

Quarantine passengers in Pohnpei frustrated over mixed messaging on quarantine period

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

February 15, 2022

Pohnpei—When travelers bound for Pohnpei entered quarantine in Guam on January 17 in preparation for their flight, they expected that portion of their quarantine to be over within seven days, as they had been told. However, during that quarantine period, fifteen people bound for Pohnpei tested positive for COVID-19 and had to be removed from quarantine. For that reason and others, including the heavy outbreak of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 in Guam, the FSM Government understandably extended the quarantine period and the flight was delayed from January 25 to February 2.

Since that time, FSM has indefinitely cancelled all repatriation flights. (See

President's [press release on page 12](#))

The originally scheduled number of passengers for the January 25 flight was down to just over 50 by the time it arrived in Pohnpei on February 2, since not only repatriates who had tested positive for the virus, but family members and others they had been in contact with in quarantine in Guam also had to be removed.

According to one passenger who at press time was still in quarantine and asked to remain anonymous for the purposes of this article, on February 1, she received a letter from the Pohnpei COVID-19 Task Force saying that she had been approved for the flight and would be required to undergo 14 days of quarantine upon arrival in Pohnpei. She said that most passengers who were on the flight also received the



same letter.

The approval letter was based on Pohnpei's requirement of the filing of an application for a Certificate of Qualified Entry (CQE) into Pohnpei.

The application requires a candidate for entry into Pohnpei to provide information such as a copy of the Passport bio-page, scan of last FSM

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FSM auditors refer Sokehs Special Projects findings to Compliance Investigation Division

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

February 7, 2022

Pohnpei—Auditors from the FSM Office of the National Public Auditor (OPA) have referred some matters they discovered while performing an inspection of public projects earmarked for use in Sokehs, Pohnpei to the Compliance Investigation Division (CID). OPA auditors refer matters to CID when they suspect that findings could rise to the level of criminal.

CID performs a separate investigation and refers findings to the FSM Department of Justice which makes the final decision on whether or not it will pursue charges. Many more matters are sent from CID than ever result in criminal charges.

For now, the OPA's three main findings were:

1. Incomplete planning and changing orders for the Sokehs Retaining Wall Project resulted in the increase of an

initial contract award of \$48,392.80 to \$94,500.

2. Questioned costs of \$17,824.61 is due to lack of proper planning and oversight for the Sokehs Community Water Project; and

3. Payment requests for the Sokehs Retaining Wall project were not authorized by the allottee as required by Financial Management Regulations.

In 2018, FSM Congress passed the special projects bill allocating \$54,500 to be

used to build a retaining wall behind the Sokehs Municipal Government building. It passed another law in 2019 to continue that same project as a "Phase II" at a cost of \$40,000. In 2018, Congress also passed a bill allocating \$20,000 for Sokehs Community Water Projects, a project to build a dam and to provide water tanks for communities in Sokehs that needed them.

During the implementation of the first to

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New sign on Pohnpei's Dekehtik causeway reminds boaters of important safety rules

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

February 2, 2022

Pohnpei—“Five minutes which can save your life before going out to sea” is the message on a new sign on the east side of the Dekehtik causeway. The sign that lists essential steps each boater should take before heading out on the water was a joint project among the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, FSM National Oceanic Resources Management Authority, and Pohnpei's Office of Fisheries and Aquaculture, an office of the Pohnpei Department of Public Safety.

The sign reminds boaters to “Check the weather forecast”. “Tell someone who cares where you are going and when you plan to return,” and to “make sure your

engine is working well”. It provides a safety checklist of items that should be aboard each vessel before it leaves land, and provides emergency contact information for boaters to use if they run into trouble while on the water.

One of the contact methods listed on the sign is the 911 service. A Pohnpei Department of Public Safety spokesperson wanted to remind boaters that the 911 service is operated by State Fire and Rescue twenty-four hours a day and can receive phone calls from cell phones even if the phone has no money on it to make phone calls. “I would like to add the importance of time. The sooner you call, the sooner we can respond,” he said. “Lastly, we can only deploy during the day.”

Bradley Phillip of NORMA wrote, “This assistance with SPC is part of the on-going work on data collection, community awareness and capacity building for coastal anchored Floating Aggregating Devices (FADs) and industrial drifting FADs. The intent of this assistance is that NORMA will provide technical advice and support with SPC to our active fishermen of Pohnpei and other recreational fishermen who may not necessarily carry sea safety gear out to sea. Which includes, marine safety Personal Life Beacons (PLBs), life jackets including waterproof grab bags with mirrors, whistle and compass. This is to help ensure and promote a greater awareness of sea safety practices and small boat registration

for all small boat operators.”

“The sign is there to remind our fishermen that safety at sea is everyone's responsibility,” wrote James Wichman, who has been coordinating SPC's part of the project to promote sea safety. “We are all working together to improve the safety of all who ventures onto the water.”



Patrick Carl- Director of DPS,
Maverick Adolf - NORMA, Lara Studzinski- SPC MRO Director,
Dahker Abraham- OFA Administrator , Keper Joel- Chief of Pohnpei State Police ,
Joseph Ainstain- Chief of Pohnpei State Fire and Rescue.



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Bill Jaynes
Managing Editor

**THE NEXT ISSUE OF
THE KASELEHLIE PRESS
WILL BE RELEASED ON:
March 2, 2022**

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

Monday, February 28, 2022

Japan provides much needed relief to Palikir Elementary School students

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

February 10, 2022

Palikir, Pohnpei—For many years, students and teachers at Palikir Elementary School have been forced either to line up for the single toilet that was in working order, or to seek less hygienic alternative solutions when nature called. Thanks to the generosity of the government of Japan through its Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects, those days are over at long last.

This morning, Japan’s Ambassador to the FSM, Hisashi Michigami, officially handed over to the Government of Pohnpei three completely renovated restrooms with 15 flush toilets, 14 hand washing sinks, and a broken and dangerous drainage ditch cover. Japan also built covered walkways between the classroom buildings.

“The children will no longer have any problems waiting in line for limited restrooms and causing them to be late from classes. During rainy weather, children can easily access the restrooms from their classroom without getting wet,” Ambassador Michigami said during his speech at the event. “Children will be the future leaders of this country, and they will be polished by education. So, the educational environment is really important for children and for the country...I hope that the improvement

of facilities at Palikir Elementary School will foster a better environment for the children’s education and will develop to become a symbol of the friendship between Japan and the FSM.”

“It is my honor that Japan was able to contribute to the educational sector of Pohnpei State and the FSM. Since I came here, H.E. President Panuelo, the secretaries and many senior officials expressed their gratitude for the long years of Japan’s contribution in various fields of the FSM’s development. Japan will continue its cooperation to the people and the government of the FSM,” the Ambassador committed.

The handover ceremony featured students singing the Pohnpei Anthem, while a student color guard raised the flag. Another group of students performed a traditional Sokehs dance, and teachers also sang a song in commemoration of the event.

Pohnpei Governor Reed Oliver movingly translated the Ambassador’s speech into Pohnpeian for the children and parents who were gathered as witnesses to the event. “On behalf of

the Pohnpei State Government I convey to you our ongoing sincere gratitude for all the support and assistance that has been given, not only for the FSM but Pohnpei State, especially today at Palikir School...We sincerely thank you and we hope that this relationship of working together shall continue moving forward”, he said, addressing Ambassador Michigami.

The ambassador presented a ceremonial key to the restrooms to Governor Oliver who then presented it to Director of Education Stanley Etse. Etse presented a hand carving of the school’s mascot,

a rooster, along with a large amount of local produce to the Ambassador.

Senators Sendilina Lekka and Mitaro Simina, Chair and Vice Chairs of the Pohnpei Legislature’s Committee on Education witnessed the ceremony as did Francisco Ifamilik, Principal of Palikir Elementary School, and the school’s entire student body and staff members.

“We’ve all been having to share one bathroom,” said one teacher who told us that she had been teaching at the school for seven years. “It’s been really hard.”



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...Sokehs Audit

Continued from front page

the two retaining wall projects pertaining to the same retaining wall, the winning bid amount was \$46,107.20. The first change order came three months after the notice to proceed on the project. That change order was for the “supply and installation of... pipe railings...”. The contractor billed \$6,107.20, the exact amount remaining of the \$54,500 Congress initially allotted for the project. That change order also extended the target completion date to September 30, 2019.

The second change order of \$40,000 was for the same reason as the first change order and resulted both in the need to petition Congress for more money and again extended the deadline for completion of the project. But it also included public road improvement and the addition of a sidewalk, which was not in the original plan.

“Lack of proper planning, effective review, and oversight by the Department of Transportation, Communication and Infrastructure (DTC&I) can give room to collusion and fraud as two change orders were made after the awarding of the contract to the lowest bidder totaling \$46,107.20,” auditors wrote. Actually, the increase amount was not at all “exactly” the difference between the bid amount and the amount allotted for the project before bids were solicited. We have sought an explanation from the auditor regarding the claims made in the audit and the figures used in it to reach that conclusion.

Auditors included photos of the now completed retaining wall showing that the wall is leaning but did not include that matter as a finding of the inspection.

On the Community Water Projects project, auditors revealed that the contractor who built the dam was paid for the job even though the dam was never operational and is now left abandoned. The inspection included photos of the “dam” showing that it is smaller than the contract required and also pipes that run up hill with no method of supporting the uphill movement of water in the pipes.

Money was used to purchase the specified water tanks but most were not in use. Some were outside Sokehs residences but had no water inside them and no means of catchment. Sokehs Police had to retrieve one of the water tanks from the Madolenihmw Municipality that was supposed to have been destined for the

Sokehs Municipality. Auditors said that either no inspections were done before payments were made or that they were inappropriately done.

In their responses, the Sokehs Municipal Government, DTC&I, and the FSM Department of Finance and Administration all generally agreed with the findings and recommendations in the report.

...Pohnpei Quarantine

Continued from front page

immigration exit stamp, and a copy of a COVID-19 vaccination card. Student applicants are required also to submit a letter from their school verifying enrollment. Medical travelers are required to submit other documentation as well, including a medical referral and a letter of clearance indicating medical fitness to travel.

The form asks for other items, including how long they have been absent from Pohnpei, purpose of travel, dietary restrictions and also for the “traveler category”. “Traveler categories” include “certified health expert; stranded returning Pohnpei resident; medical referral patient or attendant; student; other stranded resident not included above; diplomat or personnel assigned to Embassies on the island of Pohnpei, and immediate family members; crew member of open-sea fishing vessel who is a citizen of the FSM; immediate family member accompanying remains of deceased Pohnpeian or deceased resident of Pohnpei; person who is employed or who has been recruited to be employed in the State of Pohnpei and his/her immediate family; and other.

The Task Force ostensibly uses the information to prioritize and approve the passengers authorized to fly to Pohnpei. The subject of which government, the National or the State government should control the list of approved candidates for re-entry, or how many spots each government should have, has been a bone of contention since repatriation flights began.

