

# Pohnpei's Soccer Association wraps up successful Kids Soccer Tournament

By Liz Terk  
Pohnpei Soccer Association

May 29, 2024

**Pohnpei**—Pohnpei's Soccer Association (PSA) recently concluded its 3rd annual Kids Soccer tournament, marking the end of another successful season for young soccer enthusiasts in the region. The tournament, held on May 25th, saw over 75 children aged 5-13 showcase their skills on the field, despite challenging weather conditions.

The PSA's Kids Soccer program has experienced significant growth over the past year, with more than 60 children

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Photo by Stephen Jaynes



Photo by Stephen Jaynes



Photo by PSA



Photo by Bill Jaynes

# Honoring the fallen: The FSM and U.S. hold Memorial Day ceremony at sea

FSM Information Services

May 26, 2024

**Pohnpei**—Today, a solemn wreath-laying ceremony took place at sea near Dekehtik to commemorate Memorial Day, honoring the brave men and women who have given their lives in service to their countries.

The ceremony was marked by tributes from US Ambassador H.E. Jennifer Johnson and FSM Director of Veterans Affairs T.H. Hainrick Panuelo, who shared words in memory of the fallen heroes. Both dignitaries participated in the laying of wreaths, symbolizing the deep respect and gratitude held for those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

In attendance were members of the Pohnpei Veterans Association, representatives from the US Embassy, and FSM government representatives including Secretary of Foreign Affairs, T.H. Lorin Robert. The gathering

[Click here for continuation on page 5](#)



Photos by Stephen Jaynes

# ABC launches ABC Radio Australia in Micronesia

*Australian Broadcasting Corporation*

**May 15, 2024**

**Pohnpei**—ABC Radio Australia has expanded FM transmission services to the island of Pohnpei in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), where residents can now access the station’s full suite of programs via the frequency 89.1FM.

region in our programming, as well as bringing stories from right across the Pacific to the people of Pohnpei.”

ABC Radio Australia can now be heard on 89.1FM in Pohnpei, including recently launched programs Sista Sounds, Pacific Pulse, Pacific Soul and the afternoon edition of Nesia Daily.

There are multiple ways to listen to ABC Radio Australia – live via internet streaming or in your area through 24-hour FM stations, or catch up with full episodes on ABC Pacific online.

The launch of the FM service is part of an historic expansion of ABC Radio Australia’s FM footprint in the Pacific and follows the recent launch of the service in Palau, a first for the northern Pacific region.

In coming weeks and months, more countries and locations will also receive the service including Kokopo in Papua New Guinea, Nauru, Tuvalu, Kiribati, the Cook Islands and the Marshall Islands.

ABC International Services Head Claire M. Gorman said: “The launch of ABC Radio Australia in Pohnpei marks another important step in the expansion of our transmission footprint in the northern Pacific and we welcome our new audiences in the Federated States of Micronesia to explore the extensive range of Pacific-focused programs.”

Australian Ambassador to FSM Jenny Grant-Curnow co-hosted a launch event to mark the occasion which was attended by Pohnpei State Governor the Hon. Stevenson A. Joseph and ABC Radio Australia Content Director Faleagafulu Inga Stünzner.

According to Faleagafulu: “Our increasing engagement with Pohnpei and Micronesia via the launch of the ABC Radio Australia service will lead to expanded coverage of this beautiful




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Bill Jaynes  
Managing Editor

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**June 19, 2024**

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

**Monday, June 17, 2024**

# USAID-Funded Aquaculture Project in Pohnpei boosts food security and economic growth

By *Bill Jaynes*  
The Kaselehlie Press

May 17, 2024

**Pohnpei**— Representatives of the U.S. and Pohnpei Governments and the Marine and Environment Research Institute of Pohnpei (MERIP) gathered at MERIP headquarters in Madolenihmw on May 17 to mark the successful conclusion of a USAID-funded aquaculture project.

The \$391,900 grant, made possible through USAID’s Pacific American Fund, whose representatives were present at the closing event, funded the "Responding to COVID-19 through Small-Scale Aquaculture to Improve Food Security in Pohnpei" project. This project was initiated to address the pressing challenges posed by the pandemic and climate change in Pohnpei. Over the 36-month project duration, MERIP focused on empowering local communities by developing sustainable farming practices for the *Hippopus hippopus* giant clams, providing a locally available and economically viable source of animal protein.

The MERIP project achieved significant milestones, spawning and rearing giant clams at its facility before transferring them to community farms. Pilot training farms were established in each of the four communities in Pohnpei, cultivating approximately 10,000 juvenile giant clams. As the project progressed, selected farmers received support to establish their own clam farms, marking a transition from subsistence to market-based agriculture.

MERIP Executive Director Simon Ellis told the small gathered audience that although the project experienced some setbacks, including at least four incidents of local poaching of the giant clams before they reached maturity, the project overall was an astounding success.

“There have not been a lot of ocean-based projects in embassies where I’ve worked around the world,” said U.S. Ambassador Jennifer Johnson during her remarks. “So, I was fascinated when I read about this rare, special project. In fact, when I was telling my family about it, my daughters asked if they



could join me today so that they can see it for themselves. As they study science in their classes, it is also important for them to see the connection between how science can be combined with local knowledge of the oceans and reefs to improve the food supply and increase incomes in local communities.”

Indeed, the project has been all about development and education to accomplish exactly the goals Ambassador Johnson mentioned. The grant activities facilitated the development of 20 individual or family clam farms, benefitting 40 local farmers, including women and youth. Approximately 1,200 people across low-income communities now have improved access to healthy seafood, leading to enhanced food security and income for 20 families. The MERIP project, with its focus on community engagement and co-creation, exemplifies the dedication to locally driven and context-specific approaches in mitigating climate-related challenges in Pohnpei. The project also included dozens of educational presentations for students at Pohnpei schools.

MERIP Board Chairman Eugene Joseph spoke of the history and work of MERIP since its founding in 1997. He said that one of the cornerstones of MERIP’s

initiatives is the development of small aquaculture businesses in rural, coastal communities. “This effort, primarily centered in Pohnpei, works hand-in-hand with the Marine Protected Areas program. This collaboration aims to replace incomes lost due to decreased fishing activities, ensuring that conservation efforts do not come at the cost of local livelihoods,” he said.

“MERIP stands as a testament to the power of innovative, community-driven approaches to sustainable development,” Joseph said. “By fostering environmentally and economically viable practices, MERIP not only protects our precious natural resources but also ensures that the communities of Pohnpei thrive.”

“Through comprehensive efforts, the Office of Economic Affairs and its Marine Development Section work tirelessly to promote sustainable economic development in Pohnpei,” said Kukuleen Gallen, who at the time was the Acting Director of Pohnpei’s Resources and Development department. “They are dedicated to creating an environment where economic growth is achieved without compromising the natural beauty and resources of our island. It is at this juncture where our department



intersects with the mission of MERIP, which has worked for almost 20 years to promote sustainable aquaculture farming in Pohnpei. This current project, farming of giant clams for food, further strengthens Pohnpei’s marine food security.”

As MERIP staff members gave tours showing off their coral and several other aquaculture projects, Ambassador Johnson said, “This innovative aquaculture project addresses immediate needs and also sets a clear path toward sustainability, fostering economic development in Pohnpei.”

Those who attended the ceremony were later offered boat tours by MERIP staff members of some of the giant clam farms.

## Significant Progress Made in Typhoon Wutip reconstruction in Chuuk

*International Organization for Migration*

**June 3, 2024**

**Chuuk** – A delegation from the Federated States of Micronesia's (FSM) Department of Environment, Climate Change, and Emergency Management (DECEM) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) recently visited infrastructure reconstruction projects managed by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) from 25-27 May in Chuuk.

The projects are part of the Typhoon Wutip Reconstruction Project, supported by USAID and are part of the United States Government's response to rebuilding efforts under the Compact of Free Association Agreement with the FSM.

The project has fully constructed and handed over 135 houses, each equipped with individual 1,600-gallon water tanks, to community members who lost their homes to the typhoon. Additionally, the project has constructed and completed 32 public infrastructures, with two more underway. These include schools, health centres and community facilities that also serve



as safe houses during disasters.

During the visit, DECEM Secretary, Andrew Yatilman expressed his appreciation for the extensive reach of the project and its significant impact on building resilience among island communities. He highlighted key areas for continued collaboration and commended the positive changes brought by the reconstruction efforts.

John Piggott, USAID Engineering Officer, echoed Secretary Yatilman's sentiments, emphasizing the project's success in providing climate-resistant houses and strengthening public infrastructure. "This project is a testament to the long-standing partnership between USAID and the Government of FSM and reflects our concerted effort to provide sustainable solutions to ever-growing climate

threats," he said.

Before visiting to the lagoon islands of Chuuk, the delegation paid a courtesy call to the Honourable Governor Alexander Narruhn of Chuuk State, presenting the objectives of their mission. IOM Chief of Mission, Salvatore Sortino, thanked the Governor for the State's commitment to ensure strengthened disaster preparedness and recovery mechanisms.

"The State's unwavering support to IOM's reconstruction work, including in overcoming strenuous operational challenges over the past several years, has been instrumental to the success of the project," Sortino added.

Over the two-day visit, the team observed newly

constructed homes and refurbished public infrastructure in Udot, Uman, Polle, Tol and Fanapanges islands in Chuuk Lagoon. The visit provided an opportunity for the team to engage with community members who lost their houses to Typhoon Wutip and gauge ways in which the reconstruction assistance has enhanced resilience to disasters and climate threats. At the end of their visit to Chuuk Lagoon, Secretary Yatilman, Lambert and Sortino will continue their visit to Chuuk outer islands of Ta and Satowan in the Mortlocks Region. SDGs 6, 10, 11



## Regional conference focuses on digital technology and anti-corruption efforts in the Pacific

*United Nations Development Program*

**May 29, 2024**

**Fiji**--A three-day conference has commenced in Fiji, with discussions focused on the role that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can play in the fight against corruption across the Pacific.

Bringing together senior officials from across the region's anti-corruption sector, alongside regional and international experts in the field of digitalization, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pacific Office in Fiji is leading the way on efforts to harness new approaches to combatting corruption.

With support from the Government of the United Kingdom, via the UNDP-implemented Pacific Anti-Corruption Project, UNDP Pacific is working across the region to improve public financial management and address corruption. This approach includes using technology to assist in budget preparation, promoting the right to information and accountability, and strengthening anti-corruption institutions and civil society engagement in social transparency.

The pace of technological advancement has been relentless in the 21st Century, transforming the way we live, work, and communicate. From the rapid proliferation of smartphones and the rise of social media to the more-recent emergence of the widespread use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), technology has become an integral part of our daily lives.

However, those yet to be connected remain cut off from the benefits of this new era, and remain further behind – in the Pacific alone, 40 percent of our region's population remains 'digitally excluded'. Connectivity, and the need to temper the view of digital as a one-size-fits-all fix will be an essential aspect of the three-day event.



His Excellency Dr. Brian Jones, British High Commissioner to Fiji, in his opening remarks said:

"We see all over the world the horrible consequences of money laundering and

*Click here for continuation on page 6*

# ...Soccer Tournament

Continued from front page

attending training sessions every Tuesday and Thursday at the PICS Field. Originally initiated by a group of parents, the program has now been officially integrated into the Pohnpei Soccer Association, marking a milestone in the development of soccer as a competitive sport in Pohnpei.



Photo by Bill Jaynes



Photo by PSA

The tournament featured two age categories: Under 8-year-olds (U8) and Under 13s (U13). In the U8 category, four teams competed in a round-robin format, with the White team emerging as the champions. FJ Panuel was awarded Most Valuable Player, while Florian Yatilman secured the most goals for the White team. Notable mentions included Emma Haigh for sportsmanship and Joah Cinavi for enthusiasm.

For the U13 group, teams were divided into two pools, with the maroon team clinching victory in pool 1. In pool 2, the competition was intense, but the blue team emerged victorious. MVP Rico Panuelo led the maroon team to victory, while Deshone Sebastain showcased remarkable goal-scoring prowess. Special awards were also given to Christina Rodriguez for her defensive skill and Jacob Tamanitoakula for his enthusiasm.



Photos by Stephen Jaynes



The success of the tournament wouldn't have been possible without the generous support of various sponsors, including the FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs, UNDP, BRDFTco, Updated, and Senator Edward. The US Embassy

Kolonia provided two new soccer goals, USAID provided soccer balls as prizes, and the moms from Fiji made all of the lunches. The Micronesia Red Cross Society and Pohnpei Public

Hospital ensured everyone's safety.

Looking ahead, PSA announced several exciting initiatives, including:

- A soccer camp for ages 6-17, offering comprehensive soccer training and first aid instruction provided by the Red Cross.
- Launch of a league for age 15+ during weekends starting in mid-June. Interested teams can contact [pohnpeisoccerassociation@gmail.com](mailto:pohnpeisoccerassociation@gmail.com) for more info and registration.
- Partnership with Rotary Pohnpei to integrate soccer into school curricula, with plans for a primary school tour.
- Ace-sponsored competition to design the new Pohnpei State Soccer Jersey.
- Election of Pohnpei Soccer Association President, Alex Panuelo, as president of the FSM Football Association.

As the Pohnpei Kids Soccer Program continues to thrive under the PSA, the association looks forward to further collaboration and growth in promoting soccer across the region.

For more information on upcoming events and registration, interested individuals can contact [psa.pohnpeiaoccerassociation@gmail.com](mailto:psa.pohnpeiaoccerassociation@gmail.com)

# ...Memorial Day

Continued from front page

highlighted the strong and enduring partnership between the Federated States of Micronesia and the United States, rooted in shared values and exemplified through the ongoing contributions of FSM citizens serving in the U.S. military.

