

# Pohnpei's FestPAC contingent promises spectacular performance



By **Bill Jaynes**  
The Kaselehlie Press

May 3, 2024

**Pohnpei**— This afternoon, the performers from Enipein, Kitti, held a public dress rehearsal at the Kolonia gymnasium as part of their preparation for the Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture (FestPAC), which will be held in Oahu, Hawaii from June 6-16.

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# UNODC-IOM report flags gaps in FSM's Human Trafficking Prevention

By **Bill Jaynes**  
The Kaselehlie Press

May 6, 2024

**Pohnpei**—During a seminar that began today, International Organization for Migration (IOM) staff members presented a “Country Capacity Assessment on Trafficking in Persons” for the Federated States of Micronesia. The report was funded by New Zealand’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and by the IOM Development Fund under separate but linked programs to safeguard labor conditions on fishing vessels in the Pacific. The assessment tool was designed by IOM and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The results of the

assessment will guide and inform IOM and UNODC’s technical assistance and capacity building interventions in the FSM.

The report examined FSM legislation and policy, coordination and partnerships, prevention efforts, protection and prosecution in the context of human trafficking prevention.

The report is based on “national-level informant interviews in March and April of 2023 with members of the FSM’s Divisions of Anti-Human Trafficking Services, the Immigration Division, the Labor Division, the National Oceanic Resources Management Authority (NORMA), the Division of Customs

and Tax Administration, and the Pohnpei Port Authority. Results were compiled for review and confirmation at a national validation workshop in August 9 of 2023 with representatives of more FSM government stakeholder offices representatives.

“While there may be some limitations to the external validity of assessment finding, the report nonetheless provides a useful overview of FSM’s capacity to prevent and respond to instances of trafficking in persons in a holistic manner,” the Executive Summary on the report said.

One of the interesting items of note in the report is that in the last three years,

the FSM identified seven victims of human trafficking but none of those victims were trafficked for the purposes of labor exploitation. Additionally, the FSM does not have provisions to allow remote testimony during prosecution of cases which could lead some victims not to report the crime.

The finding of the report led to several recommendations for improvement in the FSM Human Trafficking protection efforts. The report recommended that the FSM should:

- Develop an updated National Action Plan on trafficking in persons

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# Indo-Pacific Senior Military Official, Federated States of Micronesia representatives wrap up robust Joint Committee Meeting in Guam

Joint Region Marianas Public Affairs Office

May 8, 2024

ASAN, Guam—The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command Senior Military Official in Guam and Micronesia Rear Adm. Greg Huffman, Federated States of Micronesia Vice President Aren Palik and U.S. Ambassador to the FSM Jennifer Johnson hosted another bilateral FSM-Joint Committee Meeting from May 1-2 at the Joint Region Marianas headquarters in Nimitz Hill.

“The FSM is a crucial part of the overall defense plan and is vitally important to the region,” Huffman said. “With that in mind, continued communication and collaboration with the Ambassador to the FSM and the heads of states in Micronesia are absolutely paramount to our core mission in defending the homeland,” Huffman continued.

The JCM agenda for this session consisted of progress updates on the defense site working group projects throughout the FSM, further information on the establishment of a national security office and maritime security throughout the region.

“These meetings allow us the chance to sit together and discuss priorities, enhance our partnerships and look for opportunities to strengthen the communities throughout the FSM,” Huffman said.

U.S. Ambassador Johnson echoed Huffman’s remarks and described the JCM as a gathering of family to frankly discuss important mutual security and

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Bill Jaynes  
Managing Editor

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

# June 5, 2024

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

## Monday, June 3, 2024

# Australia celebrates welcome of new Ambassador and successes of FSM's Australia Award scholarship recipients

By **Bill Jaynes**  
The Kaselehlie Press

May 30, 2024

**Pohnpei**—The Australian Embassy introduced Ambassador Jenny Grant-Curnow to the FSM at a combined “welcome party” and Australia Awards Alumni event at the Cliff Rainbow Hotel and Restaurant on the evening of May 30.

Having been introduced by the Embassy’s Second Secretary and Consul, Rachelle Wood, who served as master of ceremonies, Ambassador Grant-Curnow spent only a very brief amount of time speaking of herself, focusing her attention more on the Australian Awards scholarships and the alumni that were present at the reception. Her achievements in the Department of Australia’s Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) speak for themselves. She has represented Australia as Head of Representative Office to the occupied Palestinian territories in Ramallah, Political Counselor in New Delhi, and most recently as Acting Head of Mission in Tuvalu, Nepal, and Qatar. She has served in peacekeeping operations for the United Nations and worked in Indonesia, Timor-Leste, and New York.

Though it wasn’t mentioned during her introduction, Ambassador Grant-Curnow has immersed herself in the languages and cultures of the communities in which she has served and either speaks or has a functional understanding of several languages, including the difficult Arabic language.

Given that background, it was not surprising to hear from her that she had spent her time in Pohnpei since she arrived in early April, “enjoying this beautiful island out on the sea and in the mountains, trying to get to know some of the people and the customs and to learn some greetings in the local language.”

“Australia believes in the transformative power of education, both for individuals and for countries. And this is the central



idea behind the Australia Awards and our scholarships,” the Ambassador said, turning the subject from herself to the Australia Awards program. “For over 60 years, our government has supported the education of emerging leaders across the Pacific family.

“Since we established diplomatic relations with FSM in 1987, we have funded over 150 scholars to study both in Australia and Pacific campuses, from Fiji to Vanuatu, Samoa, and Papua New Guinea. Australia awardees have studied in a really diverse range of fields from health, law, and public administration to IT, agriculture, and engineering. And we really hope to encourage something that’s very dear to me is to encourage the growth of STEM, the science, the mathematics, and the engineering, because they’re the kind of skills that we need for the future growth of our countries. We’ve made real strides in encouraging women to apply, and in fact, 60% of our alumni are women, which is wonderful.

“These kinds of awards build very

warm connections between people, trust between our countries, and a very deep understanding of our cultures and the way that our societies work and friendships for life as well,” she said.

She concluded her remarks with expressions of thanks that were well pronounced in the languages of each of the four FSM States.

In the absence of many of the FSM’s members of leadership who were on FSM travel business, Brendy Carl of the FSM’s Department of Foreign Affairs welcomed the Ambassador to Pohnpei. On behalf of the FSM, he thanked the Australian government for its continuing support in many areas including the maritime security of the FSM, training in health, education, gender equality, and “other areas”. “Madam Ambassador, these are testaments to the strong friendship and goodwill that the FSM and Australia have enjoyed for several decades. The friendship and goodwill between our two peoples underpin the shared political and economic relationship that we

have, and I am convinced that by strengthening our people-to-people relationship, it will provide nourishment to our bilateral as well as multilateral relations in very profound ways in the years to come,” Mr. Carl said.

FSM Department of Foreign Affairs Deputy Assistant Secretary Kenmore Salvador offered the grace and blessing of the food prepared by the Cliff staff.

After the dinner break, Australia Awards alumni Samson Pretrick of Pohnpei, Donalyn Mina Waguk of Kosrae, Mathew Chigiyal of Yap, Beverly Billy of Chuuk spoke of their experiences as Australian scholarship recipients. Each of the speakers talked about both support from Australia in terms of financial assistance, but they also spoke of the support each of them experienced as human beings working hard to better prepare themselves educationally that Australia offered.

“One of the best things about being a recipient of the scholarship, throughout my academic journey, with the invaluable support of the scholarship, I would receive checkup calls from the liaisons, our associate liaisons,” said Ms. Waguk who is now Kosrae’s Epidemiologist after earning a Master’s Degree through the program. “This consistent communication provided me with a profound sense of security, knowing that their unwavering assistance was readily available whenever I required help. It served as a constant source of reassurance, ensuring that I could confidently navigate any challenges that arose during my studies. The checkup calls from their liaisons at FNU were not just routine calls to inquire about my well-being, but they were also an opportunity for me to discuss any academic or personal concerns... Their expertise and knowledge in the field of education were evident in the valuable advice they offered. They provided me with a profound sense of security, reassurance, and guidance, and they were

*Click here for continuation on page 4*

## ...Australia Ambassador

*Continued from previous page*

just always there when I needed help.”

Samson Pretrick, now the Director of the FSM Office of Personnel but who, at the time of his scholarship which allowed him to gain a Master’s degree in International Relations at the Australian National University and Monash University beginning in 1995 talked about the impact on his life. “Studying in Australia had a profound impact on my life, especially in my public service career,” he said. “Not only did I gain an excellent education, but I also had the opportunity to be part of a diverse and vibrant community that fostered my personal and professional growth. The skills and knowledge I acquired during my time in Australia have been instrumental in my career and I am grateful for the opportunities that the Australia Awards provided.”

“We have seen alumni go on to become leaders in their respective fields, contributing to the development of the FSM in various sectors,” he said. “We have seen return to their communities equipped with the skills and knowledge to make a difference. I take this opportunity to encourage our young people, our future leaders in the FSM to take the opportunity to apply for the Australia Awards Scholarships. These scholarships are a higher education. They are your gateway to advancing your career, life and our community.”

“Let me just share that this scholarship allowed me not to even worry about my tuition,” said Mathew Chigiyal who earned a Master’s Degree in Maritime Policy at Wollongong University and is now the Deputy Director of the FSM’s National Oceanic and Resource Management Authority (NORMA) “Like I said, because of that scholarship, it allowed me to actually attend a very prestigious school in Australia... I wish to take this opportunity to tell all the young folks to apply. You’ve got nothing to lose. You’ve got to apply for all these opportunities, all the funds that are available to you, and either pursue your education in Australia or at the USP.”

Beverly Billy of Chuuk recently earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Law at the University of the South Pacific (USP) in Vanuatu through the scholarship program.



She also studied at the USP campus in Suva, Fiji. She is now working as a staff attorney at the Chuuk State Legislature.

During her search for scholarships, she discovered the Australia Award scholarship. “I learned that the scholarship is a full-ride scholarship. It covers tuition, accommodation, travel expenses, and it even provides a fortnightly allowance to its awardees and recipients,” she said. “I took a chance, I applied to the scholarship. Gratefully, I was selected to be one of the awardees in 2019.

