

COM-FSM celebrates 29th Founding Day with modern adaptations of cultural dances

By **Bill Jaynes**
 The Kaselehlie Press

April 1, 2022

Pohnpei—As in previous years, students and faculty of the College of Micronesia-FSM celebrated the 29th Founding Day of the college with cultural displays and dancing. Whereas in many previous years, the event began with a parade through Kolonia Town ending at the PICS field, this year the parade and subsequent events were held on the national campus of the college. The parade began at the FSM-China Friendship Sports Center and ended at a stage in front of the library.



Tesiwo Liwy, President of the Student Body Association read the mission statement of the college followed by opening remarks by COM-FSM Interim President Karen Simion. COM-FSM Board of Regents Chair Suzanne

Gallen next delivered short remarks.

Vince Joy Perman served as the Master of Ceremony, walking

participants through the program of the day.

In the morning, the college's various student organizations demonstrated

tradition methods of cooking with local vegetables, along with rope and net making from coconut products. They

[Click here for continuation](#)

Pohnpei Auditors looking into all Legislature committee expenses after review of one showed violations

By **Bill Jaynes**
 The Kaselehlie Press

April 1, 2022

Pohnpei—In late October a concerned citizen contacted the fraud hotline of the Pohnpei Office of the Public Auditor (POPA) for clarification on whether a Senator from the Pohnpei State Legislature (PSL) can hold a public office in addition to the position

as Senator. The caller also asked POPA to look into whether or not is it “justifiable or appropriate to use public funds appropriated for the operations of the Pohnpei Legislature Standing Committees for birthday parties, and or for non-Committee related official function expenses.”

Pohnpei’s Public Auditor, Ihlen Joseph assigned POPA’s Compliance

Investigation Division (CID) to conduct a preliminary review and administrative investigation (PRAI) into those two questions. Mr. Joseph says that the conclusions drawn from PRAI led POPA to begin to take a closer look at all expenses of the Standing Committees of the PSL.

The recently concluded PRAI was limited to only one Legislative Standing

Committee program and expenditure activities in the fiscal year 2021. The management advisory report to Speaker Marvin Yamaguchi did not name the particular committee that CID reviewed. It urged the Speaker “and those charged with Legislative governance to undertake an in-depth review and assessment” of the issues.

[Click here for continuation](#)

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Pohnpei lawmakers considering changes to emergency order in effort to speed up COVID-19 repatriation efforts

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

April 5, 2022

Pohnpei—The Pohnpei State Legislature is considering several changes to the State’s COVID-19 response procedures and directives as initially issued as a Constitutional Emergency Order issued by Governor Reed Oliver and amended several times by the Legislature. The proposed changes, which have yet to leave committee, seem to be aimed at making it easier for people, some of whom have been stranded off island for up to two years, to return to their home.

Some of what they are proposing would require assent by the FSM National Government since the FSM controls borders. Knowing that, the Standing Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations (J&GO) Committee attempted to hold a public hearing on the proposed changes. Principle witnesses were to have been members of the FSM COVID-19 Task Force; however, no one from that task force appeared at the hearing.

The proposed resolution would gut

the previous definitions of who would be allowed to travel to Pohnpei from international destinations and would replace the previous definitions with the following:

“The Pohnpei COVID-19 Emergency Task Force shall enter into cooperative agreements with the FSM National COVID-19 Emergency Task Force with respect to the selection of persons to undergo quarantine and where advisable obtain entrance into the State of Pohnpei on international carriers. The Pohnpei COVID-19 Emergency Task Force shall endeavor to ensure that said selections are made, where possible, on a 50-50 percent equal selection formula between the two task forces and that all selected persons by both task forces have obtained the requisite Certificate of Qualified Entry (CQE) into the State of Pohnpei as set forth in this Constitutional Emergency Order.”

According to the proposed resolution, requirements for entry would change only in terms of listing the State’s vaccination requirements. All people entering Pohnpei would still require a copy of their passport bio-page and a

copy of a negative COVID-19 PCR test taken within 72 hours prior to arrival. Copies of COVID-19 vaccination records would still be required but the proposed resolution adds the verbiage: “with not less than two original vaccinations and, where applicable, one or more booster shots recorded thereon; PROVIDED that the Pohnpei COVID-19 Emergency Task Force may prescribe lesser standards for children under an age available for vaccinations as prescribed by the Pohnpei COVID-19 Emergency Task Force.

The remaining proposed changes to the existing Emergency Order are negligible as far as requirements for returning passengers, having more to do with removing multiple duplications of language regarding enforcement and adding a new section defining those powers at the end of the proposed resolution.

Again, the proposed changes are still being reviewed by the J&GO committee and have not yet reached the Committee of the Whole in their final form.



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CIA says \$400 K needed to repair engine on its one remaining aircraft

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

April 9, 2022

FSM—A victim of circumstance, Caroline Islands Airlines (CIA) is once again in trouble and has asked for a \$400,000 cash infusion to remedy the problem. CIA pilot Mr. Timizuka noticed a power problem in the Harbin Y-12 plane he was flying on the Pohnpei to Kosrae route that returned to Pohnpei on March 18. The Y-12 is the only remaining aircraft in CIA’s

fleet after other mishaps destroyed other planes in the fleet. Engineers completed a thorough inspection of the Y-12 on March 24. They found that the inner blades in the right engine had been damaged by a foreign object.

The CEO of CIA said that the airline’s maintenance consultant told them that the extent of the cost of the repair will likely be quite high. He said that the cost to overhaul the engine could be anywhere from \$200,000 to \$300,000

depending on the extent of the damages and any corrosion that might be found in the process of repair. The cost of a spare engine for the aircraft if \$1,000,000, an amount that bookings on the airline cannot support.

CIA has asked the FSM President to consider a \$400,000 subsidy for the repair of the engine and the logistics surrounding its safe shipping to an aircraft maintenance facility in New Zealand.

Because of pandemic emergency regulations, currently, CIA and Pacific Missionary Aviation are the only means of interstate air transportation in the FSM. This comes at a time when Yap is dealing with a medical personnel shortage and is planning to import medical personnel to the State (see article on page 3). The FSM Congress had also planned to have an in-person session in May. Those plans may need to be changed due to the lack of air transportation between the States.



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Bill Jaynes
Managing Editor

**THE NEXT ISSUE OF
THE KASELEHLIE PRESS
WILL BE RELEASED ON:
April 27, 2022
Deadline for submission of articles or
advertisements for this issue is the end
of working hours on:
Monday, April 25, 2022**

FSM national government steps in to address Yap's health care crisis

State doctors, nurses facing probe over strike threat

Joyce McClure
Pacific Island Times

April 7, 2022

Colonia, Yap--Federated States of Micronesia President David Panuelo declared an emergency on April 5 in response to the mass resignation of doctors and nurses at Yap State Hospital.

Panuelo directed the FSM National Task Force to assist Yap in "emergency hiring of medical personnel" and explore the possibility of bringing back the doctors and nurses "for as long as the Covid-19 persists."

"It has been some years since there was a discussion about adequate employee benefits and fair wages for the hospital staff," reads the letter written on Yap Medical Association letterhead.



Dominic Taruwemai

Health care workers in Yap, who receive the lowest salaries in FSM, sought to negotiate a benefits package and pay raises. "We hope that we can come to an agreement that is fair and equitable for all parties concerned."

Dr. James Yaingelou, a member of the group, said "chronically low compensation" and its impact on attracting qualified professionals to fill open positions is the top issue for the group. His base salary is \$26,000.

The DHS has struggled to fill open positions for many years and the pandemic made matters worse when other states in FSM and islands throughout the region were offering higher compensation.

The letter ended by stating, "We aim for a speedy resolution but in the event of an impasse, the collective decision of nurses, doctors and other allied healthcare workers under your employment, is to go on an infinite strike that will commence at 7:30 a.m., March 26, 2022."

"We solemnly believe that a strike should only be done as a last resort in the event of a breakdown in negotiations for the sake of all of our people, so our fervent hope is to have an amicable solution before then."

The intention for including it in the letter, according to Yaingelou, was only "to get their attention."

The Yap State Constitution prohibits public employees from striking "for the purpose of collective bargaining."

Salalu convened his cabinet on March 25. They agreed that the strike threat "violates state laws of both PSS [Public Service System] and PSS-exempted positions."

However, the constitution also states, "Employees shall have the right to form associations for the purpose of presenting their views to the government and shall be free from restraint or reprisal in exercising this right. The government shall give a reasonable opportunity to representatives of such associations to present their views."

It also states, "The regulations shall prescribe a system for hearing the views of employees on their working conditions, status, pay and related matters and for hearing and adjudicating grievances of any employee or group of employees. These regulations shall ensure that employees are free from coercion, discrimination, and reprisals and that they may have representatives of their choice."

Moses Limur, the acting attorney general, Elizabeth Phal, chief of personnel, and Taruwemai were instructed to meet with the group instead "to explain the legal ramification of the letter as it is in violation of state laws and including the consequences of going on strike against the government."

At a meeting the following Monday, the group's representatives were informed that Phal had been instructed to begin firing the health care professionals "one by one," Yaingelou said. "They began threatening us."



Elizabeth Pahl

Yaingelou advised the doctors and nurses to resign rather than face job termination.

If they were fired, they may not get another job in the state or FSM again. Resignation was the best option in this regard, however, it had to be each individual's personal decision, he said.

The group sent a second letter to the governor on March 28, reiterating their request for a meeting. The governor determined that the group was "in principle" still in violation of the state laws.

After consulting with his cabinet once more, the governor again deferred the requested meeting "until further notice."

The Yap State Action Plan notes that the resignations "or strike have left the hospital human resources capacity to less than the bare minimum."

It adds, "the hospital will only be able to barely provide a less than minimal coverage of 3 shifts within 24 hours for the next few days before it collapses because the same people will be working throughout the 24 hours each day of the week."

The state's action plan includes a budget of \$241,240 "to recruit a permanent, retired and volunteer health workforce from the FSM states, including Yap State" and reward nurses and doctors "who did not participate in the strike."

The budget breakdown is \$91,740 for the recruitment of 22 workers for 30 days at \$139 per diem; \$15,000 for the recruitment of retired workers for 30 days; \$120,000 for three charter flights; and \$14,500 for special awards for 29 nurses and doctors.

On April 4, the group was informed that no one had been fired from their jobs and that the resignations were not being honored. "They said we had seven days to respond before terminations would begin," said Yaingelou.

