

# FSM athletes complete historic day at Paris 2024 Olympic Games

FSMOC

August 4, 2024

**Paris, France**—For the first time ever, two Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) athletes competed at the same time at an Olympic Games, yesterday (August 03, 2024) and with much success.

Scott Fiti, the Athletics (track and field) sprinter from Chuuk State, FSM and competing in his second Olympic Games, begin the day with competing in the men's 100-meter dash with a season's best time of 11.61. This time was a season best for Fiti. He has been training with an IOC Athlete Scholarship for 2 years preparing for Paris 2024.



**Kestra Kihleng**

Shortly thereafter, Kestra Kihleng, female Swimmer from Pohnpei State, FSM, set a personal best and national record in the women's 50-meter freestyle with a time of 28.81 by finishing fourth in her heat. Kestra's



**Scott Fiti**

time was the best ever in 7 Olympic Games for a female FSM swimmer at any Olympic Game.

the world stage at the same time for our country," said FSMNOC President Aurelio Joab, from the Paris 2024

"It was an incredible day to have two Micronesian athletes participating on

[Click here for cotinuation...](#)

## New Zealand Parliamentarians visit FSM: Launch UNICEF implemented Early Childhood Initiative

By Bill Jaynes  
The Kaselehlie Press

August 13, 2024

**Pohnpei**—A group of New Zealand Parliamentarians visited Pohnpei today, led by the Right Honorable Winston Peters, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) for New Zealand. The other parliamentarians traveling with him were Chair of the Labor Pacific Caucus, Hon Jenny Salesa; Chair of the Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Committee (FADTC) Tim van de Molen; and FADTC member Teanau Tuiono.

The FSM was the third stop of an ongoing Pacific tour by the group, following Fiji and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. They will depart Pohnpei for the Republic of Palau, the final stop on their tour.



*Students, UNICEF officials and NZ Parliamentarians at symbolic handover of program supplies*

Their visit included meetings with FSM President Wesley Simina, Vice President Aren Palik, Secretary of

[click here for continuation](#)

# FSM launches 2024 Police Academy to enhance National and State law enforcement

FSM Information Services

August 5, 2024

**Madolenihmw, Pohnpei**—The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) proudly announces the official opening of the 2024 FSM Police Academy, held at the campus of the former Pohnpei Agriculture and Trade School (PATS) in Madolenihmw. This significant

building programs for present and future law enforcement agencies, with a focus on law enforcement services, protection of civil rights and maintenance of peace and order.”

The Honorable Vice President Aren B. Palik delivered keynote remarks, where he extended deep respect to the



within the communities. And so, it is only fitting that our efforts of building the capacity of our law enforcement sector be held on this very same ground.” he stated.

The Vice President recognized the critical role of various stakeholders in making the Police Academy possible. Special thanks were extended to the Department of Justice for their meticulous organization, the 23rd FSM Congress for their financial support, and the Catholic Church for providing the facilities at PATS.

The Vice President also acknowledged the presence of esteemed guests, including Ambassador Jennifer Johnson from the US Embassy and Ambassador Genny Grant-Curnow from the Australian Embassy. Their participation underscores the importance of international partnerships in bolstering FSM's law enforcement capabilities.

event marks a collaborative effort to enhance the capacity and skills of law enforcement officers across the nation.

The ceremony commenced with an opening remark by Acting Secretary of Justice Leonito Bacalando Jr. He emphasized the vision for the Police Academy “to professionalize law enforcement services across the FSM through comprehensive training opportunities for all law enforcement officers.” He also stressed on the need “to provide continuing capacity-

traditional guardians of the land and emphasized the historical significance of the venue.

Vice President Palik highlighted that the site of the academy is a fitting location for advancing the rights of the people and promoting community harmony, tracing back to the decentralization efforts during the Saudeleur dynasty by Isokelekel.

“An act in history that marked Pohnpei’s first move towards promoting the rights of the people and harmony

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Bill Jaynes  
Managing Editor

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

**August 28, 2024**

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

**Monday, August 26, 2024**

# FSM hosts Second National Fisheries Summit

FSM Information Services

August 5, 2024

**PALIKIR, Pohnpei**—

The FSM’s Second National Fisheries Summit commenced today, bringing together key stakeholders from across the nation and beyond. The event, held in Pohnpei, aims to address the critical issues facing the fisheries sector and to strategize on sustainable management and development of the FSM’s fisheries resources.



Following a welcoming address from Pohnpei State’s Administrator for Office of Fish and Agriculture (OFA) Mr. Jorg Anson, T.H. Vice President Aren B. Palik delivered the keynote address where he underscored the importance of the summit in fostering sustainable fisheries management. “Our gathering here signifies a collective commitment to the sustainable management and development of our nation’s most vital and renewable resource – our tuna,” he stated. Vice President Palik highlighted the crucial role of tuna fisheries in global food security and the FSM’s economy. “In 2021, the tuna fisheries contributed 16.6% of the FSM’s GDP, and in 2022, 19.17%,” he noted, emphasizing the sector’s significance

in supporting livelihoods in the FSM.

Vice President Palik stressed the importance of strengthening international partnerships, such as with the European Union, and regional allies like Papua New Guinea and the Marshall Islands in order to access new markets and diversify revenues related to fisheries as exemplified in the FSM’s commitment to the East New Britain Initiative (ENBI) and the Pacific Island Tuna Program (PIT) which will expand the nation’s position in tuna fisheries development.

Vice President Palik also reiterated the FSM’s commitment to sustainable fisheries management. He emphasized the importance of protecting 30% of the ocean through the Blue

Prosperity Micronesia program and the need to balance development with environmental sustainability. “Let us reaffirm our strong commitment and determination to protect these valuable, yet finite, resources for long-term prosperity and the generations to come. Because to us - when it comes to prosperity - we believe that both the economy and our environment can and should thrive together.” he said.

Vice President Palik called for the need to, “streamline our foreign investment processes and create a conducive environment for our tuna industry to grow and flourish.”

“We must not remain idle and watch others pass us by. Instead, let us seize new opportunities through collective



partnerships both within and outside of the FSM,” he urged.

The Summit will also seek endorsement at the technical level of the National Oceanic Fisheries Investment Policy, which is aimed at enhancing onshore job creation, expanding skill sets, and forging new partnerships. If endorsed, the Policy will then proceed to the upcoming State and National Leadership Conference (SNLC) later this month for formal adoption by the State and National leadership.

## Happy 234th birthday, Coast Guard!

By ADM Linda Fagan, Commandant

August 4, 2024

Today marks the 234th birthday of the United States Coast Guard. Today we honor more than two centuries of dedicated service, resilience, and excellence that has defined our proud history. Since our founding, the Coast Guard has grown from its origins as the Revenue Cutter Service into a multi-faceted service with a critical role in safeguarding our nation’s maritime interests.