Director Panuelo emphasized this continued commitment of FSM citizens who serve in the US armed forces. "Many of our own have taken up the call to serve, and some have paid the ultimate price. Today, we remember and honor them, acknowledging their bravery and dedication."



Photos by Stephen Jaynes



# Governor Stevenson A. Joseph Celebrates launch of ABC Radio Australia in Pohnpei

## Pohnpei Public information

May 15, 2024

**Nett, Pohnpei**—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph joined Australian Ambassador Grant-Curnow and ABC's Ms. Faleagafulu Inga Stunzner at the momentous launch event of ABC Radio Australia in Pohnpei. The event marked a significant milestone as ABC Radio Australia's frequencies resonate across Pohnpei's airwaves at FM 89.1.

This collaborative effort between Pohnpei and ABC Radio Australia represents a

stride toward enhancing the coverage of Pacific news and current affairs. With the expansion of FM transmission in the region, the service seeks to empower media capacity and foster deeper connections within our communities.

Governor Joseph expressed his enthusiasm for this initiative. He recalled listening to ABC Radio Australia years ago and looked forward to the programs from across the Pacific that will help us realize and appreciate our unique way of life in Pohnpei. Governor Joseph reiterated his

stance on information and media freedom and welcomed the addition of another news/information service to Pohnpei.

ABC Radio Australia's presence in Pohnpei is not merely a broadcasting milestone but also a testament to the shared values of collaboration and mutual understanding between our nations. This partnership

signifies the beginning of a new era of connectivity and engagement in the Pacific region.

Congratulations to ABC Australia, Mr. Helgenberger, V6AH, and the people of Pohnpei for their dedication to fostering new connections and amplifying voices across the Pacific.



## 82nd Airborne Division volleyball champion team includes Pohnpeian



Volleyball Champion Team during the 82nd Airborne Division 2024 "We Are All American Celebration Week" events at Fort Liberty North Carolina USA. SSG Joseph Johnnyboyd of Pohn Rakied Kolonia is second from right to the left of Division Commander General Pat Work.

## ...Workshop

Continued from page 4

corruption; it hits the poorest people hardest and compounds harm on the most vulnerable, including women and girls in our communities. Illicit funds are used to enable a whole range of threats, including funding serious organized crime - trafficking of narcotics and cyber-attacks. In the Pacific we're working to increase the flow of climate finance to help mitigate the worst impacts of climate change and the use of mobile money for payments and remittances grows, so too does the risk that these areas can be exploited by criminal actors.

"Therefore, we must use this opportunity of our partnership, which the UK is proud to support, to share knowledge, foster new relationships, build integrity and bring together the Pacific family to share regional best practice and experience and build our defenses to illicit finance".

Munkhtuya Altangerel, Resident Representative, UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji, opened the conference and said:

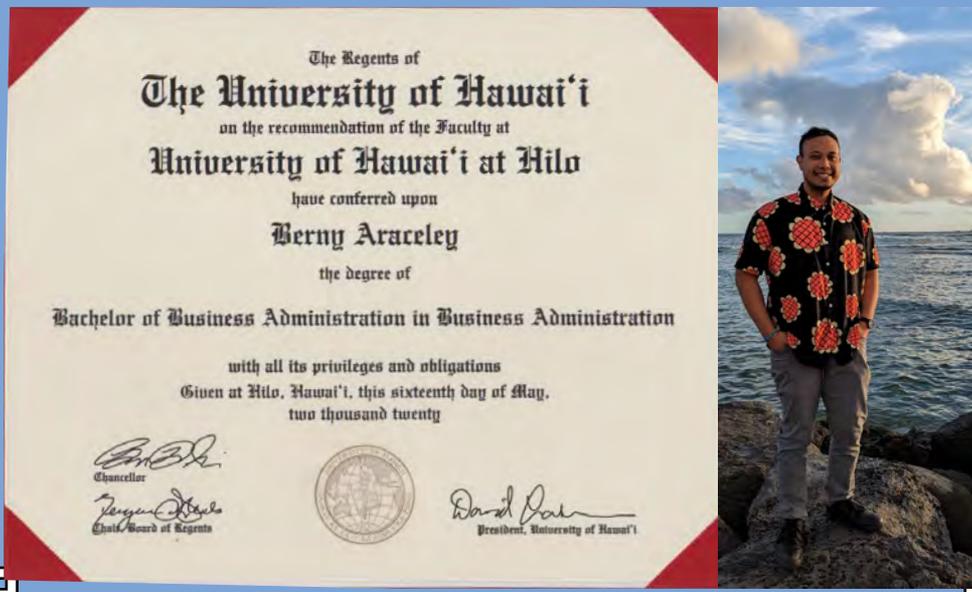
"While we must adapt and innovate to keep up with the relentless march of progress, we must also be cautious when it comes to digitalization and technology. The digital revolution offers powerful tools to combat corruption, but these tools alone won't win the fight. We need strong institutions, empowered citizens, and a commitment from Pacific Island nations to work together, and this conference offers the opportunity to forge a path toward a more transparent and accountable future in the Pacific."

'Tackling corruption in the Pacific: Can technology and artificial intelligence facilitate a breakthrough?' is supported by the Government of the United Kingdom, as well as the European Union. The three-day conference will conclude on 31 May.

### BERNY B. ARACELEY

Is pleased to announce his graduation from University of Hawaii at Hilo with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Business Administration, May 16th, 2020. He is currently enrolled in the Chaminade University Graduate Program majoring in Business and Accounting. He plans to graduate from Chaminade in 2026. Berny plans to work and at the same time do his online graduate work.

Berny is the son of Berley Araceley, (Deacon) and Meriam E. Araceley, of Pohnpei.





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## COMFSM Participants Triumph at the 1st International Agri-preneurship in Hydroponics Summit

From May 4th to May 11th, 2024, representatives from the College of Micronesia-FSM Center for Entrepreneurship traveled to Zambales, Philippines to attend the 1st International Agri-preneurship in Hydroponics Summit. Among the participants were Danna Route and Welbert Washington, who were part of the team that competed against several universities from the north of the Philippines. During this trip, the participants gained certification in food processing for hydroponics and aquaponics and learned best practices from different universities sharing their knowledge as well as through competitions. The host of the event was Zennor Hydroponics, with additional sponsorship from Harrogate Plant Producers (Tennessee, USA), Adaya Gardens (Qatar), and East-West Seed (Philippines) with support from the Department of Tourism, the Department of Agriculture, PhilGAP, and the Department of Information and Computer Technology. Other notable delegates included President Ramon, as well as representatives from different state universities and colleges,

both local and international, like Magsaysay University, Pangasinan State University, and Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University among others. The representatives from the College of Micronesia Center for Entrepreneurship competed in the following competition categories:

- Most Innovative Project Competition
- Best in Research Competition
- Seed Identification Competition (3rd Place)
- Best in Value-Added Product (Champion)
- Best Agripreneur Project (1st Place)

And as a result of their hard work, they won the following awards:

- 3rd Place - Seed Identification Competition
- Champion - Best in Value-Added Product
- 1st Place - Best Agripreneur Project

These achievements led to their recognition as 1st runner up overall award at the summit, demonstrating their exceptional skills and knowledge in the field of hydroponics. This activity is a part of the Entrepreneurship Initiative Phase 2 Project of the Center for Entrepreneurship, funded by the US Economic Development Administration.



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Reporting to the HR Director, the HRM Specialist I will carry out the major following functional responsibilities and additional necessary duties to meet HRO needs and programs:

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# Civil Society Organisations share best practices for better disability inclusion in the Pacific



*Secretariat of the Pacific Community*

**May 31, 2024**

**Kosrae, Federated States of Micronesia** - The Pacific Community (SPC), in collaboration with the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) National Government and the Kosrae State Government, held a Regional Disability Inclusion host exchange in Kosrae from 28 – 30 May. The event brought together eight civil society organisations engaged in disability rights and inclusion advocacy campaigns from around the Pacific region to share best practices and strengthen their capacity in disability inclusion advocacy, with a long-term goal of contributing to improving disability inclusion in the region.

This exchange took place as part of SPC's Pacific People Advancing Change programme (PPAC), which aims to build advocacy capacity among Pacific Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) engaged with human rights issues and advance those issues by supporting specific campaigns.

The Regional Disability Inclusion host exchange showcased Kosrae Special Parent Network (KSPN)'s achievements to date, lessons learnt and best practices from their advocacy campaign around disability inclusion through legal reform. The event also aimed to enhance the learning, skills, and advocacy practices through South-South exchange among the CSO grantees engaged in disability inclusion advocacy campaigns under the PPAC programme. SPC will use the sharing at the exchange to develop a 'what works'

paper documenting good practices and lessons learnt on CSO advocacy for legal reform on disability rights and inclusion.

As a result, CSO grantees engaged in disability inclusion advocacy are expected to apply the learnings from this exchange and the 'what works' paper to strengthen the implementation of their advocacy campaigns.

"We are elated that the PPAC Disability Inclusion Host Exchange is taking place in Kosrae, the smallest state in the FSM. This shows our people that considering the rights of our disabled citizens is a priority. The Kosrae Disability Inclusion Act was enacted a few years ago, and we are now focusing on the implementation of the law. I am pleased to announce that the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December) has become a public holiday in the State of Kosrae, which commemorates this week's event. Signing the executive order for the Kosrae Disability Taskforce this week is also an important step forward."

Director of SPC's Micronesian Regional Office, Mr William Kostka, said: "This disability inclusion exchange programme has provided a platform to share best practices and lessons learnt in disability equity and rights advocacy grounded in positive expressions of Pacific cultures that is underpinned by shared values of relationship building, meaningful participation, collaborative efforts to promote the rights of persons with disabilities. We value and believe in the work that CSOs do in their

communities and countries through the PPAC grants, and we will continue to support them to promote disability equity and rights."

Persons with Disabilities represent an estimate of 15% of each Pacific Island national population. Pacific leaders are committed to promoting Disability Inclusive Development grounded in disability equity and rights through the endorsement of the Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (PFRPD) 2016 -2025. There have been pockets of success for disability inclusion over the past decade and a half, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) has now been ratified by 14 Pacific Island Country (PIC) governments. However, the region is not on track to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals or the CRPD. PPAC Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are playing an important role in complementing the role of the government in promoting disability equity and rights.

This work is led by the Human Rights and Social Development Division (HRSD) of the Pacific Community (SPC), which has a vision for just, equitable and resilient Pacific societies. PPAC is currently funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Promoting Just, Engaged, Civic-minded and Transparent (PROJECT) Governance, and the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) through the Pacific Women Lead at SPC programme.

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Australian Government

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## Governor Stevenson A. Joseph empowers graduates at COM-FSM's 79th Commencement Ceremony



*Pohnpei Public Information*

*May 14, 2024*

**Palikir, Pohnpei**—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph attended the College of Micronesia FSM's (COM-FSM) 79th commencement exercises and graduation ceremony held at the FSM-China Friendship Sports Center. The ceremony, marked by the theme "Beyond Boundaries: Empowering Graduates with Access, innovation, and Resilience," saw Governor Joseph motivating the graduating class with insightful remarks.

In a show of respect for the late Kapilly Capelle, the Governor's Chief of Staff who passed away recently, Governor Joseph began his remarks with a moment of silence for the dearly departed.

Salutatorian Ashlen Rose Anna Liwy from Pohnpei, who graduated with an Associate of Arts Degree in Micronesian Studies, introduced Governor Joseph, who delivered a stirring address to the graduating students. Reflecting on the theme, Governor Joseph emphasized that the graduates of 2024 stand at the forefront of a new frontier, poised to navigate challenges and seize opportunities.

Addressing the students directly, Governor Joseph posed crucial questions about their readiness to enter the workforce and take the next step in their journey. He challenged them to consider whether opportunities await them at home or if they must seek them abroad, underscoring the importance of creating avenues for meaningful employment within their

own country.

Governor Joseph also directed his questions to fellow government leaders and COM caretakers, urging them to evaluate whether enough is being done to equip graduates with the skills, knowledge, and support necessary for success. He emphasized the importance of fostering an environment that

encourages collaboration, innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic growth.

Highlighting the responsibility of leaders to nurture talent and empower students to realize their full potential, Governor Joseph called for collective efforts to invest in human resources. He encouraged graduates to embrace their power from within, citing Romans 12:6 and the unique gifts bestowed upon each individual.

In his closing remarks, Governor Joseph extended heartfelt wishes to each graduate, envisioning futures filled with endless possibilities, meaningful opportunities, and the courage to push beyond boundaries to leave a lasting impact on the world.

During the ceremony, Governor Joseph also listened to the valedictorian speech delivered by Hedweag Miguel Jr. from Wone, Kitti, who graduated with an Associate of Art in Pre-Teacher Preparation, and echoed the call for investment in human resources by Governor Joseph. Mr. Miguel emphasized the significance of scholarships in nurturing the hearts and minds of tomorrow's leaders, urging national and state leaders to provide sufficient support through scholarships for students to complete their education.

Governor Joseph's presence and inspiring words left an indelible mark on the graduating class, reinforcing the commitment to invest in education and empower the next generation of leaders in Pohnpei and beyond.

### BLUE PROSPERITY

### ENTREPRENEUR FELLOWSHIP

Entrepreneurs and sustainable businesses in the FSM are invited to apply to the **Blue Prosperity Entrepreneur Fellowship!**

This program will award **grants of up to \$8,000 to eligible entrepreneurs** working to improve ocean health and community livelihoods in the FSM.

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### Ocean Entrepreneurs and Innovators Encouraged to Apply to Blue Prosperity Fellowship

Blue Prosperity Micronesia invites entrepreneurs and sustainable businesses to apply to the Blue Prosperity Entrepreneur Fellowship.

