

FSM resumes repatriation in April Quarantine in Guam reduced to five days

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—The COVID-19 Task Force of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) has suggested the following dates for repatriation flights in the month of April, which have been approved by His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the FSM.

For the State of Yap, the next repatriation flight will occur on April 6th. (*Editor's note: On March 28, Yap officials notified the national government that the State decided to delay the planned repatriation date as they needed "time to regroup and prepare to resume repatriation next month."*)

For the State of Kosrae, the next repatriation flights will occur on April 4th and April 18th.

For the State of Pohnpei, a special flight from the Republic of Fiji for essential

personnel will occur on April 6th. Regular repatriation flights from the U.S. Territory of Guam will occur on April 16th and April 23rd.

For the State of Chuuk, the next repatriation flights will occur on April 11th and April 25th.

The FSM COVID-19 Task Force has recommended that the number of days of quarantine in Guam be reduced to five (5) days. This will continue to allow for multiple PCR-based COVID-19 tests to occur, including upon arrival at the designated quarantine facility, and prior to departure.

The FSM COVID-19 Task Force has recommended that quarantine in designated State Government facilities be reduced to three (3) days, combined with restriction of movement and home quarantine, since the Omicron situation has improved



US Coast Guard carries first group of repatriated FSM residents in May of 2021
 Photo by Pohnpei Surf Club

dramatically.

Repatriation dates for the month of May and beyond will be consistent with the regular

schedule from international commercial carriers. It remains the intention of the FSM National Government to fully open the Nation's borders sometime in August, 2022.

Solomon again arrested and charged with Human Trafficking—this time by the National government



Photo courtesy of the Office of the President

By Bill Jaynes
 The Kaselehlie Press

March 26, 2022

FSM—On March 15 at approximately 11:00 PM, FSM National Police Officers arrested Rob Solomon to await an initial and bail hearing on five charges related to human trafficking. On the morning of March 16, FSM Department of Justice Prosecutors filed the criminal information and affidavit of probable cause at the FSM Supreme

Court (CC 2022-500). The charges are related to events that allegedly occurred on January 12 and January 30 of this year.

At the time of those alleged events, Solomon was out of jail on bail on similar Pohnpei State charges that prosecutors filed in December. Solomon's bail provisions required that he not contact or be within close proximity of the alleged victims in those cases. But according to a

Pohnpei prosecutor, the State received an affidavit from one of the victims, saying that Solomon had been "contacting (her) and having sexual intercourse on several occasions." On March 21, the prosecutor filed a motion for revocation of bail and on March 22, the Pohnpei State Supreme Court agreed and revoked the bail. The Court ordered that Solomon be returned

[Click here for continuation](#)

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POPA finds lax controls of Nett Municipality's cash receipts and disbursements

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

March 27, 2022

Nett, Pohnpei—A performance audit on the Nett Municipality's cash receipts and disbursements for fiscal years 2019 and 2020 has shown serious deficiencies. The goals of the audit were to ensure that all cash received was properly receipted, recorded, accounted for and deposited on a timely basis as received. Auditors also reviewed cash disbursements for proper approvals, proper recording, and accounting according to the laws and regulations.

Due to the unavailability of supporting records and source documents, auditors could not verify whether \$65,400 of the collections was deposited at the bank, and they also could not confirm if certain payments were legitimate. The Pohnpei Office of the Public Auditor (POPA) has referred those matters to its Compliance Investigation Division for further investigation, which has already begun.

In its response, and according to a hand written note by one of the auditors, the responding Nett District government official asked POPA to remove from the report the \$65,400 due to the location of the relevant documents for the unaccounted funds. POPA chose not to do so, saying in the report that they did not review the receipts that were "conveniently found subsequent to the audit conference thus cannot "waive", remove, or change the \$65,400 the auditors were not able to verify whether deposited to the bank. However, the amount may change or declared resolved pending the investigation by POPA CID already underway."

The first finding of the audit was that "significant internal control weaknesses resulted in missing collections and non-compliance with NDG (Nett District Government) Financial Management Regulations."

Auditors wrote that they discovered that NDG used generic cash receipts, which were not always issued in numerical sequence or from the same batch, which made it difficult to accurately determine the completeness of total collections. They reported that just the same, they were able to estimate that NDG's gross receipts for both fiscal years totaled \$1,664,019. NDG could only provide copies of receipts and records of deposits for \$321,261 or 19 percent of the total collections. Those records showed undeposited collections, late deposits and receipts issued, and deposits made outside of normal sequence.

As examples auditors reported that:

- Of the 62 deposits made to the NDG checking account during the period audited, the Treasury Office could only provide records for 10 of the deposits;
- They found several deposits that were not recorded in the NDG's books;
- They noted late deposits of up to over a month involving large amounts of collections. Rarely did NDG have daily totals of collections below \$100, and,
- The found collections that were receipted and/or recorded after deposits were made.

Auditors also pointed out that NDG did not properly segregate financial duties, monthly bank reconciliations were not performed, and there was a lack of independent review and monitoring.

The second and final finding was that there were "deficient controls and lack of documentation for disbursements".

Auditors reported that though they selected 108 samples for review of non-payroll disbursements, because of unavailability of supporting documents they were only able to review 60 of the selected transactions.

They found that:

- Seven of the 60 disbursement transactions totaling \$5,665 contained no evidence of the allottee's approval as required under NDG's financial management regulations;
- Purchases of three vehicles were not supported with evidence justifying the selected vendor;
- There was a disbursement of \$15,000 for payment of "life insurance" benefit to surviving family members of a former employee. Though the expense was "authorized", auditors said it seemed unusual. (The Executive Summary of the audit postulated that the Nett government had not paid that employee's life insurance payments and so paid the benefit themselves.);
- Supporting documents of \$7,832 and \$5,000 to a local business were not provided so auditors could not verify the justification for the payments;
- Control safeguards for purchasing of vehicle fuel seemed loose or lacking. "For example, pre-approved slips and purchase orders are not used even though any employee can obtain fuel."

Auditors also found disbursement lacking required signatures, justifications or supporting documents.

For payroll related disbursements, auditors select four payroll periods for review. They found that numerous documents and records supporting payroll activities could not be located. "For example, of the 44 payroll transactions in pay period number 24, only nine were found. This was the same for the other payroll periods, thus our review was limited to available records. For these, we

found no significant issues except for the following:

- "An employee received two paychecks in payroll period number 11 of fiscal year 2019, totaling \$770. Another employee received two paychecks in payroll period number one of fiscal year 2020, with combined total \$636; and
- Calculation of income taxes for certain salaries was incorrect."



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Bill Jaynes
Managing Editor

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

April 13, 2022

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

Monday, April 11, 2022

Pohnpei State commemorates 2022 World Water Day with children conducting water quality assessment

UNICEF

March 25, 2022

Pohnpei – On March 22, the Pohnpei State Department of Education (PDOE) and College of Micronesia (COM’s Center for Entrepreneurship) in partnership with UNICEF joined the rest of the world to celebrate the 2022 World Water Day at the Kolonia and China Friendship Center. This year’s event which was graced by Mr. Kapilly Capelle, Chief of Staff of Pohnpei State Government on behalf of the Governor was under the theme “Ground Water: Making the Invisible Visible”. In his welcome and keynote address, Mr. Capelle underscored the need to appreciate and value the interconnectedness of the world as protecting one part will go a long way to securing our collective existence. “Our island is our world. Each part of our world is connected to the other hence by protecting one part; we are protecting its effect on all the other parts. By ignoring one part, we are damaging all the world upon which our lives depend.”

Mr. Francisco Celestine, Ag. Director of Environmental Protection Agency, Pohnpei also reiterated the importance



of water in preserving life on earth. He reminded, “Water is life; and our lives and that of all other living things on our island depend on it.”

In raising public awareness about the event, school children embarked on float from Governor’s Office Building to the Kolonia and China Friendship Center. They held placards with relevant inscriptions on importance of water; sang songs; and engaged in poetry slam contests.

Prior to the WWD event on March 22, College of Micronesia’s (COM) Center for Entrepreneurship students conducted water quality test involving nine (9) schools to highlight the importance of clean water consumption. COM interns, along with the teachers and students of 7th and 8th grade ran the water testing experiment to show the difference in quality of treated

and untreated water – making the invisible (impurities) visible. Each school collected sample water from their water sources in their school with a hydrogen sulfate (testing kit) and monitored their water samples for three (3) days. Subsequently, the schools presented the results of their water quality test activity at the event and the students and other members of the crowd were amazed at the major difference in the water qualities. Mrs. Cecilia U. Martin, Principal, Rohi Elementary said, “I really like this water quality testing activity; it gives me an idea that everyone including students are responsible to make sure that our water is safe for drinking”.

High School Students in Pohnpei participated in the event by setting up information booths, which displayed the quality of the water sources available at their school and accompanied it with poetry

slam contest. There were 10 submissions in the poetry slam highlighting importance of water. Among the 10 contestants, four students went to the final stage of contest. The four contestants presented their emotional poetry slams at the event, and the winner was Shawn Michael Edwin, a student from our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management (DECCEM) also joined in the WWD celebration by establishing information booths together with entertaining and educational games which gave out souvenirs to participants.

In all, over 200 people including students participated in the 2022 World Water Day celebrations in Pohnpei State.



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The College of Micronesia-FSM (COM-FSM) Board of Regents is launching a new search for President of the College. The President serves as the chief executive officer of COM-FSM and as the official advisor to and executive agent of the Board of Regents.

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Position Profile: The President is appointed by the Board of Regents to serve as the chief executive officer of the College of Micronesia-FSM (COM-FSM) and as the official advisor to and executive agent of the Board of Regents. The President is a non-voting ex officio member of the Board and attends all Board meetings. The President, as educational and administrative head of the college, devotes her/his full time to exercising a general superintendence over all affairs of the institution and brings such matters to the attention of the Board as are appropriate to keep the Board fully informed in discharging its policy-making responsibilities. The President, on behalf of the Regents, performs all acts and executes all documents to make effective the actions of the Board.

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COVID, Ukraine, and FSM-Japan Kizuna at Emperor's birthday celebration

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

March 18, 2022

Pohnpei, FSM—On the evening of March 8, Ambassador Michigami Hisashi and the staff of the Embassy of Japan to the FSM hosted a reception to celebrate the birthday of Japan's Emperor Naruhito, who turned 62 on February 20. The birthday of the Emperor is an annual national holiday in Japan and plays an important part of Japanese culture and tradition. FSM President David Panuelo and other national and state officials attended the reception as did members of the diplomatic corps, Japanese residents of Pohnpei, and other invited officials.

