

Pohnpei mother and two sons criminally charged at FSM Supreme Court for firearms possession and others

By *Bill Jaynes*
The Kaselehlie Press

January 17, 2023

FSM—FSM Prosecutors have charged John Ehsa, Jr., Meriu Ehsa, and Raynard Anson with a combined total of 23 criminal charges in connection with firearms, drug possession, and attempted drug possession (CC 2023-500). The FSM Supreme Court released all three on their own recognizance pending the outcome of a trial though it required John Ehsa, Jr. to post a \$3000 cash bond.

All are innocent unless otherwise proven to be guilty after a fair trial.

According to a National Police Affidavit of Probable Cause, the discoveries occurred after FSM Customs and Tax Authority (CTA) officers filed a complaint regarding two parcels it had examined on February 3, 2023, that contained four marijuana joints in a plastic bottle in one package, and three marijuana seeds, also in a plastic bottle in another. The packages, which were shipped from a sender in Wyandotte, Oklahoma, were each addressed to John Ehsa.

On February 6, John Ehsa went to the Customs area of the Post Office in Kolonia, claiming the two parcels.

Officers told him that the parcels he wanted to claim contained contraband and would not be released to him. He made another attempt on the next day and allegedly threatened the Postal Clerk, demanding that she release the packages to him. That Postal Clerk told National Police investigators that John Ehsa, Jr. told her he had more guns than Pohnpei State and that while walking to the exit door, turned back to the clerk and said, "I want you to know that my name is John Ehsa, Jr. I will come back at 1200 hour," the affidavit said.

At a later time during that day, Meriu Ehsa, the mother of John Ehsa, Jr., also went to the Customs area of



the Post Office and attempted to claim the packages. Investigators asked her to go to the Transnational Crime Unit (TCU) office in Palikir

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25th MIF Takes Action Today for Micronesia's Prosperity Tomorrow; Nauru Inducted into MIF

FSM Information Services

February 17, 2023

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—This February 2023, the 25th Micronesian Islands Forum (MIF) was recently hosted by the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). Chaired by H.E. David W. Panuelo, President of the FSM, Leaders and representatives of the FSM and its states of Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Territory of Guam, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the Republic of Nauru, received reports and presentations on a number of issues of interest in the Micronesian subregion. Of particular note includes the Leaders welcoming the Republic of Nauru as the MIF's 10th member; the Republic of Kiribati remains in receipt of an on-going invitation. This release will summarize some of the key outcomes from the meeting,

but persons interested in reading the 25th MIF Communique may find it here: https://gov.fm/files/Joint%20Communique/Joint_Communique_25th_MIF.pdf

Whereas the Micronesian Presidents' Summit (MPS) is comprised exclusively of sovereign Micronesian countries, and by extension carries a heavy focus on subregional, regional, and international politics, the MIF includes subnational entities such as the FSM's States and U.S.-affiliated Pacific Islands in the Micronesian subregion, and by extension carries a heavy focus on subregional environmental conservation efforts, trade, workforce development, etc.

The first Regional Committee to meet with the Leaders was the Micronesia Challenge (MC). Leaders were reminded of the original commitment in 2006 to effectively conserve at least 30% of the near-shore



The leaders of the 25th Micronesian Islands Forum (MIF)

marine resources and 20% of terrestrial resources across Micronesia by 2020, which was successful, and of the new goal of effectively managing 50% of marine resources and 30% of terrestrial resources

by 2030. MC reported that regional endowments currently totaled \$16.1 Million of the target of \$55 Million. Leaders agreed

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Asian Development Bank holds public meeting to discuss multi-million dollar road project

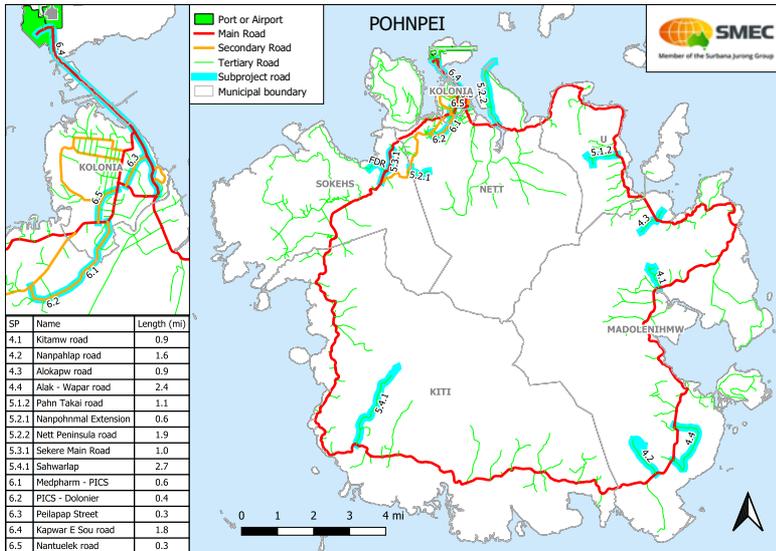
By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

February 23, 2023

Pohnpei — This morning, the Asian Development Bank and the FSM Project Management Unit (PMU) held a public stakeholders' forum to discuss the Sustainable Road Infrastructure Investment Project (SPRIIP). The Asian Development Bank and the World Bank have provided over

\$100 million to rehabilitate existing secondary and potentially tertiary roads in all four States of the FSM. Though the final apportionment scheme among the States has not yet been fully decided upon, PMU officials estimate that Pohnpei's share of the project will be approximately \$20 million.

The meeting this morning was the second of two public stakeholders' meetings in Pohnpei, the outcome of which will be used to help decide on which specific roads will be rehabilitated in Pohnpei from an already determined "long list" of roads. After all of the presentations were made, the attendees each received a questionnaire asking, among other things, for the participants to list their top five road priorities from among the 16 roads on the "long list". All three of the other States have already finished their stakeholders' meetings and have selected their "short lists" of roads. Organizers called this morning's meeting an opportunity for Pohnpei to "catch up".



The questionnaire also asked for participants to rank project selection criteria on the basis of climate resilience, access to health facilities, access to health facilities, access to services such as the government, the bank or others, and access to remote communities, flooding hazard, landslides hazard, access to economic areas, population served, road safety, and other not listed criteria. It also asked how the project would be beneficial to the communities in which each of the stakeholders. It also asked participants to outline their biggest concerns about the project from a list including land issues, environmental issues, livelihood issues, and/or social issues such as possible disruption of community functions. It also provided space for respondents to fill in any other concerns they might have.

A great deal of work yet needs to happen before any projects in any of the States will begin. PMU says that the release of the first tranche of ADB funding won't happen until October of next year. Organizers are working hard to be sure that all of

the needs of stakeholders are addressed, and the roads are also specifically designed to have the highest impact on climate change mitigation for sustainability.

Speakers at the Forum were John Adolph, the Administrator of Pohnpei's Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, who was speaking on behalf of Governor Oliver, who was off island for a health referral; FSM Secretary of the Department of

Communications, and Infrastructure (TC&I); and Assistant Secretary of Infrastructure at TC&I, who provided a project overview on behalf of the PMU Program Manager Robert Goodwin who was also unable to attend.

Robert D'Cruz, Team Leader for SMEC (a large multi-national team of consultants for the project – Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation), walked participants through a PowerPoint presentation on some of the details of the project and the main goals of the granting resources. He said that the project hopes to achieve efficient transport through improved surface and drainage; climate resiliency through improved stormwater disposal; and climate friendliness through less fuel used for those who travel the roads.

D'Cruz also told the participants that the project will also "recycle the road", which would reduce the use

of new materials and construction costs. Essentially, the existing road would be pulverized and re-used wherever possible.

Eugene Joseph, Environment Specialist of the Pohnpei Conservation Society, spoke on environmental and social safeguards, and Sonia T. Kephas, TC&I Project Officer, spoke on gender and youth considerations.



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Bill Jaynes
Managing Editor

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Vital shores up its infrastructure with the purchase of six new fuel delivery trucks

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

February 24, 2023

Pohnpei—This morning, Micronesia Petroleum Corporation (Vital) commissioned a fleet of six new fuel trucks, two of which will operate in Pohnpei at their fuel terminal in Dekehtik. Two of the new tanker trucks will be stationed in Chuuk and one each in Yap and in Kosrae. The trucks they are replacing are several decades old. They were previously assets of Mobil Oil Micronesia, Inc. and were transferred along with many other physical assets, many of which were either at or near the end of their life-cycles when the deal was made that brought the Micronesia Petroleum Corporation into existence.

According to Wayne Narruhn, the Office in Charge of the Pohnpei Fuel Terminal, who spoke at the ceremony, the Isuzu trucks were purchased at a cost of \$200,000 each. He said that they are the latest in the C-Series vehicles, can hold up to 3,000 gallons of fuel, and are fitted with several safety features to ensure safe operation.

The fuel trucks have completed all compliance procedures and are in line with the regulatory requirements for fuel delivery. Vital also took steps to ensure that their workforce is skilled and competent in operating and maintaining the trucks. The maintenance team has been trained and certified by the manufacturer to conduct regular maintenance on the trucks, and Vital has signed an MOU with Isuzu guaranteeing spare parts and technical support as needed. “All this to provide the necessary assurance to our investors and business communities that we can continue to operate safely and efficiently, providing quality service”, Narruhn said.

“We remain committed in our role to ensure that the country has energy



security, meaning energy products that are available, accessible, and affordable,” Narruhn said. “We do this in a number of ways. Firstly, we have a distinguished supplier of quality products. We also maintain high levels of inventory to ensure we don’t run out of fuel. We recognize that one of the key enabling agents for business success is the need for capital improvements to infrastructure, vehicles, and equipment. Thus, we invest heavily in upgrading our facilities and infrastructure to ensure that they are compliant and safe.

Narruhn told the gathered guests that though the COVID-19 pandemic impacted Vital’s improvement projects, they were able to work through that and completed several projects, including the upgrade of three of Pohnpei’s fuel tanks and the purchase of two aviation refuelers in order to remain compliant with international standards. He said that more improvement projects are still in the pipeline.

Invited guests to today’s ceremony included the Vital Board of Directors, Vital Senior Management and staff, representatives of FSM Resources and Development and FSM Transportation, Communication, and infrastructure, State Resources and Development representatives, and service station owners from around Pohnpei.

