

# FSM President expresses significant doubts about China's proposed multi-lateral PICS plan

By Bill Jaynes  
*The Kaselehlie Press*

June 6, 2022

**FSM**—On May 30, the People's Republic of China hosted a meeting of the 10 Pacific Island Countries with which it has diplomatic relations—the Second PRC-PICS Foreign Ministers Meeting - with the hope of adopting the China-Pacific Island Countries Development Vision and a five-year implementation plan. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi represented the PRC and also had in person and virtual bi-lateral meetings with the chief representatives of Foreign Affairs with each of the PICS (Pacific Island Country).

As had been done before, China had hoped that the countries would simply adopt the

documents as written and without change by the PICS. At the end of the meetings, PRC press releases announced great success and assent by the PICS for their plans. Actually, the PICS, while not rejecting the plans did not take action on them, agreeing instead to delay decisions on the matter until the next meeting which has not yet been scheduled.

After the first PRC-PICS Foreign Ministers Meeting last year, China took a similar tack with regards to reports of success of those meetings when it released what was purported to be a joint communique it said was signed by all of the PICS. That release took the FSM by surprise, who in fact had not signed off on the communique.

Just hours before the start of the second meetings, PRC Ambassador to the FSM Huang Zheng called FSM Secretary of Foreign Affairs

Kandhi Elieisar and FSM President David Panuelo's Special Assistant Richard Clark, demanding that the FSM make no mention during the meetings of the issues contained in a letter written by President Panuelo to 22 PIC leaders expressing several serious and pointed concerns over China's proposed Development Vision plan.

President Panuelo did not personally speak with Ambassador Huang, but in discussing the matter with cabinet members, he decided to soften the language that might be used when the FSM presented at the meeting. Instead of urging the leaders of the other countries to "reject" the proposal, the FSM would instead urge them not to accept it; otherwise, their concerns would remain a part of their statement.



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# FSM officially welcomes the FSS Tosiwo Nakayama to the FSM

By Bill Jaynes  
*The Kaselehlie Press*

June 4, 2022

**Pohnpei**—This morning, beginning under a torrential Pohnpei rain, the FSM officially welcomed the FSS Tosiwo Nakayama, the new Australia provided Guardian Class surveillance vessel, to the FSM at a ceremony at the Marine Surveillance Dock in Dekehtik, Pohnpei.

"Named after the esteemed first President of the Federated States of Micronesia, this boat marks a new era in maritime surveillance capabilities for FSM," said Australia's Ambassador to the FSM, Jo Cowley. "This boat is Australian-built and is part of Australia's multibillion dollar program called the Pacific Maritime Security Program. Through this program, Australia is dedicated to helping build a stronger FSM and stronger Pacific Family. So together, we can ensure the

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## “A black cloud has disappeared from The Pacific”; Micronesia almost certainly to remain in Pacific Islands Forum; Pacific unity strengthened & solidified, with subregional rotation of Secretary-General to begin in 2024

**SUVA, Fiji**—On June 6th to 7th, 2022, His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), joined His Excellency Surangel S. Whipps Jr., President of the Republic of Palau, and the Honorable John Silk, Special Envoy of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, in the Republic of Fiji for the purpose of engaging in a High-Level Political Dialogue with the leader of the Pacific Islands Forum. With the latter represented by the Honorable Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji, the Honorable Fiamē Naomi Mata’afa, Prime Minister of the Independent State of Samoa, and the Honorable Mark Brown, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, the dialogue has resulted in a proposed reform package that—if approved by all members of the Pacific Islands Forum—would succeed at its goals of strengthening the Pacific Islands Forum as an organization, appealing to the Micronesian Presidents Summit’s pleas for equity, and bolstering the Pacific’s unity and solidarity.

The High-Level Dialogue was established in order to address and resolve major reform issues concerning the impasse that resulted in the imminent withdrawal by the Micronesian Presidents’ Summit, to explore and discuss needed genuine political reforms within the Forum, and as a demonstration of respect for the shared bonds as Pacific Islanders. Additionally, the High-Level Dialogue was established due to the collective desire for a constructive dialogue on substantive leadership and political reforms to avoid the disintegration of the Forum membership, and a collective recognition that a united Pacific represents the region’s best chances at maintaining peace (and preventing war), developing prosperity (and preventing hardship), and mitigating and adapting to Climate Change (and preventing civilizational collapse).

As a demonstration of leadership and brotherhood, the Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum offered a reform package for consideration by the Micronesian Presidents Summit. The proposed package in its original form showed recognition and appreciation for the perspective of the Micronesian Presidents Summit as originally stated in the Mekreos Communique. Following candid and genuinely friendly discussions on the basis of good faith, mutual trust and respect, and Pacific solidarity, the proposed reform package has been approved by the countries involved in the discussions. At the time of this Press Release’s dissemination, the Presidents of the FSM, Palau, the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Nauru are attempting to get in contact with the Republic of Kiribati to garner their support for the proposed reforms.

The reform package includes that all members of the Pacific Islands Forum agree that equal representation of the three sub-regional bodies of Micronesia, Polynesia, and Melanesia, is essential; as such, there shall be two Deputy Secretary-General positions, each hailing from a separate sub-region as the Secretary-General.

The reform package further includes that all members of the Pacific Islands Forum agree to rotate both the Secretary-General and the Forum Chair by sub-region, with Micronesia to hold the next Secretary-General position beginning in 2024 for a term of five years.

There is agreement to create, and immediately install, a Pacific Ocean Commissioner as a role separate and distinct from the duties of the Secretary-General. The office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner shall be based in Micronesia, the term of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner shall last three years, and the Commissioner shall report directly to the Leaders.

There is further agreement that a Pacific Islands Forum sub-regional office shall be created in the Micronesia sub-region.

All things considered, the Leaders present in the meeting acknowledged the opportunity to meet and discuss regional and Pacific Islands Forum-related issues in-person in Suva, and reaffirmed the value of Talanoa and the Pacific Way; discussed the proposed reform package for the Pacific Islands Forum, which was welcomed by the Micronesian Presidents Summit; agreed to share and discuss the revised version of the reform package with all Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum, and further agreed that senior officials consider and agree on the implementation of agreed elements described above; and agreed that all Forum Leaders will consider the final version of the reform package at the next Pacific Islands Forum Leaders meeting during July 12th to July 14th, 2022.

“My fellow Micronesians,” President Panuelo said in a statement addressed to the citizens of the FSM specifically, “A black cloud has disappeared from the Pacific with sunshine after a fresh rain in its stead. We—the Micronesian Presidents Summit and the Pacific Islands Forum—have collectively found a way to make keep our Pacific family unified, to make it stronger against external and internal pressures, and with Micronesia’s appeals respectfully heard and addressed by our brothers and sisters in Polynesia and Melanesia. To be clear: we have won. All of us have won; Micronesians, Polynesians, Melanesians all; because we, the Pacific, have achieved a means of making our Pacific Islands Forum truly represent us all.”

“I give my thanks to my dear brother Prime Minister Bainimarama, who has extended to our country and our sub-region peace, friendship, cooperation, and love

in our common humanity while capably demonstrating his knowledge of our perspective and contrasting with his own. I also give my thanks to my dear sister Prime Minister Fiamē, my dear brother Prime Minister Brown, and my dear brother Secretary-General Puna, who have done the same.”

“I give my thanks to my dear brother President Whipps, who has eloquently described both the importance of unity and how trust plays a role in our region’s enduring sovereignty and freedom. I also give my thanks to my dear brother Special Envoy Silk, who has ably represented his President, our dear brother H.E. David Kabua. I also give my thanks to our dear brothers [H.E. Lionel] Aingimea and [H.E. Taneti] Maamau of Nauru and Kiribati for their solidarity. It is my hope that we can reach Kiribati soon, before the meeting in July.”

“Finally, I give my thanks to the People and Government of Australia, both for their assistance in providing transportation and logistical support, as well their absolute dedication to ensuring that the matters of the Pacific are solved by the Pacific; this is a profound demonstration of trust and respect. When I spoke with Foreign Minister Penny Wong last week, I was reminded of the kindness, sincerity, and love that I knew Australia and its people are all about. She is a capable diplomat, and I am dearly looking forward to our strengthening our FSM-Australia relations together. In this respect, I also give public thanks to Her Excellency Jo Cowley, Ambassador of Australia, who has been a true friend to our Nation, our people, and to me personally.”

The FSM will rescind its denunciation of the Pacific Islands Forum and looks forward to the reform package being adopted in full in July, 2022.

The Kaselehlie Press

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THE KASELEHLIE PRESS  
WILL BE RELEASED ON:  
June 22, 2022**

**Deadline for submission of articles or  
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**Monday, June 20, 2022**

# Pohnpei State and FSM National government heads trade barbs on COVID responsibilities

By Bill Jaynes  
The Kaselehlie Press

May 31, 2022

**Pohnpei**—A volley of letters regarding Pohnpei’s requirement for a Certificate of Qualified Entry (CQE), a health document the State requires of all passengers arriving in Pohnpei, began on May 24 with a letter from Pohnpei’s Acting Governor Christina Elnei to FSM’s President David Panuelo. That letter was released publicly by the State Government’s information services. President Panuelo’s vitriolic response came in a letter that among other things, announced that the National Government would be suing the State. The letter came on May 27, the day the National Government filed their case (see article on page 4)

On May 24, Acting Governor Elnei wrote that the use of the CQE had been agreed upon as a condition of entry by the National Task Force consisting of the Secretary of the Department of Transportation, Communication, and Infrastructure, and the Secretary of the Department of Health. She said that the CQE appeared to concern FSM Secretary of Justice Joses Gallen who then issued a letter, overriding the actions of the National and State Task Forces. That legal opinion became the basis of an executive order.

She wrote that the State’s interpretation of the position of the President and Attorney General is that the National Government has “wrestled away from State of Pohnpei, the duty and responsibility to protect the health of the people of Pohnpei through the use of the CQE, which to them submits to the issue of immigration.”

After United decided that due to the conflict between the two governments on the CQE issue, that it would not board passengers bound for Pohnpei, the President assured United that the issue had been resolved. “That statement is not true,” wrote Elnei. “There has not been any meeting of mind between the President, the Secretary of Justice and the State of Pohnpei. The alleged resolution is one-sided and therefore, arbitrary.”

Accusing the President and his Attorney General of acting unconstitutionally under the concept of unity, Elnei wrote, “So, what have the people of Pohnpei

seen during this era of this corona emergency? State sees infraction of the solemn mandate. State sees, trampling of oaths of office. State sees requirement of the solemn mandate to redirect attitudes and move forward under the very cardinal solemn duty to advance by the principles of unity, for that is the principal that the Constitution of this country is founded. Nothing else... We do not and will not accept unnecessary confrontation, for that is not what we are sworn to do.”

The letter asked the President and the AG to permit the Task Force to perform its duties regarding repatriating passengers with the CQE, and until the issue is resolved between the State and National governments to cancel repatriation of the United Flight scheduled to arrive on May 28. It also asked them to permit the Secretary for TC&I and the Secretary of the Department of Health, along with the National Task Force to coordinate measures that will properly address concerns of immigration and health for the people of Pohnpei.

The letter asked the President to consider several concerns before making the decision on how to respond and gave him until May 27 to respond which, if he did not do, would signal to the State that they were to continue in the accustomed role with arriving passengers. She asked him to consider what good the CQE would do if a passenger is already in Pohnpei? Would the National Government provide doctors to perform exams? Who would be responsible for the quarantine complex? If demand outstrips supply of oxygen units, how would excess patients be handled? If positive passengers are quarantined at home, what assurance would National Government provide that the virus would not spread to others. What service, if any, does the National Government intend to permit Pohnpei to perform on arrival of passengers? And, would the National Government accept liability in the event of potential suit as a result of failure to provide required care resulting in loss of life?

The President’s response letter opened by criticizing the “malicious intent” of the letter, for re-opening

the CQE issue with United though it had been resolved, and for spreading “misinformation and unusual mass distribution.” It criticized the “lack of interest in creating a mutually beneficial solution”, saying that it seemed to be motivated only to further confusion, and tension, and to create roadblocks and unnecessary complications. “Our Nation deals with so many other friendly countries and partners, regionally and internationally, yet in your letter there is a sense that Pohnpei State, while it is the host of our Nation’s capitol, is treating its own National Government as if it is a hostile foreign power.” He expressed concern that “certain officials” would use State communications “in executing personal vendettas, and doing so in a manner that is harmful to our citizens, our nation-building efforts, our relations with development partners and international commercial carriers, and our Nation’s reputation and image.” He took harsh exception to the characterization of the National Government as being unconcerned about the public health of the people of Pohnpei and the Nation.

He pointed out that the State’s own Constitutional Emergency decree expired in March and the State had done nothing to reinstate it. He disclaimed the existence of an amicable agreement regarding the use of the CQE saying that such an agreement could not exist because it would be illegal and unconstitutional. He called the issue of the CQE a “closed issue” and pointed out that each of the other States have equivalent health documentation requirements and that the National government continues to support their use as internal health

documents. He said there have been no issues with executing repatriation flights in the other three States. Further, he said that all members of the cabinet had filed a CQE with the State.

“The CQE, by and in its application, clearly violates the Constitution, for the simple reason that it usurps power that are clearly and expressly delegated to the national government,” he wrote.

“I regret that you decided to focus the first few days of your ‘actingship’ towards challenging the National Government on its contribution to the COVID-19 recovery.” He pointed out that it was the National Government who secured financing and support from national funds and international donations and assistance for vaccines, the quarantine facility itself, training, numerous medical supplies, and even the salary of many of the medical professionals.

“The exercise of governmental power is established and clearly delineated amongst and between the three levels of the FSM government as expressed in the Constitution, and it is not subject to the temporary wishes, whims, preferences, and opinions of individual members,” he wrote. “I do hope that you will take this into consideration.”

His letter pointed out other areas in which the administration of the Pohnpei government “has refused to move forward with national programming, and listed several examples including refusal to sign the MOU with Blue Prosperity Micronesia, and other measures.

“I kindly call upon you to join our collective efforts in upholding the Constitutional mandate of promoting unity and peace for our Nation and our people. Let us continue to work together to resolve the issues raised in your letter instead of creating disunity and divisions,” he concluded.