The group decided to hold off for a couple more days and see if the governor would meet with them. "They were still threatening us," Yaingelou added.



Jesse Salalu

Thirty-nine doctors and nurses (not 40 as previously reported) resigned from the state hospital last week after their attempts to negotiate with state leaders were rejected.

The president issued the new emergency directive while the FSM remains under a coronavirus-related public health emergency status until May 31. Yap Gov. Jesse Salalu issued an emergency declaration following the mass resignation last week.

Panuelo authorized the secretary of Justice to assist Yap in investigating the medical staff's actions—including their threat "to go on an infinite strike"—and to take appropriate legal actions.

The health care professionals sent a letter on March 23 to Salalu and Speaker Vincent Figir, according to Dominic Taruwemai, acting director of the Department of Health Services.

The letter was signed by 47 health care workers requesting a meeting to discuss current Yap hospital medical staff benefits and salaries.



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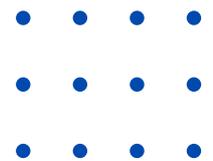
- Has primary responsibility for the quality of the institution including planning, development, organizing, selecting and developing personnel, and assessing institutional effectiveness with the primary focus on student success;
- Secures sufficient funding for the college by enhancing relationships with the FSM and State governments, increasing student enrollment, securing funding for implementation of the college's master infrastructure development plan, obtaining grants, and growing the endowment fund;
- Establishes a collegial process that sets the college's values, goals, and priorities;
- Appreciates cultural diversity and supports an inclusive college community;
- Ensures the college sets institutional performance standards for student achievement;
- Ensures that evaluation and planning rely on high quality research and data analysis of external and internal conditions;
- Ensures that educational planning is integrated with resource planning and allocation to support student achievement and learning;
- Ensures that the college's annual budget allocates resources to support learning and achievement;
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- Assures the implementation of statutes, regulations, and Board of Regents policies and assures that college practices are consistent with the college's mission and policies, including effective control of budget and expenditures;
- Maintains a highly visible leadership role, working and communicating effectively with the communities served by the college including the Board of Regents, faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness and standing of the college;
- Perform such other additional duties as the Board may require.



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We Care Student Aid & Laptop Student Care for SUMMER 2022

The College of Micronesia-FSM We Care Student Aid is intended to support students facing financial hardships due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This aid provides the selected students the supplemental financial assistance to cover outstanding (or unpaid) tuition and matriculation fees, including on-campus room and board fees after all federal grants and national and state scholarships are applied. This student aid must be applied to the recipient's outstanding

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To be eligible for consideration, applicants must be:

1. Be a continuing or returning student at COM-FSM in the summer of 2022.
2. Have incurred outstanding (or

- unpaid) balance at COM-FSM on tuition and required matriculation fees, including on-campus room and board fees during Spring 2020 to Spring 2022.
3. Enroll in an undergraduate program of study at COM-FSM in the summer of 2022.

Click [HERE](#) for the application form.



Deadlines will be from April 06, 2022- June 03, 2022 (5:00 PM Pohnpei/Pacific Time).

Laptop Student Care for spring of 2022 Click [HERE](#) for the application form.

College Welcomes Regent Arnold

The College of Micronesia-FSM (COM-FSM) welcomes a new member to its Board of Regents, the governing body for the general management and control of the college. The board consists of five members, one representative from each of the four states and the national government. On February 1, 2022, Congress confirmed Mr. Jeffrey S. Arnold as a new regent of the college. He currently is an entrepreneur serving as the marketing manager for UPDATED. Prior to going into private business, he worked at COM-FSM from January 1990 to September 2016 serving as an administrative assistant, assistant campus director, and student

services coordinator. In addition to his long service to the college, Regent Arnold is also an alumnus of the college, then Community College of Micronesia (CCM), receiving an AS in business administration. He also attended the University of Guam for two years. Regent Arnold replaces Mr. Johannes Berdon as the Chuuk State representative, who has completed two terms on the board.

The college is happy to welcome Mr. Arnold back to the college in his new capacity as a regent of the college. Regent Arnold attended his first board meeting during its March 11, 2022, meeting. In addition to endorsing several policy reviews and a new policy, the



board endorsed for ACCJC review a new BS program in Business Administration with emphasis in Accounting and adopted a resolution to recognize and commend former regent, Johannes Berdon, for his commitment and dedication to the college while a regent.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Genevy Samuel
Instructor
Chuuk Campus

All Vital personnel arriving on Fiji Airways test negative for COVID and now in 10 days of quarantine

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

April 6, 2022

Pohnpei—As reported in the March 30 issue of The Kaselehlie Press from an FSM press release regarding anticipated repatriation flights to the FSM, the anticipated charter flight of Fiji Airways arrived in Pohnpei on April 6.

Of the more than 30 passengers aboard, all but one were personnel essential to the ongoing operation of Vital, the Micronesia Petroleum Corporation, which among other things supplies all of the fuel that keeps the FSM running, including airlines that service the FSM. One passenger was a physician bound for Yap.

Though some residents of Pohnpei were surprised and concerned regarding the arrival of the flight, it was a planned flight with all COVID-19 safeguards in place, including even more stringent than usual quarantine requirements for the passengers. An FSM spokesperson

said that arriving passengers underwent seven days of quarantine in Fiji and will be required to spend 10 days in quarantine in Pohnpei.

Vital's original plan had been to charter a cruise ship to carry their vital personnel from Fiji. Vital had hoped that under that plan the personnel would have served their quarantine periods while en route on the vessel. Those plans did not materialize and so Vital chartered the Fiji Airways jet.

Without the arriving personnel, many of Vital's required certifications for operations would not be able to be completed, which could have had the potential of interrupting some fueling services, among other things.

The FSM spokesperson said that both the FSM and Pohnpei COVID task forces approved the flight arrangement and are stringently monitoring the condition of all passengers. All passengers aboard tested negative for the pandemic virus.

REQUEST FOR QUOTATION

Date : 06 April 2022



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OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is an intergovernmental organization established in 1951 and is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits both migrants and society.

In the framework of Typhoon Wutip Reconstruction Project, the IOM invites interested eligible Suppliers to submit Quotations for the supply and delivery of construction materials to Weno, Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia.

More detailed information on this Request for quotation are posted on the following website: <https://www.iom.int/construction-materials-weno-chuuk-federated-states-micronesia>

Quotation must be submitted by email to skushchak@iom.int and sshrestha@iom.int or in a sealed envelope and hand delivered to Pohnpei Office with subject 'Construction materials for 40 New Houses and Reconstruction of 5 Public Infrastructure and Utilities in outer islands in Chuuk, FSM' to:

IOM Pohnpei Office
Suite 2G, Pohn Umpomp Building
Pohn Umpomp Place, Nett Municipality

Quotations must be submitted on or before 06 May 2022 before 1600 hours Pohnpei time. Late Quotations will not be accepted.
Quotations shall be valid 90 days after deadline for submission.

IOM reserves the right to accept or reject any quotation, and to cancel the procurement process and reject all quotations at any time prior to award of Purchase Order or Contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Supplier/s or any obligation to inform the affected Supplier/s of the ground for IOM's action.

Very truly yours,
Salvatore Sortino
Chief of Mission
IOM Micronesia

India-UN Development Partnership donates sports equipment to Pohnpei Sport Development Office

Kolonia, Pohnpei – On March 18th, 2022, the Pohnpei State Scholastic Equity Games through the Pohnpei State Sports Office hosted the asset turnover/transfer of sports equipment, banners and t-shirts funded by the India-UN Development Partnership funded Strengthening the FSM's Gender Machinery Project. The UNDP FSM Office Operational Manager, Ms. Alexandria Byaruhanga, turned over the equipment to the Pohnpei State Sport Coordinator, Mr. Ramsy Joab, who received it on behalf of the Pohnpei State Scholastic Equity Games.

The India-UN Development Partnership funded Strengthening the FSM's Gender Machinery Project Output 1.6 covers organizing and

supporting gender equality scholastic games for youth to foster national pride and gender equality. US\$70,000.00 dollars was allocated for supporting these scholastic equity games which has started in Pohnpei this month and will continue to the other three FSM States (Chuuk, Kosrae and Yap). The FSM Sport Coordinator, Mr. Sabastian Tairuwepiy, is coordinating these equity games.

Witnessing the turnover were, on behalf of the FSM DHSA Secretary, Mr. Augustine Sue, the FSM Sport Coordinator, Mr. Sabastian Tairuwepiy, the Gender Project Manager, Mr. John Curley, and Mr. Bill Jaynes from the Kaselehlie Press.



...Pohnpei Auditors

Continued from front page

CID found one instance where a Senator has been holding and continues to serve on "an FSM National Government entity's governing Board of Trustees." Pohnpei State's Constitution specifically bars Senators from holding another public office besides that of Senator. "No member of the Legislature may hold another public office in, be employed by, or receive other compensation or remuneration from any government, governmental instrumentality, or any organization whose income is derived principally from Public moneys," the Pohnpei State Constitution says.

CID also determined "two instances where public funds appropriated

specifically to finance the operations of a Legislature Standing Committee in fiscal year 2021 were utilized to pay for the following:

- \$339 for a birthday party for a fellow Senator held in Chuuk State;
- \$977 for hotel and rental car expenses for a high official and party while visiting Pohnpei."

POPA found that the \$1,316 were outside and not part of the Standing Committee's official functions or operations.

POPA shared a copy of the Management Advisory Report to the Governor, the Director of Treasury and Administration. They also shared a more detailed copy of the PRAI with the Acting Attorney General and other Pohnpei State Government officials.

WCPFC and Caroline Fisheries Commission sponsors first PFC fishing tournament of the year

By Pohnpei Fishing Club

April 2, 2022

Pohnpei—24 boats registered for the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Fishing Tournament (Tuna Commission/WCPFC)/Caroline Fisheries Corporation of the Pohnpei Fishing Club on April 2. Cash prizes for the tournament totaled \$2500. It was the first Pohnpei Fishing Club tournament of the year.

Due to the La Nina caused blustery weather of the last several months, tournament organizers were forced to delay the tournament. A dangerous sounding weather forecast earlier in the week released by the National Weather

Service threatened the possibility of cancelling yet again, but the weather cleared and the tournament went off in grand form, though participants reported rough sea conditions.

The winning fish of the day was an 89.5-pound yellow fin caught and landed by young Marvey Spencer, Jr. The prize for his catch was \$700. Two sail fish of 67 pounds and 58.5 pounds respectively were caught for the \$500 and \$350 second and third prizes. Anglers landing those fish were Westcott Panuelo and Kumer Panuelo.