After the short remarks were completed, Deacon Dano “blessed” the new vehicles with the sprinkling of holy water.



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...Criminal Charges

Continued from front page

for an interview. She complied and during the interview told officers that she didn't know what was in the packages but that her son, John Ehsa, Jr. had asked her to pick them up for him. When officers told her what the packages contained, she said that she had no idea that the packages contained marijuana.

Again, according to the affidavit, John Ehsa, Jr. went to the TCU office trying to claim the packages. Since he was a suspect under investigation for multiple attempts to possess marijuana, investigators advised him of his Miranda rights, arrested him, and transported him to jail. He was released from jail on the 14th, prior to the expiration of 24 hours since his arrest.

On that date, investigators began looking into Ehsa, Jr.'s claims of possession of firearms and learned that the State had not issued him any permits for possession of a firearm. They filed for a search warrant for Ehsa, Jr.'s home in Lehnpuw, Madolenihmw, which the court granted on the following day. Several officers arrived at the home at 8:00 the following morning. During the search, the officers found a Glock 36 handgun inside Ehsa's vehicle, along with a loaded magazine with six rounds in it. They also found an empty magazine for the weapon in a gun case.

Inside the home, officers also found 50 rounds of ammunition for a Winchester .45 Automatic and other ammunition. Officers reported finding the ammunition in a box on a table in the living room. Also in the living room, the officers found a black bag containing marijuana buds. They additionally found seven marijuana plants planted on his property "in plain view".

After officers confiscated the illegal items, Ehsa, Jr. reportedly told officers that he also had a .22 caliber long rifle he had given to his half-brother, Raynard Anson. They

then transported him to the TCU investigation office, where he found his mother, Meriu Ehsa, waiting for her son. While waiting for Ehsa, Jr.'s requested counsel, the officers granted permission for the mother to speak to the son in private about his children who were at school. After their talk, Meriu left the TCU office.

On February 16, officers also interviewed Raynard Anson, who reportedly told the officers that he couldn't remember the exact date in January that Ehsa, Jr. had given him the .22 rifle but that several days later, Ehsa Jr. retrieved the weapon from Anson's house in Nanpohnmal, Nett. He reported that he had not seen the weapon since then.

While interviewing Anson, the investigators called Meriu. While that call was taking place, Anson reportedly told investigators that the rifle was at his mother, Meriu's house in China Town. When officers went to that home, Anson voluntarily surrendered the .22, which was loaded with eight rounds.

On that same date, officers interviewed a person who worked for Meriu as a housekeeper. She reported that during her duties at the home, she had seen two rifles in the home, one that was always in a case and was always in Meriu Ehsa's room. She reported that Meriu has told her to take one of the rifles and put it beside the refrigerator but that Meriu allegedly took the gun in the case and left it with her son, Anson.

Based on that testimony, officers advised Meriu of her Miranda rights when she arrived at the investigation office to take medicine to her other son, Ehsa, Jr. She waived her right to remain silent and told officers that Ehsa, Jr. had asked her to look out for his two rifles that had been stored under her bed. She reportedly also told them that when she went back to her house, Anson was there, so she gave the gun in the case to give to another man.

The person to whom Anson gave the rifle in the case told investigators that around noon on February 16, Anson asked him to store something at his house and that he would be back to pick it up later. That witness said that Anson did mention what was inside

the case, which was covered with a towel.

Based on that information, officers retrieved the rifle, which they found to be an AK-47, along with 28 rounds of ammunition that was inside the case. They arrested Anson later that evening, who invoked his right to remain silent. Since there was no attorney available at the time, they transported him to jail pending further investigation.

The various criminal counts against one or more of the defendants include multiple counts of attempt to possess marijuana, counts related to the lack of a required identification for the .22 rifle, threats and other improper influence in an official matter, prohibited acts related to possession of the AK-47 and illegal ammunition for other weapons, hindering apprehension or prosecution, and conspiracy to do so. There were 23 counts in total.

Again, all defendants are presumed to be innocent unless and until they are found to be guilty by the court after a fair hearing.

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Japan and FSM celebrate Japan’s National Day – a celebration of the birthday of the Emperor

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

February 23, 2023

Pohnpei—Ambassador Michigami Hisashi, the Japanese Ambassador to the FSM, hosted a reception to celebrate the birthday of The Reigning Emperor of Japan, Naruhito Hironomiya, who was born on this date in 1960. “The Emperor’s Birthday is celebrated in Japan on February 23, and only changes when a new emperor is crowned,” wrote a Japanese publication. “We are supercharged to celebrate the historic day with all Japanese flair and style. Japan has the oldest monarchy in the world. There have been 126 emperors since the inception of Japan, all traceable to the first emperor and the founder of what is today Japan.”

The celebration is a celebration of heritage, a unifying event, and a show of respect for the Japanese people, and Ambassador Michigami spoke at length on Japan’s heritage, culture, and ongoing accomplishments. He also spoke of FSM’s and Japan’s relationship.

Ambassador Michigami told the crowd that in February of this year, FSM President Panuelo visited Japan and met with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida. “The two leaders agreed in every field, not only in bilateral issues of like economy and security, but also regarding collaboration, including reaffirming the commitment to the free and open Indo-Pacific and imminent international issues including Ukraine.”

Though the two countries established bilateral relationships in 1988, 35 years ago, the “Kizuna” or strong friendship between the countries goes back 130 years, the Ambassador said.

He said that while “COVID times” suspended several projects, including people exchanges for development assistance from Japan, that those assistances are coming back. Three months ago, people started coming back to the FSM to assist with a variety of support. He said that a survey team will come to Pohnpei in March for the Pohnpei Port Expansion project. JICA volunteers will start returning in May. JICA volunteers have assisted in a variety of ways, and the Ambassador pointed out that Mr. Takahashi has been coaching two FSM swimmers who participated in the Tokyo Olympics, as one example of that type of assistance. He said that before the pandemic, there were 16 volunteers serving in the FSM States but that by the middle of this year, Japan hopes to exceed

even that number.

He introduced several local scholarship recipients who had either done graduate work or been trained by JICA in Japan.

He pointed out the recent behavior of his people during the FIFA World Cup of Football. While Japan beat Germany and Spain in that event which made the news and encouraged the people of Japan, it was their behavior after the matches that garnered the most news. After the matches, the Japanese spectators collected “huge amounts of garbage”. The players cleaned up their locker room, and the coach’s deep bow also moved many countries.

“Bowing is showing courtesy and respect and is a key to Japanese people,” he said.

He spoke of the history of the Japanese dolls that were on display inside the official residence. He said that dolls were a means of Japanese praying for young girls’ growth and happiness and started over 1000 years ago. The dolls evolved to the current style 300 years ago during the time of the Samurai.

Japan has an advanced economy but places “emphasis on traditional values and the pursuit of harmony rather than beating the opponent.” The traditional bow before a Judo or Karate match is an example of respect for an opponent. He said that in international relations, Japan’s expansion and growth are secondary to working with other countries for a “win-win” as a matter of policy.

The ambassador closed his speech with a toast to the people of the FSM and to further bonds of Kizuna between the two countries.

FSM Secretary Kandhi Elieisar was next to speak. He reminded the audience that President Panuelo had attended the Emperor’s enthronement ceremony in 2019 as a show of respect and Kizuna and that, in fact, the very attendance of each of the participants at the birthday celebration was a further show of that type of support.

He said that FSM and Japan share the same democratic vision and have strong historical links together. He again pledged FSM’s continuing relationship with Japan.

He thanked the government of Japan for its wide and varied assistance and those that are upcoming and ongoing such as Japan’s participation as a joint funder for the Eastern Micronesia Cable that will ultimately provide a fiber optic link



for Kosrae. He thanked them for their financial support in mitigating a possible disaster in Chuuk from the shipwrecks in the Chuuk Lagoon sunk during World War II’s Operation Hailstorm. Lastly, he thanked Japan for the estimated \$10.1 million for COM and the rehabilitation of the Maritime Institute.

He said that over 1,000 Japanese people, including the Prime Minister and a member of the Royal Family at the opening of the new four-story Embassy building with

a worth of \$6 million is a further sign of Kizuna between the countries.

He also offered a toast to the health and prosperity of Japan and the continued friendship between the FSM and Japan.

Closing the ceremony, three invited guests were asked to ceremonially open the cask of Saki that was on display.

A magnificent buffet-styled banquet then was served.

Pohnpei says farewell to Feleti Teo, Executive Director of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission



By *Bill Jaynes*
The Kaselehlie Press

February 24, 2023

Pohnpei—Staff and well-wishers gathered on the evening of February 24, 2023, to bid a fond adieu to Feleti Teo and his wife, Tausaga. Feleti has been the Executive Director of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), popularly known as the “Tuna Commission,” for eight years after assuming the role on March 5, 2015.

In his introductory remarks, Dr. Sung Kwon Soh, the WCPFC Science Director, outlined Teo’s impressive biography. Prior to Teo’s appointment as the Executive Director of the WCPFC, he served as the Director General of the Forum Fisheries Agency in Solomon Islands for six years until 2006. Following that appointment, he served as the Deputy Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum for another six years, from 2007 to 2013. During that time, he served for one year as the Secretary General while the incumbent Secretary General was on extended medical leave. In 2014 he took on the role of Secretary General for the Pacific Islands Development Forum in Fiji until he was appointed as the Executive Director of the WCPFC.

Feleti is a lawyer by training, holding a bachelor’s degree of Laws from New

Zealand and a master’s degree of Laws from Australia. He was the Attorney General of Tuvalu before he embarked on his regional public services career.

Speakers on the occasion of Teo’s farewell spoke warmly of a man who not only treated people, including staff members, well but who also managed the WCPFC with astute acumen and efficiency. “He managed not just fish but people,” said FSM Secretary for Foreign Affairs Kandhi Elieisar, saying that the environment of the world’s largest fisheries commission is one of the diametrically opposed interests between fishers and resource owners that Teo managed extremely well. “He is leaving behind an organization that is healthy,” he said, unlike the state of fisheries resources under the management of several organizations, including the Western Central Atlantic Commission. He expressed his appreciation for Teo’s work in preserving the invaluable FSM fisheries resources, along with those of the other countries in the Western and Central Pacific.