Earlier this summer, our nation commemorated the 80th anniversary of D-Day, when brave U.S. and Allied military personnel went into harm’s way and often made the ultimate sacrifice in Operation Overlord. On that fateful day, scores of Coast Guard 83 footers plied the waters of the English Channel and landed our courageous forces who stormed

the beaches at Normandy, ensuring a world safe for democracy. Indeed, the iconic photo “Jaws of Death” was shot by Coast Guard Chief Photographer Robert Sargent as the door of his landing craft opened on the deadly sands of Omaha Beach.

As we reflect on our storied past, we also celebrate the remarkable achievements and unwavering commitment of each and every member of our service. The Coast Guard has evolved into an international force: a force for peace in a sometimes hostile world; a force for stability in uncertain times; a force for protection against agents that would do harm; a force of recovery in the wake of global threats. Today, Coast Guard personnel are deployed throughout the world, and the demand for our capabilities and skills only grows.

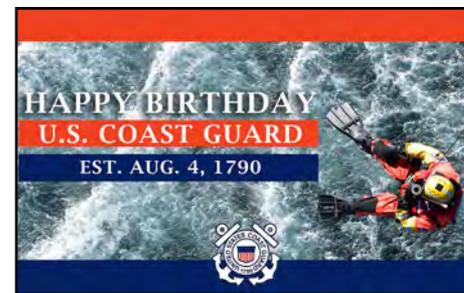
On this day, 234 years ago, President George Washington signed the bill drafted by Treasury Secretary

Alexander Hamilton which authorized the construction of 10 cutters, a small fleet that would grow to become today’s Coast Guard. This milestone serves as a powerful reminder of our enduring mission and values. It also provides an opportunity to emphasize a key priority for our future: strengthening our culture. This year, we celebrate the 30th anniversary of our core values of Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty. They remain the bedrock of our success, and the foundation for nurturing a positive, inclusive, and supportive culture is essential to our continued excellence.

On behalf of the entire Coast Guard leadership team: Thank you. Your hard work, dedication, and spirit are what make our service extraordinary. As we celebrate this 234th birthday, let us renew our commitment to our mission and to one another, embracing the opportunities and challenges ahead with unity and resolve.

Happy 234th Birthday, Coast Guard! Here’s to many more years of service, honor, and a strengthened culture of excellence.

You and yours are the best our country has to offer. Semper Paratus!



# JOCV volunteers arrive in the FSM receiving assignments throughout the FSM

*Embassy of Japan to the FSM*

**August 8, 2024**

**FSM**—On August 8, Ambassador Kagomiya welcomed nine Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV), who have been dispatched by JICA to three States of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

The JOCV program aims to support economic and social development at grass-roots level and has made a substantial contribution to people-centered development.

President Simina of the FSM acknowledged their valuable contribution and called them “the best Japanese ambassadors” at PALM10 meeting.

The first batch of JOCV in 2024 includes one volunteer in the Chuuk State, three volunteers in Kosrae State, and five volunteers in Pohnpei State.

The Embassy wishes all the best for following new volunteers:



1. Mr. Koike Tsukasa  
Primary School Education  
Department of Education, Chuuk State Government to improve teaching methods of Math

2. Mr. Kitaura Yoshihiro  
Environmental Education  
Kosrae Island Resource Management Authority to conduct environmental protection awareness activities for local residents focusing on forest protection,

3Rs, marine protection, etc

3. Ms. Nagai Kumiko  
Nutrition  
Kosrae State Hospital to provide support and advice on combating NCDs using nutritional expertise

4. Ms. Hara Tomoko  
Primary School Education  
Utwe Elementary School to improve students' math skills and assist teachers in improving their teaching skills

5. Ms. Komatsu Ayuka  
Music  
Pohnpei Catholic School to promote healthy youth through music

6. Ms. Ochi Chieko  
Pharmacy  
Pohnpei State Hospital to develop human resources capable of properly using pharmaceuticals and providing safe and reliable pharmaceuticals

7. Ms. Nakada Natsuko  
Nutrition  
Division of Public Health and Health Services, Pohnpei State Government to provide support and advice on combating NCDs by using nutritional expertise

8. Ms. Kobayashi Miki  
Primary School Education  
Awak Elementary School to improve students' math skills and assist teachers to improve their teaching skills

9. Ms. Namekawa Miyu  
Youth Activity  
Madolenihmw High School to promote the enjoyment of sports among students and local residents to revitalize the community.

## ...Academy

*continued from previous page*

The FSM Police Academy aims to equip national and state police officers with advanced skills and knowledge essential for performing their duties with excellence, safety, and integrity. This year's academy sees participation from all four FSM states and the national government, highlighting a unified effort to strengthen law enforcement across the nation.

Vice President Palik emphasized the Academy's role in enhancing the ability to combat crime and uphold justice, which is critical in maintaining public safety and trust within the community. He underscored the importance of collaboration between the National Government and State Governments, facilitated



by existing joint law enforcement agreements and annual funding from the FSM Congress.

The Academy benefits from the assistance of international partners, including the United States through various agencies such as the Joint Interagency Task Force West and the Defense Institute of International

Legal Studies. Additionally, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have contributed expert trainers, further bolstering the



training program.

The Vice President commended the officers, “I would like to commend the officers embarking on this journey for their dedication and sacrifices. Your willingness to be away from your families during this period speaks volumes about your civic duty, personal pride, patriotism, and unwavering commitment to peace and security.” he stated.

In his closing remarks, Vice President Palik encouraged the officers to persevere in their service to the

community, acknowledging the daily challenges they face. He reaffirmed the Simina-Palik administration's commitment to supporting law enforcement agencies in achieving their mission, promoting good governance, accountability, and transparency in public service.

The FSM Police Academy stands as a testament to the nation's dedication to building a secure and resilient society through collaboration and synergy with international partners.

# PacificAus Sports Program supports FSM Swimming Association Coach Certification program



*Australian Embassy to the FSM*

*August 1, 2024*

**Pohnpei**--Last week, Ambassador Grant-Curnow was delighted to be a part of the opening ceremony for the FSM Swimming Association (FSA) Coach Certification Program.

The Coaching Clinic brought together 13 new assistant coaches and two current certified coaches from the four states of FSM to be coached by internationally recognized Swim Coach Instructor, Miguel Lopez.

Ambassador Grant-Curnow reflected on Australia's long-standing partnership with FSA and encouraged the state coaches to take full advantage of this opportunity and continue building on the sport with the youth of their respective states.

Australia is proud to support this initiative through the regional PacificAus Sports Program in promoting diplomacy through sports!

