

Christmas Tree lighting and Anti-Bullying parade in Pohnpei

Pohnpei State Enginkehlap

Governor Oliver delivered remarks this evening (December 3, 2021) at Peilapalap, Kolonia at the conclusion of a parade held to mark the end of Public Safety week and their anti-bullying campaign. Over 10 different groups participated in the parade that started at the Spanish Wall and ended at the Governor's Office.

Director of Public Safety, Patrick Carl, kicked off the event with opening remarks explaining that the parade and Christmas Tree lighting is the end of their weeklong

public safety week and anti-bullying campaign. Captain Ricky Rodriguez was the MC of the event and Captain Ioanis gave the opening prayer.

In his remarks Governor Oliver said that what was learned during the weeklong anti-bullying campaign does not stop here, instead what was

Click here for continuation



Click here for a video of Christmas lights in Pohnpei

Two arrested in Pohnpei including an FSM consultant, on multiple charges related to human trafficking

By *Bill Jaynes*
The Kaselehlie Press

December 14, 2021

Pohnpei—Last week Pohnpei State police officers arrested FSM macroeconomist, consultant to the government, Robert “Rob” Solomon on multiple charges related to Human Trafficking. The arrest was initially made based on a criminal information that was filed at the Pohnpei Supreme Court on November 1 (Case #2021-00778). Carter Edwin was also arrested for charges listed in that case.

While executing a court issued search and seizure warrant on the first case at Solomon's home in Dolonier, police found a 17-year-old girl hiding in one of the closets. Prosecutors filed a second case against Solomon (Case # 2021-00999).

The charges against Solomon in the first case are two counts of criminal solicitation, one count of sexual servitude of a minor, two counts of trafficking in persons, three counts of prostitution, three counts of pandering and one count of sexual abuse. The charges against Edwin in that case were two counts of criminal solicitation, on count

of trafficking in persons, and two counts of prostitution. The alleged victims of those crime were three separate females, one of whom, at 17 years of age, was a minor.

Solomon is sole defendant in the second case which involved a different 17-year-old girl. Charges are based on alleged crimes that took place on December 3, 4, 5, and 7. In that case Solomon is charged with four counts each of sexual servitude of a minor, trafficking in persons, prostitution, and pandering. Prosecutors additionally charged him with one count each of sexual abuse and kidnapping.

The Pohnpei Supreme Court granted Solomon's motion for bail in the amount of \$2000 in the first case and \$1500 in the second case. Bail terms require that he obey all FSM laws and appear at all scheduled hearings. It bars him from traveling and from acting to intimidate any of the witnesses in the case. He has returned to work in Palikir.

Neither Solomon nor Edwin have yet had a hearing to determine guilt or innocence, and both are considered to be innocent unless prosecutors prove the charges against them in a court of law.

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Ambassador Cantor and President Panuelo visit Pakin Atoll for 70th Operation Christmas Drop

FSM Information Services

Ambassador Carmen G. Cantor joined H.E. President David W. Panuelo, First Lady Patricia Edwin, Vice Speaker Esmond B. Moses, and other key FSM National and State level dignitaries to witness the package drop for Pakin Atoll. Travelling aboard an FSM Surveillance boat, the FSS Independence, the group observed an American Air-Force C-130 (Callsign: Santa 31) drop packages at approximately 6:15pm on Tuesday, December 7th.

Operation Christmas Drop (OCD) is a tradition that began during the Christmas season in 1952 when a B-29 Superfortress aircrew saw islanders waving at them from the island of Kapingamarangi, Federated States of Micronesia. In the spirit of Christmas, the aircrew dropped a bundle of supplies attached to a parachute to the islanders below, giving the operation its name. Today, OCD operations include more than fifty-five islands throughout the Pacific. The 10-day drop, which began December 5th, will include donated food, supplies, educational materials, and tools.

OCD is the Department of Defense's longest-running humanitarian airlift operation. In addition to its crucial humanitarian aspect, Operation Christmas Drop is a multi-nation training event in which C-130 aircrews from the United States, Japan, and the Republic of Korea will airdrop food, fishing equipment, educational materials, and toys to islanders throughout the FSM.

According to the Anderson Airfield website, "Months leading up the drop dates volunteers create donation drop-

off boxes and raise money from local businesses and citizens. A week before the drop, volunteer Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, civilians, contractors, and families assist in picking up and sorting the donations."

Together, American Air Force Personnel are working with partner nations to execute low-cost, low-altitude training air drops. Per Andersen Air Force Base's Website, this is noted to be "a critical training event improving interoperability and communication for future real world humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions."

Prior to departure from Pohnpei proper, the Office of the President consulted the Mwohnsapw of Sokehs. Prior to the drop, the group was received by Traditional Chief Sounirek Pakin and the community in Pakin.

President Panuelo, when asked what the significance of the drop to the People of the FSM is, responded with: "Operation Christmas Drop is arguably the premier example of our Constitution's Preamble in action. We all know that the FSM extends to all nations that which we seek: peace, friendship, cooperation, and love in our common humanity. Is there any better example of peace than to drop food, equipment, toys, and supplies, instead of weapons? Is there any better example of friendship than to spend months of preparation to ensure that remote communities receive the things they actually need, such as fishing supplies and rice, and want, such as toys? Is there any better example of cooperation than to coordinate multiple Governments at the national, state, and municipal level, across dozens of islands, with multiple armed forces, for the explicit purpose of



making Christmas absolutely amazing? Is there any better example of love in our common humanity than to appreciate that, at its core, Operation Christmas Drop began its life as a genuinely nice thing to do, and has continued on that same premise for 70 years?"

"Thank you to all the men and women who donated supplies, and who flew the planes," President Panuelo continued. "Whether you are from Guam or the US mainland, or Japan or Korea, thank you so much for making Christmas 2021 so bright. My hope is that, in the far future where all of us alive are today are a distant memory, that Operation Christmas Drop continues as an annual

event, spreading cheer and joy across the Pacific." Ambassador Cantor said about the OCD: "It was a great honor to join President Panuelo, the First Lady, and other FSM Government Officials for this historic 70th drop. It is a joyous example of people working together as enduring partners to contribute to the common good for so many holiday seasons. I want to thank our armed forces and everyone who contributed to making this 70th OCD event a success."

For more information, please visit <https://www.andersen.af.mil/ocd/>, Embassy Kolonia's Facebook Page (@EmbassyKolonia) and the Office of the President's Facebook Page (@piofsm)

The Kaselehlie Press

Your Newspaper for Today and Tomorrow

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Bill Jaynes
Managing Editor

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December 29, 2021**

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

Monday, December 27, 2021

From 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence to 365 days of commitment to reducing inequalities and advancing human rights

The Spotlight Initiative

Today marks the International Day for Human Rights, as well as the end of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV). The Pacific region can be proud of the progress and wealth of initiatives held to raise awareness and advance progress in the elimination of violence against women and girls, and in the promotion of gender equality.

“The volume and breadth of 16 Days of Activism activities across the region and the engagement of national authorities, civil society organisations and the public has been humbling and inspiring,” noted Mr. Sanaka Samarasinha, UN Resident Coordinator to Fiji Multi-Country Office.

The EU-UN Spotlight Initiative programme supported a number of events including the launch of the Standard Operating Procedure for the Clinical Management of Sexual and Gender-based Violence in Vanuatu, the launch of the Helpline for the LGBTQIA community in Palau, and the training on GBV for police officers led by Women United Together in Marshall Islands.

These events were amongst hundreds of activities across the region organised by national authorities, women centres, faith-based organisations, and civil society organisations, to say no to GBV and stand up for the rights of women and girls.

What Covid-19 has taught us is that no one can end a global pandemic alone. Violence against women and girls is a global pandemic in its own right, for our communities to develop the antibodies needed to eliminate GBV and create the environment where women and girls can thrive, we need to continue working together every single day, supporting our communities and injecting change with our words and actions, leaving no room for the virus of inequality to survive.

“16 Day of Activism is inspiring and nurturing the next generation of activists and human rights defenders, movements of people working together for an equal, more sustainable and resilient future across the Pacific” continued Mr. Samarasinha “Once again, 16 Days of Activism has shown that when we, women and men, girls and boys, work together, the sky is not the limit and we can really become generation equality” he concluded.



International Human Rights Day



Acting Director of the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Norleen DeOrio, along with the Hon. Herolyn Movick, and Chief of Secondary Education, Mr. Jolden Lipai participated in an International Human Rights Day event to end the 16 days of Activism at Gonzaga Hall.

Acting Director DeOrio joined a panel discussion on human rights issues that included Acting Secretary of the FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs, Moses Pretrick, Second Secretary Jasemine Altinkaya from the Australian Embassy, Capt Taylor Santos from the Salvation Army, and representatives from the Pohnpei State Department of Public Safety, US Embassy, and IOM.



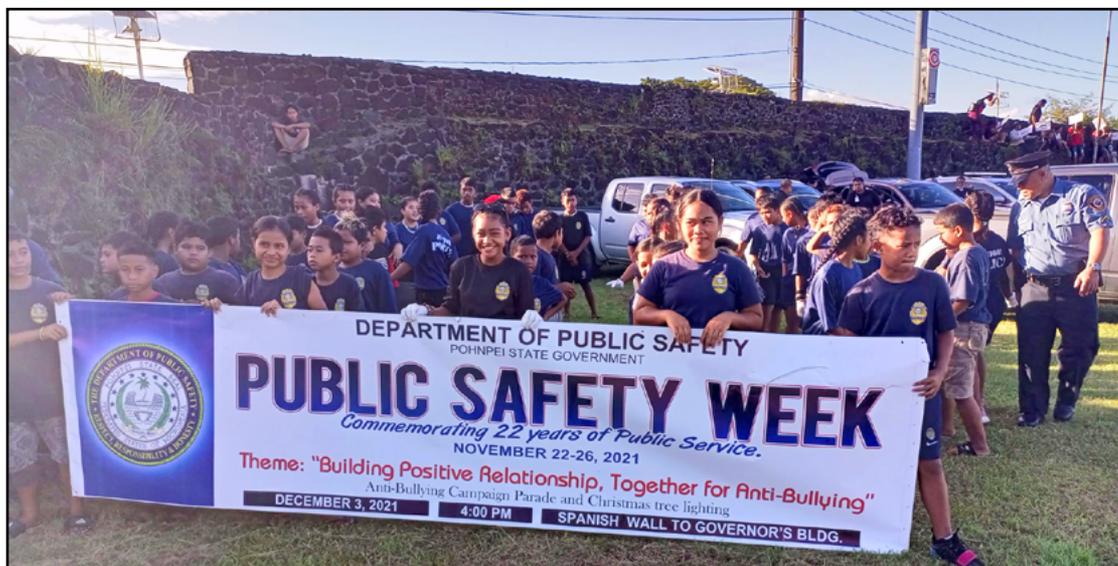
Students from Pohnpei High Schools were present and learned about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and gender equality issues.