Dr. Lara Manarangi-Trott, the WCPFC Compliance Officer, said that she has known Teo for over 20 years and recalled her first day on the job in Honiara, Solomon Islands with the Forum Fisheries Agency, the very day that riots broke out there. She described his leadership as one might describe his personality, “calm,

steady and skilled”, a difficult task while managing an organization with a budget of \$70 million and a membership of over 500 members with varying interests. For the staff in Pohnpei, she described Teo’s many empowering developments, including performance bonuses and professional training. She said that he seemed to adjust effortlessly, though she knew that wasn’t true, to the COVID-19 pandemic and the effect it would have on staff members and the ability of the commission to connect with all of its members. Still, he operated with a sense of compassion rather than merely an agenda by providing support to allow staff members who could, to work from home.

Local staff also praised Feleti’s leadership, saying that he and his wife were part of their lives and that he would be missed, not only professionally but personally.

Feo characterized his time in Pohnpei as very good but said that all good things must come to an end. He said that he was proud of his time as the Executive Director of the WCPFC and that it was personally affirming to him to have managed the only sustainable fishery in the world. He outlined several achievements of the WCPFC during his eight years in leadership but was quick to point out that the efforts of his staff were nothing short of Herculean. He said that he was constantly amazed that with only

nine professional staff members and 12 support staff, the secretariat was able to manage the needs of 40 member countries with 550 delegates. He pointed out the efforts of three professional staff members in particular: Dr. Sung Kwon Soh, the WCPFC Science Officer, Dr. Lara Manarangi-Trott, the Compliance Officer, and Aaron Nighswander, the Financial and Administration Officer, whom he said ensured that there was never a question about WCPFC finances.

He said that his time in Pohnpei was not all work and that he had come to treasure the lovingkindness of his many Pohnpeian friends.

Several dance groups provided entertainment at the event, including a group of Mwokillese dancers. Teo had said that when he and his wife first arrived in Pohnpeian, they were the only Tuvaluans, but that number has since increased, as evidenced by a dance number from current Tuvaluans in Pohnpei.

The member nations of the “Tuna Commission” selected Rhea Moss-Christian of the Republic of the Marshall Islands to be the next Executive Director from a short list of two Pacific Islands candidates. Moss-Christian made history as the first woman to chair the Commission. The other candidate was Dr. Lara Manarangi-Trott of the Cook Islands.





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Micronesian Leaders make gender equality a priority

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

February 17, 2023

Pohnpei-- The Micronesian region will be the first in the Pacific to develop a regional gender equality framework after the endorsement by Leaders at the 25th Micronesian Islands Forum (MIF) in Pohnpei.

The recommendation was first proposed by the MIF Gender Equality Committee which was set up after the 24th MIF in 2018 to progress gender equality efforts across the North Pacific.

Leaders also committed to more intentional efforts to mainstream gender-based work into sectoral areas such as energy, maritime and agriculture.

A concerted effort to mobilise resources to effect these outcomes will also be progressed over the coming two-years.

Chair of the MIF Gender Equality Committee and the Federated States of Micronesia Assistant-Secretary for Social Affairs, H.E. Stuard Penias has championed this work with member states.

“Endorsing the development of a Micronesian Gender Equality Framework would be a strong step in the right direction. It will elevate the visibility and commitment of Micronesia to principles that we aspire to as a collective, regionally and internationally. We have come a long way, we have done a lot, we still have



more to do in order to achieve gender parity. Gender equality is central to realizing our collective vision for a safe, secure, resilient, inclusive and peaceful Micronesian region.”

SPC’s Principal Strategic Lead of Pacific Women and Girls, Mereseini Rakuita has provided technical advisory support to the MIF Gender Equality Committee and congratulates the Micronesian members for their transformative action on gender equality in the 25th MIF.

“The endorsement of the Micronesian Gender Equality Framework is a strong statement by Micronesian Leaders speaking to the critical role that gender equality plays in nation building. SPC looks forward to working closely with the region in developing this piece of work over the next two years.”

The development of the Framework will include diverse and broad stakeholder engagement and consultation across the Micronesian region inclusive of communities, civil society, government, development

partners and technical agencies.

The Micronesia Gender Equality Framework will be developed over the next 24-months and presented to Micronesian Leaders at the 26th Micronesia Islands Forum (MIF) in 2025.

Congratulations also to FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs under the leadership of Secretary Mr Marcus Samo for an excellent job in guiding the work of the Committee to a successful conclusion.



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Pohnpei State 3rd Student Take Over Day 2023

FSMTC participated in the Pohnpei State 3rd Student Take Over Day. Top high school students has been selected by the Pohnpei State Department of Education to take over roles in government, organizations and other agencies for one day. FSMTC CEO/President Johnny and Vice President of Engineering Ardos took over, participated and experienced what it's like to be part of the FSMTC team. FSMTC would like to wish Mr.Johnny and Ms.Ardos the best in their future endeavors. Strive for greatness!

Mr. Rogson Johnny - MHS
CEO/President



Ms. Jeanelle Ardos - NMHS
Vice President - Dept. of Engineering



U.S. Marines from the Federated States of Micronesia are promoted to warrant officers

Lance Cpl. Joaquin Carlos Dela Torre Marine Corps Base Quantico

February 1, 2023

Quantico, VA--

On February 1, a crowd of Marines waited patiently as they prepared to take move from the enlisted ranks to being warrant officers. Among them were two Staff Sgts.'s from the Island State of Kosrae, Micronesia. According to U.S. Marine Corps Capt. Jack Kun, Warrant Officer Steve J. Asher and Warrant Officer Jerry A. Tolenoa are believed to be the first United States Marine Warrant Officers from the Federated States of Micronesia.



On February 1, a crowd of Marines waited patiently as they prepared to take move from the enlisted ranks to being warrant officers. Among them were two Staff Sgts.'s from the Island State of Kosrae, Micronesia. According to U.S. Marine Corps Capt. Jack Kun, Warrant Officer Steve J. Asher and Warrant Officer Jerry A. Tolenoa are believed to be the first United States Marine Warrant Officers from the Federated States of Micronesia.

Among the visitors witnessing the ceremony was the Federated States of Micronesia Ambassador to the United States, Akillino Harris Susaia. The First Secretary of the Federated States of Micronesia, Raleigh Welly, knew the two Marines. Following Welly's invitation, he extended the invitation to the ambassador.

"Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) Ambassador Akillino H. Susaia accepted the invitation from Warrant Officer Tolenoa and Warrant Officer Asher, both former FSM citizens, to acknowledge their accomplishments as being the first Marine warrant officers in the history of the FSM," Kun said.

As he watched the ceremony, the ambassador felt proud and fortunate to have experienced history in the making. These two Marines started a legacy and opened the doors for future Marines from Micronesia to follow their example.

"It feels surreal," said Warrant Officer Tolenoa, a Marine Corps Community Services officer with Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay. "Being the first to ever do it for the people of Kosrae... I feel like since I am here, I need to do it the right way and do it to the best of my abilities."

Tolenoa also had the support from one of the Marines who had the biggest impact on his career. U.S. Marine Corps Capt. Jack Kun, an aviation supply officer, and believed to be the first commissioned officer from Kosrae.

"He went from a sergeant and now he's an O-3 in the Marine Corps... for him to be able to do it I know I can too." Said Tolenoa.

Asher, a utilities officer with 1st Combat Engineers Battalion, 1st Marine Division, shared this experience alongside Tolenoa. For Asher, the feeling was similar to Tolenoa as well as Kun. Asher explained that he felt like now he can have an influence on other Marines and create a stepping stone for others to follow.

"I've seen a lot of good Marines get out, and I feel like as a warrant officer I can maybe help them and influence them..." Asher said.

Asher's main goal is to support the Marines and show others from the same or similar background that it is possible to reach their goal.

Ultimately, both Asher and Tolenoa are extremely proud to be able to represent their island and country alongside the ambassador of Micronesia. They wish to continue to influence, lead and do right by their Marines as the first warrant officers from Kosrae. They have built a legacy for others to follow and learn from their example.

"I want Marines, when they think about what I do, just to keep their minds open to all the opportunities that the Marine Corps can provide..." Tolenoa stated. "There are a lot more ways to do what you like, do what you love and serve your country."

EA NO: FSM-008-23
OPENING DATE: 2/20/2023
CLOSING DATE: 3/20/2023

EXAMINATION ANNOUNCEMENT



Office of Personnel Administration
FSM National Government

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

POSITION AND SALARY:

Staff Attorney I to IV
PL-34/1+100%PP
\$779.30 + \$779.30=\$1558.60 B/W

PL-42/1 +100%PP
\$1,177.58 + \$1,177.58PP=\$2,355.16 B/W

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

LOCATION:

FSM Supreme Court
FSM National Government
Palikir, Pohnpei FM 96941

DUTIES (ILLUSTRATIVE ONLY):

Drafting legislation, legal research, providing advice to members of Congress, and work with the Executive Branch of the government on legislative matters. The work is diverse, ranging from tax and budget legislation to fundamental issues of national social policy, drafting legislation and amendments to legislation for senators; attending legislative committee of reference meetings and answering technical and legal questions concerning legislation pending before the committees; performing legal research; independently drafting or working with other Office staff or other legislative staff to draft written work product, including legal and research memorandums; reviewing executive branch agency rules to determine whether they are within the promulgating agency's rule-making authority, drafting rule review memorandums that explain why unauthorized rules should not be extended, and possibly presenting rule review issues to the Committee on Legal Services; performs other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

Level I- Admission to the FSM Bar plus eight (8) years of experience or attainment of an earned degree (BA) in law from an accredited school plus admission either to the FSM Bar or practice law in any jurisdiction.

Level II- Attainment of an earned degree in law (BA) plus 4 years of experience plus admission either to the FSM Bar or practice law in any jurisdiction or attainment of an earned degree in Law (MA) plus admission to the FSM Bar or practice law in any jurisdiction.

Level III- Attainment of an earned degree in Law (MA) plus 4 years of experience plus admission either to the FSM Bar or practice law in any jurisdiction or graduated from an accredited school of law (JD) plus admission either to the FSM Bar or practice in any jurisdiction.

Level IV- Graduation from an accredited school of law (JD) plus 4 years of experience plus admission either to the FSM Bar or practice law in any jurisdiction.

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Government Personnel Office

Vice President Palik receives Ambassador Reiffenstuel, Special Envoy Grzeski

FSM Information Services

February 20, 2023

Palikir-- Recently, the Honorable Aren B. Palik, Vice President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), received Her Excellency Anke Reiffenstuel, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the FSM, and Her Excellency Beate Grzeski, Special Envoy to Pacific Island States.