WCPFC and Caroline Fisheries Corporation also provided prizes for the largest fish of each species. Winners in

that category each won \$150 in cash. For Yellow Fin, Johnny Brackett caught the largest at 57.5 pounds. Rose Ioanis caught a 23-pound Wahoo for the prize for that species. Ypeye Esperanza landed a 19.5 Barracuda for top fish in that category. Dicklet Paul landed the prize-winning fish in both the Mahi Mahi and Skipjack categories at 17 pounds and 12.5 pounds respectively.

Patricia Edwin won the top prize of \$100 for lady anglers with a 15.5 Barracuda. Dave Spencer won \$100 as the top junior angler for his 12-pound Wahoo.

The weigh-in and prize giving were a big success. We had a nice crowd at the weigh-in, and there was fresh wahoo

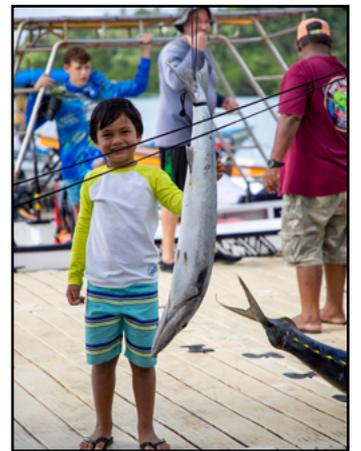
sashimi going around.

The club supports the Public Library, and thanks go to Uta and Cheryl for selling the hot dogs and sausages.

We also want to thank our volunteers, including Virgie on scores, weigh master James Cook, and all his helpers, and Doc Hedson on the microphone.

We cannot hold these tourneys without all the help we receive.

This especially is true of our sponsors, so thank you again Western & Central Pacific Fisheries Commission/Caroline Fisheries Corporation.



Pohnpei Veterans of Pohnpei honor veterans involved in culture and tradition beginning with His Majesty Herbert Hebel

US Veterans of Pohnpei

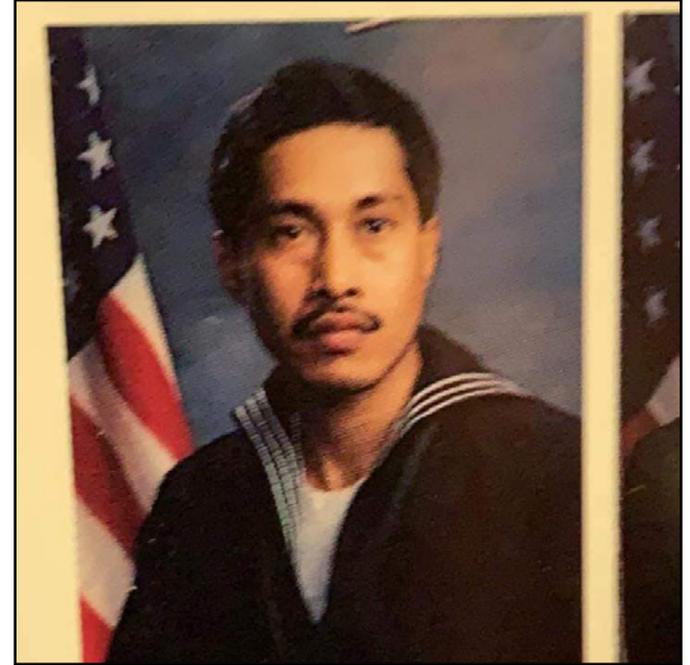
March 30, 2022

Pohnpei—USVPA (US Veterans of Pohnpei) would like to acknowledge veterans who are involved in our culture and tradition. Culture and tradition should be the center focus of our children's education to understand identity of who they are. We thank veterans in culture and tradition for your leadership in our communities and throughout Pohnpei State.

This month's Veteran profile is his Royal Highness Nahmwarki en wehi en Madolenimw, His Majesty Herbert Hebel.

" Nahmwahrki en Wein Madolenimw, was born in Wone, Kittu. He attended Wone Elementary School, Pohnpei Island Central School, and the College of Micronesia FSM where he attained an Associates Degree in Education.

He worked early on after graduation as a Head Start classroom teacher at Wone Elementary School. He later became an Elementary School classroom teacher before taking the



test for the United States Armed Forces and serving in the United States Navy.

He said that he joined the U.S. Armed Forces as a way of thanking the United States for saving his parent's life when they liberated Pohnpei from Japanese occupation

Since he had the title of Lempwei

Lapalap in Madolenimw at the time, he first asked the permission of then Isipahu Salter Salvador Hadley which he gave.

He entered the US Navy on October 13, 1987 and served for four years aboard the USS Constellation, a CV 64 class aircraft carrier. He excelled in the Navy and after a few months

of service was named Sailor of the Month, but since he was not a U.S. citizen, he could advance no higher. His active-duty status ended on October 13, 1991 at which time he relocated to Kansas City, Missouri. He remained on inactive reserve for another four years "

~ A Kaselehlie Press excerpt.

Federated States of
Micronesia
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We Are You

...Founding Day

Continued from front page

also demonstrated traditional methods of weaving and as might be expected, the Pohnpei Student Organization demonstrated the traditional sakau ceremony.

The crowd noise rose substantially in the afternoon as the student organizations each took the stage to perform, sometimes dramatically “modernized” versions of dances originating from their cultures.

The PingMok group began with the familiar warrior dance to the “drum beat” of the Mwokillese women as they beat on cracker tins and provided their traditional chant. Pingalapese dancers performed a traditional and graceful sitting dance.

The Kosrae Student Organization performed their traditional stick dance followed by the Yap Student Organization who announced proudly that after years of performing traditional Yapese dances, this year they would change things up. Entering to a hip hop tune, the Yapese students, dressed mainly in their traditional attire, danced in a more modern fashion to the same hip hop song.

It would be completely inappropriate to say that any one student organization’s performance was more popular than another but certainly, the ChuuChok Student Organization, which performed the longest of any of the others by a factor of at least three, elicited more loud audience participation than any other. At least whenever male dancers were involved in any way in their performances, the dance moves they made were largely sexual in nature. Much of the crowd stood to their feet screaming their encouragement.

The Pohnpei Student Organization was the last to perform and again opted for a modern dance to a song in Pohnpeian with a modern beat.

After the last of the official performances, some members of the crowd ran forward and gave spontaneous performances of their own.

Vice President of Administrative Services Joseph Habuchmai gave the closing remarks.



U.S. Embassy Kolonia hosted Our Ocean Youth virtual watch party at College of Micronesia

U.S. Embassy Kolonia

U.S. Embassy Kolonia, in partnership with the College of Micronesia-FSM (COM-FSM) hosted

an Our Ocean Youth Talanoa last Thursday April 7. The Talanoa (or discussion) was run by students from the Marine Science classes.



The Talanoa is a lead up to the upcoming Our Ocean Conference which will be held in Palau this week. The virtual program featured youth ocean climate activists from around the Pacific. Ms. Luan Gilmete represented the Federated States of Micronesia and spoke about some of the ongoing youth-led climate activities occurring in Micronesia. Luan is an environmental activist and co-founder

of KOHWA Organization, a non-governmental organization dedicated to environmental stewardship. She is the Communication Officer for the Green Climate Fund Project on climate resilient food security for farming households, and an alumni for the U.S. Department of State Community Solutions Program, Our Ocean Conference is co-hosted by

the Republic of Palau and the United States of America.

This year marks the seventh conference. The Conference will be a key moment for countries, civil society, and industry to commit to concrete and significant actions to protect the ocean.

Throughout the six previous conferences, participants have made more than 1,400 commitments worth approximately \$91.4 billion and protected at least five million square miles of ocean. You can learn more about the U.S. Department of State Young Pacific Leader's Program at <https://www.facebook.com/YoungPacificLeaders/>



www.vitalenergy.fm

200 young scientists display their knowledge and learning at PICS Science Fair

By *Bill Jaynes*
The Kaselehlie Press

April 8, 2022

Pohnpei—On Friday morning, April 8, 200 students of Pohnpei Island Central School (PICS) displayed their science acumen at the PICS Science Fair.

Artificial volcanoes erupted. Electricity arced. A 3-dimensional printer spit out plastic figures. Landslides slid. Pointers pointed at everything from models of the human body to the real thing. One display of solar panels constructed from used compact discs was especially intriguing. Planets whirled and the volume in the room was nearly deafening as students, not just from PICS but from other schools, elbowed their way through the crowd trying to get a view of the many displays of scientific learning and knowledge.

Topics of science projects ranged through topics of General Science,

Biology, Chemistry, Health and Environment, Robotics, Physics, and Astronomy.

Science Chairperson Rhodora Bacalando was the chair for the event. She was supported by ninth grade General Science teachers Marissa Semens, Teerebwas Tekonaba, and Stanley Silbanuz. In Biology, 10th grade teachers were Burton Eliam, Nancylynn Peter, and Wayne Diopulos. 11th grade Chemistry teachers were Margarita Tecson and Tekaeto Diopulos. 12th grade teachers taught two science disciplines. They were Health and Environmental Innovation Adviser Borauea Neemia, and Physics and Young Astronomer's Club Adviser Rhodora M. Bacalando.

The PICS Principal is Steve Seiola. The Vice Principal is Sinter Alexander. The Science Department is under the direction of Vice Principal's office, the Office of Instructional Support.



REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (INDIVIDUAL CONSULTING SERVICES) FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA SUSTAINABLE ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PROJECT

Assignment Title: Financial Management Specialist
Reference No: FSM-DTCI-6039-CS-INDV

The Government of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) has received a Project Readiness Grant (PRF) from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to assist in the preparation of the FSM Sustainable Road Infrastructure Investment Project (SRIIP). The PRF will be used to lay the groundwork for the ensuing project by supporting, i) upstream project pipeline and sector studies to identify the policies, strategies and investments for the ensuing project, (ii) the preparation of feasibility studies, designs and bid documents for critical climate resilient road, bridge or drainage improvement works to be implemented under the ensuing project, (iii) the design and implementation of a small-scale pilot project and, (iv) setting up organizational arrangements for the SRIIP.

Scope of Assignment

The main objective of the Financial Management Specialist (FMS) position is to provide accounting and financial management support for the PRF activities and to assist in setting up the financial and management information systems for the ensuing project. The FMS will be based in the Program Management Unit of DTC&I but will work closely with the Department of Finance and Administration (DOFA).