...Tree lighting

Continued from front page

learned and the support of this issue will continue. He thanked the Director of Public Safety, Patrick Carl for his leadership in overseeing the anti-bullying campaign and the Christmas Tree Lighting program. To the members of the diplomatic corps and local leadership, which included the US Ambassador, Australian Ambassador, Embassy of Japan Deputy Head of Mission, UN Resident Coordinator, IsoNahnken of Madolenihmw, John Adolph, Acting Speaker McGarry Miguel and Senator Shelten Neth, he noted that while the world is going through a pandemic it was appropriate to share a message of peace, harmony and unity in the name of humanity and thanked them for their presence. He closed by encouraging the children who participated in the parade and the anti-bullying campaign to continue to do their best in school and take what they have learned and apply it at school, in their homes and communities. Governor Oliver noted the presence of US Embassy Kolonia Defense Attaché' US Navy Commander Thomas Price and his US military colleagues.

First Lady of Pohnpei, Estle G. Oliver, with H.E. Carmen Cantor, US Ambassador and H.E. Joanne Cowley, Australian Ambassador, turned on the Christmas Tree and all the Christmas lights at the Governor's Office, following a 10-second countdown.



Kalangahn Lap to Mr. Kiyoshi Goto for the generous donations to Special Education Students



Kalahngan Lap to Mr. Kyoshi Goto and Yoshie Enterprises for their generous donations, valued at over \$13,000, consisting of 265 bags of 40 lbs rice and individual gift bags. The donations were delivered to the Governor's Office on Tuesday, December 7, 2021, and will be delivered with the assistance of the Department of Education to special education students.



College Interns Hold Workshops about Healthcare Facilities in the FSM

Seventeen Interns from the College, under the Leadership Through Innovation Program with UNICEF, held a Presentation at the Unicef office in Kolonia, Pohnpei. Their presentation focused on analyzing the January 2021 survey on the various healthcare facilities in the Federated States of Micronesia with data provided by the EPA. The exhibition has two goals. The first purpose is to present information to distinguished guests from Local and Foreign Government Agencies and other Non-Government Organizations. The second purpose is to introduce the interns into a professional setting, hone their skills for data analysis, public speaking, and begin discussions that would hopefully lead to action and reform for the Nation's Healthcare facilities. In attendance were from the National Department of Health and Social Affairs, the director of Environmental Protection Agency, including the UN Micronesia Resident Coordinator for the new Multi-Country for the North Pacific, The Honorable Jaap van Hierden, The event kicked off with welcoming remarks from Mr. Cromwell Bacareza, Chief of Unicef North Pacific, followed by distinguished guests from Mr. Marson Rosario, the Unicef Communication for Development Officer. Next, Mr. Timothy Mamangon, Executive Director of COM center For Entrepreneurship, gave a background summary on what activities the interns did leading up to the presentation. Afterward, the interns would begin their presentation, starting with the State of Pohnpei. For the Pohnpei Presentation team, Mr. Dylan Etscheit & Ms. Mercedes Olter presented their findings. Pohnpei is one of the two most populous states with eight healthcare facilities and houses the seat of the National Government and the embassies of Foreign Governments. They would first list the types of Healthcare facilities in Pohnpei State and then would go on to list the weaknesses found and suggestions for improvement. For example, it was noted that each of the facilities suffers from an acute need for sanitary facilities and trained staff to clean the facilities. Another observation is that each

healthcare facility also suffered from inadequate restrooms that couldn't meet feminine, patient, and staff needs. Furthermore, healthcare facilities are lacking when it comes to efficient hand washing materials and filtered water. With the ongoing pandemic under Covid-19, the need for isolation areas and onsite Covid-19 testing and treatment is of great importance. Even though the country doesn't have any cases of covid, the government of the FSM still needs to be adequately prepared if one finds its way here as the country has a closed border policy in place only allowing repatriation of citizens and residents. The Kosrae team consisting of Ms. Benida Asher and Mr. Isaiah Hawley presented their findings. Kosrae has 6 Healthcare facilities but is the least populous state with around 6,000 people. The Kosrae team's findings were very similar to that of the Pohnpei team. Healthcare facilities lack water sufficiency and cleanliness, isolation facilities, feminine hygiene products on-site, separated restrooms, and hand hygiene stations and materials. The suggestions are more or less the same as the Pohnpei team. There are issues with inadequately prepared facilities regarding cleanliness, feminine hygiene products on hand, and water management. However, during their presentation concerning Isolation facilities, what was mentioned was quite an eye-opener. The municipality of Tafunsak is home to the Kosrae Airport, the port through which repatriates from abroad arrive, and it doesn't house any isolation units or screening areas. The Yap team of Cody Endor and Wolfgang Wolphagen presented their findings after the Kosrae team. Again, the results are more or less the same as the Pohnpei and Kosrae team's findings. There is a severe lack of cleanliness, feminine hygiene readiness, adequate restrooms, isolation areas, screening areas, and water treatment. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, Chuuk couldn't provide information. The presentation was a success. The interns could convey the information they analyzed smoothly and coherently without struggle. The presentation was able to hone their skills for analyzing and presenting. Hopefully, it would set in motion some reform and action to improve the country's healthcare facilities.



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We look forward hearing from you!

Improving East Micronesia telecommunications connectivity

Joint media statement with FSM Information Services

December 11-12, 2021

Australia, Japan, and the United States are committed to working in partnership with the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Kiribati, and Nauru to improve internet connectivity to these three Pacific nations by providing funding to build a new undersea cable.

The proposed undersea cable will provide faster, higher quality, and more reliable and secure communications to approximately 100,000 people across three countries. This will support increased economic growth, drive development opportunities, and help to improve living standards as the region recovers from the severe impacts of COVID-19.

The new cable will connect Kosrae (FSM), Nauru, and Tarawa (Kiribati) with the existing HANTRU-1 cable at Pohnpei (FSM), providing internet connectivity through a submarine cable for the first time.

Improved connectivity and access to digital technologies can provide significant economic and social benefits and are key enablers of sustainable development. They also help increase the availability of digital government services, particularly in education and health, and provide businesses and households with improved access to services, information and trade, and

employment opportunities.

This six-country collaboration highlights our commitment to work together on critical telecommunications infrastructure and contribute to reliable and secure internet for the region.

We will continue to coordinate closely with the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank to ensure this project complements investments by these institutions to enhance digital connectivity in FSM, Kiribati, and Nauru.

This is more than an infrastructure investment. It represents an enduring partnership to deliver practical and meaningful solutions at a time of unprecedented economic and strategic challenges in our region. This project builds on the strong foundations of trilateral collaboration between Australia, Japan, and the United States in the Indo-Pacific, including support for Palau's undersea cable.

It is a further demonstration of our shared commitment to quality, transparent, fiscally sustainable, catalytic infrastructure partnerships with, and between, Pacific nations. These partnerships meet genuine needs, respect sovereignty, and complement the Trilateral Infrastructure Partnership and the Build Back Better World (B3W) initiative. Trilateral partners will continue to work together to promote an open, inclusive and resilient region.



H.E. David W. Panuelo, President of the FSM; H.E. Jo Cowley, Ambassador of Australia to the FSM; H.E. Hisashi Michigami, Ambassador-designate of Japan to the FSM; H.E. Carmen G. Cantor, Ambassador of the USA to the FSM

President Panuelo tells President Biden, other democratic countries, that FSM will seek to increase media development, engagement, & training

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—From December 9th to December 10th, 2021, His Excellency David W. Panuelo—President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)—attended the Summit for Democracy, hosted by U.S. President Joseph R. Biden Jr., and attended by over one hundred (100) fellow democracies.

The purpose of the Summit for Democracy was to discuss how to strengthen democracies and democratic principles in the defense against authoritarianism, the fight against corruption, and the promotion of respect for human rights.

It is the perception of the FSM National Government that there was common agreement in the discussions that democracies—while imperfect by design, and imperfect in reality—are nonetheless the fairest way to deliver the greatest benefits to people around the world.

For the FSM's formal and public-facing intervention statement, President Panuelo announced that he has just signed the FSM's National Anti-Corruption Strategy; additionally, the President recognized the recent Transparency International

report on corruption in the Pacific, and committed to taking positive action to positively change citizens perceptions.

President Panuelo noted that a significant threat to the FSM's democracy is its lack of free media.

“We have only one newspaper in our country, which has limited staff and no legal right to information from Government,” President Panuelo said. “This is unsustainable and must change.”

The President noted that he has submitted the Nation's first Freedom of Information Act for consideration by the FSM Congress. Among other practical benefits to assist citizens, the Freedom of Information Act would categorically state that all persons in the FSM have a right to information from their Government.

Additionally, President Panuelo advised President Biden and other democratic heads of government that he will be asking the FSM Department of Education, the College of Micronesia-FSM, and the

Nation's friends, allies, and development partners, to help increase media training, engagement, and development across the Nation.





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K Press Perspective

Will training REALLY be the solution to limited free media presence in the FSM?

On Saturday, December 11, the Office of the FSM President released a public relations piece regarding President David Panuelo's participation in the Summit for Democracy along with over one hundred "fellow democracies" around the world. U.S. President Joseph Biden hosted the summit (see article on page 6).

The President's pre-recorded statement during the summit was an interesting one on many levels. Most readers would know why it was interesting to me in particular. I will choose to give him the benefit of the doubt and admit that he was given only limited time to speak and therefore couldn't go into a full explanation of the causes of the lack of free media beyond those he mentioned. The topic is far more complex than one of training practitioners. If training is the sole issue, it should also extend to government officials on how best to deal with media requests and how to shape a media policy.

The press release says that the President will be asking the Department of Education to collaborate with the College of Micronesia FSM and FSM's development partners such as donor countries to help increase media development, media engagement, and media training for the FSM. That's great, but it ignores the fact that COM-FSM had a media studies department that it cancelled due both to low enrollment and difficulty in placing graduates. Would media outlets, if they existed, have liked to hire media studies graduates? Likely they would, but the problem is that they didn't exist and they still don't.

When I started at The Kaselehlie Press, there were at least four independent newspapers in the FSM, one in each State, but all of them moved on to greener economic pastures.

"But Palau has multiple media independent media outlets. Why don't we?"

Palau has a couple of very large factors in their favor in terms of the ability of their media outlets to financially survive. First is a geographic advantage. Though

Palau's population is only approximately 20 percent of the FSM, that population, most of whom are potential consumers of news content, aren't spread across over a million square miles of ocean as the FSM is. Second is the fact that Palau has one of the highest per capita gross domestic products in the Pacific region. In 2019 (pre-Covid) the most recent data we could find, Palau had a per capita GDP that was nearly three times that of FSM. Businesses in Palau had both deeper pockets for advertising, which supports media and also, due to the existence of meaningful business competition, they had a deeper motivation to do so.

Legal access?