The Blue Prosperity Entrepreneur Fellowship is a partnership between Blue Prosperity Micronesia (BPM) and Sustainable Ocean Alliance (SOA) to support entrepreneurs and sustainable businesses in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) working to advance ocean health, community livelihoods, and sustainable economic growth.

#### **Selected participants will receive:**

- A grant up to \$8,000 USD
- Participation in a minimum of four virtual training workshops taking place from Aug. 2024 - Aug. 2025
- Mentorship opportunities facilitated by SOA's global network, including leaders in business, technology, finance, and more

To qualify, projects must demonstrate a positive impact to the Blue Economy (sustainable use of marine resources) in the FSM. The Fellowship seeks new projects that can show measurable results before August 2025, along with plans for how to sustain impact. Initiatives are not required to generate profit or be affiliated with an organization in order to apply.

Applications will be reviewed by members of the BPM team and SOA staff. Qualified applicants will be invited to a Zoom meeting in early August, with final selections and notifications by August 16.

The virtual training workshops, spanning from Aug. 2024 to 2025, will run for 1-2 hours each, including preparatory work. Fellows will have access to personalized mentorship via email or one-on-one meetings, tailored to their specific needs and project goals.

The Blue Prosperity Entrepreneur Fellowship is a valuable opportunity for aspiring entrepreneurs and businesses in the FSM to gain access to an extensive international network of business leaders. This program aims to strengthen the FSM's Blue Economy and support initiatives for a healthy, sustainable future for the FSM's ocean.

For further details and to access the application form, please visit Blue Prosperity Micronesia's Facebook page or website at [www.blueprosperitymicronesia.org/fellowship](http://www.blueprosperitymicronesia.org/fellowship).

***Applications will be accepted until Sunday, July 7, 2024.***

# Swearing-In of Mr. Henry Saimon Jr. and Mrs. Charity Edward Salvador to the Joseph-Ioanis Administration

## Pohnpei Public Information

May 29, 2024

**Kolonia, Pohnpei**—The Office of the Governor proudly announces the swearing-in of two distinguished individuals to critical positions within the Joseph-Ioanis Administration. Mr. Henry Saimon Jr. has been officially appointed as the Executive Director of the Pohnpei Housing Authority, while Mrs. Charity Edward Salvador has been sworn in as a member of the Environmental Protection Agency's Board of Directors.

The ceremony, held at the Emergency Operations Center Conference Room, began with a word of prayer delivered by Reverend Nolenster Charley from Nan Mand Church, setting a solemn and respectful tone for the proceedings.

Governor Joseph administered the oath of office to both appointees, congratulating them and also expressing thanks to their families and the support of the 11th Pohnpei Legislature. Following

their swearing-in, Mr. Saimon Jr. and Mrs. Salvador expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the Governor, Lt. Governor, and the Speaker of and 11th Pohnpei Legislature for the opportunity to serve the people of Pohnpei in their new capacities. They acknowledged the trust placed in them and committed to diligently perform their duties to enhance the quality of life in Pohnpei.

In his closing remarks, Lt. Governor Francisco L. Ioanis offered words of wisdom and encouragement to the newly confirmed Executive Director and Board member. He emphasized the importance of integrity, dedication, and proactive service in their roles, urging them to always prioritize the welfare of the Pohnpeian people, "rohng, rohng mwahu, kilang, kilang mwahu oh wia, wia mwahu".

The Pohnpei State Government extends its sincere appreciation to Speaker Yamaguchi and the 11th Pohnpei Legislature for their ongoing cooperation and support in confirming key positions within the administration. While there are still cabinet positions pending confirmation, the collaborative efforts thus far have been instrumental in advancing the



administration's goals.

Governor Joseph, Lt. Governor Ioanis, and the entire administration are confident that the addition of Mr. Henry Saimon Jr. and Mrs. Charity Edward Salvador will bring valuable expertise and dedication to their respective roles. The government looks forward to their contributions toward the development and environmental stewardship of Pohnpei.

The advertisement features a collage of TV show posters including 'Nickelodeon All Star Party with DJ Dylan', 'Special Ops: Lioness', 'Timeless', 'Tagata Pasifika', 'Anderson Cooper 360', and 'This is Why We Fight'. Below the posters are logos for Nickelodeon, Paramount+, Warner Bros. TV, Pasifika TV, CNN, and ESPN. A starburst graphic says 'AND MANY MORE!'. At the bottom, it 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!' and includes the Pacifica TV logo and website 'www.fsmtc.fm/tv'.

# Governor Stevenson A. Joseph delivers remarks at opening ceremony of the 26th Micronesian Islands Forum in Guam

## Pohnpei Public Information

June 3, 2024

**Guam**—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph delivered opening remarks at the 26th Micronesian Islands Forum in Guam, alongside fellow Micronesian Leaders. In his remarks, Governor Joseph extended a warm welcome to all participants and expressed deep gratitude to the hosts for their generous hospitality.

Governor Joseph emphasized the enduring importance of unity, collaboration, and shared vision among the Micronesian islands, highlighting how collective efforts have strengthened regional ties, bolstered economies, and enriched cultural heritage. He praised the theme of this year's Forum, "Writing Our History, Determining Our Future," urging participants to reflect on their shared past and take decisive steps toward a sustainable future.

In his address, Governor Joseph reaffirmed Pohnpei's commitment to the Forum's goals, particularly in promoting gender equality and environmental

protection. He acknowledged the vision of the Forum's founders and previous leaders, applauding the establishment of the gender equality committee and expressing gratitude for the support from various organizations and development partners.

Governor Joseph highlighted Pohnpei's achievements, including comprehensive maternity and paternity leave policies, a dedicated shelter for domestic violence victims, and the implementation of the Family Care Protection Act. On the environmental front, he praised Pohnpei's participation in the Micronesia Challenge and successful initiatives in eradicating invasive species.

In closing, Governor Joseph called for continued collaboration to safeguard natural resources and create a sustainable and equitable future for all. He looked forward to the meaningful discussions and outcomes of the Forum, emphasizing the shared responsibility to craft a brighter future.



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# Governor Stevenson A. Joseph delivers Keynote Address at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School Commencement Exercises

## Pohnpei Public Information

May 24, 2024

**Kolonia, Pohnpei**—In a ceremony filled with vibrant energy and joyful anticipation, Governor Stevenson A. Joseph delivered the keynote remarks at the 2024 commencement exercises of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School. The event, marked by the cheerful attitudes of the graduating students, celebrated their achievements and looked forward to their promising futures.

Governor Joseph opened his address by praising the positive and spirited atmosphere of the commencement exercises. He remarked on the graduation theme, "Forever Connected: Journeying as One," noting how it deeply resonates with the experiences, bonds, and paths the graduates have shared and will continue to forge.

Drawing inspiration from the Bible, Governor Joseph shared several quotes and personal testimonies to offer

advice and encouragement to the Class of 2024. He emphasized the importance of maintaining their connections, stating, "As you embark on new adventures, whether it be further education, entering the workforce, or exploring other passions, carry with you the spirit of being 'forever connected,' and I would like to add: with God."

In his speech, Governor Joseph also invoked the words of Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple, urging the graduates to "not be trapped by dogma—which is living with the results of other people's thinking." He encouraged them to "pursue what ignites your spirit, what makes you come alive," echoing the sentiments expressed in the salutorian Karen Andon Semes' speech.

Governor Joseph challenged



the graduates to eventually return to Pohnpei and contribute their unique skills to the island nation's development. "You are our future," he declared, emphasizing the vital role they will play in shaping the future of Pohnpei.

He concluded his remarks by reiterating the importance of staying connected, not just with one another but with God. He shared two Bible verses highlighting this connection, leaving

the graduates with a powerful reminder of their faith as they step into the next chapter of their lives.

Governor Joseph's heartfelt and inspiring address left a lasting impression on the graduates, their families, and all attendees, setting a hopeful tone for the future of Pohnpei's young leaders.

## Governor Joseph supports payroll policy requiring completed personnel actions

### Pohnpei Public Information

May 29, 2024

**Kolonia, Pohnpei**—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph strongly supports the memorandum from the Director of the Department of Treasury and Administration, which mandates that no paychecks will be issued to Government State employees without completed personnel action forms.

Governor Joseph emphasizes the importance of this measure for enhancing efficiency and accountability in government operations. He urges all Department, Office, and Agency heads to ensure compliance with this directive, highlighting that it is essential for timely and accurate employee payments.

This policy aligns with the administration's commitment to transparency, accountability, and good governance. By completing and documenting all personnel actions, the state government can better manage its resources and effectively serve the people of Pohnpei.

Governor Joseph calls on the cooperation and diligence of all state employees and leaders to implement this policy, reinforcing the standards of public service for a more efficient and responsible government. For more information on the new payroll policy, please contact the Department of Treasury and Administration.

## Governor Joseph Signs executive directive to assist uninsured patients seeking off-island medical treatment

### Pohnpei Public Information

May 23, 2024

**Kolonia, Pohnpei**—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph signed Executive Directive 02-24 on May 22, 2024 to supplement State Law 10L-151-23, Section 9-4, which allocates \$100,000.00 to assist uninsured patients from the State of Pohnpei who require medical treatments off-island.

Under the Executive Directive, only uninsured patients shall be considered eligible for the funds assigned under State Law No. 10L-151-23, Section 9-4. Particular emphasis will be placed on verifying the insurance status of patients before disbursement of financial assistance.

The Executive Directive takes effect immediately and will remain in force until further notice. For more information and to obtain the necessary

forms, please contact the Department of Health and Social Services at 320-3805.

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# COLLEGE OF MICRONESIA

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### JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

**Job Title:** Communication & Information Technology Officer (CITO)  
**Category:** Specialist  
**Level:** III  
**Salary:** 35,000 – 48,000/year depending on qualifications  
**Benefits:** COM Package + Housing + Relocation Costs  
**Location:** COM LG Central Office, Kolonia, Pohnpei

Opening: 5/23/24  
 Closing: 6/14/24

#### General Description

Under the direction of the COM LG Executive Director, the Communication & Information Technology Officer (CITO) is responsible for planning, developing, implementing and managing a social media communication and information technology strategic platform that includes but not limited to social media content creation and media outreach, updating and upgrading of the program's website, system network and security as well as providing support relevant to internal and partnership personnel technology capacity needs. The CITO is also responsible for facilitating press releases to all relevant stakeholders and the general public.

**Minimum Qualification:** Bachelor's

**Preferred Qualification:** Master's

#### Application Process:

To ensure full consideration, candidates must submit the following documents:

1. A letter of interest addressing how the candidate's professional qualification and experience match the minimum essential requirements of the position (3 pages max)
2. For a copy of the Job Description details and a COM employment application form (send a request to [comlandgrant@gmail.com](mailto:comlandgrant@gmail.com))
3. A current resume that includes personal email address and cellular phone number
4. Copies of transcripts for all degrees earned;
5. A minimum of three professional reference letters;
6. Court/police clearance not more than 6 months old.

Documents are to be submitted electronically to [comlandgrant@gmail.com](mailto:comlandgrant@gmail.com) (preferably as PDF attachments) or mailed to:

Executive Director  
 College of Micronesia Land Grant  
 P. O. Box 1179  
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Applications will be accepted until **Friday June 14, 2024 before 5:00 pm Pohnpei time (UTC +11)**  
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# Governor Stevenson A. Joseph welcomes the Finnish Ambassador to the FSM

*Pohnpei Information Services*

May 30, 2024

**Kolonia, Pohnpei**—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph warmly welcomed the Finnish Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia, Her Excellency Tanja Jääskeläinen, during a courtesy call at the Governor's Office. The meeting focused on the prevailing issues and challenges of Pohnpei State, fostering a productive discussion on a range of topics crucial to the island's development.

In their discussions, Ambassador Jääskeläinen asked Governor Joseph what Pohnpei's issues and priorities that could be shared. Governor Joseph outlined his administration's priorities, emphasizing the urgent need to lower energy tariffs and seek alternative renewable energy sources. He highlighted the current energy tariff, which stands at \$0.52 per kWh, and noted the potential for further increases. Given Pohnpei's unique geography, the Governor identified solar and hydropower as viable solutions to reduce energy costs.

Additionally, Governor Joseph underscored the importance of food

and water security. He stressed the need to better manage the island's natural resources, particularly water, and to promote subsistence farming. This initiative aligns with his goal of addressing the rise in non-communicable diseases, which have become a leading cause of death among the local population.

The conversation also touched on the fisheries industry, religion, and taxation. Governor Joseph expressed his gratitude to H.E. Ms. Jääskeläinen for her visit and encouraged her to explore and enjoy the beauty of Pohnpei during her stay.

Governor Joseph's administration remains committed to addressing the key issues affecting Pohnpei State and looks forward to continued collaboration with international partners.



# Governor Joseph welcomes H.E. Sabri Kicmari, Ambassador of Kosovo, to Pohnpei

*Pohnpei Public Information*

May 30, 2024

**Kolonia, Pohnpei**—Governor Joseph warmly welcomed H.E. Sabri Kicmari, Ambassador of Kosovo to the Federated States of Micronesia, and his wife Afrdita Kicmari, during their courtesy call to the Governor's Office today. This visit marks a significant step in strengthening the bonds between the State of Pohnpei and the Republic of Kosovo, through the FSM National Government.

Ambassador Kicmari highlighted that Kosovo, the youngest nation in Europe, shares core values with the FSM, particularly the importance of self-governance and freedom. These shared values set a strong foundation for the discussions between the two leaders.

During the meeting, Ambassador Kicmari presented several programs offered by the Government of Kosovo, including diplomatic training, police officer training, and educational programs at various universities in Kosovo. Governor Joseph expressed

his enthusiasm about these opportunities for international collaboration and study abroad programs, recognizing their potential to benefit the citizens of Pohnpei and the broader FSM.

