

FSM hosts Inaugural Energy Forum to chart a sustainable and affordable energy future

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

July 12, 2024

Palikir, Pohnpei—On July 9-10, 2024, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) convened its first-ever Energy Forum in Palikir, Pohnpei. The event, themed "Energizing FSM - Affordability and Beyond," gathered a diverse group of stakeholders from government, state utility companies, development partners, and civil society to develop a comprehensive plan for improving energy affordability and access across the nation.

Governor Stevenson A. Joseph of Pohnpei welcomed the attendees, expressing appreciation to Vice President Aren B. Palik for leading the forum. He highlighted the critical need to address the high costs of fuel and identify affordable, sustainable energy sources. Vice President Palik

echoed these sentiments, calling for unity and collaboration to reduce electricity tariffs and ensure access to affordable energy for all FSM citizens.

The forum aimed to validate the 2024-2050 National Energy Policy,

[Click here for continuation on page 4](#)



Yap voters' decision internationally misreported: Political Status Commission measure did not pass

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

July 15, 2024

Yap—The Kaselehlie Press was not alone when we incorrectly reported that Yap voters had voted to establish a commission to reconsider Yap's political status. International news entities like the Los Angeles Times, and even the Pacific Islands News Association (PINA) also reported that incorrect information.

No government entity including Yap State Election Commission or Yap's

public information arm has officially said that the measure did not pass. The Election Commission merely certified the number of votes but never answered the question of whether or not the measure had passed. Neither did Yap's Department of Youth and Civil Affairs in its earlier press release on unofficial results.

Matters are more complicate for Yap outsiders. The "go to" page on the Internet for FSM State Constitutions is FSMLaw.org. The Constitution listed for Yap has not been updated in a very long time and is not complete. What

IS listed there is the rules established form amending the Constitution. For an amendment to be successfully added to the Yap State Constitution, Article X, Section 4 says, "A proposed amendment shall become part of this Constitution when approved by a majority of votes cast." However, that is not what decided by Yap voters considering the matter of whether Yap should establish a commission to consider its political status

What is missing from the FSMLaw.org page is the one section that matters to the question regarding what voting

standard is required for passage of the question on the establishment of a Political Status Commission. In 2010, Yap voters passed, by a simple majority as required, an amendment to the Constitution under the General Provisions title, Article XIV. That amendment was added as Section 11 of Article XIV and should read, "The Legislature, by two – thirds vote, shall present to the people on a ballot during an election the question: 'Shall the State of Yap commence a review of its political status?' If a two-third

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

UNICEF and UNFPA host Gender-based Violence Risk Mitigation Training

U.S. Embassy to the FSM

July 15, 2024

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) hosted a three-day Gender-based Violence (GBV) Risk Mitigation training in Pohnpei that ran from July 8-10.

Participants from development partners, government agencies, and NGOs learned ways to identify the risk of GBV in their emergency and daily operations as well as effective mitigation strategies. During their training, participants share relevant GBV experiences in relation to their work.

In her delivery remarks at this training's closing event, Ambassador Jennifer Johnson recognized all the champions fighting against GBV. "Gender-based violence is a pervasive, pernicious issue, and combating it demands our unwavering attention and collective action", she said. "Supporting measures against GBV means advocating for comprehensive policies that protect survivors, holding perpetrators accountable, and preventing violence from occurring in the first place."

The United States government is proud to support and sponsor human rights and gender equality training. Congratulations to all graduates and many thanks to USAID for funding the training, and UNICEF and UNFPA for hosting the training with Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) GBV guidelines.



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Bill Jaynes
Managing Editor

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Monday, July 29, 2024

ONPA audit finds lapses in financial management in connection with 2023 FSM Inauguration

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

July 10, 2024

FSM— FSM's Office of the National Public Auditor stated that public feedback on the 2023 Joint Presidential Inauguration "found the event to be a resounding success, with meticulous planning and execution." However, an inspection identified what the auditors called "control and compliance deficiencies that warrant immediate attention to enhance future inaugurations."

This was the first audit by ONPA on matters relating to FSM National Government Inaugurations.

The audit's cover letter reported the following issues:

1. Absence of guidelines in the administration of about \$137,550 cash donations;
2. Required progress reports to the President were not fully complied with; and
3. Inadequate compliance with required financial documentation.

Auditors stated that enabling legislation authorized a total of \$670,000 for the inauguration. The actual total expenditures related to the inauguration were \$454,365.35, with General Contractual Services being the largest expenditure at \$249,689.68, representing 54.95 percent

of the total operating expenditures.

As stated above, the audit's first finding was that there was an absence of guidelines for approximately \$137,550 in private cash donations. While the auditors did not accuse the Inauguration Committee of any wrongdoing in the handling of the donations, they noted that the records and transactions were not maintained in the government's Financial Management Information System but were only manually maintained by a staff member of the Division of Budget who was also filing the support documents.

"While we commend the efforts of the Committee to achieve accountability by creating a bank account for the safekeeping of donations, it is vital and necessary to establish guidelines to ensure that donations are used appropriately and transparently for their intended purpose in the future," they wrote.

Auditors included appendices showing that the committee spent \$86,618 of the \$137,550 donated. They also provided a general description of the types of payees and the purposes for those expenditures.

As the second finding, auditors said that required progress reports to the President were not fully complied with. According to the audit, it was not necessarily that reports were not made to the President. Apparently, they were. The objection was that all the reports were given orally

and were not available in written form for auditors to review, "introducing a sense of uncertainty and raising questions regarding the accountability of tangible evidence."

Auditors stated that the effects of the deficiency were:

1. "The failure to provide written progress reports may result in critical information going unreported. This omission could hinder the identification of areas for improvement and documentation of successful strategies, ultimately impacting the efficiency and effectiveness of future Presidential Inaugurations.
2. "The remaining balance of the cash donations (from the initial amount of about \$137,000) could potentially not be reported."

Auditors said that one of the causes of the noted deficiency was the reliance by the Secretary of Finance on a long-standing practice of delivering oral reports. As such, no templates for compiling and submitting written reports had been formulated. Auditors suggested that the prudent approach for future inaugurations is to transition to written reports.

As the last finding, ONPA found that there was inadequate compliance with financial documentation requirements.

The auditors highlighted that there was no separate documentation of justifications

filed to waive bidding requirements for the selection of the contractor chosen to construct the "Congress Front Plaza," which cost a total of \$105,920.41. There were also no recommendations by the Secretary of the Department of Finance and Administration (DoFA) to waive those bidding requirements for subsequent approval by the President.

Though an FSM Civil Engineer said that the "Congress Front Plaza" was essentially completed in time for the inauguration, several "punch list" items were not completed until afterward when off-island materials were received and installed. The final payment was made to the contractor on February 20, 2024. "However, no photos were filed as evidence of the additional work done."

Auditors noted that several Accounts Payable Vouchers were missing for payments from the Congress-appropriated funds, yet checks were still issued.

Lastly, auditors pointed out that DoFA's Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual on Prepaid Calling Cards was violated with no notations of who received them, when, face value of cards, purpose, and other essential information.

The Secretary of DoFA agreed with all of the findings and committed to making corrections in time for the next joint inauguration.

Governor Joseph engages key stakeholders in promising discussion on economic development and export growth

Pohnpei Public Information

July 4, 2024

KOLONIA, Pohnpei—Governor Joseph held a pivotal meeting with the Director of the Department of Resources and Development, Mark Kostka, Commissioner of V6AH and member of Pohnpei Export Services, Mr. Peterson Sam, and local entrepreneur Aspen Apis. The discussion centered on the economic development of Pohnpei State, specifically focusing on enhancing export opportunities.

Mr. Peterson Sam provided valuable insights into the history and challenges faced by the Pohnpei

Export Association in establishing a consistent and profitable export channel. He emphasized the need for a strategic approach to overcome these obstacles and secure stable markets for Pohnpei's products. Governor Joseph recognized these challenges and shared promising business contacts made during his recent trip to Majuro for the Micronesian Games, highlighting potential new avenues for collaboration and trade.

Local businessman Aspen Apis presented his innovative hydroponic farming venture, which currently produces a thousand leafy green vegetables, such as Bok Choy and

Chinese cabbage, per month. Mr. Apis shared his ambitious plans to scale up production to meet local demand and eventually supply export markets. His venture represents a significant step toward achieving food security and diversifying Pohnpei's agricultural exports.

Governor Joseph expressed his excitement about the potential economic benefits these initiatives could bring to Pohnpei. He praised the collaborative efforts of Mr. Sam, Mr. Apis, and Director Kostka, and reaffirmed his commitment to supporting projects that drive economic



growth and sustainability in the state. The meeting concluded with a shared vision of a prosperous future, leveraging local resources and expertise to build a resilient and thriving economy.



...Energy

Continued from front page

which sets ambitious targets for the nation. By 2030, FSM aims to achieve 100% access to electricity and 70% electricity generation from renewable sources. By 2050, the goal is to reach net zero emissions. Key discussions focused on establishing an independent energy regulator, engaging Independent Power Producers (IPPs), and electrifying unelectrified islands through a dedicated revolving fund.

Participants explored a range of strategies to enhance grid stability and transition to renewable energy sources. This included upgrading infrastructure, standardizing equipment, and developing cost-effective tariff structures. The forum emphasized creating a robust regulatory framework and empowering local communities to develop their own renewable energy projects.

Several interventions were proposed to address barriers to affordable energy. These included implementing supportive laws and policies, ensuring equitable access, and building capacity at the community level. Specific measures to improve electricity reliability and affordability included enhancing grid stability, rehabilitating infrastructure, and creating a regulatory commission to oversee the energy sector.

The forum also highlighted the need for clean cooking solutions, advocating for the use of mixed energy sources like butane and solar power. Renewable energy development was a key focus, with discussions on transitioning from conventional to sustainable energy sources and exploring new technologies such as solar, hydropower, wave power, and biomass.

Efforts to promote energy efficiency were also discussed. This included encouraging the use of energy-efficient appliances, developing a national building code, and sharing resources among islands to achieve economies of scale. The forum addressed the transportation sector, advocating for infrastructure improvements for electric vehicles and a shift towards public transportation.

Crosscutting initiatives were emphasized to support vulnerable populations, including low-income families, individuals with special needs, and the elderly. The forum discussed the need for transparency in fuel pricing and electricity tariffs to ensure fairness and affordability.

International development partners, including the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), European Union (EU), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and others, were acknowledged for their support. The forum encouraged these partners to continue collaborating with FSM to address energy sector challenges and priorities.

In closing, FSM leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the forum's objectives and outlined actionable steps for the future. These include finalizing the National Energy Policy, establishing a dedicated Project Management Unit to accelerate priority activities, and enhancing capacity building across states. Leaders agreed to circulate the draft National Energy Policy and SDG7 Roadmap for comments, aiming for endorsement in September 2024.

The FSM Energy Forum concluded with a commitment to reconvene in the near future to review progress and refine strategies.