I'm nearly certain that when President Panuelo mentioned that the nation's only newspaper has "no legal right to information from the government," he was actually asking Congress to pass "his" proposed "Freedom of Information Act" which staff members developed on their own initiative. I also assume that he means that without the legislation, the FSM's (currently) only newspaper cannot legally "demand" information. But his statement didn't point out that the FSM likewise has no real legal standing to withhold it and that doing so only creates suspicion—a suspicion that can only be allayed by the kind of transparency that the administration committed to during the inauguration over two years ago.

Suspicion leads to things like the Transparency International report in November which said that 80 percent of people interviewed in the FSM think that corruption is a big problem in government, a perception that covers a wide gamut of issues. Only the Solomon Islands, some of whose citizenry recently resorted to violence and arson, and Papua New Guinea, which is often in the news for corruption scored worse on that report. Fiji's respondents scored better on the scale even though their government leader took over during a forceful coup in 2006 and has remained in power ever since.

Transparency?

To be sure, there has never been more "news" coming out of the President's office than there has been since President Panuelo took office. What there hasn't been is any sense of inclusion of what he calls the "free media" for an outside look. Press releases from his office come out as fait accompli, sanitized and ready for government approved consumption, each "article" personally scrutinized by the President himself. Information that doesn't necessarily make him look anything but stellar simply never gets released. With only one "free media" outlet that is directly in the country, there is no motivation for the administration to do anything like a press conference where a journalist can ask a difficult question.

The FSM President's speech during the Democracy Summit said that he had signed a National Anti-Corruption Strategy. That's all well and good, but what is it? Where can one attain a copy of that—or for that matter, the FSM policy to protect the rights of women and girls that he said he'd signed during the speech he gave at the opening of the 16 Days of Activism? No one with the authority to speak seems to have a copy of either policy that can be released to either the public nor even to the sole government spokesperson.

Developers of the "President's" Freedom of Information legislation were keen to get the opinion of the "free media" before sending it on to Congress; however, during a visit to Kosrae, the President announced that he intended to introduce the proposed legislation and that was that. The bill went to Congress with nary a comment from "free media". Meanwhile, some Senators have privately declared that the bill is "overkill", which doesn't bode well for its passage.

The process on that bill's submission is illustrative of the FSM's disdain—no, disdain isn't the right word—disregard? No, that isn't right either. Marginalization of media is one still probably a less-than-perfect way to put it, but I'll use it.

If the policy of the administration is transparency, which the President said it would be during the inauguration, why is there only one spokesperson who has a professional problem if any information comes out of the government that he did not issue, whether that information came from a donor country or from a media outlet? It's because he is the one designated source for information from the national government by unpublished

policy. It's his job to be sure that happens and his job depends on it. All others in the national government are barred from commenting to the press on Executive Branch issues.

And there is fear.

In the FSM, when one public service employee released to his wife what the government called a "private communication", he was fired, arrested and criminally charged. His wife was given the same treatment. Though Human Resources appeals committees, after thorough review, recommended that they be reinstated and given back pay, that has not happened. More than a year later the Administration refuses to approve or deny the committees' recommendation. The FSM Supreme Court has been sitting on a petition for a Writ of Mandamus for months now that would, if issued, order the administration to make that final decision.

With that and other situations as a backdrop, it is difficult for anyone, most especially a journalist to assume that sharing of information is actually transparent and that it can be done without repercussions no matter what the FSM Constitution says regarding freedom of speech and press freedoms.

Reportedly, one Internet based media source out of Yap actually had to pay a fine to leaders who also made it clear that he was never to talk to the media again even though that person was in fact, a member of the media.

Self-serving media

The administration is concerned about shaping public opinion and requires that all press releases must first go to social media before going out to any established media outlets. It's an interesting directive in that a good number of people who respond to those governmental posts on social media tend to do so in a negative way—a reaction that seems to affirm Transparency International's public perception survey on corruption.

Early on in his speech during the Summit for Democracy, President Panuelo announced his intention to positively change citizens' perceptions on the prevalence of corruption in this government. At the close of his speech, he encouraged the US "to consider the passage of the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2021, as

K Press Perspective

Continued from previous page

Micronesia’s own national security relies on American democracy thriving as a beacon for the World to follow”. That proposed act has nothing to do with what the FSM faces in terms of elections but is currently high on President Biden’s agenda.

According to the Transparency International report, public perception of corruption regarding vote-buying in the FSM is the highest of all of the Pacific Island nations at 58 percent of respondents.

Interestingly, only 25 percent of Solomon Islands, and four percent of Fiji respondents felt that candidates bought votes.

Whether it accurate or not, vote-buying, whether it be with government funds through representation funds or some other source, is certainly one of the most talked about avenues of potential corruption in the FSM.

No consequences?

Only 18 percent of respondents across the Pacific thought that corrupt officials face appropriate consequences for their actions. Certainly, during my time as editor of The Kaselehlie Press, I have published allegations of wrong-doing that never went any further than the allegation, not even to clear those allegations.

It’s not that there is NO media in the FSM. There is, but most are completely funded and beholden to the governments they serve. Each FSM State has its own government owned radio station and government media entities who practically bend over backward to be sure that those radio stations are fed the information that they want out in precisely the way they want to put it out. Governments have no motivation to share with “free media”. They can get their sculpted messages out on their own without interference from “the outside”. They don’t even have to invite us to try.

For the FSM President to announce to the world that a “significant threat to Micronesia’s democracy is our lack of free media”, demeans his own influence over what little “free media” there is in the FSM, even if I happen to currently be it.

Department of Health and Social Affairs
Short-term Statistician TOR

I. Introduction:

The Short – term Statistician position is located at the FSM Department of Health & Social Affairs to support the Gender Project Manager for the India-UN Development funded Strengthening the FSM’s Gender Machinery Project which is implemented by United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) through the DHSA’s Division of Social Affairs.

II. Control of Position:

The incumbent works under the Secretary of the FSM Department of Health & Social Affairs through the Gender Project Manager and the Assistant Secretary of Social Affairs. Incumbent will perform duties stated in this TOR including other duties that the Secretary of DHSA may require of the position.

III. Scope of Work

Under the guidance of the Gender Project Manager and the Assistant Secretary for Division of Social Affairs, who will report to the Secretary of FSM Department of Health & Social Affairs, the United Nation Development Programme Team and the Project Board,

the short-term Statistician will perform the following tasks:

- Collect and review available local, regional gender related data.
- Provide guidance on the quality of the data collected.
- Designing survey questionnaire on existing Gender programs.
- Analyze data.
- Preparing the final report of the survey results as per the guidelines of the project team.
- Develop the “Where we stand publication” on gender statistics.
- Assist other related DHESA programs.
- Assist Gender Project Manager on other duties as assigned.

IV. Required Qualifications

- A Bachelor degree in statistics or related field.
- A minimum of 3-5 years’ experience in conducting surveys and data analysis.
- Report writing skills

V. Duration of the consultancy

- From 3, January, 2021 to 31, May, 2021 - 5months

Interested individuals should send their resume/cv to the below emails: health@fsmhealth.fm; JCurley@fsmhealth.fm or submit an application at the FSM Personnel Office in Palikir.





SOLICITATION NUMBER: 72049222R10005
ISSUANCE DATE: November 22, 2021
CLOSING DATE/TIME: December 21, 2021
 11:59PM Philippine time

SUBJECT: Solicitation for USAID Project Management Specialist (Resilience), FSN-11

The United States Government, represented by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), is seeking offers from qualified CCN (Cooperating Country Nationals) to provide personal services as described on the USAID website: <https://www.usaid.gov/pacific-islands/careers>.

The USAID Project Management Specialist (Resilience) serves as the primary staff for the USAID/Pacific Island sub-office in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) which covers primarily the FSM, but at times may provide support to the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) and Palau. The Specialist performs a variety of research, analyses, reporting, coordination, monitoring, outreach, and administrative functions in support of USAID's Pacific Islands Main Office located in Manila, Philippines. The Specialist supports and closely advises the USAID Country Coordinator in FSM as well as the General Development Officer (GDO) and USAID/Philippines technical and support offices to help achieve the following objectives in the Pacific: to support the U.S. Government's (USG) broader foreign policy objectives in the region; to address regional and country priorities; to complement other donor efforts; and to report on the latest news, developments, and perspective from the field and advise on how the portfolio can be adjusted accordingly.

To be considered for this position candidates must meet the following **minimum qualifications:**

1. Education (10 points): Bachelor's Degree with a focus on subjects such as environmental engineering, environmental management, water and sanitation management, economics, and international development and governance or a similar related degree is required. Note: Additional education may NOT be substituted for experience.

2. Prior Work Experience (30 points): Minimum of five years of progressively responsible, professional-level experience in the development field is required. Three years of this should have been in development assistance or related work with the USG, FSM government organizations, other donor agencies, or the private sector. Experience should include project design, program planning and implementation, performance monitoring, and/or the analysis and interpretation of large amounts of complex sector/program/project/activity

information. Note: Additional experience may NOT be substituted for education.

3. Language Proficiency/Communication Skills (20 points): Must have excellent communication skills in English, both in oral and written forms, in order to communicate effectively with USAID Mission staff and external contacts at various levels. Writing skills are required to prepare regular and ad hoc reports, project documentation, and briefing papers.

4. Job Knowledge (20 points): The Specialist must have a demonstrated knowledge of priority sectors that are important to economic growth and demonstrated expertise in designing activities that effectively applies science and technology for informed planning and decision-making. Knowledge and understanding of the economic, political, social, and cultural characteristics of all of the above countries; and, their economic development problems, resources and resource constraints, and development prospects and priorities, is required. Knowledge of all of the above countries' disaster response policies and capabilities. The Specialist must have a good knowledge, or the potential to quickly acquire such knowledge, of USG legislation, policy, and practice relating to development assistance; USAID programming policies, regulations, procedures, and documentation; and, of the objectives, methodology, and status of assigned activities. Knowledge and understanding of the organization and respective roles of local governmental institutions and the host country governments.

5. Skills and Abilities (20 points): The demonstrated ability to plan, organize, manage, and evaluate sectors/programs/ projects/activities is required. The Specialist must have good verbal communication skills, tact, and diplomacy. Analytical ability is required in order to interpret public policies, and to assist in the development of revised policies, as required; and, to develop and monitor the performance of budgets, and the development of periodic work plans. The ability to work independently with minimal supervision. The ability to work effectively in a team environment, and to achieve consensus on policy, program/project/activity, and administrative matters is required. Good computer skills are required, in order to manage activity goals and achievements, both technical and financial.

Further details on the statement of duties, evaluation, and selection factors and how to apply can be found on the USAID website: <https://www.usaid.gov/pacific-islands/careers>

Forum Foreign Ministers release joint statement on Blue Pacific leadership in disaster preparedness planning

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

01 December 2021

Suva-Fiji: As the World Health Assembly meets to consider pandemic preparedness and response, in the face of the new Omicron strain of COVID-19 and at the start of the Pacific cyclone season, Forum Foreign Ministers have released a Joint Statement on Blue Pacific Leadership in Disaster Preparedness Planning.

