplary deeds and unspeakable humility that speaks volumes to the premium he exacts on the value of humanity – the safety of the very lives of his own people here in Pohnpei.

As the Paramount Traditional Chief of Pohnpei, His Majesty not only humbly complies with the quarantine rules so he can help save the lives of his people but exemplifies what a true leader should do in times of hardship and difficulty. These rules and procedures are His, made specifically to protect his kingdom from being decimated by this deadly virus.

With the COVID -19 delta variant

on the rise, particularly in Guam, the risk of bringing this deadly virus to Pohnpei on any vessel by air or sea any day now is a real threat.

It is very important to know that the delta variant spreads faster and has a shorter incubation period. The people of Pohnpei as a community are asked to be mindful to support what the COVID-19 Task Forces and supporting agencies are doing. They are tirelessly working on prevention. Preventing that deadly variant from entering our Island and infecting our communities. Thanks to Isipahu, for supporting these unrelenting efforts with his example to comply with prevention efforts.

Right now, no one, including medical experts and scientists, can be 100% certain that the variant will not enter Pohnpei and FSM. Therefore, we need to, again and again, emphasize and urge everyone who can be vaccinated to please get fully vaccinated as soon as possible. At the same time, we all should remain steadfast with the health and sanitary habits of simple hand washing and other appropriate health practices and etiquettes.

Our vaccination efforts focus on everyone eligible to receive the vaccine. Yes, it is your choice, but we implore everyone to please think of it as a way to protect yourself and others, especially your very own loved ones. This is crucial at this point, because of the imminent threat of the delta variant. Our records are still showing a significant number of residents that are eligible for vaccination remain unvaccinated at this point. The higher the percentage of vaccination in Pohnpei the safer our families and our people will be. Thanks to our Paramount Chief, Wasalalalap Isipahu, His Majesty Herbet Hebel, and Likend Kelekel. Let us pray for their safe passage, and the rest of the repatriates, through this process and pay respect to his leadership by example. When every resident and citizen follows this example, Pohnpei will be blessed and remain safe from COVID-19 for a long time to come.



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

College of Micronesia – FSM Mission Statement

The College of Micronesia-FSM is a learner-centered institution of higher education that is committed to the success of the Federated States of Micronesia by providing academic and career & technical educational programs characterized by continuous improvement and best practices.

The College of Micronesia-FSM is searching for qualified candidates to fill the following positions:

Vice President-Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Assurance

Location: National Campus | Annual Salary: \$44,196.00 | Closing Date: October 19, 2021

Position Profile: Reporting to the President, the Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Assurance (VPIEQA) is the individual providing leadership that supports the College of Micronesia-FSM goals and strategic plan for institutional effectiveness and quality. The VP-IEQA provides leadership for and oversight of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) and Information Technology Office (ITO). The VP-IEQA is a key contributor to policy development and implementation related to institutional effectiveness and quality assurance. Essential functional areas include: governance, planning and budgeting, integrity, community engagement, administration, and continuous improvement.

Director for Institute for Student Learning and Excellences in Teaching (ISLET)

Location: National Campus | Annual Salary: \$30,168.00 | Closing Date: October 15, 2021

Position Profile: Under the supervision of the Vice President for Instructional Affairs (VPIA), the director of the Institute for Student Learning and Excellence in Teaching (ISLET) will provide coordination of distance education and oversight of faculty development opportunities, and resources for teaching. ISLET will be a place where faculty work together to focus on providing quality online and in person learning experiences promoting student success and development of a learning culture guided by learning leaders. The institute will create culturally valuable, engaged, learning and teaching experiences by providing programming, resources and support for quality teaching and advising.

Student Services Specialist III

Location: CTEC Pohnpei | Annual Salary: \$10,633.00 | Closing Date: October 30, 2021

System Specialist I

Location: National Campus | Annual Salary: \$9,968.00 | Closing Date: October 27, 2021

Serious inquiries can be made to the Human Resources Office at: hro@comfsm.fm
CALL US AT:
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VISIT US AT:
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Employee of the Month

Congratulations to Mr. Petrus Ken, System Specialist I, at FSM-FMI the college's employee of the month for October 2021. Petrus has worked in Information Technology for seventeen (17) years. In 2002, he worked in the Learning Resource Center digitizing materials, then in 2004 he moved to the IT division and worked at National Campus until 2016. In August of 2016, Petrus returned to his home state of Yap and became the system specialist at FSM-FMI.

Mr. Ken is also an alumni of COM-FSM.

He was selected as employee of the month for demonstrating professionalism and teamwork through dedication in completing difficult tasks, participating in school related and cadets community related activities even on holidays and weekends, and being honest and proactive in maintaining college technology and equipment.



Photos from the Chuuk State Joint Inauguration



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OPEN TO FSM Nationals ONLY

UNICEF Pacific is recruiting a Temporary Driver to be based in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia at the GS-2 level. The successful candidate will provide reliable safe driving services, demonstrating the highest standards of professionalism, discretion, integrity, sense of responsibility, excellent knowledge of protocol whilst ensuring compliance with local driving rules and regulations.

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1. Reliable and safe driving services for staff and officials
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3. Documentation of vehicle-related information
4. Supports Warehouse and Office Inventory Management

To view the vacancy please go to www.unicef.org under the  tab, click the option Work for UNICEF. Under the search job option – enter the job number 544701

Closing Date for applications is 10 October 2021.

Interested candidates must submit in their application online to be considered for the role.

To qualify as an advocate for every child you will have...

- A secondary education is required, along with a valid driver's license and knowledge of local driving rules and regulations.
- A minimum of two years of work experience as a driver in an international organization, embassy or UN system with a safe driving record is an asset.
- Have a valid driving license for FSM
- Clean driving record required with no accidents or moving violations and no prior criminal record.
- Willingness to work long and irregular hours
- Discreet in nature and behaviour
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- Experience of other provincial roads is an advantage
- Knowledge of driving rules and regulations, chauffeur protocol and courtesies
- Skills in minor vehicle repairs
- Ability to deal patiently and tactfully with visitors
- High sense of confidentiality, initiative and good judgment
- Fluency of the local language of the duty station as well as proficiency in English is required

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UNICEF is committed to diversity and inclusion within its workforce, and encourages all candidates, irrespective of gender, nationality, religious and ethnic backgrounds, including persons living with disabilities, to apply to become a part of the organization. UNICEF has a zero-tolerance policy on conduct that is incompatible with the aims and objectives of the United Nations and UNICEF, including sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, abuse of authority and discrimination. UNICEF also adheres to strict child safeguarding principles. All selected candidates will be expected to adhere to these standards and principles and will therefore undergo rigorous reference and background checks. Background checks will include the verification of academic credential(s) and employment history. Selected candidates may be required to provide additional information to conduct a background check.

FSMTC announces the completion of the Hantru-1 upgrade

21 September 2021

Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia and Allen, Texas—FSM Telecommunications Corporation (FSMTC) announced today that Xtera, Inc., a provider of innovative subsea fiber optic solutions, has completed the Hantru-1 upgrade. FSMTC is the premium telecommunications service provider for Pohnpei, Kosrae, Chuuk, and Yap in the Federated States of Micronesia. Completion of the Hantru-1 Submarine Cable System upgrade between Pohnpei and Guam enables FSMTC to meet the growing demand for broadband services in the region.

Xtera has provided the additional capacity using their state-of-the-art Nu-Wave™ Optima Submarine Line Terminal Equipment (SLTE). Xtera's SLTE enables upgrades to submarine cable systems with the latest photonic technologies, whilst facilitating seamless integration with their existing equipment. The increased system capacity provided on Hantru-1 significantly reduces the cost per bit of the network whilst offering enhanced functionality.

Fredy Perman, Chief Executive Officer of FSMTC, stated "I am very pleased to announce that Xtera has successfully completed the upgrade of Hantru-1. Their performance demonstrates why they were selected to be a member of the FSMTC family as our next generation supplier."

Keith Henderson, Chief Executive

Officer of Xtera, added, "The fact that FSMTC selected Xtera to upgrade Hantru-1, and to be their supplier partner of choice for the future, is a significant vote of confidence in the value of Xtera's technology, engineering, and operations team. We are extremely proud to support FSMTC as capacity demands continue to grow."

About FSMTC:

FSMTC is a public corporation established under Title 21 of the Code of the Federated States of Micronesia, governed under FSM laws. FSMTC operates in accordance with the highest standards in all relationships with customers, suppliers, the environment, and the community. Our vision is to provide the best possible modern, cost-effective telecommunications services by consistently satisfying the realistic expectations of our customers and stakeholders.

For more information, please visit FSMTC or contact marketing@fsmtc.fm

About Xtera® :

Xtera is an innovative provider of subsea and telecom technology. The Company supplies both repeated and unrepeated systems, using its high-performance optical amplifiers to deliver traffic directly inland to cities and offering flexibility in working with industry partners to provide the optimum solution. For more information, please visit Xtera or contact info@xtera.com

The 22nd FSM Congress supports President Panuelo's request, appropriates additional \$2,500,000 of locally-generated revenues to augment Low-Income Household Assistance Program

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—The 22nd Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), in a demonstration of exemplary leadership, has both met—and exceeded—His Excellency David W. Panuelo's request to appropriate an additional two million dollars (\$2,000,000) of locally-generated revenue to augment the otherwise Asian Development Bank-funded FSM Low-

Income Household Assistance Program. Through the virtuous generosity of the FSM Congress via Congressional Act 22-38, an additional two and a half million dollars (\$2,500,000) will augment the program. The practical effect is that an additional 2,500 low-income households will directly benefit from this financial assistance package.

Click for continuation on page 10

TRADE MARK CAUTIONARY NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that Hormel Foods Corporation of 1 Hormel Place, Austin, Minnesota 55912, United States of America, is the sole owner and proprietor in the Federated States of Micronesia and elsewhere of the trade mark below:

PLANTERS

which is used in International classes 29, 30 and 31 in connection with the following goods:

