

Pohnpei's Primary School stars shine bright in Christmas song showdown

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

November 30, 2023

Pohnpei—Today, excited and sometimes raucous primary students from all over Pohnpei gathered at the Pohnpei State Gymnasium for the second annual Christmas Song Contest. The theme of the competition was “Christmas Lullaby,” though the majority of groups chose songs that were more like a “lullaby,” similar to that of the mythical drummer boy’s drum solo for the baby Jesus, and with the same type of storied enthusiasm.

The competition was a judged affair with schools competing for placement and the top cash prizes. \$200 went to first-place winners; \$150 for second place, and \$100 for third place. Each school that participated received \$50

for any placement other than the top three.

The judges, some of them last-minute fill-ins, were charged with rating school musical performances based on pitch, memory, presence, creativity, and attire. The last category was really only a matter of whether or not all students wore their school uniforms. Only one group did not wear their uniforms, but they were uniformly dressed in bright



colors. As a judge, I gave that group the full 15 points in that category, as did one other judge, while the other two

marked them down for it.

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FSM Appellate Division to hear multiple appeals on Supreme Court Decision on seating of Sigrah

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

December 12, 2023

FSM—The matter of whether or not the November 2 court ruling that the FSM Congress acted against the Constitution when it refused to accept the credentials of Senator-elect Yoslyn Sigrah after the special election in which Kosrae voters elected her is still up in the air. The FSM Supreme Court’s ruling is the subject of three separate appeals. The appeals are currently working their way through the court system. Currently, there is at least one hearing scheduled to take place in January.

On November 9, Speaker Esmond Moses and the 23rd FSM Congress appealed the court’s decision (Appeal Case P6-2023). Sigrah’s legal team filed a motion to

dismiss the appeal, saying essentially that since there were other matters in terms of relief for Sigrah that had not yet been decided, the November 2 ruling was not yet final. They argued that appeals can only be filed after all matters have been decided.

On its own, the Supreme Court did not have enough justices available to establish an appeals panel, which requires three judges. The November 2 ruling was issued by Associate Justice Belcourt who cannot hear an appeal on his own ruling. Due to Associate Justice Carl-Worswick’s relationship to Sigrah, she recused herself. According to the Chief Clerk, an appeals panel has been established consisting of Associate Justice Wentworth of the FSM Supreme Court and the Yap and Chuuk State court Justices.

No ruling on any matter has been handed down by the full panel on any of the appeals. However, on November 29, Wentworth ruled to deny the motion to dismiss Congress’ appeal. The ruling said that “a single justice may deny a motion to dismiss an appeal, and that a single justice’s action may be reviewed by the full panel.” The written version of that ruling was filed on December 1.

On November 14, Ramp Mida filed a Petition for Writ of Prohibition, which became appeals case P7-2023. The petition asked the appeals panel to “bar the trial court from acting in excess of its jurisdiction to enjoin (or simply, put a stop to) the November 21, 2023, special election in violation of the separation of powers.”

Justice Belcourt was named as the respondent in that matter. The election, in fact, did not take place, and on November 24, Justice Belcourt filed his 12-page response defining the reasons why he felt that the trial court over which he presided had “not acted outside or in excess of jurisdiction.” He recommended that the appeals panel should deny the writ.

His response was not a decision of the appeals panel, which set deadlines for the filing of briefs by involved attorneys and also set a hearing of oral arguments on January 10, 2024. However, Sigrah’s attorneys have requested that the hearing date be rescheduled to the middle of January in order to accommodate one of the attorney’s travel schedules. No ruling has yet been issued regarding the

[Click here for continuation on page 8](#)

National Women's Conference brings together all four states of the FSM

FSM National Government

December 8, 2023

Kosrae, FSM- The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) National Women's Conference brought together women and adolescent girls from across all four states to identify priority issues and specific actions to ensure women share equal access alongside men to FSM services and opportunities.

This includes women and men sharing equal access to employment and career opportunities; equal access to health, justice, banks, financial and other services; and equal decision-making opportunities at community and national level especially for issues that have a significant impact on women and children such as climate change.

"This is a critical meeting for our nation, involving all four states," said member of the conference's national planning committee and FSM Assistant-Secretary for Social Affairs, Department of Health and Social Affairs, Stuard Penias. "Through this conference women will explain the key

issues impacting women and girls in FSM, to ensure consideration of these issues is prioritised in national and state policies and planning."

"We have a very clear purpose for this conference, and that's to identify emerging issues impacting women and girls and to agree on priority areas for further action on gender equality. This event will create space for discussion around these issues, including consultations for the next National FSM Gender Equality Policy."

The four-day conference was held in Kosrae from 27 November to 1 December, led by the FSM National Government's Department of Health and Social Affairs in collaboration with Kosrae State Government and supported by several partners. Partners included, but were not limited to, UN Women, USAID and the Pacific Community (SPC) through the Pacific Women Lead at SPC program, funded by the Australian Government. The program included sessions on key topics along with national and state focused discussions for each of the four states of FSM.

Participants were women and adolescent girls from all parts of FSM society including civil society and government representatives, women community leaders, female youth leaders, and those identifying as women in all their diversity. The event also has a focus on strategically including and engaging men.

Mrs. Emeliana Musrasrik-Carl, President of Pohnpei Women Council, commended the conference and thanked the organisers, participants and everyone involved in the national event. "The conference provides a platform for women to be at the centre of decision-making for policies and programmes of both state and national governments. It provides women and adolescent girls the opportunity to identify and agree on the key issues impacting them in FSM, so they can directly influence and lead the government's strategic direction to better address gender

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Bill Jaynes
Managing Editor

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Monday, December 25, 2023

Biden administration seeks Congressional green light for FSM assistance plans

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

December 5, 2023

Washington D.C.—President Joe Biden has forwarded two crucial agreements to the US Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate, aimed at implementing economic assistance for the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

The first agreement, the 2023 Agreement Concerning Procedures for the Implementation of United States Economic Assistance, preserves oversight by the Joint Economic Management Committee (JEMCO) while granting the FSM increased

autonomy in setting budget priorities within mutually agreed sectors. This agreement focuses on ensuring accountability for US taxpayer funds while granting the FSM a more prominent role in decision-making processes.

The second agreement, the 2023 Federal Programs and Services Agreement, primarily maintains existing programs but introduces technical updates. Significant modifications include amendments to postal services, disaster assistance, and the extension of Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) insurance coverage to additional eligible banks in the FSM. Notably, changes in postal services allow

greater flexibility for the United States Postal Service in offering commercial mail services.

President Biden's letter points out the perpetual nature of general provisions within the 2023 Federal Programs and Services Agreement, ensuring benefits for US executive departments and agencies beyond the initial 20-year term, unless mutually terminated. These provisions encompass privileges, immunities, tax exemptions, and dispute settlement procedures, providing continuity and support for US entities operating in the FSM.

Emphasizing the significance of

extending such assistance, President Biden aligns these agreements with his administration's strategies, including the Indo-Pacific, Pacific Partnership, and National Security Strategies. These agreements signify a sustained commitment to the FSM, fostering economic prosperity and stability in the Indo-Pacific region, thereby reinforcing broader strategic interests.

President Biden concludes by transmitting the 2023 Agreements for the implementation of economic assistance related to the Compact of Free Association between the United States and the Federated States of Micronesia.

A Green Economy Vision: The first steps to transitioning to E-Mobility in FSM

A private sector-led initiative is pursuing a comprehensive plan to bolster the green economy in the nation

Green Economy Vision

Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, December 11, 2023 – After 18 months of planning and investment, the firm, Palikir Consulting Services (PCS), has begun implementation of a new private sector-led initiative termed, the Green Economy Vision, or GEV, with the arrival of the first EV flatbed truck into the FSM.

GEV is a long-term e-mobility and renewable energy initiative to support the nation's transition toward a zero-carbon economy utilizing modern technologies that will lead to cleaner and safer communities, support financial savings for families and businesses, and create new economic opportunities.

The initiative has five pillars that will guide its implementation:

- Pillar 1: Raise awareness on the benefits of e-mobility and battery technologies and tools.
- Pillar 2: Secure private and public financing to the GEV through core partnerships.
- Pillar 3: Identify 'early adopters' to pilot and demonstrate proven, robust EV and RE technologies.
- Pillar 4: Promote "green growth" throughout the FSM economy through green technology transfer, and support of new, quality, well-paying jobs for all.
- Pillar 5: Advocate for national, state and municipal policy and regulatory

frameworks that incentivizes decarbonization of FSM society.

The EV flatbed, a popular mode of transport throughout the FSM that supports many business and family-oriented recreational and cultural activities, arrives as part of the GEV 'Early Adopter' pillar and is meant to highlight the superior quality, performance and long-term cost-savings of this mode of transport for families and businesses.

Hercules Kohler Jr. is the owner of the EV flatbed, and is very excited about the use and expansion of EV technology as an early adopter, particularly for the maintenance and fuel savings he will see over time. "When my father and I were presented with the GEV initiative, and learned about the preparation that had gone into it, including the testing of the prototypes on the island and other activities undertaken by PCS over the past year, we immediately knew that this is really the future and so we wanted to be a part of this transition and to support it. It just makes sense," says Kohler.

EV prototype testing (using a 5 kWp motor and an 83v-100amh lithium ion battery) started in January 2023 and has revealed a number of key learnings including, 1) that it takes about 6.5 kWh of power to charge every 100 km of driving range, 2) that an



Hercules Kohler Jr. is the owner of the first EV flatbed truck in the FSM, as part of the GEV 'Early Adopter' program. For Kohler, transitioning to e-mobility is "a no-brainer", and plans to be a key supporter of the initiative.

average car owner who spends \$10 per day on gas, will spend about \$3.25 for 1-3 days of EV driving depending on distance and terrain, 3) that an average driver will drive approximately 6,000 kms in one year, 4) that countless hours will be saved at gas station fill-ups and repair shop calls and visits, 5) that there is the convenience and flexibility to be able to charge at home in the evening or at work during the day, and 6) that it will be necessary to hire and train local technicians (potentially from the COM-CTEC program, as well as the FSM Utilities) to install home-based and commercial charging ports and provide after-service facilities for EVs, including critical spares such as charge controllers and other system components.

"We do recognize that the transition in the transport sector is not only about importing

vehicles – EVs of course – as there are nearly 20,000 officially registered vehicles in FSM, and to replace those will take a number of years of transitioning. So, we need to also develop the skills, and capacity to retrofit existing internal combustion vehicles already on the islands to electric vehicles using battery and brushless motor technology that are readily available and increasingly more affordable as another way to address reduction of carbon emissions and pollution on the islands", states

FSM GEV Agent, Kriskitina Kanemoto, one of several GEV Agents placed across the FSM to promote and implement the initiative with key stakeholders in the FSM States.

Key activities for the GEV initiative in 2024 will be to continue to focus on awareness raising, particularly amongst youth, governments and policy makers, expand private-public partnerships, create new skills and jobs and expand the early adopters pillar across sectors in the FSM.

To obtain more information on the GEV initiative, one can visit their Facebook page at Green Economy Vision, or email at greenconomyvision@gmail.com, or call at +691-926-0150.

...Song Contest

Continued from front page

Creativity was difficult to judge as well, as most of the performances were not original songs. However, there was room for creativity in the presentations. Two of the schools did “localized” versions of the 12 Days of Christmas with their “true loves” presenting gifts like five pigs and other local items, while the “true loves” of the second group presented gifts of school supplies.

Judges were Ilany Saimon, Maryda Inos, John Nablo, and Bill Jaynes. Of the group of judges, only one was a musician, and scores varied widely between my ratings and the others. However, the presence of ratings from four separate judges balanced the results, whether that was a good or bad thing.

Performances were classified into two categories. Category A was for first through fourth graders, though one school was allowed to participate and compete in that category despite the fact that their group included members from all primary education grades. Saladak Elementary School won first place in that category, followed by Ohmine and RSP for the top three spots. Temwen and Seinwar tied for fourth place, while ESDM and Mand tied for fifth. Governor Reed Oliver presented the awards for category A.

Category B was for students from fifth to eighth grades. Wone again won first place, followed by Sapwalap and Saladak. There were no ties for the following places, which in order were Rohi, CCA, PCS, Salapwuk, NMS, Pohnlangas, SDA, Palikir, RSP, ESDM, Pehleing, Awak, and Nett. Department of Education Director Stanley Etse presented the awards for Category B students.

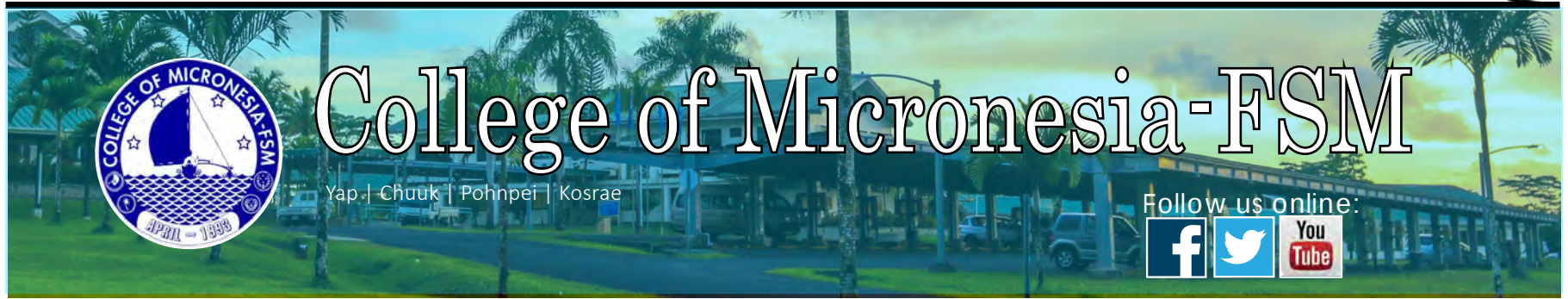
There were several highlights of the competition—too many, in fact, to name. However, if there had been an award presented for the “most courageous,” I would have given it to RSP. Two little girls from RSP stood in front of the huge crowd and belted out a sweet version of a song whose title I don’t know but that I would have to name “Unless You Give It Away.” One of them played the ukulele as accompaniment, and they sang confidently in sweet voices. As a long-time performing musician, I would have been intimidated and nervous to perform in such a small group in front of so many of my peers, but those little girls didn’t seem nervous at all.

Each group gave their all to their various performances, and though not all of them could “win” the competition, everyone who attended the event, and particularly the performers, came out winners that day.

“The Elementary School Christmas Song Contest not only serves as a platform to celebrate musical excellence but also highlights the importance of nurturing creativity and the arts in our educational institutions,” the

Governor’s office press release said. To the inclusion of creativity and the arts in our education institutions, I say a hearty “amen”.





JICA FSM-FMI Project

The JICA* Project for Maritime Education and Training Capacity Enhancement on Fisheries and Maritime Institute known as JICA FSM-FMI Project is one of JICA's technical cooperation projects that has been implemented at FMI in Yap State as follows:

Project Period:

April 2021 – March 2025 (4 Years)

Project Purpose:

Quality of Maritime Education and Training at FSM-FMI is improved and higher-level courses are provided.