Forum Foreign Ministers voice deep concern over the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis facing Pacific Island Countries, and commit to learning lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic that are culturally, regionally and internationally applicable.

Forum Foreign Ministers Joint Statement notes that while Pacific Island Forum Members acted quickly and collaboratively to invoke the Biketawa Declaration and establish the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway on COVID-19, many Forum Member countries did not have detailed pandemic emergency management plans and arrangements in place when COVID-19 took hold.

As the World Health Assembly meets in Geneva this week to consider an international instrument on pandemic preparedness and response, Forum Foreign Ministers call for improved disaster preparedness planning across all sectors and at the national, regional and international level through multi-stakeholder partnerships and guided by regional frameworks including the upcoming 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

“Our approach to disaster preparedness planning must respect the sovereignty of individual nations while promoting shared responsibility, particularly in recognition of the Pacific as a deeply interconnected family of nations. Our approach must also respect cultural values of countries and ensure the inclusion of the interests of different groups including women, men, girls and boys, the elderly, persons with disability and other disadvantaged groups” reads Statement.

Forum Foreign Ministers are also calling on development partners to provide financing and assistance to strengthen national and regional disaster preparedness and resilience-building efforts including through the Pacific Resilience Facility and preparedness training for Forum Island Countries.

Forum Foreign Ministers state that “we are in a new era of disaster risk management facing complex and systemic challenges, grappling with the health, economic and social shocks of COVID-19, on top of climate change and conflict related challenges. We need to broaden our focus from managing emergencies to managing disaster risks, from thinking about individual hazards, to thinking about interdependent systems.”

Read the Joint Statement on Blue Pacific Leadership in Disaster Preparedness Planning [HERE](#)

COVID-19 ‘biggest global crisis for children in our 75-year history’ – UNICEF

On its 75th anniversary, UNICEF warns that COVID-19 is rolling back virtually every measure of progress for children, including a staggering 100 million more children plunged into poverty

December 9, 2021

NEW YORK/SUVA – COVID-19 has affected children at an unprecedented scale, making it the worst crisis for children UNICEF has seen in its 75-year history, the United Nations Children’s agency said in a report released today.

The report Preventing a lost decade: Urgent action to reverse the devastating impact of COVID-19 on children and young people highlights the various ways in which COVID-19 is challenging decades of progress on key childhood challenges such as poverty, health, access to education, nutrition, child protection and mental well-being. It warns that, almost two years into the pandemic, the widespread impact of COVID-19 continues to deepen, increasing poverty, entrenching inequality and threatening the rights of children at previously unseen levels.

“Throughout our history, UNICEF has helped to shape healthier and safer environments for children across the globe, with great results for millions,” said UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore. “These gains are now at risk. The COVID-19 pandemic has been the biggest threat to progress for children in our 75-year history. While the number of children who are hungry, out of school, abused, living in poverty or forced into marriage is going up,

the number of children with access to health care, vaccines, sufficient food and essential services is going down. In a year in which we should be looking forward, we are going backward.”

“All children have rights to education, water and sanitation, good health, to be protected and to be heard. UNICEF has worked tirelessly for the past 75 years to ensure that children are able to access these rights,” said UNICEF Pacific Representative, Jonathan Veitch. “However, COVID-19 has pushed us back and the Pacific region is no exception where children represent 50 per cent of the population. Children need to be prioritised right now in every Pacific Island country if their rights are to be realised.”

Even before the pandemic, around 1 billion children worldwide suffered at least one severe deprivation, without access to education, health, housing, nutrition, sanitation, or water. This number is now rising as the unequal recovery furthers growing divides between wealthy and poor children, with the most marginalized and vulnerable hurt the most. The report notes:

- At its peak, more than 1.6 billion students were out of school due to nationwide shutdowns. Schools were closed worldwide for almost

80 per cent of the in-person instruction in the first year of the crisis. In Fiji, schools were closed for three months in 2020, and closed again in April 2021 with the second wave of COVID-19. They remain closed for all children except years 12 and 13 as of December 2021. With plans of re-opening soon, all students ranging from early childhood education to secondary level will be able to go to school again and learn in classrooms. The sooner that they can all return safely to the classroom, the better for them, their families and society as a whole.

- Mental health conditions affect more than 13 per cent of adolescents aged 10–19 worldwide. By October 2020, the pandemic had disrupted or halted critical mental health services in 93 per cent of countries worldwide.
- 50 million children suffer from wasting, the most life-threatening form of malnutrition, and this figure could increase by 9 million by 2022 due to the pandemic’s impact on children’s diets, nutrition services and feeding practices.

Beyond the pandemic, the report warns of other threats to children that pose extreme threats to their rights. Approximately one billion children – nearly half of the world’s children – live in countries that are at an ‘extremely high-risk’ from the impacts of climate

change, including children living in Pacific Island countries who are highly vulnerable to climate induced disasters.

To respond, recover and reimagine the future for every child, UNICEF continues to call for:

- Investing in social protection, human capital and spending for an inclusive and resilient recovery;
- Ending the pandemic and reversing the alarming rollback in child health and nutrition – including through leveraging UNICEF’s vital role in COVID-19 vaccine distribution;
- Building back stronger by ensuring quality education, protection, and good mental health for every child;
- Building resilience to better prevent, respond to, and protect children from crises – including new approaches to end famines, protect children from climate change, and reimagine disaster spending.

“In an era of a global pandemic, growing conflicts, and worsening climate change, never has a child-first approach been more critical than today,” said Fore. “We are at a crossroads. As we work with governments, donors and other organizations to begin charting our collective path for the next 75 years, we must keep children first in line for investment and last in line for cuts. The promise of our future is set in the priorities we make in our present.”

Dr. Perpetua S. Konman takes oath of office and takes seat as first female FSM Congress representative

On December 13, Dr. Perpetua S. Konman wrote a new page in FSM history when she took the oath of office and her new seat, the first female ever to do so in the FSM’s history.

[Click here for video of ceremony](#)



King tides wash across North Pacific causing millions of dollars of damages

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

December 14, 2021

FSM—Between approximately December 3 and 7, king tides washed across low lying islands throughout the North Pacific. There has been no final estimation of damages from the saltwater inundation but Chuuk State, the only State in the FSM to have so far submitted an official preliminary request for assistance, lists \$1.8 million for food crop losses alone. It estimates \$1.6 million for sea walls. Chuuk is sending out assessment teams to all five regions of the state to assess damages to infrastructure, water source and shoreline erosion.

Photos of the high saltwater inundation in the North Pacific dominated social media; photos from the Marshall Islands to Yap and all of the islands in between. Most of the photos were accompanied by fearful exclamations attributing the king tides to climate change—an understandable reaction as the water rises all around with not one thing that can be done about it.

We contacted FSM DECEM, FSM Disaster Management, and the FSM Weather station but could not determine if any alerts for the highly predictable king tides went out to the States in advance of their arrival. It also is not certain whether anything could have been done about it other than just being aware of its eminent arrival even if an alert was issued.

“King tides are totally predictable and do not change in size or severity due to climate change,” wrote Simon Ellis, Insular Region Coordinator, PacIOOS, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.”

“They are affected only by the positioning of the moon and sun. However, as water levels rise due to climate change the highest water levels will indeed get higher but only by the amount the sea level has risen. They are in fact a glimpse into the future of how the world will look

with the rising sea levels. Pls see this link for more information. [https://www.epa.gov/cre/king-tides-and-climate-change.](https://www.epa.gov/cre/king-tides-and-climate-change)”

“One thing that is also happening right now is the second year of a La Nina event. What many people do not know is that when we have an El Nino the winds blow water to the east and drop our water levels in Micronesia by anything up to a foot. During a La Nina event the opposite is true so we actually have more water in our part of the Pacific and this might be making our king tides even higher by anything from 2-12 inches at present,” he explained.

“Another interesting little fact is that the largest typhoons also occur during El Nino years when the water is hotter. This does not change the quantity of storms, only their severity. So in La Nina conditions there is less chance of a large typhoon forming in the western Pacific. But as sea temperatures rise due to climate change more severe storms will be more likely in any given year,” he concluded.

Though, as the North Pacific knows all too well, king tides can be devastating and as oceans rise, the highest king tides such as occurred during the current La Nina condition will be higher still. Climate change is certainly one of the biggest, continually developing disasters and is very real. However, experts caution that attributing single weather or tidal events to climate change can actually undermine the important message as those claims are easily scientifically refuted by those who doubt that climate change is real.

Overusing attribution of single weather events to climate change could be equated to the story of the boy who cried “wolf” over and over again until villagers grew tired of the alarm and became complacent until the wolf finally does come and devours them all.



Invitation to Bid
Ref: ITB/FJI/JPN/003/21
Readvertised

Construction of Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in the Federated States of Micronesia

The United Nations Development Programme hereby invites construction firms to submit bid for **Construction of Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia**”

The Bidder shall submit a duly signed and complete Bid comprising the documents and forms in accordance with requirements in the ITB. The Price Schedule shall be submitted together with the Technical Bid through UNDP e-tendering system.

Bidders who wish to submit an offer must be registered with UNDP e-tendering system.

The Detailed Solicitation document , BoQ , Drawing Plan and Scope of works together with other related information can be obtained from the UNDP Pacific Office, upon e-mail request to vimal.pillay@undp.org or downloaded from the procurement section of UNDP Pacific Website Procurement | UNDP in the Pacific

Tender Ref: 86626

The closing date for submission of ITB is 6th January 2022.

Any Proposal received after the deadline for submission, will not be accepted.



- Chuuk-based position
- Join the principal development organisation in the region

The Pacific Community (SPC) invites applications for the position of Chuuk State Regional Project Coordinator –FSM SE Project. This position will be located at the Chuuk Public Utilities Corporation, Chuuk State, Micronesia.

Description

The Pacific Community (SPC) is the principal scientific and technical organisation in the Pacific region, supporting development since 1947. We are an international development organisation owned and governed by our 26 country and territory members. In pursuit of sustainable development to benefit Pacific people, our unique organisation works across more than 25 sectors. We are known for our knowledge and innovation in such areas as fisheries science, public health surveillance, geoscience, and conservation of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

The Micronesia Regional Office (MRO) situated in Kolonia, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), is the main hub for SPC's projects and partnerships with the Micronesian members of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), the Republic of Palau, and the United States territories of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), and Guam. The MRO opened in January 2006.

The role – the Chuuk State Regional Project Coordinator –FSM SE Project will provide support in the delivery of FSM.SE Project, under the direction of the Implementation Advisor.

The key responsibilities of the role include the following:

1. Support the PMT and Chuuk Public Utility Corporation (CPUC) in delivery and implementation of activities of FSM.SE
2. Provide project updates and timely reporting

For a more detailed account of the key responsibilities, please refer to the online job description.