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Palikir, Pohnpei, FM 96941

Phone: (691) 320-7805; Fax: (691) 320-7534; Email: ned@fsmned.fm

TIMETABLE

For November 12, 2021 Special Election

This Timetable is based on the Revised National Election Act of 2006

Sections	Dates	Definitions
Appropriation (9FSMC) Sec. 107	October 3, 2021	40 day prior to a Special Election, Congress shall appropriate a sum adequate to defray the administrative and contingent expenses of conducting National Election.
Open and close of absentee request by mail (9FSMC) Sec. 602 (2) a	Open: September 23, 2021 Close: October 8, 2021	Request to vote absentee ballot by mail must be received by National Election Commissioner (NEC) not more than 50 days but not less than 35 days before Election Day.
Closing for filing Nomination Petition (9FSMC) Sec. 202 (4)	October 3, 2021	The name of any candidate shall be printed on an official ballot only if, at least 40 days prior to a special election the nomination paper is filed in the office of the National Election Commissioner (NEC) of the state concerned.
Last day to appoint various boards and Counting and Tabulating Committee members (9FSMC) Sec. 302 (3)a		The National Election Commissioner (NEC) of each state with the approval of the National Election Director shall appoint election board and tabulating committee members on or before January 2nd of each election year.
Designation of Special Polling Places (9FSMC) Sec. 605 (2)	September 28, 2021	Not less than 45 days prior to a special election, the National Election Director (NED) shall designate the locations of the special polling places outside the FSM
Printing of official ballots (9FSMC) Sec. 503 (1)	October 8, 2021	The National Election Director (NED) shall complete the printing of the official ballots no later than 35 days before a special election.
Request to vote at the special polling places (9FSMC) Sec. 605 (3)	November 2, 2021	Request to vote at a special polling place must be received by the National Election Commissioner (NEC) of the state of registration not less than 10 days prior to a special election.
Absentee for Travelers (9FSMC) Sec. 606 (1)b	Open: October 13, 2021 Close: November 11, 2021	Not more than 30 days and not less than 1 day before the National Election; a voter must submit in person a written request to cast a ballot prior to traveling.
Preparation of signature lists (9FSMC) Sec. 303(7)	October 23, 2021	National Election Director (NED) shall prepare signature lists from National Voter Register for each of the polling places not later than 20 days prior to each election.
VAAPP Requests (9FSMC) Sec. 604(1)d	November 5, 2021	National Election Commissioner (NEC) of the state of registration receives the written VAAPP requests at least 7 days before the National Election.
Posting of Signature Lists of SPP (9FSMC) Sec. 605(4)	November 6, 2021	No later than 6 days before a National Election, National Election Commissioner (NEC) shall post at the National Election Offices in their states signature lists of each special polling place in their state.
Posting of Signature Lists for Guam and Honolulu (9FSMC) Sec. 605(5)	November 6, 2021	No later than 6 days before a National Election, the National Election Director, or his designee, shall post the Special Polling Place Signature lists for Guam and Honolulu in a publicly accessible place in each location to be set out in the regulations promulgated pursuant to this title.
Special Election Day (9FSMC) Sec. 105(2)	November 12, 2021	The National Election Director shall schedule a special election to occur 50 days after receipt of notification from the Speaker of Congress.

Approved By:

Ause T. Lambert, Director

09/24/21

Date

Signing ceremony for the Grant Aid from Japan to the FSM for the two Economic and Social Development Programmes

Embassy of Japan

On September 17, 2021, the two Exchange of Notes for the Grant Aid for the Economic and Social Development Programme amounting to 700 million Japanese Yen or about 6.4 million US Dollars, took place

between Mr. MIZUUCHI Kentaro, Chargé d'Affaires ad interim of the Embassy of Japan in the FSM, and the Honorable Kandhi Elieisar, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the FSM, in Palikir. The outline of each project is as follows.



Signing Ceremony



Exchanging the signed documents

...Low-Income Household Assistance Program

Continued from page 8

"I extend my sincerest appreciation to the Honorable Wesley W. Simina, Speaker of the 22nd FSM Congress, and all the Honorable Senators, for this action," President Panuelo said in a statement. "By feeling the pain of generosity in appropriating our own local revenues to support donor-funded programming, we have signaled to our own citizens that their Government is explicitly concerned about their collective wellbeing. Additionally, this generous action also signals to our friends, allies, and development partners that when we say that we extend peace, friendship, cooperation, and love in our common humanity to all peoples and nations, that it most certainly extends to our own people, including those who are the most vulnerable and the most in need."

(1) The Economic and Social Development Programme for the Project for Strengthening the Health and Medical System of the FSM (about 3.7 million USD)

In the FSM, it is difficult for people living in rural areas and remote islands to access medical care because the land is dispersed over a wide ocean. This cooperation aims to strengthen the FSM's health and medical system by providing health and medical equipment such as medical containers and medical vehicles that can be used for mobile clinic to rural areas and remote islands. It is expected to contribute to economic and social development of the FSM through this project. Japan will continue to support countries with vulnerable health and medical systems in order to lead the efforts of

Click here for continuation on page 21

...Yap Falan hearing

Continued from page 2

endangered and threatened the integrity of the democratic system of the government of the State of Yap," and that his action "warrants removal from office for misfeasance and malfeasance in office."

Falan agreed that the action does seriously affect the executive branch, but his action in issuing the order, he said, was unavoidable due in part to the lack of approval and authorization by the legislature for supplemental funds that he had requested in March to pay the salaries of the state's two attorneys general.

As stated in Falan's Sept. 16 executive order, the legislature "removed the budget for all vacancies in fiscal year (FY) 2021 without proper consultation with the executive branch."

The AG's office "is one of the offices affected by the shortfall in their personnel budget" that resulted in the legislature's questioning the legality of the governor's supplemental budget request.

All agree that the money is available, but the legislature's legal counsel and the attorney general disagree on the legality of the all-up method used historically to manage departmental funds after their line-item approval. One-to-one discussions between the governor and the speaker of the legislature to find a solution resulted in an impasse.

The two attorneys had not been paid for nearly two months when Falan closed their office stating that he "was forced to take this drastic step" to avoid the government being held liable for a possible charge "of human trafficking and abuse of constitutional rights" because both the attorney general and assistant attorney general are foreign

citizens and contractual employees of the state.

Six days after closing the AG's office, Falan re-opened it upon issuing an emergency declaration for "urgent assistance" for Ifalik Island, one of Yap's Outer Islands, that has experienced "extensive destruction to the people of Ifalik Island's main food source from salt water ingress and manifestation from drastic adverse weather pattern."

When an emergency declaration is recommended by the state's Emergency Task Force under the direction of the Office of Planning and Budget, Falan said through his spokesperson, "the reopening of the AG's office is paramount to providing legal advice and legal sufficiency to the emergency declaration document before the governor's endorsement."

At the continuation of the public hearing on Sept. 24, senators questioned the timing and motivation

of Falan's emergency declaration and the re-opening of the AG's office.

Sen. Jesse Raglmar-Sublomar noted that the emergency declaration was issued "nearly 10 months after that event happened; and we were informed that it is not possible to make a declaration for a single island at that time, but now the declaration is made for the same single island. Why that is alright now is a question."

According to Falan's spokesperson, the constitution and laws do not specify that more than one island or municipality must be impacted in order for an emergency declaration to be issued.

Floor Leader Jerry G. Fagolimul, who represents Ifalik, said he "appreciates very much the governor's concern at this point of time by declaring a state of emergency in the name of my island."

Tenth Pohnpei Legislature and FSMTC announce completion of a brand new network

Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia– On Friday, September 24, 2021, Speaker Stevick Edwin of the Tenth Pohnpei State Legislature (PSL), welcomed FSM Telecommunications Corporation (FSMTC) President and CEO Fredy Perman, FSMTC Board Secretary Rich Adams and staff to a brief turnover ceremony in a conference room at the PSL.

Speaker Edwin announced that FSMTC has completed installation of a brand new network for the PSL. The new network includes commercial grade access points that are installed throughout the PSL’s properties and connected to FSMTC fiber network enabling 100% WiFi services inside and outside the campus. In addition, FSMTC also installed 65” TV screens, HD Videoconference cameras and conference bridges in PSL’s three meeting / conference rooms.

Speaker Edwin stated “I am very pleased to announce that FSMTC has successfully completed the upgrade of our network. Meeting with CEO few months back to see how they can assist us with our network and communications services, I am happy to say that FSMTC has done that and more. FSMTC has installed access points around the Legislative campus and smart TVs in the conference rooms so we can have virtual or Zoom meetings as well as keeping updated with the news through their Cable TV service.”

PSL Vice Speaker McGarry Miguel, added, “The Pohnpei Legislature has taken a big step in technological advancement and our dream to becoming mostly paperless is finally coming true with this upgrade that FSMTC has provided us.”



EXAMINATION ANNOUNCEMENT
Office of Personnel Administration
FSM National Government

Secure Application Forms from and return to FSM National Government Personnel Office	EA NO: FSM-071-21 OPENING DATE: 10/1/2021 CLOSING DATE: 11/1/2021
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It is the policy of the FSM Government that qualified FSM citizens is given first priority for employment consideration; with other Micronesians and U.S. citizens utilized in positions for which no qualified FSM citizens are available.

POSITION AND SALARY:
 Legal Information Web Master PL-34/1
 \$537.45 + \$40.00 Cola B/W

This is the minimum rate at step one of the grade. Higher rates may be authorized in cases of hard- to-fill positions where it is appropriate to the qualification of the appointee.

LOCATION:
 FSM Supreme Court
 FSM National Government Palikir,
 Pohnpei FM 96941

DUTIES (ILLUSTRATIVE ONLY):
 Responsible for maintaining the FSM Legal Information System (LIS) website;

converting word processing documents into web pages and creating links where appropriate; develop and maintain website policies; gather research materials related to the FSM Supreme Court and the four state governments to put on the websites; hyperlink into state sites and other legal research sites; upgrade material already on the FSM LIS; repair links on the FSM LIS; design site for a variety of browsers; write press releases and brochures; organize and conduct training programs for users of the FSM LIS; and performs other duties as assigned; the Legal Information Webmaster serves as a backup Information Technology when needed.

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:
 Graduation from an accredited college or university with a degree in computer science or related field plus two (2) years of work experience on legal information website and administrative duties.

CEO Perman thanked Speaker Edwin and the State Legislature for working with the FSMTC to make the project completed as early and smoothly as possible. He further stated “the Pohnpei Legislature now has a network that will allow it be able to do its work as efficiently as possible and trust that other Pohnpei Government offices can come to the legislature to use its new facilities for online trainings, workshops, and meetings.”
 About the Pohnpei Legislature

The Pohnpei Legislature is the law making arm of the Pohnpei State government. The Legislature is composed of 23 Senators who are elected by the voters of the electoral districts of Kapingamarangi, Nukuoro, Ngatik, Mwokil, Pingelap, Kolonia Town, Nett, U, Kitty, Madolenihmw and Sokehs.

About FSMTC
 FSMTC is a public Corporation established under Title 21 of the Code of the Federated States of Micronesia, governed under FSM laws. FSMTC operates in accordance with the highest standards in all relationships with customers, suppliers, the environment, and the community. FSMTC vision is to provide the best possible modern, cost-effective telecommunications services by consistently satisfying the realistic expectations of our customers and stakeholders.

For more information please visit www.fsmtc.fm or contact marketing@fsmtc.fm.

President Panuelo briefs Kosrae State's leadership; from Compact negotiations to road infrastructure, & the forthcoming UN Multi-Country Office to COVID-19 updates, etc.

FSM Information Services Kosrae Office of the Governor Joint Press Release

TOFOL, Kosrae—From September 20th to 24th, 2021, His Excellency David W. Panuelo—President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)—and his Cabinet conducted an official State Visit to the FSM State of Kosrae. The purpose of the State Visit was to formally meet with Kosrae State's leadership in the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Branches, and the State's residents, so as to inform them of the goings-on in the FSM National Government, and how such goings-on directly impact the State of Kosrae. This (lengthy) release intends to summarize the bulk of the briefings, with a focus on the items of most visible and immediate concern to FSM citizens residing in the State of Kosrae.

Regarding the ongoing negotiations on the expiring provisions of the Compact of Free Association, as Amended, President Panuelo described that the Ambassadors of the FSM, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau recently met with the U.S. National Security Council, and that "The message that was given back to me is that it is clear that...we are going to extend the economic provisions of the Compact; it's just the amounts and the level of funding, the details, that are being negotiated." The President explained that, to his knowledge, the United States has informally put forward an initial offer, and that the FSM is preparing a response to that offer.