Ambassador Michigami first gave a brief history of relationships between the FSM before moving on to current relations and other broad topics. "Now, in the 21st century, I am quite glad that HE President Panuelo and a lot of officials and citizens show gratitude to the long years of assistance from Japan; airport, seaports, ships, major roads, electricity, schools, medical facilities, protection of the environment, disaster management. We are not boasting of how many or how much those projects are. We feel glad we have had some contribution to the people of the FSM," he said.

The Ambassador then commended FSM's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. "A number of countries condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine, expressing solidarity to the people of Ukraine. Japan stands with Ukraine. And the clear message from the FSM to

Russia was quite impressive... we can add the FSM to these advocates for the international peace and order...QUAD leaders (U.S., NZ, Aus, Japan meeting at White House in Sep 2021) reaffirmed their commitments to the free and open Indo-Pacific, and said, unilateral change should not be allowed in this region. We know /huge efforts and sacrifices have been paid in modern history to achieve the current world order based on rules. No adverse turn to juggle's rule."

He spoke gratefully of the representation of Japan by long time Japanese residents of the FSM and the contributions of the Japanese Association.

He pointed out many words that had been enfolded into Micronesian languages. "Not only words. More importantly, Japan and FSM share respect to elder people, ancestors and our tradition. An expert said, 'It's not just repeating old things. By daily innovation and exploring new frontiers, we can keep our tradition.' So being conservative is not a key to Japan. Innovation, challenge, and thinking with a long-term perspective will be the keys."

He spoke of Japanese "accomplishers", pointing out that Japan included 28 Nobel Prize laureates, 20 of them within the last 22 years, and Japanese winners of major sport tournament in tennis and golf.

Moving on to the more sensitive subject of the FSM response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ambassador Michigami made a strong statement. "The world has been suffering from COVID-19. The FSM has no positive case yet.



Let me appreciate the efforts of the government and people, and international cooperation. At the same time, virus can sneak into our islands beyond any good safeguards. FSM Government already understands that to keep zero case is not everything; whether you have good preparation when the virus comes is crucial. We hope the vaccination is accelerated, medical service capacities are enhanced, and people's knowledge is strengthened.

"You have a very strict immigration restriction to the FSM nationals and foreigners. Due restrictions may be justified as emergency measures to protect people. At the same time, embassies (not only of Japan), and UN agencies have serious difficulties to bring in necessary staffs. Consequently, many development projects are suspended, including Pohnpei seaport expansion and rehabilitation after natural disasters, because staffs and experts of JICA or USAID cannot enter this country. This is against the interest of both Micronesian people and diplomatic missions. I hope the Government will take this into better consideration."

He then offered a toast to FSM and Japan's relations before turning the podium to FSM President David Panuelo.

"I would also like to offer my sincere appreciation to Ambassador Michigami, for the kind invitation to join you, your Embassy staff and Japanese citizens residing here in Pohnpei, in celebrating this auspicious occasion, marking the 62nd Birthday Anniversary of

His Majesty, the Emperor of Japan," President Panuelo said. "In 2019, I had the utmost pleasure to attend His Majesty, The Emperor's enthronement ceremony in Japan, as a sign of respect the FSM carries for Japan and the special KIZUNA we cherish."

"It is a testament to the friendly relations between our two peoples, and jointly recognizing the importance of this historic day to Japan and its people..."

"I can assure you that the FSM will continue to support Japan in all areas to tackle challenges that lie ahead, for the betterment of both Peoples. The KIZUNA between the FSM and Japan is special, unique, and profound in its strength. The FSM is committed to perpetually make this relationship closer and stronger in the days to come..."

"The recent arrangement of co-funding for the East-Micronesia Cable (EMC), the extension of the Pohnpei Port dock, and an estimated amount of 10.1 Million USD from the Japan FY2020 Non-Project Grant Aid scheme for the FSM-COM Fisheries and Maritime Institution Rehabilitation Project, continuous contribution to the FSM Trust fund in the form of diesel fuel purchases through the FSM Petro Corp, along with the procurement of health and medical equipment are all invaluable in this unprecedented time of COVID-19; and the impending signing of 4 mini-patrol boats for our four FSM States, which the FSM is very grateful," he said.



See continuation on next page

Roads across FSM set for climate-resilient upgrade

New World Bank project to support road upgrades across FSM

The World Bank

March 27, 2022

WASHINGTON – The World Bank’s Board of Executive Directors has approved US\$35.25 million for a new project to improve the climate resilience of the Federated States of Micronesia’s (FSM) secondary road network. The new project aims to deliver safer, more efficient and more reliable road connections to schools, clinics, markets and communities, with around half of FSM’s population to benefit from the project.

FSM’s population and transport network face the growing threat of rising sea levels, more intense storms and potential flooding. Improved planning around infrastructure upgrades is vital to ensuring FSM’s population can connect to vital services. The Strategic Climate-Oriented Road Enhancements (SCORE) Project will build on existing World Bank support for FSM’s transport sector, and improve the planning, design, construction and climate-resilience of FSM’s secondary road network – which

includes reconstruction and repair work on roads across all four states.

“Ensuring Micronesians in every state have safe access, year-round, to the services they need – such as markets, hospitals, jobs, clinics and schools – is at the heart of this new transport project that the government of Federated States of Micronesia will be delivering with our support,” said Degi Young, World Bank Resident Representative for FSM, Marshall Islands and Palau.

The new project will also support new asset management and road safety programs, together with initiatives to increase women’s representation in FSM’s transport sector and review the accessibility of road networks for people with disabilities.

The project also includes an option for the government to reallocate project resources in the event of an emergency or natural disasters, ensuring FSM can quickly respond to crises and disasters when they occur.

“In FSM, critical infrastructure including roads are often located within one kilometer from the coast and are vulnerable to severe weather events and climate change,” said Hon. Carlson D. Apis, Secretary of the Department of Transport, Communication & Infrastructure. “Governments in FSM, at both state and national level, have marked this as a priority area to address. Furthermore, H.E. President David W. Panuelo has attached great importance to these projects by making them part of his Pave the Nation Initiative. We are pleased to have the World Bank supporting our efforts through these important projects.”

The SCORE project will complement the existing World Bank-supported Prioritized Road Investment and Management Enhancement (PRIME) Project. While PRIME is addressing primary roads across FSM, SCORE will focus on the country’s secondary road network, which is vital for access to services, particularly for more isolated communities.

“Roads play a critical role in spurring economic growth and connecting people to markets and public services – these two projects will be an important backing in building FSM’s economy and enabling the country to build back from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Hon. Eugene Amor, Secretary of the Department of Finance.

With its approval, SCORE becomes the seventh project under the World Bank’s Pacific Climate Resilient Transport Program, which aims to improve climate resilience of transport networks across the Pacific region.

The World Bank works in partnership with 12 countries across the Pacific, supporting 83 projects totaling US\$2.16 billion in commitments in sectors including agriculture, aviation and transport, climate resilience and adaptation, economic policy, education and employment, energy, fisheries, health, macroeconomic management, rural development, telecommunications, and tourism.

...Emperor’s Birthday

Continued from previous page

President Panuelo diverged from his prepared speech to respond to some of the issues that Ambassador Michigami raised. During his thanks to the Japanese people for the many forms of financial and in-kind assistance, the President said that he would address the Ambassador’s concerns about COVID responses and promise to get back to the topic before concluding his speech so that “all of us can go away with some understanding of what’s ahead.” However, he never returned to the topic.

He did address the topic of the FSM’s diplomatic response to Russia, saying that word of the Russian invasion of Ukraine arrived as he was boarding a flight to Yap from Chuuk. On arrival he instructed the Secretary for the Department of Foreign Affairs to “work up the options of reviewing the action that we must take in reaction to the Ukraine invasion...”

“I felt the fight we (FSM) had to become a fully, full-fledged independent nation,” he said of his experience as a Foreign Affairs officer in the early days of the

FSM. “So, when that happened to Ukraine, having achieved the freedom to be a democracy and a sovereign nation, and then to have a country with a leader like Putin do such a...villainous...” thing, “there were some options, but I decided to do the strongest form of reaction as a sovereign nation.” He ordered the severance of diplomatic relations with Russia. “That country made life feel so cheap, that they could come in and bomb and destroy civilians.” He decided to take the action despite the fact that the United States had not severed relations with Russia. “...Our nation, we may not be economically powerful, but our sovereignty and our voice (are) the most important thing(s) that we carry. So, when we say and do things on a principled matter, I think that’s the most important thing to convey and to be in alliance with the Ukraine and the Ukrainian people and like-minded countries...”

On conclusion, the FSM President offered a toast.

Ambassador Michigami announced that he would entertain his guests before closing the official ceremony. He sang songs acapella in English, German, Chinese, French, Japanese, Arabic, and Italian, to the delight of the invited guests.

...Rob Solomon

Continued from front page

to the Pohnpei State Jail pending the out coming of the charges contained in one of the two previous cases against him.

Carter Edwin, who was also named in that particular Pohnpei State case was never jailed and has filed a plea agreement to lesser charges. That Court is still considering whether it will accept that plea agreement.

The FSM’s charges against Solomon are unrelated to the State cases other than to have been similar in nature. Pohnpei State’s two cases against Solomon are set to begin hearings on April 12, 2022.

FSM prosecutors charged Solomon with two charges of Human Trafficking and three charges of Trafficking in Children. Prosecutors allege that on both January 12 and January 30, Solomon lured “a minor girl to his house or apartment and engaged in sexual activities with the minor girl for money each time the sexual activities occurred.”

The two Human Trafficking counts have to do with the act of a “person

who knowingly recruits, transports, harbors or receives another person for the purpose of exploitation by threat, use of force, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or the giving or receiving of payments of benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person...” That charge can apply whether or not the victim is a minor and may or may not be related to sexual activity, but prosecutors are alleging that the form of exploitation in these cases was sexual in nature.

That the victim who was exploited was a minor added two of the charges of Trafficking in Children. The third charge of Trafficking in Children had to do with the alleged removal or confinement of the victim.

FSM National Police officers also arrested Solomon the week before his March 15 arrest but released him after a different alleged victim decided not to testify.