Expected Outputs:

- 1, Learning and teaching materials for current Class-5 (Maritime/Engineering) courses are improved.
- 2, Learning and teaching materials and equipment for Class-4 (Maritime/Engineering) courses are prepared.
- 3, Ability of teaching staff to teach Class-5 and 4 Maritime/Engineering courses is enhanced.
- 4, System for employment supports and international cadet acceptance is improved.

Training in Japan:

This is to provide FMI instructors with the technical transfer related to teaching methods to enhance cadets' understanding in lectures and practical training for the FMI trainees. (Jan. to Feb. 2024 at Marine Technical College, etc.)

Class-4 Courses

For a first time ever in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) or Micronesian regions including the Republic of Palau (Palau) and the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI), JICA FSM-FMI project has been preparing to open the Class-4 courses of navigation and marine engineering. Class-4 certificates allows individuals to become ship-masters for vessels less than 500 gross tonnages in coastal areas and marine engineer for vessels of not over 750 kilowatts total propulsion power. These qualifications are enabling individuals to serve as seafarer and/or marine officers in afore mentioned sizes of vessels. The JICA FSM-FMI project welcomes new cadets or interested students from Palau and RMI.

Equipment for Class-4 such as Audio-Visual materials for boiler training, Lifeboat, Fast rescue boat, Fire line system, RADAR/ARPA (Automatic Radar Plotting Aids) simulator, etc. will be also provided to FMI.

Facilities

In order to support the Class-4 courses, beside the JICA FSM-FMI Project, Japanese grant aid has also signed between the government of FSM and the government of Japan, for the construction of new classrooms and a new dormitory. These two new facilities are scheduled to complete by 2025.

*JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency)



His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, FSM President (2nd from right) and First Lady Ancelly Simina (3rd from left) with his cabinet members have visited FMI and The JICA FSM-FMI Project on 3rd September 2023. The new government is focusing on outer islands of four states in FSM and FMI has a crucial role in shaping FSM future.

The JICA FSM-FMI Project members and FMI Dean have been actively collaborating with the new government, particularly the Department of Transportation, Communication and Infrastructure, to prepare the groundwork for hosting international cadets and facilitating future employment opportunities for cadets.

COM-FSM Fisheries and Maritime Institute/FMI together with JICA FSM-FMI Project welcome cadets/students not only from **FSM** but also the **Republic of Palau** and the **Republic of Marshall Islands**, especially to the **Class-4 courses of Navigation and Marine Engineering**.

FMI Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/fsmfmiofficial>

FMI Alumni Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61551818463359>

FMI Webpage on COM-FSM:

<http://www.comfsm.fm/?q=fmi>



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Hundreds in Pohnpei flock to performance by the Dezhou Acrobatic Troupe

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlle Press

December 8, 2023

Pohnpei—Hundreds of people in Pohnpei gathered on December 7 and 8 to watch the performances of the visiting Dezhou Acrobatic Troupe.

The Dezhou Acrobatic Troupe from the city of Dezhou in the northwest of China's Shandong province is a much larger troupe than was able to travel to the FSM. The troupe, or portions of it, performs all over the world.

Though both performances were extremely well attended, the performance at the Kolonia China Friendship gym on December 7 had the biggest crowd. China's Ambassador to the FSM, Wu Wei, estimated that crowd at over 400. Still, the performance at the College of Micronesia China Friendship gym was not much smaller in comparison.

Members of the Diplomatic Corps and other dignitaries, including McGarry Miguel, Vice President of

the Micronesia-China Friendship Association, were invited on December 8 to attend a dinner reception with the acrobats before their performance that began at 7:00 PM. Miguel gave a speech welcoming the troupe to the FSM, followed by a speech by Li Baoguo, the Deputy Director of

Dezhou Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism.

The performance began with "Straw Hats," a sort of juggling routine involving hats and a three-tiered human pyramid of the six male performers, each with three hats to juggle with one of the hats being removed from their heads and another replacing it in succession. "The performance embodies the passion and youthfulness of young people," the program said.

That performance was followed by "disk spinning," a traditional Chinese acrobatic performance with a history of some 2,000 years. Each of the female performers spun four "plates" each on

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...Acrobats

Continued from previous page

long flexible rods while performing acrobatic stunts. Despite the fact that the plates seemed to be secured to the rods, the performance was impressive just the same.

Zhang Xue next provided a solo “magic” performance that included



the traditional Chinese linking rings, which was performed flawlessly.

Another performance was entitled “sticky bricks” and was performed by Zhang Yuhao. The sticky bricks routine initially involves three bricks that seem to be stuck together as the performer throws and manipulates them in the air. It culminates with a stack of 10 bricks.

Sun Guohui next performed “clay jar juggling,” which really is more akin to clay jar balancing, in which he balanced a heavy clay jar on his head and neck while performing other maneuvers.

A familiar juggling routine with four acrobats followed that performance.

“Only” around 400 years old, the Sichuan Opera is world-famous. One of the techniques used in order to portray characters' moods and feelings



is the art form of “face changing.” Though in China’s theaters it is most often performed under stage lights with the audience in the dark, no lights were available in Pohnpei, making it altogether more remarkable to see than when I saw a Sichuan Opera in China 10 years ago. The performer wears a series of masks and through lightning-fast feats of legerdemain, changes the mask without touching them, to the delight of the audience. Zhang Xue, who also performed the magic act,



was the performer for this one and made the seamless face change within inches of some spectators' eyes. She also brought a small girl from the audience to the center stage where she did the trick for her as well while the audience looked on.

There was another act that was not in the program involving two male performers in feats of acrobatic balance and strength.

The final performance of the evening in Palikir was entitled “Diablo,” in which the female performers manipulated lighted disks that looked like large “Duncan Butterfly” yo-yos on string, tossing them about and catching them while also performing acrobatic tricks.

The visit of the Dezhou Acrobatic Troupe was the first since the COVID-19 epidemic closed the FSM’s borders.



Pacific Partnership 2024 kicks off third mission stop in Micronesia

ENS Lacy Burkett, Asst. Public Affairs Officer Pacific Partnership 2024

Pacific Partnership 24-1 (2024) has kicked off its third mission stop in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, Dec. 12.

This mission stop will host a fly-in only team of 76 Pacific Partnership 24-1 (PP 24-1) personnel. Due to the size of USNS Mercy (T-AH 19), the ship was unable to anchor off the coast of Pohnpei.

The fly-in team will have PP24-1 medical, U.S. Pacific Fleet band, and Humanitarian and Disaster Relief members serving in Pohnpei. The arrival of the team marks the next phase of the PP 24-1 mission that will enable participants, including U.S. and Pohnpei, to work together to enhance disaster response capabilities and foster new and enduring friendships.

Pacific Partnership was last in Pohnpei in 2015 aboard Military Sealift Command's Joint High Speed Vessel, USNS Millinocket (JHSV 3).

"I would like to thank the government of Micronesia for inviting Pacific Partnership to your country. It is a true testament of our enduring bonds of friendship and shared vision of a stronger Indo-Pacific. We at the Pacific Partnership team are

honored to work alongside you in making that vision a reality," said U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Mark A. Melson, Commander, Task Force 73 and executive agent for this year's mission.

At the invitation of host nations, the Pacific Partnership's mission partners conduct tailored humanitarian civic action preparedness activities in areas such as disaster response, public health, and host nation outreach events.

Pacific Partnership's medical team, working with the Pohnpei Department of Health, will provide tailored medical care focusing on surgical care, training for first responders, clinical care, subject-matter exchanges, and community education.

The U.S. Pacific Fleet Band will be holding community outreach concerts at local schools throughout Pohnpei, as well as a public concert at Pohnpei State Gym on Friday, Dec. 15 at 6 p.m.

"We greatly appreciate the service of the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces participating in Pacific Partnership



2024," said U.S. Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia Jennifer Johnson. "Pacific Partnership 2024 builds on our people-to-people ties with the citizens of the FSM and expands our deep and enduring partnership in the islands."

Pacific Partnership focuses on multiple lines of effort to help build resilience and host nation capacity to support essential humanitarian services.

This year's mission will also feature nearly 1,500 personnel from allies and partner nations including Australia, Chile, the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany, and New Zealand.

Born out of the devastation brought by the December 2004 tsunami that swept through parts of South and Southeast Asia, Pacific Partnership began as a military-led humanitarian response to one of the world's most catastrophic natural disasters. Building on the success

and goodwill of this operation, the U.S. helped spearhead the inaugural Pacific Partnership mission in 2006.

Pacific Partnership, now in its 19th iteration, is the largest annual multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Pacific. Each year the mission team works collectively with host and partner nations to enhance regional interoperability and disaster response capabilities, increase security and stability in the region, and foster new and enduring friendships in the Indo-Pacific.

For more information about Pacific Partnership visit www.facebook.com/pacificpartnership, www.instagram.com/pacific_partnership/ or <https://www.dvidshub.net/feature/PacificPartnership>. Pacific Partnership public affairs can be reached via email at cherylcollins.pp24@gmail.com.

...Sigrah Appeal

Continued from front page

November 30. It asks the Appellate Division to review whether or not the trial court erred on six particular matters:

- The interpretation of FSM Const. Art. IX § 17, "The Congress shall be the sole judge of the elections and qualifications of its members, may discipline a member, and, by 2/3 vote, may suspend or expel a member?"
- The interpretation of FSM Const. Art. IX § 9, "The Congress may modify this provision or prescribe additional qualifications, knowledge of the English language may not be a qualification?"
- The interpretation of the vacancy declared by the Speaker unconstitutional because member-elect Sigrah was entitled to seating?
- Stopping the special election?
- He encroached on Executive and Legislative powers?
- In issuing an injunction?

Meanwhile, Congress has not met since the November 2 ruling of the Supreme Court. Yoslyn Sigrah has not been seated. The special election did not take place, and the matters will not be resolved until after there are rulings on the matters by the Appellate Division of the FSM Supreme Court.

rescheduling request.

The last of the appeals cases is appeal number P9-2023 filed by the FSM National Government on

University creates new course for Pacific 'helping professionals.'

University of Auckland

A new postgraduate course aims to upskill Pacific 'helping professionals' while improving the overall quality of life for Pacific communities.

Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland has created the University micro-credential (a stand-alone course) for those in the health and social services workforce.

Sir Collin Tukuitonga, Pacific Associate Dean of the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences Administration (FMHS), said it was part of a key initiative to upskill the sectors that support Pacific people in Aotearoa New Zealand.

He said the University recognized enticing Pacific people into tertiary study meant meeting the community 'where they were.' This has resulted in a hybrid model of both in-person and online learning allowing flexibility for family, work, and community commitments. The level eight course will recognize significant professional experience from those sectors as meeting the entry criteria.

"We're aiming to make a giant leap for the Pacific community, inviting them to come back into tertiary education, or for some it will be their first tertiary experience, and working toward a university qualification."

Improving Wellbeing Outcomes for Pacific Families navigates the Pacific Whānau Ora model in Aotearoa NZ health and the social service sector. Sir Collin said the

intention was to complement existing postgraduate offerings in Pacific Health or other related fields at the University for students wishing to continue their tertiary journey.

A new strategic partnership between the Pacific Medical Association Group and the University's FMHS has included the development of the Knowledge Hub: An entity to enable Pacific People to live longer, better lives in New Zealand and the region. A key aim of the Knowledge Hub is "to contribute to health workforce best practice for practitioners in health and social outcomes, policy development, and health communication."

The two-and-a-half-month course will be run over both University semesters with the first intake starting 26 February 2024. Course delivery will be primarily online with students expected to attend up to three days on campus.

[Applications](#) for the February course are open.

...Women's Conference

Continued from page 2

equality.”

The expected outcomes achieved from the conference include:

- Increased opportunity for women and adolescent girls to influence policy and programs and to engage with government.
- Outcomes Statement that reflects priority issues and recommendations from women for advancing gender equality that can inform future action and policy in FSM.
- Report about the development of the FSM National Gender Equality Policy.

Participants discussed how the conference outcomes will contribute to next year's 15th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and to the Micronesian Islands Forum (MIF) Gender Equality Committee's development of its regional gender equality framework. Another key topic raised by FSM's women and girls is disaster risk reduction and climate change, for which women are proving to be skilled

leaders globally who need to be included in key decision making alongside men – especially considering that women and children are 14 times more likely than men to die during disasters, according to global research by UN Women and UNICEF.



A national planning committee was convened to oversee the arrangements for the conference with representatives from the FSM National Government and state governments.

For more information about the conference:

Conference program details:

Ruby Awa, Event coordinator assisting the FSM Government: Rubyawa@gmail.com

Photos or interviews: Mr. Aron Alokoa will be providing photos – for copies of photos contact Ruby Awa, Rubyawa@gmail.com



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Japanese Embassy to the FSM introduces newly arrived Ambassador Kagomiya and wife at reception

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlle Press

December 7, 2023

Pohnpei—This evening, the Embassy of Japan to the FSM hosted a reception to welcome their newly arrived and accredited Ambassador, Kagomiya Nobuo, and his wife Kumiko. Ambassador Kagomiya presented his credentials to FSM President Wesley Simina on November 30. During this evening's reception, the Ambassador said that he had spent his career working for the Japanese economic planning agency and cabinet office, particularly in the field of macroeconomics.

"As the ambassador of Japan to the FSM, I am ready to contribute to strengthening friendly and cooperative relations between the two countries," the Ambassador said during his remarks at the reception. "Japan and the FSM, as you know, have a long-lasting traditional and historical friendship, so-called Kizuna. Based on this Kizuna, Japan and the FSM have cooperated in various ways, including quality infrastructure projects, such as ports, roads, airports, ships, and telecommunications, education, training projects, health, and disaster prevention. I am ready to work

together with you for further cooperation to strengthen our relations."

He said that people-to-people exchanges are essential. With this thought in mind, he said that he would be accelerating Japan's efforts to promote interaction. "Among others, JICA volunteers, health, education, and health, and other areas in this country, they started to come back this year, and I am very much willing to promote business-to-business people interaction that is very important for our economic relations and as well as student exchange," he said.

"Regarding the regional cooperation," he said, "I have realized the importance of the unity and solidarity countries in addressing common challenges, especially global warming. I reaffirmed the need for intensified global efforts to counter those common challenges, and I am ready to work together with your countries and other island countries."

The Ambassador closed his speech with a toast to the FSM and to the friendship between the two countries.

Vice President Aren Palik represented the FSM at the welcome reception and was

the next speaker. "FSM has benefited tremendously from its 35-year-old relationship with Japan since the establishment of our diplomatic relations in 1988. We are engaged in a range of social and economic development projects," he said. "FSM values our close relationship and collaboration with Japan on international and regional matters, and we thank Japan for playing a key role as a post-forum dialogue partner in our Pacific Island Forum engagement. I can name a number of engagements where Japan has been very helpful in the key initiatives that the Pacific Island Forum countries have pursued."