# Surveyors of WWII wrecks in Chuuk lagoon making steady progress

*Australian Embassy to the FSM*

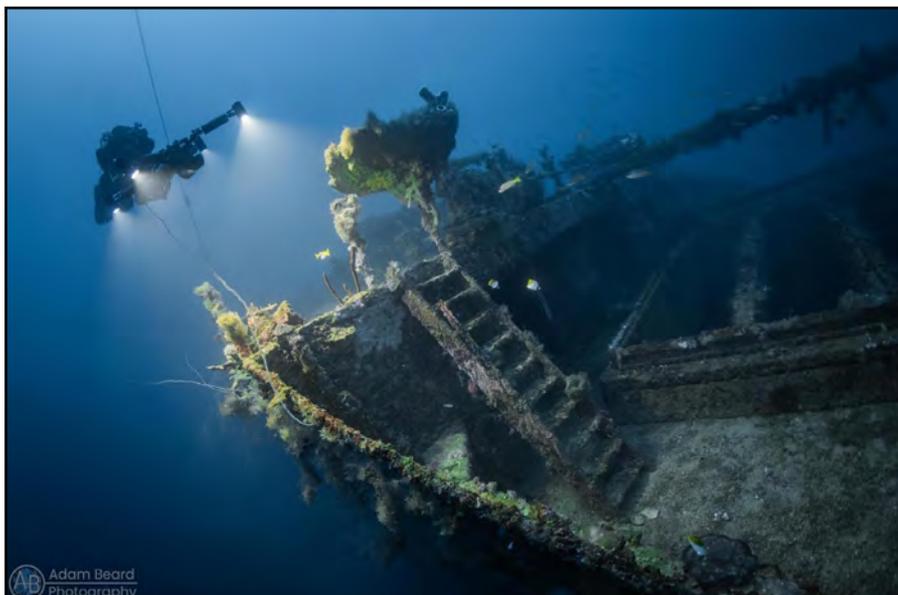
*August 2, 2024*

**Chuuk**—Australia's partner Major Projects Foundation (MPF) is making strong progress on the survey of sunken WWII wrecks in Chuuk Lagoon seeking to minimise the risk of oil spills and protect the environment and livelihoods of the citizens of Chuuk Lagoon.

Chuuk Governor Narruhn thanked the Australian Ambassador on a recent visit to Chuuk and MPF for their work together with the Chuuk -Environmental Protection Agency and the FSM Government.

20 elite divers and marine heritage experts from around the world are working to survey the top 20 potentially polluting wrecks as part of the project. The expedition data collection on this expedition wraps up in early August 2024 with assessments to follow.

#Inkfish and the Divers Alert Network are collaborating with MPF to support the project and the health of the dive team.



# 2024 State and National Leadership Conference (SNLC) opens in Pohnpei

*FSM Information Services*

**August 12, 2024**

**PALIKIR, Pohnpei**—The 2024 State and National Leadership Conference (SNLC) commenced today in Pohnpei, with leaders from across the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) gathering to address key economic, infrastructure, social, and environmental issues. The SNLC serves as a critical platform for the heads of the 5 governments and presiding officers of each legislative body to gather and shape the nation's strategic direction on key priorities.

The conference began with welcoming remarks by T.H. Governor Stevenson Joseph where he welcomed everyone to Pohnpei as the hosting state and expressed his hope to engage in “meaningful dialogue – a dialogue based on our dear principles to us as Micronesians” and emphasized the importance of utilizing the SNLC as a “springboard for action.”

H.E. President Wesley W. Simina officially opened the SNLC and highlighted the interlinked importance of social, environmental, and economic development in fostering a resilient and prosperous future for the FSM. He called for a collective commitment to inclusivity, environmental stewardship, and economic diversification.

President Simina also emphasized how important it is to the FSM in forging genuine partnerships with development partners who are committed to building local capacity and listening to the voices on the ground. “The Federated States of Micronesia is looking for development partners who understand that true development comes from within our communities,” he stated.

“We seek partnerships rooted in mutual respect, dialogue, and a shared vision for a resilient and prosperous future.”

T.H. Governor Alexander Narruhn of Chuuk State, reflected on the Micronesian Expo that was recently held in his home state. “The Expo is no longer just a tourism event,” he remarked, “but a cultural event that has brought out the best in us. It was critical to nation-building in the way we know how—our way, the Federated States of Micronesia way.”

Governor Narruhn also pointed out his uncertainty around matters concerning the amended Compact, shared fishing fees, the centralization of infrastructure projects at the national government as mandated by the recent amending of the law by Congress.

“as a leader, it concerns me to say this and to be uncertain,” he stated. “If I am uncertain, then simply imagine our people, would they be uncertain too? At this SNLC, I hope that all the different presentations from various sectors will ease my uncertainty and will be able to

answer my questions of “Where are we now, and where are we heading?” he posed to the audience.

In T.H. Governor Charles Chieng of Yap State's opening remarks, he noted his gratitude for being back in Pohnpei after over two decades, and stated that he was looking forward to the presentations and discourse over the coming days to raise issues, challenges and and more importantly - potential solutions.

T.H. Governor Tulensa Palik of Kosrae State began by acknowledging the efforts of JEMCO (Joint Economic Management Committee) and stated that while Kosrae state is relieved for the recent disbursement of compact grants, which had been delayed, stated that “delayed funding is one pressing issue we intend to raise in this forum”. Governor Palik emphasized the need for coordination on developing the FSM's SDP (Strategic Development Plan) and noted his delegation was looking forward to that point in the agenda along with challenges Kosrae is facing in the education sector, ODA (Overseas Development Assistance) timelines and processes as well as issues facing Kosrae's port, which is one of the busiest ports for fisheries operations in the region.

For this SNLC, civil society also provided opening remarks, which were delivered by Ms. Marstella Jack, the interim Executive Director of FANGO (FSM Alliance of

Non-Governmental Organizations). Ms. Jack began by expressing her gratitude for the opportunity to join the SNLC. “Thank you Secretary Akinaga, and President Simina for this opportunity to finally claim our CSO space amongst the government leadership” she stated.

She emphasized the importance of collaboration between government and non-government organizations to complement work and fill gaps. “Nation building depends on the participation of all actors, and recognises the diversity and complementarity of their functions. Civil society is an essential building block of development and national cohesion.” she stated.

The SNLC will continue over the course of this week entailing three sessions on three main thematic areas focused on Economic, Social, Infrastructure and Environmental priorities with deep dive updates and discussions on specific issues under each thematic area. The SNLC will be immediately followed by the 2nd ODA Partners Roundtable exercise. This exercise will facilitate the opportunity for direct dialogue between stakeholders and leaders with development and donor partners.

By the end of the week a Comunique and accompanying Resolutions will be produced to reflect the collective decisions and ways forward as agreed upon by the state and national leaders of our nation.

## Governor Joseph welcomes leaders to the 13th State and National Leadership Conference

*Pohnpei Public Information*

**August 12, 2024**

**Palikir, Pohnpei**—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph of Pohnpei warmly welcomed distinguished leaders from across the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) this morning at the opening of the 13th State and National Leadership Conference (SNLC). President Wesley W. Simina, Vice President Aren B. Palik, and state governors were among the many prominent figures in attendance.

In his remarks, Governor Joseph emphasized the importance of unity and collaboration as the leaders of the FSM come together to address the nation's most pressing issues. He highlighted the significance of the conference as a platform for meaningful dialogue and the development of solutions that will strengthen the bonds between the



national government and the individual states.