The matters raised on both sides are now a matter for the Supreme Court to decide with declarative judgment after the FSM filed its civil action against Pohnpei State actors.



# FSM files suit against Pohnpei alleging unconstitutional disruption of repatriation efforts

By *Bill Jaynes*  
The Kaselehlie Press

May 27, 2022

**Pohnpei**—If not for a Temporary Restraining Order issued on May 27 by the FSM Supreme Court, the May 28 repatriation flight of 101 passengers to Pohnpei would not have happened due to mixed messages to United Airlines from the Pohnpei State Government and the FSM National Government.

United Airlines CEO Scott Kirby informed the FSM National Government that it would not carry the passengers because the Pohnpei State Government had instructed him through direct communication that passengers were not to be boarded without a Certificate of Qualified Entry. The State's instructions said that if passengers arrived in Pohnpei without the document, they would not be allowed to deplane. On May 25, the FSM National Government filed Civil Action 2022-016, a complaint for declaratory judgement and issuance of mandatory injunction to keep Pohnpei State from interfering with the National Government's responsibility to control the FSM's borders. Though the civil action initially named Governor Reed Oliver in his official capacity, Norleen Oliver DeOrio in her capacity as Chairperson of the Pohnpei COVID-19 Task Force as well as in her personal capacity,

the Pohnpei COVID Taskforce, and Pohnpei State Government, the filing was later amended to include Acting Governor Christine Elnei. It also was amended to request consideration of a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) against Pohnpei State.

FSM argues that Governor Oliver's emergency declaration, issued on February 12, 2022, expired on March 14 and was not renewed, and that therefore DeOrio "acted with no authority as chair of a nonexistent task force that had expired, and she projected herself as having such authority when in truth she had none."

FSM accuses the State of violating provisions of the FSM Constitution by usurping National Authority for control of borders, "encroachment" on National Government's power to conduct Foreign Affairs and foreign assistance, powers related to foreign and interstate commerce and Congress' power to regulate such, violation of the emergency declaration act, the Constitutional Principle of Unity, civil rights violations by allegedly violating the right of FSM citizens to "travel and migrate within the Federated States of Micronesia", and National powers related to setting minimum health standards for health.

It also accuses the State and other defendants of violating the FSM Code,

such as infringement of International Civil Aviation Organization, National powers related to air carriers, and "encroachment on National government jurisdiction related to international and interstate air transport being an economic sector subject only to National Government regulation."

On May 27, the court issued the requested TRO. The order barred Pohnpei State or its officers from:

1. informing United Airlines that the Pohnpei Certificate of Qualified Entry is required for Pohnpei-bound passengers on the May 28, 2022 flight to Pohnpei to either board the flight on Guam or to deplane from that flight on Pohnpei or requiring that United Airlines bar any Pohnpei-bound passenger from boarding if that passenger lacks a Pohnpei Certificate of Qualified Entry; and from
2. requiring the presentation of a Pohnpei Certificate of Qualified Entry to enter Pohnpei or to enter quarantine on Pohnpei after arrival.

The Court also ruled that "Once the Pohnpei-bound passengers have arrived on Pohnpei and cleared immigration and customs, they must be quarantined and the quarantine process is under Pohnpei state control."

The larger issue of the FSM's 15 Causes of Action against the State plaintiffs is the subject of ongoing litigation and had not been decided. The ultimate outcome of the case has some connotations regarding FSM's stated intentions to reopen the borders to travelers beginning on August 1. The Court's issuance of the TRO is not a final decision on the overarching concerns brought to the Court but it does in some way, establish the precedent that while it is the FSM's authority to control the FSM's borders, it is the State's responsibility for actions once passengers have arrived in the State.

The Act to open the FSM's borders on August 1 is now with President Panuelo for his signature or to become law without his signature. Under that Act, the FSM border would be open beginning on August 1 with no required quarantine but with the requirement that travelers test negative for COVID-19 before travel. But if the Court decides that while FSM controls borders but the State decides on quarantine requirements, the question will be, what to do with all of the incoming passengers and where to quarantine them if that is a requirement of the State and what any Pohnpei issued quarantine requirement might mean to the actual ability of travelers to arrive in Pohnpei.

# COM receives go-ahead to add another Bachelor's Degree program

By *Bill Jaynes*  
The Kaselehlie Press

June 6, 2022

**FSM**—The College of Micronesia FSM is adding a new Bachelor of Sciences (BS) degree in Business Administration with an Emphasis on Accounting. On May 24, the ACCJC (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) sent notification to the FSM's college that their application for substantive changes for the program had been approved. COM-FSM will offer the degree option at its national campus in Palikir, Pohnpei and through distance learning.

COM-FSM's application said that the FSM has been experiencing an increase in economic potential. "Sectors such as the tourism, aquaculture, and construction industries seem to be experiencing gradual growth. Along with this economic growth comes the need for a constant supply of competent professionals in both the public and private sectors across the four States of the FSM."

The Associate of Sciences (AS) Degree program in Business Administration and Accounting established in 2012 met local employment demand, but not fully. This led to the establishment of a third-year certificate program, but it also did not quite

meet the demand. "As graduates of these programs sought to continue their studies abroad, the observed trend was that most of them get lured into working where they relocated and not coming back to the FSM."

COM-FSM's new BS program is geared toward equipping students to pursue advanced degrees such as the Master of Business Administration, Accountancy, and other further education options.

The decision to institute the degree option was made after extensive focus group questionnaires, which, due to the pandemic closures, were conducted virtually rather than by face-to-face meetings. There was

overwhelming support from students, alumni, and business leaders for the establishment of the degree program.

In 2018, the College of Micronesia FSM established a goal to "emphasize academic offering in service to national needs". They set a goal of "becoming a bachelor's degree granting institution."

The application says that the National Campus Business Administration Division would only need to increase by one staff member in order to fulfill the needs of BSBA students. College officials say that recruiting is currently underway and that COM-FSM hopes to institute the new degree program in the Fall Semester.



# Interim President's Message to the Community - May 2022

Congratulations to the Spring 2022 Graduates! The college held commencement on May 13, 2022. We are proud to celebrate the achievements of a total of 165 spring graduates across the college; 27 from the Career & Technical Education Center, 22 from Chuuk Campus, 9 from Kosrae Campus, 14 from Yap Campus, and 93 from National Campus. 9 of the 165 graduates are receiving their Bachelor of Science in Elem. Ed.

May was an exciting month for the college:

- FY 2023 Budget was presented to the Education Committee on May 12, 2022. The Education Committee FY23 Budget Report SCR No 22-35 was adopted with

the amounts requested by the college. Congress will review budgets in September 2022.

### Accreditation Update:

- The college will be submitting the Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER) for reaffirmation of accreditation on August 1, 2022. A peer review team will review the ISER and send any comments and questions to the college by October 2022.
- The Accrediting Commission for Junior and Community Colleges (ACCJC) approved the Substantive Change Proposal for the Bachelors of Science in Business Administration with an Emphasis in Accounting on May 24, 2022. The program is

scheduled to start fall 2022.

- The Upward Bound programs in both Pohnpei and Yap have been successful in renewing the grants for another five years. Upward Bound is a U.S. federally funded educational program. The program is for high school students who may be first-generation in their family to complete a 4-year college degree. The primary objective is to assist students in preparing for postsecondary education.
- Pohnpei Utilities Corporation (PUC) General Manager met with Interim President Simion on May 25, 2022 to discuss electrical apprenticeship

training via the US Department of Labor (USDOL) Registered Apprenticeship program. The USDOL Registered Apprenticeship training program will be administered by COM-FSM for PUC and is stated for Summer 2022. The training program combines paid on-the-job training and classroom related instructions. The combination training approach not only leads to competency and USDOL certification, but also highly paid workers. Additionally, the apprenticeship training program directly supports the college's mandate to build FSM's workforce.

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## ...PICS Plan

*Continued from front page*

The FSM prepared the statements that Secretary Elieisar was to present both at the multi-lateral PICs meeting and at the bilateral meeting with Minister Wang. But when it came time for the statements to be presented, Secretary Elieisar left out statements in opposition to China's proposal.

President Panuelo's Special Assistant said that after the meetings, the Embassy of the PRC urged the FSM not to release any media information on the President's letter to the PICs. The FSM never had released any information to the media and to date still has not done so, but a strongly worded letter sent to heads of state of 22 countries is difficult to contain. It leaked and within hours of its issuance, becoming fodder for newspaper articles around the world.

After the meetings concluded, Global Times published several articles on the meetings unabashedly calling President Panuelo a pawn of the United States. One of its articles quoted Yu Lei, chief research fellow at the research center for Pacific Island countries of Liaocheng University in East China's Shandong Province as saying that the FSM is "home to the world's largest and most advanced strategic missile testing site, adding that it is obvious to all which country is threatening FSM's survival and development." The article also quoted a now debunked article by the Pacific Island Times in which it was reported that in 2021 the United States and the FSM agreed on a plan to build a military base in the FSM, "to serve the Pentagon's strategic ambition of increasing its footprint in the Indo-Pacific region and contain China".

In one of its articles, Global Times indirectly, though pointedly, accused President Panuelo as turning against the needs of his own people saying, "opposition to the agreement may also be a deliberate move carried out by a few politicians of some regional countries who are willing to be used by the US at the cost of the interests of the country and people." Another article quoted a professor at a Chinese University as saying, "...the fact is that some people in FSM are reduced to political megaphones and instruments of the US, and that's regrettable."

According to the FSM Staff, when President Panuelo strenuously objected to

the claims put forth by the Global Times, representatives of the PRC responded that they could not control what reporters write and again urged the FSM not to make any statements to the media regarding its concerns about China's plans for PICs. Global Times is the newspaper of record of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party.

In his letter to his fellow heads of Pacific Island Countries, President Panuelo expressed his belief that the PRC proposed agreement "is the single-most game-changing proposed agreement in the Pacific in any of our lifetimes."

"...My country is the only sovereign Pacific Island Country in the world that has both a Great Friendship with the People's Republic of China as well as an Enduring Partnership, demonstrated by our Compact of Free Association, with the United States of America," President Panuelo wrote in his May 20 letter to his fellow heads of PICs. "We have ceaselessly advocated for joint China-U.S. cooperation on tackling Climate Change; and we have ceaselessly advocated for joint China-U.S. promotion of peace and harmony in our Blue Pacific Continent. My country's unique context, I believe, compels me to speak. Where yesterday I condemned the former U.S. President for his January 6th, 2021 insurrection effort, today I feel obligated to warn you all of what I foresee coming from China tomorrow."

"The language of these documents is a sign that China has faithfully done its homework, as the choice of words are, on their face and at first glance, attractive to many of us-perhaps all of us," President Panuelo wrote. "They speak of democracy and equity and freedom and justice, and compare and contrast these ideas with concepts that we, as Pacific Islands, would want to align ourselves with, such as sustainable development, tackling Climate Change, and economic growth. Where the problems arise are in the details, and the details suggest that China is seeking to do exactly what I warned of in my September 2020 address at the United Nations General Assembly: to acquire access and control of our region, with the result being the fracturing of regional peace, security, and stability, all while in the name of accomplishing precisely that task."

President Panuelo pointed out that while the Vision document describes every country as being equal regardless of size, it also refers to all Pacific countries with diplomatic relations with Chinas as being "one side".

He opined that the "Vision" seeks to ensure Chinese control of traditional and non-traditional security, including law enforcement, including support for cyber operations which could be used for the protection of Chinese assets and citizens. He said that it seeks Chinese control and ownership of communications infrastructure, as well as customs and quarantine infrastructure, "for the purpose of biodata collection and mass surveillance of those residing in, entering, and leaving our islands..."

"While some elements of the Common Development are not necessarily malign in intent, concerns become heightened with the right information..." He wrote, and points to the issue of Climate Change in particular saying that China has committed to reaching carbon neutrality in 2060, "which is beyond the actionable remaining lifetimes of most contemporary adults, including myself and each of us in receipt of this letter, and so a promise whose makers cannot be held to account for if it doesn't come to pass."

He wrote in his letter that on receipt of the "Vision" document, he asked every member of his Cabinet what they thought of China's proposed agreement. A staff member said that all but one member of the cabinet and one FSM ambassador recommended "serious caution" and listed specific concerns. Many of them were listed in the letter.

"I am aware that the bulk of Chinese research vessel activity in the FSM has followed our Nation's fiber optic cable infrastructures, just as I am aware that the proposed language in this agreement opens our countries up to having our phone calls and emails intercepted and overheard," the President wrote. "...I am aware of China's continued militarization of the South China Sea despite the arbitral tribunal under the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea concluding that China's rights over the maritime area has no lawful effect. I am aware that, in February, China's Consul General in Osaka said on Twitter, regarding Russia's invasion of Ukraine, that 'the biggest lesson of what has happened in Ukraine is that a weak country must obey a strong country. A challenge will lead to a disastrous result,' just as I am aware that the proposed outcomes documents we've received describes that we 'recognize that all countries, regardless of their size, strength and wealth, are equals,' even though what would otherwise be bilateral agreements are being unilaterally developed by China to become multilateral in their nature."

A requirement for Pacific Island nations

to have diplomatic relations with the PRC is adherence to the "One China Policy" and non-interference with internal affairs in international relations. "Because China considers the otherwise de facto independent Taiwan a part of itself, then it follows that an invasion of Taiwan is not a matter of our concern," President Panuelo wrote.

"This is demonstrably false, however. Any war in the Indo-Pacific would be our concern, to include that a war for Taiwan is equivalent to a war between China and the United States. Whoever wins in such a conflict, we will once again be the collateral damage as we become stuck in the crossfire of the bigger countries who ought to be benevolent hegemony for our Pacific Region and for humanity as a whole." President Panuelo set his statement against the backdrop of Russia's ongoing actions in the Ukraine.

"The Common Development Vision stemming from the 2nd PRC-PICs Foreign Ministers Meeting is a smokescreen for a larger agenda. Despite our ceaseless and accurate howls that Climate Change represents the single-most existential security threat to our islands, the Common Development Vision threatens to bring a new Cold War era at best, and a World War at worst," he wrote.