On return to Pohnpei, FSM’s Attorney General Joses Gallen wrote a widely circulated letter to United Airlines Chief Executive Scott Kirby regarding Pohnpei’s requirement of a CQE for any boarding passenger returning to

Click here for continuation

Office of Transportation & Infrastructure
State of Pohnpei
KOLONIA, POHNPEI FM 96941 TEL: 320-2411/2572

January 08, 2022

REQUEST FOR QUOTATION RFQ No. PMO-01-22

OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE (PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE) IS SOLICITING QUOTATIONS FROM INTERESTED CONTRACTOR/FIRM FOR THE GEOTECHNICAL SOIL INVESTIGATION, ENGINEERING REPORTING AND LABORATORY ANALYSIS FOR FOUR GOVERNMENT HOUSING, STATE OFFICE BUILDING, PICS TEMPORARY CLASSROOM BUILDINGS AND MADOLENIHMW TANK SITES. SHIPPING INCLUDED (SOIL SAMPLES)

Geotechnical Support No. PMO-01-22

QUOTATIONS SUBMITTED SHALL BE ADDRESSED TO POHNPEI PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE-PMO.

ATTENTION: DAVID HAWKINS
ACTING PROGRAM MANAGER
POHNPEI PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE
KOLONIA, POHNPEI 96941

QUOTATIONS SHALL BE RECEIVED ON OR BEFORE FEBRUARY 25, 2022.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT PMO OFFICE TELEPHONE NUMBER 320-2572.

THANK YOU,
DAVID HAWKINS
ACTING PROGRAM MANAGER

FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL
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CALL FOR APPLICATION

The FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs (FSMDHSA) is announcing the availability of fellowship or scholarship for those interested in health (medicine, dentistry, pharmacology, public health, mental health, and other related fields). The funding is made available from the World Health Organization (WHO). Those interested must send an email to health@fsmhealth.fm or contact the numbers below. The applicant must submit a completed WHO Fellowship Application form and transcripts.

**Department of Health and Social Affairs
FSM National Government
Palikir, Pohnpei FM 96941**

**Phone: 691 320 2619
Fax: 691 320 5263
Email: health@fsmhealth.fm**

Please note that the applicant must apply and be accepted into Fiji National University (FNU). Although high school graduates with exceptional academic achievement can be considered, applicants with two-year degree in science or related fields are encouraged to apply.

Deadline to submit all required documents is December 15th of each year.



College of Micronesia-FSM

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[Perspectives] Further away from HOME: a tribute for Lih (women)



By Delihna Manuel Ehmes

(Mrs. Ehmes is a faculty member of the College's Social Sciences Division at the National Campus)

Someone once said, "You can have a house but without a home, you will be devoid of love". As we near women's day (Rahn en lih) festivities, we are more drawn to reflect on us (as lih) women in our societies of all levels (i.e., family, community, work, church, etc.). It seems we get more energized and excited to participate in anything and everything that involves our roles as women, and the cycle goes on every time as we near Rahn en lih. Whether we participate indirectly or directly, all Lih play a role in the many processes of our societies. We continue to voice our concerns on gender equality and what it means to be heard. While only a few of us have gone through great lengths to ensure that our voices are heard, we must not forget that they did this for ALL Lih. We should admire them for

taking the bold steps to be the first in creating platforms where women can openly express their views. Today, as our small island nations strive to ensure environment, economic, and political sustainability, some of us also march in this walk to help see that the goals are achieved in the process. We have seen great many changes from the collective effort of men and women on our islands. Yet, we can still sense that tension still exists. Why do we still sense this? I cannot tell for sure why but what I am about to share are based on my observations and experiences of being a part this cycle, as having worked with children, youth, and women. If what I am about to share offends anyone, I truly apologize for that but my views are simply my own. My observations and experiences have culminated into my knowledge of processes from my island living. As an educator, I have come to develop a strong passion for "learning". I would always tell my students that learning is central to survival and adaptation. If you don't learn, you will find it hard to adapt. At least for me personally, what I've learned has been the result of moving in and out of the many social circles that I interact with. Whether it was working with children, youth, or women, one thing has become clearly evident for me-that problems develop and persist when we "move further away from home". I have seen children who struggled in school and elsewhere because parents have moved away from home. I have seen teens that are hesitant to participate in their own peer

networks due to lack of parental supervision or parental support. Teens in their peak of life's activities have witnessed and experienced for themselves the gaps and challenges in school, bullying from peers, misjudgment from teachers and their communities. This has become the consequence of parents, most particularly women who have moved further away from home, many times not by the choices they make but by the pressures and obligations that take them away from home. We have adopted a cash-dependent society and a market the demands us to produce cash in order to sustain us. Our preference to live has now changed to meet the demand of our now cash-dependent societies. Despite the type of lens we look through, our existing realities delineate from the same core-HOME. Today, priorities take us further away from our homes. We are more compelled to work outside our homes because we realize the need to bring cash home and to be providers and breadwinners to our families. Today, we are compelled to be a part of an NGO because we sense that we are the marginalized gender, and we realize the need to be heard in our larger society. Today, we choose to live with our immediate nuclear family unity because we realize the struggle of having to support the larger extended family unit. Today, we prefer convenience because we realize that living on traditional methods takes away time to be a part of the current social norms, expectations and obligations. And list goes on...Ultimately, all of this winds down to one thing-we need to

move closer to HOME. Why? If we talk about school bullying, school drop-out, drug abuse, wife battering, teen pregnancy or at a larger scale, the problems of NonCommunicable Diseases (NCDs) and Migration-all of them have a relationship to the fact that we have moved further from home. We see school bullying, school drop-out because our move away from home leaves our children with little or no parental support and supervision. We see an increase in the number of NCDs because we view working on land as a family unit, while growing our own food as more troublesome and thus, less appealing to us. The changes and problems we now see and experience are structural because they have affected us at a larger scale. Whether we realize it or not, our problems have evolved from our move away from HOME. I cannot say how exactly this can be done but I know that there is an urgent need to move closer to HOME. Our children need a warm and nurturing home, our husbands need a home-cooked meal and a clean nest, our siblings need a sister to talk to, and the people we call fathers and mothers need someone to share and pass on their knowledge, skills, and life stories. This is the HOME we used to know and the one we need to move closer to-A Micronesian HOME.

[Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author's and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the College of Micronesia-FSM.]

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

College of Micronesia - FSM Mission Statement

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

Director of Procurement and Property

Location: National Campus | Annual Salary: \$30,194.00 | Closing Date: February 27, 2022

Position Profile: The Director of Procurement & Property Management reports to the Vice President for Administrative Services and is responsible for developing and providing an effective, timely and comprehensive centralized purchasing program that supports the goals and objectives of the college in the acquisition of supplies, materials, equipment and services. Generally, work includes but not limited to overseeing, coordinating and managing the activities of the Procurement & Property Management Office, maintaining policies, inventory control standards and ensuring compliance with purchasing standards and policies.

The Director also oversees the management of property and fleet in establishing policies and procedures which foster accountability across the institution for moveable property, annual reporting on the inventory and disposal of surplus property.

Serious inquiries can be made to the Human Resources Office at email address hro@comfsm.fm and telephone number (691) 320-2482 extension numbers 179, 180, 181
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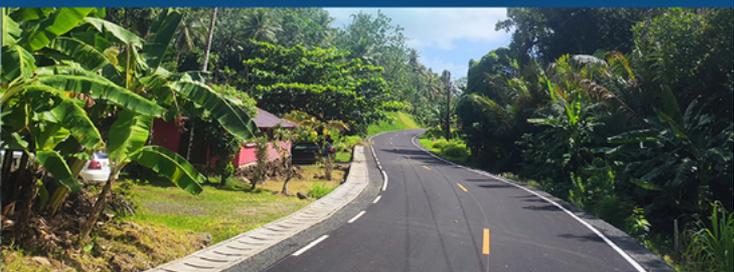
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Tower 7, Reserve Bank Building,
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The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Regional Resident Representative's Office for Pacific Island Countries is inviting applications for a position of Local Economist. The Resident Representative's Office is based in Suva, Fiji, and covers 12 Pacific Island countries (PICs): Fiji, Kiribati, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Republic of Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

Duties and Responsibilities

The local economist will work closely with the Resident Representative (RR) and country teams from IMF headquarters (HQ) to support the IMF's surveillance and program work in PICs. The economist will report directly to the RR and also take direction from mission chiefs of designated country teams. Duties include:

- Contributing to the work of IMF Pacific Island country teams, including joining missions. Assessing, monitoring and reporting on economic and policy developments, collecting data.
- Economic research and analysis using econometric techniques, IMF-based macroeconomic frameworks and databases.
- Liaising with country authorities, development partners such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, and other stakeholders.
- Assist the RR in IMF outreach, managing/participating in conferences, and administrative and other tasks as required.

Selection Criteria

- Masters or Advanced Degree in Economics or related fields, with at least 5 years of relevant professional experience in monetary and/or fiscal policy, and the financial/banking sectors. Experience working in a central bank or Ministry of Finance (or equivalent) is desirable.
- Sound knowledge of macroeconomics and strong analytical skills. Proficiency with Excel, and data collection/analysis. Familiarity with econometric techniques and software.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English, and demonstrated ability in writing high quality research and policy papers, as well as short and targeted notes.
- Willingness to travel as needed to Pacific island countries. Strong organization and interpersonal skills, willingness to learn, and ability to work effectively in a team.

The selected candidate will be offered an initial contract, based in Suva, Fiji. The IMF offers competitive remuneration packages (including health and pension benefits) in line with the United Nations systems.

Candidates are invited to submit an application and curriculum vitae by 25 February 2022, by email to Ms. Sukanaivalu: psukanaivalu@imf.org.

Opinion Editorial

U.S. Initiatives Against Climate Change: From COP 26 and Beyond

Climate change is on all our minds these days. From wherever your vantage point in Micronesia, be it on land or sea, you can see climate change's negative effects and, for some, literally in their own backyard. These recent, disturbing changes to our climate create an even greater motivation for sustained action to succeed in both mitigating and adapting to climate change. The United States government and its people support the FSM and other Pacific Island Countries (PICs) in their efforts against the scourge of climate change. Now, some months after last Fall's UN Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP-26), it is a good time to explain and elaborate upon U.S. government initiatives.

The United States entered COP-26 last October in Glasgow with four primary goals. The fact that we were able to achieve these key goals speaks to our understanding of the urgency of the moment, and our unyielding commitment to fight climate change. First, we garnered national and international commitments made on the road to and during COP-26, to maintain a 1.5 degree Celsius limit goal on global warming. Second, the parties took a consensus decision (the "Glasgow Climate Pact") that laid out various actions and timelines related to continuing to increase ambitions after Glasgow during the decisive decade of the 2020s. Third, the parties completed the outstanding implementing rules that will enable full operationalization of the Paris Agreement. Fourth, the United States demonstrated domestic and international climate leadership in a variety of ways, from President Biden's attendance at the World Leaders Summit, the announcement of various deliverables (including the President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience or PREPARE for short, the U.S.-EU initiated Global Methane Pledge, and the First Movers Coalition, among others).