"In our contemporary world, with a multiplicity of interlocking and cascading challenges, it behooves every one of our nation to work in greater goodwill, in unity and solidarity with one

another for our shared planet, and has been so much interested in addressing the issue of climate change... climate change, as we all know, is our existential threat. It's a priority for this nation, and it has everything to do with the livelihood and the future of our nation. I want to thank you, Ambassador, for your commitment to continue to work with us in that area along with our other development partners," he said.

The reception was attended by members of the diplomatic corps with the exception of China whose Embassy was involved that evening with a performance by a visiting acrobatic team. Representatives of development partners were also in attendance, as were government leaders from both the State and the national government, and members of the Japanese community in Pohnpei.



President Biden transmits Compacts of Free Association-related agreements to U.S. Congress

The White House

December 5, 2023

Washington D.C.—Today President Biden transmitted to the U.S. Congress five agreements related to the Compacts of Free Association, signed by the Department of State, with the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI). The Biden Administration is working closely with the U.S. Congress to enact legislation to allow for the implementation of these five agreements, which will fulfill our commitments and strengthen our enduring relationships with our Compact of Free Association partner nations. These five agreements are:

The Agreement Concerning Procedures for the Implementation of United States Economic Assistance provided in the 2023 Amended Compact Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia;

The 2023 Federal Programs and Services Agreement Between the Government of the United States and the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia with Annexes;

The Agreement Concerning Procedures for the Implementation of United States Economic Assistance Provided in the 2023 Amended Compact Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands;

The Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands Regarding the Compact Trust Fund; and

The Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands to Amend the Compact of Free Association, as Amended.

The Biden Administration appreciates

the bipartisan work in Congress to advance legislation necessary to bring these agreements into force. The Administration calls on Congress to pass Compacts-related legislation as soon as possible.

The Compacts of Free Association with the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau demonstrate our long-term commitment to these three nations, fostering economic prosperity and stability that form the foundation of our strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific region. Under the Compacts, the United States provides for defense of and has the authority to deny third party military access to these countries.

These Compact-related agreements

include economic assistance to support essential government services such as health, education, and infrastructure, and U.S. contributions to Compact Trust Funds, which will support the countries' self-sufficiency in the future. Extending such assistance, including Federal programs and services, is a critical component of the Biden-Harris' Administration's Indo-Pacific, Pacific Partnership, and National Security Strategies.





Bank of the Federated States of Micronesia

Notice of Inactive Bank Accounts

Bank of the FSM currently maintains accounts for the following individuals & groups:

INAKA COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION	P.O. Box 504	Weno	CHK
Anna W Mijares	P.O. Box 369	Weno	CHK
Diocese of the Caroline Islands	P.O. Box 939	Weno	CHK
FSM Women's Council (FSMWC)	P.O. Box 699	Kolonia	PNI
Ray & Dor's	P.O. Box 617	Kolonia	PNI
Angila R George	936 Lehua Avenue #103	Honolulu	HI
Mrs. Angila R George	P.O. BOX 242	Tofol	KOS
Nestor E Acosta	P.O. Box 37	Tofol	KOS
Mr. Nestor E Acosta	Block 3 Lot 1 Phase 2	Rizal Providence	Philippine
Shiro N Skilling	P.O. Box 1019	Tofol	KOS
Neila J Hedmon	P.O. Box 501	Tofol	KOS
Augusta A Alik	P.O. Box 899	Tofol	KOS
Hattie R Phillip	P.O. Box 441063	Tofol	KOS
Lucinda J O'Daol	P.O. Box 378	Tofol	KOS
Andelina Neth	Fefen Sapeta Village	Weno	CHK
Ande Kauka	P.O. Box 559	Weno	CHK
Cathedral Parish	P.O. Box 337	Weno	CHK
Mokut William	P.O. Box 304	Weno	CHK
J-Siwin Robinson	P.O. Box 802	Weno	CHK
Manikis M Sonis	2339 Kalaunu Apt. 39-F	Honolulu	HI
Siana Dois	Oneop Eor Village	Weno	CHK
Kolber Loch	Losap Island	Weno	CHK
Istor Edwin	P.O. Box 112	Weno	CHK
Isinory Manuel	P.O. Box 632	Weno	CHK
Truk Stop LPG, Christina Stinnett DBA,	P.O. Box 546	Weno	CHK
Isabell Mario	P.O. Box 1491	Weno	CHK
Arkangal Renuk	P.O. Box 246	Weno	CHK
Familien Petrus James	P.O. Box 509	Weno	CHK
Philip Yatch	C/O Ulithi Post Office	Colonia	YAP
Andrew A Minginfel	1627 Kuahale St.	Pearl City	HI
Marva P Moolang	P.O. Box 249	Colonia,	YAP
Glapta Account	7850 Fm 1960 E Apt#601	Humble	TX
Margaret M Margou	P.O. Box 85	Colonia,	YAP
Namgier Techur	P.O. Box 298	Colonia	YAP
Gillippin Dugwen	P.O. Box 40	Colonia,	YAP
Simon S Maluwelmeng	107 Camacho St.	Guam, USA	GU
William B Talugmai	P.O. Box 971	Colonia	YAP
Teresa Ow	P.O. Box 982	Colonia	YAP
Nonohn Mwomwohdsohn Pohnpei NMP	P.O. Box 373	Kolonia	PNI
Dannes Brown	P.O. Box 2327	Kolonia	PNI
Edgar W Edwards	P.O. Box 447	Kolonia	PNI
Matarr Njiie	P.O. Box 1256	Kolonia	PNI
Liza Allen	P.O. Box 615	Kolonia	PNI

As required by FSM law, the Bank wishes to inform customers that accounts will be closed and the funds transferred to the FSM Secretary of Finance in January 2024. If your account appears on this list, you can avoid having your funds turned over to the Secretary of Finance by making a deposit or withdrawal to the account before December 31, 2023.

Kosraean:

In fwal nuke pusren Masap lun FSM, Bank FSM inge akkalemye nusin Customers nukewa ma e akkalemyeyuk lung inge la account lowos ma akkalemyeyuk inge e tufwa kauli a money ka an ac tufwah itukyan nusin Secretary lun Finance ke FSM National Government ke January 2024. In oralla account se lom an tia putatyan nuke oakwuk ku oiya se inge, kom enenu in tuku nu Bank FSM oralla sie deposit ku withdrawal nuke account san meet liki December 31, 2023.

Chuukese:

Sia awora ei esinesin ngeni ami kei aramas, mwicheichen aramas, ika sopai mi affat itemi assan pun faan pungun annukun FSM, masowan ami kei accounts epuene lo ngeni ach ewe FSM Finance lon January 2024, ika pwe ese wor mwokutukutun uttut (withdrawal) ika isonanong (deposit) lon me mwen December 31, 2023 Ach anean pwe kopwe chuuto rech ach sipue annisfengen won om kei account.

Yapese:

Tan e Motochial nu FSM, Bank e badag ni nge yog ko pi customer rok ney ni rayan I January 2024, maran close nag e pi account ney, man pii e salpiy riy ko FSM Secretary ko Finance. Fa'an ra be mug e account rom ko re list ney, ma rayog ni dabni pii e salpiy rom ko Secretary ko Finance faanra ngamub mu deposit fa mub mu withdraw nag e salpiy ko account rom u m'on ko December 31, 2023.

Pohnpeian:

E kosonndier sang ni ruwes en kosonned en FSM me FSM Bank udahn pahn pakairkiheng aramas oh pwihn en aramas me sansalehr powe, me epwelpen amwail tungol de sapwellimomwail nekinen nan Bank en FSM pahn katoktokidi nan sounpwong en January pahr 2024. Mwoni koaros me patpato nan nekinen pwukat pahn kesepwillang FSM Secretary en Finance. Ma mwaromwi iang sansal powe ah komwi kak pwaredo de ketido oh kapidohi de kasauwada omwi tungol de sapwellimomwi nekinen sang nan FSM Bank mwohn December 31, 2023 ma komw sohte kupwuriki omwi tungol de sapwellimomwi nekinen en kepideklang FSM Secretary en Finance.



Ratu Sukuna Road, Nasese, Suva, Fiji
T: (679) 331 2600 | info@forumsec.org
www.forumsec.org

Opportunity to Serve our People in the Region - Project Accountant

The Pacific Islands Forum

The Forum (PIF) is an Employer of Choice in the region, aiming to recruit and employ staff based on merit and organisational needs, and ensures that employment selection upholds its values and commitment to Forum membership, gender balance and building a diverse and inclusive organisation. PIFS is committed to achieving gender balance and being fully representative of our member countries. Our workforce is currently over 50% female, and we have representatives from twelve of the eighteen Forum member countries.

To achieve greater workforce representation from our member countries we strongly encourage applicants from the following countries to apply: Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Nauru, Niue, New Caledonia, and Palau

The Opportunity

Reporting to the Team Leader Finance and will also be responsible for managing finances for projects undertaken either through the Forum Secretariat's financial systems or through those of the funding provider. The key responsibilities are summarised as:

- Project financial services
- Oversight of Project financial management
- Compiling overall financial and activity reports for the projects
- Audits and Expenditure Verification Exercises
- Management of the Extra-Budget finance accounts unit and co-management of the Management accounts unit

Applicants should have a university degree in Accounting, Financial Management and full membership of recognised professional accounting association or institute with at least three years' work experience in accounting for donor funded projects.

Further, candidates with the following qualifications, attributes, and experience, are especially encouraged to apply:

- Experience and sound knowledge of donor financial and procurement policies, procedures, and standards with demonstrated ability to work to deadlines especially as it relates to financial analysis and reporting and providing budget monitoring reports.
- Demonstrated ability to build relationships;
- Demonstrated ability to apply sustainable development concepts, political theories, and other relevant approaches, as needed, to identify issues and contribute to the resolution of issues.

The Benefits

The position carries a competitive and attractive remuneration and benefits package including medical and life insurance, education, and housing allowance. The position is placed at Band 10 / Officer level of our salary scale, starting at **SDR 31,486 to 35,421** equivalent to **FJD 95,325 to 107,239**.

Note: Amounts are based on 1 November foreign exchange rate, but your final salary will be dependent on foreign exchange rates at the time of payment.

How to apply

Interested applicants can find out more information on our website: www.forumsec.org where an information package containing the full responsibilities, selection criteria and remuneration details is available.

Candidates must include in either their application or Curriculum Vitae the full contact details of three referees. For non-Fijian nationals, this salary may be tax-free. To be eligible for this position, the applicant must be a national of a Forum member country*. Applicant must be willing to travel periodically via economy class in accordance with the Travel Policy.

Deadline for applications is at 5pm (Fiji time), Friday 29 December 2023.

*Member States of the Pacific Islands Forum: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

Australian volunteer empowers families in FSM, enhancing health programs



Australian Embassy to the FSM

December 5, 2023

FSM—On International Volunteer Day, the Australian Embassy to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) expressed gratitude and admiration for Australian volunteers contributing significantly to Australia's global development goals.

Among these dedicated volunteers is Tanya Govey, a Speech Language Pathologist from Australia, who embarked on a year-long assignment in the FSM. Tanya's mission aimed to empower families of children with disabilities, particularly Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), by enhancing communication and behavior support.

Her efforts centered on collaborating with Kosrae and Pohnpei States focusing notably on maternal and child health programs. One of the remarkable outcomes of her partnership initiatives has been the creation of an Early Childhood Development Checklist. This tool serves as a resource for health professionals, enabling them to identify and screen for initial signs of ASD and other potential disabilities among children.

Australian volunteers like Tanya epitomize dedication and expertise, working closely with local partner organizations to assist in fulfilling their developmental aspirations.

To celebrate the remarkable stories of Australian volunteers, the embassy shared a short video showcasing the experiences and endeavors of Australian Volunteers across the Pacific, Asia, and Africa.

[Link to the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOEZELvN28s>]

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Blue Prosperity Micronesia and National Geographic Pristine Seas successfully conclude nationwide marine science expedition

The nationwide expedition was a landmark effort for marine science research, community outreach and education

Blue Prosperity Micronesia

Nov. 22, 2023

Yap - Blue Prosperity Micronesia and National Geographic Pristine Seas successfully completed a nationwide science expedition to study the FSM's ocean and elevate Micronesian ocean science and stewardship. The expedition set out to survey the nation's outer islands to fill in critical knowledge gaps on nearshore marine resources.

FSM Secretary of Resources & Development Elina Akinaga commended the expedition, stating, "I am proud of the extensive and collaborative efforts of the expedition team. This expedition stands as a landmark effort, promising a more sustainable and resilient ocean for our nation. The newly collected data will play a pivotal role in empowering policymakers and communities to make well-informed decisions regarding marine resource management."

The expedition set out to examine the impacts of climate change on FSM's marine resources and to fill critical knowledge gaps on nearshore resources in remote outer atolls and islands. These initiatives build upon the foundation laid

by the Micronesia coral reef monitoring network, which has been dedicated to studying reef management for over a decade.

One of the expedition's notable discoveries involved the finding of heat-resistant corals, offering valuable insights for resource managers and communities. Dr. Peter Houk, the expedition's Chief Scientist, expressed optimism about these findings, stating, "We found many reasons for optimism regarding how diverse reef systems can handle heat stress. However, we also observed low abundances of sea cucumbers, sharks, and larger fishes in some unexpected instances. We hope that the data collected during this expedition will facilitate information sharing across the outer atolls and help these communities better understand the status of their marine resources so they can manage into the future."

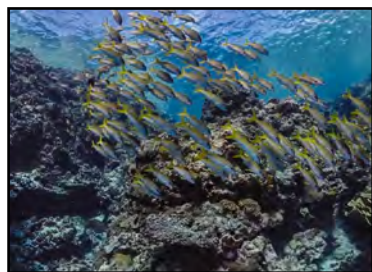
Twelve scientists from the FSM joined the international expedition team to complete 531 dives at 62 research sites across 11 outer atolls. The expedition planning team engaged in extensive consultations with state governments, mayors, and traditional leaders to secure permissions for research sites, ensuring alignment with local needs and respect for community practices.

The expedition featured extensive community outreach and public education initiatives. Public events were held in each state for communities to engage with the local and international scientists. More than 500 government leaders, technical partners, students and community members toured the M/V Argo, gaining insights into the state-of-the-art technologies used during the expedition.

A public event celebrating a successful conclusion was held at Yap Living History Museum. Hon. Governor Charles Chieng addressed the gathering, stating, "Yapese connection to the ocean is much deeper than the deepest trench in this world's oceans—namely the Yap/Mariana Trench. Our ocean is much like the heartbeat of our livelihood. For generations, our ocean has provided us with sustenance, economic opportunities, and a profound sense of belonging. Therefore, BPM in conjunction with the National Geographic Pristine Seas expedition in our area is much welcomed in that highlighting current conditions of our livelihood is relevant in more ways than one, and especially for attractions and appropriate management for our present and future generation."

Students in each state had an opportunity to learn from the researchers through Explorer Classroom sessions, both at schools and onboard the M/V Argo, and explore potential careers in marine science.