"The only way for the Federated States of Micronesia to maintain our Great Friendship with China is if our relationship with them is exclusively focused on economic and technical cooperation. I intend to maintain our Great Friendship, while also remaining committed to a Free & Open Indo-Pacific, which I believe is essential for the Blue Pacific Continent's stability. Despite being offered attractive economic assistance from China now, including donations into our sovereign Trust Fund, our Pacific well-being, security, peace and harmony, and our values and principals and sovereignty, are treasures with greater value than any amount of silver and gold.

"Geopolitics like these are the kind of game where the only winning move is not to play. My hope, my dear Pacific Brothers & Sisters, is that by informing you of these developments, and of our country's intended course of action, we can collectively take the steps necessary to prevent any intensified conflict, and possible breakout of war, from ever happening in the first place.

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



The Pacific Community (SPC) invites applications for the position of **Country Focal Officer (Pacific Women Lead)**. This position will be located at the Division of Social Affairs, FSM State, Pohnpei, 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 27 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 **Human Rights and Social Development Division** - For over 20 years SPC has operated as the region's pioneer in human rights and gender capacity building to Pacific states, institutions and civil society. Through a team of regional advisors and Country Focal Officers (CFOs) based in member states, it provides a comprehensive suite of policy and legislative advice, technical assistance and capacity building to support Pacific states to respond effectively to priority regional human rights priorities, such as gender equality, ending violence against women and children, disability rights, climate change and equitable, sustainable development.

The **role – the Country Focal Officer (Pacific Women Lead)** will support the host country government and relevant ministries to meet its national, regional and international gender equality commitments through the provision of advisory services, technical assistance, networking, coordination, and capacity-building, with a focus on implementing Pacific Women Lead.

- The key responsibilities of the role include the following:
1. Country Planning and Implementation
  2. Technical Assistance and Advice
  3. Training and Capacity-Building
  4. Networking and Partnership
  5. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

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

**Qualifications**

- Tertiary qualification in public

policy, law, human rights, gender, youth, culture, social science, community development, international relations, development studies or similar field.

**Technical expertise**

- At least five years' experience in Pacific Island country/territory working to in human rights, gender equality and social inclusion, youth for development or culture for development (in government and/or civil society).
- Strategic planning experience and in-depth understanding of country cultures, context, challenges and opportunities.
- Knowledge of legislative reform process and policy development.
- Experience in community development, non-formal adult education and/or community outreach.
- Experience in financial management, budgeting and acquittals.
- Computer literacy in Microsoft Office suite.
- Driver's license.

**Closing date:** 26 June 2022 – 11:00 pm Pohnpei time

**Job Reference:** SH000139

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. What attracted you to this position and why do you think you are the best candidate for the position?
2. What are three priority needs for improving gender equality standards in Pohnpei, FSM?
3. What does Women's Economic Empowerment mean to you and for women in FSM?

# ...FSS Tosiwo Nakayama

*Continued from front page*

security of our shared Blue Pacific, for decades to come.”

She said that the new vessel, along with another that will arrive in the FSM in the coming months could do everything the older vessels could do to protect the life and livelihoods of FSM citizens but they are bigger, faster, and have a much greater range. For instance, the FSS Tosiwo Nakayama could sail from Pohnpei to Palau and back again on one tank of fuel. It also takes a larger crew of law enforcers; 23 compared to the 14-18 of the older Patrol Boats.

“This creates opportunities for new Micronesian mariners to take their place in the rich seafaring history of these islands,” she said. “That includes women as well as men; these boats are designed to better accommodate mixed-gender crews.”

Ambassador Cowley said that the crew of the new vessel had been away from home for four months. During that time, they completed rigorous training in Perth, Western Australia, before sailing 2500 miles to Darwin in Australia's Northern Territory. They then sailed to Cairns, near the Great Barrier Reef for final safety checks before the long journey home. As they sailed home from Cairns, they conducted surveillance of Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone.

“The Federated States of Micronesia and Australia have been working together for over 30 years,” she said. “We are proud to see the FSS Tosiwo Nakayama carry forward this partnership to become an exciting new chapter in the story of the FSM.”

“This is the first time that one of our patrol platforms has been named after a known, iconic, and true leader of our nation, the late Tosiwo Nakayama,” said FSM Secretary for Foreign Affairs Kandhi Elieisar, “the founding father and first President of the Federated States of Micronesia, who served two terms as head of state and head of government of our fledgling democracy from 1979 until 1987... It is a very fitting tribute that this vessel before us

is named after our first President to keep his pioneering legacy and memory alive.”

“It is appropriate for me to take this opportunity to express our collective gratitude and sincere appreciation to the people and government of Australia through you, Ambassador Cowley, for this important flagship project and patrol boat program under which these maritime assets are looked after and managed logistically, including training afforded to the crew by the maritime advisers, also provided by Australia to ensure sustainability and longevity of the program,” he said.

He then thanked and congratulated the officers and crew of the maritime wing, some of whom have been with the program since its inception. “On behalf of your government and people, I want to say how proud we are for your service and to thank you for your indomitable spirit and strong commitment to your country. We salute all of you, including your Australian counterparts.”

“On behalf of the traditional leadership around the island, I want to thank each and every one of you for taking care of our islands for its security, safety, and so many other things that are very beneficial to our lives,” said Wasalalpalap Isipahu Herbert Hebel. “We love you all and thank you for guarding over our lands and our people.”

After the speeches were concluded, Lihkend Mer Hebel and Secretary Elieisar shook hands with the crew members of the new vessels, after which Lihkend Hebel cut the ribbon, ceremonially opening the vessel for use. The public was then invited to take a tour of the beautifully appointed vessel.



REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (REOI)  
(INDIVIDUAL CONSULTING SERVICES)

**Country:**  
Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)

**Name Of Project:**  
FSM Skills and Employability  
Enhancement Project (P176965)

**Grant No.:**  
IDA-V381

**Assignment Title:**  
SEE Project Manager

**Reference No.:**  
FM-DOFA-257497-CS-INDV

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) has received financing from the World Bank (WB) toward the cost of the FSM Skills and Employability Enhancement Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services. The FSM Skills and Employability Enhancement Project (SEE) aims to improve the quality of and equitable access to secondary vocational education and skills trainings, and to improve access to and effectiveness of employment support programs.

The consulting services (“the Services”) as the Project Manager include provision of leadership and results-based management of the SEE project in maximizing the impact of project development objectives and ensure quality and success in implementation of all project interventions. The SEE Project Manager will be based in Palikir, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia for an initial period of twelve months on fulltime basis. Contract extension will be subject to a performance and availability of funds.

The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment may be obtained through the Federated States of Micronesia Department of Finance & Administration website ([www.dofa.gov.fm](http://www.dofa.gov.fm)) or can be obtained by e-mailing address indicated in this REOI.

The FSM National Government Department of Finance and Administration (DoFA) now invites eligible individual Consultants to indicate their interest in providing the Services.

Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services (attach curriculum vitae with description of experience in similar assignments, similar conditions; detailed description of leadership positions held, description of use of software application to perform work related assignments etc. and the details of two references). Firms’ staff may express interest through the employing firm for the assignment and, under such situation, only the experience and qualifications of individuals shall be considered in the selection process.

**The criteria for selecting the consultant are:**

**Mandatory**

- Degree in management (business or project), social science, engineering, law or a related field
- Minimum of five (5) years of experience in project management.
- Excellent technical, diagnostic, and troubleshooting skills.
- Strong leadership and organizational abilities.
- Excellent communication, motivational, and interpersonal skills.
- Experience with project management tools and software including Microsoft suites and cloud services, Microsoft Project (or equivalent, especially for the development of Gantt charts)

**Desirable Experience**

- Master’s Degree in education or relevant social science discipline.
- Minimum of five (5) years of experience in project management, preferably in the social sector, specifically in vocational education and training and/or other related project.
- Technical training in Project Management (Project Management Professional (PMP) or Agile Certified Practitioner (ACP). Demonstrated experience in monitoring and evaluation within a development context.
- Experience in working in an island nation environment and familiar with cultural differences and expectations in the FSM.

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to Section III, paragraphs, 3.14, 3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank’s “Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers” Fourth Edition, November 2020 (“Procurement Regulations”), setting forth the World Bank’s policy on conflict of interest.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours 0900 to 1700 Pohnpei Time (Local Time).

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the email addresses below by Friday, June 10th 2022 to:

Secretary, Department of Finance and Administration,  
Attn:  
Mr. Kwame Shiroya  
CIU Program Manager  
Central Implementation Unit  
Department of Finance & Administration  
Palikir, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)

Email: [kwame.shiroya@dofa.gov.fm](mailto:kwame.shiroya@dofa.gov.fm)

And CC to:  
Central Implementation Unit:  
[ciu.dofa@gov.fm](mailto:ciu.dofa@gov.fm)

## FSM and US officials commemorate fallen soldiers with wreath laying ceremony on the water



By *Bill Jaynes*  
The Kaselehlie Press

May 30, 2022

*P o h n p e i* — F S M and United States Government officials honored uniformed men and women who died while in service in the United States Armed Forces with a wreath laying ceremony inside the Pohnpei lagoon. The Memorial Day ceremony honored both U.S. and FSM citizens who have paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Participants in the ceremony were U.S. Ambassador to the FSM Carmen G. Cantor and FSM Secretary for the Department of Foreign Affairs Kandhi Elieisar. After a short ceremony, Ambassador Cantor and Secretary Elieisar placed eco-friendly floral wreaths into the ocean with the playing of Taps, followed by a moment of silence.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this was the third year that the US Embassy and the FSM commemorated Memorial Day in this way rather than with a public event.

Attendees at the ceremony were Kehlen Halbert, Deputy Assistant Secretary, FSM Department of Foreign Affairs; Commander Stewart Peter, FSM Maritime Surveillance; Chief Compact Negotiator Leo Falcam Jr,

Office of the President; Mr. Herman Semes Jr., President, Pohnpei Veterans Association; Mr. Benjamin Dille, Deputy Chief of Mission U.S. Embassy Kolonia; Master Sergeant Jennifer Lindner, Defense Attaché Office, U.S. Embassy Kolonia, and Mr. Roger Chuang, Political Officer, U.S. Embassy Kolonia.

A visiting U.S. Coast Guard Cutter was also in the lagoon at the time of the ceremony, and the flotilla passed by that vessel on its way to the site of the ceremony.





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P.O Box 339  
Pohnpei, FM 96941

Office Hours:

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

# Top money and prizes from sponsors at the 28th Pohnpei Fishing Club Annual Tournament

By Pohnpei Fishing Club

May 28, 2022

**Pohnpei**—27 boats registered for the 28th Annual Fishing Tournament of the Pohnpei Fishing Club. Sponsors for the tournament were National Fisheries Corporation, Kasar Fishing Corporation, NORMA, Ambros Inc./Budweiser, MRAG, Pohnpei Ace Hardware, Mangrove Bay Bar & Restaurant, Panuelo Gas Station, Pacific Marine/Yamaha, Saimon's Market, and Salt Rush.

The day started beautifully, but shortly after departure, winds and rain swooped in and dampened some of the fishing action. Still, some good-sized fish were landed.

Prizes were provided in four categories: Biggest Fish of any qualifying species, Biggest Fish of each qualifying species that didn't win a prize in the biggest fish category, Lady Angler, and Junior



Angler.

The top three fish in the Big Fish category were yellowfin tuna. Lensper Nickolas landed the biggest; a 103-pound yellowfin for the top prize of \$700 in cash. Each of the top five winners also won \$50 gift certificates from Ace Hardware. Mark Panuelo took second, third, and fifth places with prizes of \$600, \$500 and \$300 each for his 67.6-pound, 54.2 pound, and 46.8-pound yellowfin tunas. Fourth place was a nice 47.6-pound wahoo caught by Lara Trott for a prize of \$400. Bernolina Hedson also landed a yellowfin tuna of 42.3 pounds for the sixth-place prize of \$250 and a \$25 Mangrove Bay Gift Certificate. Kei Sonezaki took the last top spot with a fantastic Grand Trevally of 25.8 pounds that won him \$200 and a \$25 Mangrove Bay Gift Certificate.

Four species were caught for the top prizes of the Biggest Fish of the Species; yellowfin tuna, skipjack tuna, wahoo, and barracuda. The top prize winners for each species won \$150. Second prize winners were awarded \$100. Each winner in the category also earned a \$25 gift certificate from one of the sponsors.

Ringlen Hadley landed the top yellowfin at 9.2 pounds. He tied for second with Mark Hadley with twin 9-pound yellowfins. The top two skipjacks landed were good-sized for the species at 15.8 and 15.2 pounds, caught respectively by Nile Panuelo and Jesley Ferdinand. Only one wahoo qualified for the species category, a 16.8 wahoo caught by Alex Ysam. Wilmar Aquino landed the biggest barracuda of 13.8 pounds. Rose Ioanis and Dr. Ieta split the second prize in the category with twin barracudas of 12 pounds.

The lady anglers won \$175 cash for first

prize and \$125 cash for second prize. They also won \$25 gift certificates from one of the supporters of the tournament. Rose Ioanis won with another fish, this one a 12-pound yellowfin. Ypey Esperanza won with a barracuda of 11 pounds.

The infamous fishing Spencer boys again won prizes in the tournament. Junior Spencer caught a 10.6-pound barracuda for the top junior angler prize of \$50 cash, a \$50 gift certificate and a rod and reel set from Ace Hardware. Marvey Spencer won second place with a 7.8-pound skipjack for a prize of \$20 cash and a \$25 gift certificate from one of the sponsors.

The Pohnpei Fishing Club ensures that each boat that goes out for the tournaments has an EPIRB (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon). If boat captains don't have one, the club has one they can issue. It's extremely important for safety and rescue purposes if that becomes necessary ANY time a boat is out. During this tournament, one boat went out and experienced engine failure within the first few minutes. It was inside the lagoon and another boater, not associated with the tournament was able to tow them back to shore, but had it happened in the open water, the boat was equipped with an EPIRB and could have used it, if necessary to signal that they had trouble and rescue could have been affected because their position would be known to rescuers.

The US Embassy has been sponsoring EPIRBs at recent tournaments for small boat owners. During this tournament the winner of their EPIRB was Marliho Mihkel, owner of the Marlin.