Regarding the Panuelo-George administration's Pave the Nation initiative, the President described Kosrae's projects stemming from the Nation's \$46,000,000 World Bank-funded FSM Priority Road Improvements & Management Enhancements (PRIME) Project, the \$12,000,000 World Bank-funded FSM Strategic Climate-Oriented Road Enhancements (SCORE) Project, and the \$18,000,000 Asian Development Bank-funded Sustainable Road Infrastructure Investment (SRII) Project.

The PRIME funding supports the Improvement of the Lelu Causeway project. Proposals have been received

and evaluated, with the contract to be awarded in October 2021. Construction is scheduled to begin in late 2022. Other projects, to be identified by the ongoing Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Resilient Road Strategy, are to be completed in January 2022.

The SCORE Project includes the Muntunenea to Sialat Road, which is proposed for consideration, and supports the operation of the proposed bottling plant. Approval of the grant is expected in May 2022.

The SRII funding supports the rehabilitation of the Lelu Causeway to Tofol Road project and the Lelu Town Roads project.

Additionally, President Panuelo described how Kosrae may wish to explore using the recent donation of \$16,000,000 from the People's Republic of China on a road project (as roads have been identified by Kosrae State Government as such a development priority).

Regarding the forthcoming United Nations Multi-Country Office, President Panuelo described that the Team Leader and other initial staff will be arriving in the FSM on the October 6th, 2021, repatriation flight for essential personnel. The Multi-Country Office's annual budget of approximately \$2,000,000 per year will help the United Nations to support the FSM and its Micronesian brothers and sisters in the Republics of Palau, Nauru, the Marshall Islands, and Kiribati, in gender equality, sustainable and inclusive economic empowerment, equitable basic services (e.g. education), human rights, governance and community engagement, and on Climate Change and disaster resilience.

Regarding COVID-19-related financial assistance, President Panuelo described how \$2,100,000 has been distributed to Kosraean applicants through the U.S.-funded Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) Program, that \$156,000 has been disbursed to Low-Income Households through the ADB-funded Low-Income Household Program, and that \$596,000 has been paid out to businesses through the FSM Economic Stimulus Package (i.e. the Tourism Sector Mitigation Fund).



President Panuelo and Governor Sigrah, accompanied by their respective First Ladies, shake hands upon the President's arrival in Kosrae State

Additionally, the President noted that he has solicited the 22nd FSM Congress' support for appropriating an additional \$2,000,000 Nation-wide for the Low-Income Household Assistance program from local FSM revenues. On September 23rd, the Congress passed this additional assistance, which they have chosen to increase to \$2,500,000.

Regarding COVID-19 vaccination updates, it was noted that approximately 80% of Kosrae's adolescent population, aged between 12 to 17 years, have been vaccinated with the COVID-19 vaccine, and that the other FSM States will begin using the Pfizer vaccine once they receive the appropriate cold-storage capacity.

Regarding the construction of the new Kosrae State Hospital, President Panuelo described that the \$26,500,000 of funding is sourced from the Compact of Free Association, and that designs have

already been completed and endorsed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Bids were invited in late 2020 but, as only one bid was received—and a minimum of two are required—the grant was not approved. As of September 24th, 2021, the bidding documents are being revised and updated, with new bids to be expected for invitations in October 2021.

Regarding other infrastructure projects in Kosrae, President Panuelo described

that the final assessment report to identify priority rehabilitation works at the Okat Port is expected by the end of October, 2021, with designing work to begin in 2022, and construction to take place in 2023.

Meanwhile, designs have been completed for the Multi-Purpose Students Center at the College of Micronesia-Kosrae Campus; a design firm has been selected to prepare the designs and bidding documents for the construction of a new elementary school in Malem Municipality; contracts are being negotiated with local contractors to replace the fencing at Kosrae High School; designs are being prepared for the refurbishment of facilities at the Kosrae Agricultural Station; and the 24-unit COVID-19 Quarantine Facility is complete and in use.

Regarding power generation and access, President Panuelo described that the FSM SEAM project will be hiring a State Officer of Energy, the MPSBEE project will be hiring an Energy Efficiency Officer, and the ADB REDP will soon begin the process of hiring a Project Officer. The President detailed that negotiations are underway with the selected bidder who will implement various priority projects in Kosrae, such as roof-mounted grid-tied solar in Tofol, and the electrification of Walung. The contract is expected to be awarded by

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

October.

Regarding fisheries, President Panuelo thanked Kosrae for explicitly supporting

the FSM National Oceanic Fisheries Investment Policy, which has been submitted to the 22nd FSM Congress for adoption. The President described the efforts made to ensure the Dayang Seafoods Processing Plant reaches its

potential, and noted that the National Oceanic Resource Management Authority (NORMA) is looking to setup a monitoring office in Kosrae in support of transshipments. Such an office is critical, it was described, as Kosrae is one of the busiest ports in the Pacific, and expects to export 1,500 forty-foot reefer containers by the end of the year.

the Kosrae State Supreme Court. The President noted that, to his understanding, in addition to the monthly meetings, the K-8 also convene with the Mayors of Lelu, Tafunsak, Malem, and Utwe every quarter. It is the view of the FSM National Government that this model of bridge-building between levels and branches of Government for the betterment of the People could be replicated in other parts of the FSM or abroad.



President Panuelo, Governor Sigrah, Speaker Palik, and Lieutenant Governor Nena share their views on items of mutual interest and import

Regarding shoreline protection, President Panuelo described that approximately \$800,000 through the Global Environment Facility (GEF) at the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has been used so far to complete a Strategic Environmental Assessment, to draft a Land Use Plan (where the final draft is expected in December 2021), as well as Management Plans and demarcation of Marine Protected Areas. Additionally, the funding has been used for dry litter piggeries, procurement of monitoring and enforcement vehicles, coral reef monitoring, rehabilitation of mangrove and eroded coastal areas, establishment of low-value grants for communities (in an effort to support mangrove rehabilitation), capacity-building, the Kosrae Protected Area Fund Act & Regulations, and more.

The remaining topics the President briefed the leadership of Kosrae State on have been detailed in recent public releases from the FSM National Government, such the creation of the Cyber Security & Intelligence Bureau (CSIB) at the Department of Justice, and the National Tax Reform Commission.



The FSM National Government delegation sits across from the Kosrae State Government's Leadership

Regarding the topic of income inequality and socioeconomic opportunity, President Panuelo acknowledged that Kosrae State Government explicitly wishes to explore how salaries for all categories of public workers can increase, and advised that he would instruct the FSM Office of Personnel to conduct a study on ways forward on that issue.

President Panuelo and his delegation express their sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Honorable Aren B. Palik and Paliknoa Welly, the Kosraean Senators in the FSM Congress; the Honorable Carson K. Sigrah and Arthy G. Nena, Governor and Lieutenant Governor respectively of Kosrae State; the Honorable Rensley A. Sigrah, Gerson A. Jackson, Hairom Livvaei, Tulensru E. Waguk, and Shiro Sigrah, Directors of the Kosrae State Department of Administration & Finance, Resources & Economic Affairs, Transportation & Infrastructure, Education, and Health Services respectively; the Honorable Tulensa W. Palik, the Honorable Rolner L. Joe, and the Honorable Jarinson Charley, the Speaker, Vice Speaker, and Floor Leader respectively of the Kosrae State Legislature; the Honorable Andy J. Martin, the Honorable Yamada Melander, the Honorable Sasaki L. George, the Honorable Alik Isaac, the Honorable Salpasr Tilfas, the Honorable Rhine William, the Honorable Daniel Palik, the Honorable Harry Jackson, the Honorable Nena Ned, and the Honorable Alokoa Jb. Sigrah, all of whom are Senators in the Kosrae State Legislature; the Honorable Chang B. William, the Honorable Edmon H. Salik, and the Honorable Robinson Timothy, the Chief Justice, Associate Justice, and Principal Judge respectively at the Kosrae State Supreme Court; and the Honorable Presley P. Abraham, the Honorable Jackson Albert, the Honorable Ruben K. Charley, and the Honorable Likiak A. Melander, the Mayors of Lelu, Tafunsak, Malem, and Utwe respectively, for making the first Presidential Visit to the State of Kosrae a resounding success by all objective and subjective means of measurement.

Regarding telecommunications infrastructure, President Panuelo described a formal offer from one or more of the Nation's closest friends, allies, and development partners regarding a forthcoming fiber optic cable connection to Kosrae. Although details on this development are still being finalized, the main idea the President conveyed to the Kosrae State Leadership and citizenry is that Kosrae absolutely will receive improved internet capacity in the near future, as the FSM has submitted its in-principle support for the project.

Regarding harmony amongst all branches of Government, President Panuelo praised Kosrae State's "K-8" meetings, wherein, on a monthly basis, the two Kosraean Senators in the FSM Congress meet with the Governor and Lieutenant Governor of Kosrae, as well as the Speaker and Vice Speaker of the Kosrae State Legislature, and the Chief Justice and Associate Justice of



President Panuelo poses with Kosraean students

President Panuelo tours every school in Kosrae State, & answers foreign & domestic policy questions, ranging from the impacts of AUKUS to the FSM & COVID-19's affect on education, and from compact negotiations to the WICHE Program

FSM Information Services

TOFOL, Kosrae—During the Presidential Visit to the Island of the Sleeping Lady, His Excellency David W. Panuelo and First Lady Patricia E. Edwin made it a point to tour every school in the State of Kosrae, Federated States of

Micronesia (FSM). Accompanied by his Cabinet and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Chief in the FSM, Mr. Cromwell Bacareza, President Panuelo made it a point to answer any question posed to him. This release intends to summarize the questions and answers that would be of most visible and immediate concern to FSM citizens, both to those residing in the State of Kosrae and across the Nation.

One student asked "We all understand the Compact of Free Association situation we are in now, with the ongoing negotiations. How are the negotiations going, and how can this affect our college education in the future, especially going to college in the United States?"

President Panuelo responded by saying "As of now, the negotiations are ongoing. If the big question is 'Will the expiring economic provisions of the Compact continue?', the answer is yes; what we are trying to negotiate are the details. For example, and for budgetary purposes, right now any given school in the FSM, including yours, receives funding through both the Education Sector Grant, which is from the Compact itself, and the Supplemental Education Grant, which is an act of the U.S. Congress. We have had internal discussions on the merits of simply combining both of these into one, but we have not necessarily relayed this information or any other specific information to the U.S. side. While the details I can share on the negotiations are limited, as they are ongoing, rest assured that the Joint Committee on Compact Review & Planning is working hard to represent you and your interests. Have faith in them, because they are Chaired by my good friend Asterio Takesy, the former Micronesian Ambassador to the United States, and the Chief Negotiator



is my own Chief of Staff, Leo A. Falcam Jr."

"Regarding going to college in the United States," President Panuelo continued, "Certain programs like the PELL Grant remain enduring, regardless of the negotiations being completed by 2023 or not. Each and every one of you who choose to become educated in the United States, like how I was educated at Eastern Oregon University, absolutely WILL have the opportunity to do so. The issue of the negotiations on the Compact of Free Association is not about whether the FSM and the United States are wondering if we're still enduring partners, as we obviously are. The United States is our first and foremost ally, and our closest partner bar none. That is not changing, and you should have absolutely no worries about your future in this area."

One student asked "If there is a case of COVID-19 in the FSM, how will the Government respond in regards to our Education System? What will happen to us? Can we still go to school?"

President Panuelo responded by saying "Before I answer that question, first let me thank the 80% of you aged between 12 to 17 for taking the COVID-19 vaccine. The COVID-19 vaccine is how we emerge from the Pandemic, and transition from being COVID-19 free to COVID-19 protected.