The discussions concluded with an exchange of overviews on the political landscapes and histories of both Pohnpei and Kosovo, fostering a mutual understanding and appreciation of each nation's journey.

Governor Joseph extended his heartfelt thanks to Ambassador Kicmari and his wife for their visit and looked forward to future engagements and cooperation between Pohnpei and Kosovo.



# Governor Stevenson A. Joseph Attends U Constitutional Day at Saladak Elementary School

*Pohnpei Public Information*

May 27, 2024

**Saladak, Pohnpei**—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph attended the U Constitutional Day activities held at Saladak Elementary School on May 27, 2024. The event celebrated the enduring significance of the Constitution and the values it enshrines.

The occasion was honored by the presence of His Royal Majesty, Sangohro, Nanmwarki of U, whose esteemed attendance underscored the cultural and historical importance of the event. The Governor was also joined by distinguished guests including the Chinese Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), His Excellency Wu Wei, the Japanese Ambassador to FSM, His Excellency

Nobuo Kagomiya, and the Public Affairs Officer from the U.S. Embassy Kolonia, Mr. Andrew Posner. Additionally, the Mayor of Kolonia, The Honorable Kumer Biza, and the U Chief Minister, The Honorable Rufino Primo, were in attendance.

In his remarks, Governor Joseph emphasized the critical role of the Constitution in governance and societal stability. He highlighted that today's leaders must respect and adhere to their respective constitutions. As leaders, it is incumbent upon us to respect and comply with its principles, setting an example for future generations to understand and value the respect we hold for this guiding framework, Governor Joseph stated.

Governor Joseph's speech resonated with the audience, reinforcing the message that a constitution is more than just a written document; it is a living embodiment of the collective will and values of the people. The presence of international dignitaries, alongside local leaders and community



members, highlighted the shared commitment to democratic principles and the rule of law. The event served as a reminder of the unity and cooperation that are vital to the continued prosperity and stability of Pohnpei and the broader FSM.

The Pohnpei State Government extends its gratitude to all participants and attendees who contributed to the success of U Constitutional Day. Together, we continue to uphold the principles that guide our community and ensure a brighter future for all.

## Close-Up Program students meet with President Simina and Vice President Palik

FSM Information Services

May 29, 2024

**PALIKIR, Pohnpei**—His Excellency President Wesley W. Simina and T.H. Vice President Aren B. Palik recently welcomed high



school students from all four FSM states participating in the Close-Up Program to the nation's capital, on May 15th. Selected based on academic and community achievements, the students visited Palikir to gain insights into government operations.

During the visit, President Simina and Vice President Palik fielded questions from the students and shared their firsthand insights into their roles. They engaged with students on various topics, including the nation's international partnerships and foreign affairs to the legislative process. President Simina highlighted the nation's developmental stage, emphasizing the ongoing journey toward self-sufficiency, and the important role our young people play in shaping that future.

The Office of the President wishes to thank these promising young students for their visit and looks forward to seeing their continued success in all future endeavors.



## Governor Stevenson A. Joseph participates in Strategic Development Plan Consultation Workshop

Pohnpei Public Information

May 15, 2024

**Kolonia, Pohnpei**—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph actively engaged in the second day of the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) consultation workshop held at the Tuna Commission conference room. The workshop, a crucial platform for fostering collaborative efforts toward sustainable development, witnessed Governor Joseph's insightful remarks and proactive engagement.

During his address, Governor Joseph extended gratitude to Lara Studzinski, FSM SDP Lead, and the FSM National

Government for their unwavering support and commitment to the development agenda. He emphasized the importance of listening and learning about the intricacies of various sectors covered in the workshop, particularly those funded through compact sector grants.

Governor Joseph underscored the necessity for alignment between the State SDP and national and municipal government SDPs, highlighting that SDPs serve as indispensable tools for accessing sector grant funds. He called for full cooperation and maximum attendance from all stakeholders to ensure the effectiveness and inclusivity

of the development planning process.

Governor Joseph introduced Mr. Churchill Edward, former Lt. Governor of the State of Pohnpei, who gave an overview of the previous Pohnpei SDP, emphasizing continuity and building upon past achievements in the pursuit of collective progress.

The participation of Governor Stevenson A. Joseph exemplifies the State of Pohnpei's unwavering commitment to advancing strategic development initiatives and fostering partnerships for sustainable growth.

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# Australian Ambassador pays first courtesy call on Vice President Palik

*FSM Information Services*

May 29, 2024

**Palikir, Pohnpei**—Earlier this month, on May 9th 2024, Australian Ambassador to the FSM, Her Excellency Jennifer Grant Curnow paid a courtesy call on T.H. Vice President Aren B. Palik following her presentation of credentials to His Excellency President Wesley W. Simina on April 29th.

Vice President Palik welcomed Ambassador Curnow, congratulating her on her new assignment and expressed appreciation for Australia's increased support to the FSM. He acknowledged her predecessor's efforts in strengthening Australia-FSM relations and encouraged Ambassador Curnow to further enhance this cooperation during the Simina-Palik Administration.

Ambassador Curnow thanked Vice President Palik for the warm welcome and reaffirmed her government's commitment to maintaining strong ties with the FSM. She emphasized Australia's intention to bolster its presence in the North Pacific.

During their meeting, Vice President Palik and Ambassador Curnow discussed various bilateral, regional, and international issues. Topics included the Australia-FSM Cooperation Talks, provisioning of Guardian Class surveillance boats, addressing oil leaks in Chuuk Lagoon, financial support for the East Micronesia Cable (EMC), the Pacific Engagement Visa, the Australia-North Pacific Connector, the Micronesia Islands Forum, and the upcoming Pacific Islands Forum Meeting in Tonga.



## Committee to Wait meeting with President Simina and Vice President Palik

*FSM Information Services*

May 29, 2024

**PALIKIR, Pohnpei**—The Committee to Wait (CTW) met with President Wesley W. Simina and Vice President Aren B. Palik, along with their cabinet members, following the opening of the 23rd Congress Regular Session on May 14, 2024. Led by Senator Johnson Asher, the CTW included Senators Joseph J. Urusemal, Merlynn Abello Alfonso, and Julio Marar.

This customary meeting aimed to outline session expectations. President Simina opened with a prayer and thanked the committee for their time, congratulating them on seating the new members of Congress. Key topics discussed included:

Pending Bills and Reconsiderations:

- Repurposing \$1.5 million from the FSM Consulate Office in Honolulu to purchase property for the FSM Embassy in Washington D.C.
- Repurposing \$2 million in short-term loans available to FSM states to support the FSM's participation at the upcoming Micro Games and Festival of Pacific Arts, the Chuuk Expo and establishment of an FSM Consulate Office in the central United States.

- Providing guidelines for the 2023 Amended Compact resiliency and special needs distribution bill. President Simina will submit proposed changes.
- Reducing the national government's 2023 Amended Compact share from 10% to 8%, per the Arngel Formula.
- FY24 Supplemental budget, including the national government share of \$11 million based on the 8%.

Nominations:

President Simina requested support for pending nominations, essential for the cabinet and national government to function. He also mentioned plans to recall and resubmit two state nominations.

Resolutions:

- Extending the Declaration of Emergency due to the prolonged drought in Yap.
- Extending the COM-FSM Land Grant Treaty, which expired in September 2023.

The meeting concluded positively with best wishes exchanged and a welcome for new committee member Senator Marar.

## Pohnpei State Government hosts key consultation meeting on Strategic Development Plan Implementation

*Pohnpei Public Information*

May 13, 2024

**KOLONIA, Pohnpei**—The Office of the Governor welcomed Ms. Lara Studzinski, the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) Lead Coordinator for the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), along with Pohnpei State SDP Coordinator, Douglas Kusto, State Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) Coordinator, Shirley Ligoehr, Avalon Edward FSM SDP assistant and Elain Chugen, Yap State SDP Coordinator, to a meeting with Governor Stevenson A. Joseph on May 13, 2024.

The meeting is ahead of the commencement of State consultations set to take place from May 14 to 16, at the Tuna Commission conference room, dedicated to fostering strategic development initiatives both at the state and national levels. Ms. Studzinski apprised Governor Joseph of the FSM's commitment to advancing the Strategic Development Plan and its alignment with the recently approved amended Compact of Free Association.

Key to the discussions was the involvement of a representative from

the FSM Joint Committee on Compact Review and Planning, tasked with exploring the synergies between SDP implementation and the provisions of the amended compact. Ms. Studzinski emphasized the pivotal role of these consultations in sculpting a collective vision for the future, rooted in a comprehensive understanding of both past challenges and future opportunities.

Expressing gratitude for Ms. Studzinski's visit, Governor Joseph underscored the significance of the forthcoming consultations. He emphasized the imperative for compact sector-funded departments, as well as all relevant agencies and offices, to actively participate in these deliberations, recognizing their role in shaping the trajectory of Pohnpei State's development.

The State consultations are poised to facilitate robust dialogue, foster partnerships, and catalyze actionable strategies toward realizing the shared vision outlined in National and State Strategic Development Plans.

# FSM participation at 2024 Mid-Year Joint Committee Meeting with United States



## FSM Information Services

May 28, 2024

Earlier this month, from May 1-2, 2024, the Vice-President of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Honorable Aren B. Palik led a country delegation to the 2024 Mid-Year Joint Committee Meeting between the Federated States of Micronesia and the United States of America at the Joint Region Marianas in Guam to discuss issues of mutual importance to both countries, under the purview of security and defense related engagements.

Among others, the primary areas of discussion included an overview of the INDOPACOM security theater with emphasis on current regional security challenges in the Indo-Pacific region, a brief of INDOPACOM J44 Joint Posture Management which includes an overview of the US Department of Defense's (DOD) construction and infrastructure projects in the FSM particularly in areas of airfield modernization, port upgrades and future engagements of US Marine Forces in the FSM with specific reference to the upcoming Taskforce Koa Moana exercise with an estimated 100 plus US Marines to be deployed to all FSM States to perform small scale construction projects as well as medical and law enforcement subject matter

expert exchanges.

Discussions on the Pacific Fleet's maritime posture were highlighted confirming the FSM's participation in the upcoming Pacific Partnership 2024-2 scheduled to be held in the summer of 2024 in Yap and Kosrae, as well as FSM's submission of salvage operation of M/V Micro Spirit in Yap. Mutual interests were also confirmed for shoal removal in the Kosrae channel which continues to be a risk for passenger and cargo vessels.

Activity updates of the US Coast Guard in the FSM were also discussed with highlights on the recent Search & Rescue Operations (SAR), humanitarian assistance in the FSM States, as well as the successful selection of Ms. Stasia Fugog of Yap in the US Coast Guard Academy for Class of 2028. Both parties also discussed the ways forward for the FSM-US Defense Site Working Group with emphasis on the critical need for consultations to be undertaken with all stakeholders at the National, State, municipal and community levels.

General discussions were also held on the ongoing and upcoming support of law enforcement training and essential equipment support. As with prior JCM engagements, the FSM was provided an opportunity to submit its primary security concerns and, among others, submitted the oil leakage in Chuuk from the World War II shipwrecks. General references were also made on the impact of climate change in the overall security apparatus of the Indo-Pacific which were acknowledged and welcomed.

"I wish to submit FSM's strong and unwavering commitment to the fulfillment of Title III obligations and will do its part in ensuring that our region and our people live in an environment that is safe and secured", Vice President Palik expressed in his opening remarks.

With support of national and state staff, primary principals accompanying Vice President Palik included the Speaker Esmond Moses, Governor of Kosrae State T.H. Tulensa W. Palik, the Governor of Chuuk State T.H. Alexander Narruhn, the Governor of Pohnpei State T.H. Stevenson Joseph and T.H. Lt. Governor Francis Itimai of Yap State.

For the US delegation, Rear Admiral Gregory Huffman, Commander of the Joint Region Marianas and US Ambassador to the FSM Jennifer L. Johnson led the delegation with essential personnel from the US Armed Forces, as well as support staff from the FBI, NOAA, DOI and CIA. Both parties concluded this year's Mid-Year JCM by agreeing that the next main JCM Meeting will be held in Chuuk State in November 2024.

"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.

Ambassador Johnson stated, "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."

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# Chuuk State embraces UNCTAD's ASYCUDAWorld, advancing FSM's digitalization goals

*ASYCUDAWorld*

*May 27, 2024*

**Chuuk**—The Customs and Tax Administration (CTA) of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) continues to be at the forefront of digital innovation. Chuuk became the third state in FSM to implement the United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD)-developed Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDAWorld).

The pivotal move enhances FSM's capabilities in digitizing customs operations, improving revenue collection, and streamlining data management.

The deployment of ASYCUDAWorld bolsters FSM's vision for a digitally empowered nation that better serves its citizens. The automation of the customs processes in FSM is supported by the European Union (EU)-funded Improving Pacific Islands Customs and Trade (IMPACT) Project, aimed at modernizing customs procedures.

On Thursday 23 May 2024, Chuuk State celebrated this landmark achievement with a ceremony attended by key

stakeholders and officials from the FSM Customs and Tax Administration. This event underscored the significant progress in enhancing the region's trade infrastructure and the commitment to economic progress.

In preparation for the launch, the FSM ASYCUDAWorld National Project Team conducted an extensive eight-day training session to educate stakeholders on the system's functionalities and advantages.

Chuuk Governor, Mr. Mekioshy William, Lt., addressed the state's trading community, highlighting the launch as "a significant milestone in our efforts to streamline trade processes and foster economic growth in Chuuk State and beyond."

ASYCUDAWorld is now live in FSM's State of Pohnpei, Yap and Chuuk.