“May we make this conference a springboard for actions and outcomes that will benefit our people for years to come,” Governor Joseph stated, urging all participants to engage with open minds and a shared dedication to the future of the nation.

As the SNLC continues over the next few days, Governor Joseph looks forward to the productive discussions and decisive actions that will emerge, guided by the wisdom of the leaders and the aspirations of the citizens of the FSM.

# Pohnpei State Government announces graduation of 18 reservist conservation officers

## Pohnpei Public information

August 2, 2024

**KOLONIA, Pohnpei**—The Pohnpei State Government proudly announces the graduation and completion of training for 18 Reservist Conservation Officers at the Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). This significant achievement is part of the Pohnpei Conservation Officer Reserve Program, launched on July 15, 2024, by Governor Stevenson A. Joseph, in collaboration with the Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP) and OneReef. The success of this initiative acknowledged the support of WildAid, Micronesia Conservation Trust, The Nature Conservancy, PIMPAC, and other partners that supported Pohnpei’s environment management and critical wildlife conservation efforts.

The 18 officers began their intensive training three weeks ago, under the guidance of both local instructors and instructors from the Guam Police Department. Their training focused on firearms proficiency, law enforcement, and policing principles and tactics. These newly trained officers are now equipped to support the Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) within the Department of Public Safety (DPS), ensuring swift responses and a robust Community Conservation Officers (CCO) collaboration to address challenges within the Pohnpei Protected Areas Network.

Governor Stevenson A. Joseph could not attend the graduation ceremony due to a state visit to the Southern Islands of Kapingamarangi, Nukuoro, and Sapwaufik. However, he did attend the opening ceremony of this training program which he expressed confidence in the program’s potential to enhance the State’s resource management for the long-term sustainability of the resources for the present and future generations.

This program, supported by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), aims to bolster the state’s conservation efforts through capacity building and a community-driven approach to enforcing conservation laws. The initiative includes funding from OneReef and the Conservation Society of Pohnpei, which covers the costs of training, gear, uniforms, and



the establishment of a Reserve Fund to support the officers.

The Pohnpei Conservation Officer Reserve Program exemplifies a strong partnership among CSP, DPS, DFW, CCO network, Municipal Governments, and the Pohnpei State Government, fostering collaboration for managing and conserving Pohnpei’s natural environment. During the signing ceremony for the MOU, Governor Joseph expressed confidence in the program’s potential to enhance resource management for the long-term sustainability of the state’s resources.

The Pohnpei State Attorney General’s Office played a pivotal role in drafting the MOU, which was signed by Governor Joseph, Acting Director Ricky Rodriguez of the Department of Public Safety, and Mr. Eugene Joseph of the Conservation Society of Pohnpei.

As these 18 officers join the ranks of Pohnpei’s conservation efforts, the state looks forward to their contributions to preserving and protecting its invaluable natural resources for present and future generations.

The Pohnpei Conservation Officer Reserve Program was launched to enhance the enforcement of conservation laws and improve resource management in Pohnpei. This collaborative initiative involves the Pohnpei State Government, the Conservation Society of Pohnpei, OneReef, and the Department of Public Safety. Special thanks to Lead Instructor Deputy Chief of Police, Bronson Martin and Instructors Lt. Taylor Andon and Antonio Mallarme Jr.

# Governor Stevenson A. Joseph attends closing day of the Second National FSM Fisheries Summit

## Pohnpei Public Information

August 8, 2024

**KOLONIA, Pohnpei**—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph attended the closing day of the 2nd National FSM Fisheries Summit, which was held to discuss and strategize on the sustainable development and management of the FSM's vital fisheries resources. The summit concluded with a productive group working session and a key presentation on "Approaches to Leveraging the Vessel Day Scheme (VDS) for Onshore Investment/Incentivizing Investment," presented by Dr. Mark Soboil, a consultant for the National Oceanic Resources Management Authority (NORMA).

Governor Joseph was joined by notable officials including the Director of the Department of Resources and Development, Mr. Mark Kostka; Administrator of the Office of Fisheries and Aquaculture (OFA), Mr. Jorg Anson; Senator Tedy Liwy and Pohnpei Port Authority General Manager, Mr. Grilly Jack. Their presence underscored the collaborative effort and commitment to advancing Pohnpei's and the FSM's fisheries sector.

The summit's final day focused on exploring innovative approaches to maximizing the economic benefits of the VDS, a key tool in the management of tuna fisheries in the Pacific. Dr.



Soboil's presentation provided valuable insights into how the VDS can be leveraged to attract onshore investments and incentivize economic growth within the fisheries sector.

Governor Joseph expressed his appreciation for the summit's efforts

and emphasized the importance of continued collaboration among state and national stakeholders. The 2nd National FSM Fisheries Summit has set the stage for future initiatives and policies aimed at enhancing the management and economic potential of FSM's fisheries resources.

# Australian Ambassador greets UNFPA representative

## Australian Embassy to the FSM

August 7, 2024

Pohnpei—Ambassador Grant-Curnow met with Dr. Mateen Shaheen from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and his team and discussed the new Transformative Agenda Programme for Women, Adolescents and Youth Phase II which includes support to the FSM.

The Transformative Agenda Phase II is committed to driving progress, inclusivity, and sustained change for the women, young people and other marginalized groups UNFPA serves. Through a steadfast commitment to improving sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), with a special emphasis on family planning, this programme builds on the successes of Phase I (2018-2023).

For more information visit [UNFPA LINK](#)



# ...Olympics

*continued from front page*

Olympic Games Village.” “And to have them do so with a season and personal bests was even more impressive!” “Our FSM leaders and islanders should be proud of the results of FSM Olympic athletes Tasi Limtiaco and Kestra Kihleng in Swimming and Scott Fiti in Athletics... best times and results ever!”

This is the 7th Olympic Games that FSM has participated in which FSM

NOC Secretary General and Oceania National Olympic Committees (ONOC) Executive Board Member, Jim Tobin, soon to retire, has coordinated and he stated it was a resounding success. “We had a long Covid lockdown and a delay of the Micronesia Games”. He concluded – “time to find new FSM youth to try to qualify and compete in the next Olympic Games - Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games”.

“From our initial training camp in Divonne-les-Baine, France (a small town on the French and Swiss border west of Paris), our athletes and coaches were unbelievable representatives of

our country, our NOC and their national sport federations,” said Jake Scaliem, Team FSM Manager. “And none of this would have been possible without the contributions we received back in the FSM islands”. The pre-games training camp for 2 weeks prior to the start of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

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.

For updates follow us also in: FB: FSM Olympic Committee Website: [www.fsmoc.fm](http://www.fsmoc.fm)



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# FSM Trade Facilitation Committee endorses comprehensive Implementation Plan

*FSM Information Services*

*August 7, 2024*

**KOLONIA, Pohnpei**—The 11th National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) meeting was held on August 7, 2024, at Cliff Rainbow Hotel in Kolonia, Pohnpei. The Meeting was presided over by the Honorable Aren B. Palik, Vice-President and Chair of the NTFC, and attended by the four Chairmen of each of the respective State Trade Facilitation Committees (STFCs) of Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk, and Yap. Other participants include senators, cabinet members, and technical staff from both National and State governments.