Duration of the Assignment and Estimated Time Input

This is a part-time assignment and the Consultant will provide 12 months of services over a two year period from June 1, 2022 to May 31, 2024.

The Department of Transportation, Communication and Infrastructure now invites eligible individuals ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services (attach curriculum vitae with description of experience in similar assignments, similar conditions, etc. and the details of two references). Firms' staff may express interest through the employing firm for the assignment and, under such situation, only the experience and qualifications of individuals shall be considered in the selection process.

The criteria for selecting the Consultant are:

Mandatory

- Bachelor's Degree in Accounting, Finance or Business Administration
- Professional qualification in accounting (CPA, CA, or equivalent) – note: experience of 10 years or more in accounting may be considered in lieu of a professional qualification.
- Minimum of 10 years working experience of which at least 5 years should be in accounting
- Familiarity with public sector accounting systems.
- Fluency in written and spoken English

Desirable

- Experience in setting up and managing project accounting systems
- Experience on donor funded projects

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours. The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment is attached and can be found at the following website: www.tci.gov.fm.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail, or by e-mail) by Friday, April 29th 2022.

Eileen Mackenzie
Administrative Officer
Program Management Unit (PMU)
Department of Transportation, Communication and Infrastructure (DTC&I)
Palikir, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)
Tel: (+691) 320 2080
Email: eymcnz7@gmail.com
Web: www.tci.gov.fm



Bank of the Federated States of Micronesia
Statements of Income
Years Ended December 31, 2021 and 2020

Bank of the Federated States of Micronesia
Statements of Condition
December 31, 2021 and 2020

<u>ASSETS</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
Cash and due from banks	\$3,844,018	\$3,216,941
Federal funds sold	4,510,000	5,565,000
Interest-bearing deposits in banks	43,683,015	72,677,394
Cash and cash equivalents	52,037,033	81,459,335
Interest-bearing deposits in banks	22,188,000	17,278,000
Securities available for sale	79,223,191	52,743,058
Loans, net of allowance for loan losses	52,893,204	51,225,274
Accrued Interest receivable	666,496	762,060
Prepaid expenses and other assets	563,878	568,987
Premises and equipment, net	1,821,011	1,879,540
Total Assets	\$209,392,813	\$205,916,254
<u>LIABILITIES AND STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY</u>		
Liabilities:		
Deposits:		
Noninterest-bearing	63,868,298	84,417,670
Interest-bearing	117,413,926	92,978,894
Total deposits	181,282,224	177,396,564
Accrued interest payable	2,864	6,215
Accrued expenses and other liabilities	795,093	1,017,184
Total liabilities	182,080,181	178,419,963
Commitments and contingencies		
Stockholders' equity:		
Common Stock, \$5 par value, 1,000,000 shares authorized; 934,348 shares issued and outstanding	4,671,740	4,671,740
Additional paid-in capital	4,663,576	4,663,576
Retained earnings	17,878,377	16,934,654
Accumulated other comprehensive income (loss)	98,939	1,226,321
Total stockholders' equity	27,312,632	27,496,291
Total Liabilities & Stockholder's Equity	\$209,392,813	\$205,916,254

Interest income:		
Loans		
Interest-bearing deposits	2021	2020
Investment securities	\$4,413,191	\$4,690,606
	342,205	549,994
	995,029	1,036,371
Federal funds sold	4,718	12,027
Total interest income	5,755,143	6,288,998
Interest expense:		
Savings	42,429	85,931
Other time deposits	23,363	63,702
Total interest expense	65,792	149,633
Net interest income	5,689,351	6,139,365
Provision for loan losses		
	5,000	335,000
Net interest income after loan losses	5,684,351	5,804,365
Non-interest income:		
Loan fee income	326,080	265,141
Service charges on deposit accounts	178,630	153,747
Other	423,479	412,146
Total Non-interest Income	928,189	831,034
Non-interest expense:		
Salaries and wages	2,073,808	2,088,282
Employee benefits	390,461	379,526
Occupancy	342,464	361,347
Data processing	336,857	285,122
Gross Receipts and use taxes	225,112	167,343
Furniture and equipment	207,708	217,244
Electronic banking	190,726	201,867
Correspondent bank fees	147,165	131,638
Telephone	138,475	164,068
Stationary and supplies	123,952	57,673
Insurance	108,765	99,216
Director and shareholder	95,113	68,052
Travel	55,000	36,600
FDIC deposit insurance	54,000	27,425
Business development	15,010	12,750
Credit and collection	11,178	29,905
Postage	8,823	6,159
Teller and operating losses	2,369	1,775
Professional fees	715	95,754
Miscellaneous	57,272	39,303
Total Non-Interest Expense	4,584,973	4,471,049
Net Income	2,027,567	2,164,350
Other comprehensive Income (loss):		
Net unrealized gain (loss) on investment securities	(1,127,382)	631,125
Comprehensive income	900,185	2,795,475

U.S. Embassy wears black for third year in support of Sexual Assault Awareness Month

U.S. Embassy Kolonia

The U.S. Embassy Kolonia's #Blackout Violence Campaign continues for its third year. According to the International Office of Migration Statistics, one in three women in Micronesia experience physical or sexual violence by their partner in their lifetime. The Embassy team (pictured below) will wear black each Thursday in April, in-step with local organizations and regional American Embassies and U.S. Government Offices in Guam. Wearing black each Thursday is a highly visible way to raise awareness about Sexual Assault and supports Micronesia's initiatives against Gender Based Violence.



U.S. Embassy team members wearing black for Sexual Assault Awareness Month #Blackout Violence Campaign

WHO, Government of Japan, and Governments of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and Palau partner to enhance COVID-19 preparedness and response

The World Health Organization

The World Health Organization (WHO), the Government of Japan and the Governments of the Republic of Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of Palau are partnering together to enhance COVID-19 preparedness and response in the three Pacific island countries. The Government of Japan is providing US\$ 697,101 funding through WHO with the project focusing on remote and outer islands in the Marshall Islands, FSM and Palau.

The partnership is coming at an opportune time as several Pacific countries and areas are responding to COVID-19 cases and community transmission for the first time. Palau faced a temporary surge of active cases from December 2021 to March 2022, resulting in nearly 4,000 cumulative cases all reported in 2022. While the Marshall Islands has reported only four imported cases in 2020 and FSM has had no cases so far, it is likely that the virus will eventually enter the countries at some point.

This latest partnership builds on two years of COVID-19 preparedness efforts in the Pacific. The Marshall Islands, FSM and Palau heeded WHO's warnings in early 2020 and, since that time, have been implementing measures including effective border controls, preparing intensive care unit beds and isolation units, and, more recently, rolling out COVID-19 vaccines. However, people living in outer islands in the Pacific are at greater risk if COVID-19 hits due to shortage in health workers, facilities and services in these remote areas and the difficulty in accessing the main islands for these services. The one-year project will address these urgent needs by strengthening and establishing national emergency medical teams, providing logistics and capacity building support, prepositioning critical equipment and supplies, and engaging with health workers and the communities in the remote islands in Marshall Islands, FSM and Palau.

National emergency medical teams (EMT) are composed of health professionals – such as doctors, nurses, pharmacists, logisticians – that deploy and respond rapidly to sudden onset emergencies or outbreaks. WHO has been supporting and coordinating the EMT initiative across



FSM Secretary for Health Marcus Samo and Japan's Ambassador to the FSM Michigami Hisashi during formal virtual handover ceremony

the Pacific with five countries having fully established their own national EMT. The project will fast-track these efforts to launch, train and enhance readiness for deployment of the Marshall Islands Medical Assistance Team (MI-MAT) in the Marshall Islands, KLEMAT in Palau, and four more teams – one for each state – in FSM.

The project will also involve the training of emergency medical teams and health workers in clinical management and infection prevention and control, as well as support technicians and logisticians in emergency preparedness logistics and maintenance. Critical medical equipment and supplies and communication satellite phones will be procured and prepositioned. In addition, risk communication and community engagement will be strengthened to help people to understand how to safely care for mildly ill family members at home.

Quotes from the partners:

Dr Mark JACOBS, WHO Representative to the South Pacific and Director of Pacific Technical Support:

“Supporting Pacific island countries and areas in preparing for and responding to COVID-19 continues to be a critical area of work for us. As we see increasing cases of COVID-19 in the Pacific, it is all the more important that we enhance these measures to protect people on hard-to-reach outer islands. We thank the Governments of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and Palau



The Government of Japan, Ministries of Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and Palau, and the World Health Organization partner to enhance COVID-19 preparedness and response. The partnership was officially launched through a virtual event on 4 April 2022.

for their leadership and the Government of Japan for their contribution to ensure that we save lives.”

Quotes from Ministries of Health

Honorable Bruce Bilimon, Minister of Health and Human Services, Republic of Marshall Islands:

“Marshall Islands has established our national EMT called MI-MAT (Marshall Islands Medical Assistance Team) with support of WHO. We are very proud that MI-MAT has been already deployed for a drought response and we trust this additional support by Japan will boost the team's capability to prepare for COVID-19 and protect people in our neighbouring islands.”

Honorable Marcus Samo, Secretary of Health and Social Affairs, Federates States of Micronesia:

“FSM consists of four states in four different islands with many scattered islands, causing significant geographic challenge for emergency response in a timely manner. All States in the nation have established emergency response system, but not full scale EMT program. Through this partnership with Japan and WHO, all of FSM states will level up their preparedness for COVID-19 and other health emergencies.”

Honorable Gaafar J. Uherbelau, Minister of Health and Human Services, Republic of Palau:

“Palau's ETM known as KLEMAT, means the rope that holds the sails of our traditional canoes. It signifies good navigation, governance and leadership. As we would like Palau to be fully prepared for another surge of COVID-19 or any other outbreak, I welcome this valued

partnership with the Government of Japan and the WHO to make KLEMAT a beacon of hope to safeguard the health and lives of our People.”

Quotes from Embassies of Japan

H.E. KARASAWA Akira, Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Palau:

“The surge of COVID-19 cases in Palau since last December has clearly showed the significance of the emergency operation team of the Ministry of Health and Human Services. I hope this project will contribute to enhancing the capacity of the team furthermore as another showcase of Japan's assistance to Palau in the medical field.”

H.E. MICHIGAMI Hisashi, Ambassador of Japan to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM):

“The FSM is one of the few COVID-19 free countries in the world but, it is necessary to prepare for the time when COVID-19 eventually arrives to the FSM. I hope this project will contribute to strengthen the FSM's medical preparedness based on the outstanding cooperation between Japan and WHO.”