“I was well taken care of. I had everything that I needed as a student away from home. My tuition, my accommodation, and other expenses were covered by the scholarship. Even during the COVID outbreak, when the borders were all locked down all over the world, the Australia Award Scholarship didn’t stop supporting us...The scholarship is (one of) the many scholarships that are available to FSM citizens, but it is one of the few that I believe puts the interest, the well-being and the welfare of its awardees as a priority... I am now able to support my family and my relatives. The Australia Award Specific Scholarship made a significant impact in my life. I come from a humble family and so applying to and getting awarded the scholarship was a life-changing opportunity and experience for me... It allowed me to connect and build a network with other aspiring leaders from

across the Pacific region. It allowed me to secure employment with my current employer. Most importantly, gave me the opportunity to support my family and be involved in the development of my community.”

The formal portion of the evening ended with a group portrait of all the Australia Awards Scholarship recipients who were present that evening.

## ...TIP Report

*Continued from front page*

(TIP) in coordination with relevant stakeholders and partners.

- Establish national coordination committee on TIP, ensuring multisectoral representation.
- Increase the regularity of labor inspections for all high-risk sectors of employment and give consideration to conducting unannounced labor inspections.
- In partnership with NORMA and the Labor Division, develop legislative provisions to allow for labor inspections to be conducted on board fishing vessels and for fisheries officials to support in monitoring labor standards.
- In coordination with relevant stakeholders, explore possibilities for offering pre-departure orientation training to fishers who will take up employment on distant water fishing fleets/foreign flagged fishing vessels.
- In coordination with

development partners and civil society, explore ways in which to increase access to psychological support services across the entire country.

- In coordination with development partners and civil society, explore ways in which to connect victims of trafficking to financial/livelihood support and re-integrations services.
- Extend training on national and international legal frameworks of TIP to all relevant officials and stakeholders.
- Train prosecutors and judges in the prosecution and adjudication of trafficking cases, including how to deal with typical evidential issues.
- Consider developing Standard Operating Procedures for the investigation and prosecution of TIP cases.
- Explore the merits and feasibility of allowing for victims and witnesses to provide advance or remote testimony during the prosecution of TIP cases.
- Consider providing TIP training to interpreters relied on during the investigation and prosecution of TIP cases.

# ...FestPAC

*continued from front page*

The young dancers showed themselves to be quite prepared to represent Pohnpei extremely well at the massive festival of indigenous Pacific culture. While maintaining Pohnpei's unique culture, the dancers also added just a bit of cheekiness that was endearing. The gathered crowd included Pohnpei government leaders, members of the diplomatic corps, and interested members of the community. All appeared to be impressed with the performances of the dance group.

FestPAC is the world's largest celebration of indigenous Pacific Islanders, which occurs every four years, though the previously scheduled FestPAC in Hawaii had to be delayed to this year due to the outbreak of COVID. According to the FestPAC website

(www.festpachawaii.org), the festival, originally organized by what is now the Pacific Community (SPC), was held in Suva, Fiji in 1972 to "halt the erosion of traditional practices through ongoing cultural exchange". The hope then was to create a space where Pacific Islanders could gather to share their traditional arts, crafts, music, dance, and oral traditions with the world.

"Over the years, FestPAC has evolved and grown in stature, becoming a highly anticipated event for both Pacific Islanders and visitors from around the world. The festival has not only preserved traditional arts and culture but has also served as a platform for contemporary Pacific Island artists to express their creativity and address contemporary issues," the website says.

The FSM is just one of 27 Pacific Islands countries that will participate in this year's FestPAC, and organizers expect as many as 3000 participants in the event.

Senator McGarry Miguel told the crowd during the rehearsal that Pohnpei will send 52 people to the festival, including the dance troupe and several government leaders, including Governor Stevenson Joseph.




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# PFC's 30th Annual Tournament—Lady anglers shine, Spencer boys again “outfish” junior anglers

By Bill Jaynes  
The Kaselehlie Press

May 11, 2024

**Pohnpei**— The Pohnpei Fishing Club (PFC) held its 30th Annual Tournament on Friday and Saturday. Annually, it is the biggest tournament of the year, and this year was no different, with nearly \$10,000 in prizes awarded to top anglers. Additionally, the PFC's marlin jackpot of \$10,000 could be won by any angler who landed a marlin over 450 pounds, or the tuna jackpot of \$1400 for any yellowfin tuna over 140 pounds, the current records for those species.

Lady anglers had very good results during this tournament, catching some of the largest fish.

The top prize for big fish was \$1500, awarded to Alloys Malifitani for his 110-pound marlin. Calany Torres, a lady angler, took the second-place \$1000 prize for a very nice 76-pound yellowfin tuna. Kenty Spencer won \$900 for third place with a 65.4-pound yellowfin. Naihila Peterson took \$800 for a 58.8-pound yellowfin tuna. Isa Peterson landed a 56.4-pound sailfish for the fifth-place prize of \$700. Plangka David was sixth for \$600, having landed a 54.2-pound yellowfin. Lensileen Nicholas won \$450, having taken seventh place with a 41.6-pound yellowfin.

All anglers received gift certificates from several generous sponsors.

This tournament provided prizes for the heaviest fish of each species. Anglers who had already won a prize for the biggest fish could not qualify for that prize in addition to the top prize with the same top prize-winning fish. First-place top species anglers were awarded \$200. Second-place winners received \$150.

Lt. Commander Nigel Williams won the top prize in the yellowfin category for a 22.4-pound dogtooth tuna, which the club classifies as yellowfin. Lanson Nicholas had an 11.2-pound yellowfin for second.

In the skipjack tuna category, Kenty Spencer and Santricko Ioanis were the top winners with fish of 21.8 and 19.2 pounds respectively.

Yoma Edward had the biggest wahoo at 24.2 pounds. She was followed by Star Edward, whose wahoo was 21.4 pounds.

Twin 20-pound mahi-mahis were landed by Nile Panuelo and Kenty Spencer. As

we understand it, since Spencer had won an award in the skipjack category, Nile was given the first-place prize.

O'Neal Optaia had a 24.4-pound barracuda. His fish was followed by Konrad Englberger's 17-pound barracuda.

Though lady anglers had already won a good number of the top prizes, there was also a category for the top lady anglers. Winners of that prize received \$300 and \$200 for first and second places respectively. Stencia Hawley was first with a yellowfin of 32.6 pounds. Lensileen Nicholas, who captained her own boat, won second with a 15-pound barracuda.

The prolific Spencer boys won the top prizes for junior anglers, earning themselves a gift certificate. Dave Spencer's 18.2-pound skipjack was first. His brother, Marvey Spencer Jr., was second with a 14.8-pound mahi-mahi.

The Pohnpei Fishing Club has been on a mission to ensure that each boat-owning member has an EPIRB for emergencies. Sponsors have generously stepped in to help them fulfill that mission. For this tournament, NORMA donated three EPIRBs and the United States Embassy donated one. Frank Panuelo, Dr. Joanes, Lensper Nicholas, and Oliver Pelep won the four EPIRBs.

The sponsors for the 30th annual fishing tournament were National Fisheries Company, Micronesia Conservation Trust, the Bank of the FSM, MRAG, Budweiser (Ambros Shimbros), Pohnpei Hardware, Imelda's Shoes, Mangrove Bay Bar, Blue Nile, Panuelo Gas Station, FCF Inc., CTSI, Pacific Community (SPC), Pohnpei Surf Club, NORMA, Arnold's Pizza, the Chinese Embassy, and the U.S. Embassy.

We are aware that there were other private donors for the huge tournament that were not in the materials sent for the Pohnpei Fishing Club.

Every angler who entered won some sort of prize whether they landed fish or not. Each received Budweiser and gas vouchers as well.

Though the Pohnpei Fishing Club provided a list of sponsors, we are aware that there were also private sponsors who also donated prizes to the Club that were not on the list they provided to us.



Photo by Jackie Villegas



Photo by Jackie Villegas





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## 79th Commencement Exercises Highlights



## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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### **Education Instructor (Kosrae)**

Teaching 12 to 15 contact hours per semester of education courses including but not limited to, ED 338, ED 302, ED 301a, ED 301b, ED 304, ED 302, ED 305, ED392, ED 414 and ED 498 with one to four preparations. Teaching classes in accordance with the goals and objectives of the course as described in the course outline. Maintaining accurate records of student attendance and student learning outcomes/grades, in accordance with COM-FSM regulations.

### **Instructor - Computer Science (CTEC/Pohnpei)**

Teaching 12-15 contact hours of CIS courses per week with one to four preparations specifically teaching CA 095 and CA 100 and other courses within the specialty of instructor. Teaching classes in accordance with the goals and objectives of the course as described in the course outline.

Serious inquiries can be made to the Human Resources Office at email address [hro@comism.edu.fm](mailto:hro@comism.edu.fm) and telephone number (691) 320-2482 extension numbers 179, 180, 181

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# FSM and UNDP Pacific Office sign seven-year project towards Land Degradation Neutrality

DECEM

**Palikir, FSM**-The UN Development Programme (UNDP) Pacific Office and the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), through the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management (DECEM), are set to embark on a groundbreaking partnership in support of enhancing climate resiliency.

The initiative aims to secure critical ecosystem services essential for the FSM's environment and economy, by strengthening climate-resilient sustainable land and coastal management contributing to Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN).

Funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and adopted in April by the 23th FSM Congress, the project titled "Securing Climate-Resilient Sustainable Land Management and Progress Towards Land Degradation Neutrality in the FSM", worth US\$5 million, is designed to support the achievement of the five key objectives of LDN: enhancing the sustainable delivery of ecosystem services; improving productivity to enhance food security; increasing resilience of the land and populations dependent on it; seeking synergies with other social, economic and environmental objectives; and reinforcing responsible and inclusive governance of land.