Vice President Palik welcomed Ambassador Reiffenstuel and Special Envoy Grzeski to the FSM, and thanked them for the opportunity to discuss items of mutual importance. Vice President Palik described the FSM's long historical ties with Germany, including the Nation's healthy cooperative relationship on important global issues, based on shared interests and values, since the establishment of diplomatic relations on April 21st, 1992.

The Vice President described that the FSM is proud to be a friend and partner to Germany, and hoped for a

more integrated bilateral relationship between the two countries. Among other priorities, Vice President Palik encouraged the assignment of an Honorary Consul of Germany in the FSM as a means to amplify and elevate the FSM-Germany partnership. It was noted that the FSM is interested in enhancing its relations with Europe and European countries, to be concretized in the establishment of a diplomatic mission in Geneva, Switzerland, later this year.

Amongst other issues discussed, the Vice President described the ongoing and existential threat of Climate Change to the FSM and the Blue Pacific Continent at large. Vice President Palik welcomed Germany's support for the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and its role as a Post Forum Dialogue Partner in the Pacific Islands Forum, and described the FSM's appreciation to Germany's support for the establishment of the United Nations Multi-Country Office for the North Pacific, hosted in the FSM's State of Pohnpei.



Pictured Above (L→R): H.E. Beate Grzeski, Germany's Special Envoy to the Pacific Islands; T.H. Aren B. Palik, Vice President of the FSM; H.E. Anke Reiffenstuel, Ambassador of Germany to the FSM

Mindful that the one-year anniversary of the brutal, illegal, and unjustified invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation will occur in the coming days, the Vice President reiterated the FSM's continued support for the rules-based international order.

The German delegation described their shared values and interests with the FSM; described Germany's intention to establish a diplomatic mission in Suva, Fiji; and noted Germany's candidature to become a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council in 2027.

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...MIF

Continued from front page

to institutionalize the MC Regional Office through the appointment of political focal points, to work with one another to jointly fund a \$100,000 match to the Bill Raynor Micronesia Challenge Scholarship Fund; and to institutionalize the appropriation and funding of MC Regional Office dues.

The Regional Tourism Committee reported on the negative impacts of COVID-19 to regional tourism, including that the aftermath of the Pandemic represents an opportunity for Micronesian economics in their recovery. In this respect, Leaders agreed to expand participation in tri-annual meetings of National Tourism Organizations and State Tourism Organizations; to expand participation at Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) events; to support PATA Micronesia Chapter Initiatives including the conduction of training and seminars; taking action for each jurisdiction to join the Pacific tourism Organization; digitizing travel services at borders to be in line with international standards; and the continuous support and upgrade of facilities and attractions.

The Pacific Islands Regional Recycling Initiative Council (PIRRIC) reported on the cost of shipping recyclable materials off island, including non-existent exportation venues for non-recyclable plastic bottles. PIRRIC stressed the need for sustainable funding mechanisms for overall Solid Waste Management activities, including capacity building for all sectors of waste management activities. Leaders agreed to establish the PIRRIC Regional Coordinator Position in the MIF Secretariat; the containment and disposal of used oil in the region; and to establish a Marine Debris Program.

The Regional Health Committee reminded Leaders of Resolutions from the 24th MIF, including equitable access to comprehensive and quality healthcare services for Pacific Island veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces, and the strengthening of US-affiliated Pacific Islands health department capacities and systems to address the health security threat of Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR), and the need for critical investments to occur in a number of health-related areas. In this respect, Leaders agreed to modernize and expand IT infrastructure to update existing Health Information Systems, disease detection, monitoring, and early warning

systems; to expand the use of telehealth and telemedicine services; to strengthen ancillary services through a regional approach, including regional support for and use of Guam's new planned Regional Public Health Laboratory Facility; and to reduce health disparities in remote areas and hard-to-reach communities.

The Regional Energy Committee described to Leaders the need to integrate Renewable Energy into Micronesian power systems, and stabilize power grids. Leaders agreed to enhance information sharing and partnerships amongst all member jurisdictions; to develop and support pilot Individual Power Products and Power Purchase Agreements in Renewable Energy; to expand capacity-building efforts in Renewable Energy; and to establish a Regional Energy Database.

The Regional Invasive Species Council described the outcomes of the first Pacific Ecological Security Conference held in Palau in October 2022, and the need to integrate invasive species efforts in Micronesia into the broader Pacific basin by collaborating with Australia, New Zealand, and others on programmatic and research efforts. Among other agreements, Leaders agreed to implement the outcomes of the first Pacific Ecological Security Conference; to recruit additional biosecurity officers in each jurisdiction; and to seek action by the USDA to fund and reinstate the annual Plant Protection & Quarantine biosecurity regional training program in 2023.

The Information Communication Technology Committee described that accessibility to services in unserved and underserved communities must be prioritized, and additionally recommended that there should be an MIF standard for submarine cable landing fees and licensing. Leaders agreed to ensure connectivity with capacity through all islands in the Micronesian subregion; to provide telecommunications accessibility to all residents; to pursue all means necessary to ensure reliable and resilient telecommunications services that are affordable for all; and to strengthen telecommunications security throughout the region.

The Regional Transportation Committee reported on air transportation issues in the North Pacific. Leaders agreed to liberalize air service resources to attract additional carriers; to foster an attractive and sustainable airline environment within each island jurisdiction; to encourage government subsidies to reduce travel costs; and to establish, where appropriate,

multi-lateral and bilateral Air Service Agreements.

The Regional Workforce Development Council stressed the need for MIF jurisdictions to develop productive workforces, as well as the need to reduce barriers to employment. Leaders agreed to implement workforce development programs, including the FSM Skills Academy funded by the World Bank; to implement a collaborative apprenticeship program on a regional basis and in all jurisdictions; to support the revival and continued funding of the FSM Migrant Resource Center; and to conduct an economic survey to determine job demands, wage levels, and working conditions.

The Regional Education Committee described the importance of increasing the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, by 2030. Leaders agreed to establish a Micronesian Regional Education Summit to discuss regional education issues, and to support a Micronesian Regional Vocational Training Center in coordination with the Regional Workforce Development Council.

The Gender Equality Committee—which, as a new MIF Committee, held its first meeting in the 25th MIF—reported that its goals include the establishment of Gender Policies; increasing political participation of women across the Micronesian subregion; and improving the availability of maternity and paternity leave for government employees. Leaders agreed to support and endorse the strengthening of gender mainstreaming through sectoral work; to support the mobilization of resources to achieve gender equality outcomes; and to support and endorse the development of an MIF Gender Equality Framework.

Beyond the reports and engagements with the various MIF Councils and Committees, Leaders also discussed other issues of importance. In this respect, the MIF Secretariat presented its annual report, inclusive that its current fund balance housed in Palau's Treasury was \$161,774 at the time of the report, and that it has prepared a communication to the Government of Taiwan requesting the transfer of the 2nd tranche of the 2nd Taiwan grant totaling \$200,000 USD. The Designated Representatives agreed to recommend requesting a third grant from Taiwan, and to also seek comparable funding from other regional and international partners.

Of significant importance to the MIF's strengthening is that Leaders re-affirmed their prior commitment to hiring a

professional Secretary General and appropriate staff to expand the capacity of the MIF Secretariat, and to better follow-up and implement the Leaders' agenda.

Another topic for discussion—of specific relevance to the FSM, the Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands—was with regards to extending the length of the College of Micronesia's Land Grant Treaty. The Presidents agreed, subject to legislative approval, to renew the Treaty for ten years to 2033.

Leaders also received briefings from the Pacific Islands Development Bank, the University of Guam's Center for Island Sustainability & Sea Grant, and the Pacific Islands Development Program.

Leaders recommended the creation of a Committee on Oceanic Resources and the creation of a Committee on Trade, as well as the establishment of Workforce Development Agencies in their islands.

At 11:22am on February 16th, 2023, the Republic of Palau motioned, and the State of Chuuk seconded, the Republic of Nauru's induction in the MIF. After consultation with his parliament, His Excellency Russ Kun, President of the Republic of Nauru, graciously accepted the invitation to become the 10th member of the MIF. The Republic of Kiribati continues to be in receipt of a standing invitation to join the MIF at its discretion and interest.

The Honorable Lourdes Leon-Guerrero, Governor of the U.S. Territory of Guam, offered to host the 26th MIF in 2024, which was welcomed by the MIF's Leaders.

At the signing ceremony at the conclusion of the 25th MIF, several resolutions were signed by the Leaders.

The first Resolution is available here: https://gov.fm/files/Joint%20Communiques/Resoultion_23-01_25th_MIF.pdf

The second Resolution is available here: https://gov.fm/files/Joint%20Communiques/Resolution_23-02_25th_MIF.pdf

The third Resolution is available here: https://gov.fm/files/Joint%20Communiques/Resoultion_23-03_25th_MIF.pdf

The fourth Resolution is available here: https://gov.fm/files/Joint%20Communiques/Resolution_23-04_25th_MIF.pdf

Governor Oliver delivers the State of the State Address

Pohnpei Enginkehlap News

February 17, 2023

Pohnpei-- Governor Oliver delivered the final State of the State message of the Oliver/Ioanis administration to the Speaker, members of the 10th Pohnpei Legislature, and the people of Pohnpei, on Friday, February 17, 2023.

The full message was streamed and can be viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/Ga2DWvaxzI4?feature=share&t=927>

(Editor's Note: At press time, the translated version of the address had still not been released.)

A translation of the message will be released soon.



Opinion Editorial

Renunciation of Foreign Citizenship to Retain FSM citizenship

FSM Constitution forbids Dual Citizenship. Art. III, s. 3 of the FSM Constitution provides that:

Section 3. A citizen of the Federated States of Micronesia who is recognized as a citizen of another nation shall, within 3 years of his 18th birthday, or within 3 years of the effective date of this Constitution, whichever is later, register his intent to remain a citizen of the Federated States and renounce his citizenship of another nation. If he fails to comply with this Section, he becomes a national of the Federated States of Micronesia.

The recent Appellate decision affirming that citizenship “renunciation” does not require a certificate of renunciation from the foreign country essentially means that dual citizenship can still be maintained by those Micronesians born as dual citizens, without a constitutional amendment. However, one must still register his or her “intent” to remain an FSM citizen, otherwise, the person becomes an FSM national.