FSM is the largest nation in the Micronesian sub-region and is made up of four semi-autonomous States (Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk and Yap) and is located between Palau and the Philippines. While the land area is known to just cover 700 square kilometers (km), FSM consists of over 600 islands scattered over an area of



around 2.6 million square km, inclusive of its Exclusive Economic Zone.

Given the vast geographical distances, FSM is highly dependent on digital technologies to enable interconnectedness among its people and a key to enabling economic diversification and as well as improve public and private sector service delivery.

The successful implementation of ASYCUDAWorld in FSM is more than a technological upgrade—it's a promise of revolutionized customs procedures and a testament to the government's dedication

to efficient service delivery through digitalization, benefiting both public and private sectors.

About ASYCUDAWorld: ASYCUDAWorld is a cutting-edge customs management system by UN Trade and Development, aimed at simplifying trade and customs processes.

About the IMPACT Project: Funded by the European Union, the IMPACT project seeks to enhance customs operations through technological advancements and capacity building.

## Courtesy call of the Pohnpei Senior Citizens Board to the Governor's Office

*Pohnpei Public Information*

*May 28, 2024*

**Kolonia, Pohnpei**--The Pohnpei Senior Citizens Board made a courtesy call to Governor Joseph at the Governor's Office. The Board, represented by President Dahker Peter, Vice President Francisco Cantero, Secretary Magdalena Walter, and Treasurer Lucas Carlos, was accompanied by Mr. Santos Abraham from the Division of Social Services, under the Department of Health Services.

During the meeting, President Dahker Peter shared several proposals aimed at enhancing the well-being of senior citizens in Pohnpei. Among the key proposals was the establishment of a cultural center for the community, envisioned as a space where senior citizens and other members of the community can gather and engage in

cultural and social activities.

Governor Joseph and the Board engaged in a broad discussion on potential projects that could significantly benefit senior citizens. The Governor emphasized the crucial role of the Pohnpei Senior Citizens Board, a non-governmental organization, in effectively communicating the needs and concerns of senior citizens to the government, thereby shaping policy to better serve this important demographic.

The upcoming Senior Citizens Day on October 1 was also a topic of discussion, with plans being laid out for its celebration. Additionally, the conversation touched upon community outreach initiatives aimed at fostering greater interaction between senior citizens and the broader community. The need for improved transportation services for senior citizens was highlighted as a critical area for development.

Governor Joseph expressed his gratitude for the visit and commended the Board for their dedication and proactive approach. He encouraged them to maintain their engagement with the government to help bridge service gaps within the



community, not just for senior citizens but for all residents of Pohnpei.

The Governor's Office reaffirms its commitment to supporting the initiatives and efforts of the Pohnpei Senior Citizens Board and looks forward to continued collaboration to enhance the quality of life for Pohnpei's senior citizens.

# Courtesy visit of FSM Ambassador to China, H.E. Vincent Sivas, and Deputy Chief of Mission, Francis Anefal, to Governor Stevenson A. Joseph

## Pohnpei Public Information

May 23, 2024

**Kolonia, Pohnpei**—Governor, Stevenson A. Joseph, warmly welcomed His Excellency Vincent Sivas, Ambassador of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) to the People's Republic of China, and Deputy Chief of Mission, Francis Anefal, during their courtesy visit today.

Ambassador Sivas expressed his heartfelt appreciation and congratulations to Governor Joseph, emphasizing the honor and joy of paying a courtesy call on the leader of the host state of the FSM. In their meeting, Ambassador Sivas provided Governor Joseph with updates on several key initiatives from China that benefit Pohnpei and the FSM as a whole. These initiatives include:

- **Ongoing Scholarships:** Open every February, these scholarships offer opportunities for FSM students to pursue higher education in China.
- **Chinese Medical Mission:** This initiative brings specialist doctors to FSM for a two-year mission to enhance local healthcare services.
- **Short-Term Training Missions:** Various vocational training programs and sports training assistance provided by China to boost skills and capacity in FSM.

Governor Joseph extended his gratitude to Ambassador Sivas and Mr. Anefal for their visit and the fruitful discussion on the ongoing Chinese assistance in Pohnpei. The Governor particularly highlighted the recent implementation of greenhouses at PICS High School and the China Pilot Farm. He shared his plans to collaborate with the pilot farm staff to disseminate their agricultural knowledge across other municipalities in alignment with his Food Security Policy priority.

At the end of the fruitful and productive courtesy



call, Governor Joseph expressed thanks, “On behalf of Pohnpei, I want to thank you Ambassador Sivas and Mr. Anefal for the good work you have done for us”

The meeting concluded with a mutual commitment to further strengthen the collaboration between Pohnpei State and the FSM Embassy in China, aiming to leverage Chinese support for the betterment of the community and sustainable development.

# Pohnpei Men’s volleyball team ready for MicroGames in Majuro



Sokehs Menin Katengensed (SMK)

May 20, 2024

**Sokehs, Pohnpei**—From Tuesday, May 7th through Thursday, May 9th, 2024 professional volleyballer Mr. James Weir, who plays for the Australian National Team and the Cannes Dragons in France, worked with the Pohnpei men’s volleyball team to sharpen their skills and focus on the upcoming MicroGames in Majuro in June this year. The 3-day training camp was sponsored by a PacificAus Sports



Australian Ambassador H.E. Jenny Grant-Curnow and James Weir pose with coaches and players of the Pohnpei men’s volleyball team. Also pictured is the Sokehs Chief of Youth and Sports (right) Mr. Josen Habuchamai.

grant received by the Sokehs Menin Katengensed (SMK) group.

The men’s team volleyball coach, Mr. Jerry Booth, said, “This training will definitely give our team a boost in terms of our performance levels. It helped us in our preparations for Majuro and we hope to turn that into some success for team. We thank the Sokehs Municipal Government and SMK for their assistance with this training and for sponsoring our team uniforms.”

James also worked with the boys and

girls 17 and under teams who are prepping for the FSM Games in Yap in July 2024.

On the night of the final reception at AA Getaway, Australian Ambassador, H.E. Jenny Grant-Curnow joined in to say farewell to Mr. Weir. Representatives from the Sokehs Municipal Government as well as SMK enjoyed the night to get know James better. Special thanks to Congresswoman Merleen Abello Alfonso, owner of AA Getaway, for her contributions to the farewell reception.



# Ambassador Jenny Grant-Curnow makes first official visit to Chuuk

*Australian Embassy to the FSM*

**May 30, 2024**

**Chuuk**—Between May 21 and 24, Australia’s Ambassador Jenny Grant-Curnow made her first official visit to the State of Chuuk. Ambassador met with the Chuuk Governor Alexander Narruhn to brief him on Australian funded projects and the new Pacific Engagement Visa opportunity with the ballot opening in early June. We thank Governor Narruhn and his office for the welcome reception inviting senior officials including DECEM Secretary Yatilman and members of the Chuuk communities.

The delegation had productive meetings

with the Vice President of the Chuuk Legislature the Hon Wisney Nakayama and Vice Speaker Andrew May, as well as Chief Justice Jayson Robert who joined us for a lunch with several #AustralianAlumni from Chuuk.

Chuuk Women’s Council (CWC) continue to impress with their dedicated staff, empowering women and girls and communities in Chuuk. Australia is proud to support CWC through the regional Pacific Women Lead.

Ambassador also met with the students and future leaders from across Micronesia and the Pacific who are studying at the renowned Xavier High School. Great to meet three dedicated

volunteer teachers from Australia building the people-to-people links between Australia to FSM.

Ambassador also had separate meetings with CEO CPUC Kembo Mida to discuss progress on the

electrification projects on Piis-Paneu and Etten islands, followed by Director of Chuuk -Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Bradley Mori to discuss the progress on WW2 shipwreck oil removal project.



## Assistant Secretary Cantor highlights funding to support civic education opportunities for students in U.S. Territories and Freely Associated States

U.S. Department of the Interior

May 23, 2024

WASHINGTON—Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs Carmen G. Cantor today met with high school students from the 2024 Insular Area Close Up Program, a program funded by the Office of Insular Affairs that provides meaningful civic education opportunities for students from the U.S. Territories and Freely Associated States.

In April 2024, the Office of Insular Affairs awarded \$1 million through its Technical Assistance Program to the Close Up Foundation. The funding helps provide opportunities for students and educators from the Insular Areas to learn more about American democratic processes through visits and meetings with government leaders in the executive and legislative branches as well as the diplomatic corps. The students also visit historical sites such as Williamsburg and Philadelphia.

“This program supports experiential learning opportunities about our democratic, governmental institutions and we are honored to support these programs for youth from the Insular Areas,” said Carmen G. Cantor, Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs. “The Interior Department is committed to inspiring the next generation of civic leaders and stewards of our lands and waters so that our precious spaces can be preserved

for future generations.”

During the visit, Assistant Secretary Cantor discussed the important role that Interior plays vis-à-vis the territories and highlighted the various types of funding assistance provided through the Office of Insular Affairs including new funding under the newly renegotiated Compacts of Free Association.

Assistant Secretary Cantor also shared information about the work of the Office of International Affairs and the technical assistance provided to other countries in conservation and natural resources. She also discussed the work of the Ocean Program at Interior, their interagency work on developing an Ocean Policy and protecting coral reef natural resources.

Funded through the Office of Insular Affairs Technical Assistance Program since 1987, the Close Up Insular Areas Program provides civic education opportunities for students and educators from the Insular Areas, and includes travel to the nation’s capital where students meet with government leaders in the executive and legislative branches as well as the diplomatic corps. Recently funded for fiscal year 2024 activities, the Close Up Insular Areas Program has inspired many island leaders and continues to be supported every year by the U.S. Congress.



## DoD representatives meet with residents of Palau; discuss proposed designation of defense site in Peleliu

Commander, Joint Region Marianas

May 17, 2024

KOROR, Palau—A team of engineers and representatives of the Department of Defense (DoD) met with government leaders and residents of the Republic of Palau to discuss the proposed designation of a new defense site in Peleliu, May 13 and 15.

About 200 residents attended the public engagements held at the Peleliu state office and in the Senate Building in Koror.

Judy Sanchez, deputy political-military advisor, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) Senior Military Official to Palau, and Harry Elliott, counsel for the INDOPACOM Senior Military Official to Palau, led the community engagements. Engineers from the U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, and U.S. Marine Corps shared details about the proposed defense site, which include repairs and expansion to the Peleliu Airstrip and Peleliu’s South Dock.

“We have a strong partnership with the Palauan government and people. When the Government of Palau sought to improve the infrastructure in Peleliu, we looked together to the designation of this new defense site to strengthen the U.S.’s ability to secure and defend Palau and meet this request,” said Elliott.

“We are one Pacific family, and the intent of these sites is to promote the quality of life for the people in Palau, and to enhance our capabilities throughout the region to include humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts, and power projection. Open and honest communication will remain a key element as we work with the government and people of Palau to reach our mutual goals and we are committed to involving the Palauan people every step of the way,” Elliott said.

Peleliu State Gov. Emais Roberts,

Palau Minister of Public Infrastructure and Industries Charles Obichang, Palau National Security Coordinator Jennifer Anson, Peleliu State Delegate Nace Soalablai, and Speaker of the Peleliu State Legislature Billy Rekemel also attended.

Roberts remarked that the meetings were a positive step toward the designation of the new defense site and thanked the team for taking the time to include the community in the conversation.

“It’s all about partnership,” Roberts said. “The Republic of Palau and State of Peleliu asked the U.S. government, asked the Department of Defense to help fix the airfield for our benefit, and also for the benefit of the military if they had the use for it.”

“I told the people of Peleliu that anything that’s happening needs to come in front of the public, everyone needs to know about it, we’ll have a consensus of where to go, and then we’ll proceed,” Roberts continued. “The last two meetings, one in Peleliu, the one in Koror, so far everybody is on board. They want this project to move as fast as possible. The benefit is so great for the people of Peleliu.”

The team hosted an additional meeting to address specific questions from landowners in Peleliu.

Rear Adm. Greg Huffman, INDOPACOM Senior Military Official to Palau shared his gratitude to the Palauan government and residents who participated in the meetings.

“We are thankful to the Government and people of Palau for their partnership and their continued support of our U.S. Armed Forces in the region. We are committed to being good partners as we work together to defend the homeland, deter aggression, and maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific,” Huffman said.

# FSM and UNDP Pacific Office sign seven-year project towards land degradation neutrality

*FSM Information Services*

May 28, 2024

**PALIKIR, Pohnpei (FSMIS)** -- 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; seek 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 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.

## President Simina receives PIF contribution for FSM drought relief

*FSM Information Services*

May 29, 2024

**PALIKIR, Pohnpei**—Earlier this month on May 15th, President Wesley W. Simina and Vice President Aren B. Palik received a financial contribution from the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) for the FSM's National Drought Emergency Relief. The donation was delivered by H.E. Carson Sigrah, FSM Ambassador to Fiji.



on behalf of the FSM Government for the PIF family's kind contribution.

President Simina thanked Ambassador Sigrah and the entire team at the FSM Embassy in Suva, the PIF family and the people of Fiji for their support and generosity. He emphasized that the gesture symbolizes the strong family bonds and solidarity within the Pacific community. Joining Ambassador Sigrah were long time embassy staff Ms. Litiana Radrodro and recently appointed Deputy Chief of Mission T.H. Chandra Legdosog.

The contribution, amounting to \$3,900 USD, resulted from a fundraising event jointly hosted by Ambassador Sigrah and the PIF Secretariat in Suva. The funds aim to support the FSM's relief efforts following the Drought Emergency Declaration issued in March.