The objective of the meeting was to endorse the 2024 FSM Trade Policy Implementation Plan.

In June 2023, the FSM Department of Resources and Development undertook a review of the 2011 FSM Trade Policy and presented its finds and recommendations to the 10th NTFC Meeting held January 2024. Following the endorsement recommendations, the department was tasked to develop the Implementation Plan. A series of States and National consultations were conducted over the following three months, between March and May 2024, to discuss the recommendations from the Review, identify and prioritize actions to be implemented over a period of 10 years with a three-year review phase. The Implementation Plan was completed in June 2024 with monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to track progress.

In the development of the Implementation Plan, outcomes and inputs from the consultations were consolidated, mapped, rationalized and sequenced, in line with the FSM Strategic Development Plan (SDP), State Development Plans and the FSM Infrastructure Development Plan, as well as other relevant sectoral plans.

In his remarks, T.H. Vice President Aren B. Palik acknowledged that while there has been exceptional progress made in service sectors essential for enhancing FSM's business competitiveness, there is still more to do in other sectors to create an enabling environment for private sector development to address the recurrent trade deficit and emerging



issues likely to impact FSM's trade and economic performance.

The Meeting noted the implementation arrangement and the importance of National-State coordination and capacity building to ensure sustainability. The Meeting further noted recommendations on the strategy to mobilize resources.

The Meeting concluded with a signing ceremony signifying the endorsement of the 2024 Trade Policy Implementation Plan which will be presented at the 2024 State and National Leadership Conference (SNLC) taking place next week.

# FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs Advances Vaccine Management Efforts

FSM DHSA

July 22, 2024

**Pohnpei** - Effective Vaccine Management (EVM) is crucial for the success of any immunization program. Proper storage and transportation of vaccines at recommended temperatures are critical for maintaining their potency and effectiveness, ultimately ensuring protection of the health of communities.

The FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs (DoHSA) is advancing its immunization programs with the Effective Vaccine Management (EVM) Assessment Assessor Workshop at Pohnpei State Hospital. The five-day workshop, facilitated by UNICEF and national EPI program focal points, aims to strengthen vaccine management systems across the region. It gathered immunization focal points from the four FSM state public health departments, representatives from the Palau EPI unit, and EPI specialists from the World Health Organization (WHO) in the FSM.

Chief of Public Health Dr Eliaser Johnson, speaking on behalf of Director Penias of Pohnpei State

Health Department, highlighted the importance of strong coordination between state and national teams in his welcoming remarks. "Together, we can make a significant impact on public health and move closer to a world where preventable diseases are a thing of the past," Dr Johnson stressed.

In his opening remarks, Acting Secretary of FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs Mr. Moses Pretrick underscored the workshop's importance in equipping state EPI focal points with the latest EVM tools and methodologies. "Building local capacity for effective vaccine management assessments allows FSM to continually improve practices and

enhance immunization programs," Mr Pretrick stated.

UNICEF FSM Chief of Field Office, Mr. Cromwell Bacareza also emphasized the importance of strong partnerships for a successful EVM assessment in his introductory remarks. "Partnering with national and local health authorities is key to implementing the EVM assessment and improvement plans. Ongoing monitoring will sustain these improvements and tackle new vaccine management challenges," Mr. Bacareza said.

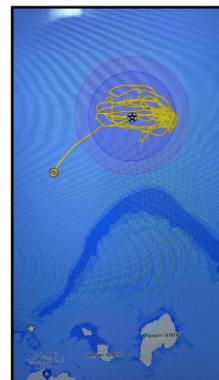
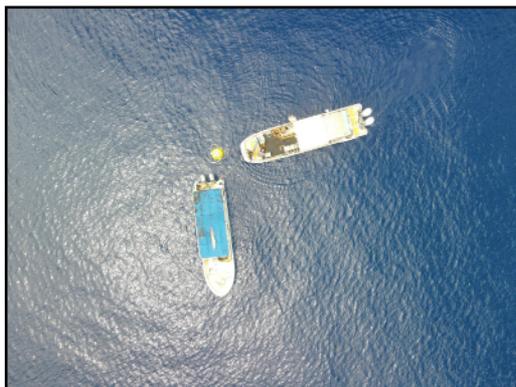
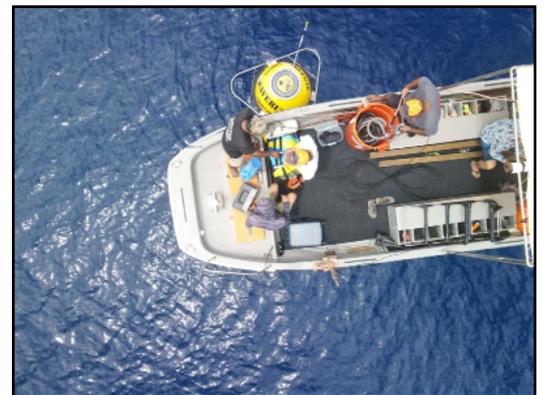
The workshop marks the first step in a comprehensive EVM assessment. Over the next few weeks, trained

assessors will use EVM tool version 2.1 to evaluate nine critical areas of immunization supply chain system. UNICEF will then assist in analyzing the data, compiling the report, and developing the Effective Vaccine Management Country Improvement Plan (EVM cIP).

The FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs thanks Government of Japan and UNICEF for its ongoing support and all participants for their active engagement in the effective vaccine management assessment. This collaboration is vital for advancing immunization efforts and improving public health outcomes.



# PacIOOS resets wave buoy in Pohnpei off the north shore



# Pohnpei State Attorney General's Office receives generous computer donation from Supreme Court of Guam



## Pohnpei Public Information

August 2, 2024

**KOLONIA, Pohnpei**—The Office of the Attorney General of Pohnpei State is pleased to announce the receipt of a generous donation of over 60 computers from the Supreme Court of Guam. This significant contribution will greatly enhance the technological capabilities

of the Attorney General's Office and other offices within the Pohnpei State Government.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to the Honorable Chief Justice Philip Carbullido Torres of the Supreme Court of Guam for this outstanding donation. This act of generosity exemplifies the strong bond and