Vice President Palik Calls for ‘Transformative Action’ at FSM Energy Forum

FSM Information Services

July 9, 2024

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—The FSM Energy Forum commenced today in Pohnpei, bringing together key energy stakeholders and partners from across the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and beyond. Under the theme “Energizing FSM - Affordability and Beyond,” the forum, running from July 9-10, aims to address pressing challenges and explore sustainable energy solutions for the nation.

The forum was officially opened by T.H. Vice President Aren B. Palik with welcoming remarks by Pohnpei State Governor T.H. Stevenson Joseph followed by statements from each of the state heads of delegations. Vice

President Palik highlighted the critical issues facing the FSM’s energy sector, particularly the challenges of electricity accessibility and affordability. He emphasized the need for transformative action to tackle the high costs of imported fossil fuels and the economic vulnerabilities they create.

In his opening remarks, Vice President Palik stated, “As we navigate our energy transition towards a more sustainable future, it is imperative to prioritize capacity building and skills development within our local workforce. By investing in the expertise and knowledge of our people, we can empower them to actively contribute to shaping the energy sector’s trajectory and driving progress towards renewable energy solutions.”

The forum serves as a platform to review the FSM’s National Energy Policy, focusing on key areas such as Energy Access and Equity, Just and Orderly Transition, and Energy Governance. Participants will discuss initiatives to ensure access to affordable and reliable energy resources, and the establishment of an independent regulatory body to enhance transparency, accountability, and efficiency within the sector as well as the potential integration of Independent Power Producers (IPPs) into the energy landscape.

Another significant highlight of the forum is the gathering of the National and State Energy working groups. This collaborative effort will also explore the establishment of the Association of Micronesian Utilities (AMU), aimed

at fostering greater cooperation and coordination in the region’s energy landscape.

Vice President Palik expressed gratitude to all contributors and stakeholders, saying, “Together, let us forge a path towards a brighter, more sustainable energy future for the Federated States of Micronesia, where energy access is universal, affordability is prioritized, and environmental sustainability guides our transformative development agenda.”

The FSM Energy Forum is poised to be a catalyst in the nation’s efforts to develop a resilient and sustainable energy sector, paving the way for a future where energy equity and affordability are at the forefront of the national agenda.

Australia provides \$20K to USVPA for gender-based violence program

Australian Embassy to the FSM

July 2, 2024

Pohnpei—Ambassador Jenny Grant-Curnow and her team were thrilled to hand over the Direct Aid Program (DAP)-FSM Women’s Community grant for \$20,000USD to the US Veterans of Pohnpei Association to support their upcoming project on gender-based violence.

The organization will partner with

the Micronesian Legal Services Corporation and conduct outreach activities and workshops for youth in Pohnpei focusing on gender issues and to raise awareness.

DAP is Australia’s flexible, small grants scheme for development activities of up to USD \$20,000. DAP applications can be submitted year-round. For more information and to apply online, visit www.fsm.embassy.gov.au



...Yap

Continued from front page

of ballots cast upon the question is in the affirmative, the Legislature shall prescribe by law the manner for the review of the political status of Yap State within six months after the referendum.”

It is the only provision in the Yap Constitution that deals with the possibility of asking Yap’s people

whether they would like to reconsider the State’s Political Status.

On July 1, 2024, the Yap Election Commission certified the results of the May 31 election saying that the percentage of “Yes” votes was 50 percent as compared to “No” votes of 40 percent.

The Political Status Commission was not passed and though that pronouncement has not been made in text form from Yap government representatives it is the stance that the Yap State Legislature has taken.

Sokehs Municipal Government responds with quick action to address POPA report deficiencies

The Sokehs Municipal Government, under the new leadership of the incumbent Chief Magistrate, Hon. Stanley Ernest, and the incumbent Speaker of the Sokehs Council, Hon. Perez Amariach, would like to thank the Pohnpei Office of the Public Auditor (POPA) for their Preliminary Review and Administrative Investigation on the allegations of abuse and misuse of Sokehs Municipal Government representation funds from fiscal year 2023. The new leadership has recognized the deficiencies in our laws and policies regarding the reprogramming of representation funds and is thankful that the previous Speaker of the Sokehs Council, Hon. Albert Johnny, has taken swift action to amend our municipal ordinances governing representation funds to prevent this kind of misuse from happening again.

In fact, during the investigation and before the review was published in June 2024, the former Speaker recognized the deficiencies and took action to pass a new ordinance, SC 10-03-24, in January 2024 before the new leadership

was sworn in, that limits each branch of government to reprogram only up to 15% of each line item in their budget, and for representation funds, prevents reprogramming from happening. If additional representation funds are required by a head of one of the three branches of the Sokehs Government, they must request a new appropriation from the Council and the Council must approve it based on need and availability of funds. The new law also prevents the Chief Magistrate from using more than a quarterly allotment of representation funds during each quarter. This ensures a quarterly allotment of representation funds to be available throughout the year.

While the report identified that no laws were broken with the actions highlighted in the report, the entire leadership of Sokehs, both municipal and tradition leaders, wants to ensure protection of public funds and will enforce the new municipal ordinance to strengthen our internal controls and provide better oversight of the use of these representation funds.

Governor Joseph welcomes “My Child Speaks” organization to discuss Autism Awareness in Pohnpei

Pohnpei Public Information

July 5, 2024

KOLONIA, Pohnpei—Governor Joseph recently welcomed members of the "My Child Speaks" organization to his office. This organization, comprised of dedicated mothers with autistic children, aims to create more awareness, understanding, and acceptance of autism in Pohnpei. During the courtesy call, the organization's members, including President Kimberly Arnold, Yuleen Nanpei Perman, Janelle Anson, and Rose Abraham, shared their mission and vision, highlighting the need for a center to provide training and assessments for the identification of autism.

Governor Joseph inquired about the current statistics on autism in Pohnpei and was informed that no official data exists. The organization emphasized the general interest in collecting these statistics, believing that the numbers are likely high. President Arnold highlighted the availability of autism assessments for infants at public health facilities but pointed out the lack of speech therapy and limited capacity for one-on-one therapy, which is crucial for autistic children. The organization has collaborated with Health Services and Special Education but

believes that more needs to be done, particularly in increasing the capacity to identify and provide necessary therapy through specialists.

Governor Joseph encouraged the members of "My Child Speaks" to submit a formal proposal for the establishment of a center dedicated to autism services. He expressed the Government's willingness to assist within its means, starting with the process of identifying an appropriate space or building for the organization. Governor Joseph applauded the passion and commitment of the organization's members, recognizing the importance of their efforts in addressing the needs of autistic children in Pohnpei.

The Governor's office looks forward to collaborating with "My Child Speaks" and other stakeholders to enhance autism awareness and support services in Pohnpei, ensuring that all children receive the care and attention they deserve.

For more information, please visit their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/mychildspeaksmicronesia>



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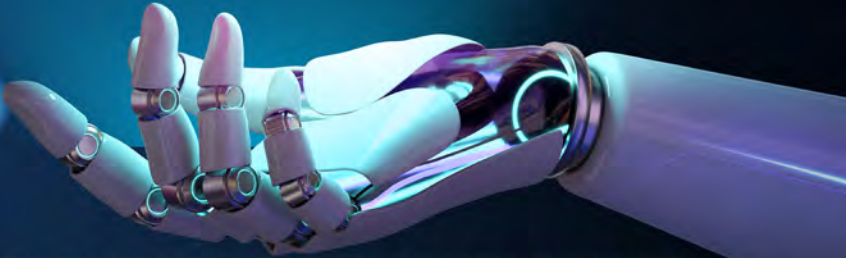




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Aquaculture Agent II (3 Positions) for CTEC, Yap, & Kosrae

Under the general direction of the CRE State Coordinator, the incumbent is responsible for the Aquaculture Extension Program in each State. The incumbent plans, organizes and conducts aquaculture workshops, meetings and demonstrations in the villages. Provide information and management advice directly to fishermen, farmers, resource owners, schools, non-governmental organizations and interested individuals. Collaborate with the State Marine Resources Management Office, other government agencies, fishermen and resource owners in planning and organizing workshops at the village level.

Maintenance Program Specialist (Yap)

Responsible for the Campus' building and grounds maintenance program and supervises a group of several buildings, grounds, and allied maintenance workers under the supervision of the Campus Dean and the Director of Maintenance. Manage and supervise the facilities maintenance and security and safety operations at the campus.

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

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Governor Joseph delivers welcoming remarks at FSM National Energy Forum

FSM Public Information

July 9, 2024

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph of Pohnpei attended the FSM National Energy Forum, where he delivered the welcoming remarks. The two-day event, under the theme “Energizing FSM - Affordability and Beyond” held at the COM-FSM/China Friendship Gymnasium, brought together dignitaries from all four states of the FSM. Vice President Aren B. Palik, Lt. Governor Arthy Nena of Kosrae, Lt. Governor Mekioshy William of Chuuk, Lt. Governor Francis Itimai of Yap, members of the Diplomatic Corps, development partners, and national and state government representatives participated in the forum.

In his welcoming remarks, Governor Joseph addressed the heavy reliance and vulnerability of Pohnpei due to fluctuating oil industry prices, which place a significant burden on the lives of ordinary citizens. He emphasized the urgent need for sustainable and affordable alternative energy solutions, stating, “The need for sustainable and affordable alternative energy source solutions have never been more urgent.” Governor Joseph highlighted the diverse presence of stakeholders and encouraged all participants to engage

deeply, share insights and experiences, explore every avenue, question every assumption, and strive for solutions that are “economically viable, socially equitable, and environmentally sustainable.”

Governor Joseph posed a fundamental question to each participant, asking whether the forum or any discussions or actions taken would lead to cheaper or more expensive energy prices. He asserted that the goal must be to achieve cheaper alternative energy sources and expressed hope that this would be everyone else's answer as well. He also stressed that during discussions or decision-making processes, the public's need for cheaper fuel should not be overshadowed by favoring a public utility enterprise or a specific alternative energy source.

Governor Joseph also joined Vice President Palik and the Lt. Governors of Yap, Kosrae, and Chuuk for a lunch presentation hosted by the Asian Development Bank and the Department of Resources and Development. The presentation focused on a climate-resilient energy and water sector (CREWS) project that aims to improve energy access on outer islands.

Governor Joseph's commitment to making energy a priority in his



administration underscores his attendance and participation at the National Energy Forum. As he noted in his remarks, we owe it to our citizens to ensure a positive outcome of this Forum.

Pohnpei State's focal point for the energy forum is Director of the Department of Resources and Development, Mark Kostka, accompanied by PUC Chair

Nixon Anson, PUC Board Chairman Erick Paul, Chief of Power Distribution Sidney Kilmeter, Chief of Engineering and Planning Alex Nanpei, and Chief Financial Officer Daisy Cantero. Senator Francisco Simram from the 11th Pohnpei Legislature, Ron Pangelinan from the Pohnpei Chamber of Commerce, and Eugene Joseph from the Conservation Society of Pohnpei were also present.