Ambassador Sigrah received the donation from the PIF Secretary General T.H. Henry Puna at the FSM Embassy in Suva. During the handover, Ambassador Sigrah expressed gratitude

## Historic Investiture: Kosrae's own Chang B. William sworn in as FSM Supreme Court Associate Justice

*FSM Information Services*

May 29, 2024

**TOFOL, Kosrae**—Earlier this month, on May 6, 2024, a historic investiture ceremony was held for FSM Supreme Court Associate Justice Chang B. William at the FSM Supreme Court House in Tofof, Kosrae, where T.H. Vice President Aren B. Palik delivered the special remarks.

Nominated by the Simina-Palik Administration on October 4, 2023, and confirmed by the 23rd Congress on April 11, 2024, Justice William is the first native of Kosrae to serve on the FSM Supreme Court since its establishment on July 12, 1981.

Vice President Palik expressed gratitude to the Supreme Court and the organizing committee for hosting the event in Kosrae, highlighting its historical significance. He emphasized the judiciary's crucial role in maintaining peace and stability in the culturally diverse nation by delivering fair, independent, and impartial decisions. The Vice President noted the people's trust in the judiciary relies on the integrity and qualifications of those on the bench.



He praised Justice William as a dedicated public servant with exceptional qualifications and integrity, reaffirming the administration's confidence in his ability to serve as a Justice of the Court. Vice President Palik thanked Speaker Moses and the 23rd Congress for confirming the nomination and congratulated Justice William for his commitment to this important role.

The ceremony was presided over by Acting Chief Justice Beaulen Carl-Worswick, Associate Justice Larry Wentworth, and Associate Justice Dennis Belcourt. Attendees included Governor Tulensa Palik and First Lady Palik, Lt. Governor Arthy Nena and Second Lady Nena, Speaker Simeon Phillip and members of the Kosrae State Legislature, Chief Justices of the State Courts, Judge Arthur Barcinas of the Guam Superior Court, clergy, family, and friends of Associate Justice William.

# President Simina welcomes Japanese Special Envoy Masahiro Komura

*FSM Information Services*

*May 28, 2024*

**PALIKIR, Pohnpei**—Earlier this month, on May 1st, His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, received the Honorable Masahiro Komura, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan at the nation's capital. The visit was the Honorable Komura's first visit to the FSM in his new assignment as the Special Envoy for the Prime Minister of Japan, the Honorable Fumio Kishida. The purpose of the mission was to pay a courtesy call on President Simina to exchange views on the 10th Pacific Island Leaders Meeting (PALM10), which is scheduled to take place in July of this year as well as other bilateral issues between FSM and Japan.

During the courtesy call, President Simina welcomed Special Envoy Komura and his five-member delegation to Palikir and congratulated Special Envoy Komura on his special mission as the Special Envoy for the Prime Minister of Japan. President Simina expressed the FSM's gratitude and appreciation to the Government of Japan for this visit, which is timely and important for both countries to reflect on the long-standing Kizuna or bonds of friendship and cooperation that the peoples of both countries have had for over 130 years. President Simina also conveyed the FSM's appreciation for Japan's contribution to the East-Micronesia Cable (EMC) project, the Pohnpei Port Expansion project, the continued presence and positive influences of JOCV volunteers in our communities, capacity-building opportunities including human resource development and training, and the ongoing Japan grant aid to the FSM.

Special Envoy thanked President Simina for the warm welcome that had been accorded to him and his delegation during their short stay in Pohnpei and conveyed an invitation from the Prime Minister of Japan, the Honorable Fumio Kishida, to President Simina to attend the upcoming PALM10 which President Simina responded positively with the confirmation of the FSM's attendance at the highest level.

President Simina took the opportunity to reaffirm that the FSM attaches great importance to promoting people-to-people exchanges between the FSM and Japan on all levels. President Simina also reaffirmed that the FSM will support Japan in ensuring a peaceful and free Indo-Pacific that upholds the rule of law as well as his trust for a successful hosting by Japan of PALM10. President Simina concluded his remarks by confirming that during his upcoming visit to Japan, he will also visit the Kochi and Osaka Prefectures to strengthen and deepen the FSM Kizuna relations with Japan which are underpinned by close people-to-people exchanges at the local level.

The courtesy call ended on a positive note, with President Simina inviting Special Envoy Komura to visit the other FSM States during his next visit to the FSM.

Other activities for the Special Envoy included touring the Department of Environment, Climate Change, and Emergency Management, visit to the Nan Madol Ruins, and other JICA project sites in Pohnpei.



## The FSM opens permanent mission to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva

*FSM Information Services*

*May 28, 2024*

**PALIKIR, Pohnpei**—The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) recently celebrated the 21st anniversary of its formal diplomatic relationship with the Swiss Confederation by officially opening a Permanent Mission in Geneva on April 22, 2024. This historic milestone marks FSM's first mission on the European continent and underscores its commitment to enhancing engagement with the United Nations system based in Geneva.

The FSM currently represents the Asia-Pacific region on the Executive Council of the World Health Organization (WHO). With the new mission, the FSM aims to contribute to global

discussions on issues emanating from Geneva and improve representation of the Pacific region in Europe. The FSM expresses its deep appreciation to the Swiss Confederation for its support and cooperation in making this mission a reality.

Following the opening of the FSM Permanent Mission in Geneva, His Excellency President Wesley W. Simina appointed Ambassador Akillino H. Susaia as its Permanent Representative. Ambassador Susaia, a seasoned diplomat and public servant, was confirmed by the FSM Congress and sworn in on April 29, 2024, in Palikir, Pohnpei. He has previously served as Secretary of the FSM Department of Transportation, Communications, and Infrastructure, FSM Consul General in Hawaii, and FSM Ambassador to both the People's Republic of China and the United States of America. Ambassador Susaia is expected to arrive in Geneva in June 2024.

The Permanent Mission of the Federated States of Micronesia to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva is located at the Spaces Secheron, Chemin des Mines 1202, Geneva, Switzerland. The mission is currently being staffed by First Secretary Johnny Hadley Jr., Charge d'Affaires.



## FSM strengthens ties with neighboring Micronesian nations towards combatting IUU fishing and Transnational Crimes

*FSM Information Services*

*May 29, 2024*

**PALIKIR, Pohnpei**—From April 18-May 04, 2024, the Maritime Surveillance & Border Control of the FSM Department of Justice joined forces with the Kiribati Police Maritime Unit in order to combat Illegal Unreported and Unregulated Fishing Activities (IUU Fishing) and other transnational crimes. The FSS Bethwel Henry set sail to the Republic of Kiribati under the command of Chief/Commander Steward Peter for this joint patrol operation and was welcomed by Assistant Commissioner John Mote of Kiribati.

This is the first time that a special joint maritime operation between the FSM and Kiribati was ever held in a single joint operation involving the second Guardian Class Patrol Boats donated by the Australian Government. This

joint operation is aimed primarily at strengthening the capacity of maritime law enforcement between the FSM and Kiribati towards enhancing joint operability and establishing effective maritime surveillance control. It also enhances national measures against maritime crimes and transnational crimes, as both countries have the largest Exclusive Economic Zones in the Pacific region with waters rich in biodiversity and natural resources.

The joint patrol operation creates synergies through cooperative interactions among the law enforcement crews of both Surveillance Units from the FSM and Kiribati in terms of combating IUU Fishing and active patrolling in their respective vast EEZs. It will also build on the success of previous iterations, and provide opportunities to share experiences, skills, and knowledge in the conduct of operations and prepare the respective crews better for future operations. This joint patrol operation successfully concluded with potential of future collaboration and positive cooperation to reinvigorate the friendship between the FSM and Kiribati in protecting their maritime borders and their precious ocean resources.



FSS Bethwel Henry departed the Republic of Kiribati and made a stopover in the Republic of Marshall Islands to donate spare parts to RMI's Pacific Class Patrol Boat in order to join more operations for law enforcement activities. This generous donation is expected to further enhance and improve the FSM's strong partnership with RMI in addressing common challenges in the area of fisheries and maritime security.

## The FSM welcomes new Swiss Ambassador, strengthens bilateral relations amidst new FSM Embassy in Geneva

*FSM Information Services*

*May 15, 2024*

**PALIKIR, Pohnpei**—On May 15th, His Excellency Wesley W. Simina received the letter of credence from His Excellency Nicolas Bruhl, accrediting him as the new non-resident Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Swiss Confederation to the Federated States of Micronesia, with residence in Manila, Philippines.

During the ceremony, Ambassador Bruhl expressed his honor in presenting his credentials and gratitude for the invitation to visit the FSM. He highlighted the significance of April 22, marking the 21st anniversary of diplomatic relations between the FSM and Switzerland, and emphasized his commitment to strengthening bilateral ties.

Ambassador Bruhl noted the strong multilateral relationship between the FSM and Switzerland, particularly on issues like climate change. He also mentioned the recent establishment of

the FSM Permanent Mission in Geneva as a milestone in their relationship. This mission, located at the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva, aims to connect Palikir with the international community and advocate for its interests. Bruhl pointed to potential bilateral cooperation in tourism and trade for mutual benefit.

President Wesley W. Simina welcomed Ambassador Bruhl and acknowledged him as the 6th Ambassador of the Swiss Confederation to the FSM since the establishment of their diplomatic relations 21 years ago. He highlighted the strategic importance of the new FSM Permanent Mission in Geneva, which will enhance the FSM's participation in global discussions through organizations like the WHO and the Human Rights Council. President Simina also expressed that he looked forward to the accreditation of Permanent Representative Akillino H. Susaia as the resident Ambassador to Switzerland. He concluded by emphasizing cooperation in areas such as coastal fisheries, conservation, youth development, sports, water



management, global peace, and climate change.

Following the ceremony Ambassador Bruhl also met with President Simina and Vice President Palik, the Speaker of the 23rd FSM Congress, and the Governor of Pohnpei State, reaffirming the friendly diplomatic relations between the FSM and Switzerland.

The ceremony at the President's Office in Palikir was attended by Vice President Aren B. Palik, Acting Chief Justice Beaulen Carl-Worswick, Associate Justice Chang B. William, Cabinet Members, members of the Diplomatic Corps, International and Regional Organizations, and other national government officials.

# Governor Joseph welcomes Swiss Ambassador Dr. Nicolas Brühl to Pohnpei

*Pohnpei Public Information*

May 16, 2024

**Kolonia, Pohnpei**—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph warmly welcomed the Ambassador of Switzerland, His Excellency Dr. Nicolas Brühl, to Pohnpei. Ambassador Brühl, who is based in Manila, Republic of the Philippines, engaged in a series of discussions with the Governor, focusing on both state and national affairs. Accompanying Governor Joseph during the meeting was Lt. Governor Francisco L. Ioanis and Director of the Department of Treasury and Administration, Mrs. Sihna Lawrence.

Micronesia (FSM) Embassy in Geneva, Switzerland. The establishment of this embassy is expected to enhance diplomatic relations and provide a strategic platform for FSM in Europe.

The visit was characterized by a spirit of friendship, cooperation, and mutual understanding. Governor Joseph highlighted the importance of such diplomatic engagements in fostering strong international relationships and thanked Ambassador Brühl for his commitment to strengthening ties between Switzerland and Pohnpei, through the FSM.

The cordial exchange between Governor Joseph and Ambassador Brühl underscored the ongoing efforts to share information and collaborate on issues of mutual interest.

During their meeting, Governor Joseph and Ambassador Brühl discussed a range of topics, including the anticipated opening of a Federated States of



# Governor Stevenson A. Joseph welcomes Early Childhood Education Students and Second Graders from Wone Elementary School

*Pohnpei Public Information*

May 21, 2024

**Kolonia, Pohnpei**—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph welcomed a vibrant group of Early Childhood Education (ECE) students and second graders from Wone Elementary School to his office today. Accompanied by their dedicated teachers and supportive parents, the young students were eager to meet the Governor and share their future aspirations.

During the visit, several students expressed their dreams for the future, with many enthusiastically declaring their desire to become police officers. Governor Joseph listened intently and engaged with the students, encouraging them to continue their educational journeys.

Governor Joseph extended his gratitude to the students, teachers, and parents for taking the time to visit the Governor's

# Pohnpei State welcomes TetraTech and the US Embassy delegation to advance USAID's Clean Cities, Blue Ocean program to assist with a new dumpsite project

*Pohnpei Public Information*

May 28, 2024

**Kolonia, Pohnpei**—Mr. Renerio Acosta and Mr. John Angin from TetraTech, alongside Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) Alissa Bibb from the U.S. Embassy in Kolonia, visited Governor Joseph to further the efforts of the USAID Clean Cities, Blue Ocean (CCBO) program. This initiative, which began three years ago as a pilot project in Kolonia, aims to combat plastic pollution and enhance solid waste management. The program has recently been renewed for another year, underscoring the ongoing commitment to environmental sustainability in Pohnpei, with an additional focus on the Pohnpei State Dump Site.

with a Solid Waste Task Force, which will develop a road map, preliminary designs, and studies necessary to establish a new, environmentally sound dumpsite.

Critical roles in the new dumpsite project were highlighted by the presence of Francisco Celestine, Executive Officer of the Pohnpei State Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Daniel Isaac, Administrator of the Office of Transportation and Infrastructure. Both officials will be instrumental in ensuring the successful implementation of the dumpsite remediation and development plans.

An MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) was signed shortly after the productive meeting. This MOU formalizes the collaboration between the Pohnpei State Government and TetraTech to remediate and close the current dumpsite and to identify and design a new dumpsite. This agreement marks a significant milestone in the efforts to improve waste management and reduce plastic pollution in Pohnpei.

Governor Joseph warmly welcomed DCM Bibb, Mr. Acosta, and Mr. Angin, expressing his enthusiastic support for the plans discussed during the visit. The primary focus of the discussions was the remediation and closure of the existing dumpsite and the identification of a new site for waste management. These efforts will be coordinated



Office. He emphasized the importance of education as a foundation for future success, explaining to the students that an education is an important foundation for jobs in the future.