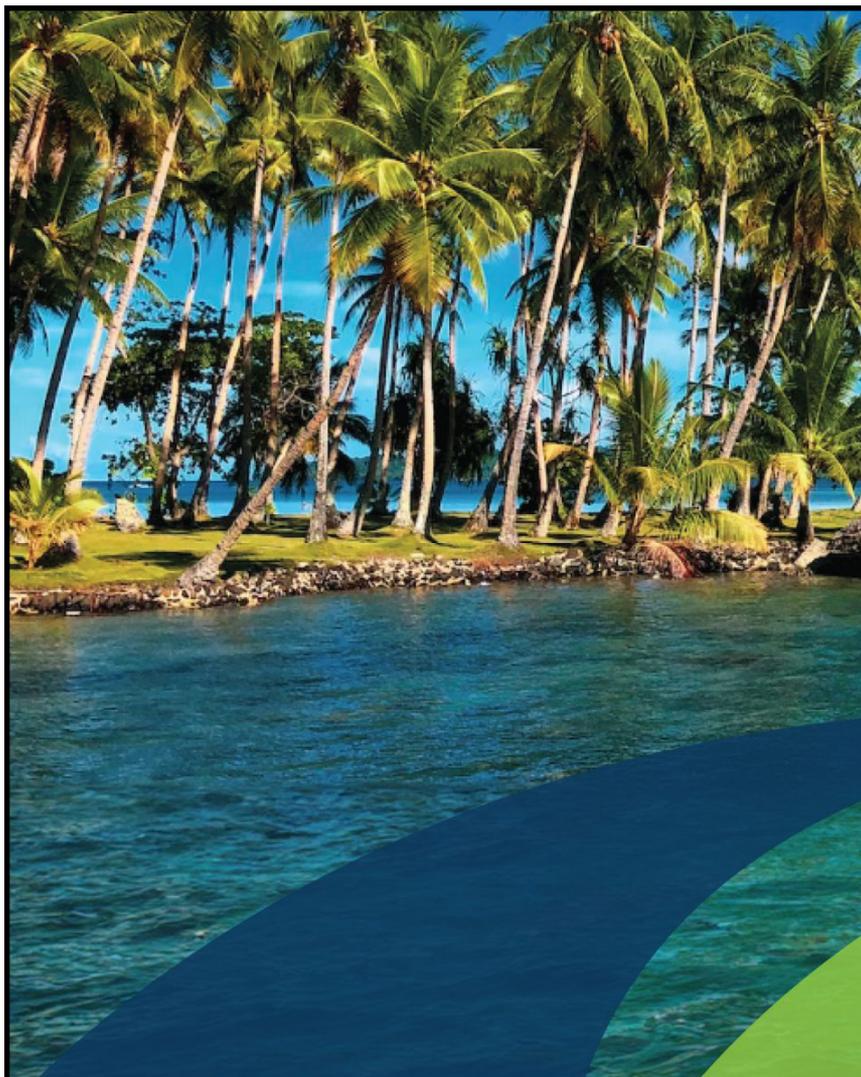
spirit of collaboration between our jurisdictions, and we are immensely grateful for the positive impact it will have on our operations.

Additionally, we would like to express our sincere thanks to Mr. Walden Weilbacher for his initiative and efforts in coordinating the shipment of these computers through the Ayuda Foundation. Mr. Weilbacher's dedication has been instrumental in ensuring the successful delivery of this valuable equipment to our office.

We also extend our gratitude to the FSM Department of Finance and Administration for granting a tax exemption on the import duties of the donated computers. This exemption has been crucial in facilitating the seamless integration of these computers into our operations, allowing us to put them to immediate use in serving the people of Pohnpei.

The donated computers will be utilized by the Attorney

General's Office and distributed to other offices within the Pohnpei State Government, enhancing our collective ability to serve the community effectively. This donation, coordinated by Mr. Weilbacher and supported by the FSM Department of Finance and Administration, represents a significant step forward in our mission to improve efficiency and service delivery across the state government.



**We are committed to improving the lives of the people of Micronesia by contributing to Micronesia's socio-economic development.**

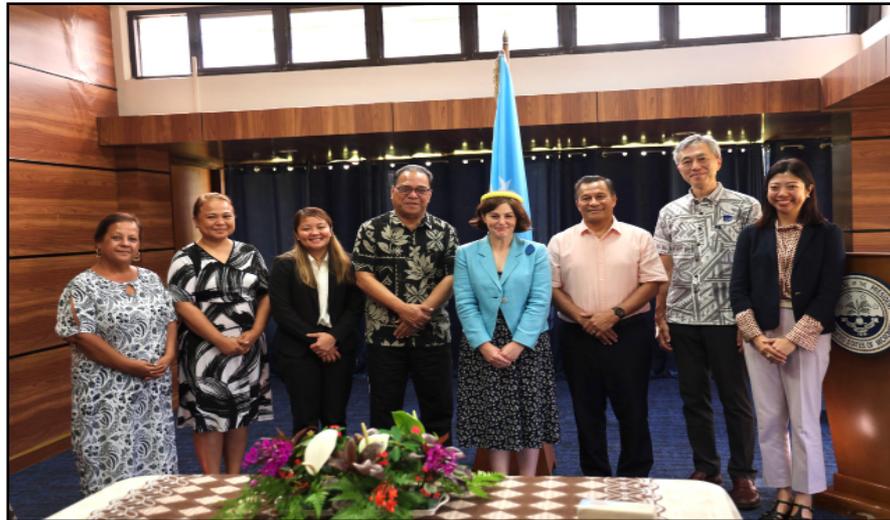


# ADB Executive Director Rachel Thompson pays courtesy call to President Simina & Vice President Palik

FSM Information Services

August 1, 2024

**Palikir, Pohnpei** - On August 1st, 2024, His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and T.H. Vice President Aren B. Palik, welcomed the Executive Director of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Rachel Thompson to the nation's capital, during her courtesy call to Pohnpei. This visit marks a significant moment in the continued partnership between FSM and ADB, emphasizing the mutual commitment to sustainable development and economic resilience. Executive Director Thompson was joined by ADB's Deputy Director General Mr Hideaki Iwasaki, Senior Country Officer to the FSM Mrs. Maybelline Bing, Senior Operations Assistant Mr. Alan Semens, Adviser Ms. Sweety Kalbesang and Adviser Ms. Maya Yoshizake.



President Simina expressed the nation's profound gratitude for ADB's consistent support and substantial contributions to the FSM's development, particularly in critical sectors such as Renewable Energy, Water & Sanitation, Disaster

Resilient Programs, and Sustainable Road Investment. The ADB's strategic focus aligns with the FSM's priorities, aiming to foster sustainable growth and improve the quality of life for our citizens.

"ADB's investment of \$218 million to date, including our current portfolio of \$71.3 million in projects and technical assistance grants, has been instrumental in advancing our national development agenda," stated President Simina. "ADB's support in sectors like renewable energy and water & sanitation not only enhances our infrastructure but

also builds resilience against natural disasters, which is crucial for our island nation, particularly in the face of climate change."

During the meeting, President Simina shared updates on the FSM's latest initiatives and priorities, emphasizing the need for continued collaboration with ADB to address emerging challenges and opportunities. He highlighted the importance of sustainable development, climate resilience, and infrastructure improvement, areas where ADB's expertise and financial assistance can make a significant impact.