The COVID-19 vaccine is how we ensure that even when the virus arrives on our shores that we will still be protected."

"Being mindful that we have implemented ten days of pre-quarantine in Guam, and most FSM States have a minimum of seven days of in-country quarantine, although some go beyond that to



fourteen days, in the event of widespread COVID-19 in the community, rest assured that your Government has plans in case this happens. As you've likely seen in the news in other countries, in-person classroom teaching might first require the use of masks and mandatory handwashing between classes, though the Government is also exploring remote learning in the event it becomes necessary. If we all continue to take the COVID-19 vaccine, however, this will not be a major concern."

One student asked "I have heard of a recent new pact called AUKUS meaning Australia, United Kingdom, United States, that means there will be nuclear submarines in the Pacific. There is rumor of the Chinese Government going to war with Taiwan and to try to conquer the Pacific region and send the United States away. What is your take on this issue and how will the Nation react?"

President Panuelo responded by saying "The FSM is firmly part of the U.S. defense umbrella and, through the Compact of Free Association, is considered as part of the homeland. Further, the AUKUS treaty, although a surprise to us, is not really new news in many ways. The United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, and New Zealand already cooperate to protect the Indo-Pacific through their Five Eyes information-sharing programming, and

the FSM specifically has security ties not only with the United States but also with Australia and Japan. The AUKUS treaty makes the FSM, the Pacific, and really the whole of the Indo-Pacific Region safer."

"On the word 'nuclear'," President Panuelo continued, "Prime Minister Scott Morrison [of Australia] explained in a letter to me that Australia does not intend to use nuclear weapons. Rather, they intend to use submarines that are nuclear-powered, as opposed to being diesel-powered.

Australia is not going to break the Treaty of Rarotonga or any other nuclear non-proliferation treaty. So the effect of nuclear-powered submarines is that this makes their new submarines able to go deeper into the ocean and for longer periods of time. This means that an Australian submarine that

is helping the FSM tackle illegal fishing is more likely to be able to track and identify its target safely. I have been briefed that there is very little safety risk, and it is worth noting that both the United States and China already use nuclear-powered submarines themselves because submarines that are nuclear-powered are more sustainable, like how solar panels on your school make your school more sustainable. That said, certainly it is my

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intention to ask Australia and the United States for an in- depth briefing on the more precise and sensitive details.”

“Regarding your concerns about a future war over China’s Taiwan Province: the FSM has an Enduring Partnership with the United States of America, but we also have a Great Friendship with the People’s Republic of China, like we have a Kizuna with Japan, and strong cooperative bonds with Australia. We extend to every country peace, friendship, cooperation, and love in our common humanity. I have asked both the United States and China to work together with each other, both on

tackling existential crises like Climate Change, and also for the common benefit of humankind. I have personally met either the current or former leaders of the United States, Japan, China, and Australia, and something I can tell you is that every single one of them wants to get along. Where geopolitics becomes an interesting challenge is in how other parties interpret your actions. No one has told me this, but you can imagine that if you are part of Australia’s leadership, and you see the United States has nuclear-powered submarines, and China has nuclear-powered submarines, and France has nuclear-powered submarines, and you have a giant ocean territory to protect, and a commitment to protect Pacific Islands, and a regional commitment to Indo-Pacific security,

you would want nuclear-powered submarines, too. Similarly, if you are part of China’s leadership, and you see Australia is getting bigger weapons because it’s scared of you, even though you’re Australia’s biggest trading partner, you are likely to feel very hurt and offended. No country in this scenario is a ‘good guy’ or ‘bad guy’, but every country wants what they think is best for their citizens. The FSM agrees. All of which is a long way of saying that nobody wants war, and while our country, the FSM, is not a big economy, we do have a big voice, and we are using our voice to tell our friends—which is every country in the world—to show peace, friendship, love, and cooperation with each other. Like how an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, our entire foreign policy is premised on the idea that all people are either already friends or friends in the making, because people who love each other and work together see no reason to hurt each other.”

One student asked “I keep hearing about a program called WICHE and so I want to ask how can we [high school seniors] apply?”

President Panuelo responded by saying “The FSM has recently joined the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education or WICHE, which will help FSM citizens applying for schools under the WICHE umbrella to qualify for reduced tuition, at a rate of no more than 150% of in-state tuition. At my alma mater, Eastern Oregon University, I am told that the non-resident tuition is \$34,384 per year, and the resident tuition is \$21,424 per year. So we can see that the difference, the savings difference, for students under the WICHE umbrella, they will be saving significant amounts of money. For students trying to get their undergraduate or Bachelors degree, you would want to work with your counselor at Kosrae High School, or the Kosrae Department of Education, to ensure that the school you’re looking at in the United States is a WICHE member. You don’t have to apply to WICHE itself—you just apply directly to the school you want to go to. In your application, you should indicate that you are seeking the WICHE Western Undergraduate Exchange in your application.”

learning more about how they can benefit from WICHE may wish to consult this link: <https://www.wiche.edu/tuition-savings/wue/for-students/>

On September 23rd, 2021, President Panuelo donated \$1,000 to each of Kosrae State’s public and private schools: Kosrae High School; Tafunsak Elementary School; Malem Elementary School; Utwe Elementary School; Walung Elementary School; Lelu Elementary School; Sansrik Elementary School; and the Seventh Day Adventist School.

FSM Joins Global Pledge to Reduce 2020 Methane Levels by 30% by 2030

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), has committed the FSM to the Global Methane Pledge; the pledge seeks a 30% reduction from 2020 methane levels by 2030.

In a letter written to the Honorable John Kerry, the U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, President Panuelo said “This ambitious goal, when coupled with mitigation of other short-lived climate pollutants, can significantly slow down the warming of the Planet, and will help protect vulnerable island countries from the many Climate impacts that threaten our existence.”

The FSM believes that focused and determined action on short-lived climate pollutants, and protection of carbon sinks, are critically important as the World buys time to allow major, long-term decarbonization to take effect. “It is for this reason,” President Panuelo wrote, “and in support of the leadership President Biden is showing on Climate Change, that I express the willingness of the FSM to join the Global Methane Pledge by adding our name to the list of supporting countries.”

The President’s letter to Special Envoy Kerry may be found here: https://gov.fm/files/Ltr_to_Special_Presidential_Envoy_for_Climate_T_H_John_Kerry.pdf



FSM citizens interested in

Pohnpei Governor signs Overseas Development Assistance Act into law creating new ODA unit

Pohnpei Enginkehlap News

September 30, 2021

Pohnpei—On Thursday, September 30, 2021, Governor Oliver signed LB 199-21 into public law 10L-65-21 creating an Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) unit for the State of Pohnpei, headed by the External Assistance Coordinator, Ms. Shirley-Ann Lighor, under the direct supervision of the Governor of Pohnpei State.

The many functions of the ODA unit include but are not limited to:

- Identifying and cataloging potential sources of overseas assistance of every kind; and
- Serving as the routing channel for all overseas assistance by the government, its agencies, instrumentalities, and public corporations; and
- Maintaining records and vital statistics on all overseas grants; and
- Cataloging and monitoring all overseas assistance

Immediately following the signing, Governor Oliver attended an ODA inception workshop in the Governor’s conference room. The workshop was an introduction to the newly signed ODA Legislation, Policy, and the formulation of an ODA Committee that consists of division chiefs from Departments/ Offices and Agencies of the Executive branch.

In his remarks, Governor Oliver highlighted the importance of the ODA law and Unit, especially as the nation

nears 2023 and compact negotiations are underway. He also spoke of the important work that has been done with strategic development (SDP) implementation plans at the Departmental and Divisional levels of the Executive branch. With the creation of the ODA unit and SDP plans, Governor Oliver encouraged the newly formed ODA Committee to commit to the work before them and follow through.

Joining Governor Oliver and Ms. Shirley Ann-Lighor at the signing of the ODA Bill was Mr. Patrick Blank, Consultant, Ms. Yvette Johnny FSM ODA Office, Chief of Staff, Kapilly Capelle, Local Liaison Rep, Ms. Suannrita Ladore, and Acting Director of the Department of Resources and Development, Mr. Mark Kostka.

Present at the ODA inception workshop: Pohnpei Port Authority General Manager, Mr. Pius Roby, Pohnpei Utilities Corporation General Manager, Mr. Nixon Anson, Pohnpei Public Broadcasting Corporation Commissioner, Mr. Peterson Sam, Division Chiefs for the Department of Resources and Development, Division Chiefs for the Department of Public Safety, Division Chiefs for the Department of Land, Medical Division Chief Dr. Nora Liwy from the Department of Health and Social Services, representatives from the Offices of Transportation and Infrastructure, Office of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Election Commission, Housing Authority, and Public Affairs.



EXAMINATION ANNOUNCEMENT Office of Personnel Administration FSM National Government

Secure Application Forms from and return to FSM National Government Personnel Office	EA NO: FSM-070-21 OPENING ATE: 9/30/2021 CLOSING DATE: 10/30/2021
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It is the policy of the FSM Government that qualified FSM citizens is given first priority for employment consideration; with other Micronesians and U.S. citizens utilized in positions for which no qualified FSM citizens are available.

POSITION AND SALARY:

Staff Attorney I to IV
PL-34/1 + 90%PP
\$537.45+483.71
=\$1,021.16 B/W

PL-42/1 + 90%PP
\$812.13 + \$730.92
= \$1,543.05 B/W

This is the minimum rate at step one of the grade. Higher rates may be authorized in cases of hard-to- fill positions where it is appropriate to the qualification of the appointee.

LOCATION:

Supreme Court
FSM National Government
Palikir, Pohnpei FM 96941

DUTIES (ILLUSTRATIVE ONLY):

Assist and advises the Chief Justice and Associate Justice in determining applicable laws in each case before the court; makes research on complex legal issues; reviews all civil and criminal cases pending proceedings; assists the judges with the issue of laws in advance of hearing, trial or appeal through research; takes notes during court proceedings and research point of law in preparation of court’s final judgment; assist in reporting the court’s decisions, through

the court digest and updates; work closely with the publication manager to finalize the head notes before inserted into the interim reports; assist in training of judges, court staff and others as needed; performs other duties assigned.

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

Level I-
Admission to the FSM Bar plus eight (8) years of experience or attainment of an earn degree (BA) in law from an accredited school plus admission either to the FSM Bar or practice law in any jurisdiction.

Page two
Level II-
Attainment of an earned degree in law (BA) plus 4 years of experience plus admission either to the FSM Bar or practice law in any jurisdiction or attainment of an earned degree in Law (MA) plus admission to the FSM Bar or practice law in any jurisdiction.

Level III-
Attainment of an earned degree in Law (MA) plus 4 years of experience plus admission either to the FSM Bar or practice law in any jurisdiction or graduated from an accredited school of law (JD) plus admission either to the FSM Bar or practice in any jurisdiction.

Level IV-
Graduation from an accredited school of law (JD) plus 4 years of experience plus admission either to the FSM Bar or practice law in any jurisdiction.

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Pohnpei State Government employees complete project management course

Pohnpei Enginkehlap News

September 22, 2021

Pohnpei—Four employees of the Pohnpei State Government, including the Director of Treasury and Administration, Christina Elnei, Acting Executive Officer of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Francisco Celestine, Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) Coordinator, Shirley-Ann Ligohr, and Strickson Silbanuz from the Office

of Transportation and Infrastructure, graduated from a five-month online course on Thursday, September 15, 2021, in a short graduation ceremony that was held at Island Palms restaurant in Kolonia.