1. Qualifications

- Tertiary qualification in development studies, sustainable energy, accounting, business, commerce, public finance.

2. Technical expertise

- At least 3 years' experience in project coordination and reporting.
- Proven record of accomplishment of working with teams across sectors and sites with minimum supervision.
- Demonstrated ability to effectively engage with a range of stakeholders.
- Demonstrated ability to articulate and communicate complex issues and positions to senior administrators and community beneficiaries alike.
- Sound coordination, administrative, networking, and collaborative skills.
- Working knowledge on computer skills in applications such as Microsoft Word and Excel.
- Fluency in the Chuukese language and English are essential (written and verbal).
- Driver license.

Closing date: 9 January 2022 – 11:00 pm Pohnpei time

Job Reference: SH000111

Applicants must apply online at <http://careers.spc.int/>

For your application to be considered, you must provide us with:

- an updated resume with contact details for three professional referees
- a cover letter detailing your skills, experience and interest in this position
- responses to all screening questions

Please answer all of the screening questions, if you do not answer these questions your application will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed at shortlisting stage.

Screening questions:

1. Could you describe your experiences in project coordination, meeting facilitation and report writing?
2. Could you describe your involvement in working with Chuuk state communities and municipalities with minimum supervision?
3. What are your experiences on communication, networking and outreach activities?

President Panuelo virtually receives His Excellency Mike Ketchen, Ambassador of New Zealand to the FSM

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), recently received His Excellency Mike Ketchen, Ambassador of New Zealand to the FSM. Following the virtual Presentation of Credentials ceremony, President Panuelo and Ambassador Ketchen discussed FSM-NZ relations.

In his opening remarks, Ambassador Ketchen described New Zealand's self-described modest but highly effective development program in the North Pacific, a description that President Panuelo categorically agreed with. The Ambassador discussed areas of ongoing cooperation between the FSM and New Zealand, and areas of proposed future cooperation in the economic and security space. Regarding the latter, the Ambassador noted that New Zealand is committing over one billion US dollars in Climate Change-related cooperation, over half of which is dedicated to the Pacific specifically.

In his remarks, President Panuelo described the FSM's close relationship with New Zealand, and noted the Nation's appreciation for New Zealand's outspoken stance on tackling Climate Change. Additionally, President Panuelo discussed items of mutual import and interest with the Ambassador as they

relate to the North Pacific specifically, and the Indo-Pacific at large, including a broader analysis of significant events in the Pacific over the course of 2021.

The meeting ended on a positive note, with President Panuelo describing that New Zealand has a disproportionately positive impact on the World at large, such as through historical accomplishments—New Zealand was the first country in the World where women won the right to vote, thanks to the efforts of Kate Shepard et al., and New Zealand was the first country in the World to split the atom, thanks to the efforts of Lord Rutherford of Nelson et al.—and also through contemporary friendship and cooperation with fellow democracies.

After President Panuelo virtually received Ambassador Ketchen, the Honorable Kandhi A. Elieisar—Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs—engaged in a virtual dialogue with the Honorable Nanaia Mahuta, Foreign Minister of New Zealand. Secretary Elieisar and Foreign Minister Mahuta's conversation delved deeper into the analysis of events affecting the Pacific over the course of 2021. As a result of these dialogues, the FSM National Government is hopeful that its relations with New Zealand will continue to be strengthened over the coming months and years.



Above: Ambassador Ketchen describes New Zealand's keen intent to ensure close and positive relations with the FSM



Right: H.E. David W. Panuelo & T.H. Kandhi A. Elieisar appreciate Ambassador Ketchen's sincere and friendly demeanor

FSM actively experiencing extensive saltwater inundation in high & low-lying islands; State governments encouraged to request assistance, if necessary; citizens encouraged to document the event

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—Originally through voluminous reporting across social media, and subsequently through dialoguing with the Nation's State Governments, the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) has been made aware of extensive saltwater inundation across the Nation's islands as a result of ongoing King Tides and storm surges. The Government has received numerous requests from citizens asking for support.

As of December 6th, 2021, the FSM National Government is communicating with the States of Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae, to determine the extent of any possible damage. As the flooding event is ongoing as of this release's publication, it is plausible that such determination will occur after the event has concluded.

Supposing that the flooding constitutes

a natural disaster, the first step following the flooding event would be for the relevant State Government to conduct an assessment of the damage. If a given State Government requires the assistance of the FSM National Government in such an assessment, then the State Government would formalize the request in a communication to the Office of the President.

Following the initial assessment, the FSM National Government would verify the assessment's authenticity. From there, the Government would work to determine what relief efforts, if any, would be necessary.

Citizens affected by the ongoing flooding activity are encouraged to document the event extensively, both with photographs and in writing. Cataloging the damage and the effects as they occur will assist the State and National Government assessments following the event, and expedite the issuance of necessary assistance.

"We are watching what's happening," said His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the FSM, in a statement, "And, first and foremost, I would ask our citizens to feel assured that their Government is aware of what's happening, and is ready to take action. We stand by to offer our full support to the State Governments when the requests come in, and I encourage the States to make

these requests without any hesitation or reservation if they feel it's necessary. Whether it's construction supplies or food, we will never abandon our citizens to the existential threat of Climate Change."

The FSM National Government will continue to monitor this situation as it develops.

All photos contained in this release are sourced from private citizens' public-facing Facebook posts.



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Office Hours:

Monday - Friday 8:30am - 4:30pm

President Panuelo solicits the European Union’s consideration to establish a European Union Delegation Office in the North Pacific

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), has recently written a letter to His Excellency Charles Michel, Her Excellency Ursula von der Leyen, and His Excellency Josep Borrell, the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy respectively, requesting that the European Union consider opening a European Union Delegation Office in the FSM.

At present, the North Pacific is served by the European Union through the latter’s office in the Republic of Fiji, which to the knowledge of the FSM National Government serves the whole of the broader Pacific region. It is the view of the FSM National Government

that it would be to the benefit of both the five sovereign Micronesian nations of the FSM, the Republic of Nauru, the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Kiribati, and to the European Union itself, if a separate and distinct European Union Delegation Office was hosted in the North Pacific for the purpose of directly coordinating with North Pacific countries.

The foundational reasoning behind wanting a European Union Delegation Office in the North Pacific is broadly consistent with the reasoning the Micronesian Presidents Summit (MPS) gave to the United Nations for the establishment of a Multi-Country Office: to better address the needs and the priorities of the countries in the North Pacific.

“With the current hosting of diplomatic missions of some of the top economies

of the world,” President Panuelo wrote, “in the form of the United States of America; the People’s Republic of China; Japan and Australia; along with representative offices of various regional and international organizations, notably the Asian Development; the World Bank; the International Organization for Migration; the World Health Organization; the Secretariat of the Pacific Community for the North Pacific, which continues to serve as an implementing entity of a variety of European Union’s programs and services in the Pacific; the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission; and now the recently established United Nations Multi-Country Office for the North Pacific, the [FSM] is set-up well as a prime site to host a European Union delegation. With the recent conclusion of the re-negotiated Cotonou Agreement and its impending implementation of targeted developments, the presence of an in-

country representation of the European Union in the northern Pacific would add significant value to the current architecture to implement priorities provided in the Agreement. I truly am confident that such a pronounced presence of the European Union in the [FSM] would also bode well for the entire northern Pacific, as it would represent and equate to limitless opportunities and mutual benefits in our partnerships.”

“Excellencies,” President Panuelo concluded, “I earnestly look forward to continue working with the European Union and its member states in the many years to come on matters of mutual benefits, and to ensure that this partnership flourishes between our peoples. I assure your Excellencies of my firm commitment to preserve and build on our relationship for mutual benefits, and towards newest height in the days ahead.”



FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA
DEVELOPMENT BANK

P.O. Box M
Kolonias, Pohnpei FM 96941
Tel. (691) 320-2840/2419/5300/5223/2624 Fax. (691) 320-2842
Email: info@fsmdb.fm | Website: www.fsmdb.fm

Opening Date: November 30, 2021
Closing Date: December 30, 2021

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT NO. 2021-004

It is the policy of the FSM Development bank that FSM citizens be given first priority for employment consideration, with other Micronesians, U.S. citizens, and other nationals utilized in positions for which no qualified citizens are available.

POSITION: Assistant General Counsel
LOCATION: FSM Development Bank, Headquarters, Kolonia, Pohnpei
SALARY: \$50,000.00 per annum, Higher Salary may be Considered Depending on Qualification
REPORTS TO: General Counsel

6. Assists Bank officials in negotiating terms and conditions of loans.
7. Collection and litigation of Bank’s delinquent loans.
8. Reviews banking legislation.
9. Advises the Bank on sound corporate practices and ethics.
10. Provides advice and training on loan related matters.
11. Works with other attorneys and officers of the Bank on legal and loan related matters.
12. Such other tasks the Bank’s President/CEO and/or General Counsel may designate.

QUALIFICATIONS: To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each of the essential duties and responsibilities satisfactorily. **EDUCATION and/or EXPERIENCE:** Graduation from an accredited school of law, admission to practice before the FSM Supreme Court, or admission to practice in any jurisdiction and be eligible for admission to practice before the FSM Supreme Court. Must have good standing and a minimum of 4 years of professional experience in civil litigation.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (Illustrative only) include the following:

1. Provides general legal services to the Bank.
2. Represents the Bank and its constituents to sue and when sued.
3. Provides legal advice to the Board of Directors and management on policy matters.
4. Reviews and recommends revisions to contract agreements involving loans, employment and others.
5. Assists in developing and implementing an effective loan collection program.

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:

All applications, curriculum vitae, three letters of reference and a writing sample of 5 to 10 pages shall be completed and submitted in person to the HR & Facilities Manager at FSMDB Corporate Office in Kolonia, Pohnpei, or email to loverh@fsmdb.fm, on or before December 30, 2021.

You may also mail to: FSM Development Bank HQ, P.O. Box M, Kolonia, Pohnpei FM 96941; or submit it to any of the FSMDB Branch Offices in Kosrae, Chuuk and Yap before December 30, 2021.

IOM Launches Women's Advancement Project in Chuuk State

International Organization for Migration

December 2, 2021

Chuuk--The International Organization for Migration IOM's Inspiring Women's Advancement Through Collective Actions (IWA) project was launched in Chuuk State at the Governor's auditorium in Weno on November 24 by the IOM Chief of Mission and a representative from Chuuk Governor Office, Mr. Jonas Paul.

Having officially launched the IWA project in FSM back in March, IOM Chief of Mission Salvatore Sortino was part of a mini launch held in Chuuk State. The launch of the project was followed by focus group discussions and a workshop to look at the different component under the IWA project. Coincidentally, activities for the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign commenced on November 24, as well, with Chuuk Women Council participants wearing orange for the United Nations theme, "Orange the World."

The program started with special remarks from IOM. Chuuk State representatives welcomed all participants and thanked IOM for the opportunities and potential development IWA project can bring to Chuuk.