Dr. Nicole Yamase, BPM Science Advisor, led youth outreach efforts for the expedition. "This expedition represents not only a scientific milestone but also a significant achievement for communities and students alike. Witnessing the enthusiasm and engagement of the next generation of ocean stewards



from each state was truly inspiring, underscoring the expedition's broader impact on fostering a connection with marine science."

Paul Rose, National Geographic Pristine Seas Expedition Leader stated, "This was the longest and most complex of our Pacific expeditions this year, and only made possible by having such a high performing team which combined Pristine Seas with the wonderful Micronesian marine scientists. It was truly world-class work!

We are all honored to have been invited by the FSM to conduct our science and media activities, and thank the local community for your hospitality and generosity."

The results of the expedition will provide an understanding of the health of FSM's ocean and will inform future ocean management through the development of Marine Spatial Plans. The data collected, as well as a science report summarizing key expedition findings, will be shared with the state and national governments. The data collected will also contribute to the Micronesia Challenge, reinforcing the region's dedication to preserving the ecosystems on which people and cultures depend upon.

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The world is “beginning to boil,” FSM cautions at COP28 Global Methane Pledge Ministerial

SPREP

December 5, 2023

Dubai, UAE--The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) has cautioned Heads of States and leaders at COP28 in Dubai that the world is “beginning to boil” as the Pacific nation calls for more decisive action to curb greenhouse gas emissions.

FSM’s Secretary of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management, Andrew R. Yatilman, has also urged that voluntary pledges and “good intentions” to the reduction of emissions must be turned into more robust, action-oriented approaches with clear goals that deliver concrete results.

He was speaking during the Global Methane Pledge Ministerial on Monday, on the margins of the latest round of climate change negotiations being attended by more than 70,000 delegates from around the world.

“You may wonder why a small island nation like Micronesia is so passionate about methane. The reason is that climate change is pushing us to the brink of extinction,” Mr. Yatilman said. “Our people, our culture, and the islands we have inhabited for over 4,000 years are endangered by rapidly rising temperatures. The world is not merely warming... it is beginning to boil.

“And for islands in the Pacific and around the world, that means deadly heat that threatens our communities, coastal erosion that tears away at our homes and infrastructure, and severe storms that batter our towns. We are no longer safe enough on the lands and on the waters that we love.”

At the Global Methane Pledge Ministerial, Mr Yatilman shared the stage with the United States Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, Mr John Kerry, European Commission Executive Vice President, Mr Maroš Šefčovič, European Commission Commissioner for Energy, Ms Kadri Simson, UN Environment Programme Executive Director, Ms Inger Andersen and Canada’s Environment and Climate Change Minister, Mr Steven Guilbeault.

Methane is a powerful but short-lived climate pollutant that accounts for a third of net warming since the Industrial Revolution. Mr John Kerry reiterated that rapidly reducing methane emissions from energy, agriculture, and waste can achieve near-term gains for decisive action and



is regarded as the single most effective strategy to keep the goal of limiting warming to 1.5°C within reach while yielding co-benefits, including improving public health and agricultural productivity.

“We think it’s the easiest, quickest and cheapest way to start making gains against global warming,” Mr Kerry said.

The subject of methane emissions from the energy sector is a big issue at COP28. Many countries and governments and private companies are gradually starting to enforce measures to curtail methane leaks and emissions and the Federated States of Micronesia is encouraged by this forward momentum.

“Of all the existing solutions to the climate crisis, action to address methane is the fastest way to turn down the heat. It can buy the world time to decarbonize – and buy vulnerable countries, like ours, time to put in place the life-saving adaptation measures that will protect us,” Mr Yatilman said.

“The international community has spent more than 30 years talking about climate change. But our efforts so far have not succeeded in slowing warming, and as a result this year we hit all-time, record-breaking temperatures worldwide.

“To truly and effectively address the climate emergency it is time our voluntary pledges and “good intentions” are turned into more robust, action-oriented approaches with clear goals that deliver concrete results.”

FSM believes the Global Methane Pledge, launched at COP26 by the European Union and the United States, is one of the keys to controlling the climate.

“Let us consider, as we move into this new phase of methane action, how we can work together on a path to certain success,” Mr Yatilman said. “The safety of my people and that of small island states around the world depend on it. Innumerable species depend on it. The lives of future generations will depend on it.”

Notice of Inactive Bank Accounts

Please take notice that as of June 30, 2023, the following SAVINGS and CHECKING ACCOUNTS on deposit with BANK OF GUAM® are inactive and the accountholders listed below must immediately contact their respective BANK OF GUAM® Branch, otherwise, the funds contained in these accounts will be transferred to the Secretary of Finance during the month of January 2024, pursuant to 29 FSMC §106 (6) and 29 FSMC §602 and under the procedures set forth in 17 FSMC §102. Please take note that after January 2024, all inquiries pertaining to the accounts below must be directed to the Secretary of Finance.

SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

Chuuk Branch (CC)

MAKAPEUS N MAZAWA

275 Farenholt Ave PMB 160

Tamuning GU 96913

Pohnpei Branch (CC)

LORIHNA CHARLEY

PO Box 941

Pohnpei FM 96941

LUCIA N DONRE

PO Box K2582

Pohnpei FM 96941

SINOLET LEKKA

PO Box 2241

Pohnpei FM 96941

IRENE LENGSI

PO Box 2486

Pohnpei FM 96941-2486

VALERIO PANUELO

PO Box 662

Pohnpei FM 96941

JACKLEEN J SANTIAGO

PO Box 3277

Pohnpei FM 96941

Kosrae Branch (CC)

CAROLYN R SHREW

275 Farenholt Ave Ste G PMB 32

Tamuning GU 96913

CHECKING ACCOUNTS

Pohnpei Branch

KRYSTILYN M ATKINSON

PO Box K3057

Pohnpei FM 96941

CHRISTOPHER DOUGLAS BARENZ

PO Box 614

Pohnpei FM 96941-0614

EDSIN I JOHN

PO Box 778

Pohnpei FM 96941-0778

YUCHEL PAINGAI

PO Box 2363

Pohnpei FM 96941-2363

ENGELBIRT PERMAN

DBA P4 LUBE EXPRESS

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Pohnpei FM 96941

Pohnpei Branch (CC)

MINH C NGUYEN

PO Box K3005

Pohnpei FM 96941

Kosrae Branch

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BURTHALISA T LANGU

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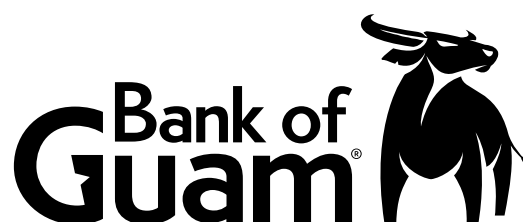
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The Pacific secures 5 million euros to address Climate-Induced loss and damage



Secretariat of the Pacific Community

December 5, 2023

Dubai, UAE – The Pacific Community (SPC) and the Kingdom of Denmark have signed an agreement that will provide €5 million to support Pacific countries to respond to the adverse impacts of climate change.

This funding will support climate-induced loss and damage caused by and support the response to both economic and non-economic impacts caused by climate change in the region.

Mr Tomas Anker Christensen, Climate Ambassador of the Kingdom of Denmark, and Dr Paula Vivili, SPC's Deputy Director-General Science and Capability, signed the agreement at an event on Loss and Damage at the Moana Pavilion on the first day of the 28th UNFCCC Council of Parties (COP) held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

The signing bolsters the partnership between the Pacific and the Kingdom of Denmark after the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Suva, Fiji, in April 2023 by the Danish Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy to support work on climate-induced loss and damage in the region. The funding of €5 million underscores the collaborative spirit between the Pacific region and Denmark, aimed at enhancing the region's resilience and fortifying adaptive measures against climate change's impact.

Loss and damage are particularly crucial for the Pacific as they address the severe, irreversible consequences of climate change that extend beyond



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Programme Adviser - Resilient Development Finance

The Pacific Islands Forum

The Forum (PIF) is an Employer of Choice in the region, aiming to recruit and employ staff based on merit and organisational needs. PIF ensures that employment selection upholds its values and commitment to Forum membership representation, gender balance, and building a diverse and inclusive organisation. Our workforce is currently over 50% female, and we have representatives from twelve of the eighteen Forum member countries.

To achieve greater workforce representation from our member countries we strongly encourage applicants from the following countries to apply: Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Nauru, Niue, New Caledonia, and Palau

The Opportunity

The Forum invites suitably experienced and qualified individuals to apply for the position of Programme Adviser - Resilient Development Finance. The role will be responsible for the provision of policy and technical advice, research, and analysis, to support PIFS' delivery of relevant activities. Moreover, the role will also provide other related advice and support in connection with PIFS leadership role in contributing to the sustainable development priorities of Pacific Island countries and territories. The key responsibilities are summarised as:

- Disaster Risk Finance (DRF) Research, Policy/Technical Advice & Advocacy;
- Resilient Development Finance Capacity Building;
- Coordinate the various Resilient Development Financing mechanisms;
- Support and Coordinate the Implementation of the Regional Collective Actions for Climate and Disasters; thematic area under the 2050 Strategy Implementation Plan;
- Support for PRP Disaster Risk Finance (DRF) Working Group;
- Support the Pacific Resilience Facility resource mobilisation;
- Support and coordinate the linkage between sustainable trade and environment;
- Knowledge Products, Communication and Advocacy; and Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting.

Applicants should have an advanced degree (Master's level) in Economics, finance, climate change, environmental studies, development, public policy, or related fields such as Disaster Risk Management, Climate Change or Development Financing. At least seven years' experience of developments in Disaster Risk Finance and Insurance and resilient development financing in Small Island Developing States, preferably in the Pacific region, is required.

The Benefits

The position carries a competitive and attractive remuneration and benefits package including medical and life insurance, education, and housing allowance. The position is placed at Band 12 / Adviser level of our salary scale, starting at **SDR 43,790 to 49,263** equivalent to **FJD132,576 to 149,146**.

Note: Amounts are based on 1 November foreign exchange rate, but your final salary will be dependent on foreign exchange rates at the time of payment.

How to apply

Interested applicants can access more information on our website: www.forumsec.org where an information package containing the full responsibilities, selection criteria and remuneration details is available.

Candidates must include in either their application or Curriculum Vitae the full contact details of three referees. For non-Fijian nationals, this salary may be tax-free. To be eligible for this position, the applicant must be a national of a Forum member country*. Applicant must be willing to travel periodically via economy class in accordance with the Travel Policy.

The deadline for applications is 5pm, Friday 23 February 2024 (Fiji time).

**Member States of the Pacific Islands Forum: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.*

We ask the world to STOP.” – FSM takes center stage at the UN Climate Conference

Climate Change Resilience SPREP

December 9, 2023

Dubai, UAE—Hard-hitting truths were put before over 100 world leaders and ministers today at the UN Climate Conference in Dubai. The Federated States of Micronesia held global attention as H.E Andrew Yatilman, the Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management of FSM took the podium, calling all parties to begin the complete phase-out of fossil fuels.

The 28th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change is now underway bringing together over 95,000 delegates to Dubai for the two-week event, over 195 Parties, and over 100 world leaders and ministers to address the climate crisis together.

“The threat of climate change is now descending upon us like a mighty wave. Already, throughout our islands, people are suffering from the devastating impacts that, like bombs or sanctions, could forever change our lives, our way of life, and our hope for a vibrant future,” presented Minister Yatilman.

“We ask countries, and especially the larger emitters to take more serious action to address climate change. To make some reasonable sacrifices so that island nations do not have to make the ultimate sacrifice.”

“Islanders around the world are no longer “potential” victors of climate change. We are present victims. We face an uncertain and possibly uninhabitable future now. Without radical measures to reduce warming in the next decade our lands and livelihoods could perish, and our people will follow.”

Minister Yatilman stressed the world has run out of time to rely only on carbon dioxide emissions reductions calling for massive cuts in short-live super-pollutants that slow waring such as methane. The Federated States of Micronesia also called for increased access to adequate and sustained financing for climate action across all sectors, in line with the objectives



and principles of the UNFCCC.

The island nation believes the first global stock take must strengthen and guarantee full implementation of the Paris Agreement. It also seeks an agreement on a robust and effective Framework for the Global Goal on Adaptation backed by streamlined access to adaptation finance.

“There are many injustices in the climate crisis, beginning with the fact that those who contaminate the least are those who will suffer the most. Micronesia and other islands have carried much more than our weight strengthening our Nationally Determined Contributions and accruing greater debt to pay for adaptation measures or climate emergencies,” stated Minister Yatilman.

“We stand on the frontline of this existential crisis watching as the rising tides wipe away our shorelines and push us into a desolate and uncertain future.”

The Federated States of Micronesia left a lasting impression upon the world – calling upon everyone to take greater responsibility to protect everyone and thanking the Government of the United Arab Emirates for hosting this meeting at a critical time that could change the course of the climate crisis for the better.

“This is why we ask the world to STOP. STOP new fossil fuel extraction, STOP excessive consumption, STOP methane emissions, STOP throwing fuel on the fire.”

“START taking greater responsibility for the past and protecting the people and resources of the future. Start with courage and commitment. START and don't stop until the world is safe – not just for you, but for us all.”

*Glory to God
in the highest*

Luke 2:14

CONGRESS
OF THE
FEDERATED STATES
OF
MICRONESIA



May you and your family be blessed with
the spirit of Love and Peace
this Christmas Season.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Esmond B. Moses
Speaker

Twenty Third Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia

At COP28, Palau becomes 9th nation state to formally call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty

SPREP

December 1, 2023

Dubai, UAE—With the world's attention directed to Dubai today as Heads of State formally speak at the Opening Ceremony of the COP28 High-Level Segment, the President of Palau, Surangel Whipps Jr., used his plenary speech to publicly join the growing bloc of now 9 nation states seeking a negotiating mandate for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.

His Excellency Surangel Whipps Jr., President of Palau, said in his high-level statement at COP28: "Our ocean feeds us, protects us, and defines us. We must protect it in return. We are witnessing the consequences of ignoring the planet's limits—floods, droughts, heat, famine, death. The solution to the climate crisis requires everyone's participation. Today, Palau joins Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and other nations in calling for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. We are sovereign countries, however we share one planet. We are stronger together, and we must unite, act and deliver to keep 1.5°C alive!"

As a large ocean state consisting of an archipelago of 586 islands located in the Western Pacific Ocean, Palau is deeply vulnerable to the climate crisis, which

poses several threats to the country. With approximately 1,500km of coastline, Palau's main vulnerabilities involve its coastal and marine areas, given that the majority of its population, infrastructure and cultural sites are in coastal areas. These include extreme high tides, coastal erosion, sea-level rise, increase in drought and storm activity, increased sea-surface temperature and coral bleaching. Like other Pacific Island states, this vulnerability is exacerbated by its geographical remoteness and isolation.