In the coming weeks and months, you will continue to hear more about these initiatives. We first wish to thank and applaud the FSM for our enduring partnership and its unwavering commitment to fighting climate change. Recent initiatives include President David W. Panuelo and I kayaking in Mangrove Bay to raise awareness about climate change for #thehumanrace on World Humanitarian Day last year, and the FSM's early and vigorous commitment to the Global Climate Methane Pledge, a critical commitment to reduce global methane emissions by 30% from 2020 levels.

An initiative with direct relevance for the FSM is the USAID-led PREPARE effort, which brings together the diplomatic, development, and technical expertise of the U.S. to support more than half a billion people in developing countries adapt to and manage the impacts of climate change through locally-led development by 2030. The Biden-Harris Administration has pledged the U.S. will provide dedicated adaptation financing of \$3 billion annually by 2024. The FSM and the other PICs will benefit from directly from this initiative. USAID is a leader and facilitator for FSM-focused support and assistance to counter a range of climate-related issues. As just one example, a recent large grant provided local grantee MERIP with funding to help coastal people in Pohnpei develop sustainable aquaculture via giant clam farming.

The Office of Insular Affairs (OIA, under the United States Department of Interior) is another strong, experienced partner in climate change mitigation, actively working in all four states to support local, targeted efforts. Just one example of its grant partnerships in the FSM is with Micronesia Conservation Trust, a regional non-governmental organization that received funds to

expand coral reef monitoring and management and recently began another OIA-funded project for the eradication, control, and management of invasive species in Kosrae, Chuuk, and Yap. These grants are critical as invasive species often gain new footholds as land and ocean temperatures increase. OIA continues to have funds available for these grants until April 1st.

Sadly, the world's climate disasters have gained force. Last December, king tides wreaked havoc in Chuuk, causing severe enough damage from seawater inundation that the FSM declared a state of emergency. U.S. Embassy Kolonia worked with the International Organization for Migration, UNICEF, Catholic Relief Services, and other international, national, and state emergency management organizations, to quickly send critical supplies to those impacted by the disaster.

The United States recognizes how important our oceans are.

The U.S. has partnered with Palau to host the April 2022 Our Ocean Conference. It will take place for the first time in the region in Koror, Palau, and is titled "Our Ocean, Our People, Our Prosperity" and will invite 500 key stakeholders to work on promoting marine protected areas, fostering a sustainable blue economy, combating plastic pollution, supporting maritime security, and advancing sustainable fisheries.

Secretary of State Blinken spent the week visiting the region, including a visit to Fiji, the first Secretary to visit in nearly forty years. His visit occurred simultaneously with the release of the United States updated Indo-Pacific Strategy, a document that clearly outlines our commitment to the Pacific. Secretary Blinken, in a speech last December in Jakarta, summed it up in this way:

"The United States has long been, is, and always will be an Indo-Pacific nation. This is a geographic fact, from our Pacific coast states to Guam, our territories across the Pacific. And it's a historical reality, demonstrated by our two centuries of trade and other ties with the region."

To meet our common challenges, each community in the world will need both current and future leaders to battle climate change in the twenty-first century. That is why the United States government has supported the growth and development of youth leaders with programs specific to regional goals and objectives. Through our exchange program Young Pacific Leaders, young women such as Yolanda Joab Mori of the Blue Prosperity Micronesia and Challenger Deep explorer and biologist Nicole Yamase lead the way, having the experience of meeting other young leaders and using that experience in a variety of initiatives to raise awareness about local and regional conditions and solutions to the climate crisis.

The U.S. Government is resolute and focused on supporting the FSM in these challenging times. My team and I at U.S. Embassy Kolonia are committed to promoting climate action and will continue to respond to climate change challenges. We look forward to sharing our continued US- FSM progress and partnerships in 2022.

Carmen G. Cantor
Ambassador of the United States to the FSM



Opinion Editorial

Congratulatory Message on 2022 Chinese Lunar New Year of the Tiger

February 1st, 2022, marked the first day of the Chinese Lunar New Year of the Tiger, also known as the Spring Festival. According to the traditional culture of China, tiger is the king of all beasts, a symbol of strength, bravery and fearlessness. On this occasion, I wish our FSM friends great vitality and all the best in this Year of the Tiger.

Year 2021 was full of turbulence and challenges for the world. At the same time, it also gave good grounds for peace and hope. Faced with the struggling recovery of the world economy, prolonged rage of COVID-19 pandemic and the staggering and evolution of the international situation, China continued to bear in mind the interest of the world, shouldered its responsibilities, and made important contributions to the world. Chinese President Xi Jinping solemnly presented the Global Development Initiative, which has been well received and supported by

international organizations such as UN agencies and nearly 100 countries, including the FSM. China remained the largest contributor to global economic growth with a solid share of more than 25 percent. We joined wholeheartedly in global cooperation against COVID-19. By the end of 2021, China provided more than two billion doses of vaccines to over 120 countries and international organizations, the largest amount of outbound vaccines given by a single country. We vigorously advocate the common values of humanity, namely peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy and freedom, as well as true multilateralism. China opposes unilateralism, power politics and bullying while firmly upholding the UN-centered international system and the international order underpinned by international law.

Year 2021 marked the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party

of China (CPC), which was celebrated by all Chinese people, embarking on a new journey of building a modern socialist country in all respects. The successful convening of the 6th Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee adopted the CPC's 3rd historic resolution, which summarized the major achievements and historical experience of the CPC over the past century. Through participation in a series of celebration activities on the CPC centenary, the international community has gained a more truthful and comprehensive understanding of China and the CPC and been better convinced that the CPC is a party that strives for the well-being of the Chinese people and also a party that endeavors for progress of humanity.

Year 2021 saw the continuous development in depth of the China-FSM Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and "Great Friendship", which yielded substantial achievements with the exchanges and cooperation across the spectrum, benefiting the well-being of our two countries and two peoples. FSM President David Panuelo, Speaker Simina of the FSM Congress and Secretary Kandhi Elieisar of Foreign Affairs respectively extended congratulatory messages on the CPC centenary to their counterparts of the Chinese leadership. The FSM attended in China-Pacific Island Countries (PICs) Political Leadership Dialogue and the first China-PICs Foreign Ministers' Meeting with high-profile delegations. 30 China-Aid isolation units for the purpose of COVID-19 response were transported to and installed for use in all 4 FSM states. China provided to the FSM a fourth cash donation in the amount of 150,000 USD to fend off COVID-19. The Chinese contractors overcame extensive difficulties arising from the pandemic to deliver Pohnpei Secondary Road Project. In Kosrae, we witnessed the dedication of Tafunsak gymnasium and the ground-breaking of Utwa gymnasium, both funded by China. The Chinese Embassy in the FSM also rendered substantial support to numerous local community projects in the areas of food security, women's empowerment, education and sports, etc..

to hold high the banner of building a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity, and work hand in hand with all countries that love peace and uphold justice to make new and greater contribution to safeguarding world peace and prosperity. The FSM people are expecting to enjoy more tangible benefits by participating in the Belt and Road Initiative and Global Development Initiative, including but not limited to the Phase-12 China-Aid Pilot Farm Project and the donation of a second passenger-cargo ship by China, which is scheduled to mainly operate in Yap.

Right now, Beijing is amid the "Winter Olympics Time", making the city the world's first to host both the Summer and Winter Olympic Games. Committed to organizing a green, inclusive, open and clean Games, China has made every effort to counter the impact of COVID-19, overcome distractions caused by very few countries with an attempt to politicize sports, and ensured the smooth opening of the Beijing Olympic Winter Games as scheduled, making new contribution to the cause of Olympism worldwide. I expect the FSM friends to join our cheering on the Olympic athletes and support China to make the Beijing Olympic Winter Games a grand global event that enhances mutual understanding and friendship and brings the whole world "together for a shared future", so as to give all nations greater confidence and strength in battling the pandemic. We are ready to work shoulder-to-shoulder with the FSM side to act on and promote the Olympic motto of "Faster, Higher, Strong -- Together", to tackle in solidarity common challenges of the international community like COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and sustainable development, and to make unswerving efforts to push forward the China-FSM Comprehensive Strategic Partnership to new heights and the joint pursuit of building a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity!

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

In the new year, China will continue



VACANCY

POSITION: Head Librarian

SALARY: Starting at \$570 Bi-weekly

LOCATION: Pohnpei Public Library

The Pohnpei Public Library is a non-governmental organization established to fulfill a need to provide the public with library services in Pohnpei. The Pohnpei Public Library officially opened in February 1988 with an all-volunteer staff and has since expanded to include full time staff, a children's reading room and a computer lab.

Job Description: The Head Librarian is responsible for overall running of the library. The position will work with the Pohnpei Public Library's Board of Directors to develop and implement the overall strategic direction of the library. The Head Librarian acquires specialized skills and knowledge relating to various library procedures and reports to the library's Board of Directors.

Qualifications: Preference for two years college graduate, Microsoft Office Application skills is required; three years of experience in library administration or other relative experience; Strong Communication skills in English, as well as Pohnpeian and experience supervising staff.

A full job description including a list of duties for the position can be obtained at the Pohnpei Public Library or requested at pplrecruitments@gmail.com. Applications should include cover letter, resume and three references. Applications should be addressed to the Pohnpei Public Library Board of Directors and emailed to pplrecruitments@gmail.com by Monday, 7 March 2022.

...Pohnpei Quarantine 2*Continued from page 4*

Pohnpei. "I wish to advise that the authority to regulate immigration is an exclusive power of the FSM National Government", Gallen wrote. "No FSM State is vested with a shared authority to regulate immigration. Only the FSM National Government has the authority to regulate and to decide on

any international travel restrictions into FSM States. In this regard, I wish to further advise that Pohnpei State's unilateral imposition of CQE is outside of legitimate state authority and a violation of the exclusive power of the FSM National Government to regulate immigration, interstate and foreign commerce. Therefore, this state regulation is considered void...The CQE is not among the travel requirements in FSM. The Governor's letter has no force and effect of law. Any enforcement or implementation of such letter by United can and may result in liability for any claims brought against Pohnpei State arising from the use of said letter."

"The Certificate of Qualified Entry (CQE) has been in place

since last year," wrote Pohnpei COVID-19 Task Force Chair Norleen Oliver when asked about the FSM AG's legal opinion. "The requirement of the CQEs is part of Pohnpei State's overall efforts in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and to ensure the health and safety of the people of Pohnpei."

Oliver said that she did not want to make any further comment for fear of harming the delicate working relationship the Pohnpei and FSM Task Forces currently have. "For (the) Pohnpei State Taskforce, we want to bring our citizens and residents home who are stranded and in financial bind at the moment...Everything that we are doing is to help bring these individuals home. ... nothing more...nothing less," she concluded.