Governor Joseph receives courtesy call from new Bank of FSM Chairman

Pohnpei Public Information

July 2, 2024

KOLONIA, Pohnpei—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph welcomed Mr. Patrick McKenzie, the newly appointed Chairman of the Board of the Bank of FSM, in a courtesy call at the Governor's Office. Mr. McKenzie was accompanied by Ms. Sihna Lawrence, Director of the Department of Treasury and Administration, a member of the Bank's Board representing Pohnpei State Government.

During the visit, Chairman McKenzie presented Governor Joseph with a dividend check of \$101,500.00, representing Pohnpei State's share in the Bank of FSM. Governor Joseph promptly entrusted the check to Director Lawrence for deposit into the

state's general fund.

Governor Joseph extended a warm welcome to Chairman McKenzie and congratulated him on the recent chairmanship appointment. The Governor appreciated the Bank's continued support of Pohnpei State's economic development.

Chairman McKenzie provided Governor Joseph with a general overview of the Bank's current operations, highlighting its commitment to serving the financial needs of the Federated States of Micronesia.

The meeting underscored the strong partnership between the Pohnpei State Government and the Bank of FSM,



reaffirming their shared commitment to the state's and its citizens' economic prosperity.

Governor Joseph welcomes students from Majuro Coop School

Pohnpei Public Information

July 10, 2024

KOLONIA, Pohnpei---Governor Stevenson A. Joseph warmly welcomed students, parents, and chaperones from the Majuro Coop School in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The group is on a school-sponsored trip and had already explored the historic Nan Madol and visited the College of Micronesia-FSM National Campus before their meeting with the Governor. The meeting took place at the Office of Fisheries and Aquaculture conference room, where Vice Speaker McGarry

Miguel and Senator Shelten Neth were also present.

Governor Joseph greeted the visitors with enthusiasm, expressing his pleasure at their visit to Pohnpei. He provided the students with a general overview of the government, giving them insights into how it operates and the roles of various officials. Vice Speaker McGarry Miguel then shared his personal connections to the Marshalls, highlighting the significant contributions the Marshallese have made to Pohnpei. He emphasized the close blood ties between certain

Pohnpeian clans and the Marshall Islands.

Governor Joseph echoed Vice Speaker Miguel's sentiments, acknowledging the deep historical ties between Pohnpei and the Marshalls. He noted that both his and Senator Neth's wives are Marshallese, further illustrating the strong bond between the two regions. He encouraged the students to embrace these connections and to learn from the shared history and culture.

In closing, Governor Joseph advised the students to think ahead about their

future careers and to choose and study the appropriate subjects in college. He emphasized the importance of planning and preparation in achieving their ideal careers. The visit was a meaningful exchange, fostering a sense of unity and mutual respect between the people of Pohnpei and the Marshall Islands.

The vision of Majuro Coop School in part reads "to inspire Pre-Kindergarten to 12th grade students to become locally and globally responsible citizens and leaders, by providing holistic academic, social tools and technical skills to be successful agents of change."



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BID INVITATION for Construction of Four (4) Schools Eot and Pwene (Chuuk Lagoon), Ettal (Mortlocks) and Onoun (Northwest)

Chuuk State, Federated States of Micronesia

NOTICE

The Project Management Office (PMO) of the Chuuk State Government is hereby issuing this Bid Invitation Notice to interested contractors for the Construction of **four (4) Schools at Eot and Pwene (Chuuk Lagoon), Ettal (Mortlocks) and Onoun (Northwest), Chuuk State, Federated States of Micronesia**. Interested contractors may bid on **one or multiple Schools**.

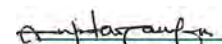
The Pre-Bid Meeting is scheduled for **Monday July 29, 2024 at 10am** at the PMO Offices in the Chuuk State Government Complex, Weno, Chuuk. For out of State contractors who wish to participate, a Zoom conference will be arranged, for which they are advised to send their names and email addresses to Sanjata Basu, Project Manager, PMO at chuukpmo@gmail.com no later than July 22, 2024.

Further information on this ITB may be obtained by submitting a written request for details to Chuuk Project Management Office, P.O. Box 1659, Weno, Chuuk, FM 96942 at email address cited above, with the subject heading:

"Construction of four (4) Schools at Eot, Pwene, Ettal and Onoun, Chuuk State, Federated States of Micronesia"

The bidding documents, which include the instructions to bidders, scope of work, bills of quantities, technical specifications, drawings, location maps and conditions of contract may also be directly obtained from the DTICI's website: <https://www.tci.gov.fm> or collected from the PMO.

The closing date for the submission of bids is **Monday August 19, 2024 at 4.00pm**


Alexander R. Narruhn AIF®
Governor Chuuk State and
Contracting Officer

July 08, 2024
Date

The FSM receives \$600,000 in humanitarian assistance from China to combat drought

FSM Information Services

July 11, 2024

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) received substantial humanitarian assistance from the People's Republic of China amounting to \$600,000 to support ongoing drought response efforts. The handover ceremony took place this morning, with the contribution being received by T.H. Secretary Andrew Yatilman of the FSM Department of Environment, Climate Change & Emergency Management.

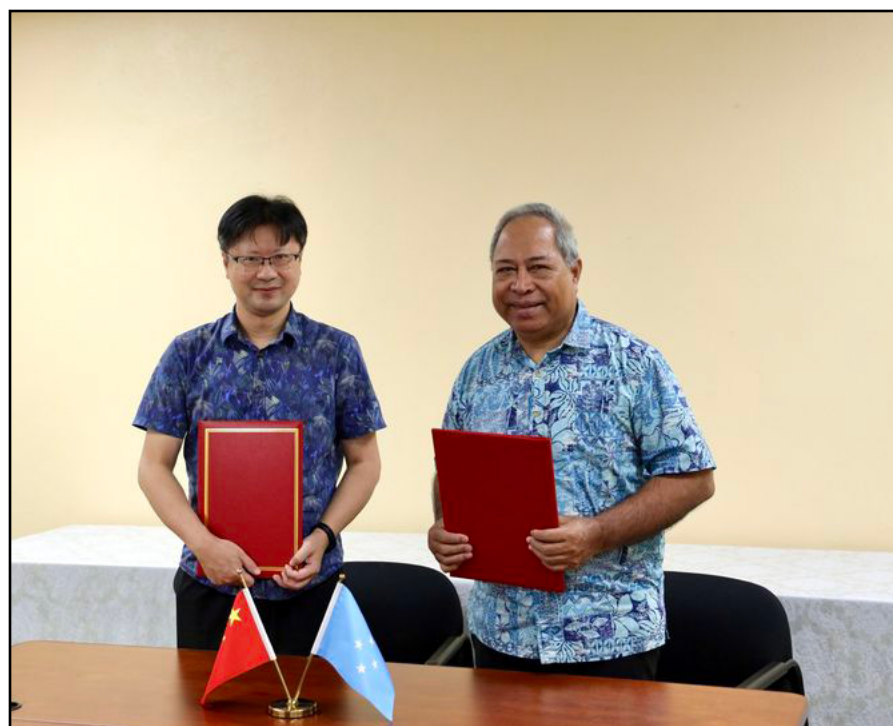
Secretary Yatilman began the ceremony by expressing deep appreciation to His Excellency Ambassador Wu Wei and the delegation from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China to the FSM for their presence and support.

"On behalf of His Excellency President Wesley Simina and the Government and People of the FSM, we extend our sincere gratitude to the People's Republic of China for this

generous humanitarian assistance for the ongoing drought."

Secretary Yatilman highlighted the recent collaboration between the two nations, mentioning the valuable disaster preparedness training held in Guangdong Province. "I would also like to thank your government for your recent support in having some of our disaster focal points participate in a training in Guangdong Province focusing on disaster preparedness and utilizing new technology such as drones during response efforts. The training brought together 39 participants from the various Pacific Island countries."

The support from China will significantly enhance the FSM's drought response initiatives. "This generous donation your government has provided will support and complement the continued drought response efforts to the affected communities throughout the FSM," noted Secretary Yatilman.



The Government and People of the FSM are deeply grateful for this friendship and cooperation between the Federated States of Micronesia and the People's Republic of China, which reflects the strong

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U.S. Embassy proudly celebrates 248th Independence Day

U.S. Embassy to the FSM

July 15, 2024

“July 4th, the birthday of the United States, is a time to come together with family and friends to celebrate and reflect on our history, values, and the importance of our democracy,” said U.S. Ambassador Jennifer Johnson at the U.S. Embassy’s annual July 4 event on Thursday.

“Our relationship with the FSM is based on shared values, and though we are far from home today, we feel ourselves among friends and family here.” She acknowledged the dedication and sacrifice that FSM veterans have made for the U.S. and FSM shared values – shoulder to shoulder – as members of the U.S. military. “Let me take a moment to recognize the many current and former members of the United States military here with us today.”

She expressed that Americans were

overjoyed to celebrate with the FSM back in March when the compact legislation was approved and signed into law. This move represents a key milestone in the two nations’ relationship. “This is a historic moment, and one worth celebrating”, she said. “Strong ties between the United States and the Pacific Islands, individually and collectively, form the foundation of our engagement and presence in the Pacific.”

Joining the Ambassador and the American people in honoring this special day were FSM President His Excellency Wesley Simina and First Lady Ancelly Simina, The Honorable Vice President Aren Palik and Second Lady Adelita Palik, Pohnpei Governor The Honorable Stevenson Joseph, FSM and Pohnpei State government officials, U.S. Veterans of Pohnpei Association, U.S. active military personnel, members of the diplomatic corps, families, friends, and partners of the American people in the FSM.

President Simina wished the people of the United States well on their country’s 248th birthday and spoke of the long, enduring partnership between the FSM and the United States. Ambassador Johnson concluded with a toast for this continued relationship.



FSMNOC names Paris 2024 Olympic Delegation

FSM Information Services

July 9, 2024

FSM—The Federated States of Micronesia Olympic Committee (FSMOC) is pleased to announce that it will be represented at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games by a delegation of eight consisting of three athletes and three coaches and 2 team officials.

Two of the athletes, Scott Fiti (Athletics) and Tasi Limtiaco (Swimming), are repeat Olympians having competed at the Tokyo Olympic Games. They will be joined by first-time Olympian Kestra Kihleng (Swimming).

“We are so excited for these athletes to represent our country and NOC,” said FSMOC President Aurelio Joab. “They will be the focus of so many Micronesians this summer and are so proud to have them carrying the FSM flag for Team FSM in Paris.”

Supporting the athletes will be Lestly Ashby Mendiola (Chef de Mission) and Jake Scaliem (Team Manager), plus coaches Karatel Phillip (Athletics), Derick Daniel (Swimming) and Susan

Kihleng (Swimming).

Also attending the Games in their leadership capacities for the FSMOC will be President Joab and Secretary General Jim Tobin.