### PUBLIC NOTICE OF SUSPENSION OF YOSLYN SIGRAH, ESQ., FROM THE PRACTICE OF LAW IN THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

On April 20, 2022, the Supreme Court of the Federated States of Micronesia suspended attorney Yoslyn Sigrah, Esq., from the practice of law for a period of two (2) months. This discipline was issued in the case of: In the matter of Yoslyn Sigrah, Esq., DPA 003-2018. A copy of the order imposing discipline may be obtained by contacting the Chief Clerk of Court for the FSM Supreme Court at: [salbert@fmsupremecourt.org](mailto:salbert@fmsupremecourt.org)

The period of Ms. Sigrah's suspension from the practice of law began on May 21, 2022, and ends on July 20, 2022. During the time of her suspension, Ms. Sigrah may not undertake representation of any clients in the FSM Supreme Court. After the two (2) months suspension, Ms. Sigrah may apply for reinstatement to practice law.

In addition, prior to the commencement of her suspension, Ms. Sigrah was required to promptly notify, by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, all clients she was representing in any pending matter, including litigation or administrative proceedings, of her suspension and her consequent inability to act as

an attorney for a period of two (2) months, from May 21, 2022, up to and including, July 20, 2022. Ms. Sigrah was also required to advise her clients to seek legal assistance elsewhere.

In the case of Ms. Sigrah's clients who are involved in pending litigation or administrative proceedings, Ms. Sigrah is required to advise her clients of the desirability of seeking the prompt substitution by other counsel. Ms. Sigrah is further required to give this notice to counsel for all adverse parties, including providing counsel for the adverse party the address or place of residence of Ms. Sigrah's clients.

In addition, in the event that Ms. Sigrah's client does not obtain substitute counsel before the effective date of the suspension, it shall be Ms. Sigrah's responsibility, as a suspended attorney, to move, in the court or agency in which the proceeding is pending, for leave to withdraw as counsel for the party to that case.

For any further information or questions, please contact the FSM Supreme Court, Clerk's Office.

Continued on next page

# WE'RE HIRING!

## POSITION ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- PA-21-2022: CSO-02C, Pohnpei Terminal
- PA-22-2022: Power Plant Operator, NPP Pohnpei

Opening Date: June 06, 2022

Closing Date: June 17, 2022



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## ...Fishing Tournament

*Continued from previous page*

For this tournament, NORMA (National Oceanic Resources Management Agency) provided three EPIRBs for raffling to boat owners. Winners of those EPIRBs were Santricko Ioanis for the boat, "Blue Rose", Mickey Harris for the boat, "Morning Star", and Darius Santos for the boat "Dirty Oar", coincidentally, the boat that had engine problems in the morning.

Allois Malfitani of Pohnpei Ocean Safety, which sells EPIRBs and other safety devices for mariners, also donated an EPIRB for raffling. Joseph Ferdinand of the "Miss Jolihna" won that EPIRB.

EPIRBs and other safety items are vitally important for boaters. Contact Pohnpei Ocean Safety to purchase your own before you go out on the water, for your own protection.

Nathan Bonnice, Cheryl Burkidine, and Mabel Loján Avellán sold hotdogs during the weigh in to raise money for the Pohnpei Public Library.

In addition to the prizes provided by the generous sponsors, the club wants to thank the many volunteers who helped to make the tournament possible and to keep it moving.

The next Pohnpei Fishing Tournament will be on June 18 and is sponsored by Vital.



## Three Pohnpei communities receive Direct Aid Program grants from the Australian Embassy

*Australian Embassy, Pohnpei*

On May 20 the Australian Embassy presented Direct Aid Program (DAP) grants to three communities in Madolenihmw. Representing the Embassy was Second Secretary Takuro Steele and Assistant Program Manager Jone Raikabula.



Westin Pelep for the Wapar Water Storage System Project. The grant will go towards purchasing two large water tanks and piping for the Wapar community. Current water storage and piping structures are old, unreliable and require replacement. The proposed project will allow for proper storage and distribution of water to all households within the community, including the Wapar Elementary School.

A DAP grant of US\$20,000 was presented to Metipw community advisor Apiner Hadley for the Solar Panel Streetlight Project in Metipw. This funding will allow the community to purchase and install twenty-three solar streetlights along the newly built road in the community. The number of existing streetlights in the community is currently inadequate, increasing the risk for community members and motorists using the road at night. The installation of new solar streetlights will increase lighting along the road, allowing for the safer movement of community members.

A second grant US\$15,975 was presented to community advisor Rev.



A grant for UD\$9,816 was presented to Estepahn Santiago for the Poasihle seawall and food security project in Temwan. The grant will be used to purchase building materials to construct a 50m long sea wall around the Enterpoint Incorporated office in Madolenihmw. Additionally, the project will provide farming tools and planting materials to farmers in the surrounding communities of Nan Madol to encourage the growing and consumption of local produce, increasing food security.

DAP is a community focused program providing financial assistance to a wide range of development areas such community development, water and sanitation, food security, education, and youth development. For more information, please visit our website [www.fsm.embassy.gov.au](http://www.fsm.embassy.gov.au)

## Interior's Office of Insular Affairs announces funding support for 9th Circuit Judicial Training Program for Pacific Insular areas

*U.S Department of the Interior*

**WASHINGTON** – The U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs has approved its annual agreement with the Ninth Judicial Circuit to provide legal training and oversight responsibilities for the judiciaries in American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Republic of Palau. OIA is providing \$428,967 in fiscal year (FY) 2022 Technical Assistance Program (TAP) funds to continue this judicial program. Compact of Free Association grant funding in the amount of \$377,000 in FY 2022 provides the same judicial training in the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

"A fair and qualified judicial system is critical in every community, and we are pleased to provide these funds that will help ensure these needs are met in the Insular Areas," said Deputy Assistant Secretary for Insular and International

Affairs Keone Nakoa.

Designed, managed, and run by the Ninth Circuit for the Pacific Insular Areas, the comprehensive training program is designed to strengthen court governance and the rule of law, improve judicial systems and processes, and improve judicial education, especially of newly appointed judicial officers.

Objectives of judicial education training programs include:

- Training to provide fair, impartial, and speedy justice and a bench imbued with integrity, professionalism, and competence.
- Training of court leaders with ethical principles so that they can train court staff and lead courts into the 21st century.
- Lawyer training to ensure a pool of qualified candidates to fill future judicial vacancies.
- Court interpreter training to ensure access to justice for local

communities.

- Training for probation officers, court security officers and other court personnel, to develop continuity of services throughout the island courts that will effectively and efficiently safeguard the administration of justice.
- Traditional law training related to customs and traditions in the Island Areas and where they intersect with statutory law.

In 1976, Chief Judge Richard H. Chambers of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals recommended to then Chief Justice Warren Burger of the United States Supreme Court that a committee be created to work with the courts of the South Pacific, including those with U.S. territorial status. Chief Justice Burger agreed and appointed Chief Judge Chambers to chair the Pacific Territories Committee of the Judicial Conference of the United States. The committee's purpose was to function as a resource to the U.S. territories and now former trust territories of the Pacific Islands to make their judicial systems more efficient and advance the

rule of law. In 1988, following a Supreme Court recommendation, President Ronald Reagan turned the committee's work over to the Judicial Council of the Ninth Circuit where it resides today.

For more, visit <https://www.pacificjudicialcouncil.org/committees/pacific-islands-committee>.

The Assistant Secretary, Insular and International Affairs, @InsularAffairs, 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. Follow and "like" OIA on Facebook and subscribe to the OIA YouTube Channel.

## Australian Embassy welcomes return of 2020 Australian Awards Pacific Scholarship recipient Ms. Ardina George

*Australian Embassy, Pohnpei*

The Australian Embassy welcomes Ms. Ardina George back to Pohnpei. Ms. George, who recently returned from Fiji, is a 2020 Australian Awards Pacific Scholarship recipient and is expected to graduate with a Master's in Applied Epidemiology in August this year.

Before applying for an Australia Awards Scholarship, Ms. George was a nurse for ten years and also worked at Pohnpei Public Health. Ms. George, a dedicated mother of four (including two high-school aged daughters), made the difficult decision to leave Pohnpei and her family to further her education. She shared her experiences of studying in Fiji with Ambassador Cowley and Embassy staff.

Being older than most of the Micronesian students at Fiji National University, her experiences studying overseas under a scholarship were always going to be different. 'Most of the Micronesians at the university are fresh out of college, and the age gap was something new and different to me. I spent a lot of time indoors studying because of the pandemic'. Ms. George was able to take advantage of the lockdowns and restrictions by shifting her complete focus to her studies with few distractions. As restrictions lifted, she was able to enjoy long bus rides around Fiji to take in the views. She also



become part of her landlord's extended family and learned to speak Hindi.

Ms. George made many friends from other Pacific Islands and is glad she decided to further her education. 'I learned that that age is not a limiting factor but having a sense of determination and a robust support system is the key to successes. Now reunited with her family, Ms. George has plans to work in the health sector in Pohnpei once she graduates later this year.

We wish Ardina the best of luck. We are sure the community in Pohnpei will benefit greatly from your hard work and sacrifice.

## Pacific unity strengthened & solidified

### Micronesia to remain in Pacific Islands Forum; Subregional rotation to begin in 2024

*Micronesian President's Summit Press Release*

**SUVA, Fiji**—On June 6th to 7th, 2022, the Leaders of the Micronesian Presidents Summit, represented by H.E. David W. Panuelo of the Federated States of Micronesia, H.E. Surangel S. Whipps Jr. of the Republic of Palau, and T.H. John Silk, Special Envoy of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, convened in person in order to engage in a High-Level Political Dialogue with the leadership of the Pacific Islands Forum. It is the view of the Micronesian Presidents Summit that the High-Level Political Dialogue has resulted in a

reform package that succeeds at its goals of strengthening the Pacific Islands Forum as an organization, appealing to the Micronesian Presidents Summit's pleas for equity, and bolstering the Pacific's unity and solidarity.

The High-Level Dialogue was established in order to address and resolve major reform issues concerning the impasse that resulted in the imminent withdrawal by the Micronesian Presidents' Summit, to explore and discuss needed genuine political reforms within the Forum, and as a demonstration of respect for the shared bonds as Pacific Islanders, the collective

## 4th FSM Constitutional Convention reconvene to complete their mandatory tasks

*June 1, 2022*

*Palikir, POHNPEI-*

On Wednesday, June 01, 2022, the 4th FSM Constitutional Convention reconvened after 26 months of recess due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The reconvening of the convention employed both in-person and virtual platforms to complete their mandatory tasks.



In his opening statement, the 4th FSM Constitutional Convention President Hon. Redley Killion welcomed the Delegates, saying, "It has been a long and difficult two years and three months since this convention recessed due to an emergency declaration due to the corona virus. There was never a thought in my mind since that time that we all wanted to come back and finish our work, the mandatory task placed upon us by the good citizens of our great nation."

The 4th FSM Constitutional Convention is projected to adjourn sine die on June 25, 2022, after which the Convention-approved proposed amendments will be engrossed and forwarded to the FSM President for public education and referendum.

On the calendar, there are over 60 proposals pending to be reviewed and debated by the Convention delegates. The convention standing committees are diligently at work

to hear, vet, review, reevaluate and act on all proposals approved by the plenary for consideration. Two proposals have already been adopted by the Convention before it went into recess on March 14, 2022 due to the corona virus Pandemic Emergency Declaration and were sent to FSM President Panuelo. Both adopted proposals are awaiting public referendum.

The Convention unanimously adopted the Standing Committee Reports from the Qualification Committee, confirming the seating of Delegate Roger Arnold and Delegate Joannes (Johnny) Risin to fill the seats vacated by the late Delegate Peter Sitan and the late Delegate Camillo Noket both from Chuuk State who had passed away after the 4th FSM Constitutional Convention went on recess in March 2020. On the first day of reconvening, the Convention President administered the oath of office to those members as official delegates to the 4th FSM Constitutional Convention.

proposed package in its original form showed recognition and appreciation for the perspective of the Micronesian Presidents

Summit as originally stated in the Mekreos Communique. Following candid and genuinely friendly discussions on the basis of good faith, mutual trust and respect, and Pacific solidarity, the proposed reform package has been approved by the Micronesian Presidents' Summit.

The reform package includes that all

*Click here for continuation*

## Charter school in Chuuk aims to revive loom weaving

### *Habele Foundation*

An innovative Charter school is reintroducing old cultural skills to local students on Weno, capital of the most populous state in the Federated States of Micronesia.

A distinctive form of backstrap loom weaving was once ubiquitous across the Caroline Islands, today's Federated States of Micronesia. Now the intricate work of crafting these textiles endures only in the small outer islands strung distantly between Chuuk and Yap. The Akoyikoyi School is looking to change that, hoping to bring loom weaving back to Chuuk Lagoon.

The effort was made possible in part by the donation of a handcrafted warp board, backstrap looms, peripheral weaving tools, and thread from Habele. Funding was generously provided by the Matson Foundation of Hawaii.

Akoyikoyi is a tuition-free charter school accredited by the Chuuk State Department of Education. Community involvement is an important component of Akoyikoyi school so parents are required to attend PTA meetings to stay informed and involved in their children's education. The school combines both Chuukese and English native speaking staff who are needed for proper bilingual instruction and cross-cultural awareness.

Habele is a nonprofit, established by former Peace Corps Volunteers, that works across Micronesia to

serve students and schools. Habele's support of cultural skills developed in Yap from its sponsorship of after school mentorship programs using traditional techniques, such as carving and weaving, to imbue students with a sense of accomplishment and community participation.

Aware of Habele's WeavingConnections program, which supports Outer Island weavers who have migrated to the United States, Akoyikoyi asked Habele for a loom of the sort still used in the Western Caroline Islands.

"This school year we started a traditional skills class," explained Clark Graham, of Akoyikoyi. "The students are learning to weave coconut fronds for roofing. Plans call for them to learn how to weave other things, including coconut baskets to carry food and also the round basket used to carry breadfruit.

He explained that having "a tyr (Chuukese for 'loom') would be another step in the learning process allowing participating students to get more in touch with their traditional arts."

A personal connection adds further significance to the project. Graham's son Curt's "paternal great grandmother was the last woman in Penia to use a tyr. "When she died, the loom was



placed in her grave," recounts Graham. "That marked the end of such weaving."