With the backdrop of the ongoing tensions between the two governments and the letter saying that passengers would be quarantined for 14 days in Pohnpei rather than the seven days previously established as the policy, the 50+ passengers arrived in Pohnpei, knowing that they would not leave the quarantine facility until the 16th. On the first COVID-19 test in Pohnpei, one passenger tested positive for the virus though he had tested negative in the three tests taken in Guam. Health officials determined that the positive test result was historic and non-contagious.

On February 12, passengers received a surprising notice from the Pohnpei Task Force saying that "due to the breaches of health protocols in MMA (the quarantine site)" the quarantine period would be "extended" until February 16. The particular breaches were not defined in the email, but medical officials say that the problem was the mingling of passengers within the quarantine facility.

"We were like ????????", the anonymous person in quarantine wrote during an online chat. "We knew it will be until February 16 and weren't informed that there was a possibility that it would be shortened."

Then, just yesterday, February 14, Pohnpei State Government released a public announcement saying that the quarantine would be extended for another seven days counted from the date of the most recent test which was on February 9. The Press Release said that it was due to non-compliance with current COVID-19 quarantine protocols. "Non-compliance with quarantine protocols impacts the safety of the people of Pohnpei and will not be allowed," it said. It said that quarantine would end after a negative test result, again, on February 16. "All repatriates in quarantine are to remain in their rooms and avoid contact with anyone besides their roommates and comply with all protocols in place. The leadership and people of Pohnpei State plead with those non-compliant travelers/visitors to please observe protocols accordingly for the safety of our people. Non-compliance will not be tolerated," the release concluded.

"It felt punitive to me," the anonymous resident of quarantine wrote. "I feel they just blame us. We were all negative, and even the one person (who) tested positive for the first test turned out negative."

"I'm okay with the long quarantine," she wrote saying that she was enjoying many 'quiet moments'. "But what I didn't like is the Pohnpei TF (Task Force) announcement! They should have said that they already made a decision to extend it for 14 days."

United States Embassy KOLONIA

U.S. EMBASSY KOLONIA

WILL HOST A

COVID-19 VACCINATION DRIVE

Date: Friday, February 18, 2022

Time: 10:00am-3:00pm

Location: U.S. Embassy Kolonia Parking Lot

Vaccinations are FREE

and open to the general public!

GET YOUR BOOSTER SHOT!

GIVEAWAYS FOR FIRST 100 PEOPLE!

BRING YOUR VACCINE CARD!

Show Your Love!

Get a Vaccine or a Booster Shot!

VACCINES AVAILABLE FOR

EVERYONE AGES 5+

Mensenieng Credit Union sponsors upcoming tennis tournament in Pohnpei

By *Bill Jaynes*
The Kaselehlie Press

February 14, 2022

Pohnpei—Mensenieng Credit Union has agreed to sponsor a tennis tournament in Pohnpei. On February 14, 2022, Albert J. Johnny, General Manager of Mensenieng Credit Union, presented a check for \$5000 to Pohnpei Tennis Association President Dion Neth, Jr.

Opening remarks for the tennis tournament will be held at the Nan Pepper tennis courts at 6:00 PM on Monday, February 28, and the competition will begin the next day beginning at 5:30 in the evening.

The tournament will consist of six events including Men's Singles, Men's Doubles, Women's Singles, Women's Doubles, Junior's Singles and Mixed Doubles. There is no enrollment fee, and the prizes will be in cash.

Neth said that the Mensenieng donation will be used to sponsor the entire duration of the tournament, which includes three cases of tennis balls, two large banners, cash prizes for 1st - 4th places, and the closing ceremony potluck.

Neth proudly announced that FSM President David Panuelo, Australian Ambassador Jo Cowley, and US Ambassador Carmen Cantor will compete in the tournament.



BID INVITATION

for

Federated States of Micronesia, Chuuk Nantaku Campus, College of Micronesia Needs Assessment

NOTICE

The Program Management Unit (PMU) of the Department of Transportation, Communications & Infrastructure (DTC&I), National Government of the Federated States of Micronesia is hereby issuing this Bid Invitation Notice to qualified consultants for the Federated States of Micronesia, Chuuk Nantaku Campus, College of Micronesia Needs Assessment and Master Plan.

Further information on this ITB may be obtained by submitting a written request for details to Mr. Shankarah Lessey, Contract Specialist, DTC&I, P.O. Box PS-2, Palikir, Pohnpei, FM 96941 at email shankarah.lessey@gmail.com with the subject heading:

“Federated States of Micronesia, Chuuk Nantaku Campus, College of Micronesia Needs Assessment and Master Plan ”

The bidding documents, including the instructions to bidders, scope of work and conditions of contract may also be directly obtained from the Department’s website: <https://www.tci.gov.fm/> in its PMU section.

The closing date for the submission of bids is **Friday 4th March 2022** at midnight local Pohnpei Time.

Repatriation flights to the FSM on indefinite pause; affected persons may be entitled to financial assistance

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—The COVID-19 Task Force of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) has recommended that the Government temporarily pause future repatriation flights from the U.S. Territory of Guam into the country. His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the FSM, has concurred with the recommendation. FSM citizens presently in Government’s Pre-Quarantine site in the U.S. Territory of Guam will return as currently scheduled, but no new flights will be scheduled until further notice.

There are numerous reasons the Task Force has arrived at the recommendation to temporarily pause future repatriation flights into the Nation.

The first reason is that the Omicron variant of COVID-19 continues to result in approximately 700- 800 new infections in Guam every day, and so by extension the threat of the virus to repatriating citizens (and to the foreign service officers at the Consulate General in Guam) remains high.

The second reason is that the Task Force is of the understanding that the high rate of infections in Guam, juxtaposed to the high prevention standards of the FSM’s Pre-Quarantine site,

results in a significant burden on Guam’s public health capacity at a time when that capacity is better served towards its members of the community.

The third reason is that, upon review of in-country quarantine procedures and processes in some of the FSM’s States, it was agreed between the FSM COVID-19 Task Force and the relevant State COVID-19 Task Force/s that a strengthening of protocols, procedures, and processes—including infection control training—is required.

The fourth reason is that, upon review of the COVID-19 community spread across the North Pacific, the Task Force has determined that the Republic of Palau’s comparative success, including genuine online-access to education for students and the intended reopening of schools this week, and the Republic of Kiribati’s relatively strict but necessary lockdown measures, are intrinsically linked to their respective vaccination campaigns. Virtually every person in Palau is vaccinated against COVID-19; the same is not yet the case for Kiribati. By contrast, the FSM’s vaccination rate is approximately between Palau’s and Kiribati’s, and while the great bulk of adults aged 45-and-up are

vaccinated, the vast majority of youth between the ages of 5-12 remain unvaccinated. The Task Force agreed that it is essential for the Nation to improve its COVID-19 vaccination rate for children, and a higher rate of adults with booster doses, before the scheduling of future repatriation flights can continue.

The FSM National Government, being cognizant of the financial impact on repatriating persons who don’t reside in Guam nonetheless being physically present there until such a time that they can return to the FSM, has determined that it is in the interest of those impacted to receive equitable financial assistance until they possess a future opportunity for repatriation. While the details of this assistance are still being developed, the assistance will apply to all persons contacted by the FSM National Government for confirmation of a repatriation slot who are now stranded in Guam.

Persons who traveled to Guam of their own volition, or upon the advice of a State Government or Non-Government Organization, may not necessarily be entitled to this assistance.

It is the intent of the FSM National Government that repatriation activities will continue once it has been assessed that doing so represents significantly less risk. It is beyond the scope of the Government’s capacity to offer a timeframe for when repatriation activities will continue in this release.

contact us :Tel : 320-6505
Email: micronesianproductions@gmail.com

Groups or individuals who wish to compete need to register by Sat, Feb 19th (\$15-)

GOT TALENT?

Dancers. Singers. Talents. If you have a group or simply want to compete alone, all are welcome!

*Three prize categories will be awarded:
Best performance, Most creative,
and Most energy.*

**SATURDAY,
FEB. 26TH
© THE
SPANISH
WALL GYM**



M ICRONESIAN **P** RODUCTIONS

Australia celebrates women in “STEM”

By the Australian Embassy to the FSM

February 11, 2022

FSM—On the 11th of February 2022, the Australian Embassy celebrated the International Day for Women in Girls in Science by featuring some of the women in the Australian Award Scholarship Program who either have studied, or will study in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). As the AAS caters to priority sectors of the country, most of the awardees in the FSM are concentrated in the field of Health Sciences. Out of the nine Australian Award Scholarship awarded for 2022 to Micronesians, four are women who will be studying in the fields of medicine and health.

Women are underrepresented in STEM, particularly in the Pacific region. However, more women and girls are stepping into these sectors. As a strong advocate in gender issues, the Australian Embassy in the FSM hopes to encourage women and girls to apply for Australian Award Scholarships in STEM fields. This not only provides opportunities in highly professional careers, but also contributes to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through working towards gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Karmi Soar Alik is a Medical Laboratory Science Technician at the Pohnpei State Hospital. Karmi graduated with a Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science from Fiji National University in 2020 under the Australian Awards Scholarships.

“As a women, I believe if we sit to discuss just the topic itself from different perspectives it can take us ladies hours to digest and still come up

with varieties of ideas. Bringing us back to the importance of women and girls in science, women bring color to science. According to Angeliki Dimitriadi, the involvement of women in science can bring a more diverse workforce, which reflects a wider variety of experiences and views, can greatly benefit the science, engineering and technology world. Women not just support but they see things differently. So, I encourage women and girls to also involve in the industry of science for the improvement and challenge that it always has.”

Shania Felix is a Telepathology Laboratory Technician at the Pohnpei State Hospital. Shania was recently awarded an Australia Awards Scholarship to undertake a Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science at Fiji National University, starting in 2022.

“I’m sure it’s known that gender equality is one factor to highlight in the science world. Women in science tend to be underrepresented or paid less compared to men, thus discouraging them to pursue further in their careers. There are women who are just as hard working and providing a fair working environment that embraces the work-life balance of all genders is crucial. A woman can be an amazing mother and scientist at the same time. In addition, recognizing women in science can help empower and motivate young girls to pursue science-related fields.”

The 2023 Intake Round for Australia Awards Scholarships is now open. More information is provided on our website www.fsm.embassy.gov.au. For further enquiries, please email us at Australiaawards.fsm@dfat.gov.au.