Though Rob Solomon currently faces the possibility of decades in jail or thousands of dollars of fines or both, he has not yet had opportunity to present his defense in either a State or National courtroom and is presumed to be innocent unless proved to be otherwise in a Court.



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BANKGUAM HOLDING COMPANY AND SUBSIDIARIES

AUDITED CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CONDITION (Year ended December 31, 2021; in 000's US Dollars)

Assets		Liabilities and Stockholders' Equity	
Cash and due from banks	\$ 36,660	Deposits:	
Interest bearing deposits in banks	520,743	Non-interest bearing	\$ 981,537
Total cash and cash equivalents	557,403	Interest bearing	1,551,694
Restricted cash	150	Total deposits	2,533,231
Investment securities available-for-sale, at fair value	499,366	Accrued interest payable	46
Investment securities held-to-maturity, at amortized cost	312,294	Subordinated debt, net	34,400
Federal Home Loan Bank stock, at cost	2,814	Other liabilities	43,162
Loans, net of allowance for loan losses	1,283,690	Total Liabilities	2,610,839
Accrued interest receivable	6,715	Commitments and contingencies	
Premises and equipment, net	20,802	Stockholders' equity:	
Goodwill	13,014	Common stock	2,033
Intangible assets	10,720	Preferred stock	980
Other assets	84,620	Additional paid-in capital, Common stock	24,910
Total Assets	\$ 2,791,588	Additional paid-in capital, Preferred stock	8,803
		Retained earnings	153,740
		Accumulated other comprehensive loss	(16,721)
		Non-controlling interest	7,294
		Common stock in treasury, at cost	(290)
		Total stockholders' equity	180,749
		Total Liabilities and Stockholders' Equity	\$ 2,791,588

AUDITED CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF INCOME (Year ended December 31, 2021; in 000's US Dollars)

Interest income	\$ 82,502
Interest expense	1,910
Net interest income	80,592
Provision for loan losses	2,150
Net interest income, after provision for loan losses	78,442
Non-interest income	27,927
Non-interest expense	80,275
Income before income taxes	26,094
Income tax expense	5,095
Net Income	\$ 20,999

BANK OF GUAM FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA BRANCHES

STATEMENT OF CONDITION (Year ended December 31, 2021; in 000's US Dollars)

Assets		Liabilities and Stockholders' Equity	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 3,896	Deposits:	
Loans, net of allowance for loan losses	23,471	Non-interest bearing	\$ 78,484
Accrued interest receivable	36	Interest bearing	178,107
Premises and equipment, net	391	Total deposits	256,591
Other assets	1,051	Accrued interest payable	3
Due from the Parent	228,952	Other liabilities	1,203
Total Assets	\$ 257,797	Total Liabilities	\$ 257,797

STATEMENT OF INCOME (Year ended December 31, 2021; in 000's US Dollars)

Interest income	\$ 2,771
Interest expense	52
Net interest income	2,719
Provision for loan losses	325
Net interest income, after provision for loan losses	2,394
Non-interest income	866
Non-interest expense	2,017
Net Income	\$ 1,243

Peter T. Wilson (1928-2021) Founder of Micronesian Scuba Tourism

By Dianne M. Strong, Ed.D., author, "Witness to War: Truk Lagoon's Master Diver Kimiuo Aisek (2013)

March 19, 2022

The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) became a jet age destination on 9 May 1968 when Continental-Air Micronesia landed its first 727 jet on Truk's coral runway. In May of 1969 Los Angeles Times feature writer Charles Hillinger landed on that same runway. On Wednesday, 26 May 1969, his story was on the front page, below the fold, with the headline "Sunken Japanese Fleet Lies Untouched in Lagoon of Truk." The kicker above it read "BOMBED BY U.S. IN PACIFIC WAR."

As a Navy man in the Pacific during World War II, the journalist knew of Truk's sunken Japanese fleet and wanted to explore the wrecks. He told readers about Truk's "virtually forgotten" sunken fleet. "No extensive diving had ever been done in the remote spectacularly beautiful lagoon."

In 1961 the TTPI had hired Peter T. Wilson as Chief, Marine Resources, for all seven of the TT districts. His mission was to develop fisheries and other sources of income to support the islands.

"However, the lack of funds and equipment kept me from pushing ahead with the development of a dive industry," Wilson reported in "Aku! The History of Tuna Fishing in Hawaii and the Western Pacific" (2011).

In 1961 Wilson hired a Trukese named Kimiuo Aisek to learn to scuba dive in Palau for bait fishing to catch tuna ("aku"). Thus boats, motors, air compressors and scuba gear appeared in the district center Fisheries offices. In 1969 when the crown of thorns starfish threatened Micronesia's reefs, Wilson named Aisek as dive master for Truk's Control team.

Meanwhile, in France famous oceanographer and filmmaker Jacques Cousteau read the LA Times story and phoned Hillinger. In July 1969, the Cousteau team arrived in Truk on an eight-week expedition. The team logged 480 dives, located nineteen wrecks and dove on twelve others.

Eighteen months later, on 11 January 1971, the Hillinger-inspired documentary "Lagoon of Lost Ships" debuted on Monday night television. ABC television presented the hour-long special in its popular series, The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau.

Few Americans in 1971 had ever donned a facemask, but millions of viewers now shared Hillinger's excitement "sitting before the TV set and accompanying Cousteau and his divers as they moved from sunken ship to sunken ship." Millions watched in awe, seeing for the first time an undersea world they had never known existed.

Cousteau's photographers had used color film and underwater lights to capture the exquisite beauty of Truk's wrecks. Viewers saw luxuriant marine life that had sprung from the death of war. The twisted steel of the ships had now become a colorful artificial reef. With underwater cinematography still in its infancy in 1971, few Americans had ever seen the colorful images of this rarely visited world.

After work one day, Wilson invited Kimiuo to dive with him on the wrecks. "What for?" Kimiuo asked, "They're just a pile of rusty junk." It's "good fun," his boss replied. Kimiuo descended for the first time to the deck of a ship to which he had once delivered cargo as a 15-year old Trukese boy. As he finned along the passageways, in his mind he saw the members of the brave crew who had perished.

John Sablan was the Truk district administrator in 1971, and the divers paying him a courtesy call were Paul Tzimoulis, then editor and publisher of Skin Diver, the world's most read diving magazine, and Ken Seybold. His pioneering Bay Travel agency in San Francisco had brought the first organized dive tours to Truk in 1970.

The two avid divers urged "the Micronesian Congress to consider declaring the wrecks of Truk Lagoon a national monument. An underwater phenomenon such as the vast collection of Truk wrecks exists nowhere else in the world...These wrecks [could] someday become Truk's major tourist attraction and source of economic development."

Finally, on 1 March 1972, all Japanese ships, vessels and aircraft in the Truk Lagoon were declared a Historical Monument under Truk District Law number 21-5. All divers were now required to obtain a dive permit before getting their tanks pumped at Fisheries, the office where Kimiuo worked.

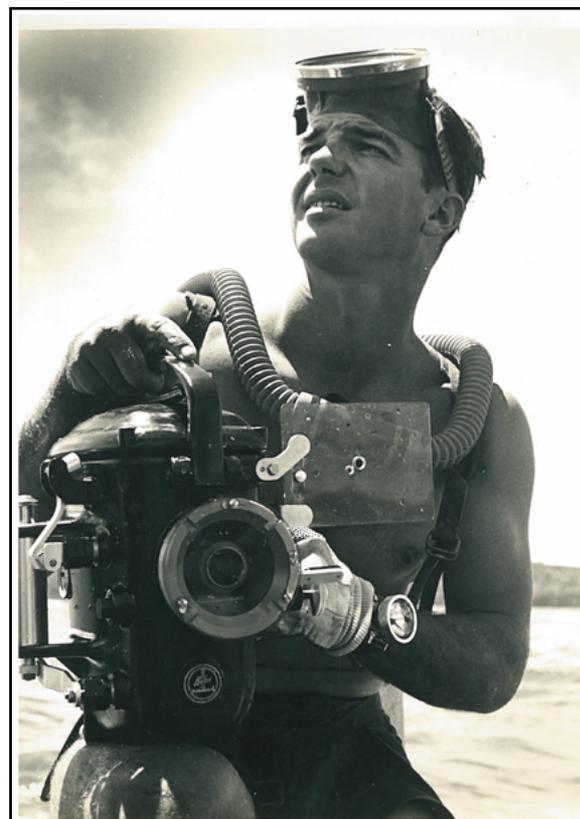
In 1972 cinematographer Al Giddings and Paul Tzimoulis' group located and filmed the Japanese I-169 submarine. In February 1972 Skin Diver editor Tzimoulis published "Submarine: Divers Discover WWII Japanese I-169 with its Entombed Crew." The issue's cover showed the open hatch of the sub.

By 1970 Truk had reliable "island hopper" jet service both from Guam and Honolulu, a Truk Continental Hotel, and wreck diving that stunned America's wreck divers. Divers began "coming like rain," Kimiuo said.

But there was no dive shop in Truk. Peter Wilson allowed Kimiuo to pump divers' air tanks at the Fisheries office and also guide tourists to the wrecks. Wilson repeatedly encouraged Kimiuo to open a dive shop. In 1973 Wilson asked the TT's Economic Development Officer George States to convince Kimiuo, and States offered a \$7,000 loan.

On 13 November 1973, Kimiuo opened the Blue Lagoon Dive Shop (BLDS), not far from the Truk airport. By 1998 when the shop's 25th anniversary was celebrated, the Aisek family had bought the Truk Continental Hotel. BLDS opened a 2,400-foot facility next door to the renamed Truk Blue Lagoon Resort. It is four and a half miles from the airport, in the village of Neauo, on the southernmost tip of Weno (formerly Moen).

Twenty-seven years after founding Micronesia's first dive shop, Kimiuo Aisek died in Chuuk on 4 January 2001. He was known in the diving



Peter T. Wilson, Fisheries Biologist, Guam Department of Fish & Wildlife, with his underwater camera on Guam in 1960



Kimiuo Aisek with author Dianne Strong, at Blue Lagoon Dive Shop, February 2000

world as a 17-year old witness to "Operation Hailstone" -- the American attack on Truk -- a great fisherman and dive master, founder of Chuuk's diving industry, and "a great man of the sea with a big heart."

Divers around the world agree with Blue Lagoon Dive Shop's slogan that Truk Lagoon is "the world's greatest wreck dive."