H.E. TANAKA Kazunari, Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of the Marshall Islands:

“The Republic of the Marshall Islands is one of a few countries that have maintained COVID-19 free condition through strict immigration control measures and promoting vaccination, although the vaccination rate of the outer islands is lower than that of the capital. It is expected that this project, together with the provision of a medical ship by Japan to RMI, will strengthen RMI's medical services for infectious diseases including COVID-19 in the outer islands.”

Education's more fun at Chuuk High School

Students enjoy education with Church donated laptops, sewing machines, and sports equipment

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

The borders of the Federated States of Micronesia continue to be closed to travel. This has not hindered The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from giving aid to the islands. Due to border closures, funds are short, The Church's donation of laptops, sewing machines, and sports equipment goes a long way to aid the school in educating their students with the latest technology and assist them to stay fit.

Last December, the Chuuk High School principal, Jason Reiong, contacted Elder William HK Davis at The Church's Welfare and Self-reliance Department in Micronesia Guam requesting assistance to get the necessary tools and equipment to help the students succeed in their education. The Church arranged to ship this equipment by DHL and it was delivered.

Now that Chuuk High School has received this donation, the Church followed up with how this donation is being used and the benefits the students are gaining from it.

Laptops aid learning and an efficient storage cabinet charge and securely stores the laptops when not in use. The students seem enthusiastic about their new supplies.

It's heartwarming to see photos of the student's excitement and big smiles. The Church Welfare department smiles as well to see how it is benefiting so many youths to be physically fit and educated in these various vocational areas.

Thanks to many Church members through tithes and offerings the Church can make a significant difference in the lives of many students and families. Chuuk is just one example of how these donations bless lives and make a difference in the world.



U.S. Embassy rolls out new Vaccination Vehicle to provide a boost to Pohnpei's Covid-19 Vaccination Program on World Health Day:

U.S. Embassy Kolonia

Ambassador Carmen G. Cantor, World Health Organization Country Liaison Officer, Momoe Takeuchi, Director Wincener David, Pohnpei State Department of Health, Chief of Public Health Norleen Oliver Deorio, the Pohnpei Public Health team and U.S. Embassy team members commemorated #worldhealthday2022 last Thursday April 7 with the roll-out of a new Vaccination Vehicle. This 15-passenger Ford Freightliner van was donated by the U.S. Embassy Kolonia's Defense Attaché Office to assist Pohnpei State with vaccination efforts throughout the island.

Ambassador Cantor and Deputy Chief of Mission Benjamin Dille also received their second COVID-19 booster shots during the event. U.S. Ambassador Carmen G. Cantor said "The Vaccination Vehicle continues our deep and enduring partnership with Pohnpei State Public Health. The van can carry Pohnpei Health Workers anywhere on the island to provide Covid-19 vaccinations, including the very important booster shots. A warm kalahngan, thank you, and muchas gracias to Pohnpei State Public Health team continued efforts to keep our communities safe!"



TUNE IN TO POHNPEI'S #1 RADIO

PARADISE RADIO

FM 89.5 V6WI

2°C not an option for the Pacific, decarbonisation a must!

Pacific Islands Climate Action Network (PICAN)

07 April 2022

The publication of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group III report on climate mitigation only confirms what vulnerable and marginalised communities, indigenous people and climate activists have been saying for years—we are on the brink of climate catastrophe if we do not immediately and drastically reduce fossil fuel production, terminate fossil fuel subsidies, and phase out dirty energy entirely in the very near future.

The Pacific and its people remain at the forefront of this crisis, already battling the consequences of years of climate inaction. Our urgent calls for a 1.5°C limit to warming, a threshold that will still see the Pacific endure serious loss and damage, has come to a tipping point.

Without an immediate and significant reduction in emissions across all sectors and regions, that 1.5°C goal is out of reach. If we do not strengthen mitigation efforts, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions

are projected to lead to a warming of 3.2°C, delivering an unrecognisable and unjust future for the people and communities of the Pacific Islands.

In response to the IPCC report, Lavetanalagi Seru, Regional Policy Coordinator for the Pacific Island Climate Action Network, said: “The scientific evidence becomes more damning with each IPCC report. The IPCC report is clear about the urgency to increase the pace, depth and breadth of mitigation efforts, in order to protect vulnerable communities. Historic polluters such as the U.S, Russia, Brazil, U.K, Canada, European nations, Japan and Indonesia, including our fossil fuel addicted neighbour - Australia, need to urgently reduce their real emissions within this decade, or otherwise, they are writing a death sentence for the Pacific island nations”.

George Koran, Coordinator for the Vanuatu Climate Action Network, added: “The recent decision taken by OPEC and its allies to continue to increase fossil fuel production contradicts the urgency of mitigation approaches highlighted in

this working group report. This is why the Vanuatu government is taking the initiative to pursue an Advisory Opinion from the International Court of Justice on the nexus of climate change and human rights. It is evident not just in the Pacific but across the globe that climate change is undermining the enjoyment of fundamental human rights promised to everyone”.

Noelene Nabulivou, Executive Director, DIVA for Equality, Convenor - Women Defend Commons Network, Chair - PICAN Gender and CC Working Group, added: “This is about survival chances of climate frontline communities in the face of severe loss and damage that we already face, a reality that gets worse with every half-degree rise. Industrialised countries must cut emissions immediately and drastically. Coal has to go and we are no longer talking about a just transition--this is about urgent decarbonisation.

Nabulivou also highlighted Chapter 18 of the groundbreaking cross-chapter box on ‘Gender, Climate Justice & Transformative Pathways’ of the report, as being critical to climate-just response,

including a table linking to SDG5 & a regional table of gender & climate action. “We will only achieve the scale, speed and depth of change if we move urgently together on gender justice, human rights, socio-economic, ecological and climate justice, for all. We have the options. We must move!”

The publication of the final IPCC report for this sixth assessment cycle makes clear that politics and profit—not science, technology or lack of understanding—continue to be the main barrier to emissions reductions and meaningful climate action.

What is also made clear by the report is that the window of action is extremely narrow but the technology, solutions, and pathways exist to severely slash carbon emissions in the coming years and into the next century, and keep open the possibility of limiting warming by 1.5°C—a lifeline for the Pacific. There is no other way for Islander people to be safe and be able to live in the places of our ancestors, and our birth. As we have always said in the Pacific, one point five to stay alive!

2022 Bill Raynor Micronesia Challenge Scholarship applications now available

Micronesia Conservation Trust

In keeping the legacy of the late Bill Raynor alive, founder of conservation in Micronesia, Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT) and its Micronesia Challenge partners established the Bill Raynor Micronesia Challenge (BRMC) scholarship fund. The BRMC Scholarship Fund aims to contribute to the development of effective conservation of Micronesia’s biodiversity and the promotion of sustainable livelihoods across the region. This scholarship provides an opportunity for individuals from Micronesia to undertake either a Master’s or Doctorate degree in any resource management/conservation field at various institutions within the Pacific Region (including universities in Guam, Hawaii, Fiji, New Zealand, Australia, and Japan) or in the US mainland. Applicants are to focus on leadership and technical skills and/or majors that enhance their ability to carry out work in conservation, climate adaptation and sustainable

development in Micronesia.

Awardees of this prestigious scholarship will receive financial support to earn graduate degrees while receiving close guidance and mentorship from key individuals within the Micronesia Challenge partnership, including members of the peer learning networks, Micronesians in Island Conservation (MIC) and the Pacific Islands Managed and Protected Areas Community (PIMPAC). The mentors/advisors are technical experts who have extensive experience in the fields of conservation, climate change adaptation and sustainable development in Micronesia/Pacific.

Each year, up to two students from the region will be selected through a competitive process and will be eligible to receive up to \$30,000 per year for up to two years for the successful completion of a Master’s program and up to three years for the successful completion of a PhD program. This scholarship is limited to one or two

students per scholarship-round in order to provide the mentorship and guidance support that will be required to ensure the students’ long-term success.

The BRMC Scholarship Fund committee will also make a good faith effort to place scholarship recipients in permanent positions when they graduate. To help ensure recipients are able to participate in Micronesia Challenge activities, either remotely or during breaks, awardees are required to study at universities within the Pacific region/rim or in the US mainland and they must secure an agency that will commit to hosting them during their studies and one willing to hire the student as an intern after they complete their studies.

To date, the BRMC has supported 19 students. Ten have graduated and are in leading positions in their own home islands across Micronesia.

The scholarship is now open for application to citizens of the Common

Wealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Guam, Palau, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), and the Marshall Islands. The application can be found on the MCT’s website: <http://www.ourmicronesia.org/brmcs.html> The closing date is May 15th, 2022.

For more information on the BRMC Scholarship Program, please contact:

Ms. Bertha Reyuw
MCT Capacity Building Program Manager
P.O. Box 2177, Kolonia, Pohnpei FM 96941
Phone: (691) 350-2092/950-2151
E-mail: capacity@ourmicronesia.org

For more information on the BRMC Scholarship Endowment, please contact:

Mr. Willy Kostka
MCT Executive Director
P.O. Box 2177, Kolonia, Pohnpei FM 96941
Phone: (691) 320-5670/8903
E-mail: director@ourmicronesia.org

Interior's Office of Insular Affairs congratulates the 2021-2022 ELDP graduates

23 students from the Pacific Insular areas

Office of Insular Affairs (OIA)

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Insular Affairs (OIA), congratulates the twenty-three new Pacific Islands graduates who successfully completed the Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP) and participated in a commencement ceremony on Thursday, March 10, 2022. Program participants represented American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau. OIA Director Nikolao Pula delivered welcome remarks to over one hundred alumni, family, and friends who joined the twenty-three graduates to celebrate their graduation. In his remarks, Pula acknowledged the challenge of participating in an ELDP virtual program, given travel restrictions due to the pandemic, and encouraged the graduates to utilize their new skills in service to their islands.

