

Australia Foreign Affairs Minister leads high level bi-partisan delegation visit to the FSM

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

December 14, 2022

Pohnpei, FSM—Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong led a high-level bipartisan Australian delegation in a visit to the Vanuatu, FSM, and Palau. The delegation arrived in Pohnpei today for a meeting with FSM President David W. Panuelo, Vice President Aren B. Palik and the President's cabinet where they



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Standing room only crowd in Pohnpei for Polynesian dance performance by students of new school

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

December 17, 2022

Pohnpei—The 40 students of the Kaselehlie Dance Company put on a standing room only performance at the Mangrove Bar and Grill on Saturday evening. Ranging in age from 4 to 18 years, the students performed dances in Keiki Hula and Tahitian styles. Some of the performers had never dance Polynesian style before they joined the school just eight weeks ago.



Proprietor, Starr Perman said that she started

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RS Roque Company and MedPharm Medical Clinic and Pharmacy give back to the community

Alvie B. Cabañez
Kaselehlie Press Volunteer Contributor

On December 09, 2022, RS Roque Company and MedPharm Medical Clinic & Pharmacy conducted a Medical Mission to children with special needs at Pohnpei State gymnasium. The event was participated by over 200 pre-selected students with special needs across Pohnpei together with their parents and guardians.

The event started with an opening remark by Director Stanley Etse, Department of Education. "I am grateful for the team for putting together a medical mission despite the short period of time," he said.

It was followed by a short speech from Vanessa Belmores, MedPharm, Licensed Pharmacist, and Architect Ryan S. Roque. Ms. Belmores expressed her gratitude to the Department of Education for their support to the event and also to the parents and guardians.

"RS Roque company has been doing annual outreach which started last year. We did a gift giving activity to all students and teachers at Wone Elementary School," said Architect Ryan S. Roque. "This year, we selected and proposed to conduct a medical mission to special education students to be the beneficiary of this years' outreach program," he continued.

A short prayer was delivered by Mae Balderrama, MedPharm, Licensed Medical Technologist. It was immediately followed by the gift giving activity. The RS Roque staff gleefully handed the gift bags while greeting the students Merry Christmas. Students



received a gift bag that includes school supplies, tumbler, and snack items. The teachers and staff of the Department of Education also received a gift bag that includes grocery items, tumbler, and face towel.

The RS Roque company also prepared prizes for the raffle draw. Juleen Manuel, Virginia Jim, Mackleen Ernest, Jessie Solomon, among others, walked away with a box of ceramics, bag of rice, box of ramen, and gift bags. Winners who were not present can still claim their prizes at RS Roque office. Lunch was also served to all the participants inside the venue.

The medical check-up was set-up at the back area of the gym. Patients lined-up to get their weight and height, get their blood drawn, get their vitals and blood pressure, consultation with the volunteer doctors, and received their free medicines. A few patients were scared getting their blood drawn, some were already crying, while the other patients were not bothered of the sting.

"It was an overwhelming crowd but was all worth it," said Dr. Renato Badar. "We

served a special sector of the community, students with special needs," he continued.

"Holiday spirit really touched me today. I am thankful for the medical team for taking care of my son," said Evangeline Pedrus, Palikir. "Wonderful work from team RS and MedPharm," she added.

The MedPharm group prepared a number of medicines from ointment, cream, lotion, and tablets. They gave away, Paracetamol, Cefalexin, Multivitamins, Erythromycin, Carbocisteine, Enalapril, Vitamin C, Oral Rehydration Salt, among others. They also distributed a hand sanitizer and isopropyl alcohol bottles.

"I am thankful for a successful event despite the struggles at the beginning. The same goes to the parents and guardians of the student with special needs for bearing with us today," said Rose Ann E. Magboo, MedPharm, Operations Manager. When asked about her recent promotion, she thanked all her boss's and all her colleagues for their support and guidance. "It was a team effort," she continued.



The event was only fitting since MedPharm is celebrating its 21st Anniversary and is still continuing to provide medical and pharmaceutical

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Bill Jaynes
Managing Editor

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WILL BE RELEASED ON:**

January 04, 2023

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

Monday, January 02, 2023

Partner nation air forces deliver humanitarian aid during Operation Christmas Drop 2022

By 1st Lt. Danny Rangel
374th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

December 14, 2022

Andersen Air Force Base, Guam--Five partner nation air forces worked together to deliver humanitarian aid as part of Operation Christmas Drop 2022, the Department of Defense's longest-running humanitarian aid mission delivering essential supplies to island communities in the western Pacific, Dec. 4-13, 2022.

Aircrew from the U.S. Air Force, Republic of Korea Air Force, Japan Air Self-Defense Force, Royal Australian Air Force and Royal New Zealand Air Force participated in the 71st Operation Christmas Drop this year, delivering 209 bundles of supplies weighing a total of more than 75 thousand pounds to 57 locations in the Federated States of Micronesia and Republic of Palau.

"It is a phenomenal thing that we have been able to continue this tradition for 71 years," said Lt. Col. Kira Coffey, 36th Airlift

Squadron commander. "The 36th AS has been central to this effort and getting to see this event and seeing the tangible effect it has to the people on the islands is important and fulfilling."

Eight partner nation C-130 aircraft traveled to Andersen AFB to participate in the humanitarian mission. Crews took part in joint operations planning and preparation needed to ensure the successful delivery of each bundle.



U.S. Air Force Capt. Maddie Atkinson and Capt. Eichard Armfield, both with the 36th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron C-130J pilot, fly over Saipan, Dec. 1, 2022, during Operation Christmas Drop 2022. Yokota's C-130J crew members practice skills that enable effective dynamic delivery in support of future operations. (U.S. Air Force photo by Yasuo Osakabe)

"It was truly exciting to come together as an international team of airmen for such a good cause," said Capt. Andrew Zaldivar, 36th AS pilot and Operation Christmas Drop mission commander. "Being able to be part of this mission is truly humbling, and I'm happy our team was able to work together with our partner nation aircrews to deliver aid to people living on these isolated islands."

Items contained in each bundle included clothing, food, medical and school supplies, fishing equipment and other essential goods. Prior to the first airdrop, the base hosted a bundle build event where Operation Christmas Drop participants joined local community volunteers to organize donations and decorate each box for delivery.

International participants in Operation Christmas Drop expressed their enthusiasm for the mission and support for the importance of delivering humanitarian aid.

"I've enjoyed meeting with other nations and sharing the common experience of delivering aid here in the Pacific," said Royal New Zealand Air Force Flight Lieutenant Campbell Wilson, 40 Squadron detachment commander. "This aid is delivered with goodwill and with pride and love from all the agencies involved. We've really enjoyed being part of it, and we're honored to take part."

Additionally, Operation Christmas Drop allowed U.S. and partner nation aircrew the opportunity to hone skills needed for future operations. Airmen delivered bundles using a low-cost low-altitude delivery method, a way of effectively airlifting supplies to austere locations using fewer resources.

This year's event culminated in a multinational 7-ship elephant walk down the Andersen AFB flightline, an event that included a C-130 aircraft from each participating country.

"It was exciting to see our partner nation C-130s come out and showcase the team effort that is so critical to the success of Operation Christmas Drop," said Coffey. "We demonstrated how we can seamlessly work together as a team and integrate operations in support of delivering vital supplies to isolated communities. I'm proud of our international team of airmen who have worked so hard to ensure this mission is successful."

Click here for special video on FSM soldier involved in OCD:
<https://www.dvidshub.net/video/868659/operation-christmas-drop-miracle?fbclid=IwAR0ZTz0Lfimaf8PWTT6p7Ff1sk4efZfRmz9bM47MifLHmLg12Q9xS409REA#.Y51hqAyDPQE.facebook>



Four humanitarian aid bundles descend from a U.S. Air Force C-130J Super Hercules assigned to the 36th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron over Fananu atoll in the state of Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia, Dec. 9, 2022, during Operation Christmas Drop 2022. The aircraft, callsign SANTA 67, was the last mission flight of OCD 2022, following a mission during OCD 2015. (U.S. Air Force photo by Yasuo Osakabe)



U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Cameron Palmer, 36th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron C-130J loadmaster, conducts a visual confirmation over Asor atoll in the Caroline Islands of the western Pacific Ocean, Dec. 4, 2022, during Operation Christmas Drop 2022. The aircraft, call sign Santa 11, delivered 14 bundles to the eastern Caroline Islands, included Asor, Falalop, and Fais islands. OCD is the longest-running Department of Defense humanitarian and disaster relief mission. Each year, the USAF partners with countries in the Pacific Air Forces area of responsibility to deliver supplies to remote islands in the South-Eastern Pacific. (U.S. Air Force photo by Yasuo Osakabe)



U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Jeffrey Furnary, 36th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron director of operations, communicates by radio with C-130 pilots at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, Dec. 10, 2022, during Operation Christmas Drop 2022. Seven C-130 aircraft from the U.S. Air Force, Royal Australian Air Force, Japan Air Self-Defense Force, Republic of Korea Air Force and Royal New Zealand Air Force delivered 209 bundles weighing a total of more than 71,000 pounds as part of Operation Christmas Drop, an event meant to assist remote island communities in the Federated States of Micronesia and Republic of Palau. (U.S. Air Force photo by Yasuo Osakabe)



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...Dance Company

Continued from front page

dancing when she was five years old in California and that she established the Kaselehlie Dance Company in March of this year.

“The vision behind KDC is to share my love for Polynesian dance with the youth of Pohnpei, while providing them an outlet to express themselves and be active,” Perman said.

The advance ticket price of \$10 and the door price of \$15 certainly did nothing to attract attendance for the performance if the crowd size was any evidence. Hundreds of people loudly cheered the dancers as they performed their numbers which culminated with a humorous dance contest between males chosen from the audience.

To open the evening, the amazing Kihleng sisters performed Jingle Bell Rock, a nearly virtuosic ukulele duet.

The youngest of the dancers from the school delighted the crowd with a hula dance to the tune of “Winter Wonderland”, and “Lilo and Stitch”. The beginner Tahitian students were next with their performance to Tutuki and Rapa Nui. The intermediate Tahitian performance included solo numbers and group numbers performed to the popular Pate Pate and Iorana.

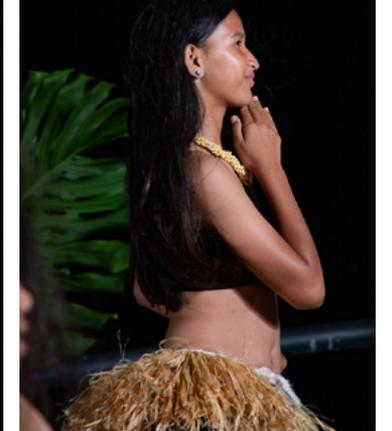
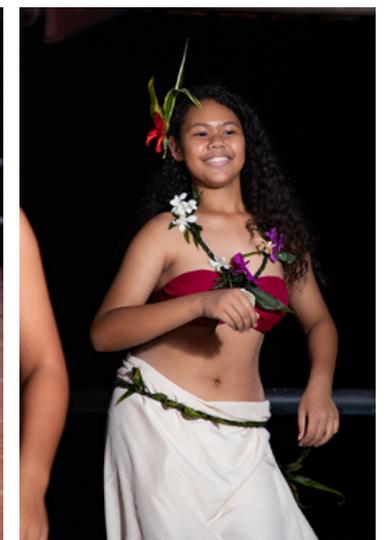
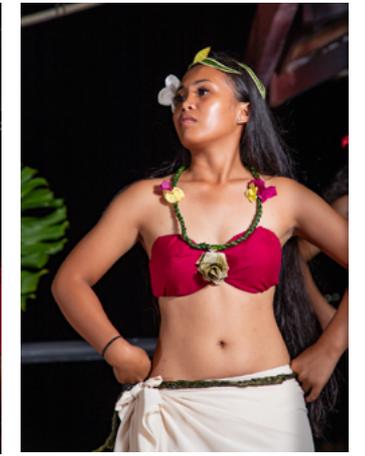
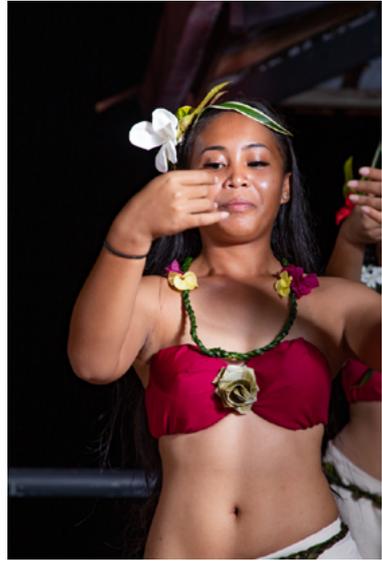
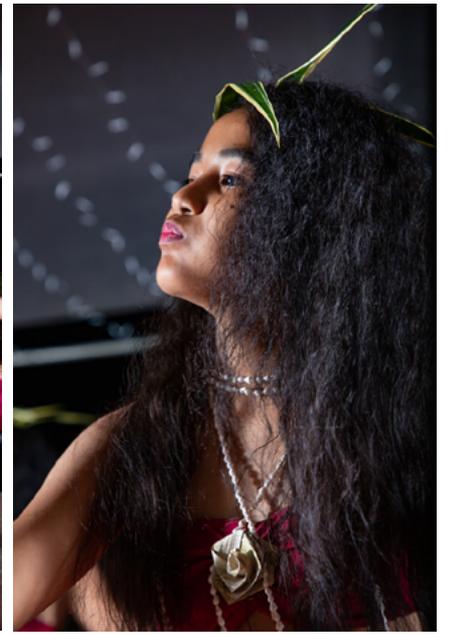
The show started very close to the time of its announced 7:00 start and it seemed that none of the audience wanted it to be over when the last performance had been done.

Perman begins the next enrollment in the school at the end of January. Tuition is \$20 per month and she currently takes only female students between the ages of 5 and 18. She says that she hopes to be able to find an instructor for male dancers in the future but currently the school is open only to female dancers. Classes are for eight weeks at a time.

During the currently completed course, Keiki Hula dancers met on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:00 to 3:45 pm. Beginner Tahitian classes were offered from 4:00 to 5:00 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Intermediate Tahitian classes were on Mondays and Fridays from 4:00 to 5:00 pm.

Interested students can contact the Kaselehlie Dance Company, or Starr Perman directly on Facebook.





Verdict awaited in Yap's murder case

Defense says suspect only meant to 'scare' Bergeron

By Joyce McClure
Pacific Island Times

Anthony Tun, one of the two suspects in the murder of Yap's acting Attorney General Rachele Bergeron only meant to "scare" the American prosecutor into leaving the island to stall pending criminal cases against his cousin, according to defense attorney Marstella Jack.

Jack said there was no conspiracy, but the government's attorney, Jeffrey S. Tilfas, maintained that Tun and his co-defendant, Francis Chaoy Buchun, "acted in concert" to plan and execute "the violent act."

Regardless of Tun's claim that the purpose of the shooting was to scare Bergeron, Tilfas pointed out that the acting attorney general "was not shot once or twice, but three times from a deadly weapon."

After a monthlong bench trial, the Yap State Court is preparing its decision on the murder case that drew international attention in 2019.

The trial was delayed due to Covid-related border closures that hampered travel logistics and disrupted court proceedings.

The prosecution and defense filed their closing arguments on Nov. 14 and 18 for Tun's case.

Buchun's trial has also been completed. The closing arguments will take place in open court on Dec. 29.

In her closing arguments, Jack claimed Tun shot at Bergeron's surroundings so she would leave the island because she was "going out of her way" to prosecute his cousin Buchun for "several individual offenses."

Bergeron just returned home from jogging when she was shot dead.

Tun was charged on Nov. 20, 2019 with conspiracy to commit murder, murder, manslaughter, assault with a dangerous weapon, threats and coercion, among others.

The defense stated that there was no proof of a conspiracy to commit murder, and that pointing the weapon, a 12-gauge shotgun, and discharging the three bullets was not "reckless" in a way that demonstrated "extreme indifference to the value of human life."

Tun never had any issue with Bergeron, Jack said. She cited the testimony given by FSM Police Capt. Kasner Aldens, who said that the presumption that Tun was trying to protect his cousin from being charged with criminal offenses was "a dead end."

On the prosecution's side, Tilfas' filing appended 38 exhibits including a recorded interview with Bergeron's husband, Simon Hämmerling, who was at home when the shooting occurred; footage from home security cameras showing Bergeron calling for help; photos of the shotshells and their location; recordings of Buchun and Tun giving voluntary statements; and a recording of the two defendants conversing about disposing of the firearm.

Citing "a crime of ghastly proportions," the prosecution stated that



Bergeron was a few feet away from her husband and their adopted daughter when several witnesses heard three "loud bangs."

Tilfas said Tun's confession and Buchun's interview indicated that they planned to shoot Bergeron and scouted the location prior to the crime.

According to the document, Tun loaded all three bullets into the weapon provided by Buchun, waited 30 minutes at the ridgeline across from Bergeron's residence, and "pulled the trigger until all three ammunitions loaded were fired and ejected."

Tun left the spent shells at the scene where they were later collected by the police. He later revealed that the gun was hidden in tall grass at the shoreline of Taneyboch in Chamorro Bay.

Even if the court finds that there was no intention to kill Bergeron, the prosecution said, Tun's confession and Buchun's interview proved "more than a reasonable doubt" that there was an attempt to harm Bergeron.

The prosecution noted that Tun had firearm training while serving as an MP officer in the past.

Evidence also showed that Bergeron tried to escape after the first shot, but fell on the ground. She was then shot two more times, resulting in multiple wounds including one to her heart, the prosecution added.

As for the terrorizing charges, the prosecution noted that Hämmerling and their adopted daughter were indeed terrorized.

The prosecution said the evidence showed that Tun "did the heinous act" to stop Bergeron from prosecuting Buchun, who was charged with human trafficking.

Defense witness Nathaniel Linglemog testified that Buchun's uncle, Francis Tamag, went to his house and warned him that "if Rachele put her nose where it does not belong, something might happen to her."

According to the prosecution, Linglemog's testimony indicated Tun's participation in an attempt to interfere with justice.

The FSM Supreme Court has scheduled the hearings for the national charges of weapon and ammunition possession for February 2023.

Pacific Sustainable Development Report 2022 raises concern

Pacific Island Forum

December 16, 2022

Suva— The lack of Pacific progress towards the global sustainable development goals has raised concern over whether the region will be able to celebrate achievement of the global SDGs by 2030.

The Pacific situation became clear with the December 8th launch of the 2nd Quadrennial Pacific Sustainable Development Report, at the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat.

The report highlights the Pacific region's progress towards the implementation of the SDGs. The report centres on people and well-being with a key message that "all countries have incorporated the SDGs into national policies and strategies. However, none of the twenty-one targets expected to be achieved by 2020 were achieved. It is also unlikely that the Pacific will achieve even 20% of the SDG targets by 2030"

In his comments at the launch, Deputy Secretary General on behalf of the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum, Dr Filimon Manoni shared his concern over the findings.

"The situation is worrisome given that our sustainability requires the restoration of social, economic and environmental stability, by investing in clean equitable growth through political frameworks and settlements that foster peace and partnership," he said.

Dr Manoni noted the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent as "our regional approach to working in a cooperative coordinated, and more integrated manner, drawing on our common strengths, and common resources, to achieve our development aspirations"

Also welcoming the report, Tuvalu High Commissioner to Fiji HE. Eselealofa Apinelu said the launch is one step of many that will help the region embrace

Click here for continuation



COM-FSM Board of Regents Names Dr. Theresa Koroivulaono as New COM-FSM President

The College of Micronesia-FSM Board of Regents announced today the successful completion of the presidential search process and unanimous selection of Dr. Theresa Koroivulaono as the college's 6th President. Dr. Koroivulaono will begin her tenure at COM-FSM in February 2023. She succeeds Dr. Joseph M. Daisy, who stepped down as President in January 2020 after serving since 2012.

The Presidential Search process invited broad participation from the college community via a Search Committee, which comprised faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community representatives. The Committee considered many applicants from a deep and diverse pool of highly accomplished leaders over a nine-month intensive international search process before recommending three candidates for the Board's consideration.

The position profile sought a leader with exceptional executive leadership, communication ability, personnel management skills and

strategic planning experience, all of which Dr. Koroivulaono possesses. Dr. Koroivulaono holds a bachelor's degree, master's degree and PhD in English from the University of Auckland in New Zealand and is the former President/CEO of the College of the Marshall Islands from 2015 to 2020. Dr. Koroivulaono has the proven leadership commitment, educational qualifications, values and ethics and multidimensional networks, with more than 20 years of experience in higher education and a long-standing commitment to student achievement and success.

After the unanimous vote at the Board of Regents meeting on November 21, 2022, Chair Suzanne L. Gallen stated, "Dr. Koroivulaono's career has demonstrated quality in her deep commitment to the success of higher education. She possesses leadership of impressive strategic initiatives across a wide range of priorities. Dr. Koroivulaono assumes the role of the next COM-FSM President with confidence and experience, and with the strength

needed to lead the college forward on its path as a learner-centered institution characterized by continuous improvement and best practices.

"The Board is confident that at this point in the history of COM-FSM, what we do to prepare our students in this complex, rapidly changing world has become more urgent and critical than ever and Dr. Koroivulaono brings both stability and ingenuity to that mission. The Board looks forward to working with her in our commitment to the success of the FSM by providing programs of higher learning. Her contagious enthusiasm for the work ahead will make COM-FSM an even greater college under her leadership."

The Board owes tremendous thanks to members of the first Search Committee (2020-21) and the second Search Committee (2022) and supporting staff for their expertise, guidance, collaboration, patience and full commitment to the long and rigorous search over the past two years. The Board is also sincerely appreciative to the college community, including faculty, staff, students,



Dr. Theresa Koroivulaono

parents and alumni, who were an integral part of the search process by contributing to various surveys, polls, interviews, evaluations and summits that invaluable aided the Search Committee's work. And finally, the Board also thanks former Interim President Mrs. Karen Simion and current Interim President Manny Mori, for their leadership, dedication and professionalism in leading the college while the search was ongoing.



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...SDGs in the Pacific

Continued from page 6

both the social and environmental dimensions of development. Apinelu, as Chair of the Pacific Steering Committee for the Second Quadrennial Pacific Sustainable Development Report 2022, stated, "We need to work together as one community. We need to be efficient in how we combat change."

Representing the Pacific Disability

Forum, Chief Executive Officer, Setareki Macanawai reflected that vulnerable communities in the Pacific continue to experience exclusion based on diminishing investments made despite the growing number of vulnerable communities.

The report was compiled under the guidance of the Pacific Steering Committee and technical advisers from across Pacific regional organisations, the United Nations in the Pacific, and civil society and private sector representatives.



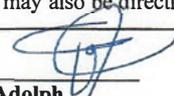
BID INVITATION NOTICE

The Project Management Office (PMO) of the Office of Transportation and Infrastructure, Pohnpei State Government of the Federated States of Micronesia is hereby issuing this Bid Invitation Notice to qualified contractors for the following projects located in **Pohnpei, FSM**:

#	Project Name	Pre-Bid Conference	Bid Closing
1	Construction of the Lukop Elementary School	19 th January, 2023 @ 10AM	16 th February, 2023 @ 8:30AM
2	Construction of the Palikir Elementary School	18 th January, 2023 @ 10AM	16 th February, 2023 @ 10AM
3	Construction of the Primary Healthcare Facility	17 th January, 2023 @ 10AM	16 th February, 2023 @ 1PM
4	Construction of the Kinakapw to Lehn Diadi Waterline	16 th March, 2023 @ 10AM	03 rd May, 2023 @ 1PM

Further information on this bid invitation may be obtained by submitting a written request for details to Mr. Farhad Khan, Program Manager, Project Management Office, Pohnpei State Government P.O. Box 2246, Kolonia, Pohnpei FM at email : info@pnipmo.gov.fm

The bidding documents, including the instructions to bidders, scope of work and conditions of contract may also be directly obtained from the Pohnpei State PMO website.


John Adolph
Administrator / Contracting Officer
OT&I , Pohnpei/State Government,
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<https://pnipmo.gov.fm/projects.html>

Note: All times are Pohnpei Local (UTC +11)

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Established in 1944, the WBG is one of the world's largest sources of funding and knowledge for development solutions. In fiscal year 2014, the WBG committed \$65.6 billion in loans, grants, equity investments and guarantees to its members and private businesses, of which \$22.2 billion was concessional finance to its poorest members. It is governed by 188 member countries and delivers services out of 120 offices with nearly 15,000 staff located globally.

World Bank Group Governance Global Practice:

An effective and accountable governance framework, in the form of functioning institutions, is a necessary precondition for sustainable poverty reduction. Fragile, ineffective or inexistent institutions have long been put forward as explaining the relative underperformance of economies. Furthermore, poor governance and structural deficiencies in public and private institutions are often prevalent in fragile and conflict affected states. On the other hand, cross-country empirics have confirmed that higher institutional quality is correlated with higher levels of per capita income and greater economic growth. Thus, governance mechanisms and institutions are critical to sustained growth and poverty alleviation.

The Governance Global Practice (GGP) comprises a variety of different professional disciplines working on public institutions, including public sector management, governance and anti-corruption, procurement, financial management, social accountability and justice reform.

The GGP interventions range from diagnostics, technical assistance and advisory services, knowledge management and sharing, creating peer learning platforms, lending and reform project implementation, and monitoring and reporting. An important part of its responsibilities is to deliver operational support to other Practices, including through inputs for project preparations, policy-based operations, hands-on implementation advice and direct fiduciary due diligence of investment financing.

The World Bank has substantially scaled-up its program and field presence in the North Pacific over the past few years and opened a new office in Pohnpei in 2022. The World Bank's current active portfolio in the North Pacific consists of 19 projects in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) and Palau with a value of approximately US \$460 million in the sectors of digital development, transport, health, governance, energy, social protection, education, urban resilience, and environment.

Duties and Responsibilities:

The FM consultant will be based in the World Bank's Pohnpei, FSM office and will work on financial management (FM) aspects of the World Bank's operations in the Pacific, focusing on the FSM. The FM consultant will work under supervision of World Bank FM Analysts, World Bank FM Specialists and Senior FM Specialists. This will include, but not be limited to: (i) supporting the Pacific FM team in completing routine supervision work on selected projects, (ii) completing IFR and audit reviews for projects under supervision of the assigned FMS, (iii) providing hands-on support to clients' FM and operations teams in order to achieve systematic recording and reporting of bookkeeping and accounts ensuring compliance with the Bank's audit and other fiduciary requirements; and (iv) carrying out other financial management related tasks as required by the World Bank's Pacific FM team.

Specific activities will include:

- As advised by the assigned World Bank FM Specialist, review a sample of individual transactions, including those forming the basis of entries in (IFRs) and statements of expenditures (SOEs) supporting Withdrawal Applications, to determine the appropriateness of these documents and the adequacy of the internal control systems;
- Follow-up any issues noted during supervision of project implementation, as well as on observations derived from reviews of audit reports, management letters and IFRs, and assess the status of their resolution (e.g. Ineligible expenditures, internal controls weaknesses, non-compliance with financing agreement covenants, late IFRs, late audit opinions etc.);
- Identify existing or emerging project FM issues in consultation with Project Finance Officers and work with the World Bank FM Team to propose relevant solutions/support;
- Facilitate verbal and written communications between the World Bank FM team, country operations team, and the client/project teams;
- Facilitate the coordination of meetings, trainings, workshops, project missions and other activities.

The FM consultant will work within the country team, which includes the Resident Representative, Operations Officer, Task Team Leaders, Financial Management Team, Procurement and other technical specialists, and Administrative and Client Service (ACS) staff.

The FM consultant will be managed by the Financial Management Coordinator based in the Suva office and for day-to-day operational matters he/she will work closely with and provide support to the Financial Management Specialists covering the portfolio of the North Pacific Country Management Unit with a focus on the Federated States of Micronesia and Palau.

This is a Short-Term Contract appointment through June 30, 2023 and may be renewed based on performance and continued business needs.

Selection Criteria:

- The candidate should hold at least a Diploma in accounting, finance, bookkeeping or auditing. A Degree will be an advantage, but not critical.
- A minimum of 3 years of relevant experience in accounting, auditing, taxation, project management or the public sector is desirable.
- The candidate should demonstrate strong coordination skills. Oral and written fluency in English is required.
- Current membership of a professional accountancy body is an advantage.

Technical and other skills

- Strong verbal and written communications in English.
- Strong coordination skills and ability to serve as a focal point for FM queries by project teams and project finance officers within the country.
- Strong interpersonal skills and ability to work independently.
- Analytical skills to verify accuracy and completeness in project financial reports.
- Practical understanding of accounting, business, finance, and/or auditing, particularly relating to the public sector.
- Ability to work with implementing agencies in a hands-on manner to follow up any issues noted during supervision of project implementation.
- Takes initiative and is adaptable.

Behavioral Competences

- Deliver Results for Clients - Proactively address clients' stated and unstated needs.
- Collaborates within Teams and across boundaries - Provides own perspective on practical solutions to any problems identified.
- Create, Apply and Share Knowledge - Applies knowledge particularly of the Pacific regional environment to strengthen solutions for internal and/or external clients.



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SCHEDULE

MONDAY - THURSDAY
 WENO-TONOAS-WENO

DEPARTURE TIMES:
A WENO: 7:30AM
M TONOAS: 8:00AM

P WENO: 4:00PM
M TONOAS: 4:30PM

FRIDAY
 AM: WENO-TONOAS-WENO
 PM: WENO-UDOT-FEFAN-TONOAS-WENO

DEPARTURE TIMES:
A WENO: 7:30AM
M TONOAS: 9:30AM

P WENO: 3:00PM
M UDOT: 4:00PM
 FEFAN: 4:30PM
 TONOAS: 5:00PM

SATURDAY
 AM ONLY: WENO-UDOT-FEFAN-TONOAS-WENO

DEPARTURE TIMES:
 WENO: 8:00AM
 UDOT: 9:00AM
 FEFAN: 10:00AM
 TONOAS: 10:30AM

SUNDAY
 PM ONLY: WENO-UDOT-FEFAN-TONOAS-WENO

DEPARTURE TIMES:
 WENO: 3:00PM
 UDOT: 4:00PM
 FEFAN: 4:30PM
 TONOAS: 5:00PM

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 TERMS & CONDITIONS:



...Medical Mission needs across FSM.

Continued from page 2

The event would not be possible without the support of the following generous sponsors and donors: CFC Corporation,

Kaselehlie Diner, Blacksand Company, Mascot, J&P Construction Co., INS, Pohnpei Reef Distributors, My Place, Lehn Diadi Rentals, and OLMCHS. Special thanks to the Volunteer Doctors: Dr. Franklin Delos Santos, and Dr. Renato Badar.

RS Roque Company and MedPharm group would also like to thank the following government officials for their unwavering support namely: Senator Cindy Lekka, Chief Norleen Oliver, Director Winsiner David, Acting Secretary Arthur Albert, Special Education Coordinator Jessie Solomon, and Director Stanley Etse.

The medical mission was conducted adhering to COVID-19 protocols.



...Australia visit

Continued from front page

reportedly discussed climate change, regional security, and the deepening FSM-Australia bilateral partnership. The delegation included Minister for International Development and the Pacific Pat Conroy MP, Senator Somon Birmingham and Michael McCormack MP.

During the visit, FSM Congress Speaker Wesley W. Simina and Senators of the FSM Congress hosted a lunch celebration of the 35th Anniversary of FSM-Australia diplomatic relations where the Australian delegation was given a traditional sakau welcome and were treated to dance performances. The delegation has been scheduled to visit Ohmine Elementary School to see some of the results of an Australian funded project there, but the Congress event went beyond its allotted time and only Pat Conroy was able to attend the event.

The high-level meeting between the FSM and Australia was closed door. Media were not allowed entrance to that exchange though the Special Assistant to the FSM President was allowed access and covered some of what went on during that session in his public relations piece on the visit which is also included in this issue of The Kaselehlie Press.

Media participants, including several journalists from large Australian publications were able to participate in a press conference directly after the closed-door session which began with a statement by President David Panuelo. He named the relationship between the two countries as the "FSM-Australian Trusted Pacific Partnership".

Minister Wong spoke of the importance of the stability of the "Blue Pacific". "We are partners in that, and we are very grateful for being described as a trusted partner. That means a lot to us," she said.

She added that the significance of the visit from a bipartisan delegation is to demonstrate that regardless of who is in government, Australia will be a partner of the FSM.

"Ours is a long partnership and an enduring partnership, a partnership

that endures through times of change, through times of challenge, and a partnership that is now as important as ever for us to work together with the type of leadership that, Mr. President, you have shown, that FSM has shown in our region, globally --," said Mr. Birmingham in his opening statement.

Of the three countries Australia visited during their journey, only the FSM has diplomatic relations with China. On the 13th of December, Australia signed a new security agreement with Vanuatu. At least one of the news articles published by VOA before the commencement of Australia's visit to the three countries posited that the focus of the visits was to be Covid, Climate Change, and China. We asked the representatives of both governments how they are dealing with the issue of China's influence in the region.

After laughing briefly about the news article's error, whether intentional or not, Minister Wong grew very serious. "...I think it was a discussion at the PIF Leaders Meeting in Fiji, and there was a discussion about the three Cs, COVID, contest and climate, and I think what I would say to you, I would say two things: the first thing is, those are realities; COVID, contest and climate are realities. So the question for all nations and all leaders is what do you do in the face of those realities. What Australia wants to do is to work with our partners and friends, like Federated States of Micronesia, to navigate this period wisely, to work together and to manage those challenges, to work together to drive the development and economic resilience of the people in the countries of the Pacific. And in this regard I do want to particularly commend the leadership of President Panuelo of FSM. This country has been a leader. This has been a difficult time for the Pacific region. Let's be frank, it's been challenging, and this President, and this country, has shown enormous leadership, and we are deeply respectful of that, we are encouraging of that, and I wanted to acknowledge it."

President Panuelo followed with a statement. "Thank you, Minister Wong. I have very few things to say after what you have just presented. We've been following the visit, historic visit from Vanuatu to here, Minister Wong, and I understand you'll be going to Palau, and so the message I'll say is that we value the trusted Pacific partnership that we have with Australia, and that's demonstrated in the leadership of the Albanese (current Australian Prime Minister) Government, and here, Minister Wong, you represent Australia, and I'm impressed with the way Australian leadership is presented, and that is the bipartisan leadership of your nation, coming here, ensuring that partnership endures, that the partnership is strong, and so the three Cs, of COVID, climate and cooperation is happening already. It's happened many years in this 35 years of relationship; it happens in the meetings of our Pacific Islands Forum family, recently during the 51st Pacific Island Leaders meeting in Fiji, and many issues of importance were discussed and adopted, including the 2050 strategy for the Blue Pacific continent. We congratulate Australia for the recent signing of the bilateral security agreement with Vanuatu, because we say "Family first." So congratulations. We recently had a meeting, the Pacific Nations, with the first US Pacific Island Leaders Summit, and that was a success, resounding success, and so we thank you for your leadership, Australia, demonstrated in climate change, COVID recovery assistance that is ongoing right now with the Pacific Nations, and overall cooperation. And so, thank you for that, and we welcome you to our shores. Look forward to many years of cooperation in our very important diplomatic relations that we continue to enjoy. So thank you, thank you for that."

Referring to a letter that President Panuelo wrote to other Pacific Island Forum member urging them not to accept a security pact proposed by China, one of the journalists asked whether there had been any repercussions based on the letter, and also asked Minister Wong how

See continuation on next page



...Australia visit

Continued from previous page

important the President's letter had been in the region.

"I think it's pretty easy," President Panuelo responded. "I've been asked a question before whether FSM, our country is sandwiched between super powers, and you know, my very direct resounding answer is no, no, because we are a country that is enemy to none and friends to all. I think that's our foreign policy, and that's very easy to determine. Our region, in terms of geopolitics, we're a country, you know, I say, and it is repeated again, and it's embedded in our constitution that we extend to all nations, peace, friendship, cooperation and love in our common humanity, and so we cooperate with every country that is like-minded to make sure that we are a country with a rule of law, that we preserve the rules-based international order, and that we look our systems of democracy to make sure that we represent our nation in the areas of cooperation, including peace, security and economic cooperation. I think that's something that a country should be proud of, and we're proud of our trusted relationship with our Pacific partner, Australia. Thank you."

"Thank you," Minister Wong responded. "I've already said that I think President Panuelo has demonstrated real leadership at this time, as has FSM, but I'd make a broader point: when I'm in South East Asia or in the Pacific, I make the point we're not saying that what we are actually engaged in is choosing what sort of region we want, so it's not a choice between great powers for much of the region, and as the President said, this region is no stranger to great power competition, and if we go to Chuuk we see that. But the choice that is being made is what sort of region we want, and if you read the President's letter, and what else has been said, that's precisely what he and many others in the region are talking about, a region that is stable, a region in which rules are

respected, and which sovereignty is preserved, and it is that regional concept of sovereignty which goes to the point of security being provided by the Pacific family. So, I know that Journalists, some Journalists like to think in binaries; that they're easy. What we are about, all of us, in our different ways, is about thinking about and acting for the type of region we want to live in and we want our children to live in."

Readers can view the entire press conference [HERE](#)

During the visit, Minister Wong presented Speaker Simina and President Panuelo a gift from the Australian people and government—and indigenous artwork from Australia's Torres Strait islands. The artwork depicted the FSM's and Australia's shared connect with the Blue Pacific both countries call home.

Much has been made in the international media of the incident involving delegate McCormack during the lunch celebration. McCormack has said that he assumed that the protocol involving sakau in was similar to what he experienced in Vanuatu with kava the day before. In Vanuatu it is proper to drain the entire bowl of kava in one go. In Pohnpei, a ceremonial sip is more acceptable, and for good reason, that apparently no one had told him about. Pohnpei sakau is much stronger than kava and McCormack suffered the consequence resulting in a short visit to the hospital.



President Panuelo & Vice President Palik receive Ambassador Huang in farewell Courtesy Call; China donates \$190,000 to Satawan for construction of community gymnasium



FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—Recently, His Excellency David W. Panuelo—President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)—and the Honorable Aren B. Palik, Vice President of the FSM, received His Excellency Huang Zheng, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China (China), in a courtesy call. The purpose of the meeting was for the Ambassador to pay his respects to the President and Vice President and to announce that his service as Ambassador of China to the FSM is coming to a close. The Ambassador will depart the FSM later in the month of December, 2022.

During the meeting, Ambassador Huang relayed his appreciation to the People and Government of the FSM for strengthening the Great Friendship between our two countries, and reminisced about some of his favorite memories in the FSM. The Ambassador congratulated the FSM for its expertise in addressing the COVID-19 Pandemic, and relayed his satisfaction that China has been able to contribute much to the FSM's development over the course of his service as Ambassador of China, such as the 2019 State Visit to China, and numerous infrastructure projects, such as the Chuuk State Government Complex, the FSM National Convention Center still undergoing construction, the Kahmar Bridge, and the secondary roads in Lukop, Madolenihmw.

As a final gesture of the Ambassador's service to the FSM and the Great Friendship between the FSM and China, Ambassador



Huang entertained the Honorable Wesley W. Simina, Speaker of the 22nd FSM Congress, the Honorable, Kandhi A. Elieisar, Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Alfred Ansin, representing the Honorable Florencio S. Harper, at the Embassy of China in the FSM for a short ceremony. The primary purpose of the ceremony was for FSM leadership to sign the condolence book for the passing of His Excellency Jiang Zemin, the former President of China.

After signing the condolence book and exchanging views on the legacy of President Jiang, Ambassador Huang and Mr. Ansin signed relevant papers sourcing financial support from the Embassy of China's discretionary fund, wherein China has donated \$190,000 for the purpose of constructing a gymnasium on Satawan Atoll in the State of Chuuk. The gymnasium is one of several such infrastructure projects in the FSM financed by the Embassy's discretionary fund over the years, including other gymnasiums in the States of Pohnpei and Kosrae, such as the Utwe Gymnasium.

The FSM-China Great Friendship began on September 11th, 1989.

New building extension to enhance emergency response capacity in FSM

United Nations Development Programme

29 November 2022

Pohnpei, FSM –The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management (DECCEM) in the Federated States of Micronesia has a new upgrade following an extension to the building, in an effort to enhance the capacity of National Emergency Operational Center (NEOC). With this extension of the building, the NEOC will allow the National Disaster Committee (NDC)



(From Left) His Excellency Mr. Michigami Hisashi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to FSM; Honorable Mr. Andrew Yatilman, Secretary of the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management; Mr. Jaap van Hierden, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Micronesia; Mr. Kevin Petrini, Deputy Resident Representative and Country Manager for the UNDP Pacific Office in the Federated States of Micronesia; (Photo: UNDP)

members to efficiently coordinate emergency responses.

The construction, worth US\$164,570, is part of the Japan-funded project, entitled ‘Enhancing Disaster and Climate Resilience in the Federated States of Micronesia through improved Disaster Preparedness and Infrastructure (EDCR FSM Project)’, which aims to improve the capacity for preparedness and mitigation of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) to man-made, geo-physical and climate- related hazards and to climate change impact.

The Division of Emergency Management under DECCEM was designated as responsible for disaster management under the Act for coordinating national activities and assisting states. The construction started in November 2021 and was completed in May 2022, in order to reduce the staff occupancy and provide a dedicated space for NEOC.

A hand-over ceremony was organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with DECCEM, and attended by Honorable Andrew Yatilman, Secretary of DECCEM, Mr. Jaap van Hierden, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Micronesia, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the FSM, H.E. Michigami Hisashi, and Deputy Resident Representative and Country Manager for the UNDP Pacific Office in the FSM, Mr. Kevin Petrini.

In addition, a High Frequency (HF) and a Very High Frequency (VHF) radios were also supplied and installed at DECCEM to enhance disaster communication with key emergency operation facilities in the FSM. The new HF radio has the function of selective calling system which can alert specific radio base without disturbing other bases and can send a short message, contributing for improving the quality of communication and coordination. A series of trainings have been provided to DECCEM and State disaster officers and the installation to outer islands are under implementation.

His Excellency Mr. Michigami Hisashi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to FSM said, “this National

Emergency Operation Center will be utilized effectively anytime and is well prepared for emergencies.”

In his remarks during the hand-over ceremony from the United Nations, Jaap van Hierden, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Micronesia, expressed his appreciation to the Government of Japan for their generous support, which enables UNDP to work with the Government of FSM on the enhancement of the country’s resilience to the impact of disasters and climate change, COVID-19 response and recovery and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In regards to the capacity building of operation of HF and VHF radio, Mr Hierden said that, “Although the majority of radio operators are men, we are encouraged to have more women participation especially during the trainings of solar system which will supply power for radios”.

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

U.S. Coast Guard Conducts Community Engagements in Pohnpei after COVID Hiatus

By Chief Warrant Officer Sara Muir
U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia / Sector Guam

December 8, 2022

Santa Rita, Guam--As part of Operation Rematau, the crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter (USCGC) Frederick Hatch (WPC 1143) conducted community engagements in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, from Nov. 20 to 24, 2022.

"We appreciate the support of the U.S. Embassy team and the Australian Maritime Advisors to make our visit a success," said Lt. Patrick Dreiss, commanding officer of Frederick Hatch. "Coming into these islands and doing community relations is a lot of fun. It might seem like work, but especially

when the local high schoolers come aboard, it is cool to show off the ship and see how much they enjoy seeing the different capabilities and the cool things our ship can do. It's fun to watch our crewmembers get the chance to show the vessel to them also."

The crew hosted visits from more than 80 senior students at Pohnpei Catholic School and the Calvary Christian Academy, colleagues from the U.S. Navy Seabee detachment in Pohnpei, embassy staff and families, and members of the FSM National Police Maritime Wing. They also took time to experience local food and culture, dive, and visit the ancient ruins of Nan Madol, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

"While playing the Seabee detachment at

the softball field in town, an impromptu game between the Americans and a local high school team broke out with a considerable crowd gathering to watch," said Dreiss. "We're calling out the Seabees on our team for the narrow 10-9 loss. But seriously, it was a great event for all."

The community events are part of a more extensive regional patrol. The Frederick Hatch crew also conducted six at-sea boardings of fishing vessels with an FSM shiprider aboard. No violations of applicable regulations were noted during the boardings. This activity was the first time in several years an FSM shiprider could accompany U.S. Coast Guard crews as the country resumes normal operations after limiting travel as a COVID precaution.

"We had a fisheries officer from the FSM Maritime National Police conduct boardings on vessels in the FSM Exclusive Economic Zone. It's a great opportunity to swap stories and learn about different things, like how they view the issues we are trying to tackle when it comes to illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing. It's a great chance to strengthen the bond we have with our allies and partners in the region," Dreiss said.

The Frederick Hatch's arrival to Pohnpei was ahead of schedule as they executed a medical evacuation of a 31-year-old Vietnamese fisherman from the Nauru-flagged, 69.4 meter (227 foot) purse

See continuation on next page

...U.S. Coast Guard FSM leadership welcomes Foreign Minister Wong for first bilateral engagement since opening of borders

Continued from previous page

seiner fishing vessel, Ocean Galaxy 195 nautical miles (224 statute miles) south of Pohnpei.

"It was an absolute team effort by every member of Frederick Hatch to medevac the injured crewmember from the Ocean Galaxy successfully. Witnessing each crewmember perform at the highest level after completing two boardings earlier the same day to help a fellow mariner was awesome to watch," said Dreiss.

The fisherman reportedly fell 12 feet earlier the same day, sustaining a head and possible spinal injury. He was conscious and talking but lost feeling and motion in his right arm and both legs, exhibiting severe concussion symptoms. The Frederick Hatch crew completed the transit to Pohnpei in about eight hours to arrive around midnight. They then transferred the injured fisherman to awaiting emergency medical services, who took him to the local hospital. The embarked hospital corpsman and linguist accompanied the fisherman to pass on relevant medical details and ensure hospital staff could communicate with him.

The Frederick Hatch is on an expeditionary patrol in Oceania in support of Operation Rematau and Operation Blue Pacific to promote security, safety, sovereignty, and economic prosperity in Oceania. In Micronesia, Rematau means people of the deep sea. It highlights the connection between mariners and honors the shared understanding in the Pacific that securing the future requires long-term vision and a carefully considered regional strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

The Frederick Hatch is the 43rd 154-foot Sentinel-class fast response cutter named for a surfman and lighthouse keeper who was a two-time Gold Life Saving Medal recipient. The Service commissioned the ship along with its sister ships, Myrtle Hazard (WPC 1139) and Oliver Henry (WPC 1140), in Guam in July 2021. These cutters are a vital part of the U.S. Coast Guard's enduring regional presence serving the people of the Pacific by conducting 10 of the Service's 11 statutory missions with a focus on search and rescue, defense readiness, living marine resources protection, and ensuring commerce through marine safety and ports, waterways, and coastal security.

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On December 14th, 2022, His Excellency David W. Panuelo—President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)—the Honorable Aren B. Palik, Vice President of the FSM, the Honorable Wesley W. Simina, Speaker of the 22nd FSM Congress, the Honorable Esmond B. Moses, Vice Speaker of the 22nd FSM Congress, the Honorable Perpetua S. Konman, Chair of the Special Committee on Climate Change & Environmental Issues, and additional leaders including the Cabinet of the Executive Branch and numerous Senators in the FSM Congress, received the Honorable Penny Wong, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Australia, and her delegation, inclusive of the Honorable Pat Conroy, Minister for International Development and the Pacific, the Honorable Simon Birmingham, Shadow Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honorable Michael McCormack, Shadow Minister of International Development and the Pacific, and Her Excellency Jo Cowley, Ambassador of Australia to the FSM, for a formal bilateral engagement. The bilateral engagement is the first the FSM has entertained since opening its borders in August 2022.

The primary purpose of the engagement was for the FSM and Australia to celebrate 35 years of diplomatic relations. In this respect, President Panuelo highlighted in detail the FSM's appreciation for its relationship with the People and Government of Australia.

"It has always been our country's foreign policy that we extend to all countries that which we seek—that is, peace, friendship, cooperation, and love in our common humanity. It is a blessing, and an honor to confirm, that the People and Government of Australia have given the FSM peace, friendship, cooperation, and love in our common humanity right back to us," President Panuelo said.

President Panuelo described how—regardless of the challenge the FSM has faced—the People and Government of Australia have consistently shown their complete and total support to assist the People and Government of the FSM.

"When our citizens faced the COVID-19 Pandemic, Australia was there to support the FSM," President

Panuelo said, noting that the Australian Ambassador and/or her senior staff attended COVID-19 Task Force meetings, providing information and honest feedback.

"When our citizens are lost at sea or stranded on remote islands, or illegal fishers threaten our livelihoods, Australia was there to support the FSM," President Panuelo said, noting that the Pacific Patrol Boat Program and the Maritime Security Advisors worked, often hand-in-hand with FSM Maritime Police, to literally save FSM citizens from harm's way.

"When our children were performing poorly, compared to other Pacific countries, in mathematics and English, Australia was there to support the FSM," President Panuelo said, highlighting the Improving the Quality of Basic Education program that provides new teaching materials and superior teaching pedagogy for the FSM's students, as well as directly funds multiple consultants based in the FSM's states and the National Department of Education.

"When we assessed that shipwrecks from World War II might leak oil into our lagoons, Australia was there to support the FSM," President Panuelo said, noting that Australia quickly joined forces with the Japan Mining Action Team (JMAS) for the important work of determining which vessels might be at the most risk of leaking oil and attempting to prevent or mitigate that leakage, whose work continues today.

"When our Blue Pacific Continent risked fracturing...Australia was there to support the FSM," President Panuelo said, highlighting that the Suva Agreement is itself evidence that patient and competent Australian diplomacy yields handsome dividends—for Australia, for the FSM, and for the Pacific.

"What I have described, I feel, is a partnership," President Panuelo said, "A partnership where we genuinely trust each other, and genuinely cooperate together in the Pacific Way. It's the kind of partnership that deserves a name."

President Panuelo described how, in the context of the FSM's relations with other countries, countries with established presence in the FSM are given names

that define how the FSM perceives the relationship. The relationship with Japan is called the FSM-Japan Kizuna (special bond); the relationship with China is called the FSM-China Great Friendship; and the relationship with the United States is called the FSM-U.S. Enduring Partnership.

"It is fitting, then, that we mark this 35th year of diplomatic relations between our two countries with a name that accurately represents who we are to each other, and who the Australian People are to the People of the FSM. That's why, today—and in celebration of our 35th anniversary—I pronounce our relationship the FSM-Australia Trusted Pacific Partnership, because we genuinely trust each other, because we genuinely cooperate together in the Pacific way, and because we genuinely partner together for the mutual benefit of our People."

Beyond the festive and ceremonial aspects of the engagement—such as a sakau ceremony and traditional dancing—President Panuelo, Vice President Palik, and the Cabinet received Foreign Minister Wong and her delegation in an extensive bilateral discussion. The bulk of the conversations focused on maritime security, education programming, and Pacific regionalism. Following the bilateral engagement proper, President Panuelo and Foreign Minister Wong hosted a Press Conference.

Many of the questions directed to President Panuelo and Foreign Minister Wong were regarding the geopolitical situation in the Blue Pacific Continent. When asked whether the FSM ever felt sandwiched between two major superpowers—i.e. the United States of America and the People's Republic of China—President Panuelo said his "direct, resounding answer" was no, because the FSM "is a friend to all and an enemy to none." The President then reiterated the Nation's commitment to preserving the rules-based international order, and the FSM's appreciation for Australia's commitment in doing the same.

"I am impressed with the way Australian leadership is presented," President Panuelo said, citing that the FSM values

Click here for continuation

...Foreign Minister Wong

Continued from page 15

that the Australian delegation included both the formal Minister of Foreign Affairs as well as the Shadow Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Citizens unfamiliar with the distinction, as the FSM has no equivalent, may appreciate that in Australia's system of governance, a Shadow Minister is a member of the opposition party who serves as counterpart to the Minister proper, which lends credibility and transparency in governance. A Shadow Minister does not have the decision-making power the Minister has, but sees all of the work the Minister engages in, so as to offer feedback and critical analysis.

When asked about what he views as threats to security and stability in the Blue Pacific Continent, President Panuelo said "We cooperate with every like-minded country to make sure that we are a country with rule-of-law, that we preserve the international rules-based order, and that we look at our systems of democracy to make sure that we represent our Nation in areas of peace, security, and economic cooperation. We have to be a nation that loves peace. And if we don't love peace, then we are not respecting the sovereignty of other nations, human rights, individual rights, and democracy itself. We are a harmonious Blue Pacific Continent, and we would say that every country that comes in to engage with our Pacific family has to respect that rules-based international order."

Following the Press Conference, the FSM's leadership and the Australian delegation enjoyed a luncheon, inclusive of formal remarks by the respective principals. President Panuelo and Speaker Simina, in their separate remarks, both highlighted the FSM's continued and deep appreciation of the People and Government of Australia, and noted that the FSM Government remains committed to establishing a formal Embassy of the FSM in Canberra at the nearest opportunity.

The FSM-Australia Trusted Pacific Partnership has endured for more than 35 years, and it is the intent of the FSM Government that the relationship continues to grow in strength and endurance over the decades to come.

Secretary of Justice represents the FSM at Indonesia-Pacific Forum for Development; AG Gallen meets with Philippine's Department of Migrant Workers regarding Labor Ban

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—In the first weeks of December, 2022, the Honorable Joses R. Gallen—Secretary of the Department of Justice of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)—sojourned to the Republic of Indonesia and the Republic of the Philippines for multilateral and bilateral engagements. For the former, the Secretary represented the FSM at the Indonesia-Pacific Forum for Development held in Bali; for the latter, the Secretary met with officials in the Philippine's Government regarding the ongoing ban on labor deployment.

At the Indonesia-Pacific Forum for Development, Secretary Gallen delivered the FSM's country statement on Human Security, speaking primarily to Climate Change, human trafficking, and illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing activity.

Following the High-Level dialogue, the Secretary met with the Honorable Retno Marsudi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, to discuss some of the FSM's pending issues of mutual interest. Among these include overlapping claims of extended continental shelf on the Eauripik Rise Area. The FSM had lodged its claim in 2013, whereas Indonesia had lodged its claim in 2018. According to the rules of the Commission on the Limits of Continental Shelf, the overlapping claim shall have no prejudice on the issue of delimitation (i.e. both claimants should cooperate with each other). In case of dispute or objection, then neither claim will be considered by the Commission.

Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the FSM and Indonesia met in Canberra, Australia, to discuss cooperation on the Eauripik Rise. It was agreed at the time that a memorandum of understanding will be signed by the two sides that will speak of mutual intention to cooperate. The FSM considered a draft memorandum of understanding proposed by Indonesia and has been awaiting additional reactions from Indonesia since February 28th, 2020.

Secretary Gallen advised the President of the FSM, His Excellency David W. Panuelo, that Minister Marsudi described that Indonesia submitted its claim on the Eauripik Rise in 2018, awaiting a no-contest reaction by the FSM, allegedly not being aware that the FSM is also awaiting further reaction from Indonesia. Secretary Gallen and Minister Marsudi agreed that, on the premise that both sides were operating on the understanding that they had submitted claims awaiting a no-contest by the other, that technical staff from the respective Governments will initiate communications through formal channels in finding out the

status of the claims made by both countries.

Additionally, Secretary Gallen spoke with Minister Marsudi regarding a visa waiver agreement between the FSM and Indonesia signed by both parties in 2018. It was the intention of the FSM Government that the 21st Congress of the FSM ratify the agreement, though due to the COVID-19 Pandemic the 21st Congress prioritized the health and wellbeing of the Nation's citizens. Thus, Secretary Gallen advised Minister Marsudi that the Executive Branch will resubmit the agreement to the 22nd Congress of the FSM for its action in the Regular Session to occur in January, 2023.

After the meeting with Minister Marsudi, Secretary Gallen attended a dinner hosted by the Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum, the Honorable Henry Puna. Secretary-General Puna described several plans for potential high-level and high-visibility visits to the Pacific in 2023 that, when further concretized, and upon consultation with member countries, will be formally communicated.

Following the Indonesia-Pacific Forum for Development, Secretary Gallen traveled to the Philippines to meet with the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Migrant Workers to discuss the lifting of the deployment ban of new workers from the Philippines to the FSM. The Philippines Government had previously initiated a ban on the deployment of new workers to the FSM in August, 2018, after mounting complaints of labor abuse by local employers in the States of Chuuk and Pohnpei.

After President Panuelo met with His Excellency Ferdinand "Bongbong" Romualdez Marcos Jr., on the margins of the 77th United Nations General Assembly in New York this previous September 2022, it is the understanding of the FSM Government that the Government of the Philippines intends to work with the FSM in order to lift the deployment ban on new imported labor. Discussions with the Department of Migrant Workers suggested to Secretary Gallen that the process for lifting the ban will take time, however; the FSM Government is not aware, at the time of this release, when the lifting of the ban will occur, though discussions between the FSM and Philippines Governments remain positive.

Upon the conclusion of the meetings with the Department of Foreign Affairs



and the Department of Migrant Workers, Secretary Gallen met with the Chief of the Philippines National Police, Police General Rodolfo Azurini Jr., on the latter's offer to usher in the FSM's applications to obtain observer status to ASEANAPOL, the law-enforcement-focused organization formed through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Chief of Police Azurini confirmed the Philippines' interest in supporting the FSM's application to ASEANAPOL and advised that he will work with the FSM Department of Justice in ways forward on this.

Of significant interest to the FSM's citizens may include that Secretary Gallen and Chief of Police Azurini broadly concurred on a proposed police training agreement. A draft agreement is to be sent to the FSM for the President's review and consideration and, if accepted, would see the agreement signed between Secretary Gallen and Chief of Police Azurini in January 2023. The practical effect this would have for the FSM is that—in addition to ongoing police training programs e.g. with the United States of America and Australia—the FSM's police forces would benefit from, and engage in, training programs with the Philippines National Police.

Secretary Gallen later met with Philippines Consul General, Mr. Patrick John Hilado, in Guam and shared with him the outcome of the Manila meeting regarding progress on the lifting of the deployment ban. The Consul General had expressed his great appreciation of the in-person meeting with Secretary Gallen and that his office is working closely with the Department of Migrant Workers in the Philippines to substantiate the FSM's intent and interest to conclude a bilateral labor agreement with the Government of the Philippines based on compliance and previous communications between the two Governments.

The FSM Government appreciates the work of Secretary Gallen and the Department of Justice in representing our Nation in Indonesia and the Philippines. Secretary Gallen returned to the FSM on December 17th, 2022.

Interior's Office of Insular Affairs Welcomes 31 Public Servants from the Pacific and the U.S. Virgin Islands to the Executive Leadership Development Program

U.S. Department of the Interior

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) welcomed 31 new participants to the Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP) for the Pacific and Caribbean insular areas this week. The 2023 Cohort is comprised of mid-level management public servants from American Samoa (4), the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (5), Guam (3), the U.S. Virgin Islands (5), the Federated States of Micronesia (8), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (4), the Republic of Palau (2).

"We welcome this new cohort of ELDP participants who are joining a long successful program that can now boast over 175 alumni," said Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs Carmen G. Cantor. "This year's group represents a broad cross-section of talent who are positioned to have a long-lasting impact in their respective island communities, and we are extremely pleased to support each one of them in what will be a special journey of professional and personal development."

Competitively selected from a pool of over one hundred applicants, the members of the 2023 Cohort demonstrated steady career growth with increased levels of responsibility, as well as individual commitment to public service, leadership potential, and diversity of regional and technical perspectives.

Commissioned by the OIA, the ELDP was designed to assist the insular governments with developing and retaining qualified and talented professionals needed to lead their governments into the future. The ELDP offers experiential training content designed to develop public service values and leadership skills. ELDP participants are immersed in experiential projects and work with leading experts to address regional issues.

The ELDP Class of 2022-2023 includes the following individuals from each Insular Area:

American Samoa

- Mika Aga - Senior Engineer,

- Department of Port Administration
- Grace Felise - Environmental Planner and Coastal Zone Management Program Manager, Department of Commerce
- Matilda Kruse - Program Integrity Division Head, American Samoa Medicaid State Agency
- Patrick Reid - Public Policy Advisor, Office of the Lieutenant Governor

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

- Jodina Attao - Chief Executive Officer, Northern Marianas Technical Institute
- Tiffany Crisostomo - Director of Revenue Cycle/Outpatient Pharmacy Business Manager, Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation
- Geralyn Delacruz - Zoning Administrator, Commonwealth Zoning Board
- Rich Salas - Director, Division of Coastal Resources Management
- William Torres - Grants Coordinator, Northern Marianas College

Guam

- Lawrence Jay Alcairo - Grant Specialist, Office of the Governor and Lt. Governor
- Chirag Bhojwani - Director of Policy and Communications, Guam Legislature
- Reuben Bugarin - Ethics Program Coordinator, Guam Ethics Commission

U.S. Virgin Islands

- Alicia Bastien, Auditor, Office of the Virgin Islands Inspector General
- Jozette Cantois, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Property and Procurement
- Mone't Francis-Gardner, Grants Administrator, Office of Management and Budget
- Sheniqa Lake, Auditor, Office of the Virgin Islands Inspector General
- Somere Webber, Federal Grants Administrator, Office of Management and Budget

Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)

- Andy Choor - Assistant Public Information Officer, Yap Congressional Delegation
- Reed Floyd - Junior Auditor,

- Kosrae Public Auditors Office, Kosrae State
- Rosalinda Mori - Senior Auditor, Office of the Chuuk State Public Auditor, Chuuk State
- Steincia Olter-Hawley - Carrier & International Business Manager, FSM Telecommunications Corporation
- Jason Reiong - Deputy Director, Department of Education, Chuuk State
- Pernes Samuel - Chief Fraud Investigator, State Public Auditor, Pohnpei State
- Trifonovitch Sound - Auditor III, Office of the National Public Auditor, FSM National Government
- Mary Lou Yatilman - Registrar of Corporations, Department of Justice, FSM National Government

Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI)

- Yetta Aliven - Information Management Officer, Office of the Chief Secretary
- Claret ChongGum - Foreign Service Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Jasmine Myazoe - Chief Internal Auditor, Ministry of Finance
- Benjamin Wakefield - Deputy Director, National Energy Office
- Republic of Palau
- Reggie Mabel - Jr. Auditor, Office of the Public Auditor
- Sanya Olkeriil - Chief, Division of Juvenile Justice, Bureau of Public Safety, Ministry of Justice

The ELDP today counts 178 alumni from the insular areas who represent island leaders with diverse professional backgrounds and an enduring commitment to public service, found in nearly every branch and agency of each insular government. Some serve today

as elected officials, ambassadors, judges, cabinet members, and directors. Additional information on each participant as well as detailed program information is available online at <https://eldp.pitiviti.org>.

OIA provides funding support for the ELDP, which is administered by the Graduate School USA's Pacific & Virgin Islands Training Initiatives (PITI-VITI). First implemented in 2008, the ELDP serves as the premier leadership development program for government employees throughout the U.S.-affiliated Pacific Islands and in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The Assistant Secretary for 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. Find information about OIA and its work on www.doi.gov/oia, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.



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Kitchen Donation to Chuuk Department of Education - Church donates kitchen needs to school grades K-5

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

17 December 2022

The State of Chuuk's Department of Education (DOE) in the Federated States of Micronesia is reinstating the school lunch program for the elementary school kindergartens through 5th grades.

A request was made to the humanitarian department in Guam for kitchen items to be donated to help with this endeavor. Chuuk's DOE, after the Compact of Free Associate-1 ended, no longer had the funds to restart the feeding program for the early Childhood Education students. William H.K. Davis, Director of the Humanitarian Department for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Guam, passed this request along to be filled through this department, knowing how this would help provide nutrition and energy for the students who, without this program, would go hungry throughout the day.

To facilitate the opening of the cafeterias, kitchen equipment and supplies were needed. Cafeterias at twenty-three out of forty-nine elementary schools would open to provide for the nutritional and health needs of their students.

This new project provides the supplies necessary to feed these students which will help them learn better in class.

There are five regions in Chuuk State: The Northern Namoneas Region, the Southern Namoneas Region, the Faichuk Region, the Mortlocks Region, and the Northwest Region. The Mortlocks Region and the Northwest Regions are in the outer islands.

Northern Namoneas Region, Southern Namoneas, and Faichuk regions are all within Chuuk's lagoon.

The materials the church donated will be distributed to all the schools in Chuuk State that have K-5 classrooms

One of the first schools to have kitchen items packed and sent down to them are in the Mortlocks K-5 where a ship recently left with their kitchen supplies headed to the Mortlocks Region.

The Project manager in Chuuk, Elinora Ewbisalen, who works with

the Chuuk State DOE and oversees that the schools receive their needed supplies, expressed her gratitude saying, "I am very grateful for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' donation to our kitchens. This is really a great help to our children in all the regions in Chuuk State, from the lagoon to the outer islands."

The Church's Guam Humanitarian Department has enjoyed partnering with the Chuuk State DOE and Jason Reiong in the past. This will be of great assistance to the school administration, students, and their parents.

This, and other donations, are made possible through the generous donations of faithful church members who believe in the two great commandments, to love the Lord thy God, and to love they neighbor as thyself.



Global Greengrants Fund (GGF) approves another four grants to Micronesian communities

GGF Pacific Islands

The Global Greengrants Fund (GGF) recently approved another four grants to Micronesian communities. The GGF, established in 1993, has been one of the leading organizations in the world supporting grassroots-led efforts to protect the planet and the rights of people. This round's grant recipients from Micronesia include the Tamil Resources Conservation Trust (TRCT) in Yap, the NEUT Association in Chuuk, the Kolonia Town Senior Citizens Association (KTSCA) and the Pohnpei Senior Citizens Association (PSCA) in Pohnpei. Each of the four community-based organizations are receiving \$5,000 grants to support their missions and activities four the next year.

The Neut Association was established in 2022. The grant will benefit members of the Wichukuno Village, Tol, Chuuk State and its neighboring villages. This project is focused on a water security program for the community, which currently has neither electricity nor running water. The project will help improve community access to a clean and reliable source of water. It also has a climate change awareness and outreach component. The Tamil Resources Conservation Trust was established in 2013 in Yap State, FSM, to effectively manage and conserve the Tamil community's natural resources from the impacts of climate change and other threats. The project will support work to combat the spread of 5 key invasive species. The project will finance an awareness campaign on invasive plants that will include

recommendations on how prevent, eradicate and control/manage the selected invasive plants from spreading in the village and other neighboring villages. The Kolonia Town Senior Citizens Association was established in 2020 in Pohnpei State. The grant will focus on food security activities. The specific activities will include establishment of two greenhouses, hydroponics farming and other farming activities to grow vegetables and other food crops. The Pohnpei Senior Citizens Association was established in 2010 in Pohnpei State, FSM, to provide quality health care and wellbeing services to vulnerable groups, most especially the elderly, women, children and persons living with disabilities. This project is also focused on a food security program that will increase the ability of these vulnerable groups to access and participate in ongoing government led resources management and sustainable development programs. It will also have an awareness raising component on COVID19 and other illnesses that are making the lives of our most vulnerable groups more difficult.

GGF has been supporting community efforts in Micronesia (FSM, Marshall Islands, Palau, Guam, CNMI, Kiribati and Nauru) for more than 20 years and has invested over \$1M in sustainable community development programs across Micronesia. Those who are interested in these community based grants may contact William Kostka at director@ourmicronesia.org, who currently serves as Coordinator and member of the GGF Pacific Islands Advisory Board.



Opinion Editorial

Pacific cultures and human rights: Bound by values

Opinion Editorial (Op Ed) by the Pacific Community (SPC) Director for the Human Rights and Social Development (HRSD) division, Miles Young

Today, 10 December, is International Human Rights Day, marking the day in 1948 when the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a way of committing countries around the world to values and principles which help reduce the risk of another world war. The Declaration sets out a broad range of fundamental rights and freedoms to which all of us across the world are entitled by virtue of being human beings. It guarantees our rights without distinction of nationality, place of residence, gender, national or ethnic origin, religion, language, or any other status. To date, 192 countries across the globe are party to the Declaration by virtue of being a member of the United Nations and next year will mark the 75th anniversary of this significant document, a remarkable achievement.

‘Human rights’ is a relatively new term for the Pacific and the question of its place amongst the region’s cultures, traditions and values has prompted much discussion. Many from the Pacific claim that ‘human rights’ is a foreign concept for the region. Yet, core human rights values and principles such as dignity, fairness, respect, inclusion, non-discrimination, and the protection of the vulnerable, resonate in the rich and diverse tapestry of Pacific cultures. Human rights support and promote community, which we in the Pacific value and prioritise, by ensuring no one, especially the most vulnerable, is left behind.

Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi, the late High Chief and former Vice President of Fiji, spent much time thinking about human rights and Pacific cultures and values: “Customs and human rights both concern rights. Human rights are understood to be the rights that are innate and inherent to each of us as individuals. Customary, traditional and cultural rights relate to our social mores as a distinct people or community. They include the ownership of land and natural resources, folk lore, traditional knowledge, and social systems. Both these species of rights belong to us by virtue of who and what we are.”

Human rights in the Pacific – a work in progress

Human rights are guaranteed in constitutions across the Pacific and Pacific Island countries have committed to at least one of the nine core international human rights treaties – Fiji is a party to all nine treaties, the Republic of the Marshall Islands is party to seven, and Samoa and Papua New Guinea are both party to six (see Table 1 below). Over the recent past, some Pacific Island countries have assumed key leadership roles in the international human rights space – for example, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Vanuatu are global leaders in using human rights as the basis for advocacy and actions to address climate change. Meanwhile, several Pacific Island countries have shown interest in joining Fiji, Samoa and Tuvalu in setting up national human rights commissions to advance human rights domestically, and many have strengthened the way in which they can monitor, implement and report on their human rights obligations and commitments.

Nonetheless, as a region there is much work to do to improve our collective human rights situation. While signing up to human rights treaties is one thing, translating them into real, tangible benefits for Pacific Islanders remains a challenge for many of our Pacific Island countries. For instance, we have one of the highest rates of violence against women and girls in the world and the percentage of women in our national parliaments is the lowest globally – this is despite a declaration by Pacific Leaders in 2012 to improve gender equality and 11 Pacific Island countries committing to the international human rights treaty on eliminating discrimination against women. Meanwhile, persons with disabilities in the Pacific are among the most marginalised in their communities, over-represented amongst those living in poverty and under-represented in social, economic and public life, with generally lower health and education outcomes – this is despite 11 Pacific Island countries committing to the international human rights treaty on the rights of persons with disabilities. And there is still more work to do in areas such as freedom of expression, the right to information, and good governance (transparency, equity and inclusiveness, accountability, independence of state institutions, rule of law, etc).

2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent – a game changer?

In July this year, the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum Countries (Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New

Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu) endorsed the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent as the long-term blueprint to advance the region over the next three decades. As Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum at the time, Fiji played a key role in the development of the 2050 Strategy which Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama launched at the 51st Pacific Island Forum meeting in Suva.

The 2050 Strategy envisions a “resilient Pacific Region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion and prosperity, that ensures all Pacific peoples can lead free, healthy and productive lives.” The Strategy commits the region to achieving this vision through “good governance, the full observance of democratic principles and values, the rule of law, the defence and promotion of all human rights, gender equality, and a commitment to just societies”. In short, the Strategy is anchored in values and principles which apply a ‘people-centred development’ approach to how the Pacific plans to progress over the coming decades – indeed, ‘People-Centred Development’ is one of the seven priority themes of the Strategy.

As we mark International Human Rights Day 2022, let us celebrate that human rights, democratic principles and values, the rule of law, good governance, and gender equality, are key pillars of the road map for the Pacific over the coming decades. The 2050 Strategy is a landmark document reflecting the collective thinking and wisdom of the Pacific as represented through our Leaders. Congratulations must also be offered for the inclusive, participatory and considered consultation process which informed the Strategy and resulted in its endorsement by Forum Island Countries. To help ensure adherence to the Strategy, Leaders have committed to checking on and assessing the performance and delivery of expected outcomes under the Strategy and ensuring accountability – but it falls on all of us as Pacific Islanders to help deliver on the Strategy, working together to achieve a “resilient Pacific Region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion and prosperity, that ensures all Pacific peoples can lead free, healthy and productive lives.”

Table 1: Human rights treaties to which Pacific Island Countries have committed

	ICESCR	ICCPR	CERD	CEDAW	CAT	CRC	CRMW	CRPD	CPPED
COOK ISLANDS				11 Aug 2006		6 Jun 1997		8 May 2009	
FIJI	16 Aug 2018	16 Aug 2018	11 Jan 1993	28 Aug 1995	14 Mar 2016	13 Aug 1993	19 Aug 2019	7 Jun 2017	19 Aug 2019
KIRIBATI				17 Mar 2004	22 Jul 2019	11 Dec 1995		27 Sept 2013	
MARSHALL ISLANDS	12 Mar 2018	12 Mar 2018	11 Apr 2019	2 Mar 2006	12 Mar 2018	4 Oct 1993		17 Mar 2015	
FED STATES MICRONESIA				1 Sep 2004		5 May 1993		7 Dec 2016	
NAURU				23 Jun 2011	26 Sept 2012	27 Jul 1994		27 June 2012	
NIUE						20 Dec 1995			
PALAU						4 Aug 1995		11 Jun 2013	
PAPUA NEW GUINEA	21 Jul 2008	21 July 2008	27 Jan 1982	12 Jan 1995		2 Mar 1993		26 Sept 2013	
SAMOA		15 Feb 2008		25 Sep 1992	28 Mar 2019	29 Nov 1994		2 Dec 2016	27 Nov 2012
SOLOMON ISLANDS	17 Mar 1982		17 Mar 1982	6 May 2002		10 Apr 1995			
TONGA			16 Feb 1972			6 Nov 1995			
TUVALU				6 Oct 1999		22 Sep 1995		18 Dec 2013	
VANUATU		21 Nov 2008		8 Sep 1995	12 Jul 2011	7 Jul 93		23 Oct 2008	
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights								
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights								
CERD	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination								
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women								
CAT	Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment								
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child								
CRMW	Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families								
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities								
CPPED	Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance								

From snows of Utah to tropics of Guam

Guam welcomes Elder and Sister Rosen, the new MLS missionary couple in the Micronesia Guam Mission

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

12 December 2022

Leaving the winter snows of Utah, Elder and Sister Rosen arrive in the warm, tropical island of Guam, the gateway to Micronesia. The Micronesia Guam Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is delighted to welcome Dave and Phyllis Rosen.

The Rosen's are from Provo, Utah where they raised six children and enjoy fourteen grandchildren. Their mission call is to serve as Member Leader Support (MLS) missionaries for eighteen months where they will help support the wards and branches here in the isles of the sea, giving leader instruction where needed.

Elder Rosen is newly called as the Micronesia Guam Mission President's first councilor. They have been assigned to live on the island of Chuuk in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) where they will serve the mission, offering leadership and support to all the islands in the mission.

Dave has served as YSA Stake Executive Secretary, Bishop, Scoutmaster, Stake High Councilor, Stake Young Men's Presidency and Gospel Doctrine Teacher.

Phyllis has served in the YSA Stake Relief Society Presidency, as a Relief Society counselor, Primary counselor, Young Women's president, choir director, activity leader, and other positions.

They love the outdoors, and what better place than the Pacific isles to spend time in one of the WWII memorial areas of the world with all it's hiking, waterfalls, beaches, and marine sanctuaries. They also love spending time with their family and playing games.

They are delighted to learn about Guam, Micronesia, and this part of the world. The mission is grateful they have chosen to serve.



Our Fish, Our Future national consultation workshop



Conservation Society of Pohnpei

On November 29, 2022, the Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP), in close partnership with the Pohnpei State Department of Resources and Development (R&D), the Office of Fisheries and Aquaculture (OFA), and the Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMA) Network International Trust co-hosted the OurFish, OurFuture national consultation workshop.

OurFish, OurFuture is a five-year project funded by USAID targeting the improvement of sustainable coastal fisheries management in the Pacific region. The project aims

to address social and ecological drivers of illegal, unreported, unregulated (IUU) fishing that are currently degrading coastal fisheries and biodiversity, negatively impacting local livelihoods, food security, and maritime security. The project is focusing on six countries: Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. Working with existing networks in FSM, OurFish project will capitalize on existing communities of practice to share information, tools, and successful practices to implement ecosystem-scale fisheries governance system with inclusive and transparent decision-making process to bridge traditional knowledge and modern science as well as increasing stakeholder engagement and agreements with measures to address ongoing issues and growing threats with regards to coastal fisheries.

The four-day workshop started with presentations on the status of Pohnpei coastal fisheries delivered by the Office of Fisheries and Aquaculture and Conservation Society of Pohnpei. Following the presentations was an overview of OurFish project by the Project Team Leader, Mr. Alifereti Tawake from the LMMA Network International Trust. It is very important to review and align existing regional projects. Therefore, the consultation workshop was conducted to obtain stakeholder inputs in Pohnpei's project workplan based on four strategic areas designed for the OurFish project and not to duplicate, but to continue and build on to on-going projects related to coastal fisheries and ecosystem-based resource management. The workplan was developed based on issues and needs at the municipal level. A validation workshop will be arranged at a later date for all partners and key stakeholders. This project will be led by the Conservation Society of Pohnpei as the local partner and will eventually reach out to the other FSM states.



OurFish, OurFuture is a regional project in partnership with the University of Rhode Island's Coastal Resource Center as the implementing entity along with the University of the South Pacific (USP) as the technical partner. The Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMA) Network will serve as the project lead overseeing project implementation in Vanuatu, Palau, RMI and FSM. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) will be overseeing project implementation in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. This project also collaborates closely with the Pacific Community (SPC), other regional fishery organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations, and relevant government authorities.

Kosrae Family Greenhouse Project - Lelu Farmers Association partners with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

19 December 2022

One island in Micronesia has taken bold steps to show initiative in creating the means for families to provide for themselves through greenhouses.

Kosrae is the easternmost state of the Federated States of Micronesia, a tiny island of approximately 42 square miles and a population of 5 - 6000 persons. Average monthly rainfall on Kosrae is 20 to 30 inches.

It is here in Kosrae that a model for self-reliance can be found that can be used throughout all the islands of Micronesia and beyond. Individual families with greenhouses can grow healthy, fresh vegetables that are so important for combating Diabetes and NCD's.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is aware of the high number of cases of Diabetes and NCD's in the Pacific islands, and created a program called 'Eat Healthy & Be Active' to combat this trend.

Knowing the need for fresh vegetables, and the lack of them on the islands, one of the chapters in this program specifically teaches about growing a garden and building a greenhouse.

William H K Davis, Humanitarian Director in Guam for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, was instrumental in forging a partnership with the Lelu Farmers Association (LFA) non-profit to provide "family greenhouses" in Kosrae State.

LFA is a Kosrae State chartered corporation, started in 2015 by Robert J Sigrah, Chairman and Nora E Sigrah, Grant Administrator. In 2016, LFA began its vegetable seedling services through FSM Congress funding. Growing "western vegetables" of cabbages, tomatoes, bell peppers and eggplant performed much better in a protected environment of a greenhouse where watering could be controlled, and the plants (especially cabbage and tomatoes) could be protected from damaging torrential rainfall.

In addition to the Kosrae family greenhouses, the Church has also provided soil amendments to existing greenhouses. LFA provides these materials upon request to active greenhouses to assist with their vegetable production. Since 2019, the Church has funded the provision of

supplemental soil amendments to existing greenhouses.

The Church provided a mini excavator to LFA in 2020 to assist with providing good quality topsoil to the greenhouse recipients. Many of the greenhouses are constructed in locations where there isn't topsoil, especially Lelu Island, Malem and Utwe. The excavator arrived in July 2020 – while Kosrae's borders were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic – and transferred to LFA by local Church leaders. The excavator was immediately put into use, with Chairman Robert excavating good topsoil from his property at Innem, Lelu and providing it to greenhouse recipients with LFA's dump truck. This continues today, upon request from greenhouse recipients. The mini excavator is maintained by Chairman Robert.

In addition to providing a protected environment for the vegetable crops, the greenhouses provide families more access to locally grown vegetables, sorely needed to combat diabetes, which is prevalent in the adult population. The greenhouses also provide food security through vegetables available to families with their own labor.

The family greenhouses funded by the Church have had a most positive impact on numerous Kosraean families. In addition to providing greenhouses, the Church provides a "starter kit" to each greenhouse recipient which includes lumber for shelving, grow bags, a garden hose with nozzle, potting soil, compost, manure, and slow-release fertilizer. LFA continues further assistance with provision of additional grow bags, trellises, and seedlings.

The Kosrae family greenhouse project has been funded by the Church annually from 2018 through 2022 for a total of 57 greenhouses located in all four Kosrae Municipalities of Tafunsak, Lelu, Malem, and Utwe. Two greenhouses were even constructed in the remote village of Walung, with the construction materials, carpentry crew and supplies, being transported by boat.

Greenhouses were provided to both Church members and other Kosrae families. Further, a greenhouse was provided to the Kosrae High School agriculture class to provide hands-on experience, as well as to the Seventh Day Adventist school/church.

Lelu Farmers Association and all greenhouse recipients are extremely grateful for the support of the Church, and especially our relationship with Elder Davis who has championed this project through the years. As diabetes concerns in the community continue to increase and food security issues rise with inflation of imported goods and shipping disruptions, LFA hopes that our partnership with the Church will continue with this family greenhouse project.

Chairman Robert adds his personal thanks saying, "This family greenhouse project has been a great success in providing families opportunity to grow their own vegetables for the dinner table, to help improve health of our community and to introduce children to farming. So many children do not connect that food in the stores comes from vegetables grown and harvested, and now they see it themselves. LFA, Nora and I, and all our greenhouse recipients are extremely grateful to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for their continuing commitment to this project over the years. We continue to receive requests for family greenhouses, bags, soil amendments and we are committed to provide them with the assistance of the Church. Kulo ma lulap!"



Matson, Habelé keep books flowing to Yap's youngest readers

Habelé

"Young Island Readers" is a book-a-month donation program that provides children from birth to age five a new age appropriate each and every month.

A generous investment from the Matson Foundation will cover the cost of providing over 400 such books to children across Yap State this coming January and February.

The Young Island Readers process is simple. When a child is born in Yap State, the mother is provided a sign-up form at the hospital. She writes the child's name and the post office mailing box their family uses. If she lives in the Outer Islands she indicates on which Atoll or Island they reside.

Sign up forms are offered again when a child is baptized or inoculated, ensuring newborns don't slip through the cracks. These sign-up forms are collected by students at Yap Catholic High School, where the details are entered into a book ordering system. Mothers or other family members may also obtain forms directly from the Yap Catholic High School as well as submit completed forms there. They can also sign up online at www.habele.org/yir.

Monthly, each enrolled child is sent a new book. The specific title is based on their age and phase of development. The books, sent at USPS media mail rates, arrive individually wrapped and addressed to the child. Those going to children in the Outer Islands are received by the Neighboring Island Coordinators at the Yap State Department of Education. The books headed to children in the Outer Islands make the last leg of the journey on either the state field trip vessel or aboard a Pacific Missionary Airline flight.

The backbone of Young Island Readers is Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL). The Imagination Library was founded and created by songwriter, musician, actress, author and business-woman, Dolly Parton, in her hometown of Sevierville, Tennessee in 1996. She envisioned a community-based program providing children with free, home-delivered books from birth to their 5th birthday.

Habelé is the "local champion" or on-the-ground partner for DPIL in Micronesia. Established by former Peace Corps Volunteers, Habelé is a US nonprofit, invested in the future and potential of Micronesian students since 2006. Though the program is both effective and efficient, there are still ongoing costs borne by Habelé. A generous donation from the Matson Foundation in late 2022 will help with that.

"Matson's generous donation to Habelé will cover all the costs for Young Island Reader books mailed in January and February of 2023," explained Neil Mellen, founder of Habelé. "We are grateful for Matson's continued support of our -and others'- work in Micronesia and across the Pacific in addressing community needs."



Building the capacity of Pacific delegates to navigate the complex world of COP15 negotiations

SPREP

09 December 2022

Montreal Canada - As negotiations run deep into the night on the first week of the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15) in Montreal Canada, where countries are hoping to finalise and approve the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, Pacific negotiators are doing their very best to amplify our Pacific voice and advocate for country priorities at the global gathering.

But the world of the CBD COP15 negotiations, like many other multilateral environment agreements, can be quite a daunting task for anyone, and very difficult to follow and comprehend especially if you are a first timer.

This is the complex environment, like at other international MEA negotiations, the Pacific delegates have found themselves in Montreal this week. It is also the backdrop for governments and Parties coming together to try and agree, amongst other things, on a new set of goals and targets that will guide global action on nature through 2030.

Amongst the Pacific delegation of more than 30 officials, there is a range of different experiences. There are experienced delegates who have done this for many years, and then there are new negotiators whose participation is not only to ensure their country and Pacific priorities are advocated for, and secured, it is also an opportunity to build their capacity for the future. It is a key part of the work being done in Montreal.

Ms Menolen Jacob-Oswalt, of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), is one of them and she said that while she felt butterflies at the start of the week, she is excited about being here.

"As a first timer to CBD negotiations, I'd like to learn more about the main practical aspects of participation in negotiations, particularly for small delegations like those from the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and other Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS)," she said.

"As a representative from the FSM, I plan to work with my delegation to push for our

priorities and interests as the FSM in the COP while aligning as much as possible with the views of other Pacific SIDS delegations."

Ms Jacob Oswalt is not alone. Ms River Thomas, of Palau, said she is loving the experience, and she wants to learn as much as she can, not just from some of the more experienced Pacific negotiators but also from others around the world. Since she arrived in Montreal, she has been absorbing all the information and experiences, which include working with other Pacific colleagues who have had to follow the negotiations late into the night.

"It's quite an experience and it is an honour to be representing my country and advocating for our national interests," she said. "It can be difficult and it takes time to balance different national interests of 196 countries, there are certain things that are red line for some Parties so it's definitely going to take time. From the Pacific's perspective however, we don't have time looking at the pressing nature of the issues we are here to try and resolve."

Ms Thomas said she is very keen on playing her part to accomplish a framework that really takes into account the special consideration of Small Island Developing States and the importance of oceans as a repository for biodiversity.

"I know there are other interests at play that are strong but I also know that as Pacific countries, we have come with a mandate from our countries, and our will is also strong. While I am new to the process, we will do everything we can as a region, and as individual countries working with our partners to create that ambitious shift."

The sentiments are echoed by Mr Ruel Yamana, of Papua New Guinea (PNG).

"This is my first CBD COP but I'm happy to be with my colleagues from the Pacific countries who have been very helpful, as well as the wonderful support team from SPREP whom we have been working with since the pre-CBD COP to prepare us for this," he said.

"This is an important meeting where we are here to set biodiversity targets until 2030 and PNG will be focusing a number

Continued on next page

...Building capacity

Continued from previous page

of those targets, in particular Target 19 on finance and resource mobilisation.

“To be honest I didn’t realise the contentious nature of some of the issues being discussed until I arrived here and looked at some of the texts but we have to stick to our key messages and when it comes to finance, the Pacific needs the necessary support to implement some of our priorities. This is an important COP and we want to see a positive outcome for our communities we are here to represent.”

The Convention on Biological Diversity was inspired by the world community's growing commitment to conserve the Earth's biodiversity and sustainably manage it. Originally planned for Kunming, China in 2020, COP15 was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and later split into a two-part event. Part 1 was held in Kunming last October while the decision to relocate the conclusion of COP15 to Montreal was made by the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties, in consultation with the CBD Secretariat and the Governments of China and Canada.

Prior to the official opening of CBD COP15 on Tuesday, the Open Ended Working Group had been meeting. The meetings were broken up into parallel working groups, where parties attempted to resolve outstanding issues on the language of the proposed Global Biodiversity framework.

The negotiations are likely to continue well into the next week. There is a general feeling that everyone wants the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to be adopted, which is the key issue at COP15.

At COP10 in Nagoya, Japan, in 2010, governments set out to meet the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets by 2020, including that natural habitat loss would be halved and plans for sustainable consumption and production would be implemented. According to a 2020 CBD report, none of these targets have been fully met. In the meantime, 196 countries have ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity, and all countries will need to adopt the framework at the meeting in Montreal.

At the opening ceremony, the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr António Guterres said: “Multinational corporations are filling their bank accounts while emptying our world of its natural gifts. Ecosystems have become playthings of profit. With our bottomless appetite for unchecked and unequal economic growth, humanity has become a weapon of mass extinction. We are treating nature like a

toilet. And ultimately, we are committing suicide by proxy.”

The Pacific has four key messages:

1. It is of critical importance for the Pacific islands region to have an effective and coherent Global Biodiversity Framework that reflects the needs of Pacific islands nations and conserving their unique biodiversity.
2. As Small Island Developing States, our Pacific islands face unique conditions in the effort to manage biodiversity and conservation, thanks in large part to our geographic situation, limited land, and vast ocean spaces.
3. Our Pacific islands need investments in capacity to manage and monitor the status of biodiversity and of human actions influencing native biodiversity.
4. Healthy ocean biodiversity is a Pacific islands national and regional priority and should also be a global priority.

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Faster pace needed at global negotiations on biodiversity

SPREP

December 9, 2022

Montreal, Canada - Three days into the start of the global biodiversity conference and the Pacific islands are already calling for more ambition, at a faster pace. The Fifteenth Conference of the Parties on the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15) is now underway in Montreal, Canada uniting over 190 governments in agreement on targets to reverse and halt biodiversity loss.

The Aichi Biodiversity Targets ended in 2020, and with COVID-19 restricting global travel, the world underwent two years of virtual negotiations on the new Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) that continues the international commitment to halt biodiversity loss. It's here at COP15 that the GBF is in the final stage of negotiations before being endorsed.

“Unfortunately, we are not progressing as much as we had hoped, even though we were given two extra years of negotiations because of COVID and we had hoped that with more time we would come to a consensus, but I think it actually has had the opposite effect,” said Ms Gwen Sisior of Palau.

In August 2019, Parties to the CBD started the work needed to develop draft text and targets for the new Global Biodiversity Framework with the intention for it to be adopted at CBD COP15 in 2020. However, due to COVID a number of different virtual negotiations then took place in 2020 and 2021, and then hybrid events in 2022 before the CBD COP15 took place in December 2022.

“When we first came back in Geneva, we started adding even more text than what we had originally agreed to during the first and the second meetings, which then elongated the entire process. I think part of it is us trying to get back to negotiating again and so the co-chairs were giving us more room to make changes - I think it's just ballooned to where we are now having so much trouble agreeing on bracketed text.”

The current version of the text being negotiated has over 900 pieces of bracketed text. This is when parties to the convention insert their additions which will then be negotiated to an agreed text. Ultimately the final result will be a series of global targets that all 190-plus countries that are

party to the CBD, will commit to. This will then result in actions on the ground to help achieve these goals which will be monitored and evaluated on a regular basis. The results of this will indicate to the international community as to just how well the world is progressing in meeting these targets across the next ten years.

“I think there's a general understanding that we need to take action, and that we need to do it right this time for the planet but I think the rate at which the text is being negotiated is a little slow,” said Ms Sandeep Singh, the Director of Environment of Fiji.

“I think for humanity we all need to come together at this COP and do the right thing and be ambitious enough to be able to reverse biodiversity loss because if we don't do it now, it will be very difficult for us to fix this later with restoration work. Parties need to take this seriously. As responsible citizens of the world, we must come to the table with the mindset that we will be negotiating a very ambitious deal here for the planet and all of humanity.”

Thirteen of the fourteen Pacific islands Parties are in Montreal, Canada this week to ensure the Pacific Islands' priorities are reflected in the final outcome. The Pacific Ocean is home to over half of the world's whale and dolphin species and our tropical Pacific has 25 per cent of the world's coral reefs, 3 per cent of its mangroves and the rich tuna resources of the Western and Central Pacific Ocean supply 60 per cent of the world's tuna – our Pacific biodiversity is critical for more than the survival of our Pacific islands way of life. Conserving and protecting our biodiversity is something the world must do together.

“Of course, we must be optimistic to ensure that we have a robust plan in place, but the pace here is not going as fast as everyone would hope for. There are still a lot of countries that are not happy with parts of the text but like most of us, we are hoping that we can have a plan by the end of the COP. With all the bracketed text in the draft GBF a lot of work needs to be done in the time of the conference,” said Mr Warwick Harris of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

While the Global Biodiversity Framework is the key part of negotiations at the CBD COP, there are also other ongoing components of the convention such

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...faster pace

Continued from page 23

as resource mobilisation, gender, and administrative elements that need to be addressed. All must be finalised by 19 December 2022. Once done so, GBF will guide and support national biodiversity actions on the ground across the planet. The Pacific island delegations at the CBD COP15 are working collectively to ensure the One Pacific voice is heard loud and clear in the negotiations while maintaining national positions.

“We’re currently developing our National Adaptation Plan and in recognising the role of nature in the short to medium term to meet our adaptation priorities it’s imperative that we reach an agreement here in Montreal on an ambitious, effective and coherent GBF to be coupled with a robust financial mechanism, to support grassroots level activities,” said Mr Harris.

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Micronesia calls for special circumstances of Small Islands Developing States to remain in Global Biodiversity Agreement

By Nanette Wooten
SPREP

December 16, 2022

Montreal, Canada-- The Federated States of Micronesia called upon more than 190 governments to take into consideration the needs and special circumstances of small island developing states during the high-level segment of the global biodiversity conference.

The Fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, now underway in Montreal, is negotiating a new Global Biodiversity Framework resulting in new targets to halt and reverse biodiversity loss.

For Small Islands Developing States such as Micronesia negotiations are also to ensure special circumstances of SIDS remains in the final outcomes.

“Micronesia, like the rest of the Small Island Developing States in the Pacific region, is uniquely challenged due to our limited land, our geographic location, and the enormity of our ocean areas,” stated the Minister of Resources and Development of the Federated States of Micronesia, Secretary Elina Akinaga.

“As such, it is of utmost importance to Micronesia that the Global Biodiversity Framework takes into consideration the needs and special circumstances of small island developing states like Micronesia and contributes to conserving our unique biodiversity, including through the provision of adequate, predictable, new, and additional finance and other means of implementation.”

FSM statement

Minister Akinaga told her fellow colleagues that she was addressing them all, with deep concern noting that after 14 Conferences of the Parties, literally 30 years later, the world is threatened with the potential of widespread biodiversity collapse.

She called upon everyone to unite to find common ground and reach an agreement on an ambitious Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

With an estimated 77 per cent of land and 87 per cent of the ocean has been transformed by human activity. As a result of human actions, estimates

indicate a loss of over 80 per cent of wild mammal biomass and roughly half the planets biomass.

“We cannot ignore the consequences of our actions, nor can we argue over semantics. We live in a mutually dependent world, with a common desire for global sustainability through biodiversity conservation. Cooperation and partnership are key to ensuring the current and future generations of humankind are resilient and enjoy equitable socioeconomic health.”

As of 15 December, it was estimated that the global human population surpassed the eight billion mark, as raised by the Minister in her statement, after 10 years of steady decline in world hunger, hunger is now on the rise, affecting roughly 10 per cent of people worldwide.

“Against this backdrop, it is also estimated that by 2050 we could lose roughly 90 per cent of the world’s coral reefs. Mass coral extinction has detrimental consequences for islands and coastal communities as roughly one billion people worldwide depend on coral reefs for their livelihoods and their food security,” stated the Minister Akinaga.

“The loss of corals and a decline of overall ocean health would cost the world roughly 9.9 trillion US dollars globally, therefore healthy ocean biodiversity should be a Pacific island national and regional priority, as well as a global priority too.”

Minister Akinaga stressed their expansive maritime zone represents both an opportunity and an enormous challenge. Being home to some of the largest fishing grounds in the Pacific, it covers an area of 1.1 million square miles, being one of the most productive tuna fisheries in the Western and Central Pacific.

FSM4

“Like most of the Pacific islands we need investments in capacity to manage and monitor the health of our biodiversity and the impacts of human activities that affect the status of our biodiversity.”

“I urge us all to come together to find common ground and reach an agreement on an ambitious Post-2020



Global Biodiversity Framework.”

The Secretary Elina Akinaga, Minister of Resources and Development of the Federated States of Micronesia presented her statement to the high-level segment of the CBD COP15 on 15 December, 2022.

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Pacific Ministers amplify one Pacific voice in united push for global biodiversity framework

By *Sosikeni Lesa*
Island and Ocean Ecosystems

December 15, 2022

Montreal, Canada-- Leaders and Ministers from Pacific countries have reiterated the call on the global community to come together to agree on an effective and coherent Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) that reflects the needs of Pacific islands nations to conserve their unique biodiversity.

They have also further re-emphasised the message that Pacific islands face unique conditions in their efforts to conserve and manage biodiversity, due to their geographic situation, limited land area and vast ocean spaces, and they need financial assistance to do this.

These views were expressed by the Premier of Niue, Hon. Dalton Tagelagi, Palau Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and the Environment, Hon. Steven Victor, Samoa Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment (MNRE), Hon. Toeolesulusulu Cedric Shuster, Vanuatu Minister of Climate Change, Hon. Ralph Regevanu, Ambassadors and Heads of Delegations who attended a Pacific Ministers Informal Roundtable Breakfast meeting at the Intercontinental Hotel in Montreal Canada, on Thursday.

New Zealand's Minister of Conservation, Hon. Poto Williams, was present as well as Australia's Head of Delegation, Mr James Larsen. The breakfast hosted by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), and funded by the Governments of Australia and New Zealand, provided Ministers an opportunity to discuss priority biodiversity issues and challenges in our region as Pacific delegates look to do their part to finalise an ambitious post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to halt biodiversity loss.

Pacific officials at the breakfast meeting at the Intercontinental Hotel.

The Director General of SPREP, Mr Sefanaia Nawadra, acknowledged the effort by the leaders and Ministers

present in Montreal. He facilitated the roundtable discussion and reiterated the Pacific's key priorities at COP15, namely:

The critical importance for the Pacific islands region to have an effective and coherent Global Biodiversity Framework that reflects the needs of Pacific islands nations and conserving their unique biodiversity.

Pacific islands face unique conditions in the effort to manage biodiversity and conservation, thanks in large part to our geographic situation, limited land, and vast ocean spaces.

Pacific islands need investments in capacity to manage and monitor the status of biodiversity and of human actions influencing native biodiversity.

Healthy ocean biodiversity is a Pacific islands national and regional priority and should also be a global priority.

The High Level Segment of COP15 followed the Pacific Ministerial breakfast. Pacific leaders and Ministers will be hoping to make their presence count in the last few days of a conference aimed at preserving what is left of the planet's biodiversity.

Talks at COP15 hit a speed bump early Wednesday when more than 60 nations from the global south walked out over concerns that pledges from rich countries to fund conservation were too small and too vague. The Ministers and delegates have four days to reach agreement before the conference ends on Monday.

While negotiators report progress on many of the proposed 22 targets in the Framework, many of the most contentious -- including the amount of land to be preserved and how conservation action will be paid for -- are still to be worked out. Advocates are hoping the nations will agree to set aside 30 per cent of the world's land and oceans by 2030, the bare minimum scientists say is needed to stop the collapse of ecosystems, as well as limit climate change to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The Pacific Ministers Informal Roundtable Breakfast was funded by Australia and New Zealand.

SIDS Coalition for Nature launched with call for action at Biodiversity Negotiations

By *Sosikeni Lesa*
Island and Ocean Ecosystems

December 16, 2022

Montreal, Canada--As negotiations to secure an ambitious landmark framework to protect and restore nature around the world continue at COP15, several Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have taken a critical step forward to advocate as one for agreed common priorities, including the need for greater means of implementing biodiversity objectives, in SIDS.

They have done this through the launch of the SIDS Coalition for Nature, and the announcement of a Call to Action for "Enhancing Means of Implementing Ambitious Objectives for Nature in SIDS under the global biodiversity framework." The Coalition is co-led by the Governments of Samoa, Cabo Verde and Seychelles. Other Pacific SIDS who are members of the Coalition are Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

On Thursday, the Coalition was launched by the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ms Amina Mohammed and Cabo Verde's Minister of Environment, Hon. Gilberta Silva during a ceremony facilitated by the Chair of the Pacific Small Islands Developing States (PSIDS) and Samoa's Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN), His Excellency Fatumanava-o-Upolu III Dr. Pa'olelei Luteru.

"SIDS are pioneers of biodiversity, demonstrating their intrinsic link to nature which is fundamental to their livelihoods and identity. Simply put, SIDS have shown that when you talk about nature, you talk about SIDS," said Ms Mohammed. She commended SIDS countries for making biodiversity protection a top priority and highlighted the Palau National Marine Sanctuary, one of the world's largest areas of protected ocean, as an example of biodiversity conservation leadership, which she said should be emulated.

The launch of Coalition for Nature

Cabo Verde's Minister of Environment, Hon. Gilberta Silva, said: "As SIDS,

our highest political and strongest commitment are not enough. While we have been frontrunners in nature conservation by using our unique environmental characteristics to transform our structural challenges into opportunities, we still need greater and more targeted support to expand our best practices, learn from each other and bridge our recurrent gaps in implementing ambitious nature objectives.

"Greater and more urgent ambition requires larger and more targeted means of implementation. There is therefore a clear need to ensure that SIDS specific naturerelated issues and particularly means of implementation are considered for the successful implementation of the new agenda for Nature in SIDS."

Samoa's Minister of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE), Hon. Toeolesulusulu Cedric Schuster, who was among a list of speakers during the launch, said the launch the SIDS Coalition for Nature is one of the necessary steps required to conserve biodiversity for today and the future.

"We have learnt from generations past that in order to continue to enjoy the benefits of our natural world, we must care for it and protect it to ensure they provide for us and future generations," Hon. Toeolesulusulu said. "It is therefore of critical importance that our biodiversity and environment is conserved for today and the future. We urge all nations to commit to the common goal of a healthy planet, and to work with SIDS in implementing more of what is necessary to meet our biodiversity goals and objectives as set out in the CBD."

Hon. Toeolesulusulu also drew attention to the fact that Pacific SIDS may be small in size but they are large ocean states.

"Our reliance on marine resources ensures we must pay more attention to marine biodiversity, as we do to terrestrial biodiversity. Reef ecosystems restoration projects, mangrove rehabilitation, bans on

[Click here for continuation](#)

...Coalition for Nature

Continued from page 25

single use plastics which end up in the marine environment, and endanger valuable fisheries, are some of the ways we are leading efforts in biodiversity restoration,” said Minister Toeolesulusulu.

“In addition, considerable efforts to maintain many of our country’s reserves and protected areas, are spent in managing invasive plants that threaten our environment. There is no doubt that the conservation of biodiversity is important to keep our ecosystems healthy and functioning and good management of biodiversity ensures the sustainability of Pacific culture and economic development.”

While the SIDS Coalition for Nature is led and formed by SIDS countries only, it will also be open to non-SIDS countries as Friends of the Coalition, who can support the coalition by adding their “voice of support” to the messages and positions promoted by the Coalition. The Coalition will also explore synergies with other Coalitions and Alliances advocating for and promoting relevant biodiversity targets for SIDS.

Peter Thomson

UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Ocean, Peter Thomson, spoke in support of the Coalition reminding there cannot be a healthy planet without a healthy Ocean.

“In his State of the Planet address delivered at Colombia University in New York, the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, said humanity is waging a suicidal war upon Nature. He reported that one million species are at risk of extinction and that ecosystems are disappearing before our eyes. A year earlier at the Climate COP in Madrid, he had warned that three major reports of the IPCC confirm we are knowingly destroying the life-support systems of our planet.

“I sum up our predicament in the shape of coral. The IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, states with high confidence that

99% of coral reefs will be lost when we go through the dreaded level of 2 degrees Celsius. Coral reefs are home for up to 30% of marine life, they are the bunkers of marine biodiversity, and it’s an understatement to say their loss will have major consequences for the health of the Ocean. At this point, remember we cannot have a healthy planet without a healthy Ocean.”

The current members of the SIDS Coalition for Nature are Belize, Carbo Verde, Comoros, Dominican Republic, Guinea Bissau, Kiribati, Samoa, Saint Lucia, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Friends of the Coalition include Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom.

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The unique characteristics and vulnerabilities of Small Islands Developing States highlighted at Global Biodiversity Talks

*Nannette Wooten
SPREP*

December 14, 2022

Montreal, Canada--The recognition of the special circumstances of Small Islands Developing States is a key position of Pacific islands delegations at the biodiversity negotiations now underway at 15th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15) in Montreal, Canada. More than 190 governments are collectively working on new biodiversity targets to be achieved by 2030 to halt and reverse biodiversity loss.

There are 22 new targets on the table for negotiation. While the Pacific Small Islands Developing States work to ensure our needs are reflected in our priority target areas, we are also negotiating to ensure recognition of the special circumstances of SIDS is included in as many of the different target statements as possible in the new post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

“The special circumstances of SIDS and for our Pacific Small Islands Developing States is so crucial and fundamental to COP15 and the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. Our small islands are home to some rarest biodiversity there is, so the stakes are high for us,” said H.E Satyendra Prasad, Fiji’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

“There would be no need for any special reference to the SIDS if we were able to achieve biodiversity protection on our own, but we need help. As one of the most exposed regions to the impacts of climate change, we need a helping hand from our developed countries. We need global solidarity in this to ensure biodiversity can be protected and conserved for our Small Islands States and the planet as a whole.”

The consistent amplification of the voice of SIDS to insert the special recognition of our SIDS has been strong at COP15. This will strengthen

the level of support and resourcing that will be provided to our Pacific islands Parties to the CBD.

It will ensure recognition of our vulnerabilities and the need for extra support and assistance to help us protect and conserve our natural resources and biodiversity. Globally there are around 465,000 islands, but they only comprise 5.3% of the Earth’s terrestrial area. Unfortunately, 75% of reptile, bird, amphibian and mammal extinctions have occurred on islands. The Pacific SIDS are amongst the most vulnerable in the world. They are home to three of the 35 global biodiversity hotspots with a high number of endemic species.

“The Asia-Pacific Region is home to communities and ecosystems with unique vulnerabilities with regard to biodiversity loss. There are more than 20 island developing nations. The Preamble to the CBD Convention explicitly acknowledges the special conditions of Small Island Developing States. Hence there are special needs for capacity development and resourcing,” stated Ms Gwen Sisor from Palau on behalf of the Asia Pacific Group at CBD COP15.

“We note the work undertaken by the Secretariat on the Programme of Work on Island Biodiversity; however, we emphasise the need to directly address the means of implementation of this programme, and to consider the unique characteristics and vulnerabilities of SIDS.

The combined Exclusive Economic Zones of Pacific Island countries and territories comprise over 10% of the world’s ocean providing vital ecosystem services valued in many billions of dollars and underpinning economic sustainability in the region. Protecting and conserving our biodiversity is of crucial significance.

“As a Small Islands Developing State, we know how important it is that we maintain the special circumstances of SIDS in the final outcome statement.

Continued on next page

...Unique characteristics

Continued from previous page

We live in the world's largest ocean, collectively our Pacific islands region is only 2% land and 98% ocean," said Dr Josie Tamate of Niue.

"We are rich in biodiversity, it is this that has sustained our livelihoods, underpins our cultural traditions and is the basis of our way of life. There is so much that is unique and special about our islands, and we must have that recognised in all final outcomes from the CBD COP15 to help us achieve the targets that we sign on to."

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'We worry about the future,' Pacific Youth advocate for survival at COP15

SPREP

December 14, 2022

Montreal,

Canada--Youth representatives from Pacific islands attending the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15) in Montreal Canada this week, have issued a challenge to world leaders present.

"Please take the time to come and visit our Pacific countries so you will know what we are talking about. Sitting here and talking about the issue is very different to what would happen if they come and experience the struggles and the tough reality for us on the ground," said Ms Camari Divuniwaqa, of Fiji.

In the Solomon Islands, that "reality" is very grim, said Mr Rodrick Holness Rollands.

"We live the devastating impact of ocean acidification, our corals are dying, islands are sinking, we see dying mangroves, we are losing corals and we worry about what the future holds," he said.

"In some cases, our cultures are attached to these things so these are also impacting on our cultures. Our food security is under threat, our marine ecosystems are being damaged, our way of life is impacted."

For Ms Marinda Imakulata Tagiilima, of Samoa, she said this is why world leaders must agree and endorse a post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework by the end of the week, that is responsive to the lived reality of Pacific countries.

"I hope they see that there is a biodiversity crisis, there is a climate crisis, and they really need to directly address them. We don't need any more words, we need more action, we don't need any more promises, we want them to deliver now," she said.

Ms Divuniwaqa, Mr Rollands and Ms Tagiilima were chosen from hundreds of applicants to join the Global Youth Biodiversity Network in Montreal where the negotiations for a new biodiversity framework continues. The conference is taking place amidst a biodiversity crisis where more than 70% of the planet's land has been transformed, more than 60% of the oceans have been impacted and more than 80% of wetlands have been lost, while more than one million species face

extinction.

The Youth representatives say the Pacific communities are at the forefront of the impacts of the biodiversity crisis.

"As young people, the impact of what is happening now, which as you all know, is not good. We are heading for a perilous future if we don't act now. Our lives have already been impacted by biodiversity loss, and while we are doing so much back home in terms of conservation, we feel it is not enough. We have come with a message from our countries and we want to make their concerns known," said Ms Divuniwaqa.

Youth delegates with members of the SPREP team.

The Pacific has four key messages and high on the priority list is the critical importance of an effective and coherent Global Biodiversity Framework that reflects the needs of Pacific communities. Mr Rollands said the Pacific youth have a key role to play.

"We have some serious concerns about the loss of biodiversity in our home countries we have come here to voice in this global forum. We know that as young people, it is our generations that are going to be impacted the most. If we don't speak up now for ourselves, we will not have a future," he said.

"So we are here to engage and fight for our communities back home. We are the future and we have to make sure our voice is at the table and is heard. We need to have one strong voice, one that must be coherent and inclusive and takes into account all the concerns of our people back home."

Ms Tagiilima agrees.

"We are very much on the front line of the climate change impacts and biodiversity loss. We live and breathe the negative consequences of something our people have had very little contribution to," she said. "Our leaders today need to take more proactive action, less talking but more action. We need them to walk the talk, consider the concerns of all the nations, especially small countries as we are at the forefront of these impacts.."

Aside from amplifying our Pacific voice at COP15, all of them agree that they also

have some work to do back home to get more youth to be involved in biodiversity conservation advocacy.

"It is a privilege to be here, especially knowing that there are only a few of us representing the Pacific but we need more youth to participate, we need more Pacific representation here," said Ms Divuniwaqa. "We want to take what we have learnt here and use it back home to build more capacity so our voice is strengthened. We want a strong network of youth to advocate for our Pacific biodiversity priorities."

They hope to return home and set up a Pacific chapter of the Global Youth Biodiversity Network.

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