Another key topic of discussion was ADB's graduation policy for the FSM, which is currently under review. Presently, the FSM benefits from a grant-only status. However, considering recent economic assessments and with the economic provisions under Compact III now in effect, ADB is evaluating a transition that may include the option of providing loans alongside grants. President Simina provided his insights on this potential policy shift, underscoring the need for a tailored approach that considers the FSM's unique economic and developmental context.

President Simina also expressed his hope that Executive Director Thompson had productive meetings in Kosrae and wished her successful and insightful visits with Pohnpei and Yap state governments.

The meeting concluded with a reaffirmation of the strong partnership between the FSM and ADB, with both parties committed to continuing their collaborative efforts through its presence in the FSM, to achieve both's shared goals towards sustainable development and enhancing the well-being of the FSM population.

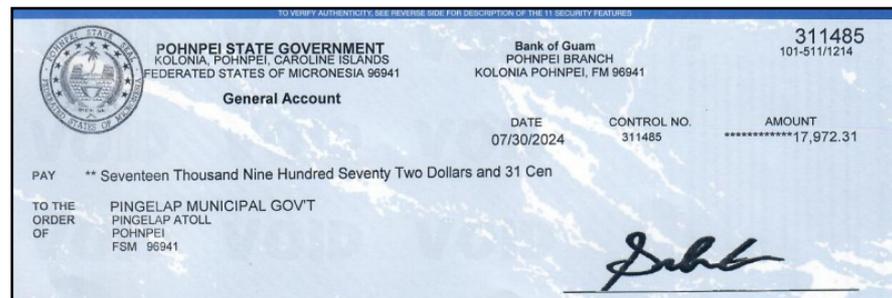
# Governor Joseph announces disbursement of Disaster Relief Funds to Outer Island Municipal Governments

Pohnpei Public Information

July 31, 2024

**KOLONIA, Pohnpei**—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph is pleased to announce that disaster relief funds have been disbursed to the Outer Island Municipal Governments. These funds, provided by the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) National Government through a Presidential Decree and facilitated by the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management (DECEM), are intended to support recovery efforts in the wake of recent drought and seawater inundation.

Following initial damage assessments conducted in the early months of the Joseph/Ioanis Administration, the Governor's Office submitted a request for assistance to the President of the Federated States of Micronesia. The FSM National Government responded



promptly, disbursing the necessary funds to the affected Outer Island Municipal Governments based on the damage assessments.

The allocated funds have been distributed to the respective Municipal Governments to facilitate the recovery of the affected Outer Islands. Each municipal government is required to ensure that all expenditures are properly documented to demonstrate the effective use of these funds. This accountability measure is essential to ensure the aid is used efficiently and

reaches those most in need.

At a recent ceremony held at the Governor's Office, representatives from the Outer Island Municipal Governments received the checks. Each check was accompanied by a letter from the Director of the Treasury and Administration, outlining the specific use and documentation requirements for the relief funds. Images of the representatives receiving the checks, copies of the checks, and the letters were shared to emphasize transparency in the disbursement process.

Governor Joseph thanked the municipal representatives for their dedication and urged them to ensure that the funds are used properly for the benefit of their communities. He also extended thanks to the solidarity and swift action of our National Government, and heartfelt thanks to President Simina, Secretary Yatilman of DECEM, Secretary Rose Nakanaga of the FSM Department of Finance and Administration, and the Disaster Coordinating Officer of Pohnpei State, Ainstain Joseph, for their crucial assistance and unwavering support.

The Pohnpei State Government remains committed to working closely with the National Government and all relevant agencies to ensure that recovery efforts are efficient, transparent, and beneficial to all affected communities.

# Japanese physicians and healthcare specialists visit Pohnpei for Fetal Monitoring Training

## Pohnpei Public Information

July 31, 2024

**KOLONIA, Pohnpei**—The Governor of Pohnpei, Stevenson A. Joseph, welcomed a delegation of Japanese physicians and healthcare specialists who are in Pohnpei to train local medical staff on the use of the innovative iCTG fetal monitoring devices. These compact, wireless devices are designed to measure fetal heart rates and uterine contractions, with data accessible on tablets, smartphones, and PCs.

The Acting Chief of the Public Health Division, Pertina Albert, escorted the group and facilitated their meeting with Governor Joseph. During the meeting, Mrs. Albert shared details of the ongoing project, which has been in progress for approximately two years. The initiative aims to enhance prenatal care in Pohnpei and will culminate in the donation of the iCTG devices to the local healthcare facilities.



gratitude to the visiting physicians and specialists for their dedication and collaboration with Pohnpei State Public Health. He highlighted the critical need for such advanced medical devices and committed the full support of his office to ensure the success of this valuable project. The iCTG fetal monitoring devices will significantly improve maternal and fetal health outcomes in Pohnpei, and Governor Joseph committed his office to assisting in every way possible to maximize the benefits of this project.

Governor Joseph expressed his

The visit marks a significant milestone in strengthening the healthcare infrastructure of Pohnpei, with the advanced training and technology paving the way for improved prenatal care services.

Advertisement for Pacifica TV. The ad features a blue background with several TV show posters: 'The Loud House: The Movie', 'Special Ops: Lioness', 'The Timeless Moment', 'Tagata Pasifika', 'Anderson Cooper 360', and 'This is Why We Pile Up'. Logos for Nickelodeon, Paramount Network, Warner Bros. TV, Pasifika TV, CNN, and ESPN are displayed. A starburst graphic says 'AND MANY MORE!'. The text reads: 'FSMTC's PACIFICA TV is the home of LIVE TV for sports, news, learning, and entertainment. Sign up now and get your first month FREE OF CHARGE!'. The Pacifica TV logo is at the bottom, with the website [www.fsmtc.fm/tv](http://www.fsmtc.fm/tv).

# Pohnpei DHSS sets up mechanism for “customer” feedback on hospital services

*Pohnpei Public Information*

August 8, 2024

*Pohnpei* — Pohnpei’s Department of Health and Social Services has announced a new campaign to enable Pohnpei State Hospital visitors to critique their experience at the hospital.

To ensure transparency and satisfaction, to provide quality patient care and great customer service, and in an attempt to keep up with modern technology, the Department of Health & Social Services proudly presents a new QR code that will be posted on the walls throughout the hospital for you to rate your experience with us. We value your honesty, needs, and opinions. So please find the time to take out those smartphones, scan these codes and let us know how we can improve our services,” the DHSS wrote on their Facebook page.



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FSM Telecommunications has announced the recent promotion of Mr. John Minoru Mori, VP of Chuuk Branch, to the position of Executive Vice President and Chief Operation Officer. Due to ever increasing changes and the competitive environment in the telecom industry, the FSMTC Board of Directors have decided that it is about time to fill the position, which has been vacant for over 7 years, to help with the daily operational matters and to help the CEO with current and upcoming projects.

“Mino needs no introduction as he has been a trusted hard working team member that has easily earned the respect and admirations from all of FSMTC,” says CEO Fredy Perman. “As Mino begins his journey to be stationed at HQ, let us all give him the warm welcome that he deserves and also provide him the usual full cooperation he needs.”