The 2021-2022 Executive Leadership cohort, listed by Insular Area, follows:

- Faith Availepule, Environmental Protection Agency, AS
- Marcella Fitisono, Department of Education, AS
- Mikaela Saelua, Department of Education, AS
- Jasper Tuiasosopo, Department of Education, AS
- Bradford Mori, Chuuk Environmental Protection Agency, FSM
- Nicole Babauta, Small Business

- Development Center, CNMI
- Antonio Borja, Commonwealth Ports Authority, CNMI
- Janice Castro, NOAA, CNMI
- Christopher Concepcion, Office of Planning & Development, CNMI
- Bobby Cruz, Public School System, CNMI
- Padwick Gallen, M.D., Pohnpei State Hospital, FSM
- Serleen Hadley Walliby, Pohnpei State Legislature, FSM
- Ramona Duenas, Department of Education, Guam
- T'Nelta Mori, Office of Congressman Michael F.Q. San Nicolas, Guam
- Jesse Quenga, Ethics Commission, Guam
- Myra Adelbai-Fraser, Ministry of Health, Palau
- Kimberly Idip, Ministry of Health, Palau
- Jovalyn Ilong Koshiba, Housing Authority, Palau
- Martin Moore, Office of Insular Affairs, DOI
- Rachel Bigler, Health and Human Services, RMI
- Tamera Heine, Office of the Consul General in Hawaii, RMI
- Malie Tarbwillin, Ministry of Finance, RMI
- Ayako Yamaguchi-Eliou, Ministry of Finance, RMI

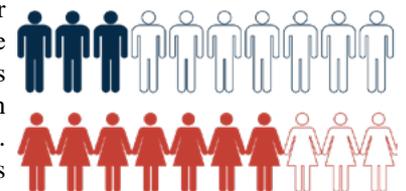
The Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs contracted the Graduate School to develop and implement the ELDP to assist the Insular Area governments with developing and retaining the qualified and skilled staff

needed to lead insular governments into the future. Since 2008, OIA has supported the participation of 178 young leaders who have completed the program.

A similar program for students from the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI), called the USVI Executive Leadership Program (ELP) takes place in Washington, D.C. and other locations along the East Coast where students join U.S. federal employees for training. There is a USVI 2022-2023 cohort that is expected to complete their studies next summer. For more information on the Executive Leadership Program and the Graduate School's Pacific Islands & Virgin Islands Training Initiatives, visit their website at <https://pitiviti.org/about-the-eldp>.



30% Male
70% Female



The Assistant Secretary of Insular and International Affairs and the Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) carry out the Secretary of the Interior's responsibilities for the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Additionally, OIA administers and oversees federal assistance under the Compacts of Free Association to the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau. OIA also administers a discretionary Technical Assistance Program for all the insular areas. For more news related to the Office of Insular Affairs, please visit: <https://www.doi.gov/oia/press-releases>. Find information about OIA and its work on www.doi.gov/oia, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

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

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

the threat of Covid19.

This aggressive vaccination drive, which began mid-January 2022 is also in response to calls by the FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs (DoHSA) for states to implement innovative risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) strategies in what it dubbed Final Push COVID-19 vaccination campaign for states to ensure persons aged 5 and older are fully vaccinated or boosted with the lifesaving Covid19 vaccine.

Consequently, the Chuuk Department of Public Health, the Department of Education and Chuuk Community Health Centers have been holding dialogue sessions with Island communities including Northern Namoneas Region, Southern Namoneas Region, Faichuuk Region, Northwest and Upper Mortlock Region where uptake for the COVID-19 vaccines has been relatively slow and thus needing a push. The dialogue sessions involved key community members like parents through PTAs;

women groups; youth groups; religious leaders and traditional leaders. Through these forums, the public health teams took turns to address concerns that some parents had about the vaccines for children and other myths and negative rumors comprehensively addressed.

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

Click here for continuation

PICRC partners with Palau Conservation Society, Koror State Government and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation's Resilient Reefs Initiative to support fisheries management in Koror State

Palau International Coral Reef Center

On March 23, 2022, the Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC) signed a contract with Palau Conservation Society (PCS) to implement a fisheries management plan in Koror State. PCS will take the lead on the Fisheries Management Project that will be created and implemented with local Koror State Fishers and Koror State Department of Conservation & Law Enforcement.

PICRC will support this project through research and monitoring of important fisheries species in Koror State waters. The research will help guide

management decisions by Koror State and provide important information on the fisheries resource conditions and how they are changing over time in response to active fisheries management by Koror State.

The work by PCS and PICRC to support fisheries management in Koror State is being enabled by the Resilience Reef Initiative (RRI), which is a global initiative to support World Heritage-listed coral reef sites and the communities that depend on them to survive, adapt and recover from climate change and local threats.

In addition to supporting the fisheries management in Koror State, RRI is also working with PICRC and other relevant local partners to support Koror State Government to design and deliver integrated solutions that build the resilience of coral reefs and the communities that depend on the reefs. RRI's partnership in Palau will ramp

up in 2022 and will include bringing on board a new Chief Resilience Officer and work on an integrated resilience strategy. The strategy development, design and delivery of actions, will provide many opportunities for the different stakeholders to contribute and provide input.

...Chuuk Vaccination

Continued from page 17

vaccines for children as young as 5 years old now available, some parents, who previously were a bit hesitant to take the COVID-19 vaccines for adults aged 18 and above because vaccines for children had not yet been approved at the time now feel motivated to get vaccinated. These parents said they didn't want to be protected against COVID-19 alone. A parent from the Island of Tol, Madam Miako reportedly said, "you know, I find it immoral for me as a parent alone to be vaccinated and protected against COVID-19 while my children are not, reason I decided to wait until vaccines for children are available. I cannot live while my children die from the COVID-19 disease."

Mr. Carter Apaisam, Program Manager of Immunization, DoHSA indicates that the Health Services is excited about the immense technical and funding support it is receiving from partners like UNICEF and the CDC in its new strategy of holding extensive dialogues with communities to address specific concerns and feedback about the Covid19 vaccines. "Now, our new approach is to avail ourselves to the communities for them to ask us all the questions about the COVID-19 vaccines and our service delivery strategies, and this seems to be working for us so far," said Mr. Apaisam. In relation to making vaccination service delivery shifts, Mr. Apaisam further indicated, "some people also say they cannot go to distant health facilities to get their Covid19 shots, so we changed strategy to take the services closer to them and that seems to be doing the magic."

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

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



COVID-19 vaccine second booster dose available across FSM

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—The second booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine is now available across the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). The second booster dose is available across

the States of Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae.

The primary goal of the COVID-19 booster dose is in the prevention of severe disease and death, particularly for persons who are elderly or who

have underlying medical conditions. The second booster dose for the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines may be administered at least four (4) months after completion of the first booster dose. The booster dose is recommended for persons aged 45

years of age and older, persons aged 18 years and older who have underlying medical conditions such as diabetes, and persons aged 18 years and older who work or live in high-risk settings or serve as frontline workers.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,
Since becoming independent as a constitutional self-governing nation in 1979, the FSM has grown the number of countries it has established diplomatic relations with. Some of the most recognizable countries on this list are the US, Japan, China, Australia, England and Republic of Korea. Usually newly independent countries waste no time in establishing diplomatic relations as they potentially benefit from such relationships in terms of financial support, technical assistance, technology transfers, capacity building, etc., and the FSM is no exception. I am told the FSM now maintains bilateral relations with 70 plus countries throughout the world.

Of course, it's a must for our country to establish diplomatic relations with as many countries as possible because it means those countries become our friends and our country could benefit from them. So having more friends is better because they can support you at the UN and other international fora. I cannot

imagine where our country will be today without the substantial financial support from our development partners which has enabled us to develop the infrastructure necessary for our economic development and progress.

There are a few countries like North Korea, Iran and Cuba that are considered pariah and which many countries including the FSM have avoided having diplomatic relations with due to something they may be doing that are inconsistent with the rules-based world order and international norms. In the case of the FSM, we probably are following the US lead in not recognizing these countries because even if we wanted to, the US could have vetoed our actions as inconsistent with the provisions of our compact treaty agreement. Anyway, we are not missing out on anything here.

With regards to the Arab countries in the Middle East especially the moderate ones like Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, the US does maintain

diplomatic relations with them. So, I am surprised the FSM has not seen fit to do the same, perhaps in deference to Israel, because I am sure the FSM could secure some economic, financial, technical and related benefits from these wealthy Arab countries whose oil reserves are the envy of the world. Perhaps we should have recognized one of the Arab countries instead of Russia.

Having served in the Department for many years, I have noted the erosion of its authority and primacy in foreign affairs, allowing other agencies to encroach on what used to be its exclusive turf. This undesirable situation is a result of a number of factors including the Department's own lack of consistency and assertiveness in advocating its positions on national issues, especially those involving foreign affairs. Additionally, once the country became a fully recognized and bona fide member of the world community, the Department became less important as the Nation became more interested in economic and social development. Also,

some will argue the Department didn't always do a good job of recruiting the best possible personnel it could find. Lastly, while the Department was blessed with some strong and competent leadership, it was not always the case, thus its slow but obvious decline over the years.

The Department needs to recapture its undisputed and dominant role in foreign affairs to ensure effective coordination of our foreign policy. It won't be easy but it could be done. It must reinvent itself by becoming more assertive in articulating its positions consistently, do a better job of recruiting the best position personnel and be the most knowledgeable in foreign affairs matters within the government, among others. And, the Department should never be apologetic for guarding religiously its turf and promoting and protecting its mandated primacy in foreign affairs for the sake of the Nation.

Thank you,
Kasio E. Mida
Concerned citizen

US\$14 Million World Bank project puts universal health care within reach for all I-Kiribati

New five-year project will improve equitable access and quality of health services across South Tarawa and the country's outer islands

World Bank

TARAWA, April 08, 2022 – Families and communities across Kiribati will receive much-needed health support as part of the US\$14 million Kiribati Health Systems Strengthening Project that has been approved by the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors. The project will improve infrastructure and equipment across Kiribati's hospitals, health centers and clinics; provide in-service training to health workers; and enhance the country's health information systems.

Kiribati is one of the smallest and most remote countries in the world. With a population of nearly 120,000, half the country's citizens live on hard-to-reach outer islands, and the other half reside on the main island of South Tarawa, one of the most densely populated areas in the Pacific. The population grew by 17 per cent between 2008 and 2018, increasing the strain on a health

system battling the twin challenges of servicing communities far removed from centralized services, and those struggling with the health impacts of urban density, such as inadequate sanitation.

"The Kiribati Government is prioritizing needs that will lead to meaningful improvements to higher quality healthcare across the country," said Lasse Melgaard, World Bank Resident Representative for the South Pacific. "We are extremely pleased to be able to support these needs with both financial support and technical expertise."

"There are various health challenges in Kiribati that need a multi-sector approach, such as the growth in rates of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), access to antenatal care and, of course, the COVID-19 pandemic that sadly arrived on the country's shores in January this year," said

the Honorable Vice President and Minister of Finance Dr Teuea Toatu. "This project will help strengthen our entire health care system and support workers with the skills and equipment they need to provide the best care to I-Kiribati no matter where they live."