During the project document signing ceremony held in Palikir, DECEM Secretary, the Hon. Andrew Yatilman, extended a warm welcome to UNDP



*UNDP Pacific Office in the FSM Deputy Resident Representative Kevin Petrini, Secretary of the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management, the Hon. Andrew Yatilman, UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji Resident Representative Munkhtuya Altangerel, and UNDP Pacific Office Senior Policy Advisor Yanki Ukyab.*

Pacific Office in Fiji Resident Representative, Munkhtuya Altangerel, Deputy Resident Representative in the FSM, Kevin Petrini, and Senior Policy Advisor, Yanki Ukyab, marking the official commencement of the project.

"We are very pleased to collaborate with UNDP on this significant initiative. With our longstanding partnership, we are confident that this project will yield productive and meaningful outcomes," Secretary Yatilman said.

Ms. Altangerel also affirmed the organization's dedication to supporting FSM's journey towards climate

resilience, stating "UNDP stands in solidarity with the FSM. Together, we can forge a path towards a sustainable and climate-resilient future for the people of Micronesia."

The six-year project will include working with the four States of the FSM to improve status of native species and biodiversity, create a more functional and resilient ecosystem, restore land and coastal resources production systems, strengthen community livelihood resilience, and food and health security.

A key value of the project lies in its

community-based demonstration on the application of integrated landscape interventions. Community-level stakeholders will be actively engaged in planning and decision-making on best approaches to manage and use agricultural and forest land as well as coastal ecosystems to help conserve biodiversity in each of the four states. It will also help develop capacities and the required enabling frameworks through "learning-by-doing" in the selected target catchments across the FSM to raise awareness of the benefits of Sustainable Land Management/Climate Smart Agriculture.

## ...Joint Committee Meeting

*Continued from page 2*

defense matters between the FSM and the United States.

"Over the past two days, we had productive and meaningful exchanges to address specific security challenges, recap our accomplishments, and pave the way forward. We were very pleased by the large, high-level turnout from both sides, and we look forward to our next meeting in Chuuk as we continue the momentum we built with our enduring partners and friends," Johnson noted.

Senior leaders from U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, the U.S. Department of State, and Government leadership of FSM also joined the meeting. The JCM is in accordance with the Compact of Free Association (COFA) Title III: Security and Defense Relations and promotes ongoing dialogue between nations to enhance security and defense responsibilities in the region.



Advertisement for Pacifica TV, featuring a collage of TV channels and content. The channels shown include Nickelodeon (with 'iG DYLAN'), Paramount+ (with 'SPECIAL OPS: LIONESS'), Warner TV (with 'Timeless'), Pasifikatv (with 'TAGATA PASIFIKA'), CNN (with 'Anderson Cooper'), and ESPN (with 'THIS IS WHY WE PLAY'). A starburst graphic on the right says 'AND MANY MORE!'. Below the collage, the text reads: 'FSMTC's PACIFICA TV is the home of LIVE TV for sports, news, learning, and entertainment. Sign up now and get your first month FREE OF CHARGE!'. The Pacifica TV logo is prominently displayed in the center, with the website 'www.fsmtc.fm/tv' below it. The FSMTC logo 'We Are You' is in the bottom left corner.

Advertisement for Vital Energy for life, featuring a tropical beach scene with palm trees and the ocean. The Vital Energy logo is centered, with the text 'Vital Energy for life' below it. The website 'www.vitalenergy.fm' is displayed at the bottom.

# Australia's newest Ambassador presents her credentials to FSM President Simina

*FSM Information Services*

*April 29, 2024*

**Palikir, Pohnpei, FSM**—On April 29, 2024, Her Excellency Jennifer Grant-Curnow presented her credentials to His Excellency President Wesley W. Simina, as the new resident Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Australia to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), succeeding Ambassador Joanne P. Cowley.

The ceremony was held at the President's Office in Palikir and was attended by the Acting Chief of Justice, Dean and members of the Diplomatic Corps, cabinet members, members of the International and Regional Organizations, and other national officials.

During the ceremony, Ambassador Curnow delivered her remarks and conveyed that she was honored to be making her home for the coming years in the beautiful State of Pohnpei, FSM. The Ambassador confirmed that the FSM and Australia have a strong relationship based on trust, respect and shared values. The Ambassador reaffirmed Australia's commitment in partnering with the FSM in critical infrastructure and connectivity as well as FSM's maritime security which has demonstrated through the support of two Guardian-Class Patrol Boats namely FSS Tosiwo Nakayama and FSS Bethwel Henry. The Ambassador also stated that Australia is responding to the nation's priorities in supporting family protection and women/girls' health and providing scholarship for young people in the FSM to study in Australia and in the region.

Ambassador Curnow concluded her remarks in commending the friendly and rewarding diplomatic relationship that Australia and FSM have enjoyed for over decades, and Australia is pleased that the FSM will be opening a mission in Canberra.

In his statement, President Wesley W. Simina warmly welcomed Ambassador Curnow and expressed his appreciation to the Australian Government for her speedy appointment, which indicated the mutual desire to advance the strong and substantive relations enjoyed between FSM and Australia. He acknowledged and recognized over thirty years of diplomatic relations between FSM and Australia which has grown, matured and prospered at all levels for the mutual benefits of the two countries. President Simina highlighted the

opportunities for enhanced development cooperation between the two countries, particularly through Australia's Pacific

Maritime Security Program, with the support of two Guardian-Class Patrol Boats namely FSS Tosiwo Nakayama and FSS Bethwel Henry, to defend and protect the nation's prestigious territory from Illegal, Unregulated, and Unreported (IUU) fishing activities, human-trafficking, disaster relief efforts and emerging maritime threats. He commended the strong and substantive relations between FSM and Australia and express hope for continued cooperation to the on-going projects and programs as well as others in the pipeline.

In closing, President Simina congratulated Ambassador Curnow and emphasized the importance of this milestone in strengthening the friendly and cooperative partnership between the FSM and Australia.

The ceremony and subsequent courtesy call concluded with an exchange of well wishes and cultural gifts, reaffirming the friendly and cooperative diplomatic relations between FSM and Australia.



## FSM helps steer plastics treaty negotiations towards final stages

*FSM Information Services*

*May 7, 2024*

**PALIKIR, Pohnpei**—The fourth of five rounds of international negotiations on a plastic pollution treaty concluded in Ottawa, Canada last week, with the delegation of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and fellow Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) continuing to play a leadership role in the talks.

Formally known as the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, the plastic treaty negotiations are scheduled to finish in Busan, Korea in December.

In Ottawa, countries fought back efforts by oil producing states to exclude upstream stages of the plastics lifecycle from being addressed in the treaty. Oil producers want to shift much of the oil that traditionally has been used for transportation and energy towards the plastics industry. They hope to rapidly increase production of

primary plastics polymers, while many countries, including PSIDS that are already overburdened with plastic pollution, are calling on producers to make less.

“Our agreed mandate for the new treaty is to address the full lifecycle of plastics,” said His Excellency President Simina. “Plastics producers must do their part at the source. They cannot expect those of us living downstream to keep mopping up their mess while they profit from running the taps.”

To demonstrate support for keeping plastic production measures within the new treaty, the FSM developed the Bridge to Busan: Declaration on Primary Plastic Polymers. The declaration is a call to action to limit plastic production to sustainable levels. Over thirty countries signed the declaration at the Ottawa negotiations and several more have joined since, along with several dozen stakeholders and other non-State actors. The European Union has stated its intention to join as well, which would bring the number of signatories to almost fifty.

The declaration has been widely covered in the international media, and more countries are expected to join the declaration in the lead-up to the final round of talks in Busan in November.

“Keeping measures on primary plastics production in the treaty is essential,” said Secretary Andrew Yatilman, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management. “The science shows that the world cannot achieve its climate goal of limiting temperature rise to less than 1.5C or achieve its goal of ending plastic pollution worldwide, unless primary plastic production is limited to sustainable levels.” The FSM and its allies will continue to coordinate over the coming months to ensure their priorities, which also include preventing harmful chemicals in plastics and delivering robust financial and other support to developing countries, stay on the table at the negotiations. The FSM was represented by Ms. Cindy Ehmes, Ms. Darla Yatilman and legal advisors Mr. Clement Mulalap and Mr. Dennis Clare.

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2024 FSM Health Summit members generate outcomes documents and commit to work toward universal health coverage

FSM Information Services

April 28, 2024

Palikir, Pohnpei—The Federated States of Micronesia Department of Health & Social Affairs concluded its 2024 Health Summit held from April 22-26, 2024 in Palikir, Pohnpei. The Summit brought together leaders from the National and State Governments, program managers and staff, stakeholders, partners, and members from the communities to deliberate on strategies in advancing the nation's health in 2024 and beyond.



Delivering the keynote address, The Honorable Vice President Aren B. Palik highlighted the healthcare challenges confronting the FSM, emphasizing the shortage of skilled personnel, the need for enhanced professionalism among healthcare practitioners, technological gaps, and the imperative for preventative care and life-saving treatments to elevate healthcare services. The Vice President underscored the ongoing shortfall of proficient and certified doctors and nurses while acknowledging the current effort of the College of Micronesia-FSM in graduating new nurses. The Vice President also indicated to the audience that as a Nation we “need to do more” if we are to meet the demand for better and more complex healthcare need of the people in the coming days. The Vice President concluded his statement by reaffirming to the 300 plus audience to keep in mind that in everything we do “unity is our strength and prosperity”, which is also the thematic vision of the Simina-Palik Administration.

The five-day Health Summit was structured around technical meetings and workshops as its format to ensure open and free exchanges of ideas. Several thematic areas surfaced from the discussions and summarized in seven categories: (1) Leadership, Governance and Management, (2) Human Resources for Health, (3) Health Service Delivery, (4) Health Information, Planning & Surveillance, (5) Health Through the Life Course, (6) Social and Environmental Determinants of Health, and (7) Health Financing.

Throughout the Health Summit, technical experts from local, regional

and international organizations, including representatives from the UN Agencies (WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, FAO), World Bank, ADB, JICA, SPC, Pacific Island Health Officers Association (PIHOA), Association of State and Territorial Health Organization (ASTHO), COM-FSM and other partners, contributed valuable insights and recommendations to inform the formulation of strategic policies. The Minister of Health and Human Services from the Republic of Palau, the Hon. Gaafar Uherbelau, was also present and provided valuable advice as well as real-life experience from Palau.