The visit concluded with smiles and renewed inspiration, as Governor Joseph reaffirmed his commitment to supporting the educational development of young learners in the community.

## Courtesy visit of USDA Rural Development officials to Governor Stevenson A. Joseph

*Pohnpei Public Information*

May 16, 2024

**Kolonia, Pohnpei**—Mr. Johnny Hiduchick-Nakayama, Administrative Program Director and Personnel Misconduct Investigator for Hawaii and Western Pacific Rural Development State Office, alongside Mr. Berly Aracely, Acting Area Director, Area III, USDA-Rural Development, paid a courtesy visit to Governor Stevenson A. Joseph at the Pohnpei State Government headquarters.

During the meeting, Mr. Hiduchick-Nakayama and Mr. Aracely extended their gratitude to Governor Joseph and the Pohnpei State Government for their support and assistance while their offices underwent temporary closure. They expressed appreciation for the cooperation extended to their staff

during this transitional period.

Furthermore, Mr. Hiduchick-Nakayama and Mr. Aracely shared promising news with Governor Joseph regarding the impending grand re-opening of the Rural Development Office in Pohnpei. They informed the Governor about the forthcoming implementation of a new digitalized system for loan applications, aiming to streamline processes and enhance accessibility for citizens.

Governor Joseph warmly welcomed these developments and emphasized the importance of strengthened collaboration between the USDA Rural Development Office and the Pohnpei State Housing Authority Office. He underscored the significance of this partnership in addressing the housing needs of various segments of the community, particularly focusing on the elderly, disabled, and Veteran populations.

As the meeting concluded, Governor Joseph and the visiting officials reiterated their commitment to working together towards the betterment of the Pohnpeian community, ensuring that vital services and support are readily available to those in need.



## Ambassador Kogiyama hands over a new Security Fence for Gagil Elementary School in Yap

*Embassy of Japan to the FSM*

May 9, 2024

**Yap**—On May 9th, 2024, there was held a handover ceremony at Gagil Elementary School in Yap State for the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects by the Government of Japan for “The Project for Construction of Security Fence for Gagil Elementary School”.

This project amounting up to US\$90,908 is meant to construct a security fence at Gagil Elementary School to improve the educational environment at school. The security fence aims to prevent suspicious individuals and wild animals from trespassing into the school premises and thereby provide a secure environment to the students.

At the Ceremony, Ambassador Kagomiya emphasized the importance of education. He conveyed his hopes that this project will contribute to a better educational environment fostered at Gagil Elementary school.

The Hon. Governor Charles Chieng expressed his gratitude to Ambassador Kagomiya and the Government of Japan for the cooperation.

The ceremony was also attended by the Director of the Department of Education Mr. Dominic Fanasog, local traditional leaders, the principal of the school, students, staff of the Governors’ office, and staff of the Embassy of Japan.



## Pacific Islands Forum expresses condolences and offers assistance after Papua New Guinea landslide

By Bill Jaynes  
The Kaselehlie Press

29 May 2024

**Suva, Fiji**—Cook Islands Prime Minister and Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum, Mark Brown, in a statement extended condolences and support to the people of Papua New Guinea following the devastating landslide on May 24th in the Enga Province. The disaster has resulted in significant loss of life and widespread devastation, prompting a wave of international solidarity.

On May 24, 2024, a massive landslide struck the Enga Province in Papua New Guinea, resulting in significant loss of life and severe destruction of property.

The landslide, triggered by heavy rainfall, buried several villages, leaving many residents displaced and causing perhaps more than 1000 fatalities.

Rescue operations have been challenging due to the remote location and the extent of the damage. Efforts are ongoing to locate survivors and provide relief to the affected communities. The international community, along with local authorities, has mobilized to offer humanitarian aid and support to those impacted by the disaster.

The government of Papua New Guinea has declared a state of emergency in the affected areas and is working closely with international partners to address the immediate needs and plan for long-term

recovery and rebuilding.

Prime Minister Brown conveyed the collective grief and sympathy of the 18 Pacific nations that comprise the Forum, along with its dialogue and development partners. "The Forum family of our 18 Pacific nations and our dialogue and development partners join us in extending thoughts, prayers and condolences to the government and people of Papua New Guinea, following the massive landslide events of May 24 in the Enga Province," Brown stated.

The landslide, described as an absolute tragedy by Brown, has left a profound impact on the community. "We mourn with Papua New Guinea and her people at the

many lives lost and uprooted. Our thoughts and prayers remain with all those directly affected and the people and government of Papua New Guinea," he added.

Highlighting the Forum's readiness to assist, Brown emphasized the importance of unity and collective effort in the face of such a calamity. "The Forum stands ready to assist and offer our support through this period of bereavement and recovery, noting with appreciation the humanitarian efforts of our Forum family and the international community," he said.

Brown's statement concluded with a message of resilience and hope: "May strength, unity and healing prevail through this time."

# Outgoing Secretary General Puna reflects on tenure at Pacific Islands Forum

By Bill Jaynes  
The Kaselehlie Press

June 1, 2024

**Suva, Fiji**—In his farewell address, outgoing Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General Henry Puna reflected on his three-year tenure, expressing deep gratitude and appreciation for the experiences and achievements shared with colleagues, leaders, and partners across the Pacific region.

Puna, addressing a distinguished audience including Fiji's Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka, Deputy Prime Minister Viliame Gavoka, representatives of the Pacific Islands Forum Members, and various diplomatic, civil society, and private sector representatives, highlighted the enriching yet challenging nature of his role. He emphasized the invaluable lessons learned through leadership and collaboration during his term.

"How fast time travels when one is having fun!" Puna remarked, acknowledging the milestones and collective efforts that marked his tenure. "Leadership, I can say for certain, is something that can only be enriched by experience; and experience, can only be enriched by the lessons that we learn through life."

Reflecting on the past three years, Puna described his journey as a steep learning curve, filled with both personal and professional growth. He expressed his appreciation for the confidence bestowed upon him by the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders in 2021, describing the experience as an incredible journey that tested his physical, mental, and diplomatic capacities to their limits.

"I can say for certain and with great confidence that this role and position is not for the faint-hearted," Puna stated. He praised the collective effort of the Forum's members, sister CROP agencies, regional partners, and the Secretariat staff, attributing the Forum's achievements to their dedication and support.

To the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum, Puna extended his gratitude for their wisdom and leadership, emphasizing the importance of maintaining regional solidarity and unity. He also thanked the Forum Missions in Suva for their guidance and support throughout his tenure.

Acknowledging his colleagues in the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP), Puna commended



their commitment to delivering better outcomes for Pacific people. He expressed gratitude to Forum Dialogue Partners and Development Partners for their support and urged them to continue working collaboratively towards the 2050 vision for the region.

Puna also addressed the Civil Society Organizations, encouraging them to persist in holding leaders accountable for their commitments. To the private sector, he highlighted their crucial role as the economic engine of the region, urging continued innovation and boldness.

In a special message to Pacific youth, Puna declared, "You are the Leaders of today," acknowledging their contribution

to his role and expressing confidence in their ability to shape the region's future.

Puna concluded by expressing his thanks to the Secretariat's senior management team and staff for their unwavering support, wisdom, and patience. He extended his best wishes to the incoming Secretary General, His Excellency Baron Waqa, expressing confidence in his leadership and the continued success of the Forum.

"Meitaki Ma'ata, Vinaka Vakalevu, and thank you all so very much again for the honour and the pleasure to have worked with you all in the last three years," Puna concluded.

# Bank Of Guam alerts customers to recent vishing and phishing scheme

The Bank of Guam

May 23, 2024

**Hagåtña, Guam**—The Bank of Guam is alerting all customers to a recent vishing and phishing scheme. Vishing, or voice phishing, involves fraudulent phone calls designed to deceive individuals into disclosing sensitive personal and financial information.

Fraudulent callers are using sophisticated technology to spoof Bank of Guam's main customer service line, making it appear as if the fraudster's call is coming from the Bank's telephone number, (671) 472-5300.

With phishing, bad actors pretend to be from the Bank by using email addresses that are very similar to legitimate Bank email addresses.

These imposters may ask for personal information such as account numbers, passwords, Social Security numbers,

and other sensitive data. They often create a sense of urgency or threaten negative consequences, such as account suspension, to pressure victims into compliance.

Customers are reminded that Bank of Guam will never ask you for account details or private information over the phone or email unless the customer initiates the communication. Bank of Guam will also never ask you to validate your personal information outside of our secure channels. To protect yourself from vishing or phishing scams and other fraudulent activities, here are some best practices to remember:

- **Be Vigilant:** Always be cautious when receiving unsolicited phone calls or emails asking for personal information.
- **Verify Calls:** If you receive a call purporting to be from Bank of Guam, do not provide any personal

information. Instead, hang up and call customer service directly at (671) 472-5300 to verify the call.

- **Beware of Unsolicited, Suspicious Emails:** Be cautious of emails that appear to look like they come from the Bank. Make sure to verify the sender address to determine if it's legitimate. If it looks suspicious, do not click on any links or open any attachments. Delete the message and empty your trash folder.

- **Report Suspicious Activity:** Report any suspicious calls or emails to the Bank immediately to ensure these activities are tracked and handled timely.

- **Protect Personal Information:** Never share personal or financial information over email or phone unless you are certain of the caller's identity.

- **Monitor Your Accounts:** Check your accounts regularly and report any unauthorized activity immediately to the Bank.

"Safeguarding our customers' information is a top priority, as is ensuring our systems are secure and our teams are trained to identify, mitigate and report these types of events quickly," said Joaquin P. L.G. Cook, President and Chief Executive Officer. "We encourage all our customers to continue to remain vigilant, monitor your account transactions regularly and always remember, the Bank will never call you and ask you to provide your account information."

Bank of Guam has reported this vishing and phishing scheme to the local FBI office and is working closely with law enforcement to address and mitigate these fraudulent activities.

For more information on how to protect yourself from fraud, please visit <https://www.fbi.gov/how-we-can-help-you/scams-and-safety/commonscams-and-crimes/spoofing-and-phishing>.

# Secretary Haaland leads U.S. Delegation to Antigua and Barbuda to highlight U.S. commitment to Small Island Communities

*U.S. Department of the Interior*

*May 29, 2024*

**ST. JOHN'S, Antigua and Barbuda**—Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland this week led the United States delegation to the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda. Throughout the conference and in meetings with counterparts and partners, Secretary Haaland and the delegation – which included senior officials and experts from across the Biden-Harris administration – underscored the United States government's unwavering commitment to SIDS and to advancing their sustainable development for a resilient and prosperous future.

SIDS are disproportionately affected by the impacts of multiple global crises, including the climate impacts of sea-level rise and extreme weather events. The Conference served as a critical opportunity for the United States to demonstrate its ongoing commitments to establishing the policies, systems and partnerships needed to strengthen SIDS' resilience and promote their long-term sustainable growth.

Throughout the visit, Secretary Haaland met with international leaders from Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and the United

Nations Secretary General to discuss efforts to tackle the climate crisis and support small island communities.

On Monday, Secretary Haaland delivered the National Statement on behalf of the United States, where she highlighted the Administration's all-of-government approach to uniting around SIDS and their sustainable development. In support of these efforts, the Biden-Harris administration released the first-ever U.S.-Pacific Partnership Strategy in 2022 and has launched efforts with Congress to provide more than \$8 billion in new funding and programs for the Pacific Islands. The United States is also expanding diplomatic and development presence in SIDS, including opening new embassies, expanding the United States Agency for International Development's footprint in the eastern Caribbean and Pacific, and sending Peace Corps volunteers to a number of islands in the Pacific region.

The United States opened embassies in both Solomon Islands and Tonga last year, has plans to open an embassy in Vanuatu this year, and has initiated an ongoing process to establish two new embassies in the eastern Caribbean. Secretary Haaland also highlighted the Department of the Interior's implementation of the amendments to the Compacts of Free Association, which together will provide \$6.5 billion in sustainable economic assistance

over 20 years to the freely associated states, which include the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau.

Secretary Haaland joined Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne and United Nations Development Program Administrator Achim Steiner for a conversation with conference attendees, including government, private sector, and non-profit partners, to discuss the future of SIDS development, the importance of creating sustainable economies, and the international community's role in supporting SIDS. Secretary Haaland discussed the United States' approach to development assistance that is rooted in working with local partners to drive local solutions, reflected in U.S. financial support to SIDS, 95 percent of which is in the form of grants, free of debt and dependence.

During the program the Secretary also highlighted the Interior Department's commitment to the Pacific Islands and U.S. territories. In 2022, Secretary Haaland traveled to the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico and in 2023, she and Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs Carmen Cantor traveled to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, the Republic of Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia.

During the visit, they toured natural and cultural resources across the islands and saw first-hand how small island communities are feeling the impacts of the climate crisis and how U.S. investments, including from President Biden's Investing in America agenda, are making a difference for people, wildlife and economies.

On Wednesday, Secretary Haaland joined Prime Minister Browne, Palau President Surangel Whipps Jr., and Guam Lieutenant Governor Josh Tenorio for a roundtable conversation with the Local2030 Islands Network, the world's first global, island-led network devoted to addressing the climate crisis by advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through locally driven, culturally informed solutions.

Secretary Haaland discussed the Biden-Harris administration's continued commitment to working with Congress to provide \$5 million in funding to support the activities of the Network. She also highlighted the Administration's commitment to advancing a bold and timely global response to the climate crisis, investing in strengthening and expanding multi-hazard early warning systems across the Pacific and Caribbean and partnering with small islands to access clean energy and improve food and water security.