EXAMINATION ANNOUNCEMENT



EA NO: FSM-005-22
OPENING DATE: 01/20/2022
CLOSING DATE: 02/20/2022

Office of Personnel Administration FSM National Government

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

POSITION AND SALARY:

National Justice Ombudsman
PL-38/1
\$658.41 B/W + \$40.00 Cola

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

LOCATION:

FSM Supreme Court
FSM National Government
Palikir, Pohnpei FM 96941

DUTIES (ILLUSTRATIVE ONLY):

Manage the office of the Ombudsman; supervises and coordinates the work of the State Justice Ombudsman and bailiffs; develops restitution and community service programs, obtains community support and implementation programs for convicted offenders; prepares case studies, pre-sentence reports and progress reports for convicted offenders; develops alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, relating to customs and traditions of the FSM; serves as liaison between the Court, the Executive and Legislative Branches, traditional leaders, law enforcements and correction institutions and agencies; provides counseling to offenders, victims and clients in need of counseling services; establishes standards and guidelines for service providers for offenders; provides training and technical assistance on Court and offender services to State Courts and Probation Officers, as requested; serves as court interpreter during court proceedings; develops and maintains case files and establishes a reporting system for the Justice Ombudsman Office; Serves as the Public Information Officer for the Court; produce newsletters on all activities and events of the Court; serves as Assistance Clerk of Courts; assists the Director of Court Administration in preparation of Court's annual budget; assists in seeking training opportunities and funding for Court Justices and staff through partner courts and organizations; assists Chief Clerk of Courts in case Tracking System; assists in administration of the FSM Bar Examination; responsible in set up. of courtroom, prior to court proceedings; responsible in the safety and security of justice, court personnel and clients during working hours and court proceedings;

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

Graduation from an accredited college or university majoring in criminology, sociology, Administration of Justice, psychology or other related fields plus four (4) years of progressively responsible professional work experience or equivalent.

Secure Application Forms From
And Return to FSM National
Government Personnel Office

- Pohnpei-based position
- Attractive expatriate package
- Join the principal development organisation in the region



The Pacific Community (SPC) invites applications for the position of Energy Investment Specialist – FSM SE Project within its Micronesia Regional Office (MRO) located at its regional office in 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 26 country and territory members. In pursuit of sustainable development to benefit Pacific people, our unique organisation works across more than 25 sectors. We are known for our knowledge and innovation in such areas as fisheries science, public health surveillance, geoscience, and conservation of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

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

The role – the Energy Investment Specialist – FSM SE Project will work closely with the Project Management Team (PMT), SPC technical division staff, regional, national and local development partners and FSM national, state, and municipal counterparts. A significant amount of the work is focused on all FSM States and working closely with the four States and engaging entities including the State Energy Working Groups, the State Governors, the State Utilities and the National Government Department of Resources and Development. Strategic networking, technical capacity and relationship development are critical to this role.

The key responsibilities of the role include the following:

1. Lead the development of four States Energy Investment Plans and one National Energy Investment Plan for the FSM Government
2. Lead efforts and strengthen partnerships in developing the necessary enabling environment and mechanisms that encourage private sector involvement in FSMs Electricity sector
3. Promote and support the investment plans to leverage at least four bankable projects in RE and EE Investments

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

1. Qualifications

- Postgraduate degree in Economics, Energy Planning, investment, Law, financial management or other fields relevant to this position.

2. Technical expertise

- At least 9-10 years in a similar project in particular in energy policy and regulation.
- Experience developing energy investment plans and resource mobilisation work.
- Thorough understanding of energy investments opportunities and project cycles, log-frames, monitoring and evaluation, and risk management.
- Demonstrated experience managing a high volume and high dollar value procurement.
- Managing logistics in challenging and remote locations.
- Demonstrated abilities in remote staff management and their performance evaluation.
- Excellent computer skills across necessary applications.
- Excellent English communication skills (oral and written).
- Driver license.

Closing date: 6 March 2022–11:00 pm Pohnpei time

Job Reference: AL000454

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

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

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

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

Screening questions:

1. Could you describe your experiences in energy investment development and (or) implementation?
2. Could you describe your experiences in energy policy and regulation work particularly on areas that cover private sector involvement in renewable energy and energy efficiency?
3. What are your experiences in drafting project proposals?

Coast Guard and Navy complete channel widening in FSM



The Coast Guard and U.S. Navy use controlled explosive dredging techniques to clear roughly 10,000 square-feet taking approximately 6,500 pounds of explosives to clear from December 4-8, 2021. The Coast Guard Cutter Sequoia carried members from the Navy's Underwater Construction Team Two (UCT-2) to widen the shoal channel which had narrowed due to marine overgrowth. (U.S. Coast Guard photo courtesy of the Coast Guard Cutter Sequoia)

*Story by Petty Officer 3rd Class Ryan Fisher
U.S. Coast Guard District 14 Hawaii Pacific*

February 10, 2022

SANTA RITA, Guam - Crews from the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard Forces Micronesia | Sector Guam improve navigation safety in Kapingamarangi Atoll.

The Coast Guard Cutter Sequoia carried members from the Navy's Underwater Construction Team Two (UCT-2) to widen the shoal channel from December 4-8, 2021, which had narrowed due to marine overgrowth.

In close coordination with FSM National Government, Pohnpei State, and Kapingamarangi Atoll leaders, the Coast Guard/Navy team used controlled explosive dredging techniques. The targeted area for removal was roughly 10,000 square-feet and took approximately 6,500 pounds of explosives to clear over the course of 4 days.

"I am proud of the efforts of our crew and the Navy's UCT-2 crew in completing this challenging mission," said Cdr. Ryan Adams, commanding officer of the CGC Sequoia. "This channel widening will allow merchant vessels to more easily navigate the island, which will provide vital supplies to more than 300 residents who call Kapingamarangi home."

"The United States and the FSM share a special and unique bond. It is through this friendship that we were all able to accomplish this mission. The widening of the channel will now improve accessibility for commerce and emergency situations especially when responding to natural disasters," said U.S. Ambassador Carmen G. Cantor. "We know how important this channel is to the lives of the people of Kapingamarangi. As with all citizens of the FSM, we share an enduring partnership and look forward to continue collaborating going forward."

Additionally, crewmembers from the CGC Sequoia and the Navy's UCT-2 detachment delivered approximately 1,700 gallons of bottled drinking water to the residents of Kapingamarangi while deployed to the island. The water was provided by the Ayuda Foundation, a non-governmental organization based in Guam.

All water was delivered to a remote drop site under a no-contact policy due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

SPREP offers environmental assistance in the aftermath of the Tonga volcano and tsunami

SPREP

03 February 2022

The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) is deeply concerned about the impact of the Hunga Tonga - Hunga Ha'apai underwater volcano eruption, and tsunami, on the people of the Kingdom of Tonga.

In response, the Director General, Mr Kosi Latu, has assured that SPREP is standing by and ready to work with the Government of Tonga and partners to provide support, especially in dealing with the environmental impact of the natural disaster.

"First and foremost, we express our heartfelt sorrow at the loss of life as a result of the disaster," Mr Latu said. "As people of the Pacific, we are a close-knit community and we share the pain of the loss of lives and the destruction of property. Our thoughts are also with the people of the Kingdom of Tonga as they move to deal with COVID-19 so soon after the devastation of the tsunami and the volcano. These are very difficult times but we are standing by to provide assistance where we are needed."

The Government of Tonga report that about 84% of the population has been directly affected. Tonga's key challenges continue to be access to safe water, ash clearance, ensuring food security and dealing with COVID-19.

The Pacific environmental regional organisation is coordinating the wide range of assistance within its mandate and areas of expertise to help Tonga to assess the impacts of the eruption and tsunami on Tonga's environment and appropriate measures to restore it to support the resiliency and livelihoods of the people of Tonga. SPREP is working in partnership with the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) for united, coordinated support to Tonga.

Mr Latu noted that the volcanic eruption; impact of the ensuing tsunami and the volcanic ash it generated, has again highlighted the vulnerability of Tonga, the wider Pacific region and its people to natural disasters. The Pacific Islands include the top three countries with the highest disaster risk listed in the World Risk Index 2021 Report

with Tonga listed as third, Vanuatu as first and Solomon Islands second. The Report assesses the disaster risk for 181 countries which covers almost 99% of the world's total population. Of the top 15 countries with the highest disaster risk, Papua New Guinea is ranked as ninth most at disaster risk, and Fiji ranked fourteenth. (Insert link here)

"SPREP will engage with the Government of Tonga and all the relevant partners and stakeholders to assist where we can, as we try to remedy the damage done to the environment, which will have a direct impact on livelihoods," the Director General said.

Mr Latu and his Leadership team from the four priority areas of SPREP's work, Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management, Waste Management and Pollution Control, Climate Change and Environmental Monitoring and Governance, have been working to look at ways to provide support to Tonga during the recovery and rebuilding phase. Amongst the key environment impacts SPREP has identified from the initial assessments, are:

- Natural disasters – such as volcanic eruptions and tsunamis compound the impacts of other key human drivers of biodiversity loss such as invasive species, climate change and habitat destruction.
- Volcanic ash contains a complex mix of chemicals, including micronutrients that can trigger algae blooms and potentially cause changes to benthic composition in coral reefs. The release of these nutrients to water can be complex and there is potential to create favourable condition for nitrogen fixing species, and stimulation of harmful algal blooms such as cyanobacteria, which can present a human health issue.
- Negative impact on Tonga's protected areas such as the effect of flooding and debris generated by the tsunami – damage to vegetation, inshore fisheries, coral reefs, mangroves, etc. There is also concern that ash cloud – blocking out sunlight for extended periods – can lead to the creation of acid rain, potential fish-die offs and coral reef smothering.
- It is anticipated that there could be significant impact on the land and sea for the months to come, combined with the current human-induced environmental degradation and exacerbated by climate change and disease (COVID-19), increased pressure is highly likely on protected areas in terms of legal and illegal harvesting and overexploitation, especially of species highly valued as food sources and livelihoods.
- A loss of coral reefs would affect Tonga's ability to cope with rising waters and storm surges leading to accelerated erosion of the coastline. This is a concern for Tonga, where climate change is driving the sea level to rise by about 6 millimeters (0.2 inches) per year — double the global



average.

- Urgent and appropriate waste management processes are required for emergency response and recovery. Planning is critical to ensure prioritisation of cleanup resources and coordination is effective.

Concluded Mr Latu: "These are some of the key environmental concerns we have in the aftermath of the tsunami. We are also acutely aware that when it comes to the Pacific Ocean, the impact is not limited to Tonga. It affects all of us in the Pacific and so it is imperative we all work together to try and mitigate the damage done. The way forward is not going to be easy, especially with the added challenge of COVID-19, but we stand ready to do our part to help."

BID INVITATION for

Construction of Five (5) Lagoon Dispensaries (Romanum, Sapore, Ununo, Parem and Fonoton) Chuuk State, Federated States of Micronesia

NOTICE

The Project Management Office (PMO) of the Chuuk State Government is hereby issuing this Bid Invitation Notice to interested contractors for the Construction of five (5) Lagoon Dispensaries (Romanum, Sapore, Ununo, Parem and Fonoton) Chuuk State, Federated States of Micronesia. Interested contractors may bid on one or multiple Dispensaries.