But credit goes to visionary Peter T. Wilson, (1928-2021) the TT's first Chief of Marine Resources who first hired him, had him trained to scuba dive, and encouraged him to open Blue Lagoon Dive Shop.

Handover ceremony for the project for procuring garbage trucks in Kolonia Town, Pohnpei State

Embassy of Japan in the FSM

On March 21, 2022, a Handover Ceremony was held at Kolonia Town Government office in Pohnpei State, for the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects by the Government of Japan for the Project for Procuring Garbage Trucks in Kolonia Town, Pohnpei State, amounting up to US\$177,088.

This project provided two garbage trucks, in order to improve the environment and sanitation by addressing the problems of littering and accumulation of wastes in Kolonia Town. The provided Garbage Trucks are expected to strengthen garbage collection activities, thus improving waste management in Kolonia Town.

At the ceremony, Ambassador Michigami Hisashi mentioned that daily waste management is essential to maintain a clean and safe environment as well as people's lives. He explained that the new garbage trucks will increase frequency of waste collection in Kolonia Town, benefitting about 6,000 people. He hoped that these garbage trucks will play an important role in protecting the environment of Kolonia Town and Pohnpei state. Followed by his remarks, Ambassador Michigami handed over the symbolic truck key to Kolonia Town Government.

The Hon. Beterigo Jacob, Mayor of Kolonia Town Government, expressed his appreciation to the Government of Japan and all of the staff involved in the completion of the project. He stated that the donation will help waste management in Kolonia Town and



he will make sure that the new garbage trucks will be used appropriately. He concluded that he looks forward to working with the Embassy of Japan in the future.

The ceremony was also attended by Ms. Irene P. Albert, Director of Administration, Ms. Malinda Mora, Acting

Director of Finance, Mr. Nixon Aldam, Chief Prosecutor, Mr. Antonio Mihkel Jr., Chief of Community Development, other staff from Kolonia Town Government, Mr. Patrick Blank, Executive Director of Micronesian Productions, and members of the Embassy of Japan in the FSM.

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communications networks; interactive online entertainment in the nature of a website containing non-downloadable photographic, video, audio and prose presentations, video clips and other multimedia materials relating to movies and television programs in the fields of comedy, drama, action, variety, adventure, sports, musicals, current events and entertainment news, documentary and animation.

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97.8% of FSM adults aged 45+ fully vaccinated, 19% boosted; 41% of FSM adolescents aged 12-17 fully vaccinated; 27.7% of FSM children aged 5-11 fully vaccinated

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—Although progress during the period of mandatory vaccination across the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) remains less than ideal, as of March 16th, 2022, the FSM has nearly reached several of its total vaccination goals.

For adults aged 45 years and up, 97.8% of FSM adults are fully vaccinated (i.e. have received two doses of the Moderna and/or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines, or the one-dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine). 19% of FSM adults aged 45 years and up have received a booster dose. Numerically, this constitutes 18,616 persons aged 45 and up who are fully vaccinated, and 3,618 who are boosted.

For adults aged between 18 to 44 years, 71.6% of FSM adults are fully vaccinated. 9.5% of adults aged between 18 to 44 years have received a booster dose. Numerically,

this constitutes 28,387 persons aged between 18 to 44 who are fully vaccinated and 3,787 who are boosted.

For adolescents aged between 12 to 17 years, 41% of FSM adolescents are fully vaccinated. These figures are highest in the States of Yap and Kosrae, with rates at 80.5% and 76.9% respectively, and lowest in the States of Chuuk and Pohnpei, with rates at 33.3% and 31.2% respectively. Numerically, 4,210 FSM adolescents are fully vaccinated.

However, it is expected that the Chuuk and Pohnpei rates will increase significantly over the next several weeks, as 59.3% of Chuukese adolescents have received at least one dose of the vaccine, and 62.2% of Pohnpeian adolescents have received at least one dose of the vaccine. Numerically, 6,711 FSM adolescents are partially vaccinated.

For children aged between 5 to 11

years, 27.7% of FSM children are fully vaccinated. These figures are highest in the States of Yap and Kosrae, with rates at 42.4% and 38.4% respectively, and lowest in the States of Pohnpei and Chuuk, with rates at 30.3% and 20.3% respectively. Numerically, 3,760 FSM children are fully vaccinated.

However, it is expected that the Pohnpei and Chuuk vaccination rates for children aged 5 to 11 will increase significantly over the next several weeks, as 55.2% of Pohnpeian children have received at least one dose of the vaccine, and 49.2% of Chuukese children have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

65.6% of the Nation's total eligible population (all persons aged five and up) is fully vaccinated, and 74.9% of the Nation's total eligible population has received at least one dose of the vaccine. 8.7% of the Nation's total eligible population has received a booster dose.

The FSM has enough vaccines for every person to become fully vaccinated and boosted.

The vaccine mandate remains in effect for all FSM citizens residing in the FSM.

As of March 16th, the FSM remains COVID-19 free.

While it is not within the scope of this release to announce repatriation dates, the FSM National Government is presently conducting readiness assessments across all four FSM States. It is increasingly likely that the FSM will resume repatriation flights in April, 2022.

The report from the Department of Health & Social Affairs which informs the contents of this release may be found here: https://gov.fm/files/FSM_covid_coverage_3-13-22_Statewide-final.pdf



Women, girls must be center of global climate fight – Pacific to CSW66

15th March 2022

CSW66 UNHQ– The Pacific has called for more recognition of the critical role of women and girls in climate resilience, at the opening plenary sessions of the Sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Under the theme, ‘Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes’, CSW66 provides a platform to highlight the threat climate change and its impacts continue to have on the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of Pacific women and girls. For the Pacific Islands Forum, Fiji Permanent Representative to the UN, H.E. Dr. Satyendra Prasad called on the international community to take urgent

action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reiterating Pacific Island Forum Leaders’ grave concern for the Blue Pacific Continent’s collective future as global emissions continue to rise. “The shared prosperity and security of our Blue Pacific can only safely exist if we pursue efforts to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, as set out in the Paris Agreement” he said.

Ambassador Prasad emphasized the critical role of women and girls in building resilient communities. “Recognizing women’s and girls’ knowledge, capabilities, and skills, and empowering them, is vital to the safety and security of all Pacific families,” she said, “In Pacific communities, women have a history of adapting to climate change impacts to provide food and water for their

families”.

Ambassador Prasad reminded the Session of the Pacific’s leadership on oceans which led to the adoption of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Life Below Water) reaffirming the region’s stewardship of over 40 million square kilometers of the Pacific Ocean, and the potential of the ocean to meet sustainable development needs if kept healthy.

Despite the many achievements in the region, Ambassador Prasad stated more still needs to be done. “The Pacific has one of the highest rates of violence globally. On average, two out of every three women experience some form of violence throughout their life. Evidence indicates a link between disasters, climate change, and gender-based violence and we have seen increased reports of domestic violence cases and the need for psychosocial support after disasters.”

Finally, Ambassador Prasad looked to the future. “We must work together and build coalitions of support,” he said. “We need ambitious, transformative gender-responsive climate change action now across all platforms to secure our collective future...we need more women leading global responses to climate change to shape our global agenda for action.”

The Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum, Mr. Henry Puna has welcomed the Pacific statement. Noting the

inaugural Pacific Islands Forum Women Leaders Meeting will convene in 2022, SG Puna said the event will continue to ensure gender equality and social inclusion are embedded in actions to progress PIF Leaders’ priorities including climate and disaster risk resilience actions. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat is also revitalizing the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration providing another opportunity to ensure actions as agreed in platforms such as CSW and the Pacific Women’s Triennial Conference and Ministers for Women Meeting are embedded in high level regional policy frameworks.

SG Puna also welcomed the ‘strong, emphatic and determined’ calls from all Pacific ministers and representatives ensuring the voices and priorities of our Blue Continent were part of the global status of women for 2022. Other PIF Member countries will be delivering national statements in the first week of CSW66 including were delivered from Australia, Fiji, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Samoa, and Tonga.

CSW66 runs as a hybrid conference until 25 March 2022, with member states, UN entities, and non-governmental organisations from around the world contributing to the session and an array of side events.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Often when we go the restaurants, we are told there is no fish. In fact, this is becoming the new normal. And, it’s no better at the markets either. There are more days without fish than days with fish. And, when you find tuna in the markets, one can easily see that we are catching more small ones most likely because there are fewer big tunas out there.

This is alarming to me and we all should take this seriously and try to influence government policymakers to be more conservative-minded when selling fishing licenses, and to take more conservation measures to protect and grow our fish stocks. I would rather we err on the side of the abundance of caution than regret later when it could be too late to reverse the trend to protect our tuna resource for future generations.

I am afraid if we don’t take immediate action now to protect what we have that it’s not impossible to one day wake up to the fact that tuna is no longer available for our consumption. That day unfortunately is not too far off in the future as we can easily note from our daily experience on the ground. That will be a sad day for all of us, especially for those who love fish, but even more so for future generations who may never experience the joy of catching and eating a tuna.

Our country, like most island developing countries, needs money to address our many developmental needs to improve the lives of our people. I have no argument against that but perhaps we can make do with \$30-\$40 million in annual fishing fees instead of \$60-\$70 million, in order to conserve more of our tuna resource by selling fewer licenses. As I see it, there seems to be this drive for more and more revenue each year. We are no longer

satisfied with a reasonable amount as we continue to want more and more money, and in the process sacrificing conservation for exploitation. The foreign fleets whose only interest is in more exploitation now, and the future be damned, are only too happy to buy more licenses causing more devastation to our environment and tuna stocks.

More conservation will allow our tuna stocks to replenish itself and grow over time. What is destroying our planet is human greed whether it’s individuals, corporations or governments. Humans are extracting more and more of the earth’s resources for profit and not having any second thoughts about the destruction being visited on our common home. There is this unhealthy appetite for more and more. We are no longer satisfied with what is reasonable or what we now have. As a result, our tuna will become extinct like other creatures of the earth due to our unrelenting pursuit for more profit without any regard for sustaining the earth’s resources for future generations. We must find the will to make the necessary sacrifices now so that our children and grandchildren will experience what a tuna is and what it tastes like.

Unless we act now, it could be too late for us and our fish. Money is important for our development but not that important that we are only too willing to sacrifice everything to make more of it. Let’s demand more conservation now and less exploitation to ensure sustainability of our tuna stocks and other marine resources.