## Pacific Islands Forum bids farewell to Secretary General Henry Puna

*By Bill Jaynes  
The Kaselehlie Press*

*16 May 2024*

**Suva, Fiji**—In an address on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum, Cook Islands Prime Minister and Forum Chair Hon. Mark Brown praised the service and leadership of outgoing Secretary General Henry Puna. As Puna's term comes to an end on 23 May 2024, the Forum reflects on his contributions and guidance during one of the most challenging periods in its history.

Puna's tenure has been marked by a series of political and economic trials. Despite these challenges, he has led with integrity, humility, and a warm collegiality. His leadership was crucial in advancing

the Forum's collective priorities amidst unprecedented uncertainty

One of Puna's most notable achievements is the establishment of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, a long-term political vision and strategy for the region. This strategy, along with its Implementation Plan, aims to enhance regional coordination and coherence in delivering the leaders' priorities.

Puna's commitment to climate advocacy has also been a hallmark of his tenure. Under his leadership, the Pacific Resilience Facility was established, successfully mobilizing USD \$116 million in pledges since November 2024. His efforts have significantly elevated the voice of Pacific youth, particularly

in inter-generational matters like climate change. His tenure is also marked by key political commitments to gender equality, exemplified by the "Revitalised Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration".

Economically, Puna has overseen significant regional advancements, including the maturation of policies in e-Commerce, sustainable economic development, aid for trade, and correspondent banking relationships. He played a crucial role in the establishment of the Pacific Trade and Investment Independent (PTI) Advisory Board, which oversees the operations of the regional Trade and Investment PTI Network.

Strategically, Puna has enhanced the

Forum's engagement with multilateral agencies, notably the United Nations, and strengthened relations with regional organizations such as the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). His efforts have managed increasing external interest and influence in the region, fostering greater engagement with partners based on the Blue Pacific Principles for Engagement and Dialogue.

"Recognizing the need to strengthen the services of the Secretariat, under his leadership a change management process has been instituted to ensure that we have a fit-for-purpose organization," Brown said. "But most importantly for

*Click here for continuation on next page*

# DYCA ensures election integrity with unofficial results

Yap Department of Youth and Civic Affairs

June 1, 2024

Colonia, Yap—Early Saturday morning, June 1st, 2024, at the Small Business Development Center, the DYCA team and police officers monitored the process while selected Election Board members acted as tabulators and verifiers, completing the unofficial subtotal count of votes for yes, no, and spoils on the island, including Rumung Municipality. The DYCA team and police officers ensured ballots were counted and delivered for verification. The unofficial results showed 456 votes for yes, 153 votes for no, and 8 spoiled ballots, with a total of 617 votes cast. However, there are still a few boxes that need to be verified from the main island, as well as pending ballot boxes arriving from off-island. To ensure the integrity of the election, the DYCA team and Election officials observed the process closely and set up surveillance cameras. We thank you for your patience as more details will be furnished depending on the arrival of the ballot boxes.

# ...Puna

Continued from previous page

the Pacific Islands Forum, Secretary General Puna’s role in ensuring the ongoing solidarity of the Forum Family is one that cannot be overlooked. He has demonstrated time and again a quiet resolve, discernment, and statesmanship, especially in supporting our political efforts to ensure our collective solidarity as a Forum Family, and it is something that we, as the Pacific Islands Forum, will remain grateful to Secretary General Puna for.”

Prime Minister Brown expressed his personal gratitude and pride in working alongside Puna, saying that it has been and honor for the Cook Islands to have Puna serve as Secretary General.

Secretary General Henry Puna will be succeeded by Mr. Baron Divavesi Waqa.

# Our young Pacific people are calling for action!

UNICEF

May 23, 2024

SUVA, Fiji—UNICEF Pacific is supporting five young people from Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Samoa, and Vanuatu, to take part in the SIDS Global Children and Youth Action Summit (CYAS) held this week in Antigua and Barbuda.

The CYAS is a ground-breaking event aimed at empowering young people from Small Island Developing States to address the complex challenges facing their communities. Held ahead of the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States, CYAS will bring together a diverse group of young leaders to share their perspectives, develop solutions, and take action on critical issues like climate change, poverty and digital transformation.

“I see the impacts that climate change has left on my people every single day - whether it be damaged housing and crops from cyclones, sea level rise, droughts, or many more. I am truly blessed to have this opportunity to attend the SIDS CYAS and I look forward to the youth voices finally being heard,” said Gabrielle Kaltongga, who is from Vanuatu and is one of the five young people. “I’m also excited to meet and share experiences with other young activists, learning from masterclasses, and most of all, I’m excited to see the actions that will be taken to build our islands up and enable them to flourish.”

Earlier this year, UNICEF supported in-person consultations across the region with young people and national partners to better understand the challenges and opportunities they face on sustainable development issues.

From these consultations, eight priority issues including climate, digital technology, clean water and safe sanitation, healthcare and resources, education, poverty and unemployment, violence as well as transport will be the key focus for the Pacific at the Conference and Summit.

"Our voices are shaped by unique challenges and our dreams dance on the tides of hope and resilience. In a matter of days, youth from all over the world

will be able to share their stories and together, weave a sail and chart our own course, for the youth, is the ethos of our future,” said Tamarua Marsters, who is from Cook Islands and is also one of the five young people. “I am honoured to be joining my regional brothers and sisters at this global summit - for our islands are not just dots on the map, but beacons of inspiration and change.”

The UNICEF-supported team is part of a group of 17 delegates aged between 14-25 years from 10 countries in the region who are attending the Summit. They will be the voice of their people on sustainable development issues that matter most to the Pacific.

“Children and young people want to be engaged in addressing the challenges they face, and they have solid solutions to offer. However, they require a much more enabling environment from

adults to help them find solutions when faced with challenges such as emotional stress, financial hardship, and violence,” said UNICEF Pacific’s Representative, Jonathan Veitch.

“UNICEF is really proud of the team who are attending SIDS4 and bringing the hopes and aspirations of all young people in the Pacific to this very vital Summit, where the future of all SIDS will be discussed. UNICEF is supporting these young voices to be heard and to be valued in decision-making processes.”

UNICEF, the Government of Antigua and Barbuda and The Ashley Lashley Foundation, have organized the CYAS recognizing the vital role young people play in building a more resilient future for SIDS.

Through interactive workshops, discussions, and project development, the Summit equips participants with the knowledge and skills to become effective changemakers.

# FBI conducts outreach in Yap

US Embassy to the FSM

May 30, 2024

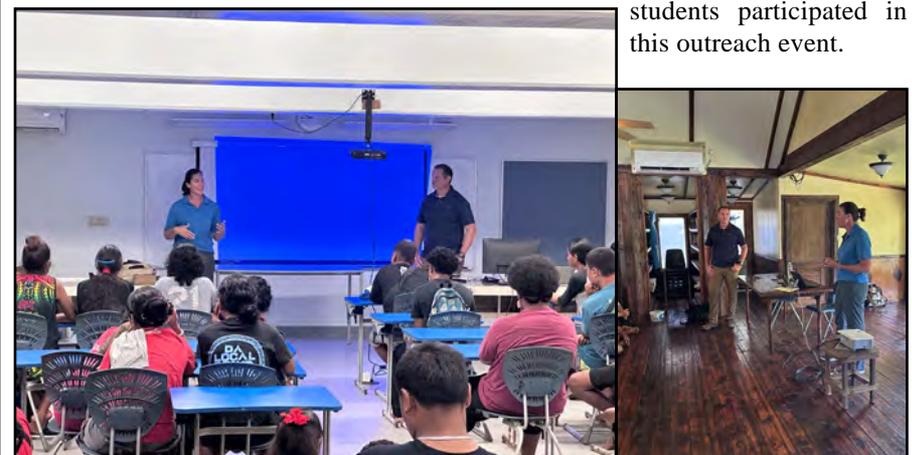
Yap—FBI Special Agents in FSM, Yap National Police, and the U.S. Army Pacific Oceania Engagement Team participated in school outreach events in Yap. At Yap High School, two sessions were held. The first included freshmen and sophomores and the second included juniors and seniors.

The outreach event provided the opportunity for students to learn more about the possibilities for jobs in law enforcement (FSM National Police and FBI) and careers in the U.S. Merchant Marines and U.S. Coast

Guard. Approximately 100 students participated in each session at Yap High School. Representatives present from the Youth and Civil Affairs department included: Daniella Raboliy, Constantine Gilbeengin, and John Filled.

Additionally, the FBI, Yap National Police, and the U.S. Army Pacific Oceania Engagement Team participated in a school outreach event at Yap Catholic High School. Students were able to learn about opportunities working in the FBI, the FSM National Police, the U.S. Merchant Marines and the

U.S. Coast Guard. Approximately 85 students participated in this outreach event.



## Pacific Islands Forum Chair addresses political tensions in New Caledonia

By Bill Jaynes  
The Kaselehlie Press

30 May 2024

**Suva, Fiji**—The Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum and Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, Hon. Mark Brown, has issued an official statement addressing the ongoing political situation in New Caledonia.

### *Brown calls for peace and dialog*

In his statement, Prime Minister Brown expressed the Forum's concern for those affected by the political unrest in New Caledonia, particularly offering condolences to families who have lost loved ones. He stressed the importance of maintaining peace and order and praised recent high-level discussions aimed at finding a mutually agreeable path forward.

"I reiterate the call for peace and order to prevail and commend the ongoing peaceful efforts to reach a mutually agreeable way forward, including the recent high-level discussions that took place in New Caledonia," Brown said.

### *Forum's commitment to facilitate dialog*

Brown reaffirmed the Pacific Islands Forum's readiness to provide a neutral platform for all parties to come together and resolve their differences in the spirit of the "Pacific Way." He highlighted the Forum's historical role in supporting conflict resolution through regional mechanisms and offered the Forum's comprehensive support to New Caledonia.

"I have written to the President of the Government of New Caledonia, His Excellency Louis Mapou, to offer the support of the PIF, including outlining the comprehensive regional mechanisms and processes available to Forum Members during times such as this," Brown stated.

### *Importance of inclusive and deliberate process*

Reflecting on the recent high-level meetings in Noumea, Brown acknowledged the complexity and

this matter must be underpinned by an inclusive process and must not be rushed," Brown emphasized.

### *Summary of current tensions in New Caledonia*

New Caledonia, a French territory in the South Pacific, has been embroiled in political turmoil primarily due to debates over its political status and potential independence from France. The region has conducted several referenda on independence, with the most recent in December 2021 resulting in a vote against independence, albeit

amid a boycott by pro-independence groups and low voter turnout.

The pro-independence Kanak and Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) and other factions continue to push for further dialogue with France, seeking either full independence or greater autonomy. Conversely, anti-independence groups favor maintaining ties with France. This ongoing division has led to heightened political tensions and unrest, prompting calls for renewed dialogue and peaceful resolution efforts.

## IRS-CI Equips FSM to Combat Financial Crimes

### *Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigations (IRS- CI)*

May 30, 2024

**FSM**—An Introduction to Financial Investigative Techniques course was successfully conducted from May 20-31, 2024, across all four Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) states - Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk, and Yap. The course was taught by the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigations (IRS-CI).

This initiative was facilitated by the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Joint Interagency Task Force – West, the U.S. Embassy Kolonia, and the 9th Army Mission Support Command. The course provided participants with baseline tools to combat financial crimes, including anti-money laundering investigative techniques to discover concealed drug smuggling profits.

The curriculum included a range of topics, such as interviewing, following the money trail, analyzing books and records, suspicious transaction reports, and an introduction to cryptocurrency.

FSM participants included national and state police investigators, the Customs and Tax Administration, the Department of Finance and Justice, the Attorney General's Office, national and state Public Auditors, state tax compliance officers, state Department of Public Safety, local banks and money transfer service managers and compliance officers, and the anti-human trafficking services division. The wide variety of participants helped to foster interagency coordination and cooperation within FSM.

The participants were highly engaged and enthusiastic throughout the course, demonstrating a strong commitment to enhancing their skills and knowledge

in financial investigations.

The course was delivered by experts from the IRS-CI, which is the law enforcement arm of the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the world's leading agency in investigating financial

crimes. The IRS-CI has extensive experience in working with international partners to combat transnational crime and protect the integrity of the global financial system.

This course is a clear testament to the U.S. Government's unwavering commitment to the security of FSM under the Compact of Freely Associated States and a free and open Indo-Pacific. It reinforces our shared dedication to combating financial crimes and ensuring a safer and more secure region.

## Yap Veterans host first Memorial Day

By Mercy Libian  
U.S. Veterans of Yap Association

June 3, 2024

**Yap**—The US Veterans of Yap Association hosted the very first Memorial Day Ceremony in Yap this past Memorial Day Monday. The Yap State Leaders were in support of the event from planning to the day of the event. The Honorable Governor Charles S. Chieng, Council of Pilung and the 11th Yap State Legislature were in attendance in honoring and remembering sons and daughters of Yap who served in the US Military and made the ultimate sacrifice. Honorable Governor Charles S.

Chieng, the distinguished guest-speaker, gave a heartfelt speech during this monumental event, addressing the Gold Star Families and calling all State Leaders to work together in support of the Veterans in Yap and their Families.

The Ceremony included "Laying of the Wreath" and a "Final Roll-Call" remembering all Yapese sons and daughters who have passed in line of duty since the beginning of OEF/OIF. As mentioned in the President's (US Veterans of Yap Association) speech, "this event goes down as history in the making for Yapese Veterans here at home" She also thanked all Yap State

Leaders for their support in making this event possible. Their presence at this event serves as a powerful demonstration of their unwavering support for our Veterans and their families. Their participation also reaffirms collective commitment to honoring the memory of those Yapese sons and daughters who have made the ultimate sacrifice. The ceremony concluded with the The Military Liaison, MAJ Orasio Leyva thanking the Gold Star Families on behalf of a grateful Nation for all their sacrifices. With support of Yap State Leaders, the US Veterans of Yap Association will continue this event annually.