Through funding from the US Department of State, IOM Micronesia is providing Competitive Start-up awards to business owners and entrepreneurs in the Federated States of Micronesia, as well as Small Grants for NGO or groups. Proposals will focus on starting, expanding or developing a business that will increase economic opportunity for women and promote womens' livelihoods and participation in the private sector.

Eligible organizations or individuals are invited to apply and submit completed applications to the IOM office in Chuuk, or email them to Lululeen Santos (lulsantos@iom.int) and Lauren Pearson (lpearson@iom.int) no later than 5pm on December 29, 2021.



TRADE MARK CAUTIONARY NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that our client, HANKOOK & COMPANY CO., LTD., a business organized and existing under the laws of the Republic of Korea and with a principal place of business at 286, Pangyo-ro, Bundang-gu, Seongnam-si, Gyeonggi-do, Republic of Korea is owner and sole proprietor of the following trademark:

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Further, take notice that HANKOOK & COMPANY CO., LTD., a business organized and existing under the laws of the Republic of Korea and with a principal place of business at 286, Pangyo-ro, Bundang-gu, Seongnam-si, Gyeonggi-do, Republic of Korea attaches singular importance to its above referenced trademark and will immediately take the strongest legal actions to protect its intellectual property rights against any person(s) or business(es) found to be infringing those rights. Note that any infringing or unauthorized use of this mark will be met with civil and criminal action including injunctions, orders to seize, audits, full damages and costs.

Any inquiry regarding said trademark may be referred to the attorneys for HANKOOK & COMPANY CO., LTD. as follows:

Hilborne, Hawkin & Co.
230 Commerce Drive, Suite 185
Irvine, California 92602
United States of America
Telephone: (714) 283-1155
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DECEM & IOM host joint dialogue on climate change and migration across all 4 states

International Organization for Migration

December 1, 2021

FSM - Climate change and the gradual intensification of sudden and slow-onset processes poses a significant risk to communities across the Federated States

of Micronesia (FSM). Typhoons and rising sea level tides threaten lives, livelihoods and property. While not immediately apparent, such threats may also result in the displacement of communities in the future.

In light of these issues, the Pacific Climate Change Migration and Human Security (PCCMHS) programme aims to support Pacific Governments, including FSM, to identify a regional response to address protection gaps for communities that are at risk of displacement and those moving in anticipation of harm. As such, IOM and the FSM Department of Environment,

Climate Change and Emergency Management (DECEM) organized a Joint Dialogue on Climate Change and Migration on 19 October to identify the priorities of stakeholders from all four states on climate change and migration.

The Honorable Andrew Yatilman, Secretary, of DECEM, delivered the opening remarks on behalf of the FSM Government.

“While we do understand that the climate crisis may result in displacement of people, a priority of the FSM is building the resilience of our people to live on our islands permanently as this for us is the definition of sustainability” Secretary Yatilman said.

The meeting brought together 70 participants (42 male, 28 female) from national and state government, NGOs and communities.

Participants discussed and identified best practices and both national and state policies on climate change. Participants also shared their views on a regional approach to climate change and migration and highlighted the importance of coordination across the Pacific.

Notably, the Honorable Kandhi A. Elieisar, Secretary of Foreign Affairs; the Honorable Eugene Amor, Secretary of Finance and Administration; the Honorable Andrew Yatilman, Secretary of DECEM; and the Honorable Gardenia Aisek, Secretary of Education, both attended and participated in the lively discussions.

Overall, participants acknowledged the impact of climate change on mobility but stressed the importance of strengthening resilience at home in order to avoid displacement. The information gathered from the discussion will underscore FSM’s priorities at the regional level under the PCCMHS programme.



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**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF
THE FEDERATED STATES OF
MICRONESIA
TRIAL DIVISION—CHUUK STATE**

Seasco Company, Ltd. Plaintiff, v. IKITSUKI a vessel dba NARIK MATAW, In Rem Defendant, v. The FSM Department of Finance, The FSM Government & Chuuk State Congressional Election District #5 (ED#5), In Personam defendants,
Civil Action No 2021-1012

**NOTICE FOR REQUEST FOR MARITIME
ARREST WARRANT**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN

That the plaintiff in the present action, Seasco Company, Ltd. has filed a request for a maritime arrest of the defendant vessel, IKITSUKI dba NARIK MATAW pursuant to Rule C of the FSM Supreme Court’s Supplemental Rules for Certain Admiralty and Maritime Claims, and that by virtue of said Supplemental Rules, a person having an interest or claim in the defendant vessel may file a claim in the referenced civil action within twenty (20) days after this publication, and any Answer they wish to make to the plaintiff’s Complaint filed in this Action on December 2, 2021, with the Court in Nepukos Village, Weno Island, Chuuk State, Box 601, Weno, FSM 96942, Ph. (691) 330-2397.

/S/ Sabino S. Asor Esq.
Asor and Meippen
Attorneys for the Plaintiff

Maintenance Assistance Program Grants for FY 2022 now open to Insular Areas

Office of Insular Affairs

WASHINGTON – The United States (U.S.) Department of the Interior’s Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) hereby announces that applications for fiscal year (FY) 2022 funding under the Maintenance Assistance Program (MAP) may now be submitted to Grants.Gov for funding consideration to support the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as the freely associated states – the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

“The Maintenance Assistance Program is meant to encourage and support

the development, improvement, and institutionalization of maintenance practices in the Insular Areas,” said Deputy Assistant Secretary Keone Nakoa. “We are especially interested in activities that will support maintenance training to extend the life of island infrastructure, ensure the safety of maintenance technicians, and/or increase the capacity of infrastructure to withstand extreme weather events.”

Maintenance Assistance Program funding is available for projects intended to develop insular institutions that improve the operation and maintenance of infrastructure in the island areas. MAP funds may also be used on occasion for limited repairs, including climate change related repairs and repairs needed to prevent future damage.

Applications will be considered from insular government entities, educational institutions, or non-profit organizations whose grant proposals directly benefit the four U.S. territories or three freely associated states, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.

More information about financial grant assistance may be found on the OIA website along with the specific MAP 2022 instructions. To apply, visit grants.gov and use CFDA # 15.875. The deadline for submissions is April 1, 2022, however, it is highly recommended that applications be submitted as early as possible. Applications will be reviewed beginning May 2022 once OIA receives full-year appropriations. Applications

Click here for continuation

United to become first in aviation history to fly aircraft full of passengers using 100% sustainable fuel

CHICAGO – December 1, 2021 – United today will operate an unprecedented flight that will serve as a turning point in the industry’s effort to combat climate change: for the first time in aviation history, a commercial carrier will fly an aircraft full of passengers using 100% sustainable aviation fuel (SAF). Also today, United announced the second round of corporate participants in the airline’s Eco-Skies AllianceSM program to collectively contribute towards the purchase of SAF.

United is the world leader in the usage and support for the development of SAF, an alternative fuel made with non-petroleum feedstocks, already having agreements to purchase nearly twice as much SAF as the known agreements of all other global airlines combined. SAF has the potential to deliver the performance of petroleum-based jet fuel but with a fraction of its carbon footprint, and according to the U.S. Department of Energy, the country’s vast feedstock resources are enough to meet the projected fuel demand of the entire U.S. aviation industry.

“United continues to lead from the front when it comes to climate change action,” said United CEO Scott Kirby, who will fly onboard today’s historic SAF flight. “Today’s SAF flight is not only a significant milestone for efforts to decarbonize our industry, but when combined with the surge in commitments to produce and purchase alternative fuels, we’re demonstrating the scalable and impactful way companies can join together and play a role in addressing the biggest challenge of our lifetimes.”

The demonstration flight – which will depart today with more than 100 passengers from Chicago’s O’Hare International Airport and land at Washington, D.C.’s Reagan National Airport – will be on a new United 737 MAX 8 and use 500 gallons of SAF in one engine and the same amount of conventional jet fuel in the other engine to further prove there are no operational differences between the two and to set the stage for more scalable uses of SAF by all airlines in the future. Currently, airlines are only permitted to use a maximum of 50% SAF on board. The SAF used on today’s flight is drop-in ready and compatible with existing aircraft fleets.

United is operating this unprecedented flight in partnership with Boeing, CFM International*, Virent – a subsidiary of Marathon – whose technology enables 100% drop-in SAF, and World Energy – the world’s first and North America’s only commercial SAF producer. United’s Kirby will be joined by executives from each of

those companies on today’s flight along with other business leaders, government officials, NGOs and members of the media.

“Boeing is proud to support United on this historic event as we work together to make aviation more sustainable,” said Ihsane Mounir, Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing for The Boeing Company. “As an industry, we are committed to addressing climate change, and sustainable aviation fuels are the most measurable solution to reduce aviation carbon emissions in the coming decades. No one entity can decarbonize aviation alone and it will require partnerships like this to ensure aviation is safe and sustainable for future generations.”

“We are honored to be part of this landmark event,” said Gaël Méheust, president & CEO of CFM International. “Drop-in SAF is something our industry can adopt now to begin making inroads on our commitment to be net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Along with our parent companies, GE Aviation and Safran Aircraft Engines, we applaud United for taking this bold initiative and look forward to even greater cooperation in the future.”

“We’re excited to partner with this group of innovative companies that are leading the way in sustainable aviation,” said Dave Kettner, president and general counsel of Virent. “Virent’s proprietary technology demonstrates that SAF can be 100% renewable and 100% compatible with our current aviation fleet and infrastructure. We are proud to be playing a role in this advancement toward sustainable aviation fuels.”

“When we fly, we connect, and our demand for the connections aviation makes possible are only going to grow,” said Gene Gebolys, CEO of World Energy. “But we need to develop affordable, high energy density, low-carbon liquid fuels at scale everywhere to allow those connections to be made sustainably. The pioneering work is the hardest work, and United has been with us from the very start. The flight path ahead will require tremendous teamwork. We are fortunate to have partners like United to do that work and are thrilled to be a part of this important milestone today.”

United’s Eco-Skies Alliance program was launched in April 2021 and now has collectively contributed toward the purchase of more than 7 million gallons of SAF this year alone. With its nearly 80% greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions on a lifecycle basis compared to conventional jet fuel, this is enough SAF to

eliminate approximately 66,000 metric tons of GHG emissions, or enough to fly passengers more than 460 million miles. Including today’s newly announced participants, the program has nearly 30 participants including companies like DHL Global Forwarding, HP Inc. and Nike.

The new participants include:

- American Family Insurance
- Biogen
- Bolloré Logistics
- CWT
- Maersk
- Meta
- Microsoft
- Palo Alto Networks
- Salesforce
- Visa
- Yusen Logistics
- Zurich North America

Today’s SAF flight and new Eco-Skies Alliance participants are among the latest accomplishments towards United’s goal to be 100% green by reducing its GHG emissions 100% by 2050, without relying on traditional carbon offsets. In a further step to build transparency and enable certified SAF emissions reductions for its corporate customers, last month United partnered with Microsoft, Air bp, and the Roundtable on Sustainable Aviation Biomaterials in the first ever book-and-claim pilot.