With this bold move, the Pacific Island state of Palau joins 8 other countries - Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Tonga, Fiji, Niue, the Solomon Islands, Antigua and Barbuda, and Timor-Leste - who are spearheading a push to secure a mandate to negotiate a new international mechanism to manage a phase out of fossil fuels, and finance a just and equitable global transition away from oil, gas and coal.

Hon. Ralph Regenvanu, Vanuatu's Minister for Climate Change Adaptation, Energy, Environment, Meteorology, Geohazards and Disaster Management, welcomed the announcement, saying: "Vanuatu warmly welcomes the call from our fellow Pacific neighbour Palau. As stewards of our Pacific Ocean home, we stand united in our commitment to a Fossil Fuel Non-

Proliferation Treaty, showing the power of Island nations to develop a comprehensive multilateral framework that addresses climate change at its source. Vanuatu spearheaded the effort to secure an advisory opinion on climate change from the ICJ - along with our allies we've proven that we can mobilise our collective ambition at the multilateral level. And a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty is the natural next step. Together, we are forging a path towards a just and equitable energy transition, ensuring the resilience of our islands and the protection of our people."

Hon. Seve Paeniu, Minister of Finance and Economic Development of Tuvalu, said: "Last year we became the second country to call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, right here in the UN Climate Talks, held in Egypt. Tuvalu now greets Palau as it joins hands with us in advocating for this bold new proposal. Our resilient nations share a common destiny, and this treaty represents a crucial step towards securing our future. With Palau and Colombia on board, our collective efforts gain stronger momentum, turning the tide against the existential threat of fossil fuels. Together, we will build a sustainable future, safeguarding our shared heritage and ensuring the survival of our unique island cultures."

Alex Rafalowicz, Executive Director of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative, said: "Palau rightfully recognises that the test for the international community on climate is stopping the expansion of fossil fuels. Their leadership in calling for a fossil fuel treaty is a shining light of hope in the dirty smoke of COP28. More countries must join them in designing a real plan to cut the cord on our reliance on fossil fuels."

Along with the group of nine nations, the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty proposal is also supported by the World Health Organization, the European Parliament, 101 Nobel Laureates, 600+ parliamentarians in 83 countries, 2,100 civil society organisations, 3,000 scientists and academics and over 90 cities and subnational governments, including most recently the State of California, the fifth largest economy in the world, and 9 Peruvian Indigenous Nations.

In this crescendo of support for international cooperation, the movement for a Fossil Fuel Treaty stands stronger than ever, heading to more major endorsements by the end of COP28, appearing as a testament to the growing momentum behind the push for a fast and fair phase out of coal, oil and gas.

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FSM's Jeem S. Lippwe urges collective action for ocean conservation at UN Assembly

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

December 5, 2023

New York, New York—FSM's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, H.E. Jeem S. Lippwe addressed the United Nations General Assembly, aligning his statement with various groups while highlighting the significance of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Lippwe emphasized the need for adopting resolutions on "Oceans and the Law of the Sea" and "Sustainable Fisheries," acknowledging the vital role of those legal frameworks.

Lippwe spoke of Micronesia's regional contributions, referencing the 2021 Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones and a recent Declaration on Continuity of Statehood in the face of Climate Change-Related Sea-Level Rise. He urged international support for these initiatives, emphasizing the protection of sovereignty and the commitment to safeguarding people affected by climate change-related challenges.

Lippwe pointed out Micronesia's proactive engagement including their submission of maritime zone coordinates and active participation in the Commission on the Limits of the

Continental Shelf. Moreover, he called for global support in protecting the rights and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in ocean conservation efforts.

He spoke of significant global progress, including Micronesia's role as the first signatory of the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity and the commitment to the 30 by 30 target, aiming to protect 30 percent of coastal and marine areas by 2030. He also stressed their involvement in negotiations for an international binding instrument on plastic pollution.

Regarding fisheries, Lippwe reiterated Micronesia's dedication to sustainable management in the face of climate change-related threats such as ocean acidification. He expressed anticipation for future consultations on sustainable fisheries management.

Despite the previous achievements, Lippwe emphasized the ongoing necessity for global collaboration to ensure the preservation and sustainable utilization of the ocean and its resources for both current and future generations.

He concluded by expressing gratitude and affirming Micronesia's commitment to contributing to the global efforts aimed at ocean conservation and sustainable usage.



Governor Oliver delivers welcoming remarks at 48th ATOSSCOM Conference

Pohnpei State Public Information

November 28, 2023

Pohnpei—Governor Oliver delivered the welcoming remarks at the 48th Association of Terminal Operators, Stevedores and Shipping Companies of Micronesia (ATOSSCOM) conference held at the PMA Auditorium. The conference, a gathering of key stakeholders in the maritime industry, saw the participation of esteemed individuals, including Former RMI President Kessai Note, now the RMI Minister of Transportation, Communication and Information Technology, Secretary of FSM TC&I Carlson Apis, Minister Charles Obichang from Palau, Lee Cabrera, President of ATOSSCOM, Sen.-elect Billy Edward, Soumas of Kousapw Mesenieng Chris Christian, Peliandal Glenn Harris in their official capacity representing the private and public sectors and other distinguished guests.

Governor Oliver extended a warm welcome to all participants, recognizing the significance of their



roles in ensuring the smooth flow of goods and supplies to our islands. He expressed gratitude for their dedication and emphasized the crucial role played by the maritime industry in meeting the essential needs of our communities.

The 48th ATOSSCOM conference promises to be a platform for constructive discussions and collaborations that will further strengthen the maritime industry in Micronesia. Governor Oliver looks forward to the fruitful exchange of ideas and initiatives that will contribute to the sustainable development of our region.

...Climate funds

Continued from page 16

adaptation and mitigation, impacting communities, livelihoods, cultural heritage, and overall resilience in the face of escalating climate-related challenges. This signing showcases Denmark's dedication and shared responsibility with SPC to build a sustainable future for vulnerable Pacific communities.

"Denmark is a small country in Northern Europe, far away from the Pacific. For years, I have heard representatives from the Pacific at the climate conferences give testimony to the dire situation in the region. Earlier this year, I visited the region and saw with my own eyes how climate change is already affecting the Pacific Island Countries. What I saw left a huge impression. With this cooperation, Denmark will assist Pacific Island Countries in assessing climate-induced loss and damage and enable local

communities planning for the future. I want to demonstrate to the region that Denmark has heard your call for support and stands ready to help" says HE Mr Dan Jørgensen, Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy.

"This collaboration exemplifies the strength that comes from working together. The funding from Denmark will play a crucial role in fortifying our region against the adverse impacts of climate change, showcasing the effectiveness of collective action," stated Dr Paula Vivili during the signing ceremony.

This signing comes as global negotiations are ongoing at COP28, where the establishment of a Loss and Damage Fund is a key priority for Pacific nations and where both Pacific and Danish Leaders are continuing to call for greater ambition to limit global emissions to 1.5 degrees of warming, embodying the collaborative approaches needed to address the immensity of the existential crisis of the climate emergency.

Governor Reed B. Oliver Commemorates 20th anniversary of Pohnpei LMMA Cross-Site Visit

Pohnpei State Public Information

December 7, 2023

Pohnrakiet, Pohnpei--Governor, Reed B. Oliver, marked a significant milestone in environmental conservation by attending the 20th-anniversary celebration of the Pohnpei Locally Managed Marine Area (LMMA) Cross-Site visit at the Hideaway Bar and Grill. The event showcased two decades of successful collaboration and cooperation among Pohnpei State, local conservation agencies such as the Conservation Society of Pohnpei, and various organizations dedicated to the protection and sustainable management of marine protected areas (MPA).

The occasion featured informative presentations on crucial programs, including coral reef monitoring, fishing aggregate devices (FAD) echo sounder buoys, and Aquaculture. Mr. Eugene Joseph, Executive Director of the Conservation Society of Pohnpei, shared insights into their comprehensive management plans, aligning seamlessly

with municipal and state strategic development plans for conservation, resource management, and sustainable development.

Governor Oliver expressed his gratitude in his remarks, acknowledging the pivotal role played by NGOs, government agencies, and the Soumas and Kousapws responsible for the vigilant protection of Pohnpei's marine resources and environment. He emphasized the event's theme, "Tukehn wahr tipwatipw wahr seisei," likening it to a resilient canoe that continues to forge ahead despite leaks or broken parts. The Governor elaborated on the elements of "idemei" and "kasai," symbolizing the determination and drive that propel the community toward its destination, undeterred by challenges.

The anniversary celebration served not only as a reflection on past achievements but also as a call to action for sustained efforts in preserving Pohnpei's rich marine ecosystem for the



benefit of current and future generations. Governor Oliver commended the collective dedication and emphasized the importance of resilience, unity, and determination in navigating the challenges ahead. Governor Oliver thanked the present and former Directors of Pohnpei Conservation Society, Eugene Joseph, Patterson Shed and William Kostka, for their important contributions to conservation and natural resource management.



A traditional Pohnpeian canoe model was presented to Governor Oliver by the Chairman of the organization, Kehlak Takaieu.

Also attending the event was the Meninkeder Lapalap of Madolenihmw, Hon. Kiomy Albert, Acting Chief Magistrate of Sokehs, Hon. Mark J. Johnny, Kuloap Madolenihmw, IsoNalaimw Sokehs, Sihpw en Lewetik, Master of Ceremony, Mr. Emilio Eperiam, Deacon Edmund and members of the various communities involved in the management of the Marine Protected Areas (MPA).

Many thanks to OneReef, The Nature Conservancy, Micronesia Conservation Trust, LMMA and FSM Department of Resources of Development for supporting this important event.

Marine Protected Areas along with

communities (kousapws) assisting in management:

Nanwap MPA:
Mesihsou, Lukop, Metipw, Dolapwail, Aparahk

Palipohn Dehpehk/Takaieu MPA:
Takaieu, Dehpehk Powe, Dehpehk Pah

Sapwitik MPA:
Lenger

Palikir MPA:
Lewetik, Oumoar, Sapwohn, Eir, Pohras, Tomwara, Seinwar

Nahtik MPA:
Enipein Pah, Enipein Powe, Soamwoai, Mwoakot

Kehpara MPA:
Seinwar

Pakin MPA:
Pakin

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Any inquiry regarding this Cautionary Notice may be directed to: Law Office of Michael J. Sipos, A Professional Corporation, P.O. Box 2069, Kolonia, Pohnpei FM 96941, telephone (691) 320-6450, E-mail: MSipos@mail.fm

U.S. Navy divers complete wreck removal operation in Micronesia during Pacific Partnership 2024

Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific

October 30, 2023

Weno, Chuuk--Mobile Diving and Salvage Company 1-8, U.S. 7th Fleet's deployed salvage force, with assistance from the Navy's Supervisor of Salvage (SUPSALV), completed the removal and disposal of a cargo vessel in Weno Harbor, Chuuk as part of Pacific Partnership 2024 Oct. 30th 2023.

MV Micro Dawn was one of six Japanese-built cargo vessels procured by the government of FSM under a Japanese grant aid scheme between 1976 and 1978. The vessels were used by the government for the Federated States of Micronesia to ferry personnel and cargo between the many outer islands of the country. Micro Dawn was built in 1978 in Kobe, Japan and had a gross tonnage of 869, and length overall of 184 feet.

During a typhoon in 2006, Micro Dawn capsized and sank on the north-facing pier of Weno Harbor in 20-30 feet of water. For 17-years, Micro Dawn fouled 200 feet of berthing space and prevented further expansion of the sole commercial port facility in Chuuk State.

In 2006, the government of the Federated States of Micronesia made a formal diplomatic request to the United States for assistance removing Micro Dawn from Weno Harbor. Due to the significant economic, safety, and environmental benefits to the country as well as the exceptional training value posed by the wreck removal, the US Navy was formally tasked to render assistance.

US Navy salvage forces first commenced work on Micro Dawn in 2019. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, efforts were halted in 2020 after little progress.

Between 2020 and 2023, operational planners developed a new concept for the salvage operation which maximized training value by utilizing commercial salvage experts and equipment from SMIT Salvage and Singapore Salvage Engineering to provide training to the US Navy team.

During the operation the Navy divers employed salvage technologies

common in commercial industry but new to the Navy, such as diamond wire saws, salvage chisels, and mechanical and hydraulic grabs.

Lt. Cmdr. Max Cutchen, Salvage Officer for 7th Fleet, said the operation offered an invaluable training experience for his team.

"Opportunities for U.S. Navy salvors to gain experience in large scale salvage operations are, thankfully, quite rare in peacetime," said Cutchen. "The same is not true for commercial salvage outfits. Micro Dawn provided an unparalleled opportunity for CTG 73.6 to work with industry to develop the critical skills they need in crisis and conflict."

USNS Salvor (T-ARS 52) departed on a 3300 nautical mile transit from Singapore to Chuuk towing a commercial crane-barge heavily laden with salvage equipment Aug. 30th, 2023.

Salvor arrived Sept. 28th, 2023, and the combined Navy and contractor salvage team went to work cutting, rigging, and relocating pieces of Micro Dawn to a disposal site designated by the government of Chuuk.

After thirty days, Micro Dawn had been completely dismantled and all remnants laid in their final resting place, deep in Truk Lagoon.

Over the course of the operation CTG 73.6 gained valuable experience in many skills including salvage rigging, crane barge operations, underwater cutting, mooring evolutions, and general seamanship.

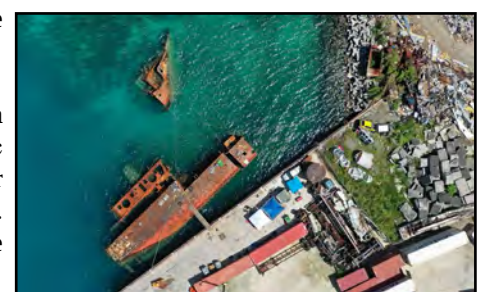
"For better or worse, military salvage is now and always has been highly dependent on the commercial salvage industry" said Ensign Chris Greene, Mobile Diving and Salvage Company Commander. "The diverse nature of the Micro Dawn team reinforced the importance of Navy salvage forces maintaining their ability to work in tandem with their civilian and commercial counterparts."

In the years ahead, storms of ever-increasing strength will continue to batter Pacific island nations and abandoned derelict vessels (ADV) will pose an enduring economic, environmental, and navigational hazard; the removal of stranded ADVs is often not commercially viable based on geography.

As was the case with Micro Dawn, some ADVs may offer opportunities to demonstrate the United States' commitment to strategic partners while simultaneously providing an unmatched training opportunity for US Navy salvage forces.

"It was an absolute honor to work with this extraordinary team of salvors," said Master Chief Navy Diver Nelson Trevallion, Mobile Diving and Salvage Company's Master Diver. "The concerted effort of everyone involved led to a resounding success well ahead of the most optimistic projections. This was an immense achievement for the United States Navy's diving and salvage community."

CTG 73.6 is currently deployed to Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia with USNS Salvor (T-ARS 52) and a commercial salvage team as part of Pacific Partnership 2024. Renowned as the United States Navy Seventh Fleet's premier maritime emergency response and salvage force, CTG 73.6 exemplifies the U.S. Navy's commitment to aiding communities in need and providing swift assistance during times of crisis.