Penia is a village on the northeast shore of Weno. This timeline of weaving's decline in the Chuuk Lagoon appears consistent with published reports.

In his widely cited "Material Culture of Truk," American Anthropologist Frank M. LeBar observed that by his 1947 fieldwork "weaving had all but disappeared on Truk." LeBar identified only eight older women among his interviewees on Romonum, a lagoon island, who "knew some or all of the processes of weaving."



"It's great to be a small part of this," explained Habele Founder Neil Mellen, himself a former Peace Corps Volunteer who taught in the Outer Islands of Yap. "The credit goes to the educators at Akoyikoyi, the weavers from Yap's Outer Islands who worked with Habele to document the weaving equipment, and the Matson Foundation who had the generosity to pay for the raw materials and shipping."

## Interior's Office of Insular Affairs supports Insular Area students through Close-Up and Junior State Foundation \$1.5 Million promotes civic engagement and education

### *U.S. Department of the Interior*

**WASHINGTON** – The U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs has announced \$1,499,430 in fiscal year 2022 Technical Assistance Program grant funding to two civic engagement and education programs for insular areas students. One million dollars has been provided to the Close-Up Foundation and \$499,430 has been provided to the Junior State Foundation.

"The educational opportunities provide by both Close-Up and Junior State Foundation are undeniable, and thanks to funding made available by Congress,

students from the Insular Areas will once again be able take full advantage of these unique learning programs," said Deputy Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs Keone Nakoa.

For the past three decades, Interior has supported over 10,000 students and educators from the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands and from the freely associated states which are the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau to participate in Junior State Foundation and Close-up

Foundation student exchange programs.

On May 26, 2022, Interior also announced grant funding to fund membership fees for the Insular Areas in the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education which makes students from the territories and the freely associated states eligible for in-state tuition rates at participating schools in the western United States.

Information about the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs and funding assistance for the insular areas can be found at [www.doi.gov/oia](http://www.doi.gov/oia).

The Assistant Secretary, Insular and International Affairs, @InsularAffairs, 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. Follow and "like" OIA on Facebook and subscribe to the OIA YouTube Channel

## FSM Skills & Employability Enhancement Project seeks to update vocational curriculum, provide vocational grants, and rebuild PATS as the FSM Skills Academy

*FSM Information Services*

**PALIKIR, Pohnpei**—Under the leadership of His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Department of Education, the Department of Transportation, Communication & Infrastructure, the Department of Resources & Development, and the Department of Finance & Administration have joined together to design the FSM Skills and Employability Enhancement (SEE) Project, which will be generously funded through a \$17,700,000 investment from the FSM's partners at the World Bank. The FSM SEE Project includes infrastructure, technical assistance, and capacity development. Funded by the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA), the SEE Project is a key initiative of the Panuelo-George administration, designed to improve educational and economic opportunities for the FSM's youth.

"The FSM workforce lacks the skills necessary for developing the economy and building the Nation, and for a long time the FSM has been importing skilled workers from outside," the Honorable Gardenia Aisek, Secretary of Education, said in a statement. "The [SEE Project] will provide the education and training in vocational areas needed to produce a skilled workforce for developing the FSM."

The SEE Project will address these goals through multiple initiatives. First, it will review and update the National Career & Technical Education Curriculum Standards & Benchmarks and provide training to teachers across all four states.

"The FSM Skills and Employability Enhancement Project will make a huge impact within the country's education system, in particular technical and vocational education and training (TVET)," said Rachel Salomon, Career & Technical Education Coordinator at the Department of Education. "SEEP will ensure high-quality TVET programs and quality teacher training to build a competitive workforce where learners are positioned for career success."

Second, the SEE Project will provide performance grants to designated high schools in Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae, which can be used to upgrade

and purchase relevant equipment and materials to strengthen hands-on learning opportunities.

"Some students with different abilities learn better with hands-on instruction," Arthur Albert, Acting Secretary of Education and Assistant Secretary for the Division of Student Services, said. "Most elected leaders profess the need to build our future in fully structured and culturally appropriate technical and vocational training programs for all our children, and this is it!"

A third program component will create a flagship vocational learning center for the Nation's most dedicated high school seniors, to be located at the former Ponape Agriculture and Technical School (PATS) campus in Madolenihmw, Pohnpei.

The Department of Transportation, Communications & Infrastructure will lead the efforts related to this campus renovation, to develop the FSM Skills Academy (FSA). The FSA facility will be designed to produce a "green" campus, featuring as many environmental/sustainability design concepts as possible while still being cost-effective and reducing operating expenses. The campus will feature practical system design concepts related to accessibility, renewable energy, rainwater harvesting, and energy use optimization to produce a world-class, modern TVET institution that can fulfill the region's needs.

This one-year of intensive skills training will lead to the opportunity to earn internationally recognized certifications and licenses.

"Learners will be able to pursue their chosen trades at the secondary level and receive internationally-recognized licenses or certificates in their fields or trades for gainful employment right after graduation, either self-employed or within the industry," Career & Technical Education Coordinator Rachel Salomon said. "Existing workers will also be able to take the tests for certifications, which could expand their employment opportunities and increase their wages."

"We wanted to have more trained and certified homegrown workers with a rooted sense of ownership and obligations to help with the needs of the

local, state, and national communities," Assistant Secretary Arthur Albert said. "More trained youth and adults will contribute to the building of the communities and the nation. We'll have more products on the shelf with label 'Made in the FSM'."

Addressing economic challenges is complex and requires the collaboration of many departments, agencies, and stakeholders. "The vocational program in the FSM has not been given the attention that it needs, and I am excited that the FSM has been given the opportunity through this multi-faceted project to develop and upgrade the vocational program, which will enable many FSM citizens to gain skills and become professionals in their chosen trade or vocation," Secretary Gardenia Aisek said. "I want to thank the World Bank for providing the funding to upgrade the vocational area of the education sector."

"Words cannot express how proud I am of Secretary Aisek and her team at the Department of Education, and how thankful we are for the World Bank's financial support for this project," President Panuelo said in a statement. "The need to strengthen vocational education in our country so as to improve economic conditions at home has been discussed at virtually every education-focused government conference, meeting house, church, and sakau market, for years. Vice President George and I did not dream this up by ourselves over a weekend; this project is the result of years of grassroots support at all levels of our society. Human resource development is the most important part of our nation-building process and efforts. The FSM Skills and Employability Enhancement Project is one of the initiatives the Panuelo-George administration is most proud of, and it will result in tangible, visible improvement in the lives of our country."

The SEE Project is expected to launch in August 2022, though recruitment for key positions has already begun. Citizens with the intention to take actions today for our Nation's prosperity tomorrow are encouraged to apply for the SEE Project Manager position here: <https://dofa.gov.fm/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/REOI-Project-Manager.pdf>

## FSM Repatriation Flights scheduled for June

*FSM Information Services*

**PALIKIR, Pohnpei**—The COVID-19 Task Force of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) has announced the intended dates for regularly scheduled repatriation flights for the month of June, 2022.

For the State of Yap, it is the intention of the FSM and Yap State Task Forces to implement a repatriation flight from the U.S. Territory of Guam to Yap on June 8th.

For the State of Chuuk, it is the intention of the FSM and Chuuk State Task Forces to implement repatriation flights from Guam to Chuuk on June 15th and June 29th.

For the State of Pohnpei, it is the intention of the FSM and Pohnpei State Task Forces to implement repatriation flights from Guam to Pohnpei on June 11th and June 25th.

For the State of Kosrae, it is the intention of the FSM and Kosrae State Task Forces to implement repatriation flights from Guam to Kosrae on June 6th and June 20th.

For the month of June, the pre-quarantine period in Guam will be reduced from five (5) days to three (3) days. Repatriating persons aged five (5) years old and above must possess documentary evidence that they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Repatriating persons must receive a negative PCR test result during their pre-quarantine period.

It remains the intention of the FSM National Government to open the Nation's borders on August 1st, 2022, with returning persons to only require evidence of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and testing negative against it.

The COVID-19 vaccines are safe and extremely effective at preventing severe disease and death. There are enough vaccines in the FSM for every citizen and resident.

# Pacific Partnership launches paper on “What Works to End Violence against Women and Girls”

*SPC and European Union joint press release*

31 May, 2022

**Suva, Fiji** - The Pacific Community’s (SPC)’s Social Citizenship Education (SCE) programme, as part of the Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls (Pacific Partnership), has launched a paper on What Works to End Violence against Women and girls on 31 May, 2022 at the USP-Japan Pacific ICT Centre.

This paper is the first to be launched as part of a series of knowledge products under the Pacific Partnership programme, in collaboration with partners such as SPC and CSOs partners like the House of Sarah, under the Pacific Partnership. The programme is funded primarily by the European Union (EU), and the Governments of Australia and New Zealand, and UN Women, and is led by the Pacific Community (SPC), UN Women and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

The “What Works” paper documents the learnings of the implementation of the SCE programme in 152 schools across Kiribati, the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI), Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

The Pacific Partnership’s theory of change is that the work to end violence against women and girls (EVAWG) in the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) is enhanced when interventions work on transforming social norms through schools, places of faith/worship and sports. These three domains/spheres are central to life and community of all PICs.

Speaking at the launch of the paper, the Ambassador of the European Union for the Pacific, H.E. Sujiro Seam said, “Evidence shows that school-based programmes, if implemented correctly, can have profound impacts when it comes to promoting attitudes, norms and behaviours which are gender-equal and non-violent. Young people are a priority of the European Union’s social vision. Youth policy arises from the recognition that young people are an important resource to society, who can be mobilised to achieve higher societal goals.”

He added that culture and faith are an integral part of the Pacific’s ways of

living and the European Union is pleased to note that in implementing the programme, SCE is based in Pacific values using cultural stories, folklore, legends indigenous to the region.

SPC’s Deputy Director General (Science and Capability) Dr Paula Vivili reiterated the need for school students and young people in the Pacific with the skills to make good, considered decisions work collaboratively and peacefully, and think critically and creatively is necessary to ensure the sustainable future of our Pacific countries.

“Social citizenship emphasises those social rights and obligations necessary to be part of, and enjoy equal opportunities, benefits and status in, a community. It refers to active, informed and responsible citizens who know their human rights and responsibilities, celebrate diversity, practice non-discrimination and inclusion, show empathy and are concerned about the welfare of others, and are willing to contribute to the development of the country,” he said.

He emphasised that the Ministries of Education in the Pacific are key drivers of the social citizenship process because they best understand what suits their country context and education systems, how to link schools and communities and how social citizenship education can be delivered to children in their country.

He highlighted that the launch of the “What Works to EVAWG” paper is about the work that has gone into the Social citizenship Education component of the Pacific Partnership and to advocate for inclusion of SCE approach to the school curricula of the remaining PICs.

“We may not see all the results and impacts of the program in our project period or indeed in our lifetimes. However, it is an investment in our Pacific people’s futures and global citizenry,” Dr Vivili said.



The “What Works to end EVAWG” paper is available on the SPC HRSD website [here](#). The entire launch event can be viewed [here](#).

## ...Pacific Island Forum

*Continued from page 13*

members of the Pacific Islands Forum agree that equal representation of the three sub-regional bodies of Micronesia, Polynesia, and Melanesia, is essential; as such, there shall be two Deputy Secretary-General positions, each hailing from a separate sub-region as the Secretary-General.

The reform package further includes that all members of the Pacific Islands Forum agree to rotate both the Secretary-General and the Forum Chair by sub-region, with Micronesia to hold the next Secretary-General position beginning in 2024 for a term of five-years.

There is agreement to create, and immediately install, a Pacific Ocean Commissioner as a role separate and distinct from the duties of the Secretary-General. The office of the Pacific

Ocean Commissioner shall be based in Micronesia, the term of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner shall last three years, and the Commissioner shall report directly to the Leaders.

There is further agreement that a Pacific Islands Forum sub-regional office shall be created in the Micronesia sub-region.

After all members of the Pacific Islands Forum sign their agreement to the reform package, it takes effect immediately.

It is agreed that, on the basis of good faith and approval of the reform package by the end of June 2022, each Micronesian country shall rescind its withdrawal from the Pacific Islands Forum.

The Micronesian Leaders strongly felt that the solidarity and integrity of the PIF was strengthened by the Gentlemen’s Agreement and should not be ignored. The principles of the Gentlemen’s Agreement are now concretized and solidified, with the result being a stronger Pacific Island Forum and a stronger Pacific.

## Man, 69 years, got his first COVID-19 shot nearly 17 months into the COVID-19 vaccination rollout in the FSM

UNICEF

June 1, 2022

“In the beginning, when covid 19 vaccine first came out, Public Health came to me at my house and I told my wife to take the vaccine, but I decided not to take it; because I have a child residing abroad who asked me not to take the vaccine, because I can die from it,” said Alpenster Henry, a 69 year old man during a community dialogue session held by the Pohnpei Department of Public Health in partnership with the Micronesia Red Cross Society (MRCS) and UNICEF.

Certainly, Alpenster is not the only person with genuine questions or concerns about COVID-19 vaccines, nearly one and half years into FSM’s COVID-19 vaccination rollout program. And this what the Pohnpei State Department of Public Health has been doing through its community engagement strategies and rapid surveys to gain more insight and understanding about the motivation

and barriers to COVID-19 vaccination uptake while providing people with the needed information to make informed decisions of getting vaccinated.

Thus, on April 28, 2022, a community dialogue session was conducted in Ipwitek community, Madolenihmw municipality with over 60 community members -men, women, children participating. The dialogue session provided an opportunity to address community concerns about the vaccines, dispel negative rumours and provide critical information like reasons for booster shots particularly for most at risk groups.

It was at this event that Alpenster made a startling admission that he was yet to receive even a single shot of the COVID-19, citing misinformation about the vaccines as reason for his hesitancy. After the dialogue session where doubts were cleared, the community developed their own COVID-19 preparedness action plan that would be implemented to keep

them safer should there be COVID-19 transmission in the community. And getting every eligible person vaccinated and boosted came top of their list as the immediate action to help keep the people of Ipwitek protected from COVID-19. They even proposed a date that their community members would be mobilized for the vaccination team. In Alpenster’s words, “Today I learned many things about the vaccine. Today I commit to myself that I will take my first shot on May 8 of this year (2022).”