As a result, the participants adopted universal health coverage for all as the unified vision for the next Framework for Sustainable Health Development in the Federated States of Micronesia: 2024-2034, which was the hallmark of the Summit and led to its endorsement by the Chief Executives. Additionally, the following outcome documents were also launched: FSM Early Childhood Development Policy (2024-2028), Nutrition Action Plan (2020-2030), Healthy Eating Guidelines (2023-2027), and National Operational Guidelines on Adolescent and Youth-Friendly Health Services 2024.

As the FSM embarks on this transformative journey towards achieving its goal “Better Health for All”, the momentum generated by the National Health Summit signals a pivotal moment in the nation's healthcare trajectory. In closing the Summit on behalf of His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, Secretary Marcus Samo remarked “our Unity is our Strength and Prosperity. We believe in the power and strength of unity. We believe in leaving no communities behind”. Secretary Samo concluded by saying that the outlook for health development is exciting. There are opportunities ahead; we need to take bold steps to achieve better health for all.

# FSM Health partners with UNICEF to train Social and Behavior Change (SBC) Champions

*FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs  
May 14, 2024*

**Weno, Chuuk**—In an effort to build a strong coalition of persons capable of planning, implementing and monitoring quality social and behavior change (SBC) interventions, the Department of Health and Social Affairs (DoHSA) with support from UNICEF organized a 5-day capacity strengthening workshop for FSM health and other stakeholders.

The training workshop, which was conducted from May 6-10, 2024, in Weno, Chuuk State brought together 35 personnel from the four (4) FSM states and national including a World Health Organization (WHO) Consultant, all working in different programmatic fields including Immunization, Nutrition, non-communicable diseases (NCDs), WASH, and clinical settings.

. Social and Behavior Change (SBC) is a relatively new area in the FSM, with most people only having been

exposed to snippets of it through risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, this training workshop was designed to give participants a basic understanding of social and behavior change principles, processes, approaches, and tactics whilst strengthening their capacity on quality planning, implementation, and monitoring of interventions for health and other promotion activities in all the states in FSM.

The workshop was facilitated by the UNICEF SBC team with active participation from the DoHSA Health Promotion Officer. Its format was interactive, encouraging and provided opportunities for discussions interspersed with exciting Icebreakers. The facilitators also employed participatory learning methods and utilized contextualized images, videos, and relatable activities in their deliveries.

The five workshop days were intense,



but participants were kept up their energy levels due to the fun-filled and participatory approaches employed by the facilitators.

Peter Malmai, The Chief of Public Health of Yap State, who was a participant remarked, “SBC is new to me. I have enjoyed learning a lot from day 1 to day 5 of the training. Now, I feel confident on how to develop more effective health promotion

interventions by unpacking the issues. My takeaways? First, Understand the issues, then Create solutions, before you Do.”

On the last day of the workshop, the 35 SBC champions developed “Personal SBC Projects” as a way of applying the SBC processes and approaches to test their new knowledge and skills in SBC.

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# Japan's Ambassador to the FSM Kagomiya visits JOCV

Embassy of Japan to the FSM

April 18, 2024

On April 18, 2024, Ambassador Kagomiya visited the Palikir Early Childhood Education (ECE) Center to observe the activities of Ms. Nanako Koe, a Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer (JOCV) and witnessed her health checkup and school lunch.



Ms. Koe started working on Pohnpei Island as a nutrition expert in 2023, contributing to nutritional management and health checkups at various schools and educational institutions.

Ambassador Kagomiya received a warm welcome from everyone at Palikir ECE Center, deepened his understanding of JOCV's activities and the educational scene in this country, and warmly encouraged Ms. Koe.

The JOCV program is one of Japan's technical cooperation schemes operated by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) as part of Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA). Under this program, Japanese citizens who wish to participate in assisting developing countries in various areas including administration, agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, education, medical care, health care, and social welfare are dispatched.



# Japan's Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs briefed on Japanese funded climate change countermeasures

Embassy of Japan to the FSM

May 3, 2024

Pohnpei—Japan's Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. KOMURA Masahiro visited the National Emergency Operations Center

and was briefed by Hon. Andrew Yatilman, Secretary of Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management, on the climate change countermeasures project implemented by Japan in cooperation with the UNDP.



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## FSM President receives Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan

*Embassy of Japan to the FSM*

*May 1, 2024*

**FSM**—On May 1, Mr. KOMURA Masahiro, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs visited the FSM and paid a courtesy call on H.E. Wesley Simina, President of the FSM and Hon. Lorin Robert, Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs of the FSM to exchange views on strengthening Japan-FSM friendship and the 10th Pacific Islands Leaders' Meeting (PALM 10) to be held in July of this year.



## Ambassador Kagomiya explains Japanese scholarships at COM

*Embassy of Japan to the FSM*

*April 30, 2024*

**Palikir, Pohnpei**—Ambassador Kagomiya visited Ms. Silbanuz Phylis, Dean of COM, and Ms. Cynthia Edwin, Counselor of COM, on April 26, and Ms. Theresa Koroivulaono, the president of COM, on April 30 respectively to make an explanation about Japanese scholarship programs which are now open for application.

There are 4 scholarship programs as follows and the deadline for application for the academic year starting from April 2025 is June 3, 2024. For all of the following 4 schemes, students can take 1 year training of Japanese language in advance which starts April 2025, if necessary. Those who take this training are to start their ordinary university/college education a year later:

- 1) Scholarship for Undergraduate Students: 4 years (6 years for medical sciences)
- 2) Scholarship for College of Technology Students: 3 years
- 3) Scholarship for Specialized Training College Students: 2 years

- 4) Scholarship for Research Students (Graduate Level): 2 years

All of these scholarships cover almost all the majors of study. Living allowances and education fees for their terms of study including their Japanese language trainings, and return travelling expenses between the FSM and Japan are to be provided.

For 1), 2) and 3) above, those who have completed 12 years of schooling or the equivalent can apply. The written examination and interviews will be held at the Embassy on June 11. The subjects of examination are Japanese, English and Mathematics while some courses for 1) and 2) additionally require Chemistry, Physics and/or Biology examinations. The total score matters.

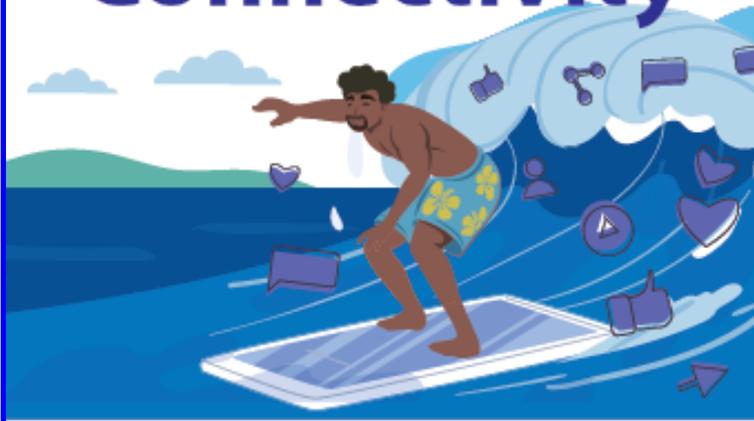
Now Embassy of Japan is strongly encouraging FSM youths to apply for these scholarships. For this sake, Ambassador visited COM to make an explanation and the Embassy is now approaching various schools and institutions.

Further information and application forms can be found in the HP of the Embassy ([https://www.micronesia.emb-japan.go.jp/.../11\\_000001...](https://www.micronesia.emb-japan.go.jp/.../11_000001...))

The Embassy of Japan will heartily welcome your applications.



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# Speaker Yamaguchi and Director of Treasury present \$1 million to Pacific Islands Development Bank

*Pohnpei Public Information*

*April 25, 2024*

**Tamuning, Guam**—During the 35th anniversary celebration of the Pacific Islands Development Bank (PIDB), Governor Joseph joined Speaker Yamaguchi and Mrs. Sihna Lawrence, Director of the Department of Treasury & Administration who presented a \$1 million dollar check to Ms. Lindsay Timarong, President and CEO of PIDB.

This generous contribution will enable PIDB to continue its vital work in supporting the economic development initiatives across the Pacific Islands region. Pohnpei State has already previously contributed \$1.3 million to PIDB.

The partnership between the government and PIDB underscores a shared vision for a prosperous future, where financial resources are leveraged to empower communities and facilitate lasting change. Cultural presentations were performed by UOG students from the various island groups in Micronesia, including Pohnpei students.

The presentation signifies a crucial milestone in the ongoing commitment to economic development within the region. Governor Joseph delivered remarks highlighting the significance of the contribution and its alignment with PIDB's mission to foster economic growth.

About Pacific Islands Development Bank:

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# Governor Stevenson A. Joseph accompanies FSM Vice President, Kosrae Governor and Speaker on courtesy call to Speaker of Guam Legislature

*Pohnpei Public Information*

*April 29, 2024*

**Hagatna Guam**—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph of Pohnpei State, alongside Vice President Aren B. Palik of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Kosrae State Governor Tulensa Palik and Speaker Semeon Phillip, conducted a warm and cordial courtesy call to Speaker Therese M. Terlaje of the Guam Legislature.

Vice President Palik, Governor Palik and Speaker Phillip extended heartfelt gratitude for the unwavering assistance and support.

In turn, Speaker Terlaje expressed her sincere appreciation for the visit and reiterated her commitment to continued cooperation and collaboration on regional issues. She expressed a genuine desire to enhance the quality of life for all residents of the region.

Governor Joseph, Vice President Palik, Governor Palik, Speaker Phillip and Speaker Terlaje exchanged views on various matters of mutual interest and affirmed their shared commitment to fostering strong relationships and addressing regional challenges collaboratively.

The discussions, held in a spirit of collaboration and cooperation, emphasized the mutual appreciation for the support and assistance provided by Speaker Terlaje and Governor Lou Leon Guerrero to FSM citizens residing in Guam. Governor Joseph,

The meeting concluded with optimism for future engagements and continued efforts to strengthen ties between Pohnpei State, FSM, Kosrae State, and Guam, aimed at advancing the well-being and prosperity of all peoples in the region.