The five-month course, entitled “Project management course” was held online and funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) in collaboration with the FSM Government

through a partnership between the College of Micronesia-FSM (COM-FSM), and the University of South Pacific/Pacific TAFE (USP/Pacific TAFE). The course delivered project management skills to participants involved in the management of climate change adaptation projects at State, National, and/or community levels. Successful participants were awarded a USP/Pacific TAFE Certificate IV in Project Management Practice.

Representing the Governor of Pohnpei, T.H. Reed B. Oliver at the graduation ceremony was Mr. Peteriko Hairens, Public Affairs Officer, who joined H.E. Carmen Cantor, US Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), and FSM Secretary of Finance, T.H. Eugene Amor to congratulate and present certificates of completion to the participants.

Congratulations to all the participants!



Governor Oliver meets the Joint Committee on Compact Review and Planning

Pohnpei Enginkehlap News

September 16, 2021

Pohnpei—On Thursday, September 16, 2021, Governor Oliver and Speaker Edwin received the Joint Committee on Compact Review and Planning (JCRP) at the Governor’s Conference Room, Peilapalap, Kolonia. Members of the Governor’s cabinet and the 10th Pohnpei State Legislature also joined the meeting with JCRP Chairman, Asterio Takesy, Executive Administrator, Ehpel Ilon, and Pohnpei’s representatives on the JCRP, Vice Speaker Esmond Moses, and FSM Ambassador to the USA, Akilino Susaia.

During the meeting, Pohnpei representative to JCRP, Ambassador Susaia informed Governor Oliver that there have been two rounds of negotiations so far with the United States of America since the start of negotiations in May 2020. He explained that part of the reason why there have not been more rounds



of negotiations is because of the COVID-19 pandemic and also the recent change of administration in the US government, with some members of the negotiation team no longer working for the current administration. The JCRP team noted that while they are hopeful for successful negotiations, they are waiting for an official reply from the US negotiation team to continue.

Governor Oliver thanked Chairman

Takesy, Ambassador Susaia, and the rest of the JCRP team for updating the Pohnpei State Leadership. Moving forward and to be on the same page, he created a joint executive/legislative committee that will engage with JCRP to ensure Pohnpei State is updated and Pohnpei interests are considered as negotiations continue.

The Joint Committee on Compact Review and Planning (JCRP) of the

Federated States of Micronesia was established as a joint committee of national executive and legislative branches and state representatives to prepare for the expiration of certain economic and financial provisions of the Amended Compact of Free Association between the Federated States of Micronesia and the United States of America in 2023. You can visit their website at: <https://jcrp.gov.fm/>

EHUPENE



KALAHNGAN USADA **BRIAN P. ETSCHHEIT**

**Weliepen SOKEHS ong
Pohnpei State Legislature
Special Election
October 14, 2021**

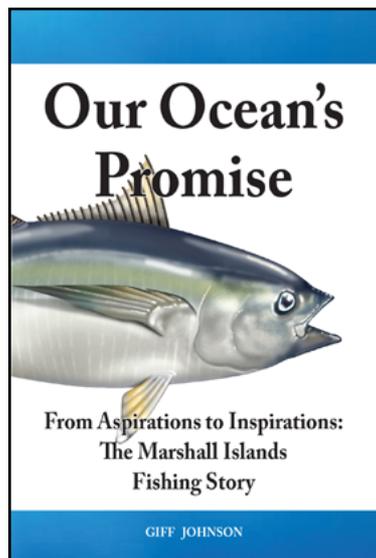


Milestone book features the Marshall Islands fishing story

Marshall Islands Journal

October 1, 2021

Majuro—The story of how the Marshall Islands went from being a bystander in commercial fishing in the Pacific to operating the world's busiest tuna transshipment port, two fish processing facilities, a purse seine vessel net repair yard, and a fleet of locally-flagged and -based fishing vessels is documented in a groundbreaking new book.



“Our Ocean’s Promise: From Aspirations to Inspirations — The Marshall Islands Fishing Story” is a 196-page overview of the Marshall Islands expanding engagement in the tuna fishery value chain. The book documents how the Marshall Islands has benefited from purse seine fishery revenue rising from about \$4 million annually to over \$30 million a year since 2010 through the country’s participation in Parties to the Nauru Agreement’s (PNA’s) globally recognized conservation and management regime that ensures sustainable fishing as well as dramatically increasing the islands’ share of tuna revenue.

“I personally witnessed the transformation in Marshall Islands’ fisheries through the collective endeavors of the PNA grouping of countries that control most of the tuna that is taken in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean,” Dr. Transform Aqorau, the founding PNA CEO, writes in a foreword to the new book. “As host of the PNA Office, the Marshall Islands was instrumental in promoting the PNA purse seine Vessel Day Scheme, and was a vociferous advocate of the PNA initiatives.”

Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority Director Glen Joseph conceived the idea for a book narrating the history of

commercial fishing in this central Pacific nation. A partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency provided necessary support for the work on the book that was researched and written by Giff Johnson, the long-time editor of the Marshall Islands Journal, the weekly newspaper published in Majuro.

Joseph recognized the FFA for its key role in supporting MIMRA “to document our story in the region.”

While the book takes the reader on a journey that begins in the 1920s, it focuses on the period from the late 1970s — as the Marshall Islands was gaining its independence and beginning to engage in the tuna fishery as a sovereign nation — to the present day. It features a forward look at MIMRA’s latest initiatives to participate in the many levels of the tuna value chain, well beyond the limited role it once played as a collector of license fees from distant water fishing nations.

“The ‘oceanscape’ in 2021 is unrecognizable from the 1970s, with numerous opportunities at MIMRA’s doorstep and the agency well-prepared to pursue those opportunities,” writes Johnson in *Our Ocean’s Promise*.



*Marshall Islands President David Kabua (center) receives the new book, **Our Ocean's Promise: From Aspirations to Inspirations — The Marshall Islands Fishing Story**, from Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority Director Glen Joseph (left) and Marshall Islands Environmental Protection Authority General Manager Moriana Phillip.*

“Our interest goes back to our humble beginning, and that is the ocean’s promise, which is our heritage, culture, food security, economic opportunity and highway to global engagement,” says Joseph in a quote from the new book. “All we aspire to is to sustainably and successfully manage our fishery.”

The book includes the first-ever detailed chronology of Marshall Islands and regional fisheries developments that catalogs the many challenges and roadblocks this nation and other independent Pacific islands faced as they worked to develop sovereign control first over

their 200-mile exclusive economic zones and more recently to implement the PNA’s Vessel Day Scheme in order to shift the paradigm of the commercial fishery to one of rights-based management controlled by Pacific islands.

MIMRA will be launching the new publication with a formal book ceremony in Majuro on October 8. Marshall Islands President David Kabua is scheduled to keynote the launch event and FFA Director General Dr. Manu Tupou-Roosen is expected to deliver a virtual message to the program.

The book is published by Amazon’s Kindle Direct Publishing and available at amazon.com.

Declaration of Public Health Emergency Extended to January 31st, 2022

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—The Office of the President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) has received from the 22nd Congress of the FSM Congressional Resolution (C.R.) 22-66, which amended His Excellency David W. Panuelo’s January 31st, 2020 Declaration of Public Health Emergency, and extended the expiration of the Declaration to January 31st, 2022.

C.R. 22-66 is thematically similar to C.R. 22-33, and retains its substantial and significant amendments to the

Declaration after C.R. 22-06, C.R. 21-252, C.R. 21-228, C.R. 21-185, and C.R. 21-175. There are no changes to the COVID-19 vaccine mandate, nor on repatriation methodologies (i.e. non-medical professionals, including teachers, consultants, engineers, etc. remain eligible for entry into the FSM on a case-by-case basis as determined by the COVID-19 Task Force).

Citizens interested in reading C.R. 22-66 may find it here: https://gov.fm/files/CR_No_22-66_compressed.pdf

Special Election for Chuuk Election District #3 to be Held November 12th, 2021; Citizens Encouraged to Vote by Absentee Ballot

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—Following the passing of the late Honorable Derensio S. Konman, Senator representing the State of Chuuk’s Election District #3 in the 22nd FSM Congress, a vacancy in the Congress has been declared and a Special Election for the vacant seat shall be held on November 12th, 2021.

FSM citizens residing abroad who are eligible to vote in Chuuk’s Election District #3 are encouraged to request to vote by absentee ballot. The closing date for such a request is October 8th, 2021. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Special Polling Places in the U.S. Territory of Guam and the U.S. State of Hawaii will be temporarily suspended;

the President’s decree for such temporary suspension may be found here: https://gov.fm/files/September_27_2021-Decree-Suspending_Special_Polling_Places_in_Guam_HNL.pdf

The closing date for the filing of nomination petitions is October 3rd, 2021.

FSM citizens requiring more information on the Special Election, including how to request an absentee ballot, are encouraged to contact the FSM National Election Office. The office in Palikir may be reached at +691-320-7805; the office in Weno may be reached at +691-330-5852. The online contact form may be found here: <https://fsmned.fm/contact.htm>

...Continued from page 10

the international community toward the earliest possible overcoming of COVID-19.

(2) The Economic and Social Development Programme for the Project for the Procurement of Diesel

Fuel (about 2.7 million USD)

Due to the worldwide spread of COVID-19, the economy of the FSM is in a difficult situation, but fuel for power generation for electricity is needed, which is the basis of economic activities. This cooperation is expected to stabilize the country's electricity supply through

the provision of fuel for power generation, thereby contributing to economic and social development of the FSM.

These two Economic and Social Development Programme embody the announcement made by Prime Minister SUGA Yoshihide to President Panuelo at the 9th Pacific

Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM9) held in July this year, that Japan would provide medical equipment such as medical containers to strengthen the health and medical system of the FSM to support measures against COVID-19, and would provide fuel to support the stable supply of electricity in the FSM.

Regional News

Asia joins Pacific to push IMO to decarbonise international shipping by 2050, introduce carbon levy

- 11 climate-vulnerable Asian nations endorse Pacific's IMO proposals
- Marshall Islands Ambassador to IMO calls a "diplomatic win for Pacific"
- IMO Member States urged to work towards "collective interests"

The Micronesian Center for Sustainable Transport (MCST)

Pacific island countries calling on the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) to fully decarbonise the shipping industry by 2050, and to impose a US\$100 carbon levy on shipping companies by 2025, have welcomed the support of climate-vulnerable Asian countries this week.

The Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) held its fourth regional dialogue where eleven participating governments from Asia adopted an outcomes statement that backs proposals by the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Kiribati and the Solomon Islands to clean up international shipping.

"We recognize the critical importance of shipping to our states and to prioritize and support all efforts to advocate for this sector to commit to an equitable transition to zero emission by at least 2050 that leaves none behind," the CVF Asia Regional Communique states.

"We fully support the current submissions to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) MEPC77 calling for IMO to adopt this as an overarching sectoral target and endorse urgent and close consideration by IMO of the mandatory GHG levy on international shipping," it adds.

The CVF is a grouping of around 50 of the most climate-threatened nations in the world, from Africa and the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean,

Asia and the Pacific.

RMI's Ambassador to the IMO, Albon Ishoda, said Asia's endorsement comes at the back of eight Pacific states throwing their support to the RMI, Kiribati and the Solomon Islands IMO proposals in September.