The good news is that on May 8, 2022, when the COVID-19 vaccination team returned to Ipwitek community, Alpenster Henry received his first COVID-19 vaccine,

and 70 other community members also received their shots.

The Pohnpei State Public Health Department in close collaboration with MRCS with support from UNICEF is continuing with this community engagement strategy towards ensuring no vaccine eligible person is left behind.



Community dialogue session to address community concerns about COVID-19 vaccines

## Over 6000 eligible children so far received their COVID-19 vaccines in Chuuk State through FSM DoHSA Final Push vaccination campaign.

UNICEF

Chuuk, March 31, 2022 ---In an effort to ramp up COVID-19 vaccination uptake and ensure that all vaccine-eligible children are also urgently protected against the COVID-19 disease, the Chuuk State Public Health, supported by partners like UNICEF, WHO, CDC and the Micronesia Red Cross Society has been leading intense community engagement and vaccination campaigns in the Lagoon Island communities to ensure that children aged 5-17 are also not left behind in the state’s quest to protect the population of Chuuk against the threat of Covid19.

This aggressive vaccination drive, which began mid-January 2022 is also in response to calls by the FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs (DoHSA) for states to implement innovative risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) strategies in what it dubbed Final Push COVID-19 vaccination campaign for states to ensure persons aged 5 and

older are fully vaccinated or boosted with the lifesaving Covid19 vaccine.

Consequently, the Chuuk Department of Public Health and Chuuk Community Health Centers have been holding dialogue sessions with Island communities including Northern Namoneas Region, Southern Namoneas Region, Faichuuk Region, Northwest and Upper Mortlock Region where uptake for the COVID-19 vaccines has been relatively slow and thus needing a push. The dialogue sessions involved key community members like parents through PTAs; women groups; youth groups; religious leaders and traditional leaders. Through these forums, the public health teams took turns to address concerns that some parents had about the vaccines for children and other myths and negative rumors comprehensively addressed.

According to the Chuuk State Public Health Department RCCE Focal Point, Ms. Moria Shomour, they have also observed that with COVID-19 vaccines for children as young as 5

years old now available, some parents, who previously were a bit hesitant to take the COVID-19 vaccines for adults aged 18 and above because vaccines for children had not yet been approved at the time now feel motivated to get vaccinated. These parents said they didn’t want to be protected against COVID-19 alone. A parent from the Island of Tol, Madam Miako reportedly said, “you know, I find it immoral for me as a parent alone to be vaccinated and protected against COVID-19 while my children are not, reason I decided to wait until vaccines for children are available. I cannot live while my children die from the COVID-19 disease.”

Mr. Carter Apaisam, Program Manager of Immunization, DoHSA indicates that the Health Services is excited about the immense technical and funding support it is receiving from partners like UNICEF and the CDC in its new strategy of holding extensive dialogues with communities to address specific concerns and feedback about the Covid19 vaccines. “Now, our new

approach is to avail ourselves to the communities for them to ask us all the questions about the COVID-19 vaccines and our service delivery strategies, and this seems to be working for us so far,” said Mr. Apaisam. In relation to making vaccination service delivery shifts, Mr. Apaisam further indicated, “some people also say they cannot go to distant health facilities to get their Covid19 shots, so we changed strategy to take the services closer to them and that seems to be doing the magic.”

At the end of the first phase of the Final Push COVID-19 vaccination campaign that ended in March, a little over 6000 eligible persons mainly children aged 5 and above representing 63% of target population have so far received their 1st Covid-19 vaccine with nearly 3000 children completing their 2nd dose.

The next phase of this Covid-19 vaccination campaign is expected to cover the remaining target Island communities including all Mortlocks and Northwest Islands.

# Remembering our own

USVPA

May 30, 2022

This Memorial Day, May 30, 2022, is a time to reflect and remember our brothers and sisters who have died while serving and fighting for our freedom. While we commemorate this day for all men and women who ultimately sacrificed their lives in the US military, we would like to take this opportunity to honor our brothers and sisters from the Federated States of Micronesia who sacrificed their lives for all of us:



Furthermore, USVPA observed Memorial Day this year with the US Embassy in Pohnpei laying the Wreaths at Sea; visited cemeteries of Soldiers in Pohnpei, participated in road march around Sokehs Rock, and spent quality time with family gatherings. USVPA thanks all veterans and veterans with disabilities who have taken time to participant in all of these events. By honoring their memory in our hearts and minds, our fallen will never be forgotten.

*“We may not know our brothers and sisters at all, but we owe them for their ultimate sacrifice for all”*

– Herman Semes, Jr.

# Proof sought by global experts on safety of treated water at Fukushima

Pacific Islands Forum

June 2, 2022

Face to face talks regarding Japan plans to discharge Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS) treated water at Fukushima into the Pacific Ocean are the next step following an initial meeting between the Government of Japan and the Pacific Islands Forum global panel of experts.

The five independent experts were announced by the Forum in January, following more than six months of meetings between Forum member nations and Japan on its discharge plans.

Today’s meeting was the second time for Japan’s Tokyo Electric Power Company, TEPCO officials and experts to meet the panel of independent experts advising

Forum Members on the issue. The International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA, was represented in an Observer capacity by Director and Coordinator of Nuclear Safety and Security, Gustavo Caruso. Japan’s head of delegation, Director General Kaifu Atsushi, Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Science Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA), welcomed the experts and Director Nagayoshi Shoichi, International Nuclear Cooperation Division, MOFA, facilitated the exchange of questions and responses from the PIF and the TEPCO teams.

Forum experts presented their analysis and findings based on the data received to date, including in relation to biological contexts and monitoring, fate in the ocean and ocean monitoring needs, and shared views

# Bank Of Guam® names 2022 IFIT Scholarships



Kiran Toh  
Father Duenas Memorial School  
Guam



Rownel Coloma  
Marianas High School  
Saipan

*Bank of Guam announced the selection of 5 Ifit Scholars. Each recipient will be awarded \$2,000 to be used towards any 4-year accredited college or university.*

June 2, 2022

*Hagåtña, GU-* Since 2011, 55 students have been named Ifit Scholars from Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Belau, and San Francisco, California.



Michelle Onejeme  
Guam High School  
Guam



Tilo Trux  
Yap Catholic School  
Yap

Bank of Guam’s Ifit Scholarship program is open to high school seniors who plan on continuing their education at an accredited college or university. Recipients are selected based on a blend of academic achievement and extracurricular activities.



Vivien Liu  
Marianas High School  
Saipan

The Class of 2022 Bank of Guam Ifit Scholars are:

1. Kiran Toh, Father Duenas Memorial School (Guam), pursuing degrees in Medical Humanities and Mathematics in Columbia University this Fall.
2. Michelle Onejeme, Guam High School (Guam), pursuing a degree in Psychology at Texas Tech University this Fall.
3. Vivien Liu, Marianas High School (Saipan), pursuing a degree in Political Science at Amherst College this Fall.
4. Rownel Coloma, Marianas High School (Saipan), accepted into the Political Science program at the University of California at Irvine.
5. Tilo Trux, Yap Catholic High School (Yap), aiming to pursue a degree in Business with a focus on Tourism at the University of Guam this Fall.

*“For 11 years now, we’ve invested in tomorrow’s leaders through our Ifit Scholarship program, each one of them representing the qualities we value at the Bank. We’re so grateful to be part of their journey and we know Kiran, Michelle, Vivien, Rownel and Tilo will continue to excel in their academic careers and give us even more reasons to make us Proud to Be the People’s Bank.”*

–Joaquin P. LG. Cook, President & Chief Executive Officer

regarding responsibility to address the issue. They expressed their role as ‘honest brokers’ of information and stressed the burden of proof on Japan to ensure safety.

The session looked at the concerns of the PIF experts around data sets provided by TEPCO, discussed the implications of those gaps as well as what could be surmised from the available information, and proposed next steps.

Earlier, PIF Governance and Engagement Director Sione Tekiteki, speaking on behalf of PIF SG Henry Puna, had noted Pacific Island countries “have many questions and concerns. We remain fully alert and conscious of the nuclear legacy issues that continue to affect our communities today,” he told the meeting.

“We are also mindful of our legal

obligations to keep our region free from nuclear pollution, including under our South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty as well as the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea,” Director Tekiteki said, “transboundary harm and the inter-generational nature of this matter remain serious concerns, particularly for our small islands that depend on the ocean for our livelihoods. As I have expressed before, we are unequivocal about the need for full access to data and evidence – in a clear and accessible form.”

“Since the proposed time of discharge in 2023 is fast approaching, this issue takes on even greater urgency for us. I remain hopeful that we will move together with one key goal – to protect and secure our homes, our peoples, and our future in this shared home we call the Pacific,” he said.

# Each FSM State to receive a Japanese Patrol Boat to promote near-shore security

*FSM Information Services*

**PALIKIR, Pohnpei**—On June 3rd, 2022, the Honorable Kandhi A. Elieisar—Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)—received His Excellency Hisashi Michigami, Ambassador of Japan, for a signing ceremony pertaining to two non-project grants from the People and Government of Japan to the People and Government of the FSM. The two grants are for the acquisition of four mini-patrol boats, and approximately \$2,700,000-worth of diesel fuel.

Increasingly cognizant of the threats of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing to the Nation’s environment and financial sustainability, the FSM approached Japan to request four (4) mini-patrol boats, the thinking being that, while the Nation’s large exclusive economic zone (EEZ) is protected by the U.S. Coast Guard and the FSM Department of Justice via the Australia-donated patrol boats, the Nation’s coastal territories would benefit from a permanent maritime police presence. On the premise that the FSM is comprised of four states, the Government asked Japan for four patrol boats i.e. one for the State of Yap, one for the State of Chuuk, one for the State of Pohnpei, and one for the State of Kosrae. It is the view of the

FSM National Government that these four mini-patrol boats will assist the FSM in adhering to its responsibilities of working to maintain a Free & Open Indo-Pacific by helping to keep the Nation’s borders safe and secure.

“On behalf of the People and Government of the FSM,” His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the FSM, said in a statement, “I extend our deepest gratitude to the People and Government of Japan, with whom we share a Kizuna (special bond), for moving forward with our request for four mini-patrol boats. The threats posed to our Nation by illegal fishing, near-shore poaching and harvesting of marine resources, and human trafficking, are entirely real. Additionally, these boats can assist the FSM with search and rescue efforts and disaster relief. Altogether, the patrol boats will assist in our Nation’s overall commitments to a Free & Open Indo-Pacific and the broader Indo-Pacific Strategy to keep our Blue Pacific Continent secure.”

In addition to the signing ceremony for the four mini-patrol boats, the Secretary and the Ambassador also signed for the procurement of approximately \$2,700,000-worth of diesel fuel. This marks the second time that the FSM has received assistance of this kind, with the first donation of fuel occurring on September 17th, 2020.



T.H. Kandhi A. Elieisar & H.E. Hisashi Michigami shake hands and pose for a photo

# Rotary Club collaborates with UNICEF, Pohnpei Women’s Council, COM, IOM and others to mark Menstrual Hygiene Day

*UNICEF*

**PALIKIR, Pohnpei**- The 2022 Menstrual Hygiene Day in the FSM was commemorated on May 27 with some students from the College of Micronesia (COM) under the theme, “Break the silence, raise awareness and change negative social norms around menstrual health and hygiene.” The event was organized by the Rotary Club and UNICEF in partnership with the Pohnpei Women Council, IOM and supported by the US, Australian, and Japanese Embassies. It also brought together representatives from the UN Resident Coordinating Office, Department of Education and Faith for Life Youth Group.

Menstrual Hygiene Day is marked around the world on May 28 every year to raise awareness about menstruation as a biological process, and to eradicate the stigma associated with it as well as addressing menstruation challenges that women face.

The president of the Pohnpei Rotary Club, Mr. Richard Dereas in his remarks indicated the sensitivity of the subject matter of menstruation across many cultures like the FSM, and the access to menstrual hygiene products challenges faced by many girls during their periods. As a result, the Rotary club is piloting a reusable pads project with UNICEF, IOM, COM and the Pohnpei Women’s Council. He said, “Our female students have faced many challenges accessing period products. These challenges resulted in students having to choose between buying period products and food or clothing,”

In her remarks, Ambassador Carmen G. Cantor, US Embassy, Pohnpei commended the Period Project by Rotary

for working towards breaking the stigma around menstruation and increasing access to environmentally friendly pads. She said, “Across the world, and I believe here in the FSM too, the topic of menstruation is associated with stigma or taboo, but I believe through initiatives such as this, we can help increase women’s choices of menstrual hygiene materials that otherwise could be limited due to cost, availability and social norms.”

Ms. Jeanyleen Andrew, one of the COM interns, in sharing her personal experience about menstrual hygiene said, “Womanhood is a lot of work. Anybody else experience getting their first period when wearing a white pant, or a white skirt? Well, I am one! And to make it worse, it happened at school. It was a terrifying experience for me because it was my first time. I didn’t know what to do so I asked my English teacher and luckily, she gave me a sanitary pad. It was a hard experience for me as I also had to learn how to put it on.”

This year’s occasion in the FSM was also used to highlight content of a draft UNICEF Handbook on Menstrual Hygiene Management, which is being adapted for the FSM context in partnership with the Department of Education and College of Micronesia.

UNICEF believes that the challenges faced by girls in schools about menstrual hygiene go beyond sanitary pad supplies and hygiene but also the critical information and knowledge that girls need during their menstrual cycles. And this is the reason the organization is working with the Department of Education and College of Micronesia to customize a widely used Comic Book on Menstrual hygiene for use in the FSM.



Participants representing different stakeholder groups who attended the Menstrual Hygiene Day event at MITC building, College of Micronesia

# Japanese speech contest held at Calvary Christian Academy in Pohnpei

*Embassy of Japan in the FSM*

*May 26, 2022*

On Wednesday, May 18, 2022, Mr. Hisashi Michigami, Ambassador of Japan to the Federated States of Micronesia, visited Calvary Christian Academy (CCA) in Pohnpei, and observed a Japanese Speech Contest hosted by Mrs. Sumiyo Ito, a Japanese language teacher, accompanied by Mrs. Virginia John, Principal of the school.