# Ambassador Kagomiya pays a courtesy call on the Honorable Marvin Yamaguchi, Speaker of Pohnpei State Legislature

*Embassy of Japan to the FSM*

*May 7, 2024*

**Pohnpei**—On May 7, 2024, Ambassador Kagomiya paid a courtesy call on the Honorable Marvin Yamaguchi, Speaker of Pohnpei State Legislature. Ambassador Kagomiya explained about the scholarship program. The Hon. Yamaguchi expressed his appreciation for the Government of Japan for its assistance in the FSM, such as the scholarship program.



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## Governor Stevenson A. Joseph Joins Vice President Aren B. Palik and Governor of Kosrae State for a Meet-and-Greet with FSM Citizens in Guam

*Pohnpei Public Information*

*April 29, 2024*

**FSM Consulate, Guam**—Governor Stevenson alongside Vice President of the Federated States of Micronesia, Aren B. Palik and Governor of Kosrae State Tulensa Palik, convened at the FSM Consulate in Guam to engage with FSM citizens residing in Guam.

The gathering provided an invaluable opportunity for citizens to directly interact with their leaders, pose questions, and engage in discussions on matters pertinent to the FSM community in Guam.

Highlighted among the topics of discussion was the upcoming Joint Committee Meeting(JCM), where Governor Joseph will be collaborating with Vice President Palik and U.S. Military and Civilian leaders on Title 3 of the Compact of Free Association, which addresses critical provisions concerning Security and Defense.

Also discussed were dual citizenship, military presence in FSM, support for FSM citizens in Guam and a compact of free association overview.

The event concluded with a renewed commitment from all parties to continue working tirelessly in the best interest of the FSM and its citizens, both at home and abroad.



# Governor Stevenson A. Joseph Explores collaborative opportunities at introductory meeting with FSM Division of Agriculture

## Pohnpei Public Information

May 13, 2024

**Kolonia, Pohnpei**—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph took a significant step towards fostering cooperation and agricultural development within the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) during an introductory meeting held at the office of the Director of the Department of Resources and Development, Mr. Mark Kostka.

The meeting served as a platform for Governor Joseph to familiarize himself with key stakeholders and initiatives in the agriculture sector at the FSM National Government. Among those present was Assistant Secretary Menoleen Jacob from the FSM Division of Agriculture, who warmly welcomed Governor Joseph and facilitated introductions to the FSM Division of Agriculture team. Among those present, were the following:

- Menoleen Jacob-Oswalt - Assistant Secretary
- John Wichep - Plant & Animal Specialist

Marlyter Silbanuz - Agriculture Program Manager

### SMALL ISLANDS FOOD & WATER PROJECT

- 1. Luan Lavern Gilmete - Project Manager
- 2. Justice Norman - Finance Admin & Procurement Officer

### GEF 6 FSM INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES PROJECT

- 1. Beverlyn Danis-Fred - Project Manager
- 2. Kimsky Kubo - National Technical Coordinator
- 3. Juliet Isaac-Mix - Finance & Admin Officer
- 4. Gloria Dadius - Finance & Admin Assistant

### GCF FOOD SECURITY PROJECT

Seimin Mihkel - Finance & Admin Officer

### USDA FORESTRY PROGRAMS

- 1. Lillyann Oswald - Urban & Community Forest Program Coordinator
- 2. Tracy Ardos - Forest Stewardship Coordinator

### UN-FAO POULTRY PROJECT

Saimon Mix - Project Consultant

Assistant Secretary Jacob provided a comprehensive overview of the division's ongoing activities, highlighting their pivotal role in facilitating agricultural endeavors across the FSM. With a commitment to collaboration and partnership, Secretary Jacob extended an offer to Governor Joseph and his administration to go deeper into specific areas of agricultural interest through detailed presentations tailored to the needs and priorities of



Pohnpei State.

Governor Joseph expressed his enthusiasm for the opportunity to work closely with the FSM Division of Agriculture and other stakeholders to address agricultural challenges and capitalize on opportunities for growth and sustainability. He emphasized the importance of leveraging expertise and resources at both the national and state levels to achieve collective agricultural objectives.

The meeting laid the groundwork for future collaboration and engagement between Pohnpei State and the FSM Division of Agriculture, setting a positive trajectory for mutual benefit and progress in the agricultural sector.

# Courtesy call of Australian Ambassador to Pohnpei Governor Stevenson A. Joseph

## Pohnpei Public Information

May 7, 2024

**Kolonia, Pohnpei**—Her Excellency Jennifer Grant Curnow, the Australian Ambassador to the Federated States, paid a courtesy call on Governor Stevenson A. Joseph of Pohnpei State, engaging in fruitful discussions on various developmental priorities and collaborative initiatives.

During the meeting, Ambassador Curnow extended her congratulations to Governor Joseph and expressed a keen interest in understanding his administration's priorities. Governor Joseph highlighted three key areas of focus: Food Security, Affordable and Efficient Energy, and addressing the non-communicable diseases (NCD) situation.

In response to Ambassador Curnow's reference to Governor Joseph's remarks at the recent Health Summit

on individual health choices, Governor Joseph emphasized the importance of local food in promoting health within the Pohnpeian community. He also shared that a comprehensive Food Security policy has been formulated and is poised for implementation.

Governor Joseph further elaborated on his energy goals, aiming to reduce costs by 10 percent and transition to a sustainable energy mix of 70 percent fossil fuels and 30 percent renewable energy sources by the end of his administration. Ambassador Curnow commended these efforts and shared insights into Australia's solar initiatives in other parts of FSM, including Pingelap.

Expressing gratitude for Pohnpei's support, Ambassador Curnow discussed the East Micronesia Cable (EMC) project, aimed at enhancing connectivity between Kosrae, Kiribati, and Pohnpei. The addition of fishing

fee revenue into Pohnpei's coffers was also discussed.

Ambassador Curnow highlighted the Australian Pacific Engagement Visas, offering up to 50 opportunities for FSM citizens aged 18-45 to seek employment in Australia. She also mentioned forthcoming direct flights from Brisbane to Palau, with accessibility via Air Nauru to Palau for FSM residents.

Volunteer programs for capacity building and a Family Protection initiative were among the collaborative efforts discussed, with Governor Joseph emphasizing the importance of local involvement and contextual relevance.

In discussing other priorities including the Australian Royal Navy Compound in Nett and upcoming wharf development at Dekehtik where Australian-gifted Guardian class patrol boats are moored, Governor Joseph

also highlighted transportation issues to the outer islands advocating for regular and fixed schedules, to properly service the outer islands of Pohnpei State.

The meeting concluded with a reaffirmation of mutual commitment to fostering cooperation and advancing shared developmental goals between Pohnpei State and Australia, through the FSM National Government.



# Pohnpei State Governor engages in key discussions at Semi-Annual Joint Committee Meeting

## *Pohnpei Public Information*

May 2, 2024

**Joint Region Marianas, Guam**—Pohnpei State Governor Stevenson A. Joseph attended the Semi-Annual Joint Committee Meeting (JCM) held at Joint Region Marianas, focusing on Title 3 of the Compact of Free Association between the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the United States of America, concerning Security and Defense.

Rear Admiral Gregory Huffman, U.S. Navy, Commander of Joint Region Marianas, and Her Excellency Jennifer L. Johnson, US Ambassador to the FSM led the U.S. delegation with Vice President Aren B. Palik leading the FSM delegation.

Rear Admiral Huffman started the discussions with an announcement of the creation of Joint Task Force Marianas, a newly established organization under his leadership. This initiative aims to enhance engagement in security and defense matters with COFA states, including FSM, the Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Governor Stevenson A. Joseph and State Governors such as Hon. Alexander Narruhn (Governor of

Chuuk), Hon. Tulensa Palik (Governor of Kosrae), and Hon. Francis L. Itimai (Lt. Governor of Yap), joined Vice President Palik along with Acting Attorney General Leonito Bacalando Jr., and His Excellency Jackson Soram, FSM Ambassador to the USA joined the FSM side of discussions. Former President and current FSM Senator, Peter M. Christian, Speaker of the 23rd FSM Congress, Esmond B. Moses, Vice Speaker Robson Romolow and newly appointed Director of FSM Veterans Affairs, Mr. Hainrick Panuelo also joined the meeting.

Over two days, the meeting featured numerous presentations and productive discussions. Updates from various U.S. Federal Departments and agencies involved in the security and defense of the FSM were provided, including insights from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), various military branches, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Geospatial Agency (NGA) and other pertinent agencies under Title 3 of the Compact of Free Association. The FSM National Police and the FSM Maritime Wing delivered presentations on their current capabilities, missions, and updates.

During the discussions, the USA

reiterated its commitment to defend the FSM as if it were defending the US Homeland, in alignment with the Compact of Free Association principles. Similarly, the FSM reaffirmed its position to actively cooperate and collaborate to ensure that US activities related to security and defense receive unwavering support and assistance.

Notable upcoming engagements discussed included Pacific Partnership 2024 and Koa Moana 2024, whose previous iterations have provided substantial assistance to the people of the FSM through health and small-scale infrastructure projects.

In Pohnpei, plans are underway to construct a warehouse in the Dekehtik area to enhance logistical capabilities. Similarly, in other states like Yap, infrastructure enhancements such as lengthening and strengthening runways and improvements to seaports are underway.

Governor Stevenson A. Joseph



expressed gratitude for the opportunity to contribute to these vital discussions, emphasizing the importance of continued collaboration in advancing mutual interests and ensuring the security and prosperity of both FSM and the United States.

# Governor Joseph asserts Constitutional authority over cabinet nominations

## *Pohnpei Public Information*

May 9, 2024

**Pohnpei, May 9, 2024** – Governor Joseph has responded decisively to the Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee of the 11th Pohnpei Legislature's decision to refer the nomination of Mr. Hermis Edmund as the Director of the Department of Public Safety back to the Governor for reconsideration.