In 1995, Esmond Moses appeared before the then Attorney General Camillo Noket and orally declared his intent to remain an FSM citizen. In Appeal Case P8-2022, the Appellate court upheld that the trial court’s finding that the oral declaration by Senator Moses was sufficient for the purpose of “renunciation” of his US citizenship, and that act in itself was in fact an affirmative step that Moses took to retain his FSM citizenship. The effect of this ruling essentially means that there is no need to produce a Certificate of Renunciation of the foreign country’s citizenship.

The challenge with this lawsuit was the meaning of the phrase “renounce” as I see it. The Court held that any dispute over the definition of “renounce” seems immaterial because what is important is the necessary or affirmative steps one needs to take to “retain” FSM citizenship. Does this mean that a dual citizen need not produce a Certificate of Renunciation of the foreign country’s citizenship? According to the recent appellate court holding, there is no need for that. All one need to do is

register his or her intent to remain an FSM citizen. What is the process for that? In 1995, apparently there had been no established procedure for that, except that Public Law No. 1-75 designated the Attorney General to take declarations of intent and renunciation of foreign citizenship.

In 2016, Congress enacted Public Law No. 19-91 which provides that if an FSM citizen with dual citizenship has renewed his or her FSM passport twice, that in itself is a rebuttable presumption that he or she has shown “intent” to retain FSM citizenship and renounce the citizenship of the foreign country. This 2016 law took one step further from the 1979 law and merely prescribes that all you have to do, is renew your FSM passport, twice in a row. You need not appear before the FSM Attorney General anymore to declare your intent or renounce your foreign citizenship. It appears that perhaps Congress might have amended Art. III, s. 3 without a referendum.

What I find interesting about this ruling is that even if a dual citizen has declared his or her intent to remain an FSM citizen either by taking the oath in front of the FSM Attorney General before 2016, or by renewing the FSM passport twice in a row after 2016, that person is still considered a dual citizen because there is no formal renunciation of the foreign country’s citizenship pursuant to that country’s citizenship renunciation laws. I would imagine that many FSM folks who have had to register their intent to remain an FSM citizen by renewing their passports twice in a row still hold dual citizenship, which is impermissible under the FSM Constitution. The ruling of the court sets forth the procedure that all you have to do to retain your FSM citizenship is to take the affirmative step of renewing your FSM passport twice in a row. This way, you avoid losing your FSM citizenship and becoming an FSM national.

So how does this ruling affect the proposed Constitutional amendment to allow for dual citizenship? Perhaps we do not need passage of this proposal after all because the 2016 law already allows for dual citizenship IF you renew your FSM passport twice in a row.

Marstella E. Jack

Meeting on implementation of EU Pacific Trade Agreement

By Setaita Tupua
Pacific Islands Forum

February 22, 2023

More than 50 Pacific government and private sector representatives participated at the Pacific Regional Integration Support (PRISE) programme National Coordination Committee (NATCO) meeting in late November.

Key discussions included updates from the PRISE implementing partners on actions to assist member states and private sector operators to realise the benefits of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA).

The PRISE implementing partners; Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the Pacific Community and UNCTAD currently provide support to Pacific countries to trade more and better, by increasing access to and benefit from international markets.

The meeting also discussed National Implementation plans and heard a presentation by Dr Jane Kelsey on the inclusion of Trade in Services and Investment Facilitation in the EPA.

Through the EU-funded PRISE programme, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat “Strengthening Pacific Intra-Regional and International Trade (SPIRIT)” project focuses on fostering greater regional economic integration through the implementation of trade agreements, in particular, the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and the Pacific’s Aid-for-Trade Strategy 2020-2025. It will also include the development of a Regional Trade Statistics Database.

The SPIRIT Trade Advisers for Melanesia and Polynesia delivered presentations on the updates, challenges, and risks and the proposed way forward on the PRISE Private Sector Mapping exercise jointly conducted by the PRISE partners.

Positive feedback received from private sector operators was shared. They also highlighted the importance of shifting to low-volume, high-value finished niche products with high demand potential in the EU market, utilizing more cost-effective e-commerce platforms.

Results on nominations for Directorship in Yap State, FSM

Yap Media

February 16, 2023

COLONIA, Yap—Governor Chieng’s formal nominations for directorships were entertained by the 11th Legislature on its 4th Session Day, First Regular Session on Thursday, February 16, 2023. With all ten members of the 11th Yap State Legislature present during the Regular Session, TH Speaker Nicholas Figirlaarwon convened and successfully acted on several various resolutions on Executive Directorship positions and the lease agreement between the government and iBoom before the body.

1. Resolution 11-11, approving the lease agreement between Yap State Government and iBoom Wa’ab Inc. passed with nine (9) Yes and one (1) abstain.

2. Resolution 11-12, confirming Mr. Dominic Fanasog as Director for the Department of Education (DOE) passed

with eight (8) Yes and two (2) No.

3. Resolution 11-13, confirming Mr. John Waayan as Director for the Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) did not pass with seven (7) No and three (3) Yes.

4. Resolution 11-14, confirming Mr. Peter Rebeuluch as Director of the Department of Youth and Civic Affairs (DY&CA) did not pass with seven (7) No and three (3) Yes.

5. Resolution 11-15, confirming Joe C. Giltug as Director for the Department of Public Works and Transportation did not pass with four (4) No and six (6) Yes.

Meantime, the only confirmed Directors by the 11th Yap State Legislature on Governor’s Nominations are Mrs. Leelkan Pongliyab Southwick for R&D, Mr. Joseph Giliko for OAS, Mr. Thomas Foruw for DHS, and Mr. Dominic Fanasog for DOE.

BYU-Hawaii recruiters come to Micronesia Guam



Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

February 15, 2023

Kosrae—BYU Hawaii and BYU Pathways recruiters came to Micronesia Guam area in January to encourage and inspire students to attend and take advantage of the incentives they have to offer this area. The BYU Hawaii Mission statement says: “The mission of BYU-Hawaii is to prepare students of Oceania and the Asian Rim to be lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ and leaders in their families, communities, chosen fields, and in building the kingdom of God.”

James Faustino, the Dean of Students/Director of Ho’okele at BYU-Hawaii, was asked, “Why should students come to BYU-Hawaii?” He answered: “Because this is a campus specifically set up for individuals from this area/region. They have special programs that cater to this area. It is a small campus, and they want to keep it that way to give their students the individualized attention for guidance and success for this targeted area.” Their hope is that the students will return to their homes with an education that will both benefit them and their homeland as well as becoming leaders in their chosen fields.

A unique opportunity is that most of their students are sponsored which makes it possible for them to be able to afford to attend BYU-Hawaii. They have about 1200 sponsored spots available out of their 2800 students right now. The sponsors find great joy in helping students achieve educational success while building leadership skills that will help to bless others the rest of their lives. At the end of their schooling here, the students attend a conference and are

interviewed to help find their “footing” as they seek career opportunities specifically on their islands. It is not difficult for students desiring to attend BYU-Hawaii to get accepted if they live in their “targeted” areas.

Maurice Mo’o is the Admission’s Manager for BYU-Hawaii. Part of his job is to recruit students from their targeted Oceania and the Asian Rim. He stated that, “Students from those geographic regions are given priority to admissions.” They try to travel to most of the major islands in the Pacific and Asia areas. BYU-Hawaii is also trying to pair themselves with Welfare/Self-Reliance which is great preparation for college. This partnership took place about a year ago with BYU-Pathways and BYU-Pathways Connect programs. Kenji Sugahara is the Asia North Area Education Specialists for BYU Pathway Worldwide. When students go through these programs, they are given priority status within the admission process. Students need to be proficient enough in speaking and understanding English to be able to attend. This can also be accomplished through the Pathway-Connect programs.

Lei Cummings is the Alumni Relations Manager at BYU-Hawaii. She says, “Part of our mission is to create leaders and we hope that our students will return to their homeland and contribute in some way, not only in their families and communities, but as leaders in their country and help to fulfill the mission and prophesy of David O. McKay.

They have seen some of their alumni come back, contribute and pay it forward by teaching other students.” In the Micronesia Guam area, we have several alumni who have done this.

UOG faculty contribute to “The Cambridge History of the Pacific Ocean”

University of Guam

February 23, 2023

Guam-- Three University of Guam faculty members contributed to a two-volume publication released by the prestigious Cambridge University Press.

“The Cambridge History of the Pacific Ocean” represents a comprehensive survey of the history of the Pacific Ocean, an area making up around one-third of the Earth's surface, from initial human colonization to the present day. More than 80 authors contributed to the publication's 64 chapters in two volumes. Volume I explores the history of the Pacific Ocean pre-1800 and Volume II examines the period from 1800 to the present day.

Dr. Anne Perez Hattori, a professor of History, CHamoru Studies, and Micronesian Studies at UOG, wrote Volume II's introduction and the series conclusion, “Choppy Waters.” She also served as a co-editor overseeing 16 chapters in Volume II.

“With 64 chapters, we were challenged to identify the leading experts in each topic. I feel gratified that we were able to include two (more) contributors from UOG — Master Navigator Larry Raigetel and Emeritus Professor Chris Lobban,” said Dr. Hattori.

Micronesian seafaring traditions featured

Raigetel, assistant professor of Island Wisdom in the CHamoru Studies program, and a master navigator from Lamotrek Atoll, in Yap, wrote a chapter on ancient seafaring traditions in Micronesia.

“Although there is a decent body of literature about seafaring, this is the first scholarly piece by an actual master navigator, making Raigetel's chapter truly historic. We were very honored when he accepted our invitation to contribute and are thrilled with his



chapter,” said Dr. Hattori.

Dr. Lobban, an emeritus professor of Biology, wrote a chapter on island ecosystems and was assisted by Maria Schefter, a post-doctoral researcher. Dr. Hattori regards Dr. Lobban as a globally recognized authority on tropical Pacific environments.

Six years in the making

The two volumes offer different ways of telling and viewing history through the Pacific's exceptionally diverse cultural traditions and over timespans that require multidisciplinary and multicultural collaborative perspectives.

The project began six years ago when Professor Paul D'Arcy of the Australian National University invited Dr. Hattori and a small group of Pacific historians to meet in New Zealand and conceptualize the ambitious multi-volume project.