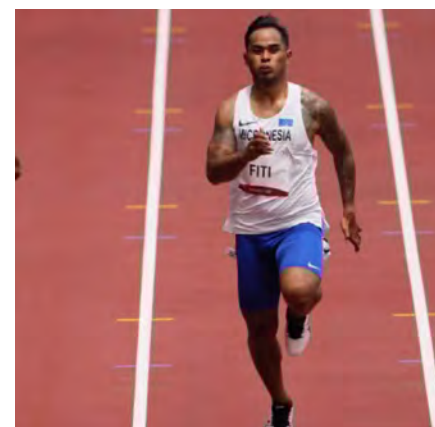
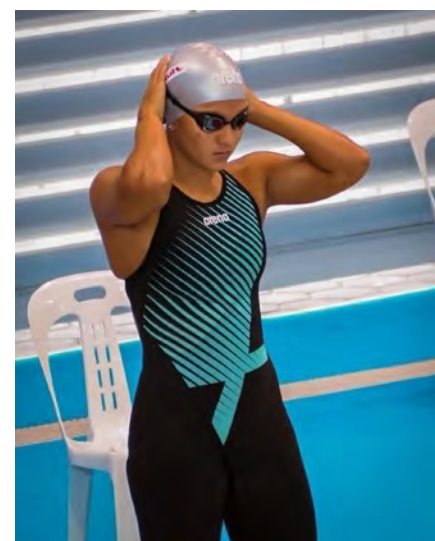
“We are so fortunate to have such outstanding young ambassadors competing for us at these Games,” noted FSMOC Secretary General Tobin. “They are rising stars in their sports and the entire country will be able to see them not only march in Opening for the first time but compete in their individual events as well.”

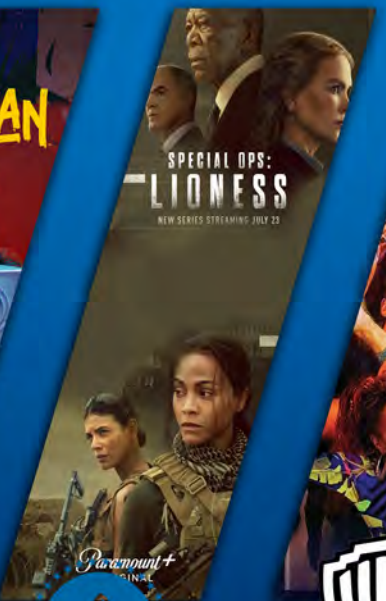
The FSM athletes, coaches and Team Manager will arrive to Divonne, France on July 10 for a 2-week pre-games training camp. They will all then take a train to Paris on July 24 and move into the Games Village for Paris 2024 Olympic Games. The Opening Ceremony is July 26, with Tasi Limtiaco and Kestra Kihleng to be the Team FSM flag bearers.

Team FSM and the FSM Olympic Committee would like to thank the following for their financial support

and sponsoring of our FSM Olympic athletes, coaches and team officials at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games: International Olympic Committee (IOC); Olympic Solidarity; Oceania National Olympic Committees (ONOC); Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Government; Etscheit Enterprises; Pohnpei Ace Hardware; Isamu Nakasone Store; Bank of Guam; Pohnpei Ace Office Supplies; Caroline Fisheries; Moylan’s Insurance; Hornet International; Bank of the FSM; VITAL; Pohnpei NAPA, and Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission.

The Office of the President sends its best wishes to our Team FSM!







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Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique

- Pohnpei-based position
- Join the principal development organisation in the region

The Pacific Community (SPC) invites applications for the position of **Office Administrator** within its Micronesia Regional Office (MRO). This position will be located at its regional office in Pohnpei, Micronesia.

Description

The Pacific Community (SPC) is the principal scientific and technical organisation in the Pacific region, supporting development since 1947. We are an international development organisation owned and governed by our 27 country and territory members. In pursuit of sustainable development to benefit Pacific people, our unique organisation works across more than 25 sectors. We are known for our knowledge and innovation in such areas as fisheries science, public health surveillance, geoscience, and conservation of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

The Micronesia Regional Office (MRO) situated in Kolonia, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), is the main hub for SPC's projects and partnerships with the Micronesian members of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), the Republic of Palau, and the United States territories of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), and Guam. The MRO opened in January 2006.

The role – the Office Administrator will provide efficient assistance to the Director in the overall responsibilities of the MRO Administration by leading logistics coordination and support office administration responsibilities for MRO.

The key responsibilities of the role include the following:

1. Office Administration
2. Support MRO stakeholders and Communication Focal Point
3. Provide Finance & HR Support for PRO

For a more detailed account of the key responsibilities, please refer to the online job description.

Qualifications

- A relevant tertiary qualification(s) in administration, office management or business administration or relevant discipline.

Essential experience and skills

- At least 4 years of experience in any

- office administration functions.
- Demonstrated organizational skills with ability to prioritise workload and complete work under deadlines.
- Demonstrate ability to work effectively without constant supervision.
- Demonstrated ability to successfully organize and assist with administrative duties.
- Demonstrated knowledge and ability to organize meetings, special events and to manage unexpected developments with understanding, initiative and adaptability.
- Ability to analyze and resolve problems in the daily operations of the office.
- Experience with computer environment used in SPC including Windows and Microsoft Office.
- Driver's license.
- Fluency (both written and spoken) in English is required.

Remuneration – the **Office Administrator** is a Band 4 position in SPC's 2024 salary scale, with a starting taxable salary range of USD 21,164–26,454 per year, plus local staff benefits.

Benefits – SPC provides medical and life insurance for eligible employees and their eligible dependents. Employees are entitled to 25 days of annual leave. Provident Fund and/or Social Security will be according to FSM's local legislation.

Closing date: 28 July 2024 – 11:00 pm Noumea time

Job Reference: CR000247

Applicants must apply online at <http://careers.spc.int/>

For your application to be considered, you must provide us with:

- an updated resume with contact details for three professional referees
 - a cover letter detailing your skills, experience and interest in this position
 - responses to all screening questions
- Please answer all of the screening questions, if you do not answer these questions your application will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed at shortlisting stage.

Screening questions:

1. Please describe your administrative experience working in a national or regional office (including financial background if any).
2. Explain how you would handle a situation where you were assigned multiple tasks by different team members?
3. Briefly describe your experience in travel and logistics management/administration for fieldwork or workshops and identify three lessons learned.

FSM Ambassador to Fiji pays courtesy call on Fiji Prime Minister Sitiveni L. Rabuka

FSM Embassy in Fiji

July 9, 2024

Fiji—Ambassador Carson K. Sigrah paid a courtesy meeting with Prime Minister of Fiji, Hon. Sitiveni L. Rabuka on July 4, 2024. The meeting marked the 36th years of friendship and commitment on cooperation to build on strengthening friendship since establishments of diplomatic ties in August 5, 1988.

Furthermore, the meeting was an opportunity to strengthen collective efforts toward the 2050 Strategy of the Blue Pacific Continent and address common views ahead of the 53rd Pacific Island Forum Leaders Meeting scheduled for August 2024.

In his remark, Ambassador Sigrah thanked Fiji's effort in reuniting the Pacific Flock, especially returning the Northern Region back into the Pacific Island Forum (Suva Agreement).

In this respect, Prime Minister Rabuka extended his appreciation toward FSM's contributing efforts to regional solidarity and peace while emphasizing that both countries had shared common issues during colonial times and noting that FSM was more exposed to war activities during the WWII.

He expressed sincerity in both nations' shared challenges arising from geo-strategic competition in the Pacific Region, IUU fishing, Climate Change, and security challenges that would entail security cooperation between FSM and Fiji- Maritime Police Training while citing Fiji's Ocean of Peace Concept for further consideration in the upcoming Leaders Meeting in Tonga.



In respect with Climate Change, PM Rabuka shared opportunities arising from Developed Partners who sought to develop studies and initiatives to combat soil inundation. In particular, he further shared PRC and Indonesia had developed initiatives to combat soil erosion. He further asked how FSM is doing with Climate Finance and further share Fiji's commitment in combating climate change impacts, such as soil inundation to name a few.

Aside from the Sectoral developments that were discussed, Ambassador expressed the issue of connectivity embedded in the 2050 Strategy and the need to meet leaders' aspiration in the 2050 Implementation Plan.

In reflection, Ambassador Sigrah said "The meeting today was an opportunity for us all to become more mindful of our relationship between the Federated States of Micronesia and the people of Fiji, rekindling the close ties between our two nations, and affirming FSM's core values of peace, unity and liberty," while commending Fiji's exceptional leadership toward a peaceful Pacific.





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COLLEGE OF MICRONESIA

Land Grant Program

PO Box 1179 Kolonia, Pohnpei, FM 96941

Phone: (691) 320-2486/2728

Website: comlandgrant.org

Email: comlandgrant@gmail.com

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

Job Title: Associate Director of Agriculture Experimentation Station (AES)
Category: Leadership & Management
Salary: 56,174 – 63,196 / year depending on qualifications
Benefits: COM Package + Housing + Relocation Costs
Location: COM LG Central Office, Kolonia, Pohnpei

Opening: 7/12/24

Closing: 8/02/24

General Description

Under the direction of the Executive Director, the Associate Director of AES serves as the chief administrative officer for the Agriculture Experiment Station division, providing research leadership, management and support in policy, advisory, advocacy, development, guidance and direction including but not limited to funding, resources, systemic analysis, capacity building and development of internal/external partnerships for the AES division at the College of Micronesia Land Grant central office and throughout its partner colleges as well as within the communities in the region in sustainable agriculture, aquaculture, foods, livestock and technology.

Minimum Qualification: Master's

Preferred Qualification: Ph.D.

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 or visit our website at comlandgrant.org)
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 (preferably as PDF attachments) or mailed to:

Executive Director
 College of Micronesia Land Grant
 P. O. Box 1179
 Pohnpei FM 96941

Applications will be accepted until **Friday August 2, 2024 before 5:00 pm Pohnpei time**

RMI, FSM, and ROP Citizens are encouraged to apply.

An Equal Opportunity Employer



COLLEGE OF MICRONESIA Land Grant Program

PO Box 1179 Kolonia, Pohnpei, FM 96941

Phone: (691) 320-2486/2728

Website: comlandgrant.org

Email: comlandgrant@gmail.com

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

Job Title: Associate Director of Cooperative Extension Services (CES)
Category: Management
Salary: 56,174 – 63,196 / year depending on qualifications
Benefits: COM Package + Housing + Relocation Costs
Location: COM LG Central Office, Kolonia, Pohnpei

Opening: 7/12/24

Closing: 8/02/24

General Description

Under the direction of the Executive Director, the Associate Director of CES serves as the chief administrative officer for the Cooperative Extension Services division, providing leadership, management and support in policy, advisory, advocacy, guidance and direction including but not limited to funding, resources, systemic analysis, capacity building and development of internal/external partnerships for the Cooperative Extension Services at the College of Micronesia Land Grant program central office and throughout its partner colleges as well as within the communities in the region in sustainable plant and animal agriculture, aquaculture, youth and family development, food and water safety, climate change, and childhood obesity.

Minimum Qualification: Master's

Preferred Qualification: Ph.D.

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 or visit our website at comlandgrant.org)
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RMI, FSM, and ROP Citizens are encouraged to apply.