Thank you,
Kasio E. Mida
A concerned citizen

Embassy of the United States of America Vacancy Announcement: VA2022.001

POSITION TITLE: Procurement Agent/Property Assistant
OPENING PERIOD: March 30 to April 13
SERIES/GRADE: FSN-105/07
SALARY: USD \$14,759.00



FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION AND JOB DESCRIPTION VISIT:

fm.usembassy.gov/embassy/jobs/

CONTACT THE HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE:

KoloniahumanResourceRequests@state.gov

DUTIES: Incumbent serves as the Procurement Agent/ Property Assistant. As Real Property Assistant, incumbent is responsible for leasing actions and coordinating with landlords. As the Procurement Agent, incumbent is responsible for preparing purchasing actions and maintaining procurement files. Incumbent will also serve as Non-Expendable Property Assistant who is responsible for receiving and record-keeping on all property.

EDUCATION: At least two years post-secondary education is required.

EXPERIENCE: Three years of experience in purchasing, procurement, leasing, or property inventory, involving application of complex regulatory material is required.

LANGUAGE: Level 4 (Fluent) Speaking/Reading/Writing English is required. (This will be tested.)

Selected applicant under consideration will be required to pass medical and security certifications.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY (EEO): The U.S. Mission provides equal opportunity and fair and equitable treatment in employment to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation, marital status, or sexual orientation.

President Panuelo endorses Ambassador Cantor's nomination to serve as Assistant Secretary of Insular & International Affairs at U.S. Department of Interior



His Excellency David W. Panuelo and Her Excellency Carmen G. Cantor
[file photo from January 31st, 2020]

FSM Information Services Press Release

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—Following the announcement by His Excellency Joseph R. Biden Jr., President of the United States of America, that he has nominated Her Excellency Carmen G. Cantor, Ambassador of the United States of America to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) to serve as the Assistant Secretary of Insular & International Affairs at the U.S. Department of Interior, His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the FSM, has written to the Honorable Joe Manchin, Chair of the U.S. Senate's Committee on Energy & Natural Resources, and the Honorable John Barrasso, Ranking Member of the same Committee, to confirm the FSM National Government's endorsement of Ambassador Cantor's nomination "without hesitation or reservation."

Citizens unfamiliar with the importance of the U.S. President's nomination of Ambassador Cantor to this position may appreciate the following summary. Under the Compact of Free Association, as Amended, the U.S. Department of Interior oversees U.S. Government financial federal assistance to the FSM. If Ambassador Cantor is confirmed as the Assistant Secretary for Insular & International Affairs, the practical effect for the FSM is that our Nation would have a very close friend and ally in direct and frequent contact with our country and our Micronesian subregion. It is the view of the FSM National Government that it is in the FSM's national interest

that Ambassador Cantor be confirmed as the Assistant Secretary for Insular & International Affairs.

"In her time serving the FSM," President Panuelo wrote in his letters to the U.S. Senate's Committee on Energy & Natural Resources, "the Ambassador has not only successfully demonstrated our shared values of Peace, Unity, and Liberty, but has also played a key role in keeping our Nation COVID-19 free (which it remains to this day). Whether it's been informing our Nation of contemporary, near-future, and long-term security threats in the Indo-Pacific, working to promote women and girls' empowerment, playing a key role in our national COVID-19 Task Force, and strengthening FSM-U.S. relations across the spectrum, the People & Government of the FSM have been extraordinarily happy with her service.... Ambassador Cantor is the real deal."

"Rest assured: if over the course of your deliberations any person in your esteemed body wonders 'Does the FSM support Ambassador Cantor's nomination to serve as the Assistant Secretary for Insular & International Affairs?' that the answer is a resounding yes. The Government of the FSM categorically endorses Ambassador Cantor's nomination without hesitation or reservation."

The President's letter to the Senators can be found here: https://gov.fm/files/Dipnote_to_US_re_Ltr_to_Senator_Joe_Manchin_III.pdf

Ms. MacKenzie Scott awards \$6 Million grant to Micronesia Conservation Trust

Micronesia Conservation Trust

March 23, 2022

The Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT), along with hundreds of other organizations around the world, has received a significant, unrestricted grant award from philanthropist Ms. MacKenzie Scott. The announcement was made on her blogpost, Medium, on March 23, 2022. The MCT Board of Trustees has authorized the establishment of a Reserves Fund with the generous US\$6,000,000 gift from Ms. Scott.

The purposes of the Reserves Fund include: provide a long-term source of funds to meet unforeseen financial needs; provide a long-term source of funds for capital improvement projects; and fund, annually, partner proposals in accordance with locally determined priorities.

Of the award, Mr. William Kostka, MCT Executive Director, says "This amazing and transformational gift

will allow MCT to do the things we have not been able to do consistently (e.g. our own annual call for proposals, staff capacity development, just in time grants to support quick and innovative programs, and maybe even our own MCT building so we won't have to continue to pay rent). This gift is testament to the hard work of our Board and staff over the years, as well as that of our partners. The Board and staff, and all the communities we serve across Micronesia convey our sincerest gratitude to Ms. Scott and her amazing team." The MCT Board and Management plan to invest the award immediately and spend the remainder of 2022 completing its updated Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2027) and developing budgets, as well as policies and procedures to govern the Reserves Fund and the use of the revenues it will generate. This will ensure that MCT is positioned to deliver improved programs to stakeholders and communities across Micronesia.

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RED HORSE (word)


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President Panuelo appeals for President Xi's support to call for Russia's withdrawal & cessation of hostilities in Ukraine, & to put world on a path to peace

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On March 28th, 2022, His Excellency David W. Panuelo—President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)—wrote a letter to His Excellency Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China (China), soliciting China's support to call for the Russian Federation's withdrawal from, and cessation of hostilities in, Ukraine, and further to put the World at large on a path to peace.

The text of the President's letter is below and a PDF of the diplomatic note can be found here: https://gov.fm/files/President_Panuelos_Ltr_to_President_Xi_Jinping.pdf

President Xi, I write to you today with humility in my heart. At this hour, a weary and distraught humanity is in need of champions for peace. Nations must work together now to lead us into the paths of peace. Approximately one month ago, the Russian Federation brutally invaded Ukraine without provocation or justification. In the month of war so far, the Russian Federation has engaged in numerous war crimes, including the murder of innocent civilians and the destruction of infrastructure such as hospitals and schools. There have been reports of white phosphorous and other extraordinarily harmful material being used for no reason other than to extinguish precious human lives; and, of course, the Russian

Federation has frequently raised the specter of using nuclear weapons. There is no nuance in Russia's behavior; they are choosing to act as villains. Due to our Nation's unwavering commitment to peace, friendship, cooperation, and love in our common humanity, we felt it was necessary to demonstrate our firm protest of the Russian Federation's unnecessary war and invasion of Ukraine by severing our diplomatic relations with them until such a time that the Russian Federation can show an actionable commitment to these values. Our country knows all too well what it's like to be controlled by foreign powers, whether it be the Spanish and German Empires in the 19th century, the Japanese Empire after World War I and prior to World War II, or the American Empire shortly thereafter. In other words, nations have forgotten the lessons learned from the tragedies of the last century, the sacrifice of the millions who fell in the two World Wars. Nations have disregarded the commitments we have made for the world community. We have betrayed peoples' dreams of peace, and the hopes of the young and the vulnerable. We have stopped being our neighbors' keepers and stewards of our common humanity.

The Federated States of Micronesia is committed to peace, and recognizes and appreciates that China feels precisely the same way, because China fought—with diplomacy, not weapons—at the United Nations for our country to

become sovereign and internationally recognized, among other countries.

It is increasingly clear to the Federated States of Micronesia that the Russian Federation—perhaps due to its historical and ideological differences with the United States of America and its partners—has no interest in ending its war in Ukraine any time soon, despite increasing pressure from the U.S. and Europe. It is even possible that the more the U.S.-side and European-sides increase their pressure on the Russian Federation that the latter will only feel more empowered to engage in violence.

I believe now is the appropriate time for the People's Republic of China to demonstrate its global leadership by calling on the Russian Federation to cease hostilities and withdraw from Ukraine. I am advised that this would be consistent with the 2013 PRC-Ukraine Treaty of Friendship & Cooperation, whose Articles 5, 6, and 7 describe China's and Ukraine's commitments to each other, including the unwavering support of China's territorial integrity on

behalf of Ukraine, and China's support of Ukraine's territorial integrity.

President Xi, speaking personally and frankly, of all the reasons I do not like Russia's war in Ukraine it is because it suggests that war between countries is something that can still happen today. It would be my preference that all countries embrace peace. The Chinese, as paragon examples of peace, friendship, cooperation, and love in our common humanity, I believe can and should rise to the occasion to call for the cessation of hostilities. While I worry that the Russians and Americans will not listen to each other, I am convinced that both of them would listen to China, and I also believe that China taking on this leadership role would be in the interest of both the Federated States of Micronesia and the global community of nations.

President Xi, I take this opportunity to first thank you for considering my request, and secondly to reaffirm our Nation's firm and unwavering commitment to our Great Friendship.



Pacific Community
Communauté du Pacifique

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Phone: +687 26 2050
Fax: +687 26 38 18

REQUEST FOR QUOTATION (RFQ) RFQ:22-3671

DATE: 21/03/2022

SUBJECT: CONSULTANCY TO DEVELOP THE EXIT STRATEGY FOR THE EU FSM SUSTAINABLE ENERGY ACCOMPANYING MEASURES (SEAM) RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY (REEE) PROJECT

The Pacific Community (SPC) would like to invite interested qualified bidders to submit quotations to Conduct an Exit Strategy for EU FSM Sustainable Energy Accompanying Measures (SEAM) Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (REEE).