The process included pitching the product to Cambridge University Press, identifying and contacting some of the world's leading authorities on Pacific histories, and meeting deadlines affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The final product will stand in perpetuity and is certainly one of the highlights of my career,” Dr. Hattori added.

Global Partnership for Education Country Team Lead visits FSM

FSM Department of Education

February 23, 2023

FSM—Mr. Daisuke Kanazawa, Country Team Lead for FSM, Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Secretariat, visited the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) from 9-16 February 2023. The main objectives of his mission, which was jointly carried out with UNICEF with the support of National Department of Education (NDOE), Pohnpei Department of Education (PDOE) and Chuuk Department of Education (CDOE), were to review the results of the recently concluded support for the Covid-19 response under the GPE Accelerated Fund (AF) and the ongoing support to the GPE support to the implementation of the Compulsory ECE Policy, both of which are implemented by the National Department of Education (NDOE) with the support of SDOEs through UNICEF as Grant Agent, and to discuss new funding allocations from GPE available for FSM.

The GPE/UNICEF mission called on the President of FSM, the Governor of Pohnpei, the Lieutenant Governor of Chuuk, the Local Education Group, the National Department of Education, and the Chuuk Department of Education, and visited ECE centers and schools in Pohnpei and Chuuk.

The GPE AF funding benefited approximately 90 schools in FSM, enabling learning continuity and safe

schools operations in most of the remote and outer island schools through the provision of internet connectivity (Satellite systems for 25 schools in Chuuk, 19 schools in Yap and 5 schools in Pohnpei), solar power systems (1 in Kosrae and 9 in Yap), resources for development and dissemination of teaching-learning resources such as laptops (24 for Chuuk and 18 for Yap), printers and accessories (19 schools in Yap), High-Frequency Radio and solar power battery sets (2 sets for Pohnpei) and water tanks (13 Schools in Yap and 25 schools in Chuuk).

Under the ongoing GPE support to the Compulsory ECE Policy, work has been initiated to assess the ECE centers for repairs and renovations to support the creation of ECE learning spaces as well as the procurement of teaching and learning resources. Meanwhile, technical expertise is being recruited to strengthen the ECE curriculum and enhance teacher training and capacity for ECE.

In addition to reviewing the progress of the two GPE programmes, the discussions with the government, local education groups and schools, and community members centered around the priorities and way forward for a transformative education system and the steps and procedures for the grant application to access the funding allocations available to support that vision.



Vice President Aren B. Palik discusses climate change, Ukraine, the Samoa Agreement, & more with Ambassador of the European Union

FSM Information Services

February 23, 2023

Palikir-- This February, 2023, the Honorable Aren B. Palik—Vice President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)—received His Excellency Sujiro Seam, Ambassador of the European Union (EU) to the FSM. Accompanied by the Honorable Kandhi A. Elieisar, Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, and the Honorable Elina Akinaga, Secretary of the Department of Resources & Development, the Vice President took the opportunity to engage and discuss items of mutual interest and importance to the FSM and the EU.

Vice President Palik shared that the FSM and the EU share similar ideological values, including democracy and democratic principles. The Vice President emphasized the appreciation the FSM has for the EU's support ever since the establishment of diplomatic relations on October 28th, 1996.

Recognizing the FSM's continued interest in establishing formal presence of the EU in the North Pacific, Vice President Palik solicited the Ambassador's support to continue conveying the importance of an EU office in the North Pacific to be hosted in the FSM. The Vice President also described to the Ambassador the FSM's intention to establish an Embassy in Geneva, Switzerland, which will also give the FSM the opportunity to

strengthen its relations with the EU, as well as the United Nations, and other bilateral donors and partners across the European Continent. The Vice President also reaffirmed the FSM's commitment to signing the Samoa Agreement, which is the proposed successor to the Cotonou Agreement. (The Cotonou Agreement is the legal framework for the EU's relations with 79 countries across Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific). In turn, the Ambassador conveyed his appreciation to Vice President Palik for discussing these issues. Regarding the FSM's solicitation for the establishment of EU presence in the North Pacific, the Ambassador advised that the EU has not yet reached a decision but that discussion on this matter remains open. The Ambassador also advised that the EU continues to advocate for the signing of the Samoa Agreement and appreciates the FSM's commitment of support to it.

Ambassador Seam reaffirmed that the EU will continue to provide development assistance to the FSM, and appreciates its relationship with the FSM. Noting the forthcoming one-year anniversary on February 24th, 2023, of the Russian Federation's brutal, unjustified, and illegal invasion of Ukraine, the Ambassador described the EU's appreciation for the FSM's initiative in severing diplomatic relations with Russia. The Ambassador described that the FSM's decision delivered a powerful message to the whole world because it



Pictured Above: T.H. Aren B. Palik, Vice President of the FSM; H.E. Sujiro Seam, Ambassador of the EU to the FSM

shows the ambition to keep our World safe and peaceful. The Ambassador advised that the EU is in full support of Ukraine and hopes that there will be a time that the conflict between Russia and Ukraine is resolved peacefully.

Vice President Palik conveyed the FSM's appreciation for the EU's assistance in combatting anthropogenic Climate Change, including the EU's various resilience and adaptation initiatives, and inclusive of the EU's support to the FSM in this regard. The Vice President described the FSM's appreciation for the EU's support for the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, reiterated the FSM's commitment to the Paris Agreement, and solicited the Ambassador for the EU's support in limiting global warming to no more than

1.5 degrees Celsius.

Citizens may recall that Ambassador Seam presented his credentials virtually on October 8th, 2020, during the height of the COVID-19 Pandemic; the President of the FSM, H.E. David W. Panuelo, met with the Ambassador on the margins of the Pacific Islands Forum meeting in July 2022. The visit to the FSM in February 2023 was the first time the Ambassador visited the FSM and its States. Prior to his departure from the FSM, the Ambassador visited some of the EU-funded projects in the FSM at Awak Elementary School, Pohnpei Public Safety, the Department of Environment, Climate Change, & Emergency Management, and the FSM Congress.

Vice President Aren B. Palik discusses the Pacific Community with Deputy Director General

FSM Information Services

February 25, 2023

Palikir-- This February 2023, the Honorable Aren B. Palik, Vice President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), received Dr. Paula Vivili, Deputy Director General of the Pacific Community (SPC) for a courtesy call. The Vice President and the Deputy Director General discussed the SPC Regional Office and SPC's programming in the FSM and the region.



Pictured Above: T.H. Paula Vivili, Deputy Director General of the Pacific Community; T.H. Aren B. Palik, Vice President of the Federated States of Micronesia

Habele obtains rights to History of Micronesia, aims to donate and place online

Habele

February 24, 2023

FSM—Habele has obtained the copyright for a massive and unique multi-volume collection of transcribed source documents dealing with four centuries of Micronesian history. The US nonprofit began to provide copies, free-of-charge, to educators and institutions across Micronesia and United States in late 2022.

Rodrigue Levesque is a brilliant polyglot who travelled the world working on United Nation and other development projects. On a trip to the Pacific, he became fascinated with Micronesia. He was horrified at the lack of published source material on the Islands, particularly the very early times. He spent decades, and enormous sums of his own money, digging for, and translating documents from around the world.

As explained in a 2014 Saipan Tribune article, "According to Levesque, it was this experience of intrigue and mystery and the lack of history about Micronesia, compared to Polynesia and even Melanesia, that inspired him to start his decades-long project. 'I decided to let the world know about Micronesia and its interesting past,' Levesque said.

Over the years he relentlessly pursued the project, scouring archives, libraries, and institutions of a dozen countries and languages to find source material—all of which he photocopied, photographed, or typed into a few laptops."

Levesque made novel translations of thousands of documents between 1992 and 2002. These were compiled in forty massive volumes, with only the first twenty being printed in physical form. Though the series has been widely cited by the small number of dedicated historians who publish academically on Micronesian topics, very few, save a number of universities and museums, ever bought complete sets of the physical copies of these books.

Levesque hoped that finding, compiling and presenting so many high-quality source documents would spur a far-reaching transformation and vitalization of the study and development of history within Micronesia. He saw his work as helping establish common points of departure from which the study, debate and appreciation of local, traditional and even contemporary histories could respond. His goal was not to place the colonial narratives on a pedestal but rather to get those narratives out far and wide in order to spur meaningful engagement with those accounts, and

in doing so spur the creation of other accounts.

The biggest challenge faced in the mid 1990s to Levesque's goal were the books themselves. The twenty volumes of History of Micronesia: A Collection of Source Documents would have cost a library or school \$2,000 dollars, excluding shipment, and have taken more than three feet of shelf space. The volumes were painstaking organized chronologically by document date, rather than topically. The books were individually indexed but there is not an index covering the set as a whole and

there are no cross references. Together, these factors often made the series difficult for a lay reader to obtain and then to navigate.

"Beyond donating physical copies, the larger, and more influential possibility is placing all of the content from all forty volumes on the internet to be freely and easily accessible by all" explained Neil Mellen, Executive Director of Habele. "When Rod published the volumes in the mid 1990s he could not have imagined how the internet could, someday, make access to all this content much easier and universal."



Rodrigue Levesque, author and editor, shakes hands with Neil Mellen, of Habele finalizing transfer of copyrights and initiating the longterm plan to place Levesque's thousands of "History of Micronesia" source documents online for free and easy access by all.

Pohnpei receives first PIMPAC Award



Conservation Society of Pohnpei

February 3, 2023

Pohnpei—On February 3, 2023, the Pohnpei Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMA) Executive Committee was awarded a Community Conservation Award by The Pacific Islands Managed and Protected Area Community (PIMPAC). PIMPAC is a regional learning network of partners that aim to build capacity to support conservation and

community well-being and is co-coordinated by the Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT) and the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Pohnpei LMMA Executive Committee is comprised of village leaders representing communities adjacent to eight active marine sanctuaries or Marine Protected Areas (MPA). The award recognized the hard work of the Pohnpei communities who are actively partnering with state government partners to manage and protect their marine resources and share lessons learned with one another. A recent coral reef monitoring data demonstrates that the efforts of these communities are creating an impact by improving fish populations in most MPAs. Dr. Peter Houk of the University of Guam, who leads the analysis for the Micronesia long-term coral reef monitoring program, said, "I was amazed while looking at the trends in Pohnpei's fish assemblages. At first, there was limited success in Pohnpei's MPAs and grouper protection, but the switch seemed to turn about three years ago with growing community engagement, enforcement, and Paramount Chiefs' engagement. Now, Pohnpei MPAs are leading the way in Micronesia." Yet, he cautioned, "while success has grown, challenges still remain with sustained community outreach and enforcement."