The first Pre-Bid Meeting is scheduled for Friday February 25th at 10am at the PMO Offices in the Chuuk State Government Complex, Weno, Chuuk, with subsequent Meetings and Site Visits to be scheduled thereafter. For out of State contractors who wish to participate, a Zoom conference will be arranged, for which they are advised to send their names and email addresses to Mr. Sasha Savich, Project Manager, PMO at PMOChuukl@gmail.com no later than February 18th.

Further information on this ITB may be obtained by submitting a written request for details to Chuuk Project Management Office, P.O. Box 1659, Weno, Chuuk, FM 96942 at email address cited above, with the subject heading:

"Construction of five (5) Lagoon Dispensaries (Romanum, Sapore, Ununo, Parem and Fonoton) Chuuk State, Federated States of Micronesia"

The bidding documents, including the instructions to bidders, scope of work, bills of quantities, technical specifications, drawings, and conditions of contract may also be directly obtained from the DTCI's website: <https://www.tci.gov.fm/> or collected from the PMO.

The closing date for the submission of bids is Friday May 6th 2022 at 4.00pm

The Federated States of Micronesia extends its love to the people & Kingdom of Tonga by donating \$100,000 in emergency relief

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On February 14th, 2022, His Excellency David W. Panuelo—President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)—signed Congressional Act 22-79, which has since become Public Law 22-81, which appropriates the sum of \$100,000 from the General Fund of the FSM for the purpose of funding relief efforts in the Kingdom of Tonga due to the eruption of the Hunga-Tonga-Hunga-Ha'apai volcano and subsequent tsunami.

“In my capacity as President of the FSM,” President Panuelo said in a statement, “I would like to first extend my sincerest appreciation to

the Honorable Wesley W. Simina, Speaker of the FSM Congress, for Congress' continued leadership. It is a blessing to know that each and every one of my colleagues in our National Congress are committed and devoted to public service, and committed to doing the right thing.”

“To the People & Kingdom of Tonga,” President Panuelo continued, “The People & Government of the FSM extend to you peace, friendship, cooperation, and love in our common humanity this February 14th, 2022. You are with us in our hearts and minds, and we pray for your swift recovery. In the meantime, we extend to you our Blue Pacific solidarity and unity.”

I-94 RECORDS NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE FOR TEN (10) YEARS

Public Announcement No. 22-01
FSM Embassy to the United States

This is to inform citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) that the U.S Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) has decided to extend the availability of I-94 records on its website for 10 years if you entered the United States or its territories after April 30, 2013. Previously, I-94 records were available on the CBP website for only five (5) years.

The following link at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home#section> should direct you to the CBP website for more information and for retrieving I-94 records and information. If you have had issues in the past with retrieving documents due to the five-years rule, we encourage you to try again under this amendment for ten (10) years.

Citizens may continue to reach out to the Embassy at (202)223-4383 or one of the FSM Consulates in Portland, Hawaii, and Guam, should they need assistance with the retrieval process.

COVID-19 response: SPC deploys health experts to assist Pacific Island Countries

Pacific Community (SPC)

11 February 2022

Suva, Fiji – The Pacific Community (SPC) is deploying a team of health experts from the Public Health Division to support requests made by Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs), to assist with its COVID-19 preparedness and response.

Today a team of 5 health experts are travelling to Kiribati, while another 2 will travel to Tonga on Tuesday 15th February.

SPC is working in collaboration with the Ministry of Health Kiribati and Tonga. The team will be supporting Kiribati and Tonga in the areas of infection, prevention and control, laboratory, clinical services, biomedical engineering, coordination, and data management.

SPC acknowledges the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) for its support and collaborative efforts for the SPC deployment team to Kiribati.

Director for the Public Health Division, Dr Berlin Kafoa said that SPC has a long-standing partnership with DFAT and continues to work in the region to support and assist PICTs especially during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

“From the onset of the pandemic, SPC has been working remotely to support

the region. We are now able to respond to country requests by deploying our technical health experts.”

SPC is a member of the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway on COVID-19 (PHP-C), which provides regional leadership, direction, and coordination to enable the provision of medical and humanitarian assistance from regional and international organisations in a timely, safe, effective, and equitable manner. The Public Health Division is also a member of the World Health Organization (WHO)-led multi-agency Joint Incident Management Team (JIMT).

SPC also acknowledges its collaboration and partnership with other partner agencies and donors for all ongoing work in the region. Preparation to assist and deploy additional health experts to other countries such as the Solomon Islands is currently underway.

For Kiribati, as of 10th February, the cumulative total of COVID-19 recorded cases in the country was 2,235 cases which comprises of forty-two (42) imported cases and 2,193 community cases on South Tarawa, Betio, Buota, Butaritari and North Tarawa. For Tonga, as of 10 February 2022, a total of 66 COVID-19 positive cases were reported (including 64 active cases).

The FSM temporarily rescinds its withdrawal from the Pacific Islands Forum

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On February 11th, 2022, the Micronesian Presidents Summit (MPS) convened virtually. The leaders, including His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), having discussed specific substantive reforms of the Pacific Island Forum and its leadership, and on the basis of consensus, have agreed to temporarily

rescind their withdrawal from the Pacific Islands Forum, so as to materialize these reforms offered to the MPS by no later than June 2022.

The diplomatic note sent from the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Federated States of Micronesia to the Republic of Fiji on this matter may be found here: https://gov.fm/files/DFA-KAE-49-22_-_Pause_Denunciation.pdf

Clean and safe water through resilient and inclusive water facilities

UNDP

February 11, 2022

Chuuk-Access to public water supplies and sanitation services in Chuuk State of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is limited. The 2010 National Census reported that 7 percent of households obtained drinking water from the public water supply systems. The public water supply operated by the Chuuk Public Utility Corporation (CPUC) produces 2,500 cubic meters of water per day, of which 95 percent is sourced from deep wells.

To improve access to safe water and sanitation, CPUC with support from the UN Development Programme (UNDP) through the Japan-funded Enhancing Disaster and Climate Resilience (EDCR) project has implemented the rehabilitation of 14 primary deep wells and a water treatment plant and begun to use a portable water tanker. Despite unprecedented disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the project was successfully completed in August 2021, which has benefited 3,898 people, including 1,976 men and 1,922 women in the Chuuk State.

Safe and clean water for all

The late Kiki Stinnett, the former president of the Chuuk Women’s Council who was one of the key stakeholders for the project reflected on her experience and lessons learned from the project during the online interview conducted by the UNDP team in November 2021.

“Now we enjoy our comfort of having water and coming straight homes not worrying about collecting water, which was very time-consuming and arduous. Even if we have any issues with the deep wells, we have CPUC’s tanker that delivers water to us. This especially makes lives of mothers and care givers easier as they now can spend more time to do other things.”

Before the project, people of Chuuk State had to set a time, often during the night, to collect water and it took them 4-6 hours to fill in their water storages. This put women and girls who are often responsible for household water supply at increased risk of abuse and attack as they would make their way in the darkness from the water sources.

Having experienced three major droughts since 2016, the rehabilitation work on the deep wells and the water treatment plant as well as the water tanker provided with support from the project have proven to be timely in advance of the dry season.

Community ownership enhancing the sustainability of the project

CPUC in collaboration with other key stakeholders, including the Chuuk Women’s Council set up the Water Committee. The Committee has been conducting regular meetings to discuss on-going water projects and progress on various water supply issues. Ms. Stinnett emphasized that community ownership is a key to ensuring the sustainability of the project.

“We need capacity building for our people to keep up with the maintenance and the operations of the deep wells and other resources. We also need support for other islands to improve their existing resources because at the end of the day, the community takes care of the resources invested. We are Small Islands Nations with limited resources. We have to figure out among ourselves by being open-minded and willing to share our resources with others.”

Increased access to clean and safe water through resilient and inclusive water facilities is vital for community resilience in Chuuk State. Although the project was completed, the Chuuk community will continue to work from within and with other partners to keep this work going.



Rehabilitated deep well and water tanker in the Chuuk State (Photo: CPUC)

Kevin Petrini, Deputy Resident Representative and Country Manager of the UNDP Pacific Office in the Federated States of Micronesia appreciated the efforts made by CPUC which implemented the rehabilitation of the deep wells and the water treatment plant. He further added that such intervention will contribute to improving water resources particularly during emergency situations in Chuuk State, which is vulnerable to the effects of droughts and flooding.

The UNDP EDCR project in FSM, which is supported by the Government of Japan in partnership with the Government of FSM was initiated in March 2019. The overall project goal is to effectively address the consequences of, and responses to, geo-physical and climate-related hazards to protect lives, sustain livelihoods, preserve the environment, and safeguard the economy. 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.

BID INVITATION

for

Federated States of Micronesia, Professional Consulting Service for the Design of The Teaching Clinic, College of Micronesia, Pohnpei Campus

NOTICE

The Program Management Unit (PMU) of the Department of Transportation, Communications & Infrastructure (DTC&I), National Government of the Federated States of Micronesia is hereby issuing this Bid Invitation Notice to qualified consultants for the **Federated States of Micronesia, Professional Consulting Service for the Design of the Teaching Clinic, College of Micronesia, Pohnpei Campus.**

Further information on this ITB may be obtained by submitting a written request for details to Mr. Shankarah Lessey, Contract Specialist, DTC&I, P.O. Box PS-2, Palikir, Pohnpei, FM 96941 at email shankarah.lessey@gmail.com with the subject heading:

"Federated States of Micronesia, Professional Consulting Service for the Design of the Teaching Clinic, College of Micronesia, Pohnpei Campus"

The bidding documents, including the instructions to bidders, scope of work and conditions of contract may also be directly obtained from the Department's website: <https://www.tci.gov.fml> in its PMU section.

The closing date for the submission of bids is **Friday 25th March 2022** at midnight local Pohnpei Time.



Water treatment plants rehabilitated with support from the UNDP EDCR project (Photo: CPUC)

FAO convenes a global dialogue to update on latest initiatives

Tonga volcanic eruption and tsunami throws the vulnerability of the countries into sharp relief as they struggle to reach Sustainable Development Goals

FAO

02/02/2022

Rome - The massive volcanic eruption and tsunami in Tonga last month, followed by last week's earthquake and aftershocks, have highlighted the vulnerability of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), a global meeting focused on the countries and convened by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has heard.

In opening remarks at the Global SIDS Solutions Dialogue, FAO's Chief Economist, Máximo Torero Cullen, underscored "the severe challenge that SIDS face in moving towards the (UN's) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" and the pressing need to build the resilience of these states to climate change, natural disasters and other external shocks including the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We have therefore made a concerted decision to prioritize activities for these countries and are working closely with SIDS networks and constituencies to implement them", Torero Cullen said.

"FAO is supporting SIDS to build back better and achieve better production, better nutrition, better environment and a better life," which are the basis of FAO's new strategic framework "to ensure more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems, thereby combating hunger, malnutrition, poverty and inequality."

The Global SIDS Solutions Dialogue was jointly organized by the FAO Liaison Offices in Brussels, Geneva and New York and the FAO Office of SIDS, Least Developed Countries and Landlocked Developing Countries. The event sought to inform governments and development partners of the outcomes of a SIDS Solutions Forum held in Fiji last August. The Dialogue is set to kick-off a series of thematic events on transformation of food systems in SIDS, throughout the next two years.

To achieve recovery from COVID-19 and reach the SDGs, Torero Cullen stressed the importance of identifying homegrown solutions and harnessing innovation using digitalization as a force multiplier to

accelerate the process.

With around 65 million inhabitants, SIDS account for only 1 percent of CO2 emissions and yet are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, posing an existential threat. Fisheries, tourism and agriculture contribute significantly to their economy, sectors whose vulnerability and fragility is making it more challenging for them to produce sufficient food to meet their populations' needs.

SIDS in the Caribbean, the Pacific and many small islands in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans and the South China Sea depend on food imports, with 50 percent of SIDS importing more than 80 percent of their food and nearly all SIDS importing 60 percent of their food. As such, SIDS are particularly affected by disruptions in supply chains and international trade, including flight cancellations, slowdowns in the shipping industry and logistics bottlenecks.

The Forum last August launched the SIDS Solutions Platform as a uniquely innovative intra and interregional knowledge exchange platform to incubate, promote, scale up and replicate locally grown ideas. These will accelerate the achievement of agriculture, food, nutrition, environment and health related SDGs in SIDS; but also allow SIDS to replicate good practices from other countries.

Among the participants in this week's dialogue were: Thilmeeza Hussain, Permanent Representative of Maldives to the UN and Special Envoy of the President of the General Assembly; George Rebelo Chikoti, Secretary-General, Organization for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS); Walton A Webson, Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Nations and Chair of the Alliance of the Small Island Developing States (AOSIS); Nazhat Shameem Khan, Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations in Geneva, Co-host of the SIDS Solution Forum; along with representatives of the Republic of Barbados, the European Commission, the Europe-Africa-Caribbean Pacific Liaison Committee, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and the International Telecommunication Union.

Blue Pacific priorities to the fore at France Summit

Pacific Islands Forum

Feb 11th, 2022

Brest, France- Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General Henry Puna has called on all States to play their part when it comes to maintaining the health of the ocean. SG Puna made the plea as he attended the One Ocean Summit conference in Brest, France, also attending in his capacity as the Pacific Ocean Commissioner.

Commissioner Puna drew attention to the priorities of the Blue Pacific including the importance of finalizing and adopting the agreement for marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdictions commonly known as BBNJ. In addition, he outlined the ground-breaking Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones in the face of Climate Change-related Sea-level rise, recently adopted by Forum Leaders.

Commissioner Puna also stated "the nature of the ocean implies that any action in your own waters can have transboundary impacts on other countries' and on our global commons. This is particularly true with marine pollution, including radioactive discharge."

He reminded the audience of the global impact of the world's largest undersea volcanic eruption in centuries, the Hunga Ha'apai-Hunga Tonga event, on January 15, 2022.

"From Tonga, the underwater eruption was felt thousands of miles away on the shores of Japan, Peru, and the United States' Pacific Coast. This disaster reminds us just how interconnected we all are uniquely, inextricably, with the ocean," he said.

Speaking at the Governance Workshop held during the summit convened by

French President Emmanuel Macron, Commissioner Puna shared the Pacific Islands Forum's commitment to ocean governance and other Pacific priorities.

Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) "must have adequate teeth," he said. "It must break from the status quo of fragmented governance. Coordination, cooperation and coherence must mean that we all play our part, and that proper accountability is implemented."

Commissioner Puna also addressed the high-level summit on Friday where he spoke on the ground-breaking Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones in the face of Climate Change-related Sea-level rise that was adopted by Forum Leaders.

The Declaration addresses an issue at the heart of Pacific countries and other countries, including Small Island Developing States and low-lying States. It provides certainty in relation to their maritime zones and the entitlements under UNCLOS in relation to our EEZ boundaries and continental shelf, in the face of shifting tides and diminishing coastlines.

Amongst other Pacific priorities he raised - the existential threat of climate change, and the importance of the oceans-climate nexus.

President Macron has organized the One Planet Summit dedicated to the ocean to mobilise the international community and take tangible action to mitigate pressures on the ocean. The three-day summit was held in the context of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union, with the support of the United Nations.



SG Puna at the One Ocean Summit with the US Presidents Special Envoy on Climate, John Kerry. CREDIT: OPOC

The Global Greengrants Fund (GGF) Continues to Support Local Community Sustainable Development Efforts

Micronesia Conservation Trust

February 15, 2022

Pohnpei—Over 30 small grants of approximately \$5,000 each have been provided to Pacific communities in GGF's 2021-2022 Fiscal Year. These include nine (9) rapid response grants to local communities in Tonga to help with their recovery efforts after the devastating volcano eruption last month. They also include five (5) grants to community organizations in Micronesia.

The Senpehn Youth Organization is receiving a grant of \$5,000 to relocate and/or abolish an illegal dumpsite in Section 4 of Madolenihmw Municipality. This will include removal of all rubbish from the illegal dumpsite Madolenihmw to the Pohnpei dumpsite in Dekehtik, awareness raising activities, and installment of signs to stop people from bringing their trash to the illegal dumpsite.

The Laudato Si Club at Xavier Micronesia High School in Chuuk has been awarded a \$5,000 grant for a food security project. This will include construction of a hydroponic nursery where students can grow vegetables for consumption, support for the club's monthly activities, and purchase of training material for local youths in Chuuk.

The Kipar Poail Pwoaipwoai Pwok Rohnkitti Community Organization (K3PR) also received \$5,000 for a water security project. This grant will be used to build a fence around the water holding

tank in the community to ensure water security for these four communities in Kitti Municipality.

The Enipein Ecotourism Inc. received a \$5,000 grant to help with solid waste management and a community beautification project. The project will engage the unemployed people of Enipein to clean up litter/rubbish in their yards, roadsides and shorelines, as well as community awareness on the importance of sanitation and conservation. The Enipein Ecotourism Inc. will work closely with the Enipein Youth Organization Inc. to implement this program.

And finally, the Pohnpei Women Empowerment Association Inc (PWEA Inc) has been awarded a \$5,000 grant for a water security project. The project will allow the group to purchase piping and other materials to connect water tanks, which have been purchased but not hooked up properly. This project will focus on families with widowed women and people living with disabilities.

GGF has been providing grants to Micronesia and the wider Pacific for over 20 years. They have invested over \$500,000 in Micronesia. If your community has a project concept, please contact William Kostka at director@ourmicronesia.org. Mr. Kostka helps communities in Micronesia develop their grant proposals and reports to GGF. He is currently the interim Coordinator for the GGF Pacific Board of Advisors. The next round of GGF grants is March 2022.

Guardian Patrol Boat training commences

FSM Maritime Surveillance Advisers

On January 31 2022, nineteen officers of the Division of Border Control and Maritime Surveillance, led by LCDR Paulino Yangitesmal commenced an intensive six weeks of training in preparation for the formal handover of the first Guardian Class patrol boat on March 11 2022.

The training will cover all of the new systems they will be required to master in order to safely operate the vessel and will be delivered in the classroom as well as practical hands-on operations. For the seaman they will learn to master the highly capable stern launched sea boat that will significantly improve SAR capabilities.

On the first day they were also given the opportunity to visit the first of FSM's Guardian Class patrol boats, NUSHIP Tosiwo Nakayama. All of the commissioning crew were impressed with the new vessel and were struck by how much larger it was compared to the old patrol boats. AB Fiona Halverson and AB Aileen Lebehn were particularly impressed with the crew accommodation. AB Halverson stated 'being a female officer on the old patrol boats was difficult as we had to share accommodations with our male colleagues, to have our own female cabin with an ensuite bathroom is absolutely fantastic. I encourage more women to apply to join the seagoing component of FSM's frontline maritime surveillance capability'.

The impact of foreign goods dependence

By Jayleen B. Joel
COM-FSM Student Essay

Upon the arrival of Europeans in Micronesia, islanders were introduced to foreign goods. Overtime, Micronesians grew very fond of these convenient goods. They became so overly dependent on these products that their own local produce of the land became less appealing. In 1996, the value of imports in Micronesia was \$8.9 million, but six years later, in 1972, the value of imports tripled, rising to \$26.3 million (Hezel, 1973). The more modernized the islands become, the more reliant people became of the foreign goods. In 2018, the value of imports in the region accelerated to \$122 million ("Micronesia", n.d.). Reliance on foreign goods has become a serious issue in Micronesia because it has altered many aspects of the Micronesian society.

Micronesians' dependency on foreign or imported goods (especially cash) has led to the breakdown of the traditional Micronesian family structure. Formerly, Micronesians lived in extended families that could have a depth of three or four generations (Hezel, 2001). It was preferable to live in extended family units because it gave the family access to more workers. The more members a family had, the more productive it was in obtaining the necessary resources it needed from the land and sea. It used to be manageable for a multi-generational family to live off the land and sea, but today, it has become almost impossible for them to live off of money-paying jobs. The nuclearization of the extended family then set the stage for several social issues.

Due to increased reliance on foreign means, the traditional view on land began to dissipate. Land, which used to be the way of life and source of life, lost its value to money.

Last but not the least, reliance on foreign goods brought about a wide range of health implications in Micronesia. Starting in the 1960s, variety of imported goods including convenient commodities like cars became readily available in Micronesia, and such conveniences "made it possible for people to dispense with much of the bodily exercise that had always been such an integral part of island life" as reported by Hezel (2020). An almost sedentary lifestyle became the norm in Micronesia, adding to the growing number of social issues because more people preferred the more prestigious and convenient products-imported

goods. The change in dependence from the more physically active lifestyle to the more sedentary gave way to many health vulnerabilities, most of which are non-communicable diseases, especially heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes. al., 2019). The study noted that the more traditional a people's lifestyle is, the healthier they are. The dependency on store-bought goods has rendered Micronesians victims of chronic diseases.

To determine whether reliance on foreign goods is indeed an issue in Micronesia, two set of survey was administered, targeting 60 participants of three different age groups in the FSM (all residing on the island of Pohnpei)—youths in-between ages 19-23, middle adults aged 25-39, and older adults within the age range of 40-60. The survey targeted 20 youths, 20 adults, and 20 elders. In the questionnaire, participants were asked to pick which on the listed items they thought was the most serious issue in the FSM: 1. Breakdown in the family; 2. Reliance on foreign goods; 3. Political corruption; 4. Lack of educational opportunities; 5. Poor health services and facilities; 6. Lack of jobs; or they were asked to indicate on a space provided if there were other serious problems.