United’s 100% green commitment

Here are some of the ways United plans to make sustainability the new standard in flight:

- United recently agreed to purchase 1.5 billion gallons of SAF from Alder Fuels - enough to fly more than 57 million passengers and is also an investor in Fulcrum BioEnergy, where United has an option to purchase up to 900 million gallons of additional SAF.
- In July 2021, United Aviate Ventures (UAV) announced that along with Breakthrough Energy Ventures and Mesa Airlines, it has invested in electric aircraft startup Heart Aerospace. Heart Aerospace is developing the ES-19, a 19-seat electric aircraft that has the potential to fly customers with zero emissions when powered by renewable electricity.
- In July 2021, Air Transport World



magazine named United its Eco-Airline of the Year for the third time.

- In June 2021, as part of its agreement with Boom Supersonic, United announced plans to purchase 15 of Boom’s “Overture” airliners (with an option for 35 more). Slated to carry passengers in 2029, the net-zero aircraft plans to fly on 100% SAF.
- In February 2021, United announced an agreement to work with Archer Aviation to accelerate the development and production of their electric aircraft – an urban mobility solution that has the potential to serve as an ‘air taxi,’ giving United customers another opportunity to reduce their carbon footprint before they even board a United flight.
- In 2020, United became the first airline to announce a commitment to invest in direct air capture, a carbon capture and sequestration technology. United remains committed to investing in carbon capture and sequestration as a key pathway to achieving its climate goals.
- In 2020, the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) named United as the only airline globally to its 2020 Climate ‘A List’ for the airline’s actions to cut GHG emissions, mitigate climate risks and develop the low-carbon economy, marking the seventh consecutive year that United had the highest CDP score among U.S. airlines.
- In 2019, United operated the Flight for the Planet, which represented the most-ecofriendly commercial flight of its kind in the history of commercial aviation.
- In 2018, United became the first U.S. airline to commit to reducing its GHG emissions, by 50% by 2050. This goal has since been superseded by the airline’s 100% green commitment.
- In 2016, United became the first airline globally to use SAF in regular operations on a continuous basis with SAF from World Energy.

Inaugural China-Pacific Foreign Ministers' Meeting sheds light on Beijing's Pacific Islands strategy

By Lili Song
East-West Center

Dec. 3, 2021

OTAGO, New Zealand—Recently, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met via video link with high-ranking officials from nine Pacific Island countries and the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum in the first-ever China-Pacific Foreign Ministers' Meeting. The October 21 meeting, which has received only limited coverage in non-Chinese media, sheds some new light on China's strategy in the Pacific, which has been the subject of considerable interest in recent years.

The meeting clearly signals China's intention to deepen its relations with Pacific island countries, or PICs, beyond economic dimensions. One researcher with the Taiwan Institute of National Defense and Security Research has even suggested that the meeting can be considered to mark the starting point of a new effort by Beijing to build a "pro-China bloc" in the Pacific.

According to a press release by the Chinese foreign ministry, participants in the meeting had an in-depth exchange on elevating the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two sides to a new

level. One official Chinese Communist Party newspaper in Shanghai compared the meeting to earlier milestones in China-Pacific relations such as President Xi Jinping's meetings with Pacific island leaders and the first ministerial meeting of China-PICs Economic Development & Cooperation Forum in 2006.

12-point joint statement

The October meeting led to a 12-point joint statement. One notable outcome is the agreement to hold similar meetings on a regular, ongoing basis, which may help increase China's political influence in the Pacific. The participants also agreed to "step up communication and collaboration in the UN and other multilateral institutions" on major topics such as implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, reform of the UN Security Council, and response to climate change.

The joint statement shows that the two sides managed to find some common ground in matters of top concern among the PICs. The joint statement shows that the two sides managed to find some common ground in matters of top concern among the PICs, including COVID response, climate change, nuclear-related issues, development, and marine environment

and resources. Signaling Beijing's desire to be seen as a committed partner for the PICs, China pledged to set up a reserve of emergency supplies to assist in their fight against COVID-19, as well as centers for cooperation in climate change, poverty reduction and development. It also promised to hold a China-PICs fisheries cooperation and development forum before the end of the year.

AUKUS reaction

The Foreign Ministers' Meeting is clearly an "upgrade" from earlier meetings that had taken place at the vice-ministerial level. And it may be no coincidence that it was held just over a month after the AUKUS nuclear submarine deal between the US, Australia and Britain. Indeed, Wang Yi criticized the AUKUS deal during the meeting, warning that it would "create risks of nuclear proliferation ... cause an arms race, and jeopardize regional peace and stability."

Although the joint statement from the Foreign Ministers' Meeting makes no direct reference to AUKUS, it expresses the two sides' firm commitment to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty and calls on the relevant parties "to fulfill treaty obligations and promote regional peace."

Navigating relationships

The tendency for Australia and the US to react to what China does in the Pacific is arguably zero-sum thinking that may have the effect of allowing Beijing to control the narrative and optics in the perceived rivalry. Ultimately, Pacific Island leaders will continue to navigate their relationships with both China and Western strategic partners in the ways that they see as most beneficial to their communities. Any country that routinely ignores the PICs' priorities or disrespects their traditions and values is unlikely to be their partner of choice.

But when it comes to the critical issue of climate change, there is a clear need for all countries to work together. As Federated States of Micronesia President David Panuelo noted in a statement following the October meeting: "[n]either China nor the United States can fix climate change alone, but if our two allies work together, convincing other allies like Australia to come on board, and friends like Brazil to do more, we can still save humanity."

Dr. Lili Song teaches law at the University of Otago in New Zealand, including specialties in both Pacific and Chinese law. She previously taught at the University of the South Pacific in Vanuatu.

New MoU to enhance protection and sustainable management of Pacific Ocean resources

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

09 December 2021

Noumea, New Caledonia – The Pacific Community (SPC) and The Pacific Islands Ocean Observing System (PacIOOS) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to enhance and enable access and exchange of data and develop ocean models. The agreement will also facilitate scientific collaboration between the two organisations by hosting and/or training students and writing academic publications. The MoU will increase and strengthen collaboration and exchanges between SPC and PacIOOS and acknowledges the important of ocean science for increased knowledge and improved management of the ocean surrounding Pacific Islands Countries and Territories.

Dr Jerome Aucan, Head of SPC's Pacific Community Centre for Ocean Science (PCCOS), said the MoU will enhance scientific collaboration and exchange in the Pacific and benefit Pacific peoples:

"Sharing knowledge allows both organisations to better fulfil their mandates to make ocean science and expertise readily accessible to Pacific Island governments and communities to help protect and sustainably manage vital ocean resources", he said.

"An example of this collaboration is the sharing of best practices for forecasting extreme sea level events in the context of sea level rise. By sharing these forecasts which are useful to coastal communities and decision-makers for town planning, urbanism, and farming we can increase the resilience of these Pacific communities to the impacts of climate change and extreme weather hazards", said Dr Aucan.

The agreement recognises the role SPC and PacIOOS as providers of ocean data and products and notes past and current academic interactions between SPC staff and PacIOOS staff, and the recent creation of the SPC's Pacific Community Centre for Ocean Science (PCCOS).

The Pacific Community (SPC) is the principal scientific and technical organisation in the Pacific region. For almost 75 years the organisation has worked for the well-being of Pacific people through the effective and innovative application of science and knowledge.

The Pacific Community Centre for Ocean Science (PCCOS) is the platform for

coordination and integration of ocean science, knowledge and information at SPC and in the Pacific, partnering with international and regional stakeholders. The Pacific Islands Ocean Observing System is a Hawaii-based ocean observation platform providing accurate and reliable coastal and ocean information, tools, and services that are easy to access and use.

...MAP Grants

Continued from page 17

related to public safety and emergencies will be reviewed in a timely manner, prior to the April deadline.

The Assistant Secretary of Insular and International Affairs and the Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) carry out the Secretary of the Interior's responsibilities for the U.S. territories

of American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Additionally, OIA administers and oversees federal assistance under the Compacts of Free Association to the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau. OIA also administers a discretionary Technical Assistance Program for all the insular areas. Find information about OIA and its work on www.doi.gov/oia, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

Opinion Editorial

The crisis we face is real': Blinken on why Biden is convening a Summit for Democracy

Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State



Democracy is facing a moment of reckoning. For 15 years, global freedom has declined, according to the human rights organization Freedom House. It's happening in authoritarian countries, where rulers have restricted people's freedoms, canceled and postponed elections, and cracked down on political opponents with increasing brutality – and in democratic countries, where mis- and disinformation have eroded trust in public institutions, political polarization has widened, and long-standing challenges like economic inequality and systemic sexism and racism have left many feeling like the system won't ever work for them.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made these problems more acute. Unscrupulous leaders have seized the opportunity to crush freedom of assembly and crank up surveillance, and false information about the virus and vaccines has spread widely.

This is why President Joe Biden is bringing more than 100 governments together for the Summit for Democracy, which begins Wednesday.

And whether you live in a country where democracy is strong or where the chance of a free and fair election is nonexistent, this matters to you.

Commitments, accountability
Democracy and authoritarianism are global phenomena. They don't stay contained within borders.

Ideas spread.

News travels.

Autocrats see how misinformation campaigns or sham trials worked in another country and try them at home. They point to divisions within democracies to make the case to their citizens that democracy is an inferior system that could never deliver for them.

Likewise, when democracies foster strong and inclusive economies, handle political disagreements without bloodshed, provide public safety without denying civil liberties, and maintain stability with free elections and peaceful transitions of power, others see those results and want them for themselves. In this way, what we do in our own countries shapes what other countries do in theirs.

We also affect each other directly through our one-to-one interactions – for example, development assistance deals that include support for human rights – and multilaterally. Organizations like the United Nations, NATO and the World Bank have a direct impact on countries' policies and practices.

When there's a broad-based commitment in those forums to democratic principles and human rights, those ideals are fortified across countries and communities.

That's why strengthening democracy can't be a solo endeavor that countries do in isolation. It must be approached as a global mission – governments, civil societies, private sectors and citizens working together across borders, languages and cultures – everyone committed to inaugurating a new era of rising freedom and stronger human rights protections around the world.

That's the idea behind this week's summit. President Biden has convened a majority of the world's governments to address the challenges facing democracies, such as defending internet freedom, reducing the misuse of surveillance technology, fighting disinformation and protecting the rule of law. Civil society groups from many countries will also be there, because they're critical for holding governments accountable and making sure democracy delivers for people.

All participating governments will make concrete commitments toward three goals: countering authoritarianism, fighting corruption and protecting human rights.

To encourage accountability, President Biden will bring everyone together in a year to report our progress. The United States will be making commitments, too.