"We see this as a diplomatic win for the work that we, in the Pacific are undertaking, to urge the IMO to take the bold and necessary actions needed to align itself with the Paris Agreement goal of 1.5 degrees," Ambassador Ishoda said.

"We thank the Asia region for joining in our efforts and recognising that our regions face disproportionate negative impact from the climate crisis. We

need to work in solidarity and ramp up pressure on the IMO to raise its level of ambition and help global efforts to accelerate the shipping sector's transition to low carbon emissions," he said.

Ambassador Ishoda, however, stressed that more countries need to step up and work together to drive the ambitious changes required in international shipping, an industry responsible for three percent of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions annually.

"We need all of the 170-plus IMO member states to put their individual interests aside and work towards the collective interests of all nations. And they can do that by getting on board with the Pacific's proposals ahead of the UN climate change conference, COP26, in Glasgow and at the Marine Environment Protection Committee gathering of the IMO next month."

Portal for Pacific biodiversity to go live

SPREP PROE

September 28, 2021

Pacific region—A resource designed to provide anyone in the Pacific – or anywhere in the world - access to Pacific biodiversity data, will be launched on Friday 1st October 2021.

The Pacific Biodiversity Information Facility (PBIF) will be launched by the Director General of Secretariat of the Pacific Environment Program (SPREP), Kosi Latu, who will introduce the tool during a virtual event.

important data about all types of life in this part of the world. At SPREP, we believe there are economic and social benefits our members can reap from being able to access such important information," said Mr. Latu.

The Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) hosts PBIF.

It was customised by SPREP's Invasive Species Team. Team members David Moverley and Bradley Myer will provide a demonstration during the launch.

PBIF offers advanced data search, browse, map visualisation and an image gallery. Search results are scoped to include a relevant defined subset data

mobilised by a thematic network, or published by organisations within a country.

PBIF is available in ten Pacific languages and will present all of the biodiversity data available from the following Pacific island countries and territories: American Samoa, Cook Islands, East Timor, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Hawaii, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Northern Marianas, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Wallis & Futuna.

What is PBIF?

The Pacific Biodiversity Information

Facility presents all of the biodiversity data currently available on the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) from Pacific Island Countries and territories.

Visit: <https://pbif.sprep.org/>

What is GBIF?

GBIF—the Global Biodiversity Information Facility—is an international network and data infrastructure funded by the world's governments and aimed at providing anyone, anywhere, open access to data about all types of life on Earth.

Visit: <https://www.gbif.org/what-is-gbif>

Regional News

Interior Office of Insular Affairs announces nearly \$3 Million to protect coral reefs and combat invasive species in the Insular Areas

US Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs

September 29, 2021

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of the Interior’s Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) has announced \$2,772,443 in Coral Reef and Natural Resources Initiative (CRNR) grant funds to protect coral reef resources in the U.S. territories and the freely associated states. The funding includes \$1,541,421 that will support efforts to control and eradicate invasive species in the insular areas.

“Supporting healthy coral reefs and protecting natural resources from invasive species are essential components to confront climate change effectively,” said Deputy Assistant Secretary Keone Nakoa. “Due to

their island geographies and the increasing frequency and severity of natural disasters, families in the U.S. territories and the freely associated states are particularly vulnerable to the existential threat of climate change. I am pleased to announce these FY 2021 funding awards, which help to address this priority for the Biden-Harris administration.”

Coral Reef and Natural Resources Initiative awards totaling \$1,231,022 for fiscal year 2021 have been awarded as follows:

- Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Government’s Coral Reef Initiative - \$113,290
- Ridge to Reefs, non-governmental organization, for decreasing

land-based sources of pollution impacting the coral reef in American Samoa - \$115,879

- Nova Southeastern University Coral Reef Fellowship Program for the benefit of American Samoa, Guam, the CNMI, and the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) - \$210,000
- Coral Reef Research Foundation, a Palau-based non-governmental organization, for mapping Palau’s lagoon and reefs - \$212,329
- U.S. VI coral restoration from Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease - \$279,977
- Guam Government’s Coral Reef Initiative - \$299,547

Grants totaling \$1,541,421 for fiscal year 2021 to combat invasive species have been awarded as follows:

- University of Guam for research

and related efforts to counter the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle - \$866,423

- Micronesia Conservation Trust, a regional non-governmental organization, for the eradication, control, and management of invasive species in Kosrae, Chuuk, and Yap - \$300,000
- Island Conservation, a non-profit organization, for the removal of invasive rats in Mili Atoll, Marshall Islands - \$299,838
- CNMI Government for Sabana Pandanus Forest control and native trees restoration project - \$75,160

For more information about the Coral Reef and Natural Resources Program Initiative visit the OIA website at <https://www.doi.gov/oia/financial-assistance>.

Economic recovery in East Asia and Pacific faces setback

The World Bank

September 27, 2021

WASHINGTON DC—The East Asia and Pacific region’s recovery has been undermined by the spread of the COVID-19 Delta variant, prolonging the distress for firms and households, likely slowing economic growth and increasing inequality, the World Bank said on Monday.

Economic activity began to slow down in the second quarter of 2021, and growth forecasts have been downgraded for most countries in the region, according to the World Bank’s East Asia and Pacific Fall 2021 Economic Update. While China’s economy is projected to expand by 8.5%, the rest of the region is forecast to grow at 2.5%, nearly 2 percentage points less than forecast in April 2021. Employment rates and labor force participation have dropped, and as many as 24 million people will not be able to escape poverty in 2021.

“The economic recovery of developing East Asia and Pacific faces a reversal of fortune,” said World Bank Vice President for East Asia and Pacific, Manuela Ferro. “Whereas in 2020 the region

contained COVID-19 while other regions of the world struggled, the rise in COVID-19 cases in 2021 has decreased growth prospects for 2021. However, the region has emerged stronger from crises before and with the right policies could do so again.”

The damage done by the resurgence and persistence of COVID-19 is likely to hurt growth and increase inequality over the longer-term, the Update finds. The failure of otherwise viable firms is leading to the loss of valuable intangible assets, while surviving companies are deferring productive investments. Smaller companies have been hit the hardest. While most firms have faced difficulty, larger firms are likely to see a smaller decline in sales and more likely to adopt sophisticated technologies and receive government support.

Households have suffered, especially poorer ones, which have been more likely to lose income, suffer greater food insecurity, have children not engaged in learning, and make distress sales of scarce assets. The resulting increase in stunting, erosion of human capital, and loss of productive assets will hurt the

future earnings of these households. Increased inequality between firms could also increase inequality between workers.

“Accelerated vaccination and testing to control COVID-19 infections could revive economic activity in struggling countries as early as the first half of 2022, and double their growth rate next year,” said East Asia and Pacific Chief Economist, Aaditya Mattoo. “But in the longer term, only deeper reforms can prevent slower growth and increasing inequality, an impoverishing combination the region has not seen this century.”

The report estimates that most countries in the region, including Indonesia and the Philippines, can vaccinate more than 60 percent of their populations by the first half of 2022. While that would not eliminate infections, it would significantly reduce mortality, allowing a resumption of economic activity.

However, the region will need to make a serious effort on four fronts to deal with long COVID: addressing vaccine hesitancy and limitations in distribution capacity to prevent plateauing coverage; enhancing

testing, tracing, and isolation to control infections; increasing regional production of vaccines to reduce dependence on imported supplies; and strengthening health systems to deal with the prolonged presence of the disease. International assistance is needed to support national efforts in all these areas, especially in countries with limited capacity.

Beyond containing COVID-19, a comprehensive strategy will be needed to boost growth and ensure it is inclusive. The report identifies accelerated technology diffusion as a possible silver lining of the crisis that could boost productivity, democratize education, and transform state institutions. However, complementary reforms are necessary. Equipping firms with the skills to embed technology in their business must be accompanied by openness to trade and investment and by competition policies that strengthen incentives for firms to adopt new technology. Implementing long-delayed reforms in education to improve teaching quality and curriculum relevance could ensure wider access to the benefits of new learning technologies.

Regional News

Blue Pacific Alliance Launches \$19.8 Million ‘PROJECT Governance’ Initiative

East-West Center is among partners implementing the 5-year, USAID-funded project to support governance systems in the Pacific

HONOLULU (Sept. 28) – Yesterday in Suva, Fiji, the Blue Pacific Alliance launched a five-year, US \$19.8 million project funded by United States of America through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to help strengthen democratic institutions and promote sound, just, and responsive governance in the Pacific Islands region. (View video of the launch event.)

The initiative, titled “Promoting Just, Engaged, Civic-minded and Transparent (PROJECT) Governance,” aims to organize local communities to foster consensus and inclusion, inspire ownership and draw on local understanding of governance. The Blue Pacific Alliance is a partnership between The Pacific Community (SPC), East-West Center (EWC), CARE, and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) to implement the new PROJECT Governance initiative.

PROJECT Governance aims to:

- Enhance the integrity of government transactions (sound governance)
- Promote the fair and equal application of laws and the integrity of electoral and political processes that represent the will and interests of the people (just governance)
- Strengthen institutions, policies and services to ensure that they are accessible, accountable, and responsive to all segments of the population (responsive governance).

‘Building a better world’

In a statement presented remotely during the launch event, Sāmoa Prime Minister Fiamē Naomi Ma’āfa said, “PROJECT Governance presents a further opportunity for our member governments, respectively and collectively as the Blue Pacific Region ... to support our continued efforts to improve human development, sustainably grow our economies and reduce poverty, improve gender equality, and enhance good governance as well as political and social conditions for stability and safety.”

“I wish to express my thanks to USAID and all other partners for their support for PROJECT Governance, and I look forward to our government engaging with the institutions in the Pacific who are promoting this project,” said Federated States of Micronesia President David Panuelo in a similar message. “I’ve often said that a better world is something we build collectively, as we are doing today.”

People-centered approach

“Exploring a people-centered approach to development and good governance will be at the heart of the activities delivered through this partnership,” said Dr. Stuart Minchin, Director-General of SPC—the region’s principal scientific and technical development organization—which is leading the Blue Pacific Alliance. “Collaborations will be sought with a wide range of stakeholders including governments, local communities, financial and anti-corruption specialists, journalists, judges, politicians, national human rights institutions, and civil society organizations, as well as youth, traditional and faith-based leaders.” (Photo: In-person and virtual participants in the project launch event.)

PROJECT Governance will be implemented in collaboration with 12 Pacific Island countries, where program staff will work alongside local communities: the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Sāmoa, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Nauru, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

The initiative will also provide small grants to civil society organizations in various Pacific Island countries to support local initiatives. Ultimately, sound, just, and responsive governance will result in an enhanced quality of life for Pacific citizens and increase the resilience, prosperity, and sovereignty of Pacific nations.

EWC and PROJECT Governance

East-West Center has been awarded US \$5 million of the project funding to lead four mutually reinforcing programs focused on supporting financial-governance officials across the region over the next five years:

- Financial Governance Training: A region-wide training program to enhance

Pacific governments’ sovereign authority and law-enforcement capabilities to identify, investigate, and prosecute financial crimes by strengthening national financial governance agencies and connecting them regionally through a Pacific Islands Financial Intelligence Network.

- Financial Media Training: Reporting tours and training programs in government investment and financial policies for Pacific investigative journalists and media professionals, expanding the independent media’s ability to inform the public on financial issues and hold governments and enforcement agencies accountable.