In a letter addressed to Speaker Yamaguchi dated April 23, 2024, Governor Joseph cited Section 10 of Article 9 of the Pohnpei Constitution, reaffirming the Governor's sole responsibility to nominate cabinet officers. The Governor highlighted the

constitutional parameters, emphasizing the separation of powers and the critical importance of adhering to the advice and consent procedure for nominations.

"To contrive any other process outside of the constitutional parameters of advice and consent procedure for nomination, we run the risk of usurpation of the separation of powers which can give free rein to a dominant branch of government to exercise the right to make/prescribe and at the same time enforce the law," stated Governor Joseph in his letter.

Governor Joseph's response underscores the foundational principles of governance and ensures the integrity of the constitutional framework. In the same letter, Governor Joseph reaffirmed his nomination of Mr. Hermis Edmund, reflecting his commitment to upholding the rule of law and advancing the interests of Pohnpei State.



# Courtesy visit of FSM Social Security Administration Board of Trustees to Governor Stevenson A. Joseph

*Pohnpei Public Information*

May 13, 2024

**Kolonia, Pohnpei**—The Governor’s office hosted a courtesy call from the Federated States of Micronesia Social Security Administration (FSMSSA) Board of Trustees, led by Chairman Jack Harris, along with Trustee Jason Poll representing Chuuk State, Social Security Administrator Mr. Leon Panuelo Jr., and Pohnpei Social Security Administration Branch Manager Felixina Irons.

During the visit, Administrator Mr. Leon Panuelo Jr. provided an insightful overview of the state of the FSM Social Security system. He highlighted that one of the main challenges facing the system is the source of funds. While the number of beneficiaries continues to rise, the working population, which constitutes the primary source of funds, remains stagnant. However, Mr. Panuelo also noted the significant positive impact of the recent 45% salary increase, which has provided a notable boost.

Mr. Panuelo shared valuable statistics, revealing that there are approximately 6,800 beneficiaries nationwide, with roughly 3,000 beneficiaries residing in Pohnpei. Moreover, he disclosed that approximately \$2 million in benefits is disbursed monthly, with around \$800,000 allocated to beneficiaries in Pohnpei alone.

Highlighting the collaborative effort between the FSM Congress and the Social Security Administration, Mr. Panuelo expressed gratitude for the ongoing support. He mentioned that the Social Security fund receives an annual subsidy of \$1 million from the FSM Congress, with an additional \$500,000 recently included.

Both Chairman Jack and Administrator Panuelo expressed heartfelt gratitude to Governor Joseph and the Pohnpei State Government for their unwavering support, particularly in providing housing for the Pohnpei branch on public lands. They also conveyed their eagerness to expand operations further, ensuring the effective provision of services to all citizens.

In response, Governor Joseph expressed his sincere appreciation for the courtesy visit and the insightful updates on social security in the FSM. He commended the efforts of the FSM Social Security Administration (FSMSSA) in addressing the welfare needs of the people of Pohnpei and the nation at large. Governor Joseph also revealed Pohnpei State’s exploration into implementing a pension plan system, emphasizing his full support for FSMSSA’s ongoing crucial work in Pohnpei State and across the nation.



# Pohnpei State’s Track & Field athletes gear up for Micronesian Games

*Pohnpei Public Information*

May 8, 2024

**Nett, Pohnpei**—Pohnpei State’s finest track & field athletes are set to compete in the upcoming Micronesian Games in Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands. Under the watchful

eye of T.H. Francisco L. Ioanis, Lt. Governor of Pohnpei and Chairman of the Micronesian Games Committee, the athletes have been honing their skills at the PICS track & field. With determination and skill, they are ready to represent Pohnpei with pride on the regional stage.



# Pacific Youth Council convening identifies priorities for youth development

*Pacific Community (SPC)*

**May 5, 2024**

**Nadi, Fiji**—As part of a regional convening, the Pacific Youth Council (PYC) and National Youth Council (NYC) representatives from 14 Pacific Island countries and territories the need to strengthen collaboration, inclusivity, and governance as the top three priorities for youth development in an outcome document.

The outcome document will be endorsed by the PYC board and made available in the weeks to come.

Held in Nadi, Fiji, from April 29 to May 3, 2024, under the theme "Toe Timata le Ūpega – Cast the Net Anew", this gathering brought together stakeholders, including civil society organisations, international development agencies, and youth advocates, to address pressing challenges and opportunities facing Pacific youth.

The convening and the outcome document underscored the need for resourcing youth-led initiatives, integrating Pacific youth into core regional strategies, policies, and frameworks, enhancing climate and disaster risk reduction efforts, labour mobility, safeguarding the oceans and environment, fostering intergenerational dialogue, prioritising entrepreneurship education, and improving mental health support services for youth, among other critical areas.

As part of the weeklong event, the PYC also elected its new board members and had the opportunity to review key governance documents, including its strategic plan and constitution.

Incoming Chair of PYC, Mr Mahoney Mori, shared that this PYC convening is historical because, as a collective, the PYC members have handed over the reins to Micronesia, allowing Micronesia to take the lead for the first time.

"I thank our brothers and sisters from Melanesia and Polynesia for demonstrating great leadership for

our region by taking a step towards achieving our long, ambitious call for an inclusive Pacific. Polynesia is now proudly passing the baton to Micronesia, leaving bigger shoes to fill," he said.

Mrs Tahere Siisiialafia-Mau, the outgoing Chair of PYC, highlighted, "My theory of change is straightforward; Youth are the spearheads of Pacific development and progress. This notion is critical as I acknowledge the ripple effects of our work extend far beyond our immediate scope and can ultimately spearhead our Pacific communities towards unparalleled development and prosperity".

The event was facilitated by the Pacific Community (SPC) with funding support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through its PROJECT Governance Programme and the Australian Government through its Pacific Women Lead programme respectively.

USAID Deputy Director of Mission, Mr Mohib Ahmed, who delivered remarks at the event's closure, emphasised to the youth leaders that "the outcomes of your efforts will shape the trajectory of Pacific youth for generations to come."

He highlighted that USAID, through its PROJECT Governance, supports this gathering because by investing in youth leaders and providing skill development opportunities, we can unlock the full potential of our youth, driving economic growth and prosperity across the Pacific.

"Engaging youth and emerging leaders in development has been pivotal in addressing pressing issues such as climate change and gender disparity, aligning with the shared goals of the United States' foreign policy and the priorities outlined in the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent," Mr Ahmed said.

Ms Gabriella McMahon, the Pacific Community's Human Rights and Social Inclusion Advisor, emphasised, "In the youth development space, there has been a long-standing tendency to underestimate not just the inherent potential of youth but also their existing capabilities."

"We are committed to further enhancing youth inclusion by ensuring they are in the driver's seat right from the beginning of the journey."

She shared that the PYC convening this week is the first in a set of regional convenings planned to take place in the region to map and build the momentum for a sustainable future for Pacific youth and communities. The series of regional convenings facilitated by SPC also include the Senior Officials Meetings in August and the Pacific Youth Ministers meeting planned for September of this year.

Outcomes from these meetings will inform the update of the Pacific Youth Development Framework (PYDF). The PYDF is a strategic document which guides and supports youth development initiatives across the Pacific region. The last iteration of the PYDF expired in 2023.



# USAID supports Pohnpei State enhance local waste management systems and advocate 3R practices to combat ocean plastic pollution

U.S. Embassy to the FSM

May 9, 2024

**Pohnpei**—Standing behind the global movement to combat plastic pollution, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is working with the Pohnpei State Government to improve local waste management systems and advocate for 3R (reduce, reuse, recycle) practices to prevent plastics from flowing into the ocean. On May 2 and 3, through USAID’s Clean Cities, Blue Ocean (CCBO) program, the agency facilitated a workshop on how to advocate for waste segregation and recycling. It was attended by representatives from state agencies, municipal governments, civil society and non-government organizations, academe, and international organizations. The workshop helped participants understand the need for waste segregation and recycling to enhance waste management systems and built their capacity to develop and implement advocacy plans.

“Addressing the challenge of ocean plastic pollution and its far-reaching impacts requires collective action,” said Jennifer Johnson, U.S. Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia. “USAID is honored

to work with Pohnpei State, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management (DECHEM) in advocating the 3R practices among community members to stem the flow of plastics into our oceans.”

Since 2023, USAID has been providing Kolonia and nearby municipalities in Pohnpei State with technical assistance on how to enhance waste management systems and promote 3R practices in communities. Last year, USAID facilitated a Solid Waste Capacity Index for Local government self-assessment process with Kolonia Town Government and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to help them measure their waste management capacity and identify areas for interventions, funding allocation, and investments. USAID also held a training workshop for Pohnpei municipalities on social and behavior change communication to help stimulate positive changes among community members towards waste management.

USAID, in partnership with EPA, the Kolonia Town Government, and the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), are preparing to pilot a waste



management program that segregates plastic recyclables to help increase the lifespan of Pohnpei’s sanitary landfill. The plastics will be brought to the CRS CREATE Center, an upcycling facility that will be piloted and established in Kolonia with the support of USAID. Through this facility, community members will have access to machinery, tools, and training from skilled staff to create products (such as tiles, boxes, and combs) made from recycled plastics, which can be sold for profit on the local market.

About USAID’s clean cities, blue ocean program

Clean Cities, Blue Ocean was launched

in August 2019 as the U.S. Agency for International Development’s flagship program to respond to the ocean plastics pollution crisis. The six-year (2019-2025), \$67 million program works at the global level and in specific, rapidly urbanizing focal countries to address ocean plastics directly at their source. By strengthening waste management systems and building circular economies, city by city, the program builds sustainable solutions that reduce ocean plastics while empowering vulnerable populations and mitigating pollution that affects human health and our climate. For more information, please visit [www.urban-links.org/ccbo](http://www.urban-links.org/ccbo).

# Focus on Pacific future as SG Puna leads final mission to Pacific

Pacific Islands Forum

May 13th, 2024

**Rarotonga, Cook Islands**– Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General Henry Puna is embarking on a pivotal mission, focusing on Pacific regionalism for the future.