Pohnpei LMMA Network is coordinated by the Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP), which is also an active partner of PIMPAC. "Unity of sharing lessons and learning from each other is key, especially to modern conservation and resource management tools such as no-take zones." said Eugene Joseph, CSP Director. The award came with a \$1000 small grant from MCT to support future cross-site visit activities. Willy Kostka, the Executive Director of MCT, also said in his remarks, "Conservation is not something that happens overnight. But with diligence and consistency, the Pohnpei LMMA Network has shown that hard work pays."

For more information with regards to the PIMPAC Community Conservation Award or Pohnpei LMMA Network, please feel free to contact Bertha Reyuw capacity@ourmicronesia.org or Eugene Joseph euoseph925@gmail.com

United Airlines announces 2023 Japan and Guam summer flight schedules

- Guam/Saipan-Japan flights increase to 59 weekly flights, increasing seat capacity by 17% compared to the 2019 summer schedule
- New and increased trans-Pacific routes from Japan offer more convenient and quicker connections for Asia-Pacific travelers

GUAM, February 22, 2023 - United Airlines announced today its 2023 Japan and Guam summer flight schedule, effective March 26, 2023. United will significantly increase its flights on all routes between Guam (GUM) and Japan -- Narita/Tokyo (NRT), Chubu/Nagoya (NGO), Kansai/Osaka (KIX), and Fukuoka (FUK) -- to a total of 56 flights a week. In particular, United continues to strengthen the Narita-Guam route and will increase its flights from 18 to 25 flights per week and plans to operate up to four daily flights to meet strong passenger demand.

“The summer travel demand from Japan to Guam is looking promising right now, which is positive news for the island,” said Sam Shinohara, United’s Managing Director of Airport Operations, Asia-Pacific. “Looking back to the start of the pandemic levels when tourism came to a halt, we continued to fly our Guam routes with the commitment of supporting the local community as well as the return of tourism to the region. With the new summer schedule, we are another step closer to our goal of restoring a full Guam-Japan schedule.”

The Japan to Guam/Saipan summer flight schedule, which becomes effective on March 26, 2023, is listed below:

Guam/Saipan routes	Flight No.	Flight schedule (Eff. Mar. 26)
NRT-GUM	UA827/UA873	Daily
NRT-GUM	UA197/UA196	Daily
NRT-GUM	UA865/UA864	Daily (eff. April 9)
NRT-GUM	UA874/UA828	Four-times-weekly
NRT-SPN (Saipan)	UA825/UA824	Three-times-weekly
NGO-GUM	UA136/UA137	Daily
NGO-GUM	UA172/UA171	Daily
KIX-GUM	UA150/UA151	Daily
KIX-GUM	UA177/UA178	Three-times-weekly
FUK-GUM	UA166/UA165	Daily



Shinohara added, “United will be celebrating 55 years as Guam’s hometown airline in 2023, and we understand how increasing capacity between Japan and Guam is vital to Guam’s tourism industry. I thank our Japan team for continuing to promote Guam as a top destination for Japanese travelers and our tourism stakeholders in Guam for working together for the benefit of the island.”

Japan’s flight capacity significantly expands in time for summer travel As travel to and from Japan continues to increase, United also announced that Japan will launch two new trans-Pacific flights and increase frequency to a total of 10 daily flights, significantly expanding connectivity options for customers through 70 weekly flights.

“Capacity increases in Japan benefit our customers throughout Asia-Pacific by providing more convenient flight options to connect. This will mean fewer stops to make and shorter travel times overall,” said Shinohara.

Japan is United’s largest station in Asia that provides connections from three of Japan’s major airports on 10 routes to the U.S: four routes from Narita/Tokyo (NRT), one from Kansai/Osaka (KIX), and five from Haneda/Tokyo (HND).

The Japan trans-Pacific flight schedule, also effective on March 26, 2023, is listed below:

Trans-Pacific routes	Flight No.	Flight schedule (Eff. Mar. 26 eastbound)
NRT- SFO (San Francisco)	UA838/UA837	Daily
NRT-EWR (Newark)	UA78/UA79	Daily
NRT-DEN (Denver)	UA142/UA143	Daily
NRT-IAH (Houston)	UA6/UA7	Daily
HND-ORD (Chicago)	UA882/UA881	Daily
HND-SFO (San Francisco)	UA876/UA875	Daily
HND-EWR (Newark)	UA130/UA131	Daily
HND-LAX (Los Angeles)	UA38/UA39	Daily (new)
HND-IAD (Washington D.C.)	UA804/UA803	Daily (new)
KIX-SFO (San Francisco)	UA34/UA35	Three times weekly (Daily eff. Apr. 24, eastbound)

Due to ongoing travel restrictions, flight schedules are subject to change without advance notice. Customers are encouraged to visit united.com to check the latest flight schedules and book flights through the United website or app, local travel agents, or United’s City Ticket Office in Tiyan.

United reminds customers that Early Check-in service is available for all Guam travelers who are leaving on early morning flights. Passengers can check in the night before their flights to avoid long lines at the airport. Early Check-in service is offered daily from 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. at the United counter at the A. B. Won Pat International Airport, Guam.

Pacific Island nations to develop advanced warning system for Tuna migration under new NZ\$25 million regional partnership.

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

February 24, 2023

Nadi, Fiji – A Pacific Community (SPC) led NZ\$25 million regional partnership aimed at enabling Pacific nations to adapt their tuna fisheries to the impacts of climate change was announced today by the New Zealand’s Deputy Prime Minister and Associate Minister of Foreign

Affairs, Hon Carmel Sepuloni.

Announcing the programme, Hon Carmel Sepuloni said, “The impact of climate change on tuna is a regional concern and requires a collective and coordinated response. This Pacific regional partnership fund will provide critical support for Pacific countries to protect their economic futures through the preservation of their tuna fisheries. New Zealand

supports Pacific-led solutions to shared challenges, and recognises the value of delivering these solutions through regional organisations, such as SPC.”

The ‘Climate Science for Ensuring Pacific Tuna Access’ programme, will support the region’s efforts to manage its valuable tuna resources in the face of climate change related challenges.

Tuna is a crucial source of income and food for many Pacific Island countries and territories. Ensuring the current sustainable levels of fishing continue is essential to the region’s economic and social well-being.

However, the impacts of

See continuation on next page

...Tuna migration

Continued from previous page

climate change, such as rising sea temperatures and changing ocean currents, are affecting tuna populations and the communities that depend on them. This project will work to improve our understanding of future climate impacts on tuna, and support decision making to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the region's tuna fisheries.

"This new programme represents a significant investment in the future of Pacific tuna fisheries," said Dr. Stuart Minchin, Director-General of Pacific Community (SPC).

"SPC's Climate Science for Ensuring Pacific Tuna Access' programme is the first step in developing a Pacific-owned advanced warning system to forecast with cutting-edge accuracy where - due to ocean warming - tuna will move".

"The 'Climate Science for Ensuring Pacific Tuna Access' programme will support Pacific island countries and territories to proactively monitor and manage their fisheries and pinpoint this climate change-induced tuna migration.

It will put Pacific Island nations at the forefront of fisheries monitoring enabling them to negotiate ongoing access to this vital resource and build sustainable fishing industries for the regions ongoing food security," Dr Minchin said.

The programme will work with Pacific Island countries and territories to develop and implement new technologies and innovative approaches to monitor fish populations and support research on the impacts of climate change on tuna, informing and enabling the development of climate-smart adaptive management strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability of the region's tuna fisheries.

The project will run for 3.5 yrs. It will be implemented by SPC and will involve collaboration with national governments, regional organizations, and the Pacific tuna fishing industry.

CAMCO signs MOU with SPC for renewable, efficient and sustainable energy promotion

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

22 February 2023

Auckland, New Zealand—Climate and impact fund manager Camco have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the intergovernmental organisation, the Pacific Community (SPC), to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency solutions for the sustainable development of the Pacific.

Today's agreement comes as many Pacific Island Nations work to achieve ambitious renewable energy targets and end their heavy reliance on imported diesel for energy production, which has resulted in some islands having among the highest electricity costs in the world.

Renewable energy and energy efficiency are critical to achieving these goals, but most developers in the region are currently unable to bring projects to a financial close without technical assistance, development capital assistance, or both.

To address this, the Pacific Energy Officials Meeting in 2022 directed Camco and SPC to catalyse private sector participation in renewables investment in the Pacific, which has led to today's MoU.

Camco is currently developing the

USD100 million blended finance platform, Transforming Island Development through Electrification and Sustainability (TIDES), to provide flexible financing to local developers with the goal of catalysing investment in the Pacific region's renewable energy sector at scale.

On its part, SPC supports sustainable development by applying a people-centred approach to science, research, and technology across all of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which is underpinned by the organisation's deep understanding of Blue Pacific contexts and cultures.

Under the MoU, both parties will capitalise on one another's strengths and experiences to ensure Camco's blended facility TIDES reflects regional needs and together coordinate the delivery of regional market capacity-building activities. The overarching aim is to improve developers' access to finance and capacity to help build a viable renewable market and thereby catalyse private investment at scale.

As a first step, Camco and SPC will create a joint report on the use of results-based finance for submission and ratification at the 5th Pacific Regional Energy and Transport Ministers Meeting in Vanuatu in May.

Geoff Sinclair, Managing Director at Camco, said: "The Pacific Community is unmatched in terms of its on-the-ground presence, experience and expertise in delivering scientific and technical solutions to advancing sustainable development in the Pacific and we are extremely excited to be partnering with them to scale up climate action across the region."

Solomone Fifita, Manager of SPC's Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (PCREEE), said: "The PCREEE is very fortunate to partner with Camco and to make use of its years of experiences in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean. This partnership supports the PCREEE's efforts to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency investments, markets and industries in the Pacific."

In January, Camco announced it had signed an MoU with consultancy firm ITP Renewables. Under that agreement, ITP Renewables will support Camco in the implementation of TIDES by providing its world-class renewable energy consulting services to the platform's development partners, projects and investees at competitive rates.