Through the Kiribati Ministry of Health and Medical Services, the project will contribute to the health and wellbeing of I-Kiribati families and communities and work towards achieving universal health care through more equitable access to quality health services. The project will include the delivery of essential equipment and supplies along with the refurbishment of health facilities across the country, including support for the rebuilding of the London Kiritimati hospital. The project will also upgrade Kiribati's health information system, increase access to telehealth services and will also fund the purchase of sea ambulances for outer islands to enable

faster, more effective emergency support.

In addition, health workers will receive training on current approaches in maternal, neonatal and child healthcare, infection prevention control, and health care waste management, as well as specific training on supporting survivors of gender-based violence. The refurbishment of health facilities will also include separate examination rooms, waiting areas, bathrooms, and protected areas for survivors of gender-based violence.

"We want to contribute to making sure all survivors of gender-based violence feel safe when accessing health and support services," said the World Bank's Lasse Melgaard. "Supporting survivors of gender-based violence is a critical focus for our projects across the Pacific and is a challenge that cannot be tackled by one sector alone."

Pohnpeian earns Graduate Degree at Sophia University in Tokyo

Association for Promotion of International Cooperation

TOKYO, Japan – Annette Rose Ludwig of the Federated States of Micronesia recently became the sixth Micronesia to earn a MA degree in Global Environment Studies from Sophia University's Graduate School of Environmental Studies in Tokyo. Ludwig, who is from Pohnpei, graduated in March. She was a research assistant at the Herbarium of the University of Guam before she began her graduate studies.

Ludwig attended Sophia University, one of Japan's top research universities, on a highly competitive full-ride scholarship for citizens of the FSM, Palau and the Marshall Islands. The scholarship is offered by the Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT), Sophia University and the Association for Promotion of International Cooperation (APIC), a private foundation in Tokyo. Ludwig is one of nine Micronesians who have

been awarded the scholarship to Sophia University. The scholarship supports training Micronesians for regional environmental leadership roles.

"The Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT), Sophia University, Association for the Promotion of International Cooperation (APIC) and partners of the Micronesia Challenge (MC) are extremely proud of Annette," said William Kostka, executive director of MCT. Sophia University provides full tuition scholarships, while APIC covers travel and room and board expenses. MCT, through the Bill Raynor Micronesia Challenge Scholarship Program, covers the cost of internships for the scholarship students, which includes bringing them back home during their breaks to work with their host institutions and mentors. This allows the students to stay close to their local partners, which has resulted in 100% of the graduates returning to lead programs on each of their islands.

Ludwig, who was raised in Fiji, did an internship with the Pohnpei State Forestry in 2020 while in graduate school. During the internship, she was able to conduct research that sparked her interest in land-use change in Pohnpei. Her master's thesis focused on current agricultural practices on Pohnpei and the effects of sakau production in watershed areas. Sakau is also known as kava, ava and yaqona in other parts of the Pacific. Ludwig hopes to return to Pohnpei to continue working with Pohnpei State and the communities with their forestry management programs.

While she studied in Tokyo, Ludwig was active in the off-campus New Hope Christian Fellowship and a Christian circle at Sophia University. She was also passionate about learning the Japanese language. Ludwig joined a weekly Japanese course held at APIC's office next to Sophia and studied hard to develop her language skills. In addition to classroom work, the language students participated in trips

to Mt. Takao near Tokyo as leaves were changing colors in Autumn, and enjoyed Christmas light displays in the popular Shibuya neighborhood.



Annette Ludwig enjoys the cherry blossom season on the campus of Sophia University in Tokyo.

Catch of the day: COVID-19 Vaccine

FSM DHSA Risk Communication Committee

March 25, 2022_Kosrae. You may have heard and read stories of people getting vaccinated on the road, in the train, and at health facilities or temporary vaccination sites on land but for Kosrae State, they had to take it a notch higher to administer Covid19 vaccines, out on the open water. Imagine going fishing only to get vaccinated instead. That is exactly what happened to a couple near the village of Walung. On the morning of Friday, March 25, 2022, a couple going out fishing was chanced upon by a team from the Micronesia Red Cross Society (MRCS) - Kosrae Chapter enroute to conduct a vaccination survey in the remote community of Walung. The MRCS team was accompanied by a small vaccination team to administer vaccines in Walung.

While idling in their own boat near the reef, the couple was preparing to throw their lines, anticipating in excitement for the tensions on their lines as they pull in their catches of the day. In that moment the boat carrying MRCS team and vaccination team pulled up next to the couple and asked if they were vaccinated. When learning that they were not, the team proceeded to conduct its awareness and eventual



administering of the vaccine. "My wife and I had been planning to get our shots but somehow haven't made the time to go" shared the fisherman after they joyfully received their shots.

After the encounter, the outreach team proceeded to Walung, where they continued with their survey and administering of the vaccines.

Kosrae is intensifying its vaccination efforts including the administering of booster shot to its most vulnerable population particularly as the FSM announced resumption of repatriation of citizens and essential workers and the eventual easing of border restrictions. In a recent press release from the FSM PIO, the FSM is targeting a possible August 2022 date for reopening of its international borders.

Thus, the MRCS supported by UNICEF has been conducting rapid surveys

to understand motivation and barriers to COVID19 vaccination uptake. This survey also helps to know people's preferred communication channels for receiving critical health information. The findings from this social data collection provide the needed insights that effectively shape the risk communication, community engagement and vaccination service delivery strategies in Kosrae. In recent times for example, Kosrae State has had to adjust its operations including taking the vaccinees closer to the communities and proactively address any misinformation as ongoing survey findings indicate high community awareness levels about COVID19 vaccines and willingness to receive multiple COVID19 vaccine shots. Accessibility and availability of the vaccines were the main drivers of the plateaued rate of vaccines in recent months. Misinformation continues to be the main drivers of vaccine hesitancy. Public Health teams are now bringing the vaccines closer into the community and health workers are on site to conduct the awareness.

As of March 19, 2022, FSM Immunization Program is reporting that 89% of Kosrae 45 years and older

population is fully vaccinated, 17% of which have received their booster shot. 77% of the eligible population (5 years and older) completed their recommended primary doses with less than 10% receiving their booster shot. Kosrae's current approach is showing a more increased rate of daily COVID-19 vaccination uptake. Considering the high emigration rate and the current deceased, there is also a high probability of Kosrae's real-time coverage to be higher.

Kosrae is encouraging all its citizens, 5 years and older, to get vaccinated and those eligible, to get their booster dose. Booster dose increases the protection for individuals with diabetes, hypertension and other immunocompromised conditions against severe-illness, hospitalization and death. Kosrae's vaccination campaign is under the banner of "Kosrae United Against COVID-19". This outreach is supported by Kosrae DHS, Kosrae COVID-19 Taskforce, MRCS- Kosrae Chapter, FSM DHSA, UNICEF and WHO.

It is still unclear if any fish were caught, but that lovely couple from Kosrae can rest assured they caught their protection against COVID-19 instead.

Statement on oceans

Pacific Elders' Voice

7 April 2022

The Pacific Elders' Voice welcomes the convening of the 7th Our Oceans Conference in Palau on the 13-14 April. We congratulate the Republic of Palau for hosting this conference and making implementation of the commitments from previous conferences, as well as focusing on significant new commitments around six action areas, the core thrust of the conference.

At the outset, the Pacific Elders wish to highlight the great significance and spirituality of the Pacific Ocean for Indigenous Peoples. The ocean represents the lifeforce of all Pacific Islands people. We hope that the Our Oceans Conference will truly acknowledge this truth and set in train measures to ensure that the Pacific Ocean is appropriately protected for current and future generations.

We also welcome the convening of the UN Ocean Conference to be held in Lisbon from the 25th June to the 1st July. This will be an ideal opportunity to create meaningful and lasting action to protect the world's oceans. We hope that this conference will provide the opportunity for all nations to commit to a global goal of 30% of the world's oceans to be incorporated within marine protected areas.

We have been deeply concerned about the recent findings of Working Group II of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report which noted that small islands tropical corals are at high risk from climate change. The IPCC report highlighted the fact that ocean warming and acidification, due to increased carbon dioxide levels, will cause severe coral bleaching on an annual basis. It also notes the impacts that climate change will have on fish stocks in the Pacific Islands region.

We believe that much more needs to be done now in order to address the impacts of climate change on Pacific Island communities. Major greenhouse gas emitting countries must accept higher reduction targets in order to avoid the worst impacts. Greater effort in the form of financial and technical resources must be provided to Pacific Island communities to help them better adapt to the impacts of climate change; and for those that suffer loss and damage due to

climate change, there is an urgent need to provide adequate compensation by the major emitting countries.

We welcome the announcement by the United Nations Environment Assembly that the UN will commence negotiations for an international treaty aimed at controlling the production and use of plastics. We are very concerned about the growing amount of plastic pollution from discarded fishing gear, known as "ghost gear" in Pacific waters. Discarded fishing gear is known to have a profound impact on the marine life of our Ocean. Greater efforts are required to monitor the use of fishing gear when fishing boats return to port.

At the same time, we are also concerned about over-fishing and irregular, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in our region. Regional fisheries agreements must be strengthened, and distant water fishing nations must take appropriate steps to regulate their fishing fleets. The Pacific Ocean does not have a limitless supply of fish and marine resources.

We wish to express our disappointment that the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity Beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction was not concluded at a recent meeting in New York. The importance of protecting marine biodiversity beyond the limits of national jurisdiction cannot be overstated. We draw particular attention to the need to define effective environmental impact assessment procedures on the high seas and we call on all nations involved in these negotiations to resolve their differences and ensure that the next session will be the final one, and that a new agreement is concluded.

We wish to express our gravest concern about the proposal by the Japanese Government to release radioactively contaminated water into the Pacific Ocean from the damaged Fukushima Nuclear Power plant. We call on the Japanese Government and the International Atomic Energy Agency to work together to find a workable solution for the disposal of the waste water rather than dumping it in the ocean.

We are also very concerned about the state of Runit Dome in the Enewetak Atoll of the Marshall Islands. This Dome was established by the United States as a temporary storage for radioactive debris from past nuclear weapons testing. It now appears to be leaking radioactive material. We therefore call on the United States to take urgent remedial action to secure the Dome and to properly compensate all those that have been negatively affected by the nuclear weapons testing.

Pacific Elders reiterate their concern over proposals for deep seabed mining in the Pacific, particularly as there are limited, if any, regulatory measures to address the impacts of such mining and, until such time, the region should refrain from engaging in any deep seabed mining.