SG Puna’s visit to Rarotonga is part of a Forum program of national missions aimed at fostering stronger ties and understanding of regional unity and how the Forum delivers on its mandate. This mission also carries emotional significance in that it is SG Puna’s final mission before completing his tenure as PIF Secretary General, and it is in his homeland where it all began. The Cook Islands visit will begin with formal courtesy calls on the Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum, Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown,

Minister of Foreign Affairs Tingika Elikana, and the Secretary of Foreign Affairs Tapaeru Herrmann.

The PIF delegation, with advisers supporting SG Puna and Director of Governance and Engagement Sione Tekiteki, will then spend the day in national consultations with Cook Islands representatives, speaking to the history and state of Pacific regionalism, the 2050 Strategy securing our Blue Pacific future, and action for gender equality. Other specific areas for discussions will cover the Small Islands States grouping within the Forum, and a review of how regional organisations serve their founding mandates towards the Pacific at 2050.

“There is strong agreement and focus on ensuring our regional agencies can work smarter to serve our Pacific

nations. We are also taking a deeper look at how groupings such as the Small Islands States Leaders are serving unity and regional cooperation. All this work requires national talanoa sessions to really help us see how regional public policy is being delivered and implemented,” said SG Puna.

“Three years ago, I came into this role determined to ensure the values of Talanoa and respectful sharing and hearing of views, would be a strong feature of how the secretariat listens to the leaders, and the people of the Pacific. National consultations are an important part of our monitoring and evaluation and must continue to be a



key feature of engagement with our Blue Pacific continent,” he said.

Mindful of the Forum’s founding mandate, Economic and Trade priorities will also feature in the consultations. Presentations and feedback on a new Pacific roadmap for Economic Development, Private Sector and Climate Finance strategies, and updates on the multi-million-dollar Pacific Resilience Facility will feature during the discussions today through to Wednesday 15th May.

# UOG launches new Data Science and Library Science Master's programs

University of Guam

May 9, 2024

**Guam**—During its regular meeting on April 25, the University of Guam Board of Regents approved two new graduate degree programs to launch in the Fanuchãnan (Fall) 2024 semester — a Master of Science in Data Science and a Master of Library and Information Science.

The UOG School of Education and University Libraries have partnered to offer the Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) aimed at developing a professional workforce for the region's school, public, and academic libraries and specialized collections. The program will also offer a graduate certificate in School Librarianship.

"Across the region there is a need to train new library and information resource professionals," said Dr. Monique Storie, Dean of University Libraries.

There are 182 libraries and other collection institutions across Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern

Mariana Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia. However, according to a study from UOG, there are less than 30 library professionals among them with advanced degrees.

### Demand for Data Science

In response to the rising demand for data scientists across the U.S. — an increase of 35% over the next eight years is projected by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics — the UOG College of Natural and Applied Sciences aims to equip graduates with a strong foundation in statistical modeling, machine learning, management, and analysis of large data sets.

Data scientists work in a multitude of fields from finance to marketing to science and across disciplines and use their analytical tools and techniques to extract meaningful insights from data and present them to stakeholders.

"Our graduates will be adept at transforming data into actionable insights, a skill that's increasingly crucial among all industries," shared Dr. Rachael Leon Guerrero, Dean of the College of Natural and Applied



Sciences.

Graduate students in the data science program will have the opportunity to receive support through grant-funded projects and contribute to research initiatives at UOG, and gaining experience and skills needed to work in both academic and industry settings.

The University also plans to launch a one-year graduate certificate in Data Science soon.

### Addressing Workforce Needs

These programs underscore UOG's commitment to workforce development in the region, following the launches of

the Doctor of Education in Instruction and Academic Leadership, the Master of Accountancy, and certificates in Cybersecurity and Island Sustainability.

"These new programs are indicative of how the University partners with our communities to train up the professional workforce of tomorrow," stated Dr. Anita Borja Enriquez, UOG President.

For more information about the Master of Library and Information Science, Master of Science in Data Science, and other graduate degree programs, contact the UOG Graduate Studies Office at [graduatestudies@triton.uog.edu](mailto:graduatestudies@triton.uog.edu).

# United Airlines launches Tokyo/Haneda-Guam route

**Daily Tokyo/Haneda-Guam service provides convenient access to and from Tokyo's city center United hosts gate celebrations in both locations for passengers on inaugural flights**

United Airlines

**Guam, May 2, 2024** - United Airlines launched the much-anticipated Tokyo/Haneda to Guam service on May 1, 2024, with gate events in Tokyo and Guam to celebrate with passengers traveling on the inaugural flight between the two locations.

The new service departs Guam at 7:05 p.m. and arrives in Tokyo/Haneda at 10:00 p.m. the same day. The return flight from Tokyo/Haneda to Guam departs at 11:55 p.m. and arrives on Guam at 4:45 a.m. the following morning. United operates the flight with a 737-800 with 166 seats, 16 of which are in business class.

The new daily nonstop service provides greater choice for customers in Tokyo to travel to Guam and creates a more

direct link between Guam and Tokyo's city center. From Tokyo/Haneda, customers will also benefit from 30 plus connections to destinations across Japan with United's Star Alliance partner, ANA. United now offers direct services to Guam from five airports in Japan – Tokyo/Haneda, Tokyo/Narita, Osaka, Fukuoka, and Nagoya.

Kenichi Kiriya, Director of Sales, Japan and Micronesia at United, leads United's dedicated Sales team in Japan who work to promote Guam as a preferred vacation destination for Japanese customers.

He said, "The new route creates a more direct link for customers living in the Greater Tokyo area and provides another convenient way to travel to Guam. Tokyo/Haneda is a game-changer for travelers from Japan,

providing an easier and more convenient commute to the airport for our Guam flight. Customers can complete a full day at work and then travel to the Haneda airport, only 13 minutes away by train to check in for their overnight flight to Guam. They will wake up in paradise ready to begin their vacation."

### Tokyo/Haneda (HND) – Guam (GUM)

Tokyo/Haneda (HND) – Guam (GUM)

Flight	From	To	Depart	Arrive	Frequency	Aircraft
UA849	GUM	HND	7:05 PM	10:00 PM	Daily	Boeing 737-800
UA848	HND	GUM	11:55 PM	4:45 AM	Daily	Boeing 737-800

### More connectivity for Guam customers

Sam Shinohara, Managing Director for Airport Operations – Asia/Pacific at United, noted that the Tokyo/Haneda-Guam flights will operate year-round and will create a more direct link to what is considered the most convenient airport in Tokyo.

"The new Tokyo/Haneda-Guam route is beneficial to customers in both directions.

*Continued on next page*

## Opinion Editorial

# Asia-Pacific's alarming loss of biodiversity – a hidden threat to the food security and habitat of our future generations

By Jong-Jin Kim, Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

In recent months, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and others have pointed to an increase in food insecurity and 'hunger hotspots' in various parts of Asia and the Pacific. While conflicts and climate crises can carry some of the blame, we must acknowledge that the slow but steady erosion of our region's biodiversity is an equal or even greater threat to our future food security.

FAO's most recent outlook report on Asia-Pacific's Forest Sector found that biodiversity and ecosystem resilience in natural forests are declining along with the capacity of these forests to deliver water and soil protection, climate regulation, amenity and cultural values, and wood, foods, and medicines. Reversing this trend must be a priority for all countries in the

region now and in the next decade to ensure our survival, especially in the face of dangerous climate change.

While this biodiversity loss is a crisis for Asia and the Pacific in many ways, the impact it can have on our ability to achieve future food security poses a serious threat. We know from FAO's recent reports, that the Asia-Pacific region is home to half of the world's undernourished people and that nearly 45% cannot afford a sustainable and healthy diet. At the heart of some of these nutrition challenges is a food system that is currently founded on a narrow genetic base of 10-15 crops. We have lost much of the diversity that was, historically, commonplace in our diets and increasing dietary diversity is a key part of the solution to ending malnutrition.

According to the 'The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture', published by the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for

Food and Agriculture Assessments, biodiversity for food and agriculture (BFA) contributes to food security and nutrition in many ways. This includes the enabling of food to be produced in a wide range of environments, helping to maintain the stability of food supplies throughout the year and resilience to shocks such as droughts and pest outbreaks, supplying a wide variety of nutritionally diverse foods.

Indeed, wild biodiversity is an important source of food for many people, particularly in poorer parts of our region. It also provides raw material for crop breeding programmes and contributes to the supply of many ecosystem services that support food production.

So we all need to wake up to this urgent need to better protect Asia-Pacific's biodiversity, for the good of ourselves, our food security and nutritional health, our environment, and to safeguard those of our future generations.

This month we observe the International Day for Biological Diversity. Its slogan, indeed its call to action, is that we must all "Be part of the Plan" to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity by supporting actions called for in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

At FAO, we are working to that end in our efforts to help our Member Nations enhance efforts at biodiversity and sustainability in agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries, and forestry, particularly through our updating of action plans to reach the 2030 biodiversity targets. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure a sustainable food systems transformation across the region, to achieve food security, nutrition, and livelihoods – especially for local communities and indigenous people who rely on the existing biodiversity.

Given the importance and the increased demand of aquatic foods in our region, and worldwide, FAO has committed to a vision for Aquaculture Transformation for Asia and the Pacific. This will enable the sustainable intensification of aquaculture by improving sustainability

and reducing the environmental impacts of production. It also aims to harness the rich and diverse cultural foundation of aquaculture in this region, by strengthening its contribution to food security and improved nutrition, while also securing livelihoods and socioeconomic development, and environmental recovery.

Halting deforestation and forest degradation, while enabling forest and landscape restoration, are also vital components of addressing the challenge of biodiversity loss and climate change. Some 15 years ago, FAO and its partners UNDP and UN Environment launched the REDD+ Programme. 'REDD+' is the abbreviation for 'Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries.' FAO, as co-lead for the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and host of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission, is working to support countries in upscaling restoration with an aim for better livelihoods and environment. FAO also provides technical expertise directly linked to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

With food security as our mandate, along with ending poverty and reducing inequalities, FAO in Asia and the Pacific is responding to help shape national pathways for a food systems transformation. As part of these transformative efforts at country and regional levels, it is imperative to promote sustainable natural resources management, as well as protecting critical ecosystems to conserve biodiversity, protect land, soil, and water – while reducing food loss and energy use.