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Pohnpei Port Authority's reorganized Board of Directors and management pay courtesy call on Governor

Pohnpei Public Information

July 3, 2024

KOLONIA, Pohnpei—Governor Joseph recently welcomed the reorganized Board of Directors and management team of the Pohnpei Port Authority (PPA) during a courtesy call. Representing the Board, Chairman Treyvane Esiel introduced the new Board members: Vice Chair Sihna Lawrence, Secretary Alik J. Alik, and Board members Mason Albert, Master Halbert, Joseph Saimon, and Silverina Pretrick.

From the PPA management, Airport Manager Ronald Reyes represented General Manager Grilly Jack, accompanied by Human Resources Manager Zorro Donre, Executive Secretary Masumi Sam, and Information Technology Specialist Cooper Etse. Mr. Ronald Reyes discussed several pressing and pending issues with Governor Joseph, who acknowledged the concerns and expressed his commitment to addressing them.

Governor Joseph expressed his gratitude to the Board and management

of PPA for their visit and their dedication to the port's operations and improvements. He also thanked Acting Speaker McGarry Miguel, who was present during the courtesy call, for his continuous support and involvement in state matters.

The Governor emphasized the importance of the Pohnpei Port Authority in the state's economic development and assured the Board and management of his administration's support in their efforts to enhance the port's efficiency and services.



Pacific's first Banking Forum ends, outcomes to Economic Ministers

Pacific Island Forum Secretariat

July 11, 2024

Brisbane—Commitments to keep the Pacific connected to global banking systems will shape next steps from the inaugural Pacific Banking Forum in Brisbane this week.

The Forum, organised by Australia and the United States in partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum, has ended with an Outcomes document to be tabled at the upcoming Forum Economic Ministers Meeting in Suva later this month.

Pacific Heads of State, Treasury Officials, Financial Stakeholders from Central Banks, Global Financial Institutions, Regional and local banks, and International Development Partners were amongst those at the historic meeting, which has committed to ensuring Pacific people, businesses, and governments can reclaim equitable access to global financial services

and transactions. Following the high-level meeting, officials met to discuss Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing initiatives.

The post-Forum focus on enhancing regulatory frameworks, sharing best practices, and addressing emerging challenges in combating financial crime across the Pacific region will help to address strong regional concerns shared by Forum Chair, Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown.

Speaking to the impact of compliance for Pacific Forum members, PM Brown noted the region had seen the fastest withdrawal of Correspondent Banking (bank to bank transfers) services globally. This prohibits local banks and communities in the islands from accessing cross-border payment services for trade and investments. It has increased the cost of remittances to and between Pacific nations and affects access to development aid and global financial systems.

In his keynote, the Forum Chair noted the withdrawal of Correspondent Banking Relationships, "is a well-documented global phenomenon affecting many emerging markets and developing economies, but especially so for Forum Island Countries."

"The issues associated with the decline of correspondent banking relationships in the Pacific affect the ability of local banks to connect with International Financial Institutions and access cross-border payment services, thereby affecting the financial systems at a sovereign level, squeezing out government owned bank's ability to play in their own backyards. Affecting the ability of Pacific countries to meaningfully participate in global supply chains...In a nutshell, the opposite of financial inclusion."

Australia Treasurer Jim Chalmers in his remarks, had emphasised his Government's commitment to its

Pacific neighbours bearing the brunt of enforcement globally against money laundering, financing for terrorism, and broader criminal transactions through the region.

"Ensuring all Pacific countries have access to safe, secure, and stable banking is one of Australia's highest priorities in the region. You can bank on Australia to work with you to keep the Pacific connected to the global financial system," he said.

Earlier in the meeting, PIF Secretary General, Baron Waqa spoke of a joint Pacific Islands Forum and World Bank 'Pacific Strengthening Correspondent Banking Relationships' project, to ensure continuous access to correspondent banking services for the region. Emanating from the outcomes of the Forum Economic Ministers Meeting in 2023, the project is in the negotiation phase.



President Simina continues nationwide outreach to Sapwuahfik

FSM Information Services

July 10, 2024

Sapwuahfik, Pohnpei—On July 5-7, His Excellency, President Wesley W. Simina, and Madame First Lady Ancelly Simina visited the outer atoll of Sapwuahfik, also known as Ngatik, as part of the administration's ongoing state visits across the FSM. Accompanying them were Congressman Peter Christian, Pohnpei State Senator Stevick Edwin and Senator Kikuo Apis Jr., representatives from the Pohnpei State Governor's office, members of cabinet and staff.

Upon arrival, the delegation was warmly received by Sapwuahfik's traditional leaders and residents at Sapwuahfik Elementary School. The

event included municipal government leaders, church representatives, and community members. President Simina expressed deep gratitude for the warm welcome and the community's efforts in preparation for the visit.

During his remarks, President Simina and the First Lady pledged \$2,500 to the Sapwuahfik Women's Organization to support their future initiatives. The President reiterated the administration's commitment to addressing the needs of outer island communities, highlighting plans for improving marine transportation services and widening the main channel.

The visit included an inspection of the local airstrip, where President Simina intends to seek grant assistance from development partners for necessary improvements. The official program concluded with traditional performances and songs by the people of Sapwuahfik.

"Being from the outer islands myself, I understand firsthand the realities and challenges that come with outer island life. The remoteness can make daily life difficult, but it also strengthens our resolve to bridge these gaps. Our administration is committed to ensuring that all citizens, regardless of location, have access to essential services and opportunities to ultimately bring our nation, and people, closer together," President Simina said.

The Simina-Palik administration extends its heartfelt thanks to the people of Sapwuahfik for their generous hospitality and looks forward to strengthening relationships and support for all outer island communities.



UNFPA provides the first-ever Family Planning training in Yap State of FSM, with Australia's support

UNFPA

July 4, 2024

YAP--"The family planning training has equipped me with practical skills needed at my job. For example, I have learned how to insert contraceptive implants like Jadelle and intrauterine contraceptive devices (IUDs)," said Marilyn Werelmog, who works at a health center in Yap, one of the four states that compose the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) in the North Pacific.

This was a part of the series of family planning training that UNFPA Pacific has started providing in FSM under the Transformative Agenda programme funded by the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The training that the Health

Worker Marilyn participated in, along with 14 other healthcare providers from Yap, was the first one conducted in the westernmost state with around 11,000 population.

According to the available data, 44 per cent of women in FSM have the so-called "unmet need for family planning" implying they want to delay pregnancy or do not want to get pregnant now, but they are not using any contraception.

To address this critical need, UNFPA has stepped in by training midwives, nurses, and doctors in FSM to deliver high-quality family planning counseling and services for women, adolescents, and people with disabilities. To date, 34 healthcare workers from 13 public health facilities across the country have received the UNFPA training.

"I found this type of family planning training to be very important for health workers like me who are serving local communities in a remote outer island," Marilyn stresses, "because the training also helps defuse the myth that both the providers and the beneficiaries of the services may carry about family planning, for instance, a misunderstanding that contraceptive methods cause infertility or birth defects. These misconceptions actually prevent some people from adopting family planning."

FSM is one of the new member states added to the programme countries of UNFPA's Transformative Agenda in its Phase II that started last year. By its end in 2027, the TA programme aims to assist FSM with having at least one health worker fully trained to provide youth-friendly and disability-inclusive family planning services in all of the public health facilities in the country, according to Evelyn Adolph, UNFPA Assistant Representative for Micronesia Multi-Country Office in Pohnpei, who accompanied the family planning training in Yap State.



USCGC Frederick Hatch completes patrol period, strengthens regional security and community ties

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

July 11, 2024

SANTA RITA, Guam — The USCGC Frederick Hatch crew completed a highly operational patrol period from May 21 to July 1, 2024, demonstrating exceptional versatility and collaboration in maritime security and community engagement across the Pacific region.

Lt. Patrick Dreiss, the commanding officer of the Frederick Hatch, noted, "This patrol spanned multiple missions, from supporting our DoD partners to search and rescue to working alongside regional partners, highlighting how varied Coast Guard operations can be. As my last patrol as commanding officer, it was a fitting end to an incredible two and a half years in Guam, and I have very much enjoyed watching the successes of the crew during my time."

During the patrol, the crew took on an extended operations period while their sister ships were in maintenance, dedicating 46 hours to successfully escorting high-value naval assets in coordination with Naval Base Guam Security, Station Apra Harbor, and Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25 (HSC-25). This operational increase was a significant commitment to ensuring the security and readiness of these strategic assets, a task the crew executed with utmost professionalism and precision.

The cutter played a pivotal role in the first-ever Operation Irensia, enhancing regional cooperation alongside patrol boat crews from the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands and partners from the Royal Australian Navy and Pacific Maritime Security Program in Guam. The crew's significant contributions to this operation are a testament to their dedication and professionalism. Additionally, the crew honored the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of Saipan by participating in the march and ceremony, holding eight community relations events that included tours and engagements with local women's and veterans' associations.

In a noteworthy display of support and partnership, the Frederick Hatch crew completed three anchorages in the CNMI Northern Islands, delivering essential supplies and conducting environmental surveys in collaboration with CNMI Fish and Wildlife. This effort supported local communities and contributed to critical ecological monitoring and conservation efforts.

On June 21, the crew, under the direction of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam and in collaboration with Guam Fire Rescue and Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25 (HSC-25), conducted an extensive overnight search for a possible distressed swimmer near Gun Beach. The report was ultimately deemed a false alert, and the search suspended. The patrol also included intensive training exercises ranging from medical drills to ship handling and night operations training, significantly enhancing crew proficiency and readiness.

"The Frederick Hatch crew is at the forefront of our operations in Micronesia; under new leadership, they will continue to deliver on our mission for the people we serve in the Pacific," said Capt. Robert Kistner, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam. "In concert with Oliver Henry, while the Myrtle Hazard undergoes their first drydock maintenance, Frederick Hatch ensures our strategic readiness and response capabilities remain robust. This careful balancing of maintenance and mission readiness reflects our steadfast dedication to safeguarding maritime interests."

Pohnpei State Police Commission makes courtesy call to Lt. Governor and Governor



Pohnpei Public Information

July 5, 2024

KOLONIA, Pohnpei—The Pohnpei State Police Commission made a significant courtesy call to Lt. Governor Francisco L. Ioanis and Governor Stevenson Joseph over two days. This visit aimed to strengthen the collaboration between the Commission and the State's executive leadership, ensuring that the public safety strategies align with the overall development goals of Pohnpei State.



The Pohnpei State Police Commission, established to oversee and enhance the effectiveness of the police force, plays a crucial role in maintaining law and order in Pohnpei. The Commission acts in an advisory capacity to the Director of Public Safety in the following areas:

Continued on next page

Pohnpei State welcomes new leaders in fisheries and environmental protection



Pohnpei Public Information

July 3, 2024

KOLONIA, Pohnpei—Pohnpei State proudly announces the swearing-in of Mr. Jorg Anson as the new Administrator of the Office of Fisheries and Aquaculture (OFA) and Mr. Antonio Sarapio to the Board of Directors of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The ceremony, held at the OFA conference room, included honored dignitaries such as Acting Speaker McGarry Miguel, Senator Shelten Neth who delivered the opening prayer, Senator Mitaro Simina, Senator Herolyn Movick, Senator Tendy Liwy, Senator Dionis Saimon, EPA Executive Officer Francisco Celestine, the Administrator of the Office of Transportation and Infrastructure, Lepen Moar Kitt, Salvason Salvador, Luhkenmoanlap Kitt, Emerson Eperiam as well as EPA and OFA employees, family, and friends.



Governor Joseph delivered remarks before administering the oath of office, congratulating the new appointees and their families. He extended his gratitude to Acting Speaker Miguel and the 11th Pohnpei Legislature for their continued support of the Joseph/loanis Administration's nominations. After the presentation of certificates of appointment by Acting Speaker Miguel, both Mr. Anson and Mr. Sarapio expressed their gratitude and commitment to their new roles, promising dedicated service to Pohnpei.

In his remarks, Acting Speaker Miguel congratulated the new Administrator and the new EPA Board member on behalf of the Speaker and the 11th Pohnpei

Legislature. He highlighted the critical importance of fisheries and aquaculture to Pohnpei's economy and the livelihoods of its people and emphasized the collective effort required to maintain a clean and healthy environment for all.

Lieutenant Governor Francisco L. Ioanis delivered the closing remarks, offering guidance to the new appointees. He reminded them of the existing laws and regulations governing their responsibilities and urged them

to review and suggest necessary amendments. He addressed the human challenges in fisheries and aquaculture conservation and commended EPA's efforts to remove abandoned vehicles to promote cleanliness. Lt. Governor Ioanis thanked the wives of Mr. Anson and Mr. Sarapio for their support and expressed gratitude to the Acting Speaker and the 11th Pohnpei Legislature for their unwavering support and confirmation.

...Police

Continued from previous page

1. Oversee the activities of the Department of Public Safety and make periodic reports to the Governor and the Legislature as to the operations of the Department and its effectiveness in enforcing the laws of the state;
2. Receive and investigate

complaints from the general public on any matter relative to the jurisdiction and activities of the Department; and
3. Advise the Director and the Chiefs as to corrective action where necessary

Lt. Governor Ioanis recently welcomed Acting Chairman Baron Mendiola, Secretary Patrick Pedrus, and Internal Investigator Raynold Julios for a courtesy call. Together, they had a productive conversation about current public safety initiatives,

the challenges our police force faces, and future plans to enhance law enforcement in Pohnpei. Drawing on his experience as a former police officer and detective, Lt. Governor Ioanis expressed his strong support for the Police Commission and the Department of Public Safety, which falls under his responsibilities.

During the meeting with Governor Stevenson Joseph, Acting Chairman Mendiola, Secretary Pedrus, and Internal Investigator Julios were joined by Commission member

Joab Paul and Acting Director of Public Safety, Ricky Rodriguez. Governor Joseph emphasized the importance of the Commission's work and reiterated his support for their efforts. The presence of Acting Director Rodriguez underscored the unified commitment of the Commission to uphold the highest standards of public safety in Pohnpei. The Governor and the Commission members agreed to continue their collaborative efforts to ensure a safe and secure environment for all citizens.

Governor Stevenson A. Joseph meets with MiCare administrator to discuss new healthcare plans and premiums

Pohnpei Public Information

July 2, 2024

KOLONIA, Pohnpei—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph recently met with MICARE Administrator Jacky Salomon and his staff to discuss the latest developments in healthcare insurance plans and premiums. The meeting, held at the Governor's office, was an informative session where Administrator Salomon presented the new MICARE healthcare insurance plans and premiums that will take effect on October 1, 2024.

During the meeting, Mr. Salomon

detailed the new plan options, maximum benefits, and premiums available for citizens to choose from. Governor Joseph expressed his appreciation to Mr. Salomon and his team for their efforts in enhancing the healthcare options for the people of Pohnpei, noting that the new options and benefits are a significant step forward in ensuring our people have the best healthcare coverage.

One of the notable changes highlighted by Administrator Salomon is the ability for individuals, including fishermen, farmers, and small business owners, to apply for health insurance through

MICARE. The new plans come with flexible payment options, making it easier for various segments of the community to access healthcare insurance.

To ensure that all citizens are informed about these important changes, Administrator Salomon and his staff will be hosting general assemblies across Pohnpei throughout the month. These assemblies will provide detailed information on the new healthcare plans and answer any questions from the public.



For more information about the new MICARE healthcare plans and premiums, please contact MICARE at 320-3415/5865.

Governor Joseph welcomes French Ambassador to Pohnpei

Pohnpei Public Information

July 2, 2024

Pohnpei—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph graciously received H.E. Marie Fontanel, the French non-resident Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia, during her official courtesy call. Ambassador Fontanel, who also serves as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of the Philippines and the non-resident ambassador to Palau and the Marshall Islands, was accompanied by Francesca Fuentes, Political Officer. Governor Joseph extended a warm welcome to Her Excellency and Ms. Fuentes, marking a significant moment in FSM's diplomatic engagements.

Governor Joseph engaged in a productive and insightful conversation with Ambassador Fontanel, discussing the intricacies and challenges currently faced by Pohnpei and the Federated States of Micronesia. He took the opportunity to share his administration's priorities, highlighting the critical areas of food security, health, energy, and water security. This dialogue provided a platform for Governor Joseph to emphasize the importance of addressing these key issues to ensure the well-being and prosperity of Pohnpei's residents.

The conversation naturally progressed to the topic of development, where Governor Joseph articulated his policy on foreign aid. He reiterated his stance from the 26th Micronesian Islands Forum, affirming that Pohnpei

welcomes any and all assistance from foreign countries, provided it aligns with the state's development goals. This policy underscores the need for aid to support Pohnpei's strategic objectives and contribute positively to its long-term growth and stability.

Governor Joseph also queried Ambassador Fontanel on the increasing international interest in the Micronesian region. Ambassador Fontanel responded by highlighting France's enduring commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific. She referenced French leader Charles de Gaulle's vision of a free and autonomous France, drawing a parallel to the importance of an open Indo-Pacific for global security and prosperity. Ambassador Fontanel concluded by affirming that a free and open Indo-Pacific is essential for the world's stability and growth.

Kalahngan to Ambassador Fontanel and Political Officer Francesca Fuentes for their visit.



Courtesy visit by the recently reorganized board and management of Pohnpei Public Broadcasting Corporation to Governor Stevenson A. Joseph

Pohnpei Public Information

July 13, 2024

KOLONIA, Pohnpei—On July 10, Governor Stevenson A. Joseph welcomed the recently reorganized Board and Management of Pohnpei Public Broadcasting Corporation (PPBC), also known as V6AH, during their courtesy visit to the Governor's Office today. The delegation, led by Commissioner Peterson Sam, included Assistant Commissioner Yamasda Ehpel, Board Vice Chair Paul James, Board Secretary Steezia Aldis, Board member Baron Mendiola, Radio Announcer Wenselyn Alfons, IT Specialist Radney Edgar, and Mr. Epekenio Eperiam from NAMWEIAS, an NGO collaborating with PPBC on completing the PPBC/V6AH sign-off theme.

The meeting focused on the corporation's ongoing projects and recent achievements. Commissioner Sam presented the progress of the sign-off theme video, highlighting the collaborative efforts between PPBC and NAMWEIAS. The video, which seeks the general public's assistance for completion, showcases the vibrant culture and heritage of Pohnpei. Governor Joseph had the opportunity to view clips of the video and expressed his admiration for the work done so far.

Governor Joseph commended the PPBC team for their dedication and innovative approach to public broadcasting. He recognized

the importance of the sign-off theme in fostering community pride and preserving local culture. The Governor assured the PPBC of his support and assistance in their efforts to enhance the broadcasting services and reach of V6AH. He encouraged the team to continue their creative endeavors and engage the community in meaningful ways.

The visit concluded with a renewed commitment to collaboration between the Governor's Office and PPBC. Both parties agreed to work together on initiatives that promote community involvement and cultural preservation. Governor Joseph extended his gratitude to the PPBC team for their visit and their ongoing contributions to the people of Pohnpei. For more information and to view the sign-off theme video, please contact Epekenio Eperiam at 320-7851 or Yamasda Ehpel at 320-2296 or 320-2199.

To watch clips of the sign-off theme for PPBC and learn more, please click the following link: <https://fb.watch/tIdMUFF734H/>



Governor Joseph meets with Nanpwutak Pikiniap and dignitaries

Pohnpei Public Information

July 6, 2024

Sokehs, Pohnpei—Governor Joseph was recently granted an audience with Nanpwutak Pikiniap, Nahnmwarki of Sokehs and IsoNahnken of Sokehs. The audience included dignitaries such as Senator Mitaro Simina, Senator Tendy Liwy, FSM Senator Merlynn Abello-Alfonso, Senator Francisco Simram, and former Governor Marcelo Peterson.

During the meeting, Governor Joseph provided a broad overview of Government operations and shared important updates. The conversation was respectful and allowed for many perspectives to be shared on recent developments in Pohnpei State and the Nation as a whole.

Governor Joseph appreciated the opportunity to engage with these esteemed leaders. He highlighted the



importance of continued dialogue and collaboration to address the needs of the community, especially with traditional and local government leaders.

This meeting underscored the commitment to



transparency and open communication within the administration. Governor Joseph looks forward to more such engagements to better serve the people of Pohnpei.

Governor Joseph attends welcome & farewell event for Pohnpei Port Authority Board of Directors

Pohnpei Public Information

July 5, 2024

KOLONIA, Pohnpei—Governor Joseph attended the Welcome & Farewell event for the Pohnpei Port Authority (PPA) Board of Directors at the former Medical Monitoring Area at Misko Beach. The event recognized the recently sworn-in and reorganized PPA Board members, including Chairman Trevayne Esiel, Vice Chair Sihna Lawrence, Secretary Alik J. Alik, and members Mason Albert, Master Halbert, Joseph Saimon, and Silverina Pretrick (not present). Outgoing Board members were also honored and presented with certificates of appreciation for their service: Senator Aurelio Joab, MaryAnn Eperiam, Limwan Helgenberger, and Brandon Tara (both not present).

Acting General Manager Ronald Reyes and Board Chairman Trevayne Esiel opened the event with initial remarks, setting a welcoming and optimistic tone. Governor Joseph followed, delivering remarks in which he expressed gratitude to the outgoing Board members for their dedicated service. He encouraged the new and continuing Board members to embrace their responsibilities and duties with diligence and integrity, emphasizing the importance of adhering to established rules and regulations.

Governor Joseph further highlighted the need for ongoing consultation with management and leadership to amend existing rules and regulations when necessary. This, he explained, is essential to better serve the people of Pohnpei and ensure that the Board's actions align with the community's needs and aims. His remarks underscored a commitment to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement in governance.

The event was marked by a spirit of fellowship and unity, bringing together Board members, management, employees, and other stakeholders in a productive gathering with Acting Speaker McGarry Miguel delivering closing remarks that included a toast to the incoming and outgoing board members. It was a fitting occasion to celebrate the contributions of outgoing members and welcome the new team as they embark on their

mission to enhance the operations and impact of the Pohnpei Port Authority.

Dignitaries who attended the event included the Lt. Governor of Pohnpei, T.H. Francisco L. Ioanis and the Second Lady, Lilly Jean Tihpen-Ioanis, Speaker of the 23rd FSM Congress, T.H. Esmond B. Moses and Pohnpei State Senator Tendy Liwy.



World Bank Resident Representative visits Governor Joseph

Pohnpei Public Information

July 9, 2024

KOLONIA, **Pohnpei**—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph welcomed the World Bank Resident Representative, Mr. Omar Lyasse, for a courtesy visit. Accompanied by Mrs. Suzanne L. Gallen, World Bank Country Officer - North Pacific, Mr. Lyasse expressed his gratitude to Governor Joseph for hosting the World Bank's offices in Pohnpei, which serve the Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

During their discussions, Mr. Lyasse and Governor Joseph reviewed previous and future World Bank projects. A key topic was an upcoming World Bank-funded project, which Mr. Okean Ehmes from NORMA briefed Governor Joseph on. The project aims to create a marina in the Lidakika area of the causeway. It includes paving the area to Lidakika, extending piers to accommodate more boats, and providing ice at the marina for fishermen. Governor Joseph expressed his excitement for this project

and its potential benefits for the local community.

Mr. Lyasse provided updates on the project, noting that final approvals are expected to be completed by the end of the year. Governor Joseph conveyed his appreciation for the World Bank's continued support and partnership in Pohnpei's development initiatives.

The meeting concluded with both parties reaffirming their commitment to working together on projects that contribute to the sustainable development of Pohnpei and the broader region.



Governor Joseph meets with FSM Director of Veterans Office

Pohnpei Public Information

July 2, 2024

KOLONIA, **Pohnpei**—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph recently welcomed Mr. Hainrick Panuelo, the FSM Director of Veterans Affairs, for a meeting at the Governor's Office. This marks Director Panuelo's first official visit in his new capacity. During the meeting, Director Panuelo congratulated Governor Joseph and discussed several veteran-related issues, including securing land for the Office of Veterans Affairs. Governor Joseph expressed strong support for this initiative and provided valuable suggestions for moving forward.

Another key topic of discussion was the recruitment of FSM citizens into the U.S. Armed Forces. Director Panuelo, a veteran himself, emphasized the need for recruits to be familiarized with their upcoming responsibilities living abroad. He proposed an awareness initiative within the Office of Veterans Affairs to address this need, which Governor Joseph fully endorsed. Additionally, Director Panuelo spoke of engaging in a clean-up day and Governor Joseph

informed Director Panuelo about the upcoming Pohnpei Clean Up Day, an initiative led by the Pohnpei State Environmental Protection Agency, aimed at promoting environmental sustainability. The date of this event will be shared with the public, soon.

Governor Joseph and Director Panuelo agreed to maintain close collaboration on these important issues to better support the veteran community and Pohnpeian citizens serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.



Assistant Secretary Cantor announces over \$1 million in Technical Assistance Grants for the Federated States of Micronesia

U.S. Department of the Interior

July 12, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Department of the Interior's Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs Carmen G. Cantor yesterday announced \$1,038,453 in Technical Assistance Program (TAP) funding from the Office of Insular Affairs that will benefit the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). The announcement came during a visit with FSM Ambassador Jackson Soram at the FSM Embassy in Washington.

"These projects will directly support and strengthen communities in the Federated States of Micronesia, creating opportunities for long-lasting impacts," said Assistant Secretary Cantor. "This year's TAP awards will support projects in various FSM communities including healthy reef management in Yap, trash recycling programs in Pohnpei, training healthcare workers in Chuuk, and strengthening indigenous learning at public schools in Kosrae and Pohnpei."

Four TAP grants, totaling \$1,038,453 will serve communities in each of the four states in the FSM through the following projects:

- \$413,292 to One People One Reef for a Project to Bridge Sustainable Reef and Healthy Community Management in Ulithi Atoll, in Yap State;
- \$264,994 to Catholic Relief Services for the Communities Recycle – Empowering Artisans, Transforming Environments Project, a trash recycling - business initiative in Pohnpei State;
- \$183,382 to ROSE Initiatives for a Simulation Center for Longitudinal Training of Healthcare Providers at the Chuuk State Hospital, in Chuuk State; and
- \$176,785 to Pacific Resources for Education and Learning for Indigenous Learning Recovery Projects, in Pohnpei and Kosrae State.

The Federated States of Micronesia and other Insular Areas also received support



from \$3.8 million in TAP funding which was announced in April 2024, and included support for:

- Participation in the Close Up Foundation and Junior State Foundation programs for students from the U.S. Territories and the freely associated states;
- The EPA Circuit Rider program which provides for water quality technical support and laboratory certification

programs in the freely associated states;

- Prior Service Administration benefits for retirees who were formerly employed during the U.S. administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands; and
- Membership in the Western Interstate Commission (WICHE) for American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau which reduces costs for students from insular areas at postsecondary institutions in the WICHE network.

Funding assistance provided through the TAP program stand as a testament to the continued support that the United States provides for the people of the Federated States of Micronesia beyond the Compact of Free Association.

French Ambassador presents credentials to President Simina



FSM Information Services

July 5, 2024

Palikir, Pohnpei—In a formal ceremony held on July 2nd, 2024, His Excellency President Wesley W. Simina received the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the French Republic to the FSM, Her Excellency Marie Fontanel. The event marked a significant moment in the diplomatic relations between the FSM and France, underscoring the long-standing partnership and mutual commitment to regional and international cooperation.

President Simina welcomed Ambassador Fontanel and her Political Adviser, Ms. Francesca Fuentes, to the FSM, and acknowledged the diplomatic ties established between the FSM and France on February 5, 1993, highlighting the history of collaboration that has benefited both nations through diplomatic, cultural, and developmental exchanges.

In his remarks, President Simina extended his congratulations to Ambassador Fontanel on her new appointment and emphasized the FSM's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations in various sectors, including trade, education, and technology. He reiterated his dedication to exploring new avenues for cooperation during his administration.

A major point of discussion during the ceremony was climate change, a critical concern for the FSM. President Simina highlighted the existential threats posed by sea-level rise and other climate-related impacts on the small

islands and atolls of Micronesia. He called for France's continued support in international climate negotiations and the enhancement of the FSM's capacity to address climate challenges, advocating for the needs of vulnerable small island developing states.

Moving into bilateral discussions, President Simina underscored the importance of establishing a European Union (EU) Mission in the North Pacific, based in the FSM. He reiterated the significance of such a presence in enhancing cooperation and understanding between the EU and the Micronesian sub-region, complementing the existing EU Mission in Fiji and contributing to the implementation of the Samoa Agreement. Amongst topics of regional importance that were discussed included the ongoing situation in New Caledonia, where President Simina expressed his hopes for a swift, safe and lasting resolution for all.

President Simina also expressed appreciation for France's role as a founding member of the EU and for the support provided through the European Development Fund under the Cotonou Agreement. He conveyed his optimism about the benefits anticipated from the recently signed Samoa Agreement.

In conclusion, President Simina expressed his hopes for deeper collaboration and understanding in the future for the FSM and France relationship. He invited Ambassador Fontanel to explore the diverse states of Kosrae, Chuuk, and Yap during her tenure as equally integral to understanding the diversity of the FSM.

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Lawyers & Notaries Public,
Pacific House, Butt Street, PO
Box 149, Suva, Fiji
Email: trademarks@munroleyslaw.com.fj
www.munroleyslaw.com

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MUNRO LEYS

Lawyers & Notaries Public, Pacific
House, Butt Street, PO Box 149,
Suva, Fiji
Email: trademarks@munroleyslaw.com.fj
www.munroleyslaw.com

MUNRO LEYS

Youth from Pohnpei attend special conference on Guam

Pohnpei LDS

July 9, 2024

Guam—On June 19th to the 24th 102 young men and women from Pohnpei attended a special youth conference on Guam hosted by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They ranged from 13 to 18 years old. For many, this was their first time leaving Pohnpei and traveling by airline.

The Church of Jesus Christ's youth conference program is called "For the Strength of Youth" (FSY), and is part of the Church's efforts to strengthen the faith and bless the lives of young people. This year's theme for FSY conferences throughout the world is "I a disciple of Jesus Christ."

A diverse group of young people from throughout Micronesia attended the Guam FSY conference held at the Holiday Resort on Tumon Bay. In all, over 300 youth from Chuuk, Guam, Kosrae, Pohnpei, Palau, and Saipan attended along with leaders and chaperones. The gathering was an opportunity to associate with people from neighboring islands and to interact with friends from different cultures.



Shortly after arriving, the youth were divided into small groups called companies. These companies adopted names and designed banners for their companies, and under the direction of youth counselors, spent the week participating together in reading and discussing scriptures, playing games, and singing and dancing together.

Classes were offered on topics such as building self-esteem, overcoming challenges, finding a common culture and identity in Christ, and learning to discern truth by studying the scriptures and listening to the Holy Ghost. In addition, representatives for BYU Hawaii and the Church's Pathways education program presented opportunities for post-high school education.

One of the culminating events was an outdoor game night held at Paseo Stadium in which companies competed in various games. This was followed by a variety show featuring talents such as dancing, singing, piano solos, and one demonstration of rapid-fire Rubik's Cube solving. At every event, youth sang the theme song, "I am a disciple of Christ."

A special event for those attending was meeting Elder John A. McCune, First Counselor in the Asia North Area Presidency, and his wife Debbra E. McCune. The McCunes interacted with the youth, helped to judge the presentation of company banners, and enjoyed other activities.

At a special devotional, Elder McCune spoke to the youth about their central identity as followers of Jesus Christ. "The island we're from is an important part of who we are, but that's not our primary identity," he emphasized. "We are sons and daughters of God, covenant children of Christ and disciples of Christ. This is our identity."

Buck and Rachel Jolley of Guam were the acting session directing couple for the Guam FSY conference.

"We were able to bring a lot of different youth from a lot of different islands all across Micronesia," said Buck Jolley. "That gave them a chance to see that there are other youth who have the same beliefs and struggles as they do."

"Our goal was to give the youth an experience that they would always remember," added Rachel Jolley, "something to carry them through by helping them come unto Christ."

Following the FSY conference, many participants stayed a few days after the conference ended to attend in Yigo Guam Temple for their first time. The Yigo Guam Temple is one of the Church of Jesus Christ's newest temples and was dedicated in 2022.

Following are quotes from a few of the youth who attended the conference:

"At FSY I learned that God loves me and that he has his own timing on answering my prayers," said Shakira Alex of Pohnpei

Margarena from Chuuk described how happy she felt at FSY and how strongly she "felt peace through her faith." She further stated that she "understands the things that God wants her to do."

Silverreen from Pohnpei stated that when she first arrived at the FSY conference she felt "really nervous." But as the week progressed, she enjoyed herself and learned that "God loves us all no matter what."

As the FSY participants said their goodbyes and left Guam to return to their home islands, they undoubtedly took with them renewed commitments to live as disciples of Christ. This commitment will undoubtedly be reinforced through memories of this wonderful gathering of youth on the island of Guam.



Assistant Secretary Cantor announces \$372 Million in Compact Funding for the Republic of the Marshall Islands

U.S. Department of the Interior

July 12, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C.

– The Department of the Interior’s Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs Carmen G. Cantor this week announced \$372 million in Compact of Free Association (Compact) funding for the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI). The funding includes direct Compact economic assistance to the RMI Government and a deposit into the Trust Fund for the People of the Marshall Islands as provided for under the Compact. The announcement came during a visit with RMI Ambassador Charles Paul at the RMI Embassy in Washington.



Assistant Secretary Cantor highlighted the U.S. Government’s implementation of provisions under Public Law 118-42, which enabled and provided funding for the recently negotiated agreement on amendments to the Compact of Free Association signed between the United States and the RMI on October 16, 2023.

“We are honored to deliver \$372 million on behalf of the U.S. Government to support the Republic of the Marshall Islands as one of our first actions taken under the newly amended Compact agreements,” said Assistant Secretary Cantor. “This amount includes a contribution of \$200 million to the Compact Trust Fund and is the first installment of United States contributions expected to total \$700 million over a four-year period.”

Since the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act was signed into law by President Biden on March 9, the United States has provided funding support totaling \$372 million as follows:

- \$200 million – The Compact Trust Fund for the People of the Marshall Islands provides the RMI with sources of revenue to help meet the needs of people in the RMI in

accordance with terms of the Trust Fund Agreement between the United States and RMI.

- \$132 million – The Kwajalein Development Plan Fund supports projects to facilitate resilience and healthy communities throughout Kwajalein Atoll as further described in the Kwajalein Development Plan that is currently being updated by the RMI.
- \$20 million – The Climate Fund supports the RMI’s efforts to obtain additional assistance and better cope with challenges from climate impacts, including sea-level rise and other environmental challenges that could threaten the existence of the RMI.
- \$20 million – The U.S. Supplemental Health Fund supports RMI efforts to improve health outcomes for the people of the RMI.

Under Public Law 118-42, there were also updates to the types of services that individuals from the Marshall Islands and the other freely associated states are eligible for while living in the United States. An initial list of program and policy updates from various agencies that reflect the amended Compact are available here and will be updated as needed.

Also called for under the Compact of Free Association agreement is an annual meeting of the Joint Economic Management Fiscal Accountability Committee (JEMFAC) which reviews and approves annual budgets for Compact funds. The JEMFAC, which is chaired by Assistant Secretary Cantor, is planning to hold its first meeting under the renewed Compact later this year.

Assistant Secretary Cantor announces \$66 Million in Compact Funding for Palau Completes First Palau Bilateral Economic Consultations under the 2023 Compact Review Agreement

U.S. Department of the Interior

July 11, 2024

WASHINGTON,

D.C.—

The Department of the Interior’s Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs Carmen G. Cantor today announced \$66 million in funding to the Government of Palau and completed the first bilateral economic consultations on June 26 and 27 in Koror, Palau. The U.S. implemented provisions under Public Law 118-42 and the recently negotiated Compact of Free Association (Compact) Section 432 Review signed between the United States and Palau on May 22, 2023.

Assistant Secretary Cantor and U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Palau Joel Ehrendreich led the U.S. delegation for the bilateral economic consultations with a Palau team headed by Palau President Surangel Whipps, Jr., Minister of Finance, Kaleb Udui, Jr., and other cabinet officials.

Since the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act was signed into law by President Biden on March 9, Interior has transferred \$66 million to the Palau Government for the following purposes:

- \$50 million – Palau Compact Trust Fund – to support Palau’s efforts in the provision education, health, climate adaptation and the environment, the administration of justice, and public safety, or for expenses related to the audits required under the Compact Review Agreement.
- \$10 million – Palau Fiscal Consolidation Fund – to assist the Government of Palau in paying debts it incurred prior to April 1, 2023. This is the first annual contribution of \$10 million to be provided over a six-year period.
- \$6 million – Compact Infrastructure Maintenance Funds for fiscal years 2022, 2023, and 2024 which represents the last remaining

U.S. financial obligation to Palau under the 2010 Compact Review Agreement. The \$6 million was earlier announced in Palau.

“These consultations demonstrate the United States’ commitment not just to maintain our relationship with Palau, but to strengthen it,” said Assistant Secretary Cantor. “The United States is proud to continue to be Palau’s strategic partner as democracies and free market economies. Our bonds of shared values, shared interests, and friendship run deep. We want Palau to succeed as a democratic and prosperous nation for its own people and as a model for others in the Indo-Pacific region.”

The bilateral economic consultations included briefings on Palau’s economic initiatives, Palau’s National Development Plan, and the planned use of economic assistance under the Compact. The group also discussed “dashboard” performance measures and recommendations provided by the Economic Advisory Group for Palau as related to the island nation’s economic, legislative, financial, and management improvements.

The bilateral consultations are one of the requirements under the Agreement to review Palau’s progress in achieving reforms to help Palau frame and execute a vision for successful and sustainable economic recovery, reconstruction, and development. This was the first bilateral economic consultation between the two countries under the 2023 Compact Review Agreement.

Under Public Law 118-42, there were also updates to the types of services that individuals from Palau and the other freely associated states are eligible for while living in the United States. An initial list of program and policy updates from various agencies that reflect the amended Compact are available here and will be updated as needed.

Opinion Editorial

Striding forward together

Japan and Pacific island countries and regions, connected by the Pacific Ocean and kizuna (bonds), have been and will continue to be mutually indispensable partners.

The circle of friendship between Japan and the Pacific islands has been expanded through exchanges in various areas, including in sports and at the local government level. Tuna and bonito caught in the waters around Pacific island nations have long enriched Japanese people's food culture. Over the years,



the years,

Japan and Pacific island countries and regions have worked hand in hand to tackle common challenges such as climate change and disaster management and prevention. Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers have dedicated themselves to the development of each country alongside local communities, sometimes even before the establishment of diplomatic relations. I have personally heard from Pacific island leaders heart-warming stories about their contributions, of which I am very proud.

It was back in the 20th century when the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting was initiated. I have been involved in the PALM process for over a decade now. At the second Ministerial Interim Meeting in 2013, which I attended as

foreign minister, I stressed that Japan and Pacific island countries were steadily deepening dialogue and cooperation and highlighted the importance of our mutual cooperation. This is the spirit that we have proudly cultivated and carried on to this day.

It has been 27 years since the first PALM, and 2050 — the target year for the “2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent” endorsed by the Pacific Islands Forum leaders — will come in 27 years, counting this year. On the basis of kizuna, as well as shared values and principles backed by the nearly 30-year history of the PALM process, we will pass on our strong relationship of trust and friendship to the next 30 years as we adapt to changing circumstances.

Japan will continue to stride forward together with Pacific Island countries and regions toward 2050.

*Prime Minister of Japan
Fumio Kishida*



Bridging technological barriers with ASYCUDA training and advancing trade

UN Trade and Development

July 10, 2024

Pacific—In the Pacific, the United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD) backed ASYCUDA technologies have reached the shores of 14 countries enhancing their customs and trade capabilities.

The customs administration and the trading community have undergone digital transformation with the ASYCUDA technologies leaving behind manual processes.

Programmes such as ASYCUDAWorld and electronic Single Window have introduced efficiencies, transparency, reduced time and cost, improved government revenues and trade statistics, and support progress toward achieving sustainable development goals.

However, embracing digitalization is an ongoing process and comes with challenges, such as technical skills gaps and potential insecurity about workflow disruptions and cultural shifts.

To enable smoother transition and post implementation phase, ASYCUDA Pacific provides detailed training to customs officers and stakeholders before system launch. This proactive approach equips them with essential skills to navigate the automated system effectively, minimizing operational disruptions and maximizing efficiency.

By familiarizing the trading community with the technology beforehand, ASYCUDA

facilitates seamless integration into customs operations, enhancing transparency, accuracy, and overall effectiveness in managing international trade transactions.

Ms. Niro had to immerse herself in understanding the complexities of the automated system, moving away from traditional paperwork.

With support from the European Union-funded Improving Pacific Islands Customs and Trade (IMPACT) project, the trading community of the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Marshall Islands were trained in the lead up to the implementation of the system.

Feedback from our trainings, boosting efficiency!

In the Republic of Marshall Islands, where the system is being finalized for launch, the UN Trade and Development, ASYCUDA Expert, Mr. Ravinda Warnakulage, said despite the technological challenges including power outages and outdated IT infrastructure, the trading community were provided with intense training until they were ready to use the system.

“Despite the challenges, the training continued and users were assisted on a timely basis and queries were attended to,” Mr. Warnakulage stated.

“Necessary training materials and declaration templates are published in the RMI

ASYCUDA portal’s website for stakeholder use. The training lab is setup in the Customs premises and the stakeholders onsite, may visit to get help. Training for stakeholders is part of the schedule,” he added.

The Acting Chief of RMI Customs, Mr. Doug Anjain, mentioned, “We had to upgrade our ICT infrastructure to suit the ASYCUDA operation and recruited additional customs offices to strength the work force and constant training both internal and external stakeholders is a key factor to the successful implementation of ASYCUDA and the training sessions are being conducted.”

The RMI Customs Officer, National Project Team Member, Mr. Ishmael Tallur shared, “Two people including myself received the ASYCUDA functional training at ASMP office in Suva, Fiji, and we help to train internal staff and external stakeholders. There are challenges and hiccups when switching from the manual system to the ASYCUDA eDocument system, but we believe with regular training we can minimize the knowledge gap.”

The Director for the Republic of Palau’s Bureau of Customs and Border Protection, Mr. John Tarkong Jr. attributed the advance training ahead of the system launch in enabling efficient and seamless customs processes.

“Thanks to the ASYCUDA training, our officers are well acquainted with the system and its processes,” Mr. Tarkong Jr. said.

In the Federated States of Micronesia, where

the system was launched in March 2024, an Agent at Transco Agencies, Ms. Maria Corazon James, remarked, “Training with the ASYCUDAWorld system was a good experience and meant learning more with computerizing stuffs.”

Another ASYCUDAWorld user who underwent the same training, Mr. Alvin Cholymay, emphasized, “The training was important to ensuring we, the users, were well acquainted with the system before using it daily.”

Mr. Cholymay, who is also an Agent at Transco Agencies, added that changing from manual to a digital platform was not easy as years of working in manual routine changed quickly.

“Without a comprehensive training, it would not have been possible to use the system, it comes with a lot of good things and being accurate is key to manning the digital system. And the good thing was that different trainings were held for different groups of users which made things easier to understand and grasp.” Mr. Cholymay noted.

While the functional trainings happen prior to the launch of the system, UNCTAD’s team of ASYCUDA experts remain available to help address any challenges experienced by the trading communities following implementation.

Timely trainings are also scheduled to keep users at pace and up to date with the system.