We hope to see positive change coming out of this summit, with measurable progress before long. But on a deeper level, our goal is simpler: to get leaders and citizens on the same page.

Authoritarian governments are actively working to sow division and distrust in democracies. The crisis we face is real. We must be clear-eyed and united in our determination to rise to this moment.

'We aren't perfect'

There's a limit to how much we can protect our own democracy without others. Without shared standards on new technologies, we can't sufficiently protect Americans' privacy. Without other countries protecting their media ecosystems, Americans will be targeted for more disinformation.

Without all democracies fighting corruption, the global financial system is undermined – with real consequences for the global economy and for people's lives. In our world, there's a hard limit to what countries can do alone. We

need democratic unity to meet the challenges of our time.

That said, we don't want to create a world of rigid ideological blocs. The countries at the summit represent a spectrum, from rock-solid democracies to ones that have backslid.

They're all welcome, because our goal is that we all move in a better direction. That'll look different from country to country. And we will work with anyone – including countries that can't be considered democracies at all – to solve shared problems.

Finally, the president convened this summit because to get democracy rising again, the United States must lead. We aren't perfect. We, too, have work to do at home.

But we're a 245-year-old democracy of people from every country and background, and we've wrestled openly with how to become a more perfect union from the start. No country represents the promise of democracy, its challenges or how it offers the unique ability to improve on itself like we do. At this moment of reckoning for democracy worldwide, America must step forward and bring others with us.

President Ronald Reagan said, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. It has to be fought for and defended by each generation."

We are now called to that fight – Americans and all people worldwide who believe in democracy and want to see it thrive. That's what the world will see us doing this week and in the years to come.

Antony J. Blinken is the 71st U.S. Secretary of State.

Article originally published in USA Today. Link: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2021/12/08/president-biden-hosting-democracy-summit-here-why/6418307001/>

What the FSM knows about the Omicron Variant of COVID-19, how the FSM is responding to it, & best advice for citizens (Get vaccinated, get boosted)

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On November 30th, 2021, the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) received a briefing from the World Health Organization (WHO) regarding a new COVID-19 variant of concern named Omicron. This release intends to describe what the Government knows about the variant, how the Government is responding to it, and the Government’s best advice for citizens at this time.

First reported in South Africa (though not necessarily originating from there) on November 24th, 2021, which aligned with a steep increase of COVID-19 infections in recent weeks there, the Omicron

variant has already been detected globally in the Kingdom of Belgium, Japan, Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, and other countries.

As of this release, it is unknown whether the Omicron variant is more transmissible (i.e. can spread more easily from person to person) compared to other variants, including the Delta variant which is otherwise presently responsible for the vast majority of COVID-19 cases globally. Preliminary evidence suggests that there may be an increased risk of reinfection with Omicron (i.e. persons who previously had been infected with COVID-19 could become reinfected more easily with the Omicron variant), though it will require more time to confirm this.

Despite uncertainties, it is reasonable to assume that the currently available COVID-19 vaccines remain effective at their primary purpose of preventing death and lessening the risk of severe disease.

The COVID-19 vaccine mandate remains in effect, i.e. all FSM citizens residing in the FSM must take the COVID-19 vaccine. Persons who received their second dose of the Moderna vaccine six months ago or longer are encouraged to receive a booster dose. Persons who received the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine two months ago or longer are encouraged to receive a booster dose. There are enough vaccines in the FSM for every person to become fully vaccinated and to receive a booster dose.

Approximately 72% of all adults aged 18 years and up are fully vaccinated, although the Government estimates the real vaccination rate—based on population changes since the 2010 Census—may be closer to 79.8%.

The Pfizer vaccine for children aged five years and up is physically present in all FSM States, and available for citizens in the States of Yap and Kosrae. The FSM National Government is advised that the States of Chuuk and Pohnpei intend to begin offering vaccines for children in January, 2022.

After repatriation flights to Pohnpei on December 1st, Kosrae on December 6th, and Chuuk on December 15th, the Nation will temporarily pause on repatriation activities until January, 2022. It is projected that, by the time repatriation activities continue, the global community will know significantly more about the Omicron variant than is known

today.

For the most part, repatriation protocols and processes will remain the same, inclusive of a 10-day pre-quarantine in Guam complete with two (2) PCR-based tests to determine if an individual is infected or not, to be followed by an in-country quarantine of between 7-14 days depending on the FSM State a person is being repatriated into (e.g. Pohnpei State mandates a minimum of 7 days, Chuuk State mandates a minimum of 14 days). In-country quarantine experiences also include multiple PCR-based tests. It is proven that currently available PCR tests will detect the Omicron variant as COVID-19 positive.

Historically, only persons aged 18 and up must be fully vaccinated to be considered for a repatriation flight into the FSM. In 2022, this will change; all persons aged 5 and up will need to be fully vaccinated. The FSM National Government continues to work diligently with the World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention in preventing COVID-19 from entering the Nation, and in mitigating its impact in the event the virus appears in the community.

“The most important thing for any citizen or resident of this Paradise in Our Backyards to do,” said President Panuelo in a statement, “is to get vaccinated if you haven’t already, and to get a booster dose to strengthen your protection against COVID-19. I was recorded on video getting my first dose of the Moderna vaccine in December 2020, and my second dose in January of 2021. I intend to be recorded again when I take my booster dose on December 9th, 2021, in partnership with the United States Embassy Kolonia during their booster doses

Micronesian Legal Services Corporation (MLSC) is seeking applications for the position of Deputy Director in our central office on Saipan.

Qualifications:

- Be an attorney admitted to practice before at least one of the courts of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Guam, or the Northern Mariana Islands, or eligible to be admitted.
- Have sufficient management experience to assist the executive director in the day-to-day management of the organization.

Compensation and Benefits:

Compensation includes an annual salary dependent upon experience, ranging from \$72,000 to \$81,000, based on a competitive pay scale, and generous benefits will be provided. Salaries of all staff may be adjusted by the Board of Directors depending on available funding.

Relocation expenses:

MLSC pays airfare to relocate to Saipan for the employee and their immediate family, and a fixed amount for transportation of household goods.

To apply:

Please submit a resume and cover letter to Executive Director Lee Pliscou at lee@mlsnet.org.

Position is open until filled.

3D Printers bring additive manufacturing to Micronesian classrooms

Habele

This December, high school students in Yap and Pohnpei used their own 3D printers to successfully create three dimensional models. These cutting edge, additive manufacturing machines were provided by Habele, the US non profit that also led the training.

Participating schools earned the premium 3D printers in 2020 for excellence in completing Habele's "Robotics Certification Challenge," a challenge requiring staff and students at high schools across Micronesia to successfully complete a robotics certification course. 3D printing provides Robo League students with even more hands on exposure to advanced technology, while giving endless opportunity for creative exploration.

The students' first print was a reticulated, three dimensional model of a gecko lizard. This demonstrated the ability of the printers to "print in place," or to print movable joints, without having to assemble individual parts. As the printers whirred in the background, students learned the essentials of using the machines, as well as the applications and benefits of the technology.

"The principles and coding used in these machines is directly applicable to real world manufacturing processes," said Neil Mellen, founder of Habele. "Printers like this were used in the United States to produce parts for respirators during early days of the pandemic."

The students also learned how 3D printing enriches their work in the Habele Robo League. In addition to printing standard replacement parts, students will be able to innovate components of their own design. Equally important, the new 3D printers will help schools reduce their dependency on imported parts for robotics, as well as other educational materials.

The Habele Robo League, which serves public and private high schools across all four Micronesian States, is funded through support from the Office of Insular Affairs. "We are proud to be part of the vibrant and empowering partnership that has characterized U.S.-Micronesian relations for so many decades," said Mellen.

Established by former Peace Corps Volunteers, Habele is a 501(3) nonprofit supporting Micronesian students.

Secretary Becerra launches the Biden-Harris Administration's White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders Announces USTR Ambassador Katherine Tai as Co-Chair

Press Release of the White House

December 9, 2021

Washington D.C. – Today, Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Xavier Becerra launched the Biden-Harris Administration's White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (WHIAANHPI) and announced U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Katherine Tai as his co-chair of both the White House Initiative and the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. The Initiative, which was created in response to the President's Executive Order (EO) 14031, Advancing Equity, Justice, and Opportunity for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, is charged with driving an ambitious, whole-of-government agenda to advancing equity, justice, and opportunity for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AA and NHPI) communities in the United States.

Like other communities of color, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to exacerbating long-standing health inequities facing AA and NHPI communities, the language of some political leaders during this public health crisis has also fueled a spike in anti-Asian bias, xenophobia, and violence. To address these inequities, the new WHIAANHPI is housed within HHS, returning this initiative to the Department where it was first launched under the Clinton Administration in 1999.

"Returning the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders to HHS, where it originated, represents an important step in reinvigorating this historic initiative," said HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra. "The Biden-Harris Administration is committed to tackling a wide scope of challenges impacting communities that have been historically overlooked and underserved. I look forward to working with Ambassador Katherine Tai in leading our federal efforts to advance equity, justice, and opportunity for AA and NHPI communities across the nation."

"I am honored to Co-Chair the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (WHIAANHPI)," said Ambassador Katherine Tai, U.S. Trade Representative. "President Biden, Vice President Harris and the entire Administration are committed to creating a more equal, just, and inclusive America. Leading

this initiative with Secretary Becerra will be a critical part of our work across government to expand opportunity, confront systemic barriers to success, and address the rising violence targeted at the AA and NHPI community."

"The White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders is the embodiment of the longstanding commitment and vision that President Biden and Vice President Harris have for our diverse and growing community," said Deputy Assistant to the President and Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Senior Liaison Erika Moritsugu. "This Administration has delivered results for AA and NHPI communities with the President's whole-of-government approach to equity, along with the American Rescue Plan, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal, and now again with the reinvigoration and expansion of this historic Initiative."

"With today's launch of WHIAANHPI's Interagency Working Group and Regional Network within HHS, we now have the tools to secure resources, promote opportunities, and increase the visibility of AA and NHPI communities," said WHIAANHPI Executive Director Krystal Ka'ai. "I am honored to serve under the leadership of Secretary Becerra and Ambassador Tai during this pivotal time for our community as we work to build a brighter future for generations to come."

Under the leadership of Secretary Becerra and Ambassador Tai, the newly-expanded Initiative includes an Interagency Working Group tasked with coordinating the federal government's efforts to support AA and NHPI communities. It also includes a Regional Network comprised of federal officials in ten federal regions across the country who help to connect AA and NHPI communities with federal grants, programs, and resources.

The WHIAANHPI under the Biden-Harris Administration will focus on helping to coordinate a comprehensive federal response to the rise in acts of anti-Asian bias and violence; address the systemic lack of disaggregated data on AA and NHPI communities; expand language access and language assistance programs for AA and NHPI individuals across federal programs; address educational, health, economic, and housing disparities impacting AA and NHPI communities, and more. For more information on the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, see www.hhs.gov/whiaanhpi.