- PROJECT Governance Graduate Fellows: Equipping a core group of exceptional Pacific governance leaders through graduate degree fellowships for advanced degrees in management and finance.

- Blue Pacific Governance Gateway: An online platform to support, synergize, and sustain the full array of PROJECT Governance initiatives. The Gateway will serve as a digital meeting place and resource for networking, communications, and capacity development, and as the portal for sharing the digital tools and data developed across the project.

“Over the next several years, effective financial governance will be a critical factor determining whether greater economic opportunities and foreign investment will deliver better livelihoods for Pacific peoples,” said East-West Center President Dr. Richard R. Vuylsteke. “Based on this, the East-West Center’s contribution to PROJECT Governance focuses on strengthening financial governance through a two-pronged effort: developing the capacities of financial oversight agencies and empowering civil-society organizations to demand greater transparency from leaders and government institutions.”

“Our team is excited to be working with our Blue Pacific Alliance partners to implement these important activities in support of Pacific Island communities,” said EWC Chief Communications Officer Jake Hamstra, who is heading up the Center’s participation in the project. “East-West Center will draw on our longstanding in-country networks to focus on enhancing good financial governance as a collaborative effort with regional, national, and civil-society partners.”

For more information about the East-West Center and PROJECT Governance, please contact ProGov@EastWestCenter.org.

Pacific Forum Members hold third briefing with Japan regarding Fukushima treated nuclear wastewater

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

September 15, 2021

Pacific nations continue to raise questions and concerns in closed briefing sessions around plans by Japan to discharge over a million tonnes of treated water from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant into the Pacific Ocean.

The Government of Japan committed to ongoing dialogue with Forum Members as a priority follow up to the PALM9 Summit in July. This followed Japan’s announcement in April of plans to begin discharge in 2023, for a period of up to 40 years. The announcement drew strong global response, including from the Forum Chair and Leaders.

In his opening comments at the third briefing on Tuesday afternoon, Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Henry Puna noted the issues require “open and frank consultation” along with sustained dialogue at the political and technical level.

Japan officials presented a status update on the ALPS (Advanced Liquid Processing System) Treated Water, interim measures regarding the planned discharge, and outcomes of the latest International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) visit to Fukushima.

While appreciative of the information being shared by Japan, Secretary General Puna reiterated the region’s unequivocal need for information as being key to safeguard the Blue Pacific as a nuclear-free zone. “I

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Regional News

Young children's diets show no improvement in last decade, 'could get much worse' under COVID-19 - UNICEF

During crucial period when children begin to transition to solid foods, just one in three are fed a diet diverse enough to grow well

24 September 2021

NEWYORK/SUVA, FIJI, – Children under the age of two are not getting the food or nutrients they need to thrive and grow well, leading to irreversible developmental harm, according to a new report released by UNICEF.

Fed to Fail? The crisis of children's diets in early life – released ahead of the UN Food Systems Summit this week – warns that rising poverty, inequality, conflict, climate-related disasters, and health emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, are contributing to an ongoing nutrition crisis among the world's youngest that has shown little sign of improvement in the last ten years.

“The report's findings are clear: When the stakes are highest, millions of young children are being fed to fail,” said UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore. “Poor nutritional intake in the first two years of life can irreversibly harm children's rapidly growing bodies and brains, impacting

their schooling, job prospects and futures. While we have known this for years, there has been little progress on providing the right kind of nutritious and safe foods for the young. In fact, the ongoing COVID-19 disruptions could make the situation much worse.”

In an analysis of 91 countries, including 14 Pacific Island countries, the report finds that only half of children aged six to 23 months are being fed the minimum recommended number of meals a day, while just a third consume the minimum number of food groups they need to thrive.

In the Pacific region alone, the proportion of children between six to 23 months consuming diets with the minimum number of recommended food groups ranges from as low as 9.3 per cent in Kiribati to 54.7 per cent in Fiji. “Young children around the Pacific region are deprived of the diets they need at the time in their life when it matters most,” said UNICEF

Pacific Representative, Jonathan Veitch. “As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to exacerbate the difficulties that families face in feeding their young children, it is crucial that every possible action be taken to protect the diets of all children.”

An insufficient intake of nutrients found in vegetables, fruits, eggs, fish and meat needed to support growth at an early age puts children at risk of poor brain development, weak learning, low immunity, increased infections and, potentially, death.

Children under the age of two are most vulnerable to all forms of malnutrition – stunting, wasting, micronutrient deficiencies, and overweight and obesity – as a result of poor diets, due to their greater need for essential nutrients per kilogram of body weight than at any other time in life.

Globally, UNICEF estimates that more than half of children under the age of five with wasting – around 23 million children – are younger than two years of age, while the prevalence of stunting increases rapidly between six months and two years, as children's diets fail to keep pace with their growing nutritional needs.

A triple burden of malnutrition also faces the Pacific region, with children experiencing stunting, micronutrient deficiencies and overweight or obesity. Stunting is reported to be very high in Solomon Islands and the Republic of Marshall Islands where almost one-third of children are stunted, followed by Nauru and Vanuatu with almost one-quarter of children stunted.

To deliver nutritious, safe, and affordable diets to every child, the report calls for governments, donors, civil society organizations and development actors to work hand-in-hand to transform food, health and social protection systems by leading key actions, including:

- Increasing the availability and affordability of nutritious foods – including fruits, vegetables, eggs, fish meat and fortified foods – by incentivizing their production, distribution and retailing.

- Implementing national standards and legislation to protect young children from unhealthy processed and ultra-processed foods and beverages, and to end harmful marketing practices targeting children and families.

- Increasing the desirability of nutritious and safe foods through multiple communication channels including digital media to reach parents and children with easy to understand, coherent information.

In the Pacific, UNICEF is working with governments and partners to address poor nutrition and health amongst young children through infant and young child feeding counselling, cooking demonstrations, and behaviour change communication targeting the first 1000 days in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

For older children and adolescents, a children's cooking show called Pacific Kids Food Revolution provides a platform for children to advocate on and support Pacific Island nations to overcome the triple burden of malnutrition. National legislation on breast milk substitutes and marketing of unhealthy food among children in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are also being updated.

For more information about UNICEF Pacific and its work for children, follow UNICEF Pacific on Twitter and Facebook

About the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit:

The UN Food Systems Summit was announced by the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, on World Food Day in October 2020 as a part of the Decade of Action for delivery on the SDGs by 2030. The aim of the Summit is to deliver progress on all 17 of the SDGs through a food systems approach, leveraging the interconnectedness of food systems to global challenges such as hunger, climate change, poverty and inequality. More information about the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit can be found at <https://www.un.org/food-systems-summit>

...Fukushima Wastewater

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appeal to the Government of Japan to continue to share the relevant information in its totality, and within agreed timelines.”

“Importantly for us in the Blue Pacific, our fears really lie in the transboundary nature of the impacts. We require nothing less than full and complete disclosure of all information and evidence to enable us to fully understand the nature and extent of the impact, and to enable us to make a comprehensive and unbiased assessment of the impacts of the proposed ALPS water discharge.”

As reiterated by Forum Foreign Ministers on 27 July, the region is actively pursuing efforts to advance Forum Leaders' commitments to international consultation, international law, and independent expertise to provide guidance and verifiable scientific assessments. To accelerate efforts, the Forum will engage independent experts to support the region's efforts over the next months.

Thanking the Government of Japan, Secretary General Puna said he is hopeful there will be ways to address Pacific concerns to reach “solutions that are based on science, and consistent with legal and moral obligations.”

Opinion Editorial

Asia-Pacific is the world's most rapidly aging region, but are we ready?

Imagine it is the year 2050. In Asia-Pacific, one in four people will be over the age of 60; three times the number of older persons in 2010. With close to 1.3 billion senior citizens in less than 30 years from now, are countries in the region prepared to fully address the needs of older persons so that they age with dignity?

Let's rewind.

Today, 72-year old Ping sells three kilos of sticky rice each day in her remote village in a Southeast Asian country, earning barely enough for a basic living. She's been doing this for more than 10 years, ever since her husband passed away. Her son died two months ago, and her two daughters have married and moved to another province. Ping gets some consolation from the health insurance she is entitled to, as maintaining good health during her old age is her main concern.

Back in the day, Ping and other women in numerous countries across Asia-Pacific may have been supported by their families and communities. Yet, times are changing. Migration and urbanization have shifted traditional support systems for the elderly, and more and more governments are grappling with increasing healthcare costs and a shrinking workforce. While less than a third of older persons in the region currently receive a pension of some sort, pension payments are increasing as the older population increases, straining governments further.

More than ever there is an urgent need for policy reform in addressing population ageing. This must be driven by a shift in mindset to convert the challenges into a demographic opportunity.

Population ageing is not a threat, but an opportunity

We must rethink population ageing,

celebrating it as the triumph of development that it truly is. More and more people are living longer due to the result of successive advancements in health, nutrition, economic and social well-being.

Along with longer life-expectancy, couples are having fewer babies. This is due to a variety of reasons such as challenges couples face in striking a work-life balance to not being able to afford having more children. However, low fertility and longer life-expectancy are not the problem. The real problem is not being ready to face this rapidly changing demographic shift.

This is why governments must act now. Policy makers must work together with academia and civil society to incorporate rights-based ageing policies and systems into national development plans. While some countries in Asia-Pacific have already taken steps, implementation must be strengthened, particularly within the contexts of COVID-19 and escalating humanitarian crises that increase vulnerabilities of older persons.

Adapting a life-cycle approach with gender equality at the core

In Asia-Pacific, with more than half of the older population being women, it is crucial to adapt a life-cycle approach to population ageing, grounded in gender equality and human rights.

Life-long gender discrimination leaves women even more disadvantaged in an ageing society. Older women are often more financially dependent than older men due to generally lower education levels and unpaid work, having often carried the burden of

being the family caregiver.

Investing in each stage of life, starting from before a girl is born, determines the path of her life course. When a woman is able to safely deliver her baby, this in turn improves the long-term health of both mother and child. When a girl has access to quality education, including comprehensive sexuality education, it helps her make informed decisions about life-changing matters as she transitions from childhood to adolescence and on to adulthood. When a woman has equal opportunity to contribute to the workforce and has bodily autonomy, she has the power to shape her own future.

The decisions she makes, and is allowed to make, at every stage of her life, paves the way towards a healthier and more financially secure silver age.

There is little time to lose

We need to take action now. The megatrend of rapid demographic shifts is altering Asia-Pacific and our entire world.

This is why the years 2020-2030 have been declared the UN Decade for Healthy Ageing, complementing the Madrid International Plan of Action for Ageing (MIPAA) whose 20th anniversary next year will



bring together governments in Asia-Pacific, and globally, to review progress made and better plan for the challenges ahead.

While there is no single comprehensive policy that can address population ageing, we must invest in forward-thinking, rights-based and gender-sensitive policies that focus on the needs of people at every age of their life. In so doing, countries in the Asia-Pacific region can aspire to, and achieve, a better future for all, where no one is left behind.

Bjorn Anderson
UNFPA Regional Director



Opinion Editorial

China persistently promotes building a community with a shared future for humanity

October 1st, 2021, marked the 72nd anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC). It's another milestone in the history of the 5000-year-old Chinese civilization or even in that of the entire human civilization for the reason that China has realized the First Centenary Goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects in China by the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC), meaning all 770 million rural population who used to live below the poverty threshold have been lifted out of poverty.