FSM President joins US Ambassador, USAF for OCD 23 Push Ceremony



By Tech. Sgt. Taylor Altier
374th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

December 6, 2023

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE, Guam—In a heartwarming ceremony held at Andersen Air Force Base, dignitaries, military officials, and volunteers gathered for the annual Operation Christmas Drop Push Ceremony, Dec. 4. The event marked the official commencement of the humanitarian mission that delivers essential supplies and holiday cheer to remote Micronesian islands.

His Excellency Wesley Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, alongside Jennifer Johnson, U.S. Ambassador to the FSM, addressed the crowd, emphasizing the profound impact of collective goodwill and joint efforts.

“Operation Christmas Drop is not just about delivering tangible goods,” said President Simina. “It is a testament to the enduring partnership between our nations and our shared values of goodwill and cooperation.”

As the ceremony unfolded, President Simina expressed gratitude for the dedication of the service men and women who diligently organize and execute the operation each year.

“What began as a noble initiative between the U.S. and the Federated States of Micronesia has blossomed into an inspiring display of international cooperation, transcending borders and demonstrating the enduring spirit of unity. This annual tradition has evolved beyond its origins, welcoming the participation of other nations.”

Ambassador Johnson echoed President Simina’s sentiments, emphasizing the unique nature of OCD in capturing the

true spirit of Christmas.

“From our friends in the Federated States of Micronesia and Palau to our friends in the U.S. military, and our partners and allies in Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, the Philippines, and Canada for sharpening their craft to conduct low-cost, low-altitude airdrops and to the volunteers and non-government organizations that collected and sorted donations for these supplies and built the drop boxes, thank you from the bottom of my heart,” she said.

Ambassador Johnson also expressed her excitement about joining the 36th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron alongside President Simina to witness firsthand the incredible work of U.S. service members.

As the ceremony concluded, both leaders conveyed their hopes for the tradition to continue serving as a beacon of goodwill and a reminder of the power of love, cooperation, and the simple delight of sharing joy during the holiday season. Operation Christmas Drop stands as a testament to the enduring spirit of unity and the commitment to making a difference in the lives of those who are often the hardest to reach.

“May this tradition continue to serve as a beacon of goodwill, reminding us of the power of love, cooperation, and the simple delight of sharing and spreading joy to those who are often left behind,” said President Simina. “May the blessings of this holiday season rain upon our islands.”



President Simina meets with MRA – partnership remains strong

FSM Information Services

advisory services.

November 29, 2023

Palikir—On November 29th, 2023, the Micronesia Registration Advisors (MRA) Inc.’s Chief Compliance Officer (CCO) Mr. James F. Moonier paid a courtesy call on H.E. President Wesley W. Simina in Palikir.

MRA Inc. is a registered corporation based in the FSM that was established in 2005. This public-private partnership primarily assists Japanese companies in registering foreign entities, notably captive insurance companies, with approximately a quarter of all Japanese captive insurance companies currently registered within the FSM. Since its establishment the FSM has emerged as a prominent hub through MRA’s close collaboration with the FSM government while also providing other

The meeting provided an opportunity for CCO Moonier to update President Simina on MRA’s performance in 2023, including its captive insurance program, as well as discuss proposed next steps for its reorganization based on mutual interests. President Simina thanked CCO Moonier for his update and the MRA for its important work that it contributes to the FSM as a long-term partner.

Present with President Simina in the meeting were Secretary of Finance T.H. Rose Nakanaga and Acting AG Jeffrey Tilfas. The Simina-Palik administration looks forward to continuing its important partnership with MRA to continue to benefit the people and economy of the FSM.

FSM delegation takes part in COP28 in Dubai

FSM Information Services

December 2, 2023

Dubai, UAE--The 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) opened, has officially opened in the United Arab Emirates. A delegation from the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), including government representatives from the Department of Environment, Climate Change, and Emergency Management, the Department of Resources and Development, and FSM Congress are representing the nation.

The UNFCCC Conference of the Parties is the largest global meeting on climate change, gathering representatives from governments and organizations from around the world to discuss how to solve the climate crisis.

At COP 28, countries will negotiate a wide array of topics that strengthen action on climate change including ways to reduce emissions and prevent the worst impacts. In particular, this year countries will evaluate the progress made during the first five years of the Paris Agreement, a new accord under the Convention that aims to hold global temperature rise "well below 2°C" with a view to staying below 1.5°C—the level that is truly safe for island nations. Achieving this goal is vital to avoid triggering the worst and irreversible impacts of climate change. Recent scientific reports, including the global Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Emissions Gap Report, indicate that the world is on the path to 3°C temperature rise, or more, which in the Pacific islands would increase deadly heat waves, extreme weather, and sea

level rise.

The FSM will continue to lead the charge in demanding greater climate ambition.

As a Champion of the Global Methane Pledge, the FSM will push for large polluters of methane, a greenhouse gas that is 80 times more powerful than carbon dioxide (CO₂), to take concrete actions. This includes mobilization of financial resources for efforts in developing countries, mandatory measures to control methane pollution from the oil and gas sector, and a pathway towards a global methane agreement.

The FSM is also supporting the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Pledge, led by the United States, to triple global capacity for renewable energy, double the yearly improvement of energy efficiency between now and 2030, and to make tangible commitments to realize this goal.

Emphasizing that small island states contribute little to but suffer greatly from the climate emergency, the FSM—with the Pacific Islands—will continue to engage with developed countries to secure financing for loss and damage to address the present and real-life costs of climate change in vulnerable countries. A Loss and Damage Fund, additional to existing climate financing, was created last year at COP27 and this year countries are working on ensuring it is able to support countries like the FSM that are already suffering from high temperatures, coastal degradation, and typhoons.

The delegation will be negotiating and networking for the two weeks of the COP, closing on December 12th 2023.



FSM and Pohnpei State Governments receive President of Nauru in celebration of Nauru Airlines' inaugural flight to Palau

FSM Information Services

December 1, 2023

Pohnpei--Nauru Airlines' inaugural flight to Palau landed in Pohnpei today, with H.E. David Adeang, President of Nauru aboard, marking his first visit to the FSM since his election in October. To celebrate the occasion of the inaugural flight, H.E. President Wesley W. Simina, T.H. Vice President Aren B. Palik and the T.H. Governor Reed Oliver, among others, received President Adeang and his delegation at the airport, where a short program, including a sakau ceremony was held.

An FSM delegation led by Vice President Palik and including T.H. Senator Peter Christian joined the

inaugural flight from Pohnpei onward to Palau, where the celebrations will continue.

The FSM government congratulates the government of Nauru, Nauru Airlines and their partners on reaching this important milestone to increase connectivity between our islands.



Targeting all FSM flagged longline vessels to be fully equipped with Electronic Monitoring by 2024

FSM Information Services

December 7, 2023

FSM—The National Oceanic Resource Management Authority (NORMA) Acting Executive Director Limanman Helgenberger, NORMA Consultant Eugene Pangelinan, NORMA Assistant Director for Compliance Division Youky Susaia Jr., Senior Fisheries Economist Angelina Tretnoff, EM Program Manager Dan Gilmete and Assistant Attorney General Mr. Robert Nakasone Jr. recently convened a meeting with President Simina to discuss the further implementation of Electronic Monitoring (EM). The EM Program Manager, Dan Gilmete, presented President Simina with an update on the progress of the EM installation. NORMA is working towards making FSM the first Pacific Island country fully capable of effectively monitoring longline vessels fishing in the Federated States of Micronesia's (FSM) Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

To ensure complete transparency in FSM's longline fishery by 2023, FSM initiated the Technology for Tuna Transparency T3 Challenge in 2018. This objective will be achieved through the implementation of technologies such as electronic monitoring (EM) and electronic reporting (ER) to facilitate data collection.

The electronic monitoring system is an onboard recording system that captures and logs various fishing activities. It includes strategically placed cameras that record the catch & processing and GPS logging to track the boat's position and movements. All the data

is securely recorded onboard the vessel on an encrypted hard drive.

The objectives of the FSM EM program aim to ensure transparency in fisheries monitoring and activities within the FSM EEZ. It also seeks to address data gaps in the longline fishery while complementing and supplementing existing tools without replacing them.

The key objectives are:

Compliance: The program independently monitors and ensures compliance with fisheries regulations.

Science: It conducts scientific assessments on species of special interest, contributing to better understand their status and conservation needs.

Sustainability: The program takes on the role of a responsible steward in resource management, advocating for sustainable practices.

Dan Gilmete the EM Program Manager explains that "With Electronic Monitoring Systems, we can ensure traceability throughout the supply chain and can prove to consumers that the tuna they buy is legally and sustainably caught within safe work conditions."

With continuous support from The Nature Conservancy (TNC), NORMA has been diligently working on establishing its national EM program. This involves creating performance standards for EM systems and developing protocols for reviewing video footage. As a significant fisheries partner in the FSM, Liancheng promptly joined the T3 Challenge and has been actively collaborating with the FSM on EM trials throughout the development phase. Liancheng's fleet of longline vessels operating in the FSM is progressing towards meeting the T3's 2023 deadline. This will enable them to provide the necessary data to support the FSM's fisheries management objectives and Liancheng's sustainability goals. "The EM trials has been successful through the very strong cooperation of our fishing partners Liancheng. We extend our thanks to them in also leading this work through their own efforts and this has allowed us to progress our EM trials to date. We are now ready to implement EM in FSM waters for longliners starting with our flag vessels in 2024 and are excited that FSM is leading this work in the region by taking this bold step." stated Eugene Pangelinan.

H.E President Wesley W. Simina conveyed his support for EM and concluded by stating "I'm encouraged that through electronic monitoring, we will increase our capacity to monitor longliners operations in our waters where human observers are not present. I encourage the Authority to roll out EM in 2024 to meet our international commitment under the Technology for Tuna Transparency Challenge or T3 Challenge".



The FSM continues its leadership at the Global Plastics Treaty negotiations in Nairobi

FSM Information Services

November 28, 2023

FSM—The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) continues to play a leadership role at the international plastics treaty negotiations, the third round of which concluded in Nairobi, Kenya last week. Formally known as the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to develop an

international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, the plastics negotiations have now completed three of five planned sessions to develop a final treaty. In addition to spearheading a proposal on a financial mechanism to support developing countries in implementing the treaty, the FSM has joined the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) and numerous others in demanding that countries fulfill the agreed mandate of the negotiations

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Operation Christmas Drop underway - President Simina thanks crew at “Push Ceremony”—joins flight mission

FSM Information Services

December 6, 2023

Yigo, Guam--On December 4-5, 2023, H.E. President Wesley W. Simina participated in the Operation Christmas Drop Push Ceremony, followed by the flight mission to the outer island of Satowan.

Taking place on Andersen Air Force Base, President Simina, First Lady Simina, Acting Consul General to

Guam Johnny Silbanuz and staff joined crew, volunteers, and partner government representatives, including H.E. Jennifer Johnson, US Ambassador to the FSM, for the Push Ceremony.

Operation Christmas Drop is an annual tradition where the U.S. Air Force delivers supplies, humanitarian aid and gifts to outer islands of Micronesia and is the longest running humanitarian and goodwill mission that began in 1952. The operation uses military cargo

aircraft to parachute the bundles of aid and gifts to these islands during the holiday season. It has since grown as a symbol of goodwill and collaboration, bringing together partners from Japan, Canada and Korea joining in the operation this year.

In President Simina’s remarks, he stated, “we are reminded of the profound impact a collective and joint effort of goodwill can have on the lives of those who are often the hardest to

reach. Operation Christmas Drop is not just about delivering tangible goods; it is a testament to the enduring partnership between our nations and our shared values of goodwill and cooperation.”

He further thanked all of the partners, crew, organizers, volunteers, donors and the community of Guam, stating “I extend the deepest gratitude of my people. Your dedication and selflessness through the years is an inspiration.”



Following the Push Ceremony on December 4th, President Simina and Ambassador Johnson joined the crew on the flight mission to the island of Satowan where they conducted three drops. In the spirit of camaraderie and mutual support, this year's participation by President Simina underscores the significance of the continued commitment and cooperation between the FSM and its partners and highlights the deep appreciation and dedication of the FSM to the success of this collaborative effort.

“Gentlemen, this is our fight too” — President Simina delivers keynote address at FSM Women’s Conference

FSM Information Services

November 27, 2023

Tofol, Kosrae--On November 27th, H.E. President Wesley W. Simina and First Lady Ancelly Simina joined participants from throughout the nation in kicking off the 9th FSM Women’s Conference in Kosrae State, where President Simina delivered the keynote address. Gathering under the theme “A Decade in Review: Embracing our Achievements”, the festive gathering brought together women from all four states and their primary state women’s organizations, including the Pohnpei Women’s Association, the Chuuk Women’s Council, the Yap Women’s Association, state and national government representatives, traditional leaders and key partners, among the co-hosts and co-organizers of the Kosrae Women’s Association.

Speaking alongside President Simina during the opening ceremony were T.H. Governor Tulensa Palik as well as H.E. Jennifer Johnson, US Ambassador to the FSM and H.E. Jo Cowley, Australian Ambassador to the FSM, where they both reaffirmed their dedication to supporting the FSM’s goals in advancing gender equality.

In President Simina’s address, he opened by stating “I want to start by saying that I am not only here as your President, but as your strong supporter. I recognize the fact that true equality requires all of us, not just half the population. Gentlemen, this is our fight too. We must stand together in unity, not as spectators,

but as active participants in this transformative journey towards gender equality.”

The conference will feature panels and discussions on ending gender-based violence (GBV), developing health standard operation procedures (SOPs), consulting on the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Policy, impacts of climate change and women’s economic empowerment – all of which will culminate in an outcomes document produced by the end of the week. Another hope of the conference is to re-organize and revive the FSM Women’s Association as the national umbrella for all women’s groups.

President Simina closed by encouraging everyone to engage with one another, saying, “Ladies – and gentlemen, your stories, experiences, and ideas are not just valuable—they are necessary. We are all here to listen and learn from you, and to use the outcomes of this conference to guide our way forward.” He concluded with “in the tapestry of our matrilineal society and Micronesian culture, women are the threads that hold it all together. And for that, I thank you, and wish you all fruitful discussions during this 9th FSM National Women’s Conference, which I hereby now declare open.”



Opinion Editorial

“The Climate Change Conference is an opportunity – if we all play our part”

A farmer in the Niger whose fields have dried up due to the heat.

A father in Palau who does not know whether his house will still be standing when his children are grown up – or whether the rising sea levels will swallow up his village.

Mayors in Spain, Germany or Lithuania who have to find a way to protect their towns and cities from a water shortage and ever more dangerous floods.

Regardless of which country you look at in the world, one crisis is evident everywhere: the climate crisis.

This crisis is the greatest security challenge of our age. It affects us all – with varying degrees of severity but with the same relentlessness.

What gives me hope is that we have the knowledge, the technology as well as the instruments to contain the climate crisis together. What we need is political will.