Michigami, Mrs. Ito, Mr. Kazuto Ito, husband of Mrs. Ito, two students who won the prizes of last year's contest, and Ms. Airi Iizuka and Ms. Yuine Sato from the Embassy of Japan gave their marks to all contestants.

Ambassador Michigami applauded all students who gave speech in Japanese for their efforts, and expressed his hope that they would visit Japan in the future and continue to study Japanese.

Eight students gave the same speech explaining "Sakura Zensen" or the movement of the cherry blossom's blooming line that goes from south to north in Japan in Japanese. Ambassador

At the end of contest, the two best students received from Ambassador Michigami Japanese stationaries as their award.



## Interior's Office of Insular Affairs Announces \$35 Million in Compact Impact Funds for FY 2022

*U.S. Department of the Interior*

**WASHINGTON** – The U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs has announced the availability of \$35 million in fiscal year (FY) 2022 Compact Impact funding to be provided to Hawai'i, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa. The total amount includes \$30 million in mandatory funding made available under U.S. Public Law 108-188 and an additional \$5 million in discretionary funding made available under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022 (Public Law 117-103).

"I am pleased to announce that all fiscal year 2022 Compact Impact funds have been made available to each eligible jurisdiction impacted by the Compacts of Free Association," said Deputy Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs Keone Nakoa. "Both the mandatory and additional discretionary funding will help supplement costs borne by these four state and territory governments and are usually utilized to offset government operations."

Provided for under the Compact of Free Association, as amended, U.S. Public Law 108-188, mandatory funding is made available to each of these eligible governments to help defray costs associated with increased demands placed on health, education, and social services, or infrastructure related to such services provided to individuals who have migrated from the freely associated states to these U.S. jurisdictions. Additional discretionary funds may be made available at the discretion of Congress. The total of \$35 million in Compact Impact funds for fiscal year 2022 has been assigned to each jurisdiction as follows:

Affected Jurisdiction	Mandatory	Discretionary	Totals
Hawai'i	\$15,798,564	\$2,633,094	\$18,431,658
Guam	\$12,532,239	\$2,088,706	\$14,620,945
CNMI	\$ 1,652,879	\$ 275,480	\$ 1,928,359
American Samoa	\$ 16,318	\$ 2,720	\$ 19,038
Totals	\$30,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$35,000,000

Under current law, mandatory Compact Impact funding provided to the affected jurisdictions under U.S. Public Law 108-188, ends in fiscal year 2023.

The Assistant Secretary, Insular and International Affairs, @InsularAffairs, 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. Follow and "like" OIA on Facebook and subscribe to the OIA YouTube Channel.

## Secretary Marcus Samo represents Health Ministers from Pacific Island Countries at 75th World Health Assembly in Geneva

*FSM Information Services*

**PALIKIR, Pohnpei**—From May 18th to May 30th, 2022, the Honorable Marcus Samo, Secretary of the Department of Health & Social Affairs, is in Geneva, Switzerland, representing the Health Ministers from Pacific Island Countries at the 75th World Health Assembly. On May 23rd, 2022, Secretary Samo provided his formal remarks which may be found here: [https://gov.fm/files/PIC\\_Statement\\_at\\_WHA75\\_FSM05222022\\_Final.pdf](https://gov.fm/files/PIC_Statement_at_WHA75_FSM05222022_Final.pdf)

Citizens may recall that in late 2021 the FSM was confirmed to become a member of the World Health Organization's Executive Board, representing the Asia-Pacific region. The Nation's membership will last for three years i.e. from 2022 through to 2025. As a member of the Board, the FSM assists in implementing the decisions and policies of the World Health Assembly. Replacing the Kingdom of Tonga, the FSM joins Japan, China, South Korea, and Malaysia as representatives on the 34-member Board from the Western Pacific Region. The World Health Assembly, which is the main governing body of the World Health Organization, is held annually, and brings together Ministers of Health, Directors General of Health, and experts in the health sector.

While arguably the FSM has earned its place on the Executive Board through its leadership in the health sector, the FSM National Government remains highly cognizant that the Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji, the Honorable Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, and the People of Fiji, withdrew their candidacy in support of the FSM. "This is a gesture of goodwill that we will not forget," His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the FSM, said in October 2021, which is repeated again here so as to emphasize the FSM's continued recognition and appreciation of this gesture of goodwill.

The FSM's attendance at the 75th World Health Assembly, which was unable to offer a virtual means of engagement, emphasizes the Nation's commitment to international cooperation in the health sector. Secretary Samo, whose statement at the Opening Plenary Session on May 23rd, 2022, represented

all Pacific Island Countries, was also the first speaker of the day, marking the first time a Western Pacific Regional speaker was afforded this opportunity and accorded this status.

Emphasizing this year's theme of "Health for Peace; Peace for Health", Secretary Samo reminded attendees of the Pacific Island Leaders' Healthy Island Vision created approximately a quarter of a century ago, where "Children are nurtured in body and mind; environments invite learning and leisure; people work and age with dignity; ecological balance is a source of pride; and the ocean which sustains us is protected."

"Can we truly say we are at peace when some countries, particularly the small island states, continue to sink beneath the rising waves?" Secretary Samo said. "Can we say we are at peace when we continue to pollute our oceans and poison the fish and marine life that are vital for our economic and food security today, and into the future, and holds one of the keys for ending both poverty and hunger? Is a parent at peace when her child is ill but cannot access the treatment so easily available to others? Is a breadwinner at peace when he cannot even make the one-dollar-a-day to provide for the life of his family?"

Assuring the fellow members of the World Health Assembly that the Pacific "will continue to work alongside

our fellow Member States as we strive towards a fairer, healthier, and more peaceful world," the Secretary concluded by extending to all peoples that which the FSM seeks: peace, friendship, cooperation, and love in our common humanity.

The following day, Secretary Samo attended an event co-hosted by the Governments of Australia, India, Japan, and the United States of America, entitled "From Local to Global: Promoting Vaccine Confidence and Fighting the Infodemic." The event's purpose was to allow for the sharing of best practices on how governments can build confidence in vaccines (both for COVID-19 and others), and raise awareness for coordinated national, regional, and global action on instituting effective vaccination programming.

Additional engagements, including those on the margins of the World Health Assembly, are inclusive of the FSM delegation conducting consultations and discussions with other member countries, as well as philanthropic organizations such as the Sasakawa Foundation.

Secretary Samo is accompanied by Carter Apaisam, Immunization Program Manager at the Department of Health & Social Affairs, and Jeem Lippwe, Charge'd'Affaires from the FSM Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York.

## Interior's Office of Insular Affairs Funds WICHE Membership Fees for Insular Areas Students from Territories and Freely Associated States Now Eligible for In-State Tuition in Participating Western Schools

*U.S. Department of the Interior*

**WASHINGTON** – The U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs announced a payment of \$174,900 in Technical Assistance Program (TAP) fiscal year 2022 grant funding to the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) for membership fees for the benefit of American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

"We are especially pleased that this funding helps provide opportunities for capacity development and higher education," said Deputy Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs Keone Nakoa. "We encourage administrators and teachers in the insular areas to notify students of the new opportunities across institutes of higher education, especially as students from the Insular Areas are underrepresented across institutes of higher education in the United States."

Membership in WICHE provides opportunities for students from the insular areas to participate in ongoing initiatives related to higher education, workforce development, and behavioral health. This new collaboration also guarantees in-state tuition rates for students from the territories and the freely associated states at hundreds of institutes of higher education across the Western region of the United States.

The Assistant Secretary, Insular and International Affairs, @InsularAffairs, 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. Follow and "like" OIA on Facebook and subscribe to the OIA YouTube Channel.



# Pohnpei Robo League holds 4th Annual Robotics Exhibition

*Habele*

*May 26, 2022*

Teams of students from public and private schools across Pohnpei gathered in the Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School gymnasium to showcase their robotics achievements for “Robo Day 2022.” This annual gathering offers high school robotics clubs an opportunity to close out the school year by matching skills with peers in a friendly competition open to the public.

For the island of Pohnpei, located in the Federated States of Micronesia, Habele’s Pohnpei Robo League represents the premiere Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) opportunity for high school students. The Pohnpei Robo League encourages hands on experimentation with complex technology, problem solving, and teamwork, even for students who might not see themselves as “math and science” enthusiasts. Since its inception in 2018, the League has emphasized a student-driven learning process, with participants encouraged to explore and experiment with their equipment.

In the 2022 competition, students built robots to move through a set field of play, picking up objects with differing point values and depositing them in “scoring zones,” as well as maneuvering through an obstacle course.

The winners for this year’s Robo Day are:

- 1st – Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School
- 2nd – Pohnpei Catholic High School
- 3rd – Pohnpei Island Central High School
- 4th – Calvary Christian Academy

5th – Pohnpei Seventh Day Adventist School  
6th – Nanpei Memorial High School

While Robo Day draws the most public awareness to the Robo League, it represents the culmination of a year of opportunities for participating schools. Pohnpei high schools have seen integration of 3D Printing, robotics certification courses, as well as build out of wireless networks for distance learning during the pandemic.

Habele, a US nonprofit enables and equips high schools in the Robo League across all four of the Federated States of Micronesia. Habele was founded by former Peace Corps volunteers who taught in Micronesia. The nonprofit first introduced robotics to Micronesia in 2011.

Support from the US Government comes through the Office of Insular Affairs, which provides technical assistance funding for development projects in Micronesia. The US-FSM relationship is historically, strategically, and politically unique. Shared goals of regional openness and sustainable development are based on decades of common history and partnership.

Habele’s Robo League is building the knowledge and skills of future island leaders. These leaders will tackle complex multi-faceted challenges. At the same time, Habele is deepening the US-FSM partnership, ensuring those challenges can be faced as a team.

building the knowledge and skills of future island leaders. These leaders will tackle complex multi-faceted challenges. At the same time, Habele is deepening the US-FSM partnership, ensuring those challenges can be faced as a team.



## Three of FSM’s top swimmers to compete in the FINA World Aquatics Championships

*By FSM Swimming Association*

*June 18-26, 2022*

**FSM**—The FSM Swimming Association is sending three swimmers to the upcoming FINA World Aquatics Championships in Budapest, Hungary. The swimming portion of the competition will be held June 18-25. The team competing comprises three FSM athletes, each selected based on FINA point rankings of the swimmers available to participate.

Tasi Limtiaco, who represented the FSM in the Tokyo Olympics and the FINA World Swimming Championships in Abu Dhabi, UAE last year, leads the team as the FSM top ranking swimmer. Tasi currently holds 10 FSM National Records in swimming. He has represented the FSM at multiple World Championships and the Oceania Swimming Championships. He has been training at the Thanyapura Sports Resort in Phuket, Thailand and will be competing in the 50 Meter Breaststroke and the 100 Meter Breaststroke.

Kestra Kihleng is the only female swimmer on the team for this event. This is her second World Aquatics Championships. She has also represented the FSM at the Oceania Swimming Championships, Micronesian Swimming Championships, and won a bronze medal in swimming at the 2018 Micronesian Games in Yap. She holds one FSM National Record in swimming,

and will be competing in the 50 Meter Butterfly and the 50 Meter Breaststroke.

Kyler Kihleng rounds out the team at his first ever World Championships. His international swimming debut was at the Micronesian Swimming Championships in Palau in 2019 where he set two FSM National Swimming Records. He will be competing in the 50 Meter Freestyle and the 100 Meter Freestyle.

The team will be accompanied by Coach Akifumi Takahashi (Ataka), FSM Swimming Head Coach. FSM Swimming Association General Secretary Susan Kihleng will also accompany the team and will be attending workshops throughout the time in Budapest for a brand-new FINA Mentorship Program. FINA, the international governing body of swimming, has selected ten national federations from around the world, including the FSM, to participate in this program from June until December, 2022. The FSM Swimming Association is honored to take part in this program and looks forward to seeing the progress made in the development of swimming throughout the FSM as a result.

Please follow the FSM Swimming Facebook page for updates on these athletes as they travel to Budapest and compete on the world stage.

<https://www.facebook.com/FSMSwimming>



## Opinion Editorial

# Remarks by Delegate Akillino H. Susaia to the 4th FSM Constitutional Convention on June 1, 2022

Mr. President, distinguished Delegates: I beg the indulgence of this Convention so that I may share my views on the issues of Unity and Revenue Sharing.

Our FSM Constitution provides, in Article XIII, Section 3, "It is the solemn obligation of the national and state governments to uphold the provisions of this Constitution and to advance the principles of unity upon which this Constitution is founded." [emphasis supplied]

When those words were conceived at the 1975 Constitutional Convention, our founding fathers represented island people who had lived for centuries under the domination of competing world powers, with only as much minimal indigenous local governance as suited the convenience and interests of those governments--- not of our choosing, and not even within our region.

Even so, throughout much of that long period our local cultural institutions remained in place and the resources we valued were not threatened at that point. Our local cultures remained the focus of our lives.

The devastation visited upon us by World War II changed all that forever.

After that terrible war, we became a UN Trusteeship for another forty years. And it was during that period of increasing travel and better communications that we, especially our younger generations, developed a growing appreciation for the many common values and traditions we share as Micronesians. We also became aware of the movement toward self-government among formerly non-independent peoples all over the world. And in the fertile field of those influences, the seeds of our nation took root.

It did not happen overnight, and it was not obvious at first that a unified Micronesia would even be a goal. We were separated by distances. We spoke many languages. But as our leaders were exposed to advanced education in the US and elsewhere, some becoming active in government in the Trusteeship Districts and in the Congress of Micronesia, many of them came to

envision greater opportunities for our islands as a whole by working together to advance our many shared interests.

By the time the first Micronesian Constitutional Convention met in 1975, the Northern Marianas, Marshall Islands and Palau were strongly motivated by their own perceived economic interests. We all know how that turned out, but out of that difficult and sometimes contentious process there also emerged something unique to our long history---a bonding of four ancient island cultures to become the Federated States of Micronesia!

At the 1975 Convention, a few argued that in committing their states to this new and untried nation, the document should specifically provide states an option to withdraw from the Federation should their people so decide at some later date. It is important now to recall that these arguments did not prevail. Ultimately, the delegates decided and the people later confirmed that the Constitution is founded on the principles of Unity and that the commitments to those principles by the national and state governments are solemn obligations to uphold.

Now more than forty years later, that original commitment to Unity has served our people well as FSM has become a fully-participating member of the United Nations as well as many other multilateral organizations. The FSM also conducts full bilateral diplomatic relations with the United States and with dozens of other sovereign countries, large and small. The day-to-day lives of our people have improved tremendously with advances in health care, education and public infrastructure facilities.

Mr. President, Delegates: I, for one, feel a great sense of pride in our demonstrated political stability and the economic progress our new nation has made in little more than forty years; and I say to you that it is progress our states separately could not have achieved alone.

Naturally, at times some of our people have faced hardships along the way, causing them to question whether it might be better for their state to leave the Federation and go its own way. An

argument has been made that since the Constitution does not expressly forbid state secession, that option is available. Delegates, I believe the Constitution's unqualified commitment to Unity and the 1975 Convention debates on that principle removes the possibility of state secession from the federation. However, I believe that so long as anyone challenges that conclusion as a matter of Constitutional law, the reality must be expressed beyond any shadow of doubt to preclude pointless debate, confusion among our people and expenditure of needless public expenses to determine the intention of our founding fathers.

For that reason, Delegate Berney Martin and I introduced CCPR-4-39 which would amend Article XIII, Section 3 of the FSM Constitution by adding the following sentence to the existing language:

"In furtherance of this spirit of unity, no state can secede or separate from this Federation."

My fellow delegates, I appeal to you today to support the passage of this Proposal (CCPR-4-39).

Mr. President, distinguished Delegates: It is my strong belief that the continued progress of this nation hangs not only on preserving our unity in name, but also on applying its principles consistently throughout all our governmental decisions and actions at every level. This means that we must remain alert to proposed actions that may not only directly erode our unity but which in practice would tend to weaken the basic institutions that make up our nation as a whole.

For most of our citizens, the focus of our daily lives is within our states and local governments. That is as it should be. We are impacted every day by what occurs within our states, and within each state there are always challenges in securing adequate resources to meet local needs.

I know that most citizens and state government officials don't give much thought from day-to-day to the financial needs of running your national government. I say "your" national

government, because while it functions largely over your horizon each and every FSM citizen is a stakeholder in the successful, effective operation of the national government. And like your state governments' obligations to their respective states, the national government is constantly challenged to find adequate resources to meet its obligations to the Federation as a whole.

Because, you see, under our Constitution the National Government has no interests of its own – no reason for being, no constituents to serve other than the people of the FSM. The only role for those who work in the Executive Branch, the Congress and the Judiciary is to generate and provide benefits to the states and to the people.

Those benefits take many forms. One of course is revenues and assistance from both domestic and international sources. A major national government function is to distribute those financial assistance and revenues among the states as our Constitution and laws provide, retaining only as much as is required to perform its functions. Another form of benefits is direct delivery of services in support of state activities the states cannot carry out alone, harnessing economies of scale and accessing international expertise.

Mr. President, honorable Delegates: Those great men who came together and designed the FSM Constitution more than forty years ago were not looking inward. They were looking beyond a system of limited internal cooperation. They saw that this Federation could not survive and prosper in isolation from the rest of the world. The Federation's structure therefore was designed to meet that reality head-on with a Nationally-elected, representative government-- Executive and Congress, with powers limited, yet sufficient to deal with issues of our collective national interest, both foreign and domestic.

I would not dispute that over forty-plus years we in the FSM at every level of government have experienced much, and in many cases learned from our mistakes. Our dynamic Congress, together with our Judiciary has done

*Click here for continuation*

## Opinion Editorial

### ...Susaia Remarks

*Continued from previous page*  
and continues to do a great deal to implement, enlarge upon and to interpret the principles of our Constitution, and to me it is striking how seldom and how little a need has been seen over the years to amend the words of our founding fathers.

One of the things I take away from that observation is that before moving to amend our founding document every effort should be made to use our institutions of government, including our national Executive and Congress, to find and adopt solutions short of Constitutional amendments.

In the case of revenue sharing between the national and state governments, which is the topic of several amendments proposed in this Convention, while it may be true that the circumstances have evolved beyond what was envisioned in 1975, I believe that solutions can be found short of Constitutional amendment. And I certainly believe it is inappropriate to refer in a Constitution to specific, temporal economic assets such as the captive insurance program.

I understand the motivation for equitable sharing of fishing revenues. But, I hardly think that a population basis that would, across the board, give Chuuk and Pohnpei considerably more shares of such revenues is equitable. I strongly believe that the existing arrangement for distributing the fishing revenues is the most ideal set up. We should not allow politics to trumped our economic development.

Finally, I respectfully submit that these and other concerns relating to revenue sharing with the States should first be submitted to the scrutiny and wisdom of the State and National Leadership Conference as well as other relevant expert bodies before receiving the attention of our Constitutional Convention.

And so, Mr. President and honorable delegates let me end this statement with this old saying: "Some things call for plain talk, so please forgive my directness here."

**Kalahngan, Kinisou Chapur,  
Kamangar and Kulo Mulalap!**

## Stand firm in pursuit of "Four-Pronged Adherence" push forward building of China-PICs community with a shared future hand-in-hand

As developing countries in the Asia-Pacific alike, China and Pacific Island Countries (PICs) enjoy long-lasting friendly exchanges. Since the establishment of diplomatic ties in the 1970s, China and PICs have continued to expand exchanges and cooperation in more than 20 areas, including trade, investment, ocean affairs, environmental protection, disaster prevention and mitigation, poverty alleviation, health care, education, tourism, culture, sports and at the sub-national level. For PICs, China has provided a large scale of economic and technical assistance without any political strings attached, details of which can be referred to in the Fact Sheet: Cooperation Between China and Pacific Island Countries ([https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx\\_662805/202205/t20220524\\_10691917.html](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx_662805/202205/t20220524_10691917.html)).

From May 26th to June 3rd, China's State Councilor and Foreign Minister H.E. Wang Yi paid official visits to seven PICs, namely Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea, and a virtual visit to the Federated States of Micronesia upon invitation. He also held video conference with the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Cook Islands and the Premier and Foreign Minister of Niue, and hosted the second China-Pacific Island Countries Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Fiji. These visits set a new record for the history of friendly exchanges and opened a new chapter in the traditional friendship between China and the PICs.

When jointly meeting the press in Honiara with Foreign Minister of Solomon Islands T.H. Jeremiah Manele, H.E. Wang Yi introduced the purposes of his trip to the Pacific Islands region, stressing that China will continue to pursue "four-pronged adherence" to developing relations with PICs:

First, adhere to treating each other as equals. It's China's consistent stance that all countries, big or small, are equal. When developing friendly relations with PICs, China will uphold justice while pursuing shared interests and follow the principle of sincerity, real results, affinity and good faith. China regards PICs as an important part of South-South cooperation and an important partner in building a community with a shared future for mankind.

Second, adhere to mutual respect. China always respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of PICs, as well as the PICs people's efforts to explore development paths in line with their own national conditions. When conducting exchanges and cooperation with PICs, we have never interfered in the internal affairs of PICs, never attached any political strings, and never sought any geopolitical self-interest.

Third, adhere to win-win cooperation. China will continue to be an advocate, builder and promoter of PICs development. China stays committed to deepening pragmatic cooperation with PICs in various fields and sincerely helping PICs develop economies, improve people's well-being and enhance the capacity for self-driven development, and shares the dividends of China's development with the PICs people.

Fourth, adhere to openness and inclusiveness. The Pacific Islands region should be a stage for cooperation, rather than an arena for vicious competition. China's cooperation with PICs doesn't target any country, nor will it be disrupted by any country. At the same time, we respect the various ties that PICs have established with other countries, and are open-minded about carrying out more tripartite cooperation with other countries inside and outside the region.



In response to a reporter's question about the China-Solomon Islands framework agreement on security cooperation, which has aroused some debate and suspicion, H.E. Wang Yi expounded on three principles for China and Solomon Islands to promote security cooperation: 1) fully respect the national sovereignty of Solomon Islands. China-Solomon Islands cooperation is based on Solomon Islands' needs and requirements, on the premise of Solomon Islands' consent, and on the basis of equal consultation; 2) help maintain the social stability of Solomon Islands. The aim of China-Solomon Islands security cooperation is to help Solomon Islands strengthen police capacity-building, offset the security governance deficit and maintain domestic stability and long-lasting peace and security. It's not targeting third parties, nor does China intend to establish military bases in Solomon Islands; 3) in parallel with regional arrangements. China-Solomon Islands security cooperation and the existing regional arrangements complement each other, sharing the same objectives and interests. The cooperation conforms to the common interests of Solomon Islands and the

*See continuation on next page*

## Opinion Editorial

### ...Opinion Editorial PRC

*Continued from previous page*

Pacific Islands region.

At a joint press availability with Prime Minister and Foreign Minister T.H. Frank Bainimarama of Fiji after the successful conclusion of the second China-PICs Foreign Ministers' Meeting, H.E. Wang Yi summarized the meeting's five-point consensus as follows:

First, deepening the comprehensive strategic partnership. China and PICs will continue to support and help each other, firmly uphold each other's core interests and major concerns, and keep consolidating and expanding the comprehensive strategic partnership.

Second, safeguarding national sovereignty, independence and dignity. It is important to respect the sovereignty of all countries, abide by the principle of non-interference, and jointly uphold the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries, particular small and medium-sized countries.

Third, pursuing common development and prosperity. China will continue to provide assistance to PICs with no political strings attached to enhance the capability of PICs for self-driven development.

Fourth, advocating true multilateralism. China and PICs all abide by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter earnestly, advocate multilateralism, and call for efforts to implement the Paris Agreement faster and adopt practical measures to support the climate response of PICs.

Fifth, promoting people-to-people exchanges. China stands ready to further exchanges and cooperation with PICs in such areas as education, culture, youth, sports and media, provide PICs with Chinese government scholarships and various training opportunities, and encourage closer sub-national exchanges and cooperation.

On June 2nd, local time, H.E. Wang Yi held virtual meetings with T.H. Kandhi A. Elieisar, FSM Secretary of Foreign Affairs and H.E. John

Haglelgam, Former President of the FSM and President of Micronesia-China Friendship Association (MCFA), respectively. The two sides exchanged in-depth views on carrying forward traditional friendship and consolidating the development of China-FSM Comprehensive Strategic Partnership featuring mutual respect and common development. They reached important consensus on seeking greater synergy between the Belt and Road Initiative and the Blue Prosperity Micronesia by expanding cooperation in fields such as agriculture, fisheries, infrastructure, trade, investment and tourism, which will surely bring new vitality to the long-term development of bilateral relations and make positive

contribution to the peace, stability and development in the Asia-Pacific.

H.E. Wang Yi emphasized, the facts over nearly half a century have proved that the exchanges between China and PICs did not and will not affect regional security and stability. What we focus on is economic development, and what we care about is improving people's well-being. What we are doing in PICs is building roads and bridges rather than increasing military presence.

Despite changes in the international landscape, China will always hold fast to "four-pronged adherence" to developing relations with PICs and be a good friend and good partner

pursuing common development with the FSM on the basis of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit. With the guidance of the notion of a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity and the consensus of the second China-PICs Foreign Ministers' Meeting, China is ready to work with the FSM to actively materialize the outcome of this virtual visit to the FSM by State Councilor and Foreign Minister H.E. Wang Yi and keep pushing forward the China-FSM "Great Friendship" and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership onto new heights in a concerted efforts to build a China-PICs Community with a Shared Future.

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

### Out migration

Dear Editor,

We are all worried about the continuing out-migration of our people to Guam, Saipan, Hawaii and beyond. It seems that more of our people are leaving our country every day in search of a better life in the US and its territories, even in spite of the challenges resulting from the pandemic. And, given the difficult situation in the US in attracting their own people for jobs in the private sector, more US companies are now reaching out over the internet to recruit our people. With the lack of good employment opportunities at home, it's not surprising that many of our people are responding in droves to the recruitment ads and leaving home.

It was roughly estimated some years ago that upwards of 50,000 of our people are now residing in the US and its territories. And, it's not hard to figure out that more and more of our people will be residing abroad based on the number of citizens leaving each month. This trend will likely to continue and even increase in the future as more of our people leave for distant shores, attracted by the allure of better employment opportunities and new places.

Definitely, there is a brain drain here which will ultimately affect our ability to successfully build a new and viable nation. We cannot do an effective job of nation-building

without the contributions of many qualified citizens already residing abroad, and those who are and will be leaving each month. And, unfortunately, young people probably make up a good percentage of those who have left or will be leaving. So, we must do something now to slow down the exodus and try to keep our people home where they belong, especially the youth who will be tomorrow's leaders. Our government must become proactive and creative in finding ways to successfully bring back some of our people and somehow slow down the outmigration by improving things on the ground here. I am sorry to say that our government has not made a good-faith and sustained effort at attracting back those citizens who may want to come home. We make half-hearted stabs at the issue without well-thought out, well-funded and aggressive campaigns, resulting in failures only. Administration after administration mostly talk but don't do enough to be successful in returning at least those who may wish to come home. Without a serious and sustained campaign with full backing of our government, we will never succeed and the FSM diaspora abroad will only grow.

I know the government can pass legislation that will provide incentives for our people to return home. For example, if a citizen returns and establishes a business venture that provides employment, he/she should qualify for a tax break for up to 3 years or so. Or, if a citizen returns and finds

a job in the private or public sector, he/she should receive a modest premium on top of his/her salary for a period of time. Unless our government can think up attractive incentives such as these and others to incentivize our people to return home, very few will choose to come back on their own.

I know the majority of our people will never come back but I am sure some will choose to return home if only our government can make a stronger case for their return by always reaching out to them at every opportunity. When our leaders including the president, cabinet members and members of our Congress travel to the US for meetings, conferences and the like, they should make it a point to stop at areas where there are sizeable citizen populations to speak to them and articulate the Nation's need for their service. That their knowledge, experiences and skills are very much needed at home to support our important nation-building effort. At the same time, they can talk about what incentives the government might have for them if they return and what job opportunities there may be at the time.

For sure, the majority of our people who are already living abroad will never return home. But I am sure there is a percentage who may be thinking of coming home but only need a gentle push from our government to "take the plunge" and return.

*Thank you.  
Kasio E. Mida*