The results from both sets of survey showed 45 people from all the three age ranges chose reliance on foreign goods to be the most serious problem in the FSM. Although the youngest group scored lowest in choosing reliance on foreign goods as a serious issue, the two older aged groups unanimously picked this choice as the most serious issue. It was then concluded that because elders lived a more traditional lifestyle than youths and adults, they were more aware of the negative impacts of modernization and therefore, considered reliance on foreign goods to be a serious issue. Youths viewed it as an ordinary way of life given that they were born and raised in this modern lifestyle. Interestingly, the majority of these participants believed that the loss of traditional culture is one reason that led to this issue. While all of them believed that this problem can be fixed, they had different answers on who could fix the problem. While the writer agrees that there needs to be more study on the matter, she convinced that reliance on foreign goods is an eminent issue. The percentage retrieved was significant enough to show that reliance of foreign goods is a serious issue in the region.

Secretary Blinken announces President Biden to host forthcoming Pacific Island Conference of Leaders in Honolulu

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On February 12th, 2022, His Excellency David W. Panuelo—President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)—virtually met with the Honorable Antony J. Blinken, Secretary of State of the United States of America, the Honorable Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, Acting Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji, and other Pacific Island Leaders, to discuss issues of mutual interest, such as tackling the Climate Change crisis, strengthening democratic principles and norms, and otherwise advancing a Free & Open Indo-Pacific.

Acting Prime Minister Sayed-Khaiyum opened the meeting, describing Fiji's broad appreciation for the U.S. re-engaging with Pacific Island Countries. Among other items, the Acting Prime Minister requested the return of the U.S. Peace Corps to Fiji and Pacific Island Countries.

Secretary Blinken spoke next, speaking at length about the U.S. having common interests, as well as values, with Pacific Island Countries, such as the preservation of a Free & Open Indo-Pacific and tackling the Climate Change crisis which, President Panuelo noted, was rightly described as “literally an existential issue.” The Secretary spoke of the United States' support for the Pacific Islands Forum as a powerful vehicle for Pacific nations to speak with one voice, and described in detail how the United States seeks to play a more consistent and larger role within the Pacific.

President Panuelo spoke next, and his remarks will by extension constitute the bulk of this release. After sharing solidarity with the Kingdom of Tonga (a sentiment shared unanimously by all attending parties), President Panuelo first spoke on the issue of Climate Change. “In the interest of brevity, I will get right to the point. The issues facing the Federated States of Micronesia are well-known, and so are the solutions. Climate Change remains the greatest existential threat facing our Nation and the Indo-Pacific region. It represents a national security threat to our Nation, and our citizens lives and livelihoods. What Micronesia needs to see our American allies do is to successfully pass the original multi-trillion-dollar Build Back Better legislation, as promised to the global community at COP26. Genuine American leadership on tackling Climate Change in this manner is essential towards convincing Australia, India, China, and other countries that solving this matter of life and death is also in our collective economic and social interest. Passing that legislation shows the leadership of speaking through actions, not words,” President Panuelo said.

“Climate Change can only be defeated by a global community dedicated to fairness, equality, democracy, and the rule of law. For our first and foremost ally, the United States, that might include passing your proposed Freedom to Vote Act and strengthening democratic participation at home. For Micronesia, that might include passing our proposed Freedom of Information Act so that our

citizens know what their Government is doing on their behalf. For our entire region, that absolutely must mean the advancement of a Free & Open Indo-Pacific,” President Panuelo continued.

The President then defined his interpretation of what a Free & Open Indo-Pacific means, saying “A Free & Open Indo-Pacific means that peace, security, stability, and freedom of navigation in the Pacific Ocean is inseparable from peace, security, stability, and freedom of navigation in the Indian Ocean. Crucially, this freedom and openness is the result of the international rules-based order and the rule of law.”

Moving onwards to the Compact of Free Association, President Panuelo said “Any law or group of laws, taken in isolation, run the risk of amounting to just words on paper, no matter how noble their intent. Those laws must be backed by both tangible and intangible things, and the actions of people who believe in them and enforce them. It is for this reason, as well as the general prosperity of our people, that the Federated States of Micronesia seeks the timely conclusion on the negotiations of our Compact of Free Association, and with the aim that our Enduring Partnership be so much the envy of other Indo-Pacific countries that they, too, will purposefully seek to strengthen their relations with the People & Government of the United States of America.”

President Panuelo concluded his remarks

by saying “Welcome, Secretary Blinken, to the Blue Pacific Continent. I solicit your support that today's meeting be the beginning of an increase in engagement from the United States of America to all Pacific Island Countries. To show our solidarity, I announce today that the Federated States of Micronesia, following consultations among Leaders of the Micronesian Presidents' Summit, and on the basis of consensus, temporarily rescinds the withdrawal by the Federated States of Micronesia from the PIF Agreement in order to take a ‘pause’ on its withdrawal from the PIF from being effective, and to allow for specific substantive reforms of the PIF leadership to materialize by June 2022 and no later.”

The other Pacific Island Countries attending the meeting spoke at length about mutually shared challenges, such as the Climate Change crisis, and public health, economic health, and ocean issues.

Secretary Blinken provided closing remarks, announcing that the U.S. Government is looking forward for U.S. President Joseph R. Biden Jr. to host the forthcoming Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders, of which President Panuelo is the Chair, to occur in-person in Honolulu, Hawaii, and with the intent for that meeting to continue the conversation at the highest level, and follow-up on many of the ideas raised in the discussion during the February 12th meeting.

Yasuda Foundation donates \$15,000 to Palau International Coral Reef Center

Palau International Coral Reef Center

The Palau International Coral Reef Center has received a generous \$15,000 donation from the Yasuda Foundation! The donation was presented by Mr. Takao Yasuda alongside President Surangel Whipps, Jr., former President Tommy Remengesau Jr., Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment Steven Victor, former Minister of Finance Elbuchel Sadang and PICRC's

Chief Executive Officer Dr. Yimnang Golbuu.

“We want to express our utmost gratitude for this extremely generous donation” said Dr. Golbuu, CEO of PICRC. “With the impact of COVID-19 on the Center's finances, this donation comes at a critical time and will help the Center maintain its high quality and impactful research and education programs to support the stewardship of Palau's ocean resources.”



Pohnpei Catholic School Students visit FSM Supreme Court

The FSM Supreme Court

On February 3, 2022

Palikir Pohnpei - The FSM Supreme Court received 6 senior students from Pohnpei Catholic School (PCS) as part of the school's "Career Day". These students are JJ Weilbacher, Tiara Rachel Lebehn, Maileen Benjamin, Iverson Vince Werthog, Jovan Kilang Oliver Irons, and M-Jay Saimon.

and understand the court system and brief history of the court, and functions of each divisions within the court. The students concluded the day with a tour of the courtroom. Without any proceeding schedule on that day, the students were able to access to restricted areas within that courtroom, and this include the judge's bench, designated areas for the parties involved in a proceeding, and areas for the court's staffs.

During the whole day visit, the students were given an opportunity and allocated time to meet with the Associate Justice of the FSM Supreme Court the Hon. Dennis Belcourt, Director of Court Administration Mrs. Emeliana J. Musrasrik-Carl, and the Court's division heads and staffs. During each meetings, students had an opportunity to discuss

The Supreme Court would like to express its sincerest appreciation for the schools and especially the students that have chosen the court as an institution for their 2022 Career Day. The Supreme Court hopes that the visit would be able to assist the students for their future career.

PICRC researchers record life on Palau's ocean floor using deep-sea camera systems

Palau International Coral Reef Center

Last November, Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC) Researchers embarked on a new project to explore Palau's deep-sea environment! Over the course of five days, the team deployed two deep-sea camera systems to document the strange and exciting life forms that inhabit our ocean floor.



the cameras automatically returned to the surface.

The Research team included Dr. Louw Claassens, Victor Nestor and Adrian Ililau from the Center's Research department, who were accompanied by Dr. Jonatha Giddens, chief scientist of the National Geographic Society's Exploration Technology Lab's deep-sea research. The project was funded with a grant from the National Geographic Society.

The team identified several known species in the hours of footage, including cutthroat eels and giant Chaceoncrabs. The identities of some creatures are still unknown and will require closer analysis to determine.

"What makes the deep ocean so fascinating is that it's still largely unexplored," said Dr. Louw Claassens, PICRC's Science Officer. "So even the deep ocean areas in our own backyard are filled with unexpected discoveries!"

To reach the ocean floor, which lies far beyond the reach of scuba divers, the team used two deep-sea camera systems on loan from the Exploration Technology Lab. These autonomous cameras sank hundreds meters to the ocean floor and captured 4K footage of deep-sea marine life. After recording three hours of video,

The team originally planned to use the cameras to survey a seamount in the Palau National Marine Sanctuary (PNMS). However, because of scheduling conflicts, the team opted to deploy the cameras offshore of Airai. For the research team, this footage offers a

Upcoming price movements due to consistently upward trend in oil prices since May 2021

Vital FSM

Pohnpei, FSM- The Vital FSM Petroleum Corporation ("Vital") takes this opportunity to advise its valued customers of three scheduled price movements in the coming months. Due to the consistently upward trend in global oil prices since May 2021, wholesale prices for unleaded gasoline (ULP), diesel (ADO), and kerosene (DPK) for FSM customers are now confirmed to move:

- By +\$0.15 per gallon on Monday, February 21, 2022;
- By +\$0.15 per gallon on Monday, March 21, 2022; and
- By +\$0.10 per gallon on Wednesday, April 20, 2022.

Vital analysts note that in the past eight months, global oil prices have been consistently on the rise, and that FSM prices followed the same upward trend by moving a total of +\$0.75 in 2021.

The last price increase in the country went into effect in September 2021, bringing the national average for a gallon of gasoline to \$4.65, and \$5.45 for a gallon of diesel.

Vital Chief Financial Officer Ms. Cherish Mendiola commented, "The data clearly shows that the MOPS price is above pre-COVID levels and continues to rise. You can see proof of the upward trend in places like Guam, where motorists have seen the price of gas jump forty-five cents per gallon since January 5, 2022. Thankfully, the stabilizing mechanism in our pricing framework has deferred any further price movements for the country since September," Mendiola continued, "and FSM motorists are paying retail prices that are up to sixty cents lower than retail prices in Guam. This is great for FSM motorists but realistically speaking, wholesale prices are no longer sustainable and will need to increase to meet the rising costs."



Figure 1: As of February 3, 2022, retail prices in the FSM range from as low as \$4.50 in Pohnpei (Panuelo's Gas Station), \$4.65 in Yap (YCA, Coco Tree Service Center), \$4.70 in Chuuk (K&I), to \$4.75 in Kosrae (Senny's Gas Station.) Retail prices in other Micronesian islands are currently at \$5.19 in Guam (Mobil); \$5.37 in Palau (Belechel M-Dock Gas Station); and \$5.90 on Majuro (Ace's One Stop).

glimpse of what might be discovered in the Sanctuary's deep waters.

continued Dr. Claassens. "We believe there's much more left to discover."

"We have high hopes to continue studying Palau's deep ocean, especially unexplored areas of the PNMS"

For now, these videos serve as some of our first glimpses into Palau's mysterious deep ocean!