In 2015, the international community showed this will and paved the way for a new, climate-neutral world by adopting the Paris Agreement. Almost 170 countries set themselves ambitious climate targets back then. The expansion of renewable energies has accelerated dramatically.

However, when we come together for the Climate Change Conference in Dubai in a few days' time, we will also know:

We find ourselves in a race

against time – and we have been too slow to date.

The forthcoming COP is a huge opportunity to pick up the pace, an opportunity which we should seize together by forming alliances among countries at the forefront of climate action. For in Dubai we will be carrying out the Global Stocktake agreed in Paris for the first time. This will allow us to review our progress towards reaching the targets set in Paris and to determine where we have to step things up.

Germany believes that three points are key here.

First of all, we should hugely ramp up the global energy transition by 2030. For every tonne of CO₂ a country emits harms us all. According to the International Panel on Climate Change, we have to work together to decrease global emissions by at least 43% in the course of this decade. Every percentage point reduction in greenhouse gases means fewer droughts, fewer floods and fewer lives lost.

In the EU, we have set a course for climate neutrality by 2050 with the Green Deal. In Germany, we have pledged by law to become climate neutral by 2045. However, the energy transition is a global task.

That is why we are working to ensure that a joint agreement is reached at COP 28 on tripling renewable energies, doubling energy efficiency and gradually phasing out fossil fuels.

By doing this, we also want to



make it clear that the transition towards an energy system largely free of fossil fuels has begun.

Secondly, our best tool for tackling the climate crisis is solidarity. That is

why we are standing shoulder to shoulder with those who have played the smallest role in bringing about the climate crisis but are now being hit hardest.

Three years earlier than announced, Germany has increased its annual contribution to climate finance to more than six billion euro from its budget funds. In so doing, we are playing our part in the industrialised countries' pledge to make available 100 billion euro for climate finance – and we are confident that this pledge will be fulfilled by the end of this year.

We know that the climate crisis is already having effects which can no longer be reversed. That is why we are also pressing ahead with adaptation to climate change and providing special support for developing countries. The contributions of all donors for adaptation should be doubled to 40 billion US dollars by 2025 at the latest. Germany intends to play its part in reaching this target.

At the last Climate Change Conference we agreed to establish a loss and damage fund and we recently fleshed it out in Abu Dhabi. Our task now is to confirm this agreement at COP 28 and to fill the fund with money. To achieve this, it is key that the funds go first and foremost

to the most vulnerable states and that all states with the means to do so contribute to the fund. Naturally, this includes the industrialised countries. However, it also includes those states which have earned a lot of money with fossil fuels or have enjoyed high growth rates in the last few years. We all have an obligation.

That is why, thirdly, we want to invest in our partnerships at COP 28. We know that the conditions necessary for a successful energy transition and climate action are different in each country. And that the radical change which the green transformation will entail can only work if it is socially just. We will support our partners to this end.

We can all benefit because every investment in solar panels, in green hydrogen or in heat insulation technologies is an opportunity for growth, new jobs and a secure energy supply. For this reason, we are expanding climate, energy and development partnerships. They will enable both sides to learn from each other and will benefit both sides.

After all, no country should have to decide between development and climate action. Every society has its own path to follow.

It is important that we all have the same goal: a climate-neutral and resilient future in which our children can live in security and prosperity. During the coming days in Dubai, we will have an opportunity to set out on this journey together.

We should seize this opportunity.

Annalena Baerbock
Foreign Minister of Germany

...Plastics Treaty

Continued from page 25

process to address the full lifecycle of plastics, including limiting primary polymer production as well as the use of certain polymers and chemicals of concern.

In Nairobi, the group of countries supporting the financial mechanism proposal spearheaded by the FSM grew from eight original co-sponsors at INC-2 in Paris in June to sixty-two co-sponsors at INC-3. The co-sponsors of the revised proposal submitted in Nairobi included all fifty-four countries of the Africa Group, as well as Chile, the Cook Islands, Dominica, Ecuador, the FSM, Grenada, Nauru and Panama. These countries are calling for the new

treaty to establish a dedicated fund, or Multilateral Fund, to support the actions taken by developing countries to implement the treaty, including any core obligations as well as capacity building and transfer of essential technologies. Taking as their model the famously successful Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol ozone treaty, the proponents highlight that treaty's Multilateral Fund as one of the key reasons the Montreal Protocol has become the world's most successful environmental treaty. Also similar to the Montreal Protocol, the plastics treaty aims to prevent harmful pollution from a single primary industry by addressing human made products across the production, consumption, collection, reuse and waste management stages of the lifecycle of plastics. The proponents emphasize that a dedicated fund can be designed to precisely address each of these elements of the plastics lifecycle.

Among the challenges in Nairobi, however, was a number of oil-producing countries who strongly resisted taking on plastics production, insisting that countries focus their efforts to address plastics pollution downstream instead, and consider it primarily as a waste management issue. These countries and others with plastics production facilities also sought to avoid examining the health impacts of chemicals used in plastics and the possibility of banning certain inputs. “These countries are backtracking from our agreed treaty mandate in order to keep profiteering from fossil fuel products. The producing countries expect those of us who are already most overburdened by plastics pollution, particularly PSIDS like the FSM, to undertake a disproportionate amount of the management and remediation work,” said Andrew Yatiman, Secretary of the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management. “We need to

bring plastics production to sustainable levels. We can't just keep mopping up for profiteers who overrun the taps. And we need to ensure that the chemicals and additives in plastics are not harmful to human health and the environment, including the marine environment.”

H.E. Wesley W. Simina, President of the FSM, sees his country's efforts on finance, production and chemicals as part of the same overall goal, one of equity in eliminating global plastics pollution. “We need plastics production at sustainable levels with inputs vetted for safety. We need the effort to address plastics pollution to be balanced among countries across the full lifecycle of plastics; and we need the distribution of resources to implement the treaty to be fair and consistent as well,” he says. “When all are dedicated and enabled to do their part effectively, we can achieve our goal of ending plastic pollution worldwide.”

Opinion Editorial

Human Rights Day 2023

Miles Young, Pacific Community (SPC)
– **Director, Human Rights and Social Development (HRSD) division**

“Our future is in our past” is a Pacific metaphor which acknowledges the inherent value of culture for the wellbeing of Pacific peoples and for its contribution to resilience building.

The new Pacific Regional Culture Strategy 2022-2032 (PRCS), endorsed by Pacific Island Countries this year, envisions “a future where Pacific region cultures are vibrant, visible, and valued for the empowerment, wellbeing and prosperity of our people.”

Cultural wellbeing recognises the role of culture in contributing to overall wellbeing which enables the survival, livelihood, resilience, and dignity of a group of people.

Respect for human dignity underpins the PRCS, recognising the interconnected nature of human rights and culture.

Human Rights Day is celebrated annually on 10 December and is a time to reflect on how “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” including the right to enjoy and practice one’s culture and language and be afforded equal access to opportunities, as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the PRCS, respectively.

Many from the Pacific claim that ‘human rights’ is a foreign concept for the region. Yet, core human rights values and principles such as dignity, fairness, respect, inclusion, non-discrimination, and the protection of the vulnerable, resonate in the rich and diverse tapestry of Pacific heritage and cultural practices. Fijian concepts such as veirokovi (respect), Tuvalu’s fale pili (my neighbour) and fa’a Samoa, or ‘the Samoan way’, for example, all resonate with human rights values. Pacific cultures value the individual and collective wellbeing of people – human rights support and promote community, which we in the Pacific value and prioritise, by ensuring no one, especially the most vulnerable, is left behind.

Human rights are guaranteed in constitutions across the Pacific, with Pacific Island Countries committing to at least one of the nine core international human rights treaties – Fiji is a party

to all nine treaties, the Republic of the Marshall Islands is party to seven, and Samoa and Papua New Guinea are each party to six.

Over the recent past, some Pacific Island countries have assumed key leadership roles in the international human rights space – for example, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu are global leaders in applying human rights as the basis for advocacy and actions to address climate change, including its adverse impacts on culture.¹

The “wellbeing of our people” and human rights is also prioritised in the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, the region’s over-arching framework for sustainable development over the next three decades. The 2050 Strategy commits to “scientifically-based research and traditional knowledge as well as promoting human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of all people.”

While we recognise the efforts of Pacific governments, civil society and individuals to advance human rights in our region, there is still much work to do. Ratifying human rights treaties is one thing, translating them into real, tangible benefits for Pacific Islanders is another and remains a challenge. For example, 11 Pacific Island countries have ratified the international human rights treaty on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) yet the region has one of the highest rates of violence against women and girls in the world – up to twice the global average of intimate partner violence.

Violence against women and children is a fundamental violation of human rights and conflicts with the values of cultural wellbeing. Further, systematic gender-related barriers means that our region has the lowest representation of women across our national parliaments, an issue which needs to be addressed if we really want to improve the rights of women to political participation at the highest levels.

We live in a region proudly bound to its heritage and cultural practices that promote dignity and wellbeing, along with protection and care of family and community.

How can we use that heritage and cultural wellbeing to end gender-based violence, and work together towards more peace and harmony in our homes?

How can we take the PRCS, which has been informed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international commitments and instruments, and work together to achieve its vision of “a future where Pacific region cultures are vibrant, visible, and valued for the empowerment, wellbeing and prosperity of our people.”



The 3rd Pacific Human Rights Film Festival opened with a screening of ‘Oceans Apart’ on 4 November, focussing on sport and human rights. From left (back row): Dr. Milla Vaha, Senior Lecturer at the University of the South Pacific (USP); Dr Giulio Paunga – USP’s Deputy Vice-Chancellor; Miles Young – Director, SPC HRSD; Randal Kamea – Fijian rugby player and publisher of Teivovo Magazine; Mere Moto – former Fijiana 15s player and Strength & Conditioning Coach; Eleina McDonald – former Fijiana 15s and 7s player, Operations & Events Manager at Fijian Drua; Dan Leo – former Samoan rugby player, founder Pacific Rugby Players Welfare; Samoa High Commissioner to Fiji, H.E. Aliioaiga Feturi Elisaia; Dr Paula Vivili – SPC Deputy Director-General Science and Capability; New Zealand High Commissioner to Fiji, H.E Charlotte Darlow; Giulio Panettiere, visiting anthropology student. From left (front row): Volunteers Shivaali Shrutika, Adi Laisa Sebulala, Siteri Rokotubuanakoro, Rariqi Turner, Maria Veranaisi and Film Festival Director Ben Wheeler.

75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights



In today’s turbulent world with conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza and Sudan and burgeoning tensions between Venezuela and Guyana, it is perhaps important to take a step back and recognize our universal and inalienable rights. Rights that we have simply because we exist as human beings. Rights that are inherent to us all, regardless of nationality, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status. Rights that range from the most fundamental - the right to life - to those that make life worth living, such as the rights to food, education, work, health, and liberty. Rights that include our right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, was the first legal document to set out the fundamental human rights to be universally protected. The UDHR, which turns 75 on Sunday, 10 December 2023, continues to be the foundation of all international human rights law. Its 30 articles provide the principles and building blocks of current and future human rights conventions, treaties and other legal instruments. In adopting the UDHR, the UN General Assembly enshrined human dignity in its preamble as follows: “Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.”

The first of 30 articles enshrines that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of

Click here for continuation on next page

Opinion Editorial

Honoring 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence: Reflection and Action

By U.S. Ambassador Jennifer Johnson

Last month marked the beginning of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, starting with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on November 25 and culminating with Human Rights Day on December 10. These two markers symbolize what we know to be true: achieving gender equality is not possible without addressing gender-based violence, a human rights abuse that holds back women and girls in all their diversity from fully and safely participating in social, economic, and political life. Ultimately, gender-based violence harms all of us, regardless of who experiences it, and prevents our communities from reaching their full potential.

Empowering women and promoting gender equality is one of the top priorities both for me personally and the U.S. Government worldwide. I recently

had the opportunity to attend the FSM National Women's Conference in Kosrae, where we dedicated the first day to discussing gender-based violence. We commended the work that has been done—much of it led organically by the amazing local women's councils in the four states—and recognized that more work remains to be done. What does it mean for us to put anti-violence values into practice each day, in all aspects of our lives? What does it look like for government, civil society, business, and every part of society to say that enough is enough – we will no longer tolerate gender-based violence?

These are questions we should all be asking ourselves in our homes, our communities, and our countries. Gender-based violence continues unabated in every region of the world. In the United States, about one in four women and nearly one in ten men reported being impacted by sexual violence, physical violence, and/

or stalking by an intimate partner. Globally, one in three women across their lifetime are subjected to physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence from a non-partner.

In the last decade, considerable progress has been made here in the FSM in efforts to eliminate gender-based violence. Passage of laws to address domestic violence, such as the Family Protection Act and Domestic Violence (DV) Legislation, has provided legislation for establishment of DV centers in three of four states, which are available to all survivors of sexual, domestic, and human trafficking crimes. Additionally, the National Government hotlines (while focused on human trafficking) receive and support calls from victims of sexual and domestic violence.

More can always be done. This is why the United States through USAID continues to update the U.S. Strategy to Prevent & Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally. As noted in this living document, "The ultimate vision of this strategy is to build a future free from gender-based violence for all people."

Advancing economic opportunities for women is essential to create gender equality. Through our partner, the International Organization for Migration, we have extended funding for small grants and training for women via the Inspiring Women's Advancement through Collective Action (IWA) Project.

Let us work together to scale up what we know works to prevent gender-based violence; to promote gender equality; strengthen laws and end impunity; to use evidence-based approaches to our policy and programmatic work, and to always keep survivors front and center in everything we do.

As President Biden said, "We must recommit ourselves to ending violence against women and girls in all their diversity—wherever and whenever it occurs. Ending this scourge is a moral imperative, and it is in our strategic interest to strengthen security and stability for us all. When women are safe and fully integrated into their societies, everyone does better."

...UN Human Rights

Continued from previous page

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - make up the International Bill of Rights.

In the years since then, all five sovereign Micronesian countries have achieved political independence; have become members of the United Nations; and have ratified the UHDR. And by doing so, recognized your fundamental rights and those of others.

Please take moment to reflect on your fundamental rights. Reflect whether you believe that you possess all the human rights enshrined in the UHDR. To reflect what you and your community can do to demonstrate your commitment to human rights.

Whatever the outcome of your reflections may be, you are not alone. United Nations Micronesia is your friend, your neighbor, and your ally in seeking a world where human rights are promoted and protected, and we stand with you in solidarity and in partnership.

Happy Human Rights Day.

Jaap van Hierden

The author is the Resident Coordinator for United Nations in Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Kiribati. As the designated Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Micronesia, the UN Resident Coordinator guides UN's engagement in development, humanitarian and peacebuilding activities in five Micronesian countries.

brotherhood". The UDHR, together with the 2 covenants - the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant for

Benefits of Pacific traditional medicine shows early promise

Kim Meredith | Pacific media adviser

A group of Pacific female scientists researching the use of traditional Sāmoan medicine in the fight against viruses, say early results are promising.