1. You are requested to submit a quotation to carry out specific tasks as outlined in the Terms of Reference (Annex I).
2. Queries or questions may be emailed to koine@spc.int
3. SPC reserves the right at the time of award of contract to vary the quantity of services and goods specified in the RFQ.
4. SPC reserves the right to accept or reject any Proposal and to annul the solicitation process and reject all Proposals at any time prior to award of contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder(s) or any obligation to inform the affected bidder(s) of the grounds for the Purchaser's action.
5. This RFQ has been requested from at least 3 service providers and quotations will be assessed based on both their assessed abilities to achieve the outcomes and cost.
6. Please email your quotation to koine@spc.int by 5pm Pohnpei time on 18 April 2022.
7. This letter is not to be construed in any way as an offer to contract with you or your organisation.
8. Please visit the link to for TOR and Proposal Submission Form RFQ22-3671 Consultancy to develop the exit strategy for the EU FSM Sustainable Energy Accompanying Measures (SEAM) Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (REEE) Project

**TUNE IN TO
POHNPEI'S #1 RADIO**

PARADISE RADIO

FM 89.5 V6WI

Governor Sigrah, President Panuelo, and Ted Waitt sign Declaration of Commitment to Blue Prosperity Micronesia

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On March 15th, 2022, His Excellency David W. Panuelo—President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)—joined the Honorable Carson K. Sigrah, Governor of the State of Kosrae, in a signing ceremony of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Government of the FSM, the State of Kosrae, and Blue Prosperity Coalition, so as to declare their collective commitment to Blue Prosperity Micronesia. Ted Waitt, Founder & Chair of the Waitt Institute, signed in absentia and on behalf of the Blue Prosperity Coalition. Also joining the signing ceremony were William Kostka, Executive-Director of Micronesia Conservation Trust—which is a partner in the Blue Prosperity Micronesia program—and members of the President’s Cabinet.



Citizens may recall that the FSM and Blue Prosperity Coalition signed an MOU in July 2019 to support the nation’s efforts to advance sustainable ocean use. The resulting program generated by that MOU is Blue Prosperity Micronesia, a five-year nation-wide initiative with the aim to protect 30% of the FSM’s waters, develop strategies for economic well-being, and strengthen existing fisheries management to support the sustainable growth of the FSM’s marine resources for current and future generations.

Blue Prosperity Micronesia remains one of the Panuelo-George administration’s top priorities. What the MOU signed between the FSM National Government, the Kosrae State Government, and Blue Prosperity Coalition represents is, firstly, an acknowledgement of Blue Prosperity Micronesia’s overarching goals and intentions; secondly, to clarify and confirm that the State of Kosrae has the authority to manage its marine environment zero to twelve nautical miles from shore, including authority related to economic activities, human use, fisheries, and protected areas; thirdly, a recognition that the State of Kosrae has committed to achieving the goals of the Micronesia Challenge (which seeks to protect and effectively manage 50% of coastal territory and 30% of terrestrial territory by 2030); fourthly, an agreement that broad consultation among stakeholders is essential, as such consultation would consider community-based conservation and management efforts, traditional knowledge, and practices of local communities with respect to sustainable and equitable conservation; and fifthly, to agree to support the July 2019 MOU between the FSM Government and Blue Prosperity Coalition, including to work in partnership to develop a comprehensive, legally-binding marine spatial plan for Kosrae’s coastal waters that uses best available information with a series of steps and expected timelines, and with technical and financial support from the Blue Prosperity Coalition. Blue Prosperity Micronesia seeks to work across all levels of government and, with this MOU, acknowledges that the work within Kosrae must support the Kosraean communities, while also strengthening the prosperity of the FSM as a whole.

As a first step following the signing, the MOU partners will convene to develop a work plan for Blue Prosperity Micronesia in Kosrae that is expected to include a coastal marine spatial planning process, and broad community consultations in water science, policy development, and outreach.



Fiji to pilot new seed system model

SPC

25 March 2022

Suva, Fiji – Fiji has been selected to pilot a proposed seed system model following an intensive discussion among stakeholders at the Pacific Seeds for Life (PS4L) Fiji Seed Forum in Nadi this week.

PS4L is a New Zealand funded programme implemented by the Pacific Community (SPC)'s Land Resources Division (LRD) in the region.

The new seed model could result in the country paving the way in improving efficiency in production of quality seeds and seedlings of diverse crop varieties and enhancing the commercialisation of seed production.

“With the growing demand for seeds, the industry needs our full support,” said Fiji Assistant Minister of Agriculture, Mr Viam Pillay while officiating at the forum. “Fiji’s import bill for vegetable seeds continued to increase from \$FJD1.5 million in 2019 to \$FJD2.4 million in 2020 and \$FJD4.1 million in 2021. These numbers are more reason why we held such a forum to ensure that our concerted efforts are directed towards enhancing development of Fiji’s seed industry.”

The three-day forum brought together representatives from the farming community, research and extension officers from the Ministry of Agriculture, NGOs, seed suppliers and private seed producers.

SPC’s Land Resources Division director, Karen Mapusua said that the successful implementation of the seed system will depend on national and local governments and relevant stakeholders working in close collaboration along seed value chains.

“The economic importance of LRD’s work on seeds is clear – agriculture underpins economies across the Pacific. The challenges of improving food security, ensuring nutritional value, facilitating trade and developing capacity across these areas are central to regional development efforts.”

SPC’s team leader for the Sustainable Agriculture Programme, Gibson Susumu said the forum brought key players together to discuss and agree on a seed system model.

“Given the importance of seeds, the SPC’s Pacific Seeds for Life programme works to strengthen seed systems in our member countries to ensure ongoing availability and access and use of a diverse portfolio of seeds. We have proposed a seed system model to pilot in six countries – Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Fiji.”

PS4L is a NZ funded programme implemented by LRD and Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research New Zealand (MWLR), working in close partnership with the Ministries of Agriculture in the six member countries.

Four Guam and Micronesia leaders appointed to senior leadership roles at Matson

Patrick Bulaon Promoted to VP and GM, Guam/Micronesia

Matson

March 22, 2022

HONOLULU – In a series of new appointments and promotions involving four Guam executives, Matson has announced that Patrick Bulaon, operations manager, Guam and Micronesia, is being promoted to vice president and general manager, Guam/Micronesia, effective April 1, 2022.

In his new role, Bulaon assumes responsibility for overseeing all operations and sales activity of Matson's Western Pacific and Micronesia regions, which include Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Republic of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Okinawa, Japan.

Originally from Guam, Bulaon joined Matson in 2021 and previously served in various operations and sales management positions over 28 years in Guam, CNMI, Micronesia, South East Asia, and the South Pacific for ExxonMobil and PacifiCare Asia Pacific.

Bulaon has been a member of the Rotary Club of Northern Guam, the Guam Chamber of Commerce, and Guam Contractor's Association. He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration and finance from Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and is a 1986 graduate of Father Dueñas Memorial School.

Bulaon succeeds Bernadette "Bernie" Valencia, who has been appointed vice president, sales – Hawaii with responsibility for all sales and marketing activities in Matson's largest trade lane, effective April 1, 2022.

Valencia succeeds Len Isotoff, who is being promoted to succeed Vic Angoco as senior vice president, Pacific, effective April 1, 2022.

Angoco has been appointed to succeed the retiring Bal Dreyfus as senior vice president, Alaska, based in Anchorage, effective July 1, 2022.

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Matt Cox said, "Matson works at developing talented leaders and Guam has certainly produced more than its share. Vic is one of Matson's most experienced and trusted leaders. Likewise, Len, Bernie and Patrick are among the next generation of senior leaders at Matson and are well positioned

to help lead us into the future."

Valencia joined Matson in 2008, bringing a successful 15-year track record of business accomplishments and deep knowledge of the local business communities in Guam and Micronesia. Starting as sales / customer service manager, she was later named general manager, Guam and was promoted to her current position in 2017. Valencia holds a bachelor's degree in Aviation Maintenance from San Jose State University. She is the co-founder and a board member of iCAN Resources, a Guam nonprofit organization that employs and provides life skills to the disabled community and was recently appointed to the University of Guam Board of Regents. She has been an active member of many organizations, some of which include the USO Advisory Council, The Employer's Council, and the Guam Women's Chamber of Commerce.

In his new role as senior vice president, Pacific, Isotoff will be responsible for all of Matson's Hawaii, Guam, Micronesia and South Pacific operations. A native of Chuuk, Isotoff joined Matson in 1999 as Logistics Manager on Guam and has served in a variety of successive roles, including sales / customer service manager in Guam, Pacific Northwest sales manager, container operations manager in Honolulu and general manager, Guam/Micronesia. He was promoted to his current position in 2016.

Isotoff holds a bachelor's degree in business management from Oregon State University. He serves on the Historic Hawaii Foundation Board of Trustees and the Navy League Honolulu Council.

Angoco began his 32-year maritime career on Guam and has held a wide range of operations and sales management roles. He joined Matson in 1996 as operations manager on Guam, and quickly rose through the ranks in successive sales, customer service and operations leadership positions in Guam and Hawaii. He was promoted to his current position in 2010.

"We are proud of our roots in Guam and Micronesia. Having four executives from the Pacific advance simultaneously in one company is a testament to Matson's investment in its team and our region," Angoco added. "Patrick will carry on the tradition of leading the Guam and Micronesia operations as a son of Guam and proudly serve the community we call home."

About Matson

Founded in 1882, Matson (NYSE: MATX) is a leading provider of ocean transportation and logistics services. Matson provides a vital lifeline to the domestic non-contiguous economies of Hawaii, Alaska, and Guam, and to other island economies in Micronesia. Matson also operates premium, expedited services from China to Long Beach, California, provides service to Okinawa, Japan and various islands in the South Pacific, and operates an international export service from Dutch Harbor to Asia. The Company's fleet of

owned and chartered vessels includes containerships, combination container and roll-on/roll-off ships and custom-designed barges. Matson Logistics, established in 1987, extends the geographic reach of Matson's transportation network throughout North America. Its integrated, asset-light logistics services include rail intermodal, highway brokerage, warehousing, freight consolidation, Asia supply chain services, and forwarding to Alaska. Additional information about the Company is available at www.matson.com.

Pacific Islands Forum statement Emergency Special Session on Ukraine-March 23, 2022

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

The Pacific Islands Forum member states with presence at the United Nations in New York, namely Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and my own country Fiji, register our deep concern at the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.

In the spirit of constructive engagement, we call on the Russian Federation to take every available measure to de-escalate the situation and return to the path of diplomacy in good faith.

We welcome dialogue between the Ukrainian and Russian governments and call for an immediate ceasefire, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to affected areas and the urgent withdrawal of military forces in accordance with internationally recognised borders.

The actions of the Russian Federation are violations of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine and are inconsistent with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We are collectively shocked at the scale of the humanitarian crisis, which has already displaced more than 10 million people.

We call on all parties to fully respect international law, international humanitarian law, and international refugee law, and to uphold human rights. In particular, we call for the protection of civilians, civilian infrastructure, medical facilities and personnel, and nuclear sites.