Over the past century, China has undergone tremendous changes turning itself from a poor and war-torn country into a dynamic and prosperous one. It is now the world's second largest economy, growing in composite strength and international standing. It has thriving cosmopolitan cities, beautiful and harmonious countryside, advanced infrastructure, a safe and convenient transport network, a dynamic market, and a stable and orderly society, and people's rights to existence and development, as the primary basic human rights, are well protected. Despite the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, year 2020 saw China's GDP reach 101.6 trillion RMB (15.7 trillion USD), surpassing the threshold of 100 trillion RMB (15.5 trillion USD) for the first time. With a per capita gross national income of more than 10,000 USD and a per capita disposable income of 32,189 RMB (4,974.7 USD), rising from 98 RMB (15.2 USD) in the early years of the PRC (1950s), China has a middle-income group of 400 million people, the biggest in the world, and its population's life expectancy raised from 35 years in the 1950s to 77.3 years in 2019.

From war-torn scratch 72 years ago, the new China (PRC) established an independent and substantial industrial and economic system in just a few years. Groundbreaking successes were achieved in nuclear technology, satellites, carrier rockets and other cutting-edge technologies. Today,

China leads the world in quantum communication, artificial intelligence and 5G technology. Its Shenzhou manned spacecraft and Tiangong space lab are orbiting the earth. The rover Zhurong has landed on Mars and is engaged in scientific exploration. Its manned submersible, Jiaolong, dived to the deep sea. All of these serve to demonstrate how China has significantly improved its independent scientific and technological capabilities.

Practiced in the whole process of the PRC's founding, reconstruction and reform, in all aspects of governance, and in every field of economic and social life, democracy has taken root in China as a shared value, as well as a political institution and mechanism of governance. Democracy is a shared value of the entire human race; it is not a "patent" to be claimed by any one country. There is no fixed model of democracy's fulfillment. In judging whether a particular form of democracy works, one needs to see whether it is adapted to a country's history and culture, whether it conforms to its conditions, whether it can deliver political stability and social progress, whether it can improve people's lives, whether it can win public support, and whether it can contribute to advancing the progressive cause of humanity. The days of isolation are gone in China, and democracy is the order of the day. The Chinese people now live in contentment, and Chinese society is full of vigor. Polls show the Chinese people's overall satisfaction toward the Chinese government exceeding 93%. These all well illustrate the immense success and strong vitality of the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

While China has achieved remarkable successes as a result of a dedicated effort made over many years, it is still in the primary stage of socialism and will long remain so. China's international status as the largest developing country in the world is still unchanged.

China is a huge country with a large population and complex national

conditions. The key to achieving its independence, development, and prosperity is the robust leadership of the CPC. Bearing in mind its abiding mission of serving the people wholeheartedly, the CPC upholds Marxism as the scientific guiding ideology, which enables its strong leadership and governance. Its long-term ruling-party status in China is by choice of the history and the people. The CPC has led the people in realizing coordinated material, political, cultural, social and eco-environmental progress, pioneering a new and distinctively Chinese path to modernization, creating a new model for human progress, and refuting the myth that modernization can be achieved only by following the capitalist model.

The CPC is a political party that seeks happiness for the people and progress for humanity. No matter how the global situation might have changed, the CPC has always pursued the shared human values of peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy and freedom. It has championed internationalism, stood on the right side of history and the progressive side of humanity, and contributed to world peace and development. Since the 18th National Congress of the CPC, China has moved closer to the center of the world stage. Playing a more active role in international affairs, the CPC, guided by Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy, has consistently pushed forward major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics, followed the path of peaceful development, safeguarded world peace, pursued common development and promoted the building of a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity.

The concept of building of a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity advocates that countries with different social systems, ideologies, historical civilizations and development levels target the same goals, align their interests, and share their rights and responsibilities, so as to promote the overall development of human society. The Belt and Road Initiative provides an important platform for building a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity. China has signed more than 200 documents on BRI cooperation with 140 countries and 32 international organizations, including the Federated States of Micronesia. A World Bank

report shows that the BRI could contribute to lifting 7.6 million people from extreme poverty and 32 million from moderate poverty, boost trade by 2.8 to 9.7 percent for participating countries and by 1.7 to 6.2 percent for the world, and increase global incomes by 0.7 to 2.9 percent.

The FSM is an important partner of China in the joint pursuit of a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity and the Belt and Road Initiative. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations 32 years ago, China and the FSM have enjoyed deepening political mutual trust and remarkable achievements in friendly exchanges and practical cooperation across the spectrum, yielding tangible benefits for our two peoples. For the past 20 months, although the pandemic severed the in-person exchanges between China and the FSM, the hearts and minds of our two peoples got much closer. Our two countries have not only rendered mutual support to contain the COVID-19 virus, but also worked shoulder-to-shoulder to resolutely fend off the political virus of politicizing, stigmatizing and labeling the pandemic and stand against the wrongdoing of a few Western countries to politicize COVID-19 origin-tracing efforts. In doing so, we've made our contribution to the international cooperation on combating the pandemic in solidarity. China has provided various kinds of assistance to the FSM in response to COVID-19, especially the donation of 30 isolation units worth around 1.2 million USD, and has also shared first-hand knowledge, provided technical support to and coordinated policies with the FSM for combating the virus. Some Chinese sub-national governments, enterprises and friendship organizations have also generously lent their helping hands to their FSM counterparts. The Chinese government and contractors of China-Aid projects in the FSM, overcoming substantial difficulties and economic loss and managing to minimize the pandemic's impact on our bilateral practical cooperation, completed and handed over such projects as the Kahmar Bridge and Secondary Road in Pohnpei.

Moving forward, China will stay a builder of world peace, contributor to global development, defender of

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热烈庆祝 中华人民共和国成立72周年 中密建交32周年

In Warmest Celebration of
the 72nd Anniversary of the Founding of
the People's Republic of China
& the 32nd Anniversary of the Establishment of
Diplomatic Relations Between China and the FSM



" China-FSM Comprehensive Strategic Partnership & Great Friendship "



" Joint Pursuit of the Belt and Road Initiative
and the Building of A Community with A Shared Future for Humanity "

中华人民共和国驻密克罗尼西亚联邦大使馆
EMBASSY OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA IN THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA



Opinion Editorial

Smart Islands Initiative: An affordable, accessible digital future for Pacific communities

It is no secret that many countries in the Pacific region suffer some of the highest costs of broadband internet, with the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, and countries within Micronesia paying the highest prices globally per gigabyte of internet.

Often, the great cost is not met with its equal in access or speed – internet remains slow and capped at low monthly averages.

On the surface, this might translate as interrupted access to Facebook and Twitter and perhaps an Instagram story that never uploads, but the impacts caused by sky-high internet costs in developing Pacific countries prone to natural hazards go much deeper.

It can result in serious developmental challenges, especially exacerbated during disasters or, as we've now witnessed, a pandemic. In the Pacific's case, it has been both, with disasters prefacing the second wave of COVID-19 in many Pacific countries and with the November-April cyclone season on the way.

Socioeconomic challenges posed by COVID-19 have aggravated existing costs of connecting remote islands, lack of human and financial resources, inadequate digital skills and high costs to access these services. Affordable broadband access can help Pacific countries recover faster from COVID-19 and accelerate their achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This challenge presents an opportunity to bridge the communication divide through targeted support, cooperation, and partnership – a partnership which is spearheaded by thoughtful change and centered around people.

In April 2020, category-5 Tropical Cyclone Harold hit several Pacific countries, leaving a trail of destruction in its wake. Harold claimed lives, crushed homes, and destroyed sources of income for thousands of Pacific peoples, particularly in Vanuatu and Fiji.

In anticipation of one such disaster back in 2014, the United Nations, with the leadership of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), undertook a satellite connectivity project in nine Pacific countries, including Fiji, Kiribati, Micronesia, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu with over 90 satellite ground terminals were provided including C-Band, Ku Band, and Ka band terminals.

This project installed satellite ground stations to provide connectivity to communities within these Pacific countries and made disaster response operations possible in the aftermath of Harold.

With affected countries having instituted COVID-induced national lockdowns, physical response to Harold was near impossible. However, the satellite capabilities established in some of the affected communities were able to connect communities to the outside world and aid disaster response efforts as they were the only means of communication.

This also allowed communities to capitalize on the connectivity for non-emergency communication and socioeconomic activities, such as connecting schools, health clinics, and government offices.

Our investment in infrastructure and the partnership we share with the Pacific people has changed the pace at which island communities can now recover from disasters and reduces the cost of building back better.

Fast forward to now - people in these communities are learning how to access and use digital services and applications, such as mobile banking, e-commerce, e-agriculture, e-health, among others.

This cost-cutting concept, which supports access to affordable connectivity in Pacific communities most in need of it, is known as the Smart Islands initiative – and

it is designed to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs in the Pacific, with under a decade left to go.

The Smart Islands initiative enhances broadband availability and affordability across communities, providing opportunities for digital skills development and access to digital services, which are essential to SDG targets.

By digitally empowering Pacific communities through the Smart Islands initiative, the development trajectory of Pacific Island Countries will no longer be defined by geographical barriers and isolation, but rather, by the plethora of opportunities for education, healthcare, business, livelihood, and employment, among others.

This initiative, now starting in Vanuatu, has gained increasing traction among Pacific Island Countries and the UN is developing Smart Islands initiatives that will capitalize on various UN agencies' expertise and support governments to fully roll out Smart Islands initiatives in the years to come.

In order to make Smart Islands a reality throughout the Pacific, an evidence-

based, whole-of-government, multi-stakeholder approach is essential.

By collaborating and harmonizing the development and provision of digital services, Pacific ministries and government agencies can create economies of scale, and the private sector may expand its connectivity and upgrade network capacity.

Civil society and community organizations are key interlocutors in articulating community needs.

This has the potential to pave the way to accelerate the introduction of emerging technology, such as big data and artificial intelligence, once communities are connected and the multitudes of data are collected to enable data analysis.

Investing in a digital future for our sisters and brothers in the Pacific is a no-brainer – but it will only happen if we continue to form these crucial partnerships, placing people and sustainable change at the centre and ensuring no one is left behind.

*By Sanaka Samarasinha
UN Resident Coordinator, Fiji multi-country Office, Atsuko Okuda,
Regional Director, ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.*

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the international order and provider of public goods, but will never seek to overtake, threaten, challenge or replace any other country, far less seek hegemony. There is only one international system - the one with the United Nations at the core. There is only one international order, which is based on international law, and there is only one set of fundamental international norms, which is based on the missions and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The attempt to maintain hegemony in the logic of "might is right" by one or a few Western countries in the cloak of protecting a "rule-based international order" will be resolutely opposed by China and rejected by the overwhelming majority of countries.

China stands ready to continue

helping the FSM achieve sustainable development on an early date through our Belt and Road cooperation on the principles of extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits, to work shoulder to shoulder to constantly elevate China-FSM "Great Friendship" and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership to new heights, benefiting the well-being of our two peoples, and to make new contributions to the building of a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity. We need to make concerted efforts to safeguard the international system with the United Nations at the core, pursue mutual respect and mutual benefits, oppose hegemony and power politics, and strive for building an open, inclusive, clean, and beautiful world that enjoys lasting peace, universal security, and common prosperity!

*Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the FSM
Huang Zheng*