Award winning researcher Dr Natalie Netzler (Ngāti Ruanui, Ngāti Hauā, Moto'otua, Scotland) senior lecturer, and virologist at Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland's Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, is part of a research team investigating how traditional medicine can contribute to and complement western medicine.

Along with Dr Helen Woolner (Cook Island Māori - Mauke: Kimiangatau; Papa'a) from Victoria University, and Masuisuialemalietoa Dr Seesei Molimau-Samasoni (Sāmoa: Leulumoega Tuai; Apolima Uta), Manager of the Plants and Postharvest Technologies Division in the Scientific Research Organisation of Sāmoa, the study also involves a network of traditional healer practitioners in Sāmoa.

For the last six months, the scientists have



investigated the anti-viral properties of Sāmoan medicine against COVID-19. "This really is the first time the use of traditional medicine has been fully studied against COVID-19; the early results are promising," said Dr Netzler.

Leading the virology, she is testing traditional medicines against different viruses, to see whether traditional medicines work in combination with clinical antivirals like Paxlovid, or if they cancel each other out. Dr Netzler was invited onto the project once her colleagues had evidence that showed

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U.S. Coast Guard conducts security boarding at Port of Guam, bolstering maritime security

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

December 7, 2023

SANTA RITA, Guam — The U.S. Coast Guard Sector Boarding Team, a key component of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam, conducted a thorough security boarding of the 380-foot (116-meter) motor vessel Papa Mau, flagged from Antigua Barbuda, at the Port of Guam on Dec. 6, 2023.

This general cargo vessel, arriving from Pohnpei in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), was meticulously inspected upon reaching Guam and found to be in full compliance.

The fact the port in Pohnpei is working to meet U.S. International Port Security Standards, but has not yet achieved this status, and the vessel crew took no other advance notice or security actions, necessitated this boarding. The operation ensured the vessel's crew complement matched its manifest and other security measures were in place. This step is crucial for maintaining the high maritime safety and security standards that the U.S. Coast Guard and the Port of Guam uphold.

This operation comes after the U.S. Coast Guard International Port Security (IPS) Program's successful bilateral exchange with FSM in Chuuk and Pohnpei. Held from Oct. 15 to 19, this initiative aimed to enhance compliance with the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code. This collaboration underscores the mutual commitment to maritime safety and environmental stewardship in the Pacific region.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Christopher Bruce, leading the Sector Boarding Team (SBT) as the boarding officer, praised his team's efforts: "Our team's professionalism and flexibility are key in providing essential services to ensure maritime security in Micronesia. We're committed to maintaining safe and secure maritime routes, vital for the region's prosperity."

The U.S. Coast Guard Sector Boarding Team in Guam is pivotal in safeguarding the port's security. Working in synergy with other units, including the Joint Rescue Sub-Center and fast response cutters, the team significantly contributes to the U.S. Coast Guard's robust presence in the Pacific.



U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam is renowned for its comprehensive approach to executing various statutory missions. These include search and rescue, defense readiness, and protection of living marine resources. A significant focus remains on ensuring smooth maritime commerce and security of ports, waterways, and coastal areas.

The ISPS Code, integral to these operations, is a vital global standard for maritime security. Instituted post-9/11, it aims to detect and prevent security threats in international maritime transport. The Federated States of Micronesia, as a signatory to the SOLAS convention, is actively working towards full compliance with the ISPS Code.

Looking forward, the U.S. Coast Guard International Port Security Program plans to conduct biannual visits to FSM. These visits are pivotal for fostering collaboration and ensuring continuous progress in meeting ISPS compliance.

One cannot overstate the strategic value of Guam as a hub for the U.S. Coast Guard's operations in the region. As a gateway to the Pacific, Guam is crucial in bolstering maritime security and facilitating safe and efficient maritime commerce.

As FSM continues its journey towards ISPS compliance, the U.S. Coast Guard's role in ensuring port security and fostering international maritime cooperation remains more critical than ever. Through these collaborative efforts, the U.S. Coast Guard and its partners in the Pacific are setting a solid example of commitment to maritime safety, security, and stewardship.

...Traditional Medicine

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they were onto something.

"There have been no real studies into looking closely at the contribution of traditional medicine, Dr Woolner and Dr Molimau-Samasoni found anti-inflammatory properties of a plant, that's up there with ibuprofen," she said.

Dr Molimau-Samasoni a traditional healer, (whose knowledge came down from her maternal grandmother's

side) received her PhD in Australia; she also leads the liaison between the traditional medicine practitioners from her villages, and advises on extraction methods, uses and plants etc. Dr Woolner, a Natural Products Chemist, leads the chemical analyses of the medicines to identify the bioactive properties.

Netzler said their coming together was fortuitous given there were so few Pacific women in bio-medical science. Safeguarding and acknowledging the passing down of traditional knowledge was a joint vision of all three who have experienced first-hand treatment of traditional medicine.

"My dad, Gene Netzler, used to do the fofo (Samoan massage) my great-paternal grandmother, Mary Agnes Brunt practised traditional Samoan medicine, and it was used through that side of the aiga."

She was particularly excited about the holistic approach of traditional medicine, drawing up safety guidelines for Pacific clinicians and healers, to make them safe and effective.

"We know how important traditional medicine is for our communities. We want to be clear; we are a Pacific female-led team, we know how important it is to our communities to safeguard this knowledge, ensuring that intellectual

property stays with them, we are not trying to validate but define the scope of anti-viral activities so that there is local benefit for the community.

After centuries of tried and tested expertise in traditional medicine across the Pacific, Dr Netzler said together the team were looking to find solutions to some of the current viral threats to our health across the Pacific including influenza, COVID, RSV and mosquito-borne diseases like the dengue virus. After finding that two traditional Samoan medicine extracts have antiviral activity against the virus that causes COVID, the team are now seeking additional external funding to continue this important work.

SPREP and GGGI renew partnership to Advance Environmental Stewardship and Sustainable Growth in the Pacific

6 December 2023

UAE - The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) penned a renewed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), solidifying their long-term commitment to cooperation and collaboration for the achievement of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement within the Pacific region.

The first MoU between GGGI and SPREP was signed in 2018 and since then the two organisations have been working together in the Pacific Regional NDC Hub and the Climate Finance Access Network (CFAN) to deliver climate change policies and strategies and mobilise funding for implementation in the Pacific Island Countries.

“As world leaders gather in Dubai for COP 28, the renewed solidarity underscores the joint dedication of SPREP and GGGI to assist Pacific Island nations in navigating the challenges

posed by climate change,” Dr. Frank Rijsberman, Director General of GGGI Said. “The focus of the MOU is specifically tailored to enhance support for green climate finance initiatives, recognizing the pivotal role of financial backing in fostering sustainable and resilient development across the Pacific region,” Dr. Rijsberman added.

“Pacific Island Leaders at COP 28 continue their call for commitment to achieving “1.5 to Stay Alive,” taking the opportunity offered through the Global Stocktake to recalibrate pathways to achieve global targets. We similarly take the opportunity to review and renew our MOU and re-commit to work together on climate change especially access to finance but also integrate initiatives in waste management and the conservation of nature so we are fully addressing the global triple environmental crises of climate change, waste management and biodiversity loss,” said Mr Sefanaia Nawadra Director General of SPREP.

This strategic partnership between SPREP and GGGI signifies a united front in addressing environmental concerns and propelling the Pacific Island nations toward a greener, more climate-resilient future. The signing ceremony took place at the Moana Pacific Pavilion at COP28, symbolising a pivotal step forward in the shared pursuit of a sustainable and resilient Pacific.

SPREP has worked extensively across the Pacific islands region for 30 years, supporting member countries to achieve a sustainable environment and a resilient Pacific. GGGI established its offices in the Pacific in 2015 and supports its 14 member and partner countries in the Pacific to implement green, inclusive, and resilient economic development.

Under the MoU, SPREP and GGGI will focus on enhancing green public and private investment flows to convert green growth strategies and investment plans into practical action,

while strengthening environmental and social safeguards; strengthening environmental and green growth planning at the national, sub-national, and local levels including for renewable energy,

circular economy and waste management, waster security and climate smart landscapes and ocean scapes; developing innovative financing mechanisms to support implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans and building capacity for environmental and green growth policy development and implementation.

The renewed partnership between SPREP and GGGI is expected to play a significant role in advancing environmental stewardship and sustainable growth in the Pacific, ensuring a brighter future for the region’s communities and ecosystems.

Pacific Island auditors trained on revised government auditing standards

PASAI

November 28, 2023

Auckland, NZ--The Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions (PASAI) has partnered with the Graduate School USA to train government audit office staff in congressional-style jurisdictions to conduct performance audits to new standards from today.

Sixty-one staff (30 female, 31 male) from the government audit offices of American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), FSM Chuuk, FSM Kosrae, FSM Pohnpei, FSM Yap, Guam, the Marshall Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands and Palau are participating in the two part-day, online workshop from 28 to 29 November 2023.

These jurisdictions, concentrated in the North Pacific, are either American territories or are in ‘free association’ with the United States of America. As such, the government auditing standards they follow are American.

The course will cover the general standards for governmental auditing, such as ethical principles and quality control. It

also includes the fieldwork and reporting standards for performance audits.

After an in-depth review of and update on the standards, participants will discuss the purpose and requirements of individual standards, with an emphasis on the recent changes.

PASAI Director (North), Doris Flores Brooks, was delighted by the response of PASAI members to the opportunity to learn about the revisions to the standards.

“We are pleased to be meeting the demand for training that is tailored to the needs of government auditors working in Congressional systems,” she said.

PASAI is sponsoring the course being offered by the Graduate School USA through its Pacific Island and Virgin Island Training Initiatives (PITI-VITI) programme. Its Oregon-based instructor, Drummond Kahn, has trained Pacific Island auditors over many years.

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).

Joint CSO statement to the 20th regular session of the Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean

WWF-Pacific

05 December, 2023

Rarotonga, Cook Islands – Decisions made during the 20th session of Western Central Pacific fisheries Commission (WCPFC20) will profoundly influence the future of tuna and other highly migratory fish stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO).

These decisions are pivotal for communities that rely on fisheries for their livelihoods. The WWF-led CSO Observer delegation emphasizes the need for aligning WCPFC20 outcomes with Sustainable Development Goal 14 and its specific targets, including regulating harvesting, ending overfishing, combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and related issues, and addressing destructive practices.

According to a 2021 report prepared for the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) by MRAG Asia Pacific, the value of tuna harvested or transshipped in the Pacific tuna fisheries involving IUU fishing activity was estimated at US\$333.49 million annually for the study period 2017 – 2019¹. Collaboration is strongly encouraged particularly with those developing technologies relating to improving monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) and with CSOs and NGOs working in the fisheries space. They bring with them a wealth of knowledge that can contribute to the reduction of IUU fishing in the WCPO.

Issues and Recommendations

The WWF-led CSO Observer group is

[Click here for continuation on next page](#)

PICRC-JICA project team implements ecotourism training in Ngiwal State

From November 5th to 28th, the coastal ecosystem management project team from the Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) carried out a series of mangrove ecotourism training sessions for community members of Ngiwal State. In total, 27 community members, all of whom wished to become ecotour guides, were trained. Ngiwal State has two Protected Area Network (PAN) sites along the coast: Ngemai Conservation Area and Ngerbekuu River Watershed Nature Reserve. These rich natural environments are ideal for promoting ecotourism.

During the training, participants learned about kayak tours, customer service, marketing, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), history, terrestrial flora and fauna, mangrove ecosystems, and more. Ngiwal State Government, Paddling Palau, Belau National Museum, Palau Small Business Development Center, Palau Red Cross Society, and some individual experts helped to implement the training.

On November 28th, a closing ceremony was held at Labek in Ngiwal State. The ceremony was opened with an address by Honorable Francisco Melaitau, Governor of Ngiwal State. Dr. Hideki Yukihiro, a JICA expert,

then talked about the different trainings that were held. Mr. Ryutaro Kobayashi, Chief Representative of JICA Palau Office, and Ms. Geraldine Rengiil, Director of Research Department, PICRC, made congratulatory speeches. After that, certificates were awarded to the trainees by Governor Melaitau, Mr. Kobayashi, Ms. Rengiil, and Ms. Leena Mesebeluu, Director of Bureau of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Environment. Finally, Ms. Willa Wong, Ngiwal State PAN Coordinator, gave a speech as the representative of the trainees.

This ecotourism training is part of a three-year joint coastal ecosystem management project of PICRC and JICA. The PICRC-JICA project team and Ngiwal State Government are implementing a pilot activity to promote mangrove ecotours under Ngiwal State's Sustainable Ecotourism Management Plan.



...WCPFC

Continued from previous page

taking advantage of the hybrid nature of the meeting with a few attending virtually while four will be attending face-to-face. The delegation members include the Human Dignity Group, Locally Managed Marine Area Network International, Micronesia Conservation Trust, Pacific Conference of Churches, Pacific Islands Association of Non-governmental Organisations, Pacific Islands News Association, and WWF-Pacific. They have identified their shared critical concerns that include:

1. Observer Participation at WCPFC
Limited observer participation, restricted media access, and lack of transparency in decision-making hinder accountability. Recommendations include:
 - Allowing observers access to all sessions.

- Involving expertise from NGOs and the private sector.
- Reviewing participation fees for observers.

2. Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs)
The environmental impact of FADs on coastal communities and small-scale fisheries necessitates:

- Stronger measures for FAD marking and tracking.
- Research on non-entangling and biodegradable FAD materials.
- Monitoring of non-entangling FADs.

3. Security, Safety, and Well-being of Crew and Observers
Despite efforts, incidents highlight the need for binding measures, including:
 - Implementation of binding measures for crew welfare.
 - Mandatory reporting of incidents.
 - Transparency on investigations into human rights violations.

4. Longline Fisheries Observer Coverage
Acknowledging the need for greater observer coverage, CSOs recommend:
 - Increased observer coverage on longline vessels.
 - Prioritizing monitoring through human observers or electronic monitoring.

5. Transshipment
Addressing at-sea transshipment issues requires:
 - Prohibiting at-sea transshipments.
 - Real-time reporting for all transshipment activities.
 - 100% observer coverage.

6. Harvest Strategies
Urgent implementation of harvest strategies for all tuna species is crucial for long-term sustainability and market access.

7. Sharks
To protect threatened shark species, recommendations include:

- Revising conservation measures for sharks.
- Encouraging national plans of action on sharks.
- Ensuring safe handling and release practices.

Conclusion

The CSO delegation emphasizes shared concerns for fishery sustainability and the safety of fishing crew and observers. They await the outcomes of WCPFC20 with hope that the recommendations are considered.

WWF is an accredited observer at WCPFC, and is participating at the WCPFC20, leading a team of Pacific-based CSOs.

¹ MRAG Asia Pacific (2021). *The Quantification of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing in the Pacific Islands Region – a 2020 Update*. 125 p.

U.S. PACIFIC FLEET BAND



FRIDAY

DEC. 15

POHNPEI
STATE GYM

STARTING

6PM