We applaud the hospitality of Ukraine's neighbours, who have welcomed over three million refugees. We urge that civilians fleeing conflict be treated with dignity and without discrimination.

We call attention to the particular and disproportionate risks faced by women, girls, those with disabilities and those requiring essential medical and social services during conflict and displacement.

We are concerned by the spillover effects of this conflict, particularly greater food insecurity and higher fuel prices, which are already affecting lives and livelihoods, including in the Pacific and other regions.

Our Blue Pacific relies on the rules-based international order that has promoted peace among our global family for over half a century. The challenges we collectively face today are numerous and will not be overcome without peaceful dialogue. Climate Change and COVID-19 must remain at the forefront of our global efforts. Our actions must be guided by established rules and norms.

We reaffirm the importance of the rules-based international order and recall the Preamble of the UN Charter, which calls us to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to reaffirm our faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small.

I thank you.

Arthur Albert & Robert Nakasone Jr. appointed as Chair & Vice Chair of the President's National Advisory Council for Children

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—The President's National Advisory Council for Children (PNACC), which was re-established on June 17th, 2021, has recently met, and appointed its officers. The Acting Secretary of the Department of Education, Mr. Arthur Albert, has been appointed as the Chair of the PNACC; Mr. Robert Nakasone Jr. of the Department of Justice has been appointed as the Vice Chair. The Department of Health & Social Affairs (DHSA) serves as the PNACC's Secretariat.

The PNACC's objective is to develop an integrated and comprehensive FSM Child Rights and Protection Policy (CRPP), that will include prevention, response, and services, as well as bridges to all the relevant obligations within the FSM and State Constitutions as well as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC). The PNACC will also develop an implementation plan to include: legal and policy framework, preventative and responsive services, human and financial resources management, mechanisms for effective collaboration and coordination, and information management and accountability at all levels of Government.

Members of the PNACC who were also present for the appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair included Mr. Brendy Carl, Assistant Secretary at the FSM Department of Foreign Affairs; Mr. Iven Yaropiy, Deputy Assistant Secretary at the FSM Department of Foreign Affairs; Mrs. Lucille Apis-Overhoff, Assistant Secretary for the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management; Mr. Stuard Penias, Acting Assistant Secretary for the Department of Health and Social Affairs; Mrs. Lomalida Jibemai, Statistics Specialist IV at the Department of Resources and Development; Mr. Augustine Bungmai, Monitoring & Evaluator at the Department of Education; Mr. Dionisio Saimon, Maternal and Child Health Program Manager at the Department of Health & Social Affairs; and Mr. George Isom, Country Focal Officer for Human Rights at the Department of Health & Social Affairs. It is the intent of the Government for additional members of the PNACC to include representatives from the Office of National Archives, Culture & Historic Preservation;

development partners; faith-based organizations; non-government organizations; and representatives as recommended by the Governors of the FSM States of Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae.

The PNACC originally came into existence in the early 2000's as a response to the FSM's ratification of the United Nations Convention on the CRC on May 5th, 1993. The FSM later ratified the CRC optional protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography on April 23rd, 2012. The FSM further ratified the optional protocol on the involvement of children

in armed conflict on October 26th, 2015. The CRC convention was the first Human Rights Convention that the FSM ratified after it became a member country of the United Nations on September 17th, 1991. The CRC also outlines the FSM's responsibilities in protecting children from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

The CRC recognizes that the primary responsibility for the care and protection of children falls upon a child's parents, though it also emphasizes the role of governments to keep children safe and to assist parents with their child-rearing responsibilities.



Regional Climate Change CSOs discuss gender-just solutions to the climate crises

Climate Action Network

14th of March, 2022

Port Vila, Vanuatu - The Pacific Islands Climate Action Network (PICAN) hosted a region-wide panel discussion with representatives of the Solomon Islands Climate Action Network (SICAN), Vanuatu Climate Action Network (VCAN) and Oxfam in the Pacific. The Panel Discussion titled "Gender-just Climate Solutions that will Drive the Transition to a Green Future" focused on the nexus between gender justice and climate justice, and the indigenous, Pacific-led gender-just solutions that will drive the envisioning of a green future.

Allan Taman of the Santo Sunset Environment Network (SSEN) set the scene by outlining how women are often excluded from participating in

community decision-making and policy-making, particularly around critical areas like resource management. However, if they had access to capacity building and other forms of support, women can lead in resource management as demonstrated by Santo Sunset Women Environment Network (SSWEN).

Lecturer at the Solomon Islands National University (SINU) and member of SICAN, Mary Tahu Paia, also pointed out that women and girls should be part of decision-making because they are on the frontlines of climate change because of how dependent they are on natural resources like fresh water and firewood for their livelihood, but also because they play such an important role in adapting to the climate crises. Women have knowledge of sustainable practices and resource management particularly

around areas like food security because of their traditional roles and their connection with the land and sea.

Moses Pelomo of the Kastom Gaden Association and member of SICAN expounded on this food security analysis by pointing out the various dimensions to food security and the impact of climate change on it.

Aydah Akao, Coordinator and Gender Adviser of the Network for the Indigenous Peoples of Solomons pointed out some best practices with indigenous groups and their management of natural resources. She also spoke of the need to bring in men to the conversation around gender.

The panel discussion then concluded with closing remarks from Oxfam in the

Pacific's Project Manager and Capacity Building Adviser for the Pacific Climate Change Collaboration Influencing and Learning (PACCCIL) project, Kesaia Vasutoga who reinforced the idea that climate disasters impact women and girls first and worst and pointed out the need to, as a result, centre women and girls in the conversation around climate justice. In addition, the necessity to reflect, document processes in the climate and gender justice space to ensure learning and knowledge is established.

The panel discussion was convened at the Climate Action Network's Festival of Ideas and was organised by PICAN in its efforts to reinforce the nexus between climate justice and gender justice and the interconnectedness of issues in these areas.

Mereseini Rakuita announced as SPC's Principal Strategic Lead – Pacific Women



SPC

23 March 2022

Suva, Fiji – The Pacific Community (SPC) has announced the appointment of Mereseini Rakuita as its 'Principal Strategic Lead – Pacific Women'.

Ms Rakuita will champion the organisation's work on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls to bring about the transformational changes required to improve the status of women and girls in the Pacific.

The news is receiving significant support from the region's women's movements and from SPC's partners

across the Pacific, since it was announced by SPC's Director-General Dr Stuart Minchin at SPC's launch of the Pacific Women Lead programme on 18 March.

Ms Rakuita will commence the high-level role from 4 April. A key part of her role includes working on the Pacific Women Lead programme, located in the SPC's Human Rights and Social Development (HRSD) division and funded by the Australian Government. Australia has committed AUD 170 million to the five-year programme, through its partnerships with SPC, women's funds and other development partners. SPC is the key implementing partner within the

programme, with more than AUD 56 million dedicated to its work.

Speaking after the announcement, Ms Rakuita expressed her thanks and her vision for the role, "I'm deeply humbled and honoured to be appointed to this role to serve the women, men, girls and boys of this region and to bring about greater gender equality across the region. Success for Pacific Women Lead will take close collaboration and open dialogue with SPC colleagues, member governments, development partners and civil society including faith-based organisations and the private sector. But I am confident that we share the same vision and that working together, we will achieve it. I wish to give specific thanks for the support to my appointment from the women's movements and civil society partners, including the warm messages from the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, femLINKpacific, and the Fiji Women's Rights Movement."

Pacific Women Lead is at the centre of SPC's regional work for gender equality, serving as secretariat to the Pacific Women Lead Governance Board and providing technical, convening and funding support to government ministries, civil society and other partners. The programme will apply an approach which is Pacific-owned, Pacific-

led and relevant to Pacific cultures and contexts, and underpinned by positive expressions of Pacific cultural values.

As the key implementing partner in Pacific Women Lead, SPC has the opportunity to deepen its own expertise in the area of gender equality and enable the regional technical organisation to be more gender equitable in all its work.

About Pacific Women Lead:

One of the largest funding global commitments to gender equality, Pacific Women Lead promotes women's leadership, realises women's rights, and increases the effectiveness of regional gender equality efforts. Australia has committed AUD 170 million to the five-year programme, including through its partnerships with the Pacific Community (SPC), women's funds and other development partners. The Pacific Women Lead programme is at the centre of SPC's regional work for gender equality, serving as secretariat to the Governance Board and providing technical, convening and funding support to government ministries, civil society and other partners. More: hrsd.spc.int/pacific-women-lead.

A+Jojo Scholarship builds legacy of Micronesian strength and resilience



HONOLULU, Hawaii - We Are Oceania (WAO) and the Scholarship Board for the Dr. Joakim Peter Memorial Scholarship announces the opening of applications on April 9, 2022, for the 3rd cohort of Marshallese, Micronesian, and Palauan college students dedicated to

leadership in community resiliency.

The scholarship funds emerging leaders from the Compact of Free Association (COFA) nations of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Republic of Palau pursuing undergraduate or graduate degrees who exemplify the life and values of the late Dr. Joakim "Jojo" Peter.

Jojo, as he was affectionately known among the inspired friends and colleagues who founded the scholarship, died at Kuakini Medical Center on April 9, 2019.

He was a graduate of Xavier High School in Chuuk, FSM, University of Guam, and University of Hawai'i

at Mānoa where he earned his master's in Pacific Islands Studies and a doctorate from the College of Education in Disability Studies.

Jojo was a champion for civil rights and human dignity in Hawai'i for the COFA community. He co-founded We Are Oceania (WAO), the Honolulu-based non-profit that now serves as the fiscal sponsor of the memorial fund.

Dr. Sheldon Riklon, alumnus and former faculty at the John A. Burns School of Medicine and now Associate Professor at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and the chairman of the scholarship board, said the initiative is an extension of the work Jojo had inspired many to do.

"Jojo was an extraordinary friend, educator, scholar, leader, and inspiration to many of us. This scholarship connects his legacy with the new generation of COFA youth leaders who will carry on Jojo's work of social justice into the future." Riklon said.

MORE

Since his friends and colleagues founded the scholarship in 2019, it has funded four undergraduate and graduate students.