In conclusion we are extremely concerned about the unprecedented threat that are facing the Pacific Ocean. Much more must and can be done in order to address these threats. We sincerely hope that upcoming Ocean conferences will deliver meaningful outcomes that would ensure that the Pacific Ocean as well as those communities that rely on it for their existence will have a future that they can pass on to the next generations.

Pohnpei high school students tour Pacific Patrol boat and Maritime Wing

On April 1st, 2022, the Australian Embassy in Pohnpei invited students from high schools in Pohnpei to take a tour of the Pacific Patrol Boat F.S.S Palikir and the Maritime Wing. The event was part of the Embassy's International Women's Day activities centering around the theme #breakthebias. The schools in attendance included PICS High School, Nanpei Memorial High School, Madolenihmw High School, Calvary Christian Academy, Pohnpei Catholic School, Our Lady of Mercy High School, and Ohwa Christian School. The students were given the chance to learn how both men and women in the law enforcement sector are going against gender stereotypes and breaking the bias. The visit also provided an opportunity for the students to gain an insight into FSM's maritime surveillance activities, including the Pacific Maritime Security Program supported by Australia. There are currently two women serving on the patrol boats. The new Guardian-class Patrol Boat, the F.S.S. Tosiwo Nakayama, will be able to accommodate both male and female crew members. The students conveyed great enthusiasm and interest as they asked questions during the presentation given by the VMS officer and the tour given by the captain and crew of the F.S.S Palikir. The Australian Embassy hopes that this opportunity inspires these students to pursue careers that #breakthebias and look forward to another tour once the new Guardian Class Patrol Boat F.S.S. Tosiwo Nakayama arrives.

A big thank you to the FSM Maritime Wing and the Pohnpei Port Authority for assisting with this event.



President Panuelo appeals to Prime Minister Sogavare to respectfully reject and give deepest consideration to longer-range consequences from Solomon Islands' proposed security agreement with the People's Republic of China

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On March 30th, 2022, His Excellency David W. Panuelo—President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)—wrote to the Honorable Manasseh Sogavare, Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, regarding the latter's proposed security agreement with the People's Republic of China. It is the view of the FSM National Government that such a novel and unprecedented security agreement between China and Solomon Islands poses a risk of increasing geopolitical tensions across the Blue Pacific Continent.

The text of the President's letter to Prime Minister Sogavare can be found in full below, and the letter to Solomon Islands can be found here: https://gov.fm/files/Letter_to_T_H_Prime_Minister_Manasseh_Sogavare.pdf

Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare, Greetings from the Federated States of Micronesia! At the outset, I wish to emphasize my deepest respect to you, your office, and the People & Government of Solomon Islands, and on behalf of the People & Government of the Federated States of Micronesia, to express our collective well wishes for your People's health and prosperity. Allow me to also emphasize at the outset that our Nation's broader foreign policy outlook—that we are a friend to all, and an enemy to none—is consistent with that of Solomon Islands.

Mr. Prime Minister, I write to you today as a fellow Pacific Islander and friend, and to humbly offer our Government's perspective regarding a topic I'm sure you've been hearing ceaselessly about; that is, your Government's forthcoming security agreement with the People's Republic of China.

The Federated States of Micronesia has grave security concerns about this proposed agreement because this agreement is entirely novel and unprecedented. Therefore, before you sign such an agreement, I would like to

describe to you our own relationship with China, and what I fear the larger countries are privately preparing for.

The Federated States of Micronesia has had diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China since September 11th, 1989. We call our relationship the FSM-China Great Friendship. We have no loans with China, only grants; and the Chinese do not ask us to take loans. China always offers development assistance, but never insists on what development assistance might look like; when we ask for a ship, like the Hapilmohol-2, we get a ship, and when we ask for a Government Complex, like the Chuuk State Government's campus, we get a Government Complex. Needless to say, economic and technical cooperation with China has been beneficial for our country and our People, and I am sure Solomon Islands is benefiting from a similar experience. The People & Government of China are a friend to the People & Government of the Federated States of Micronesia.

That said, you and I are both aware—and I think you'd agree that it can be plainly seen—that the U.S. and China are increasingly at odds with one another. This presents an issue—because the Federated States of Micronesia is a friend to the People & Government of China, but we are also a sincere friend, even an ally, of the People & Government of the United States of America.

Our ideal scenario in the Federated States of Micronesia is that China and the U.S., as well as Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and so many others, become friends with one another. Wouldn't it be wonderful if they could look past their fears and grievances and embrace each other as friends? Wouldn't it be terrific if they could see that the troubles of our times, such as Climate Change, require all of them working in concert instead of against each other?

That ideal scenario is my dream, and I share it through my addresses at the

United Nations General Assembly and through media interviews, through Press Releases, and through casual conversation with the diplomatic corps based in our country. But a dreamer must also be practical, and in practice the countries we call friends are increasingly not acting very friendly with each other.

My fear is that we—the Pacific Islands—would be at the epicenter of a future confrontation between these major powers. It's not an impossible fear; it has happened before. Both the Federated States of Micronesia and Solomon Islands were the battlegrounds during World War II. I am confident that neither of us wishes to see a conflict of that scope or scale ever again, and most particularly in our own backyards, and most especially as we can see—from Russia's invasion of Ukraine—that the bigger countries will choose violence if they think it serves their interests, and without regard necessarily to our interests, such as our interest to not become collateral damage.

I imagine the following hypothetical scenario. The Federated States of Micronesia is currently negotiating its Compact of Free Association with the United States of America; meanwhile, China and Solomon Islands establish a close security partnership. The security partnership is a resounding success; Solomon Islands is wealthier from China's business investments, such as in the extractive resources sector; and Solomon Islands is secured from internal and external threats. But China fears the U.S. fortress to its east, and Australia fears the Chinese fortress to its north. What happens next?

I ask you, Prime Minister: is it within the realm of plausibility that, as more Pacific Islands seek security arrangements with larger countries, that we could see a sovereign and peaceful Pacific become fragmented, and become tools for these larger countries' spheres of power and influence? And is it plausible that,

once the spheres have been carved out, that our concerns about Climate Change—today's problem—would manifest into all-too-real concerns about a war in our backyards, with our people, our islands, as the playground for children playing as adults? Isn't it plausible that our islands could become collateral damage once again, such as we saw occur in Guadalcanal in your country, and Chuuk in my country, during World War II?

I would maintain that this possibility is all too plausible; and that compels me, despite my country's long friendship with China and our even longer enduring partnership with the United States, to appeal to you most respectfully to give your deepest consideration to the longer-range consequences for the entire Pacific Region, if not the entire world, that could well flow from a decision to host the establishment of a military presence by China in your country.

If any part of what I have written has given you pause, however briefly, then please feel empowered to reach out to me, and to the Pacific Islands Forum at large. As much as your bilateral security arrangement may be strictly a matter between your country and the People's Republic of China, its existence would absolutely affect all countries who call the Blue Pacific their home. The Federated States of Micronesia cannot endorse or agree if your decision is to proceed with a security relationship with the People's Republic of China, because of its far-reaching and grave security implications for our harmonious and peaceful Blue Pacific Continent.

Thank you, Prime Minister, for your kind attention to my lengthy letter. I say again for posterity that the People & Government of the Federated States of Micronesia extend to you peace, friendship, cooperation, and love in our common humanity, and pledge that it is our goal that our two countries shall always share this friendship with each other as fellow brothers and sisters of the Pacific.

New ICT equipment to support Pohnpei State's Emergency Response Capacity

UN Development Programme

29 March 2022

Pohnpei, FSM – Information and Communication Technology (ICT) equipment worth US\$20,000 was handed over to the Pohnpei State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) on Tuesday 29 March 2022, in support of Pohnpei State's capacity in emergency communications and operations as well as crisis management and coordination.

The ICT equipment, includes computers, monitors, displays, a network switch, a server, a printer, a projector, a screen, firewalls, security and operating system software programs. The equipment is needed for emergency response resources for EOC, which provides a point of centralized control, coordination, and direction of emergency operations in the capital.

In Pohnpei, the Governor's Disaster Committee comprised of department directors, serves as an advisory body to the Governor in the formulation of policies and coordination of the disaster response efforts, and the Director of Public Safety is responsible for supporting preparedness and response efforts acting as the controller of EOC. The Pohnpei COVID-19 Emergency Taskforce which has been formed under the framework of Governor's Disaster Committee also supports emergency precautionary measures and interventions to protect the health and safety of the people of Pohnpei from COVID-19.

The ICT equipment provided by UNDP was timely and critical for EOC, which is serving as a critical place for key staff

from the relevant departments, offices, and agencies to effectively work together, share information and decision-making, and assist in making the most effective use of resources.

His Excellency Mr. Michigami Hisashi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to FSM said, "I hope the ICT equipment handed over today will further strengthen the capacity of the Pohnpei State Emergency Operation Center, and contribute to the sustainable economic and social development of the FSM."

Kevin Petrini, Deputy Resident Representative and Country Manager for the UNDP Pacific Office in the Federated States of Micronesia, in his remarks during the handover ceremony, expressed his appreciation to the Government of Japan for their generous support, which enables UNDP to work with the Government of FSM on the enhancement of the country's resilience to the impact of disasters and climate change, COVID-19 response and recovery and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

He further added, "UNDP stands ready to provide further support to enable the National and State Governments of FSM to continue its operation during the COVID-19 pandemic and other emergencies."

This support has been made possible through two UNDP projects funded by the Government of Japan: Enhancing Disaster and Climate Resilience in the Federated States of Micronesia through improved Disaster Preparedness and Infrastructure; and COVID-19 Response Support in the Pacific.



Rehabilitation of the Enipein Pah village water system completed

Micronesia Conservation Trust

The Kitti Municipal Government (KMG), the Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT), the Association for the Promotion of International Cooperation (APIC) and community volunteers teamed up to rehabilitate the Enipein Pah village water system, which was built over 30 years ago and had started to leak. APIC is a Japanese organization that supports sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region and has been supporting water security projects

and scholarships in Micronesia. MCT received a grant from APIC to purchase water pipes and fittings and the Kitti Municipal Government provided the technical expertise for the project. Many community volunteers showed up to provide the needed labor to connect the pipes all the way from the dam to the water tank which distributes the water to the houses in Enipein Pah. KMG, MCT and the Enipein Pah community are extremely thankful to APIC for their generous grant.



Left: Pipe before



Right: Pipe after