All of these approaches complement FAO's overarching global framework to help our Members achieve better production, better nutrition, better environment, and better life for all – leaving no one behind. I believe that, together with many stakeholders, we can 'walk the talk' necessary to achieve this. That's if everyone, including every woman and man in this region, steps forward to 'Be part of the Plan'.

### ...United Toyko/Haneda

*Continued from previous page*

Aside from a convenient travel option for Tokyo residents, Guam customers can access downtown Tokyo and area attractions with greater convenience," Shinohara said.

With this addition, United will operate six daily flights from Tokyo/Haneda, with services to New York/Newark, Washington D.C., Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and now Guam. United also operates up to 10 daily flights to Tokyo's Narita airport, with services to New York/Newark, Houston, Denver, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Guam and Saipan. United offers more seats from the United States to Tokyo than any other U.S. airline.

Shinohara added, "Our United team worked diligently to secure this route. Japan is an important tourism market for Guam, and the new daily flight from Tokyo/Haneda will provide added service from Japan's largest city."

As Guam's hometown airline for more than 55 years, United offers more than 87 weekly flights to 14 destinations and is the only airline today flying between Guam and Osaka, Fukuoka and Nagoya in Japan, islands in the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and Palau.



## U.S. Department of Defense Secretary Austin concludes trip to Hawaii

*U.S. Department of Defense*

*May 6, 2024*

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III concluded his travel to Honolulu, Hawaii, today. During his visit, Secretary Austin met with counterparts from Australia, Japan, and the Philippines, presided over the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) Change of Command, engaged with service members, and spoke with distinguished guests from the Freely Associated States.

Secretary Austin's Meetings on Thursday, May 2

Secretary Austin met bilaterally at Camp Smith with Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Richard Marles to discuss the U.S.-Australia Alliance. The two officials surveyed a range of areas where both countries are continuing unprecedented work to deepen their defense cooperation, including force posture initiatives, defense industrial base collaboration, and partnerships across the Pacific Islands region.

Secretary Austin also met bilaterally at Camp Smith with Japanese Minister of Defense Kihara Minoru to advance historic momentum in the U.S.-Japan Alliance. The two officials discussed ongoing efforts to implement agreements announced during Prime Minister Kishida's Official Visit to Washington, as well as opportunities to further strengthen the Alliance by increasing cooperation with Indo-Pacific partners.

Secretary Austin, Deputy Prime Minister Marles, and Minister Kishida then convened a Trilateral Defense Ministers' Meeting (TDMM), where the three officials highlighted landmark trilateral achievements made in implementing a range of cooperative activities announced by the United States, Australia, and Japan in June 2023. The three officials signed a trilateral technology research and testing arrangement and also announced plans to conduct a regional integrated air and missile defense live-fire exercise in 2027.

Secretary Austin, Deputy Prime

Minister Marles, Minister Kishida, and Philippines Secretary of National Defense Gilberto Teodoro then held the second-ever meeting of defense ministers from Australia, Japan, the Philippines, and the United States. The officials highlighted significant collaboration among their four countries to advance a shared vision for a free, open, secure, and prosperous Indo-Pacific. The officials then convened the first-ever joint press conference by the defense ministers of their four countries at Camp Smith.

Secretary Austin and Secretary Teodoro also met in Honolulu to discuss bilateral defense cooperation between the United States and the Philippines following President Marcos' historic April 2024 visit to Washington and trilateral meetings with President Biden and Prime Minister Kishida.

Secretary Austin's Engagements on Friday, May 3

Secretary Austin presided over the USINDOPACOM Change of Command in Honolulu, where he delivered remarks recognizing outgoing commander Admiral John Aquilino, incoming commander Admiral Samuel Paparo, and the hundreds of thousands of American service members across USINDOPACOM's Area of Responsibility.

On the margins of the Change of Command, Secretary Austin also spoke with leaders from the Freely Associated States (FAS), including President Surangel Whipps, Jr. of the Republic of Palau, President Wesley Simina of the Federated States of Micronesia, and Minister Kalani Kaneko of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Their meeting follows the historic passage of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2024 in March, which funded a twenty-year extension of U.S. economic assistance to the FAS under the Compacts.

Secretary Austin concluded his trip to Hawaii with a series of engagements with service members, where he thanked them and their families for their contributions to the safety and security of the American people.

## Australia to support second phase of Governance for Resilient Development in the Pacific

*United Nations Development Programme*

*9 May 2024*

*Suva, Fiji* – With Pacific Island countries experiencing the increasing impacts of climate change and disasters – alongside subsequent economic and social development challenges – Australia has

furthered its support to climate action in the Pacific by committing to a second phase of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) Governance for Resilient Development in the Pacific (Gov4Res) project.

The second phase of the Gov4Res project will build upon its already-resounding success in managing development through a risk informed lens.

Pacific Island leaders and people have clearly articulated a different future – one of inclusive resilience. The second phase of the Gov4Res project will create spaces for developing and implementing progressive and tailored shifts towards more resilient development. By nurturing sharing and learning on the same topics, the team will work with Pacific decision makers and stakeholders to drive a more coordinated and resilient approach to development.

The Gov4Res project will work through country systems – including national and local government financial systems – to promote Pacific led and determined approaches to strengthening resilience. To kick off its second phase it will host a Leadership for Resilient Development event at the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat this week.

Four key strategies for effective implementation have been adopted for the second phase of the project:

- Demonstrating and Influencing
- Country Specific Approaches
- Promoting Pacific Leadership
- Connecting and Partnerships



Munkhtuya Altangerel, Resident Representative of the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji, at the launch event for the second phase of the project said that UNDP and the Australian Government recognize that “while there are no simple and fully articulated pathways towards Pacific resilience, Pacific leaders and people have made it clear that it is their future to define and create. The work of Gov4Res therefore will continue to be under the leadership of Pacific Island countries and people.”

Australian Deputy High Commissioner to Fiji, Clair McNamara reiterated that Australia is responding to Pacific priorities by putting climate resilient action at the heart of its development programs across the Pacific.

“We know that real and urgent action is key, and we are responding to Pacific priorities by putting climate resilient action at the heart of our development programs across the Pacific.”

The second phase of the UNDP Gov4Res Portfolio is supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

The launch took place in Suva on 9 May.

# WCPFC represented at Third Regional Workshop on Operationalizing Cooperative Mechanisms to Combat IUU Fishing

*The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)*

*April 23 - 25, 2024*

**Da Nang, Vietnam-** The Third Regional Workshop on Operationalizing Cooperative Mechanisms to Combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing took place from 23 to 25 April in Da Nang, Viet Nam. The three-day workshop was organized by the U.S. Diplomatic Mission in Vietnam through the Department of Narcotics and International Law Enforcement (INL) and the U.S. Coast Guard, in coordination with Vietnam's Department of Fisheries Surveillance (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development). The workshop gathered over 70 delegates, including international and regional experts in fisheries law enforcement from twelve countries: Australia, Canada, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Vietnam. At the opening, Mr. Ryan McKean, Director of INL at the U.S. Embassy, highlighted the global challenge of IUU fishing, emphasizing its threat to the sustainability of fish stocks and the livelihoods of people in Southeast Asia and beyond. He stressed that cooperation should aim to enhance maritime law enforcement and combat IUU fishing effectively, ensuring the protection and sustainable use of marine resources for future generations.



*Participants at the Third Regional Workshop on Operationalizing Cooperative Mechanisms to Combat IUU Fishing, held Da Nang, Vietnam, April 23 - 25 2024. Dr Manarangi-Trott is seated in the front row, sixth from the left side.*

WCPFC Compliance Manager, Dr Lara Manarangi-Trott, participated in the workshop as an invited speaker, to provide an overview of the role of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission in supporting sustainable tuna fisheries in the western and central Pacific Ocean. The discussions focused on available tools, processes, and information to support WCPFC Members and Cooperating Non-Members in their fisheries enforcement activities to combat IUU fishing.

“IUU fishing undermines the very foundation of sustainable fisheries management, threatening marine ecosystems and the livelihoods and food security of communities, particularly in small island developing States and participating territories in the Western Pacific Ocean. This workshop highlighted the crucial roles of coast guard personnel, port inspectors and regional fisheries management organisations such as WCPFC, in combating IUU fishing. By working together, we can forge global partnerships and innovate solutions to eradicate IUU fishing from our oceans”, said Dr. Manarangi-Trott.

The Workshop served as a platform to strengthen the capacity of participating governments and regional partners to counter contemporary maritime challenges, such as IUU Fishing. Other substantive discussion areas included whole-of-government coordination, countering illicit drug trafficking, port security, detecting and combating forced labour

on fishing vessels, maritime law enforcement including high seas boarding and inspection activities and best practices to exchange information on maritime threats.

WCPFC’s participation at this workshop complements the multi-year support that WCPFC has provided since 2009 to Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam through the Western Pacific East Asia Improved Monitoring (WPEA-ITM) Project, in support of national and international cooperation for the sustainable management of highly migratory fish stocks in the Western Pacific and East Asia Seas. The Western Pacific and East Asia Seas region is a key fishing area for the WCPFC. In 2022, Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam countries in this region caught about 29.6% of all tunas (758,172 tons) in the WCPO, including 304,157 tons of yellowfin tuna, which was nearly 44% of all yellowfin tuna caught in the WCPO.

For further information, please contact: [wcpfc@wcpfc.int](mailto:wcpfc@wcpfc.int)

### About WCPFC

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) is one of five global tuna regional fisheries management organizations, responsible for the conservation and sustainable use of highly migratory fish stocks, particularly tuna, in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. Established in 2004, the WCPFC comprises 34 member countries and territories, and seven cooperating-non-members dedicated to promoting the sustainable management of the world’s largest tuna fishery. The WCPFC Secretariat is headquartered in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia.

The objective of the Western Pacific East Asia Improved Tuna Monitoring (WPEA-ITM) Project is to build capacity in Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam to fully engage in regional initiatives to conserve and manage fisheries for highly migratory fish stocks. The Project is currently supported by the New Zealand Government, and extension of support for the Project for four years was announced at the end of 2023.

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