Axel Defngin, a Hilo-born Yapese student in the Pacific Islands Studies master's degree at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and a member of

Continued on next page

Announcing the Special Presidential Envoy for Compact Negotiations

Press Statement

Antony J. Blinken, Secretary of State

MARCH 22, 2022

The United States has a special and longstanding relationship with the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau – collectively known as the Freely Associated States (FAS). We are currently engaged in negotiating amendments to certain provisions of the Compacts of Free Association with the FAS, and completing the negotiations is a priority for this Administration.

In light of the critical nature of these complex negotiations, President Biden is appointing Ambassador Joseph Yun as Special Presidential Envoy for Compact Negotiations. Ambassador Yun has more than 33 years of diplomatic experience, including as the U.S. special representative for North Korea policy and as the United States Ambassador to Malaysia.

The Compacts reflect the close relationships between the United States and the FAS and are a critical source of regional security, stability, and prosperity. Through these negotiations, we will strengthen our enduring partnerships with our close Pacific Island partners and ensure a free and open and prosperous Indo-Pacific region.

...Scholarship

Continued from previous page

the 2021 cohort, aspires “to be like Dr. Peter by assisting Pacific Islander communities with issues dealing with health and education.”

Pearlnalin Anien, a graduate of Marshall Islands High School, is a biology major at UH Hilo who dreams of becoming a medical doctor, wants “to create an everlasting impact on my country and others as well.”

Interested youth can apply online via the scholarship website (www.ajojoscholars.org) before the deadline of June 1, 2022. Students attending any accredited college or university in the United States or Pacific Islands, are eligible to apply.

The Dr. Joakim Peter Memorial Scholarship fund is fiscally sponsored by We Are Oceania (WAO), a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization in Hawaii, tax ID #85-0514098, whose mission is “to empower our Micronesian community to navigate success while honoring the integrity of our diverse heritage.” Donations to the scholarship and the many programs and services are tax deductible to the extent of the law. For more information, visit: www.weareoceania.org; (808) 754-7303

Salvation Army Guam Donation

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

Non-profits and charities receive many donations at the end of the year in correlation with Christmas. Come January, many of these organizations find themselves in a slump with a large reduction in their donations. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is always on the lookout for opportunities to aid these charities and non-profits.

The Church’s Micronesia Guam Welfare and Self-reliance department noticed an article in their local newspaper explaining how donations at the Salvation Army’s thrift store had dropped off significantly after the new year. To alleviate the lack of donations, the Church donated \$5,000 to the Salvation Army, to help feed those in need. The Church believes in the two great commandments, the second of which is to love thy neighbor as thyself. Church members not only give tithes but also offerings which make this kind of donation possible. This donation will help restock the Salvation Army’s pantries to bless the lives of those in need. All donated monies go to fill those pantries. Clients from throughout the community of Guam seek assistance from the Salvation Army.

Captains Eric and Kari Rudd are the couple overseeing Guam’s Salvation Army organization. They have been on island for two years now this June. Kari explains “there are many that are hungry, and we serve the disenfranchised. We serve those in the margins. It is the mission of The Salvation Army to serve suffering humanity without discrimination.”

The Salvation Army cannot successfully help others without generous donations. The Church welcomes partnering with the Salvation Army and supporting their program to take care of the less fortunate. We feel this is a good partnership, where we can support what they do best and that is “We are ever so grateful. We praise God and thank the LDS church”- Capt. Eric and Kari Rudd.



During Committee to Wait on the President, H.E. David W. Panuelo advocates for Dennis Belcourt as Chief Justice of the FSM Supreme Court, proposes opening borders in August 2022, and names mid-October as proposed date of the Micronesian Islands Forum

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On March 21st, 2022, the 22nd Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) began its 4th Special Session. After the opening session, His Excellency David W. Panuelo virtually received the Committee to Wait on the President. Chaired by the Honorable Esmond B. Moses, Vice Speaker of the FSM Congress, committee members included the Honorable Isaac V. Figir, the Honorable Florencio S. Harper, and the Honorable Aren B. Palik.

The meeting began with the President describing his intention to nominate the Honorable Dennis Belcourt, Associate Justice of the FSM Supreme Court, for the position of Chief Justice. President Panuelo described that Associate Justice Belcourt, with his long history of service to the FSM and keen understanding of its history and culture, would provide robust and impartial leadership at the Court. Additionally, the President noted that the former Chief Justice of the FSM Supreme Court, the Honorable Dennis Yamase, had recommended the Honorable Dennis Belcourt as his successor based on the latter's unique combination of shrewd intellect, compassionate heart, and dedication to public service.

President Panuelo also advocated for two additional nominations. Of these, the first is for Mr. Nakama Sana to serve on the Board of Trustees of the FSM Trust Fund (as opposed to the Nation's second Trust Fund with the United States frequently referred to as the Compact Trust Fund). The second of these is to request the FSM Congress to allow for the President to resubmit his former nomination of Ms. Yuko Nakasone to continue her service on the Board for the National Oceanic Resource Management Authority (NORMA). On the latter, President Panuelo noted that he met with the Board and Management of NORMA the previous week, and that they collectively shared their support for Ms. Nakasone to continue her service as a member of the Board.

The next topic of discussion was the 4th FSM Constitutional Convention. It is the understanding of the Executive Branch that the 4th FSM Constitutional Convention wishes to reconvene at the nearest practicable time so as to complete its work. In this regard, President Panuelo solicited Congress' support to consider means of supporting the Constitutional

Convention so that it can reconvene, whether that reconvening means doing so in person, virtually, or in a hybrid format. The next topic of discussion was the COVID-19 Pandemic. While the President was unable to commit to specific dates for the next repatriation flights, the President did commit to having this information finalized and disseminated by the end of March 25th, 2022, and emphasized that all four FSM States will have repatriation flights in April. President Panuelo suggested that it is possible there may be adjustments to the Pre-Quarantine process in Guam (such as by having it be slimmed to a three-day experience or a five-day experience, as opposed to a seven-day or ten-day experience). Additionally, President Panuelo advised that the FSM COVID-19 Task Force is increasingly considering targeting August 2022 as the approximate timeframe to fully open the Nation's borders, and by extension removing quarantines altogether. If this occurs, the President described, there would still likely need to be mandates on travelers demonstrating evidence of having received their COVID-19 vaccination, as well as a negative COVID-19 test, prior to entry into the FSM.

President Panuelo further advised the Committee to Wait that persons who were on the jointly approved National & State repatriation lists, but were unable to make the last repatriation flight, will receive either \$1,500 per family or \$1,000 per individual, which is consistent with the Stranded Citizens Assistance program implemented earlier in the Pandemic. The President also described that it is the Government's intention for those who were unable to make the last repatriation flight (such as by being tested positive and now stuck in Guam) to be the first priority for seats on the next flight.

Noting that many of the Nation's most urgent programming is delayed or otherwise impaired by the border closure, President Panuelo advised that it is his intention to ensure that FSM Petroleum Corporation/Vital can implement a repatriation from the Republic of Fiji to the FSM, and for that flight to be filled with essential workers for both Vital as well as the FSM National Government and the Government of Pohnpei State. Additionally, President Panuelo advised that it is his intention to prioritize the repatriation of several essential personnel working at the Department of Transportation, Communication, &

Infrastructure, such as the head of the Program Management Unit, on the next repatriation flight.

The next topic of conversation was with regards to the forthcoming Our Oceans Conference, which is to be hosted by the Republic of Palau from April 13th to 14th. Noting the importance of the Conference, the President advised that he has accepted the invitation to attend. On the premise that the President will be out of the country for that period, President Panuelo also advised that it is his intention to visit the U.S. State of Oregon so as to join the opening of the FSM Consulate in Portland on April 23rd.

The next topic of conversation was with regards to forthcoming events and conferences. President Panuelo advised that the FSM Fair—a week-long sojourn into the Nation's tourism destinations and offerings—will be held from June 27th to July 1st in Pohnpei State, to be followed every six months by an additional FSM Fair hosted by a separate FSM State in a rotation. The idea behind the FSM Fair is to boost domestic tourism awareness, and eventually international tourism activity, for when the Nation's borders reopen and the Nation has successfully transitioned from COVID-19 free to COVID-19 protected.

President Panuelo described that the next iteration of the State & National Leadership Conference is proposed to occur from July 25th to July 29th, to be hosted by the State of Yap.

Additionally, President Panuelo advised that the next iteration of the Micronesian Islands Forum is proposed to occur from October 17th to October 21st, to be hosted by the FSM National Government and by extension held in the State of Pohnpei.

It is within the realm of plausibility that a casual reader of FSM National Government Press Releases may confuse the Micronesian Islands Forum with the Micronesian Presidents Summit and, by extension, humbly request an explanation on the distinction between the two entities. The remainder of this release will describe this distinction.

The Micronesian Islands Forum and the Micronesian Presidents Summit are first distinct from each other insofar as the former has nine (9) members and the latter has five (5) members. The Micronesian Islands Forum's membership includes the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Territory of

Guam, the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the FSM National Government, and the FSM States of Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae. Key relationships in the Micronesian Islands Forum are that Presidents interact on the same level as Governors; that all islands share some form of special relationship with the United States of America (e.g. a Compact as in the case of Palau, a Covenant as in the case of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands); and that all islands have some form of shared programming (e.g. the Micronesia Challenge).

The Micronesian Presidents Summit's membership, by contrast, includes only the sovereign Micronesian Nations of the FSM, the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Kiribati, and the Republic of Nauru.

Citizens may recall that the Micronesian Islands Forum last met in July 2019 in the State of Chuuk, with key outcomes including the creation of the annual Micronesia Cleanup Day activity; by contrast, the Micronesian Presidents Summit last formally convened in September 2021 and informally convenes approximately once a month to discuss issues of mutual importance to the Micronesian subregion, such as tackling illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing.

During the 24th Micronesian Islands Forum in July 2019, the FSM was chosen to host the next iteration of the Forum. In a meeting with the Department of Resources & Development on March 17th, 2022, it was agreed that the Government ought to confirm dates for the 25th Micronesia Islands Forum, and the dates of October 17th to October 21st were chosen as the most suitable on the premise that they do not negatively impact other major events (e.g. the United Nations General Assembly, COP27), and that it would ensure the Micronesian Islands Forum still convenes prior to the conclusion of the Panuelo-George administration on May 10th, 2023. It is the hope and intent of the FSM National Government that the next Micronesian Islands Forum demonstrate a collective emergence from the COVID-19 Pandemic, with renewed focus on shared items of interest to the Micronesian islands with a special relationship with the United States.