PASAI trains champions to sustain strategic management in six Pacific audit offices

PASAI

February 20, 2023

Auckland, New Zealand-- The Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions (PASAI) taught strategic management concepts and processes throughout last week to 14 staff (10 female, four male) from six public audit offices in FSM Chuuk, FSM Kosrae, FSM Pohnpei, Guam, Palau and Tuvalu.

International consultant, Pritom Phookun, and PASAI's Director Practice Development, Sinaroseta Palamo-Iosefo, facilitated five, part-day online sessions from 13 to 17 February to develop participants' knowledge on strategic management concepts including value creation, strategic priorities and key performance measures.

PASAI Chief Executive, Esther Lameko-

Poutoa, opened the first online session reminding participants, "It's important for SAIs to visualise the impact on society they want to achieve to plan how they will achieve the change effectively and efficiently.

"Proper strategic management is key to ensuring SAIs deliver meaningful and quality audits to improve governance in their countries."

The online course is part of a broader programme to enhance SAI strategic management capabilities.

Two staff from each office will gather in Guam from 6 to 10 March 2023 for a face-face workshop to build the necessary skills that will foster strategic thinking at the individual and organisational levels.

Afterwards, these 'strategy champions' will facilitate strategic development processes in

consultation with their SAIs' stakeholders and staff, with remote support from PASAI.

Ms Palamo-Iosefo explained, "A thoughtfully developed strategic plan, annual operational plan and monitoring and evaluation framework are essential elements of any productive and impactful public audit office.

"This online course will set the participants up with the foundational knowledge needed to facilitate their own SAIs' strategic development sessions."

PASAI acknowledges the support of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

Gender equality and a safer ocean core to international meeting in Cairns, Australia.

Pacific Community (SPC)

February 27, 2023

85 Delegates from Australia and Pacific nations are meeting in Cairns this week to help ensure safer and more equitable oceans for the entire region.

For the first time since COVID19, critical priorities on Pacific Search and Rescue along with ensuring women participation in all facets of the maritime sector, will be progressed through the 5-day international meeting (27th February – 3rd March).

The Pacific Search and Rescue Workshop (PacSAR) and the Pacific Women in Maritime Conference (PacWIM) is jointly hosted by the Australian Government in partnership with the Pacific Community (SPC) and

the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

Search and rescue specialists, seafarers, women heading maritime organisations and those championing more women-led roles in the largely male dominated sector will work together to progress search and rescue coordination and effective women in maritime strategies this week.

Expected outcomes of the conference will include a re-developed strategy for improving access for Pacific women in the maritime sector (2023-2027) and the biennial PacSAR event provides a learning opportunity to build capacity amongst Pacific Island Countries Territories to strengthen their search and rescue response. This is a fundamental

humanitarian obligation to strengthen and enhance cooperation to improve search and rescue capacity in the region. Mick Kinley, CEO, Australian Maritime Safety Authority is looking forward to the effective dialogues and outcomes with Pacific representatives over the coming week.

He said, “it has been some years since we have had the opportunity to meet our Pacific partners in person. We value this chance to build networks, share knowledge and skills, and develop plans to action important goals for gender equity and safety in the region.”

SPC’s Principal Strategic Lead for Pacific Women and Girls, Mereseini Rakuita has been supporting work to drive transformational change for

women in the maritime sector in the Pacific.

She said, “only 11 per cent of our maritime sector are women - that's only 1 in 10 of an estimated 16,000 workers. But we know when we have a diverse workforce, we make better decisions, so ensuring young women and girls in the Pacific are able to equitably work in the sector is a critical priority for this meeting.” The PacSAR Workshop and PacWIM Conference will be held at the Cairns Convention Centre from Tuesday, 28th February to Friday, 3rd March.

This work is being jointly funded and coordinated by AMSA, IMO and SPC with additional support by SPC’s Pacific Women Lead Program.

Progressing Labour Mobility in the Pacific

BY MANAINI ROKOVUNISEI
Pacific Islands Forum

February 22, 2023

In February 2020, Forum Trade Ministers endorsed labour mobility as a standing agenda item of the Forum Trade Ministers Meeting (FTMM) and Forum Trade Officials Meeting (FTOM). Labour mobility continues to play a significant role in economic and human resource development strategies for our Members and contributes to improved livelihoods and standards of living.

At this same meeting, Trade Ministers commissioned the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) to conduct a comprehensive assessment of labour mobility arrangements, including under regional and sub-regional trade agreements, and provide recommendations for consideration at their next meeting.

While the assessment focuses on labour mobility arrangements within the context of regional and sub-regional trade agreements, consultations and research have identified social impact issues that require on-going discussions and incorporation into existing arrangements.

These include issues around wage disparity, access to health services, living

conditions, orientation and reintegration programmes. Our members are also facing issues around brain drain, skills development and social protection gaps.

Acknowledging these challenges and areas for improvement, there is great opportunity to strengthen intra-regional labour mobility arrangements and look at active labour market policies that respond to employment.

To support our members, the report has recommended that consideration be given to developing and establishing the following:

- regional platform for decision-making on labour mobility and policy support,
- regional labour mobility strategy; and
- regional information sharing network.

Based on the recommendations, the labour mobility strategy and decision making platform will progress this under the Pacific Aid for Trade Strategy 2025 and within the context of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent Implementation Plan.

Quality and standard paramount for Pacific products

Ulrich Diekmann
Pacific Island Forum

February 22, 2023

standards and reliable measurement are not just the concern of specialists, but for all of us. We take Quality Infrastructure (QI) services for granted. For example, when we buy potatoes or fruit at the local market we expect the weight to be right; when we fill up our car we expect to get the quantity and quality of fuel we pay for; or when we order IT accessories over the internet we expect that the SD card complies with international standards so that it fits into our laptops.

Why is quality so important for the Pacific?

Because quality requirements are not only a basic prerequisite for exporting products, but above all it ensures market access and competitiveness for Pacific products. They also ensure that, for example, locally sourced food is safe to consume, which is also an important contribution to the standard of living of Pacific people.

Since the end of 2020, we have been implementing the PQI Initiative together with the national focal points, our partners, and hundreds of stakeholders in the region. PQI stands for Pacific Quality Infrastructure and is

an initiative that aims to raise the profile of quality among exporters and society by promoting quality related services. It is funded by the Enhanced Integrated Framework, the European Union, Australia, Germany, and Japan.

How do we implement the PQI Initiative?

By informing stakeholders about the importance of quality and quality infrastructure - QI for short - and by identifying and trying to solve quality challenges together with our partners in the Pacific Island countries. We also train service providers to improve their services by bringing them into line with international standards and, where necessary, to be accredited by independent bodies. The overall aim is to improve access to internationally recognised QI services in the region.

Where to from here for PQI initiative?

With the aim of improving cooperation between Pacific Island countries in the area of QI, we have started establishing regional networks such as the PISC, the Pacific Island Standard Committee. The PISC is tasked with coordinating and promoting the development and adaptation of regional standards and to encourage the participation of stakeholders in the Pacific. Similar networks will be created for the other QI components.

PIFS-WTO MOU to Strengthen Cooperation

Pacific Islands Forum

February 22, 2023

JOINT STATEMENT BY PIFS AND WTO ON MOU SIGNING

The WTO and PIFS signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for joint technical assistance for Pacific Islands Forum countries, which renews for the fifth time longstanding

cooperation between the two Secretariats for delivering regional technical assistance activities.

PIF Deputy Secretary General Filimon Manoni noted the strong cooperation between the WTO and PIF. He said the MOU will ensure that relevant technical assistance and capacity building on WTO issues will benefit Pacific Island countries

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World Trade Organization (WTO) Director-General Okonjo-Iweala and PIFS Deputy Secretary General Filimon Manoni officiate during the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding

Office of Insular Affairs official visits Pohnpei's Governor Reed Oliver



Pohnpei Enginkehlap News

February 13, 2023

Pohnpei-- Thank you to Mrs. Tanya Harris Joshua, Deputy Director, Technical Assistance Program (TAP) at the Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) for visiting Governor Oliver today.

Mrs. Harris-Joshua, a native of Pohnpei, is currently on-island to attend the

Micronesian Islands Forum and visit projects funded through the OIA's Technical Assistance Program.

Joining Governor Oliver to welcome back Mrs. Harris-Joshua was Ms. Shirley Ligohr, Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) unit Coordinator, and Mr. Benneth Edmund, Grants Management Specialist.

Nearly \$1.2 Million grant awarded to College of Micronesia to expand high-speed internet access

National Telecommunications and Information Administration

Today, College of Micronesia was awarded \$1,195,260.00 from the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program (CMC). The program is run by the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and is part of the Biden-Harris Administration's Internet for All initiative.

- College of Micronesia is one of 61 minority-serving colleges and universities receiving grants today totaling \$175 million.
- The College of Micronesia -FSM (COM-FSM)'s "Connecting Micronesian Communities of Learning:

Community-Based College Wifi in the Federated States of Micronesia" project aims to bring technological equity to its campuses and the students they serve. The project will improve Wi-Fi access across the six campuses that COM-FSM serves. The existing slow and unstable broadband network connections will be upgraded, and existing network speeds will be increased. The program will address the need for better broadband access and increase the value and potential of the free laptops that students currently have access to at the college. The project will provide broadband access for students as they receive training in various vocational and academic programs and allow for the college to take full advantage of its new status of providing online instruction as one of its modes of instruction.

First Pacific E-commerce Committee meeting

BY DONNA TEKANENE REIHER Pacific Islands Forum

February 22, 2023

On 2nd December 2022, the first Pacific E-commerce Committee was held, marking a milestone achievement for the Pacific E-commerce Initiative through the creation of a forum that focuses on accelerating e-commerce readiness in the Pacific as guided by the Pacific Regional E-commerce Strategy and Roadmap.

Over 60 participants representing 12 member countries and 18 observers attended the first Pacific E-commerce Committee meeting held virtually.

The meeting presented the progress made towards the implementation of the

Pacific Regional E-commerce Strategy and Roadmap, gave the opportunity to Member countries to showcase their recent developments in e-commerce and endorsed the terms of reference for the establishment of the Pacific E-commerce Committee and its two sub-Committees, namely the Pacific E-commerce Private Sector and Development Partners Sub-Committees.

The first Monitoring and Evaluation Report on implementation of the Regional Strategy, available here, revealed that 43% of the Strategy's measures are under implementation through targeted projects by the Strategy's implementing partners.

The meeting was organized by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIF).