

# United States and Pacific Island leaders hold first U.S.-Pacific summit and agree to partnership

By *Bill Jaynes*  
 The Kaselehlie Press

September 29, 2022

**Washington D.C.**—On September 29, 2022, the United States and fourteen Pacific Island nations announced the successful conclusion of the first-ever U.S.-Pacific Islands Summit held at the White House in Washington D.C. on September 28 and 29, 2022.

“Forged by shared history, sacrifice, and values, our partnership has contributed to prosperity, peace, and security in the Pacific Islands, the United States, and the world for generations. Today,

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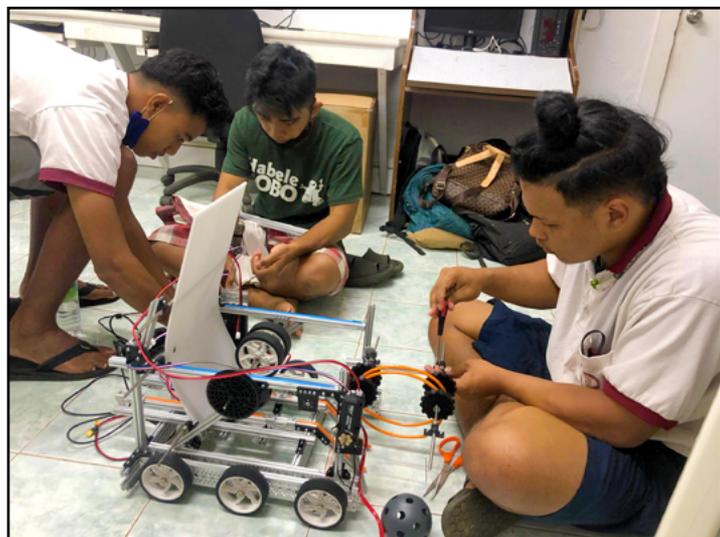


**Pictured Above:** The Leaders of the Pacific meet with the President of the U.S.; this photo was taken by the U.S. Government



**Pictured Above:** T.H. Fiane Naomi Mata'afa, Prime Minister of Samoa; H.E. Joseph R. Biden Jr., President of the United States of America; H.E. David W. Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia

# Pohnpei students to represent Micronesia in International Robotics Championship



*Habele*

A team of students from Pohnpei’s largest public high school is headed to Switzerland. These students represent the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) in the FIRST Global International robotics challenge.

The five students from Pohnpei Island Central School (PICS), the island’s oldest public high school, will compete against robotics teams from 180 countries around the world. This will be the first team to represent the FSM at an international robotics competition, since Yap State carried the Micronesian flag at the inaugural FIRST Global competition, held in Washington, DC in 2017.

In the Olympics-style competition, students from PICS will collaborate with teams from other nations to complete

a series of tasks in the “Carbon Capture Challenge,” a game built around the tournament’s central theme of cooperatively addressing climate change.

The PICS team has been carefully designing, building, and testing a robot to navigate this challenge, which will involve scooping up “Carbon Element” balls, and launching them through the air into a “Sink” to store the captured carbon. Points are awarded throughout different stages of the game, and weighted by skill and technical achievement.

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## Two Micronesians plead guilty to human trafficking related charges against two Micronesians in Ottumwa, Iowa

By Bill Jaynes  
The Kaselehlie Press

October 9, 2022

**Ottumwa, Iowa**—According to a United States Department of Justice press release, two Micronesians living in the United States have pleaded guilty to two counts related to human trafficking of two FSM citizens. 46-year-old Nesly Mwarechong, and 51-year-old Bertino Weis, pleaded guilty to two counts of unlawful conduct with respect to documents in furtherance of trafficking or forced labor. The hearing on October 6 came after a federal grand jury in the Southern District of Iowa returned a five-count indictment against the defendants for recruiting two young men from the FSM to come to the United States for the purpose of coercing their labor in a meat processing plant for the defendants' financial gain.

As is customary in cases of human trafficking, the Justice Department press release did not name the victims.

According to their plea agreements, the defendants convinced the two victims to leave their homes in the FSM in December of 2019 and travel to the United States by promising them they could work in the U.S. and send money back to their families. After the victims arrived in Ottumwa, Iowa the defendants did get jobs for the victims but then confiscated their passports and social security cards. Thereafter, each week the

defendants took the victims to cash their paychecks and took all of the money from their pay except for \$20 each per week.

"The defendants used various means to compel the victims' labor and services, including confiscating the victims' passports and social security cards, imposing debts on them, limiting and monitoring their communication with family, physically and socially isolating them, and creating a system of total financial dependence on the defendants. In so doing, the defendants created a situation where the victims either had to continue complying with the defendants' demands or risk being homeless and without a means of supporting themselves in a foreign country where they did not speak the language and had no means of returning home," the US DOJ press release said.

"These defendants used the allure of jobs in the United States to entice the victims and then exploited them and profited off their hard work," said Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke for the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. "The Department of Justice remains committed to partnering with federal, state and local officials to investigate and prosecute human trafficking offenses, which have no place in our society."

The defendants face a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine, which will be

determined at their sentencing, scheduled for February 15, 2023. As part of the defendants' plea, they have already agreed to pay nearly \$70,000 in restitution to the victims.

According to WHO13, a local Ottumwa news source, the investigation into the crimes came about after one of the victims went to the Ottumwa police department in June of 2020. Police officers followed the defendants as they took the victims to cash their paychecks. Officers witnessed the victims cashing the checks and then being forced to give the money to the couple.

"This case is very unique and complex, and we appreciate the assistance from the U.S. Attorney's Office here in the state of Iowa," Jason Bell of the Ottumwa Police Department told WHO13. "Without their cooperation and willingness to participate and assist us, providing the resources in order for us to do this case, we wouldn't be able to do it."

Investigator Jeremy Tosh of the Ottumwa Police Department investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Virginia Bruner and Ryan Leemkuil for the Southern District of Iowa and Trial Attorney Christina Randall-James of the Civil Rights Division's Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit prosecuted the case.

"Seeing the relief on their faces being out of that situation really drove home how terrible this is," Tosh told WHO13. "I think the big takeaway is even though it's not a sexual trafficking thing, it's still affected them a lot and their livelihoods. They weren't able to control their own world."



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Bill Jaynes  
Managing Editor

**THE NEXT ISSUE OF  
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WILL BE RELEASED ON:**

**October 26, 2022**

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

**Monday, October 24, 2022**

## FSM Auditor questions appropriateness of selection of Kitti road projects contractor on unfinished road projects

By Bill Jaynes  
The Kaselehlie Press

October 10, 2022

**Pohnpei**—At the request of the Mayor of Kitti, the National Office of the Public Auditor (OPA) looked into expenditures made for two Kitti road projects, one in Salapwuk and the other in Mwoakot. Congress appropriated \$50,000 for the Rakuh to Utinpil secondary road in Salapwuk. Authorization to begin work was signed in June of 2021. The duration of the project was to have been 45 days. Congress appropriated \$100,000 for the Mwoakot road project, an existing road. Authorization for the contractor to begin the project was issued and signed in December of 2020. The Mayor of Kitti told OPA that though funds had been released by the FSM government to the contractor for both projects, neither had been finished.

Though OPA did not name the contractor, it said that the same locally owned contractor was selected to do both jobs.

The first of OPA's findings was that there was "insufficient and misleading certification of project status by the inspection officials for the Mwoakot Road Project". To date, 80% (\$80,000) of the contract award amount has already been provided to the contractor, though only 50 percent of the work has been completed. "A senior official of DTC&I (FSM Department of Transportation, Communications, and Infrastructure) claimed that the contractor had already purchased the materials to complete the project. But no work has been done on the project since February 18, 2021, by which time \$80,000 of the allotted \$100,000 for the project had already been released to the contractor.

Auditors conducted site inspections with Kitti Municipal government officials and with DTC&I officials. The audit said that "various attempts were made to interview and carry out a site inspection with the contractor, however, were unsuccessful."

OPA said that there were insufficient supporting documents for the inspection reports, each providing only a percentage of the work completed with no justification or supporting

documents. "The actual project status reported was not in line with the actual condition of the road project upon the site verification by the inspection team," OPA wrote.

OPA noted that on January 5, 2021, the inspection report used to authorize a release of \$30,000 said that the project was "successfully completed as per work scope." On February 18, 2021, when the FSM Department of Finance and Administration (DoFA) released another \$20,000, the inspection report said that only 50 percent of the work had been completed.

OPA said that in addition to the work not having been completed though 80 percent of the funds have been expended, the FSM government did not collect the \$66,802 from the contractor that it was contractually due because of the number of days that had passed beyond the agreed upon completion date. This finding was fleshed out in OPA's second finding, which said that it was a breach of contract that delayed the project for more than a year with no remuneration to the people or the government.

OPA said that it was "informed of close family relations between the contractor and a senior official who was responsible for supervising the project and inspection officials." It noted that DTC&I did not have effective controls and procedures in place to mitigate conflicts of interest with contractors.

OPA found that there was a lack of segregation of duties in the processes of procurement and independent inspections of the road projects. It found that the Project Inspection Officer for the Mwoakot and Salapwuk road projects was also involved in the selection process for the contractor.

"When segregation of duties is not implemented it increases the risk of undetected collusion between government officials and the contractor; which may eventually lead to financial loss and no or low positive impact on the community or recipients of the public projects," OPA wrote. OPA has referred the matter to its Compliance Investigation Division which investigates possible non-compliance

with the law, which could potentially be referred to the FSM Department of Justice for possible prosecution in the event that laws were violated.

OPA's final finding regarded lack of compliance to the provisions of the Financial Management Regulations for the procurement process for sealed bids. It said that there were only two bidders for the Salapwuk road project. One of the bidders did not submit the required documents for the bid. "The only document in the file for the bidder was the project cost estimate; however, the selection panel still included the bidder in their evaluation...from our review of documents and inquiry with staff involved in the procurement process, we noted that members of the selection panel did not declare their independence before taking part," OPA wrote.

OPA is also referring this matter to its Compliance Investigation Division.

FSM Secretary of DTC& I Carlson Apis agreed with the findings in the audit though he asked for clarification regarding the \$66,802, OPA said FSM could have collected from the contractor for breach of contract regarding delays. He wrote that both contracts are still valid, and a recent change order has been approved by the FSM Department of Justice. In an addendum to his response, he pointed out that DTC&I has "strengthened our procurement process by having the review panel include representatives from the Department of Finance and Administration and the Department of Justice. A confidentiality form has also been incorporated, requiring all members to fill out prior to the evaluation of any project. Furthermore, while we have included project managers in the review panel in the past due to short staffing, we have noted the audit's recommendation of excluding project managers from involvement in the panel. For future review panels, we will no longer include the project managers."

FSM DoFA Secretary Eugene Amor also agreed with the finding of the audit saying, "I wish to stress that Finance highly values your efforts in this audit to ensure proper implementation and execution of public projects to promote accountability of public funds."

## FSM citizen to serve jail time for re-entering U.S. under another name after having been deported

By Bill Jaynes  
The Kaselehlie Press

October 5, 2022

**Hagatna, Guam**—The United States Department of Justice announced today that Clarence Poch, a.k.a. J.M Irons of the FSM, was sentenced after having attempted to re-enter the United States after he had been deported. Poch/Irons will serve nine months and 24 days in jail, followed by one year of supervised release and a mandatory \$100 special assessment fee.

Poch was deported from the United States to the FSM on January 12, 2012, after being convicted of felony domestic assault in Minnesota. He has no permission to return to the United States. Poch later changed his name to J.M. Irons and obtained a new FSM passport that enabled his travel from Chuuk to Guam. On November 14, 2021, while traveling to Saipan via Guam, federal immigration officials in Guam arrested Poch after determining his identity through biometric data.

Biometrics are unique physical characteristics, such as fingerprints, that can be used for automated recognition.

"The use of biometric data enables immigration authorities to identify many individuals arriving at our ports of entry," stated United States Attorney Anderson. "The manipulation of immigration documents will not defeat this technology. Such conduct will only increase our motivation to seek criminal enforcement."

The investigation was conducted by Homeland Security Investigations and U.S. Customs and Border Protection. The case was prosecuted by Marivic P. David, Assistant United States Attorney in the District of Guam.

## ...U.S.-Pacific partnership

*Continued from front page*

in the face of a worsening climate crisis and an increasingly complex geopolitical environment, we recommit ourselves to working together in genuine partnership to address the mounting challenges of our time”, the declaration on the U.S.-Pacific Partnership said.

“You know, this summit honors the deep history that our nations share and a longstanding trade and diplomatic relationships, and a — and a shared fight to defend freedom,” U.S. President Joe Biden said in giving remarks on the establishment of the agreement. (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/09/29/remarks-by-president-biden-at-the-u-s-pacific-island-country-summit/>)

“And the sacrifices we made together, the partnerships between our — among our peoples helped bring an end to the bloody war in the Pacific during World War Two. And recently, we honored the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Guadalcanal at a memorial in the Solomon Islands.

“And — and today, security in the Pacific and for the Pacific Islanders remains as critical as ever to us and I hope to you as well. To secure — the security of America, quite frankly, and the world depends on your security and the security of the Pacific Islands. And I really mean that,” President Biden said.

Early news reported that Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare of the Solomon Islands, whose country recently established diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China, had expressed a hesitance to sign the document. But when all was said and done, Sogavare signed along with the heads of State of Cook Islands, Republic of Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Republic of Nauru, New Caledonia, Republic of Palau, Independent State of Papua New Guinea, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Independent State of Samoa, the Kingdom of Tonga, Tuvalu, and the Republic of Vanuatu.

In broad strokes, the partnership agreement (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/09/29/declaration-on-u-s-pacific-partnership/>) consists of 11 tiers—eleven headings on different aspects of the U.S. Pacific relationship.

- First, we resolve to strengthening our partnership.
- Second, we commit to bolstering Pacific regionalism.
- Third, we are committed to tackling the climate crisis together as a priority.
- Fourth, we are committed to enhancing

our cooperation to advance economic growth and sustainable development in the Pacific.

- Fifth, we are committed to supporting each other to better prepare and respond to natural disasters.
- Sixth, we resolve to protect the Blue Pacific and enhance the laws that govern it.
- Seventh, we resolve to maintain peace and security across the Blue Pacific Continent.
- Eighth, we commit to continuing our cooperation in addressing COVID-19 concerns and other health-related issues.
- Ninth, we commit to expanding opportunities for all our peoples.
- Tenth, we reaffirm our commitment to comprehensively address the legacies of conflict and the promotion of nuclear nonproliferation.
- Eleventh, way forward and future implementation of the Partnership.

According to a fact sheet issued by the White House (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/09/29/fact-sheet-roadmap-for-a-21st-century-u-s-pacific-island-partnership/>) the United States made several firm and measurable commitments. It says that the United States has directly provided over \$1.5 billion to support the Pacific Islands over the past decade. The White House announced over \$810 million in additional expanded programs.

“These initiatives seek to improve the lives and wellbeing of all Pacific Islanders by expanding diplomatic engagement, including through the historic announcement that the United States will recognize Cook Islands and Niue, following appropriate consultations; combatting the climate crisis; launching a new Trade and Investment Dialogue; providing development assistance; enhancing maritime security; expanding educational opportunities; enhancing security, health, and digital capacity; and addressing painful legacies of war,” the fact sheet said. “These new initiatives include the 10-year \$600 million Economic Assistance Agreement request to Congress, which is associated with the South Pacific Tuna Treaty. Additionally, the Administration’s Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment aims to deliver game-changing projects in the region.”

The White House described the Compacts of Free Association between the United States and the FSM, Marshall Islands, and Palau as a “bedrock of U.S.-Pacific cooperation for nearly four decades”.

“We expect the negotiations for all three Compact agreements to conclude by the end of this year; current agreements expire in September 2023 for the FSM and RMI, and one year later for Palau. At the Summit, leaders of FSM, RMI, and Palau expressed appreciation at the progress in the

*Click here for continuation*

## Australia subsidizes Nauru Airlines’ biweekly Pohnpei North-South Pacific flight beginning October 16

By *Bill Jaynes*  
The Kaselehlie Press

October 4, 2022

**FSM**—The Australian Embassy in the FSM has announced that Nauru Airlines will, with Australian support, once again be connecting the North and South Pacific with flights beginning on Sunday, October 16. The flights will originate in Brisbane and continue on to Nauru, Tarawa, Majuro, and will terminate in Pohnpei. The flights will return to Brisbane using the same route on the same day.

The service will run every two weeks and will include both passengers and cargo.

Passengers can take advantage of a connecting flight from Nauru to Nadi, Fiji, thus providing greater connectivity for travelers to South Pacific Islands.

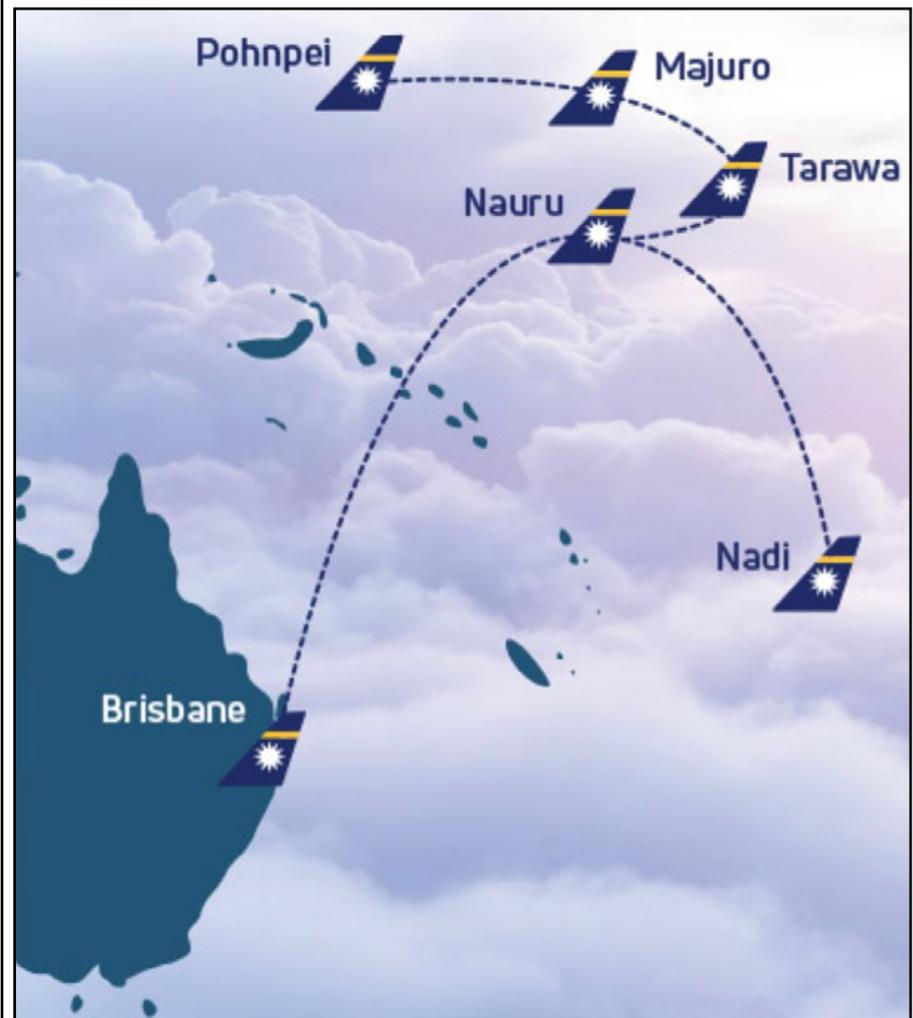
“Australia recognizes the importance of connectivity between these Pacific islands, and this flight works towards our longer-term goals for sustainable economic recovery and growth in the Pacific,” the Australia in Micronesia

Facebook page said.

Nauru Airlines previously served the FSM for North-South connections. One aviation news source said that the airline curtailed services in early 2020 due to the FSM’s border closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the airline actually discontinued Pohnpei as a destination in September of 2019, before the pandemic arose. At that time, the airline cited low passenger numbers.

Many FSM government officials travel from the North Pacific to the South Pacific. Most government travelers have chosen the expensive route of traveling to Hawaii and then back again to the South Pacific after a few days of layover and the resulting per diems in Hawaii on the competing airline, which provides air miles to travelers. Nauru Airlines is not linked to any frequent traveler reward programs, though it is a highly-rated airline.

Seats can be purchased on the Nauru Airlines website <https://www.nauruair.com/>.



# Big winners but not a lot of fish at 15th Annual Blue Nile Fishing Tournament

By The Pohnpei Fishing Club

September 24, 2022

**Pohnpei**—Mark Panuelo took home the top prize of \$800 cash at the 15th Annual Blue Nile Fishing Tournament. His prize-winning fish was a 60.4-pound yellowfin tuna. The fish of the five other winners in the big fish category were considerably smaller. Though it was a gorgeous day, weather-wise, the big fish seemed to have taken refuge in deeper, colder waters if they were there at all.

The 15th Annual Blue Nile Fishing tournament was sponsored by Blue Nile, Ocean View Plaza/West Wing, Best Buy/One World Plaza/Paranuii, Arnold's Restaurant, Panuelo Gas Station, and Rain Water. 24 boats registered for

the tournament though many of them returned empty-handed.

Leeson Nicholas won the \$700 second place prize in the big fish category for a 38.2-pound yellowfin. Stencia Hawley took third with a 22.4-pound yellowfin for \$600. Joseph Ferdinand's 19.4-pound yellowfin came in fourth for \$450. Kevin Ihara, Jr. took home \$375 for a 14.2-pound barracuda. Astonishingly, a skip jack was one of the top prize-winning fishing in the big fish category, something that happens only rarely. Melner Isaac landed that 11.2-pound skipjack for the sixth-place prize of \$300.

Only three species of fish were landed for the species prizes. For yellowfin, Stencia

Hawley landed a small 5.6-pound fish to add \$200 to her winnings as first prize in that species. The \$100 second prize went to Selestine Isaac for a 5.2-pound yellowfin.

Marouf Almeddine had the biggest barracuda at 11 pounds, winning him \$200. Lesson Nicholas took second prize for his 9.2-pound example of the species.

Three prize-winning skipjacks were caught. Kevin Iharra, Jr. added to his winnings with a 9.4-pound skipjack. Kellen Zackryas and Mattson Matthews split the second-place prize in that species for \$50 each with twin seven-pound skipjacks.

The top lady angler for a prize of \$250

was Delina Ferdinand with a 9.4-pound yellowfin. Genievue Gruss earned the \$150 second place prize for a 6.4-pound barracuda.

The United States Embassy donated another EPIRB for the raffle at the tournament. Lensper Nicholas, aboard the boat "Master", won this tournament's donated EPIRB.

Special thanks go to everyone who helped out at the registration and weigh-in. We want to especially thank all of our volunteers. A special get well is being sent to Virginia.

We also want to thank Mangrove Bay for the facilities. It is always a great venue.



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**U.S. Embassy hosts  
welcome reception  
for Charge d'affaires  
Alissa Bibb**

By *Bill Jaynes*  
*The Kaselehlie Press*

September 30, 2022

**FSM**—The United States Embassy to the FSM hosted a formal welcome reception for newly arrived Chief of Mission Alissa Bibb. In the absence of a current Ambassador to the FSM, Bibb is currently serving as the Charges d’Affaires of the U.S. Embassy.

A career Foreign Service Officer since 2010, Alissa Bibb is the Chargé d’affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Kolonia. Prior to this assignment, she most recently served as Special Assistant to the Under Secretary for Management. Alissa previously served overseas at the U.S. Embassies in Bishkek, Moscow, Port of Spain, and Ulaanbaatar.

Alissa is a graduate of St. Lawrence University, where she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Languages. Before joining the State Department, she managed international exchange programs between the United States and the countries

of the former Soviet Union. Alissa speaks Russian and Kyrgyz. A native of Jericho, Vermont, she is joined in Kolonia by her husband Andrew L. Dana.

FSM Vice President Aren Palik officially welcomed Charge d’affaires Bibb with a speech during the reception.



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**National Campus** The National Campus is situated on a 73-acre site near the FSM capital in Palikir, six miles from Kolonia. The student body at the National Campus is composed primarily of recent high school graduates from the four states in the FSM. These students come to the National Campus with bilingual or trilingual backgrounds representing eight different Micronesian languages and as many cultures. Approximately nine hundred fifty full-time students are enrolled each semester in either degree programs or programs leading to a certificate of achievement. Fifteen buildings exist at the site that include classrooms, learning resources center, recreation, student center, dining hall, residence halls for men and for women, offices for faculty and administration, a multipurpose gymnasium, maintenance facilities, tutoring and counseling center.

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# Pohnpei State funeral services for the Late Honorable Feliciano Materne Perman

*Pohnpei Enginkehlap News*

**October 5, 2022**

**Pohnpei--**A sincere and profound eulogy was delivered by Senator Francisco Ioanis who called the late Lt. Governor Perman a Statesman, his mentor, and teacher. As the most senior legislator, he shared fond memories of working with the late Lt. Governor who was also Speaker of the Pohnpei State Legislature. Speaker Marvin T. Yamaguchi spoke of the Lt. Governor's legacy of service to the people of Pohnpei, dedicating his whole life to making our lives, in Pohnpei, better. On behalf of the 10th Pohnpei State Legislature, Speaker Yamaguchi presented a legislative resolution that was passed in honor of the late Lt. Governor to the Second Lady and family.



Governor Oliver on behalf of the people and state of Pohnpei conveyed deep condolences and sympathies to the Second Lady, Mrs. Maurine Perman, and the family of the late Hon. Feliciano Perman. He spoke of his time with Lt. Governor Perman when they both served as delegates to the second Pohnpei Constitutional Convention. Governor Oliver served as Vice Chairman on the committee of Finance under Lt. Governor Perman who was the Chairman. Governor Oliver spoke of his integrity, honesty, and attention to detail not only during their time as delegates but also as the Lt. Governor of Pohnpei when he meticulously oversaw the Executive Budget Review Committee (EBRC). He expressed his deep gratitude to the Lt. Governor for his wisdom, patience, and guidance during this eventful administration.



Governor Oliver also recognized and expressed gratitude on behalf of the people and State of Pohnpei to the many dignitaries present that included Wasalapalap Nan Pwutak Pikiniap, Nahnwarki of Sokehs, IsoNahnken of Madolenihmw, Rohsa Kittu, Vice President Aren Palik, Vice Speaker Esmond Moses, Senator Dion Neth, Secretary of Finance and Administration, Eugene Amor, Secretary of Health and Social Affairs, Marcus Samo, President's Chief of Staff Jane Jimmy Chigiyal, former Governor of Pohnpei, Johnny P. David, Chief Justice of Pohnpei, Hon. Nelson Joseph, H.E. Huang Zheng, Chinese Ambassador to the FSM, H.E. Hisashi Michigami, Japanese Ambassador to the FSM, U.S. Charge d'affaires Alissa M. Bibb, Australian Charge d'affaires Matthew Holloway,



The Governor's representative, Mrs. Daisy Nanpei-Cantero, read out Executive Proclamation 22-09 declaring a period of mourning over the untimely passing of the late Hon. Feliciano M. Perman. Among the many achievements and accomplishments that included being the Lieutenant Governor of Pohnpei, he was also one of the framers of the Sokehs constitution, Delegate to the 2nd Pohnpei Constitutional Convention, General Manager of the Pohnpei Utilities Corporation, Director of the Department of Treasury and Administration, Planning and Budget Advisor, State Program and Budget Officer, Tax Collector and Administrative Clerk.

Vice President Aren Palik, delivered a proclamation signed by H.E. David W. Panuelo to the family of the late Lieutenant Governor

during the service. The proclamation was read out by Master of Ceremonies, Peteriko L. Hairens, along with letters of sympathy and condolences from the Japanese Embassy, U.S. Embassy, and Australian Embassy.

After the State Funeral, the body of the late Hon. Feliciano Materne Perman departed by motorcade, escorted by Pohnpei State Police Officers, to Cupid's in Nan Pohn Mal. The remains of the late Lt. Governor Perman were buried the following day, on October 4, 2022.

The full video of the State Funeral Service can be found here: [https://youtu.be/b\\_8Yk5yvbWw](https://youtu.be/b_8Yk5yvbWw)

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# Guam Guard graduates first Army Ranger from Pohnpei

*Guam National Guard Public Affairs*

*Sept. 30, 2022*

**BARRIGADA, Guam** - Spc. Rency Une of Pohnpei State displayed such high levels of leadership potential during his Initial Entry Training, the cadre at Fort Benning offered him a rare opportunity to go straight to Ranger School.

As the Army's premier infantry force, Rangers specialize in conducting close combat raids and direct fire assault missions deep inside enemy territory. Among the most mentally and physically challenging leadership schools in the world, Ranger School trains students to exhaustion, pushing the limits of their minds and bodies for 62 days.

Spc. Une was born and raised on the remote Pacific island of Pohnpei, located in the Federated States of Micronesia. A geographical and cultural neighbor to Guam, the FSM also shares strategic relevance in the INDOPACOM region. Une, however, credits the traditional values instilled by his grandmother for his success in the interview below.

Congratulations on your achievement, Spc. Une. Why did you join the Guam Army National Guard?

RU: "I chose to join the Guard because I want to serve close to home, make a difference in the community, and at the same time, to take on new challenges and better myself."

How was your experience going straight from Initial Entry Training to Ranger School?

RU: "It was really tough. It doesn't matter how tough you think you are; I think the most important asset is the mindset. For me, personally, it's my mindset that really pushed me through that rigorous training at Ranger School."

Where did you learn this mindset?

RU: "It comes from my grandmother. She's from the Federated States of Micronesia- specifically, Pohnpei State. She was the one who raised me. She taught me every day to be humble, and always work harder toward the things I really want in life."

What advice would you give to others, looking to follow in your footsteps?

RU: "I strongly encourage my brothers and sisters in the Guam Guard to go out there and seek these great opportunities. Take advantage and go for it while you're still young, because you are physically able to do a lot - more than you think. All I would say is just go out there and be yourself."



*U.S. Army Spc. Rency Une graduated from Ranger School in Ft. Benning on July 15, 2022. He is the first Ranger in the Guam Army National Guard from the island of Pohnpei. (U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. Josen Pascual)*

## FSM begins the process of drafting a National Early Childhood Development Policy -five strategic priorities

On September 22nd and 23rd, the FSM National Government held a national workshop on the development of an Early Childhood Development Policy. To date, the nation has not had an ECD Policy and the states have been implementing sectoral services for children without overall coordination of these services.

In partnership with UNICEF, the national government worked with four non-government organizations in the states to do outreach and research to uncover what the states were doing for ECD services and where the gaps are in each state. The NGO partner in Pohnpei was the Pohnpei Women's Advisory Council (PWAC). In Chuuk it was the Caroline Pastoral College Institute (CCPI). In Kosrae, the Kosrae Women's Association (KWA) and in Yap our partner was the Tamil Women's Association. Their research gave the workshop some background information on the areas of good health, adequate nutrition, responsible caregiving, safety and security, and opportunities for early learning that children in the FSM have in each state.

The results of the research showed that the states are not implementing ECD services at the same levels and there are gaps to be filled in each state to improve ECD services. This is also true with some of the ECD legislation needs for the states. For example, maternity leave is one of the legislations needed to support early childhood development (especially exclusive breast feeding for six months). This legislation has progressed differently in each state and at the national government. In November 2021, the FSM Congress passed an act to extend maternity leave for FSM National Government employees from six to twelve paid weeks in connection with the birth of a child; an extension that was welcomed. Earlier this year, on April 5th, the state of Kosrae passed into law its state maternity leave of 90 days and the state of Pohnpei passed into law maternity leave of six paid weeks (42 days). There is a need to set a standard so that all women and children across the nation benefit the same from paid maternity leave.

During the workshop, participants

highlighted the need for funding and legislation to support early childhood development as well as the need to improve ECD workforce benefits to attract and retain employees. It was pointed out that permanent employees at the state level have a better chance than those who are on contracts when it comes to receiving ECD benefits. Some other issues unveiled included water and sanitation issues in some villages, child neglect/food security, sexual assault victims; children with disabilities being kept at home decried the increasing number of children being diagnosed with autism and a lack of proper systems to support their proper development.

Mrs. Emiliana Musrasrik-Carl, the President of the Pohnpei Women's Council and the facilitator of the Pohnpei workshop commented, "There are many gaps in the systems, so it is important to reach out to communities to find their specific needs."

Since ECD services in the states are



*Small group work during the Pohnpei State ECD workshop*

multisectoral, the FSM ECD Technical Working Group requested that the Governors appointed a state level technical working group that will be responsible for representing the states at the national workshop and working with the national team on creation of the policy.

Mr. Stuard Penias, Assistant Secretary Department of Health and Social Affairs gave the opening remarks on behalf of Hon. Secretary Marcus Samo of the FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs

*Continued on next page*



## ...ECD

*Continued from previous page*

and described that the intention of the Presidential National Advisory Committee for Children (PNACC) is to bring together the broadest range of stakeholders possible to collectively look at issues relating to children. He noted that, “Whilst the role of government is key, we know that early childhood development is something our whole community have a role in promoting. People of all ages, abilities and experiences have an important responsibility to protect and nurture our children, especially in their early years. Let us work together to create enriching opportunities for children in Pohnpei and our Nation.”

The workshop was led by two technical advisors from The RISE Institute. Mr. Carlos del Castillo Cabrales, located in Columbia, and Ms. Rocio Gomez, located in Washington D.C., who provided the results of the data collected by the NGOs and led the discussions with the states that ultimately led to the identification of the 5 strategic priorities that the FSM ECD Policy will focus on. These strategic priorities that set up the strategic framework for the ECD Policy are:

1. Quality and inclusive ECD services for all
2. Development of the ECD Workforce
3. Establishing an ECD monitoring and evaluation system
4. ECD Governance and funding
5. Public awareness, participation, and advocacy

The next steps in the development of the FSM ECD Policy



*Kosrae State ECD Technical Working Group*



*Chuuk State ECD Technical Working Group*

will be for the technical team to develop a draft policy that will then be reviewed by the states and national technical working groups and refined to a final policy that will be taken back to the communities to validate and then it will be adopted by the FSM National Government. Afterwards, the states will create action plans to direct state level efforts and investments to grow ECD services to help meet the goals of the policy. In the coming weeks, the ECD technical working groups will consult with all stakeholders—especially members of the public—to socialize the draft ECD policy with a completion timeline of the end of December 2022.



*FSM ECD Technical Working Group Chairman, Ms. Lomalida Jibemai takes notes during the national workshop*

The workshop was attended by National representatives from Departments of Health and Social Affairs, Justice, Education, and Resources and Development. All four states had representation from Departments of health, education, public safety, and civil society partners.

## 2nd UOG Drone Corps cohort earns certification, skills

### University of Guam

The University of Guam Drone Corps program produced 12 more federally certified drone pilots over the summer, with some currently engaged in internships and field work opportunities.

UOG Drone Corps members gained instructional and hands-on experience with unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAVs, in preparation for the Federal Aviation Administration's Part 107 certification exam. The FAA's remote pilot certificate is required for commercial drone services. After earning their certification, the members completed 40 hours of drone flight experience to apply what they learned in real-world applications.

"UOG Drone Corps provided me with an outlet to network with aviation-related businesses and entities to understand their goals and how we can work

together to accomplish any task," said UOG Drone Corps member Francisco Camacho, a criminal justice major.

This year, UOG Drone Corps partnered with Bella Wings which provided its equipment and office space to coordinate in-class lessons and simulated practicum for the students.

Following their certification, some students have taken up internships and are assisting with field work and research through photography, surveying, mapping, and other services. Andrea Velasquez, a business administration major, took up an internship with drone business 2cofly to build on her experience from the program.

"Through my internship, I've learned that drones have more uses aside from the recreational aspect, like photogrammetry and surveying."

Other members have internships with Bella Wings Aviation and Aviation Concepts. Additionally, UOG Drone Corps conducts mapping and surveying services for local agencies, in which the members can participate.

"Through UOG Drone Corps, we are helping to build a generation of responsible drone pilots who can assist our local workforce and educational institutions with an array of aerial services. We're excited to see our students become licensed drone pilots and contributing members of society," said Romina King, associate director for NASA Guam Space Grant and NASA Guam EPSCoR, and a UOG associate professor of geography at the Western Pacific Tropical Research Center.

The UOG Drone Corps program, which started in July 2021, is jointly coordinated by NASA Guam Space Grant and the NASA Guam Established

Program to Stimulate Competitive Research, or EPSCoR, both housed at the university. The inaugural cohort was instructed by Aviation Concepts and saw 12 members receiving their FAA Part 107 certification. Combined with the second cohort, the program has produced 24 certified drone pilots.

For more information on the program, visit [bit.ly/dronecorps](http://bit.ly/dronecorps) or contact [dronecorps@triton.uog.edu](mailto:dronecorps@triton.uog.edu).



## ...U.S.-Pacific partnership (2)

*Continued from front page*

negotiations and expressed a strong desire to conclude the negotiations by the end of this year," the White House said.

Under the auspices of strengthening and supporting the U.S. Pacific Islands Partnership, the White House announced several initiatives:

- First-ever National U.S. Strategy for the Pacific Islands
- Recognition of Cook Islands and Niue
- Executive Education for Rising Pacific Leaders
- Supporting the Tuna Treaty
- Resilience and Adaptation Fellowship Program for Rising Leaders

The White House committed to build U.S. Capacity in the Pacific by:

- Appoint the First-Ever Envoy to the Pacific Islands Forum
- Elevate USAID Presence in the Pacific
- Return and Expansion of the Peace Corps

The U.S. agreed to coordinate with allies and partners. "The Partners in the Blue Pacific (PBP), launched in 2022, is a new effort from the United States, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom to make our partnership, individually and collectively, with the Pacific more efficient and effective. The Partners welcome the intent of Canada and Germany to join, as well

as the engagement of France, the European Union, the Republic of Korea, and India; the PBP invites further cooperation with all those that share its values, objectives, and approach – principally that of consultation and partnership with the Pacific. The PBP will focus on six prospective lines of effort:

- Climate Change Resilience, Adaptation, and Disasters
- Secure and Resilient Technology and Connectivity
- Protection of the Ocean and Environment
- People Centered Development
- Resources and Economic Development
- Political Leadership and Regionalism"

It agreed to take urgent action on the climate crisis, clean energy, and sustainable infrastructure by providing support for climate forecasting and research. The administration intends to:

- Provide \$15 million to help Pacific Islands adapt and build resilience to climate change and extreme weather events by enhancing their ability to identify, anticipate, and prepare for climate impacts on public health and safety, food security, water resources, coastal and ecosystem management, and overall sustainable development.
- Provide \$7 million to expand Pacific Island weather and ocean data collection that will provide more accurate and reliable information on ocean conditions that are critical to sea-state forecasts and formulating advisories and warnings to ensure public safety.

It also intends to provide ocean mapping

support. To help the Pacific Islands "climate-proof" their "blue" economies, the U.S. is working with Congress to provide \$4.8 million to establish a Resilient Blue Economies program. Under its Global Partnership for Climate Smart Infrastructure, the U.S. will help mobilize more the \$400 million in financing for climate projects that advance Pacific Island countries' net-zero goals. It intends to work with the Pacific Islands and other countries toward the goal of lawfully establishing and maintaining baselines and maritime zone limits in the face of sea level rise and climate change. It intends to provide expanded natural disaster relief and humanitarian assistance. To bolster communities' resilience to disasters and climate risks, enhance livelihoods, improve food security, access to water, health and education, support governance, and encourage sustainable natural resource management and biodiversity conservation, the U.S. intends, subject to availability of funds, to provide new rounds of funding in 2023 under the Pacific American Fund of USAID. It intends to provide additional funding for climate adaptation and other foreign assistance.

Under the auspices of forging economic partnership and supporting economic recovery, the U.S. intends to:

- Establish trade and investment dialogues.
- Develop a memorandum of commercial cooperation with Pacific Island countries.
- Investment in support for infrastructure in the Pacific
- Commit \$500,000 to expand the Global Innovation through Science and Technology program (GIST)

- Provide \$7 million in new funding pending Congress approval to help establish sustainable transportation infrastructure
- Expand electrification partnership
- Expand port and aviation connectivity.
- Provide \$20 million to Solomon Islands to bolster tourism

The United States committed to bolster security cooperation and maritime protection by:

- Partnering with the U.S. Coast Guard to provide over \$3 million to enhance U.S. Coast Guard training and capacity-building in the Pacific Islands for maritime security and marine protection.
- Providing \$2.8 million for FBI-led law enforcement training to Pacific Island countries.
- Continue bilateral security negotiations.
- The State Department will deliver \$2 million in new assistance to improve security-sector governance and institutional capacity of select U.S. partners through advisory support efforts.

The United States also agreed to help the Pacific to improve digital connectivity and cyber security, to continue to combat COVID-19, and support health security in the Pacific. It also intends to address war legacies such as unexploded ordinances.

On the evening that the summit was concluded, President Biden hosted a dinner for the Pacific Island leaders at the White House.

## -Police Blotter-

This Police Blotter covers September 12-26, 2022. Though in all cases, arrests were made all those arrested have merely been charged. All are considered to be innocent unless proven to be otherwise in court.

### Sept 13, 2022

- Joe Maruwe, 52yrs of age from Pohnrakied, Kolonia arrested for appearance under the influence of alcohol.

### Sept 14, 2022

- Stanley Mateak, 52yrs of age from Palikir, Sokehs arrested for Careless Driving.
- Benter Poll, 60yrs of age from Metipw, Madolenihmw arrested for careless driving.
- Detrick Route, 44yrs of age from Pehleng, Kitti arrested for Disorderly Conduct.

### September 15, 2022

- Win Thomas, 59yrs of age from Dolonier, Nett arrested for careless driving and no driver's license.
- Paderson Chaniel, 17yrs of age from Peidie, Sokehs house arrest for theft and released to parents.
- Jojo Jimmy, 24yrs of age from Mawlok, Sokehs arrested for theft.
- Evelyn Marquez, 41yrs of age from Pahn-takai, U arrested for Prohibited behavior and disorderly conduct.

### September 16, 2022

- Maylani Nelper, 36yrs of age from Daini, Kolonia arrested for Prohibited behavior and disorderly conduct.
- Jayson Zarred, 36yrs of age from Pohras, Sokehs arrested for Prohibited behavior and disorderly conduct.
- Kayla Hallens, 18yrs of age from

- Dolonier, Nett arrested for consume alcohol under 21yrs of age.
- BJ Aaron, 20yrs of age from Iosmaru, U arrested for consume alcohol under 21yrs of age.
- Saladson Fredrick, 18yrs of age from Meitik, Nett arrested for consume alcohol under 21yrs of age.
- Alfred Pelep, 18yrs of age from Dolonier, Nett arrested for consume alcohol under 21yrs of age.
- Don Shoniber, 28yrs of age from Pohnrakied, Kolonia arrested for Assault & Battery with dangerous weapon.

### September 17, 2022

- Maylenn Gilmete, 39yrs of age from Enpein, Kitti arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol, open container & obstruction of justice.
- Jeffrey Pretrick, 31yrs of age from Sekere, Sokehs arrested for disorderly conduct.
- Karihn Kihleng, 47yrs of age from Saladak Nanpailong, U arrested for disorderly conduct.
- Myles Roby, 18yrs of age from Paies, Kitti arrested for disorderly conduct.
- Enderson Paul, from Paies, Kitti arrested for disorderly conduct.

### September 18, 2022

- Etik MavilanaYusuf, 26yrs of age a foreigner from Indonesia arrested for Disorderly Conduct.
- Elias Ladore, 55yrs of age from Palipowe, Nett arrested for Disorderly Conduct.
- Alpret Hallens, 45yrs of age from

- Awak, U arrested for Disorderly Conduct.
- Reachel Louis, 24yrs of age from Palikir, arrested for Disorderly Conduct.

### September 20, 2022

- Bermin Tihpen, 49yrs of age from Wapar, Madolenihmw arrested for careless driving.

### September 21, 2022

- Godwin Fritz, 67yrs of age from Mand, Madolenihmw arrested for Possession of Marijuana.

### September 22, 2022

- Charles Roby, 49yrs of age from Nanpohnmal, Sokehs arrested for Trespass & Disorderly Conduct.
- Alexander Ioanis, 69yrs of age from Dien, Kitti arrested for Careless Driving.
- Etik MavilanaYusuf, 26yrs of age a foreigner from Indonesia arrested for Disorderly Conduct.
- John Paul, 42yrs of age from Nanpohnmal, Sokehs arrested for Driving under the influence of alcohol and careless driving.

### September 23, 2022

- Charles Roby, 49yrs of age from Nanpohnmal, Sokehs arrested for Disorderly Conduct.
- Rex Benjamin, 32yrs of age from U arrested for Disorderly Conduct.
- Bensky Phillip, 45yrs of age from Mapwusi, Kolonia arrested Appearance in Public while under

the influence of alcohol.

### September 24, 2022

- Bryan Wichep, 32yrs of age from Palikir, Sokehs arrested for Careless Driving.
- Francisco Dision, 24yrs of age from Enpein, Kitti arrested for Careless Driving & No driver's license.
- Kostan Primo, 47yrs of age from Awak, U arrested for Driving under the influence of alcohol and unauthorized used of vehicle.

### September 25, 2022

- Motlen Route, 42yrs of age from Pehleng, Kitti arrested for Assault & Battery.
- Matzunnaga Talley, 41yrs of age from Nannal Palikir, Sokehs arrested Driving under the influence of alcohol & careless driving.
- Renmad Robert, 32yrs of age from Pihs, Madolenihmw arrested for Driving under the influence of alcohol & careless driving.
- Kesus Sise, 44yrs of age from Sekere, Sokehs arrested for Driving under the influence of alcohol.

### September 26, 2022

- Merlihse Lepohn, 69yrs of age from Ipat, Nett arrested Careless Driving.
- Mackilino Ardos, 38yrs of age from Nansokasok, Nett arrested for Disorderly Conduct.
- Hiroshi Torres, 46yrs of age from Nankengkeng, U arrested for Sexual Abuse & Sexual Assault.

## ...Robotics

*Continued from front page*

While this is the first international robotics competition for the team from Pohnpei, students at PICS are no strangers to competitive high school robotics. In 2018 public and private high schools in Pohnpei first joined the Habele Robo League. This program immerses students in hands on, real world, situations, teaching these young island students to solve complex and open-ended problems.

Habele, a nonprofit established by former Peace Corps volunteers who taught in Micronesia, first introduced high school robotics to the FSM in 2012. The program began in Yap, the most westernmost of the four Micronesian States. Since

2018, Habele and local educators have partnered with the Office of Insular Affairs, extending robotics and STEM opportunities to both public and private schools across all four of the FSM states.

Starting in 2018, Robo League schools in Pohnpei State have gathered annually for "Pohnpei Robo Day." This year end competition between high schools showcases robotics skills and learning for the community.

Though over 8,000 miles from home, and competing on the international stage, the Pohnpei team headed to Geneva, Switzerland will be building on years of homegrown experience. These students, proudly representing a nation of many small and scattered islands in the Western Pacific, will take the field with a particular and personal interest in the climate change focus of the challenge.

Representing Pohnpei Island Central School, Pohnpei State, and the Federated States of Micronesia are team members: Eberhard Salons, J.C Curley, Chennelle Cantero, Einstein Halbert, and Norman Pedrus. Supporting the team will be Tekaeto Diopulos, a PICS Teacher and head of the Robotics Club, as well as Darla Ladore of the Department of Education.

In addition to the cheering crowds at the event in Switzerland, friends, families and fellow Robo League students across Micronesia will be watching via online live stream. Owing to a deep and decades-long partnership between the United States and Micronesia, many Americans with a personal tie to the islands will also be cheering them on from afar. Among these, a former US Ambassador to Micronesia, who now

serves as an Assistant Secretary at the US Department of the Interior, a federal agency that supports social and economic development within Micronesia.

"Interior's Office of Insular Affairs has been pleased to support the Habele Robotics program as an important extracurricular opportunity for the benefit of students' education in the Federated States of Micronesia," said Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs, Carmen G. Cantor.

"Through building robots and competing them against one another, students are exposed to scientific methodological processes through the use of technology, teamwork, and project management skills that will be applicable wherever they go. Congratulations to Team Pohnpei now competing their robots internationally in Geneva, Switzerland!"

# COVID-19 booster doses no longer required for travel into the FSM; all FSM states fully open for interstate & international travel

## FSM Information Services

**PALIKIR, Pohnpei**—On October 10th, 2022, His Excellency David W. Panuelo—President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)—signed an Amendment to the Permanent Regulation Implementing Public Law 22-134 i.e. the Healthy Border Protection Act. The practical effect of the Amendment is that any person traveling to the FSM, although still required to be “fully vaccinated” against COVID-19 prior to entry into the FSM, no longer requires a booster dose prior to travel under any circumstance.

Per Public Law 22-134, i.e. the Healthy Border Protection Act, persons

intending to travel to the FSM are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. A person is considered “fully vaccinated” after they have received the second dose of an mRNA vaccine, such as the Moderna or Pfizer vaccines, or the single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. As of October 10th, 2022, all of the FSM’s States—Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae—are fully open for interstate and international travel.

After booking one’s ticket on an international commercial carrier, a prospective traveler to the FSM can expect to show documentary evidence of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19 when checking in at the airport; additionally, the traveler can

expect to complete a Health Declaration Form whilst on the aircraft. Presuming the traveler declares they are not showing any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, then at no point prior, during, or after travel does the traveler need to provide a COVID-19 test result. At no point is the traveler required to undergo any form of quarantine or restricted movement.

Although all of the FSM’s States are fully open for interstate and international travel, the State of Chuuk continues to see wide community spread of COVID-19. Teams from across the FSM’s States, the U.S. Centers for Disease-Control & Prevention, the World Health

Organization, UNICEF, ASPR, Red Cross, and the Pacific Island Health Officers Association, are presently active in Chuuk State and providing assistance. The FSM Government encourages families and tourists to consider delaying their travel until after Chuuk recovers from its current wave of COVID-19.

The Amendment to the Permanent Regulation Implementing Public Law 22-134 can be found here: [https://gov.fm/files/Announcements/Amendment\\_to\\_the\\_permanent\\_regulation\\_implementing\\_public\\_law\\_no\\_22-134\\_Healthy\\_Border\\_Protection\\_Act.pdf](https://gov.fm/files/Announcements/Amendment_to_the_permanent_regulation_implementing_public_law_no_22-134_Healthy_Border_Protection_Act.pdf)

# Emergency Operation Center to support Pohnpei State’s emergency response capacity

## United Nations Development Programme

21 September 2022

**Pohnpei, FSM** – A ground-breaking ceremony of the Pohnpei Emergency Operation Center (EOC) was organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in support of Pohnpei State’s capacity in disaster preparedness and response on Wednesday, 14 September 2022.

The Center, worth US\$1,387,625 is part of the Japan-funded project, entitled “Enhancing Disaster and Climate Resilience in the Federated States of Micronesia through improved Disaster Preparedness and Infrastructure (EDCR FSM Project)”, which aims to improve the capacity for preparedness and mitigation of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) to man-made, geo-physical and climate-related hazards and to climate change impact.

The Emergency Operation Center is part of the new fire station facility and will be utilized by the Governor’s Disaster Committee for efficient coordination of emergency responses. The construction is expected to be completed by March 2023.

In Pohnpei, the Governor’s Disaster Committee comprises of department directors, and serves as an advisory body to the Governor in the formulation of policies and coordination of the disaster



*(From Left) Mr. Kevin Petrini, Deputy Resident Representative and Country Manager for the UNDP Pacific Office in the Federated States of Micronesia; His Excellency Mr. Michigami Hisashi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to FSM; Jaap van Hierden, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Micronesia; Honorable Reed B. Oliver, Governor of Pohnpei State of FSM in the groundbreaking ceremony of Pohnpei State Emergency Operation Center (Photo: Pohnpei State Government)*

response efforts. In addition, the Director of Public Safety is responsible for supporting preparedness and response efforts, acting as the controller of EOC.

This construction of the new Center is timely and critical as the Pohnpei State is currently lacking a dedicated facility to host these functions to serve a critical place for key staff from the relevant departments, offices, and agencies to effectively work together, share

information and decision-making, and assist in making the most effective use of resources.

During his speech, Honorable Reed B. Oliver, Governor of Pohnpei State of the Federated States of Micronesia said, “Once the construction is completed, operation of EOC would be effective and efficient as all the people who are engaged in disaster response are able to gather one location”.

His Excellency Mr. Michigami Hisashi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to FSM said, “The Pohnpei State EOC, which will begin construction at this location today, is a very important facility and is expected to become the center of disaster preparedness for the State of Pohnpei.”

In his remarks during the ground-breaking ceremony, Kevin Petrini, Deputy Resident Representative and Country Manager for the UNDP Pacific Office in the Federated States of Micronesia, expressed his appreciation to the Government of Japan for their generous support, which enables UNDP to work with the Government of FSM on the enhancement of the country’s resilience to the impact of disasters and climate change, COVID-19 response and recovery and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). “Although the building has a quite limited space focused on the core function of EOC, the project considers and continue discussion on the use of the facility considering gender and people with disabilities,” Mr. Petrini added.

The UNDP EDCR project, since its commencement in 2019, has provided equipment strategic to Palau’s disaster risk management. The project aims to strengthen gender sensitive disaster communication and climate monitoring systems; enhance gender sensitive national and state disaster responder’s readiness capacity; and enhance community disaster resilience through improved water resource management and integrated gender and social inclusion awareness.

# President Panuelo & Vice President Palik discuss governance, regional priorities, & citizens' needs

*FSM Information Services*

**PALIKIR, Pohnpei**—His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), and the Honorable Aren B. Palik, Vice President of the FSM, recently met to discuss good governance, regional priorities, and the needs of the FSM's citizens.

Government's agencies and departments—relayed to President Panuelo items of mutual interest and concern.

President Panuelo and Vice President Palik agreed that it will ultimately serve the interests of the FSM's citizenry for them to split which departments they focus their time and attention on. In this regard, Vice President Palik has been asked to focus on the Departments of Resources & Development, Education, Health & Social Affairs, the FSM Public Defender's Office, and the FSM Post Office. President Panuelo will retain his focus on all other Departments and agencies.

President Panuelo briefed Vice President Palik on the recent engagements at the 12th Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders in Honolulu; the 77th United Nations General Assembly in New York City; and the U.S.-Pacific Island Country Summit in Washington, D.C. In turn, Vice President Palik—who had requested lengthy briefings from each of the FSM

The meeting concluded on a positive note, with Vice President Palik consenting to President Panuelo's request that he attend the forthcoming Joint Committee Meeting between the FSM Government and the U.S. Government to discuss national and regional security issues. President Panuelo, by contrast, will remain in the FSM and work closely with the Department of Justice and Blue Prosperity Micronesia on the recently submitted Marine Spatial Planning legislation, as well as provide a keynote address at the forthcoming 39th gathering of the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures.



*T.H. Aren B. Palik, Vice President of the FSM, and H.E. David W. Panuelo, President of the FSM; readers of this photo caption may appreciate learning that both the President and the Vice President are graduates of Eastern Oregon University*

# Vice President Palik receives Ambassadors Huang & Michigami, discusses FSM-China Great Friendship & FSM-Japan Kizuna

*FSM Information Services*

**PALIKIR, Pohnpei**—On October 6th, 2022, the Honorable Aren B. Palik—Vice President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)—received His Excellency Huang Zheng, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China (China) and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, and His Excellency Hisashi Michigami, Ambassador of Japan, for courtesy calls. The meetings were the Vice President's first formal discussions with the Ambassadors of China and Japan since his election in September, 2022.

In the meeting with Ambassador Huang, Vice President Palik emphasized the importance of the FSM-China Great Friendship, and thanked the Ambassador for China's support during the COVID-19 Pandemic. "As we open our borders and we continue to implement some of the crucial projects between our countries, such as the National Convention Center and the renovations for the Pohnpei State Government Complex, the President and I can affirm that we are ready to entertain proposed charter flights to bring in the necessary workers and materials for these projects," Vice President Palik said.

Ambassador Huang described to Vice President Palik that China intends to donate 2,000 solar lights and flashlights for rural communities in the FSM, and advised that a forthcoming meeting between the Education Ministers of China and Pacific Island Countries will be useful to enhancing cooperation in this area.

Following the meeting with Ambassador Huang, Vice President Palik received Ambassador Michigami. In the meeting with Ambassador Michigami, Vice President Palik described the importance of the FSM-Japan Kizuna (special bond), and thanked the Ambassador for Japan's close relationship with the FSM. In particular, the Vice President noted the FSM's continued appreciation for the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and its Volunteers, as well as support to the Fisheries & Maritime Institute, among a voluminous number of other forms of historical, ongoing, and forthcoming assistance. "The people of the FSM and the people of Japan share a special bond, Ambassador," Vice President Palik said, "and we intend to remain close friends, allies, and partners."



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# Pacific Declaration a comprehensive milestone for global partnerships

## *Pacific Island Forum*

*September 29, 2022*

**Washington DC**—The Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Henry Puna says Pacific Leaders and US officials should feel “a strong sense of accomplishment” on the achievement of the joint US-Pacific declaration today.

The declaration, endorsed by all attending Pacific nations in the inaugural Biden Summit this week, affirms a 10-point list of key priorities topped by the climate crisis, recognition of the Blue Pacific and 2050 agenda, and the strength of regionalism offered by the Pacific Islands Forum.

“The summit was a strong demonstration of mutual respect and genuine diplomacy towards a shared vision, based on the principles of talanoa and trust — I can only congratulate all involved, especially our Pacific Leaders who’ve had a gruelling travel and meeting schedule over the last three weeks”

He welcomed the ‘willingness of the US to listen and accommodate the region’s views and concerns especially in settling the language for the partnership vision — a critical space of consensus for both the US and the Pacific.”



Throughout the two-day summit, leaders were able to share hopes, reflections on other existing partnerships, and the legacy of the US relationship with the Pacific.

The summit had attracted global attention

the moment it was announced, with the Biden administration being the first to invite Pacific leaders as a collective to Washington. The topics of economics, trade and investment, climate advocacy and action featured alongside strengthened engagement for social inclusion, women, and youth leadership, and investing into more US-Pacific partnerships. US initiatives announced at the Summit are detailed in a factsheet, also released today.

## Ms. Cruz awarded the BRMC scholarship

Ms. Jolly Ann Cruz, a citizen of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), is awarded the Bill Raynor Micronesia Challenge (BRMC) scholarship this year. She is the 21st student to be supported by the BRMC Scholarship since it was first launched in 2017. Each year MCT recruits at least two students to pursue their Master's or Doctorate degrees in conservation or environmental-related fields. Ms. Cruz works with the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance (MINA) as the Program Manager for MINA's Schools, for Environmental Conservation, and the Tasi Watch Rangers initiatives.

Before joining MINA in June 2014, she served as a Micronesia Challenge Young Champion (MCYC) intern hosted by MINA from 2013 to February 2014 dedicating a lot of her time to the education and outreach through the RARE Managaha Pride Campaign. This is also another program supported

by the Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT). “This internship exterminated any remaining doubt about my interest in pursuing an environmental career. I realized that this is where I wanted to be, in the community, raising awareness and combating the environmental challenges we face, sparking an interest in the conservation of our environment and the sciences”, says Ms. Cruz.

After years of working as the Program Manager at MINA, Ms. Cruz decided to pursue her Master of Education in Teaching (STEM+ the Art). Her goal is to make the science curriculum, taught locally, relevant

to Micronesia and create connections to the environmental realities we face daily. Her passion for teaching makes her realize that she needs to pursue higher studies to be able to give back to future generations of leaders, science experts, decision-makers, and of course the island communities across Micronesia. Ms. Cruz will continue to work full-time with MINA while pursuing her Master's Degree at American Public University (APU) she expects to graduate in 2024.

The Micronesia Conservation Trust and partners of the Micronesia Challenge are fully committed to continuing to support young Micronesian champions to pursue graduate degrees under the Bill Raynor Micronesia Challenge Scholarship (BRMC) and to return home to work after they graduate as a way to give back to their home islands. If you would like to learn more about the scholarship, you can email Ms. Bertha Reyuw at [capacity@ourmicronesia.org](mailto:capacity@ourmicronesia.org).

## New agreement to improve ocean science collaboration in the Pacific

### *The Pacific Community*

*03 October 2022*

**Noumea, New Caledonia** – The Pacific Community (SPC) and the Institut Français de Recherche pour l'Exploitation de la Mer (IFREMER) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) last week covering a broad scope of initiatives, including ocean modelling techniques, decision making support systems for ocean management, technology exchange, data sharing, collaboration on aquaculture, and fisheries.

SPC and IFREMER share common concerns and objectives in relation to advancing research activities,

enhancing monitoring capacities, and strengthening scientific cooperation in the Pacific region.

“This agreement aims at boosting the institute’s research capacities in its overseas locations, including two in the Pacific, therefore this MoU with SPC will help strengthen the services to the territories where labs are located,” said François Houllier, President, and CEO of IFREMER.

Dr Stuart Minchin, Director General

of SPC, emphasised the importance of partnership when seeking excellence in ocean science “we see the need for partnership with research institutions that do curiosity-driven work so we can provide pathways to the best applied science in the Pacific region.”

The Head of the Pacific Community Centre for Ocean Science (PCCOS), Dr Jerome Aucan said this MoU is “just the beginning of future collaborations between SPC and IFREMER to help improve the quality and delivery of ocean science products to Pacific Island countries and territories and to ensure informed decisions are made to protect and sustainably manage their ocean resources.”

The agreement lists a series of collaborative activities to be implemented between the two organisations in the coming years.

## 17 Pacific Island countries and territories meet to discuss coastal fisheries and aquaculture realities and challenges

**WHAT:** 5th Regional Technical Meeting of Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (RTMCFA5)

**WHEN:** 11-14 Oct 2022

**WHERE:** SPC's Headquarters, Noumea, New Caledonia (hybrid format: in-person & virtual)

**WHY THIS EVENT IS INTERESTING FOR THE MEDIA?**

- This meeting brings together technical fisheries officials from around region to discuss and identify issues and actions needed across the Pacific region.
- It is a space where locally based actions, relevant to the region are recommended.
- The SPC Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Marine Ecosystems Division is sharing and presenting a range of tools, apps and methods to support coastal fisheries and aquaculture work in the PICTs.
- The Community-Based Fisheries

Dialogue (CBFD) enables Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Non-State Actors (NSA) an opportunity to provide information, advice and key needs to assist with informing Leaders on priority issues.

**MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES ARE OFFERED TO INTERVIEW:**

- Representatives of SPC's Member Countries are available to talk about their fisheries and/or aquaculture situation.
- Representatives of community-based fisheries NSAs are available to speak about their experiences and lessons from community-based initiatives.
- Representatives from SPC (coastal fisheries and aquaculture experts) are available to talk about coastal fisheries and aquaculture realities across the Pacific islands region.

**HOW:** Sending B roll videos of

interviews and/or through zoom

**ABOUT THE EVENT:**

Since 2017, fisheries and aquaculture officers from the Pacific island countries and territories (PICTs), meet almost every year at the Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (RTMCFA). The objectives of this regional meeting are to discuss their technical and science issues and priorities and to agree on actions to address their priority challenges in the areas of coastal fisheries and aquaculture.

This will be the second RTMCFA meeting to include the one-day Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue (CBFD), convened by and focused on Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and other Non-State Actors (NSAs) engagement. The CBFD2 will provide CSO/NSA participants to voice their needs and priority issues, as well as

share experiences and lessons from community-based fisheries initiatives.

Some key points that will be discussed at this 5th Regional Technical Meeting of Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture (RTMCFA5) are:

- Approaching the coastal fisheries enforcement through awareness and behaviour change,
- Why science is needed for the trade regulation of two high-value commercial sea cucumber species from the Pacific?
- The development of the Regional Aquaculture Strategy to face the growing demand for food
- Why aquatic biosecurity is important for the Pacific?
- The set of actions, to be presented as recommendations for the Heads of Fisheries meeting, to be held in March 2023.

## UOG researchers help name a new Marianas orchid species

*University of Guam*

An estimated 86% of land-dwelling species on Earth are yet to be described, according to a study in PLOS Biology, but with a newly published paper in Orchideen Journal by the University of Guam's Western Pacific Tropical Research Center, an orchid endemic to Guam and Rota is no longer one of them.

The orchid, which has been known to local botanists for decades but never formally described, is now known as *Bulbophyllum raulersoniae*. The species is named posthumously in honor of Lynn Raulerson, the longtime curator of the University of Guam Herbarium, who first reported the taxon as unique.

The description was authored by Benjamin E. Deloso, a horticulturist at the Missouri Botanical Garden who earned his Master of Environmental Science from UOG in 2020; UOG environmental science graduate student Charles A. "CJ" Paulino; and Australian taxonomist Jim Cootes. Cootes has an orchid named for him, *Bulbophyllum cootesii*, or Cootes' *Bulbophyllum*, according to the Smithsonian Gardens.

A step toward federal protection

Their paper notes that the orchid is only known to be on the islands of Guam and Rota in limestone forests that are at least 500 feet above sea level.

The historic geographical range of *B. raulersoniae* may be greatly reduced today due to habitat loss, the paper states, with the Lamlam-Alifan ridge in Southern Guam being a refuge for the species.

The authors made a recommendation to the International Union of the Conservation of Nature to assess the species as "endangered."

'A special orchid unique to the Marianas'

The researchers determined it was distinct from the other species of *Bulbophyllum* in the Mariana islands. It is smaller and grows on host plants, such as pandanus. The plants produce a solitary flower of about 1 cm in size.

"Trekking up Mount Lamlam multiple times to make our observations made me appreciate the importance of the habitat as a whole, not just the species we were studying," Paulino said. "The ecosystem along the Lamlam-Alifan ridge is truly a special place containing some of Guam's most interesting plants and animals. I hope this study encourages others to both conserve and restore our native habitat for the benefit of all that call Guam home."

The Mariana Islands are home to 30 reported species of orchids, four of which are considered endemic to the archipelago and seven of which are endemic to Micronesia. *B. raulersoniae* adds to 2,200 known species globally in the *Bulbophyllum* genus.



*Bulbophyllum raulersoniae* orchids, known only to grow in Guam and Rota, produce a solitary flower of about 1 cm in size. The species, one of four orchids known to be endemic to the Mariana Islands, was formally described and named this year in Orchideen Journal by University of Guam graduate student Charles "CJ" Paulino as well as by UOG alumnus Benjamin Deloso and Australian taxonomist Jim Cootes.



Charles "CJ" Paulino



Benjamin Deloso

# Micronesia Clean Up Day celebrates its fourth year

On September 13, 2022, an Awards Ceremony was held at the President's office Conference room to recognize groups and individuals throughout the Federated States of Micronesia who have made a difference in the area of waste management and environment protection.

A keynote address was delivered by DFA Deputy Secretary Ricky Cantero, emphasizing the importance of Micronesia Clean Up Day as, "not just a day of cleaning, but it is also a day to promote, enhance, and reconfirm our commitment to the movement of maintaining "Clean Islands for Healthier Communities in the FSM." His Excellency David W. Panuelo has prioritized environment protection in his administration and has encouraged everyone to be part of the movement.

In her welcoming remarks on behalf of DECEM Acting Secretary Cynthia Ehmes, Assistant Secretary of the Climate Change Division Ms. Lucille Overhoff stated that, "The purpose of this year's Micronesia Clean Up Day is not just to recognize those who won this year's Trash Challenge, but to join our leaders to encourage all of us to continue to keep our islands clean and protect our still pristine environment."

The ceremony began with a prayer by Father Dave Andrus of the Jesuits of Pohnpei followed by the National Anthem led and played on accordion by Ms. Noriko Lopez of the SGI. Those in attendance included Mayors, Donor partners, School Principals, private sector reps and National and State representatives such as Lukenmenloahp en Kitt, Welson Panuel, Mayor rep from Kapinga, USAID representatives, SPC Director Studszinski, JICA Resident Representative Muruoaka, Ms. Denise

Adams Boylan, Trash Challenge winners, CCA Principal Virginia John, PCS Principal Yolanda Nanpei, OLMCHS Principal Russel Figueras, Pwudoi Youth Organization rep, FSMDOE Rep Marylne Halbert, R&D Rep Dave Mathias, and Pohnpei EPA staff representing Director Celestine. The Ceremony also included a zoom communication and live broadcast with Chuuk and Kosrae States where key participants attended. In Chuuk State, Governor Alexander Naruhn witnessed the ceremony with Chuuk EPA and key offices and participants.

This year's Micronesia Clean Up Day activity was a Trash Challenge where the states participated by registering as a group at the EPA/KIRMA Office, then selecting the dirtiest place on the island, and take a photo of the place before and after cleaning. The Winners from each state were determined by the before and after photos, EPA/KIRMA inspection codes, and whether they met the group quota of 10 to 15 members, and registered at the EPA/KIRMA office.



The Winners of the 2022 MCD TRASH CHALLENGE are as follows-

	Yap	Chuuk	Pohnpei	Kosrae
1 <sup>st</sup> Place (\$1,000.00)	Wanyan Group	Saponong Women Ministry Group	Palipowe Nett Youth Organization	Jacob George Group
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place (\$750.00)	Ablul Clean Up Group	Achocho Group	Pwudoi Youth Organization	Sepe Mike Group
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place (\$500.00)	COM-Yap Clean Up Group	Likitu Group	Work Life	Theodore N. Lonno Group

Additionally, the following categories were also part of the award ceremony. Congratulations to Chuuk and Pohnpei states as the recipients of this year's PRESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD for their dedication to eliminate waste and conserve natural resources.

CATEGORIES	Yap	Chuuk	Pohnpei	Kosrae
<b>PRESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD</b>		Oneisom Women Association	Pohnpei Waste Management Services	
<b>Group that has consistently cleaned on a monthly basis since 2021</b>	-Wanyan Clean Up Group,  -Ablul Clean Up Group,  -COM-Yap Clean Up Group,  -Rumuu Youth Clean Up Group	Chuuk Women Council		Utwe Youth Group and United Airlines
<b>Business that has promoted Eco friendly products</b>		Deal Store	Fair Office Supply	Simpson Imports Company
<b>Business that has banned the use of Plastic Shopping bags</b>			-Palm Terrace Store	
<b>School that has promoted the 3Rs through Environmental Clubs/Effective Programs</b>		St. Cecilia School	-Pohnpei Catholic School,  -Calvary Christian Academy,  -OLMCHS,  -Pohnpei Seventh Day Adventist  -Ohmine Elementary School  -College of Micronesia-FSM	Lelu Elementary School

- Finally, the FSM Department of Environment, Climate Change, and Emergency Management wishes to recognize the efforts and support of its donors and partners. They include -
1. VITAL
  2. SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY (SPC)
  3. COLLEGE OF MICRONESIA (COM-FSM)
  4. JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE AGENCY (JICA)
  5. MICRONESIA CONSERVATION TRUST (MCT)
  6. V6AH RADIO
  7. UNITED STATES EMBASSY