FSMTC congratulates Executive Vice President/COO John Minoru Mori!

# Pohnpei Attorney General presents remarks at Department of Education General Assembly

## Pohnpei Public Information

August 2, 2024

**KOLONIA, Pohnpei**—The Pohnpei State Department of Education’s General Assembly for School Year 2024-2025 was held today at the Kolonia-China Friendship Gymnasium. The General Assembly officially starts the new school year for public schools in Pohnpei. Representing Governor Joseph who is on a state visit to the Southern Islands of Kapingamarangi, Nukuoro, and Sapwuaifik, was the State Attorney General, Belsipa Mikel-Isom.



Other dignitaries attending the event included Senator Mitaro Simina, representing Speaker Marvin T. Yamaguchi, Senator Tandy Liwy, FSM NDOE Assistant Secretary Arthur Albert, Chairperson of the Board of Education, Mrs. Alice Ehmes and Director of the Department of Education, Mr. Stanley Etse. Principals, teachers, and Education staff also attended the Assembly. Pehleng Elementary School entertained the General Assembly.



Delivering special remarks on behalf of Governor Joseph, was State Attorney General Belsip Mikel-Isom. In her speech, she called the work done by education staff an investment for the future. “You have a sacred duty to nurture and guide these young minds. Your role is vital and profound”. She urged the teachers to continue their dedication and in keeping with this

year’s theme: “Promoting Strong Collaboration to Foster Quality Educational Endeavors for All”, called for the spirit of collaboration in the new school year and to move forward with “renewed energy and determination to make this school year a success.”

The chief of primary school, Mr.

Peter Ramirez, delivered general information/statistics from the previous school year, and closing remarks were made by the Director of the Department of Education, Mr. Stanley Etse. The General Assembly for the Department of Education marks a significant step forward in the ongoing efforts to enhance the educational landscape

of Pohnpei. The Attorney General’s participation and powerful message on behalf of Governor Stevenson A. Joseph underscores the government’s unwavering support for education and its critical role in the state’s development.

## ...WASH

*continued from front page*

Foreign Affairs Lorin Robert, and the FSM Committee on Foreign Affairs to discuss shared priorities and exchange perspectives on regional issues. “This focus is underpinned by a commitment to longer-term economic development for the benefit of current and future generations,” Mr. Peters said in an official press release of the New Zealand government.

Though all the other engagements took place during the visit, The Kaselehlie Press was only invited to the opening ceremony for the MFAT-funded and UNICEF-implemented

project, “Investing in Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) for the Future of the North Pacific,” which took place at 2:00 this afternoon at Nett Elementary School.

A UNICEF representative said that the initiative is dedicated to enhancing early childhood development and ensuring that children in FSM, RMI, and Palau receive the best possible start in life.

“The project adopts a comprehensive approach, addressing health, nutrition, education, social protection, and water and environmental sanitation for children from conception to eight years old. Our aim is to create an environment where all young children can thrive,



leading to improved life outcomes and positive intergenerational benefits,” the spokesperson said.

Key outcomes of the program include improved children’s diets and access to nutritious, local food; enhanced quality of caregiver and parental support for child development; and better access to healthy and hygienic environments for children.

The New Zealand press release states that New Zealand will invest NZ\$4.4 million to support UNICEF-led projects for improving early childhood development outcomes across the North Pacific.

*Click here for continuation*

# President Simina continues engagement with Pingelap

FSM Information Services

August 7, 2024

**PALIKIR, Pohnpei**—His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), had a productive meeting with the legislative branch from the outer island of Pingelap, led by T.H. Speaker Kinsiro Boaz. This meeting is part of the Simina-Palik administration’s continued commitment to engage with and address the unique needs of the FSM’s outer island communities. Joining President Simina were the T.H. Vice President Aren B. Palik and senior staff.



In October last year, President Simina paid a state visit to Pingelap as part of his nationwide outreach efforts. During this visit, he had the opportunity to hear firsthand the challenges faced by the residents of Pingelap and agree on actions to take moving forward.



During the meeting, key topics of discussion included food security projects and pressing transportation issues. The President expressed his dedication to improving transportation connectivity for outer islands, which is vital for economic development and access to essential services. He

conveyed that conditions should soon improve with the FSM’s vessel *Caroline Voyager* recently completing its dry docking in Japan and now on its way back to the FSM.

“This administration is committed to working closely with outer island communities to bridge the gap and build resilience to climate change,”

stated President Simina. “Improving transportation connectivity is not just a critical step in this process, but also a means to strengthen unity across our islands.”

The meeting concluded with thoughtful gifts presented from Pingelap and



a renewed commitment to the collaborative efforts that were initiated during the state visit last October.

# Asian Development Bank Executive Director Rachel Thompson visits Governor Stevenson A. Joseph

Pohnpei Public Information

July 31, 2024

**KOLONIA, Pohnpei**—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph welcomed Rachel Thompson, the Executive Director on the Board of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), representing multiple countries including the Federated States of Micronesia, during her official visit to Pohnpei on July 31, 2024. Ms. Thompson was accompanied by her advisors Sweetie Kalbesang and Maya Yoshizaka, ADB Senior Country Officer Maybelline Andon-Bing, and Operations Assistant Alan Semens.



Governor Joseph expressed his gratitude to Ms. Thompson and the ADB for establishing their office in Pohnpei, underscoring the importance of ADB’s presence in the state. The Governor emphasized the positive impact ADB’s initiatives have had on the community and the vital role they play in supporting Pohnpei’s development goals.

During their meeting, Ms. Thompson inquired about the Governor’s priorities for Pohnpei. Governor Joseph outlined his

administration’s focus on Food Security, Water Security, Energy Security, and the prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). He highlighted that these priorities are intricately linked with the need for improved infrastructure and advanced technology. Governor Joseph also stressed the importance of foreign aid aligning with Pohnpei’s Strategic Development Plan, reiterating that the state would only accept aid that supports its long-term development objectives.

“We are committed to ensuring that all foreign assistance aligns with our strategic goals,” Governor Joseph stated. Ms. Thompson acknowledged the Governor’s priorities and expressed ADB’s continued commitment to supporting Pohnpei and the broader Federated States of Micronesia. She reiterated ADB’s dedication to working collaboratively with local governments to achieve shared development goals.

The meeting concluded with both parties reaffirming their commitment to fostering a strong partnership aimed at enhancing the quality of life for the people of Pohnpei through sustainable and strategic development initiatives.

# Preserving knowledge of U cultural heritage by creating a booklet titled U Historical Sites and Stories

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

August 1, 2024

**U, Pohnpei** - The story of how the U Municipality was created is one of several traditional knowledge stories highlighted in the first U Cultural Heritage Booklet launched earlier this month, in Pohnpei.

This International Day for Indigenous Persons - held on 9 August - it is important to continue highlighting the traditional knowledge, voices, and wisdom of indigenous peoples, and preserving stories like this one.

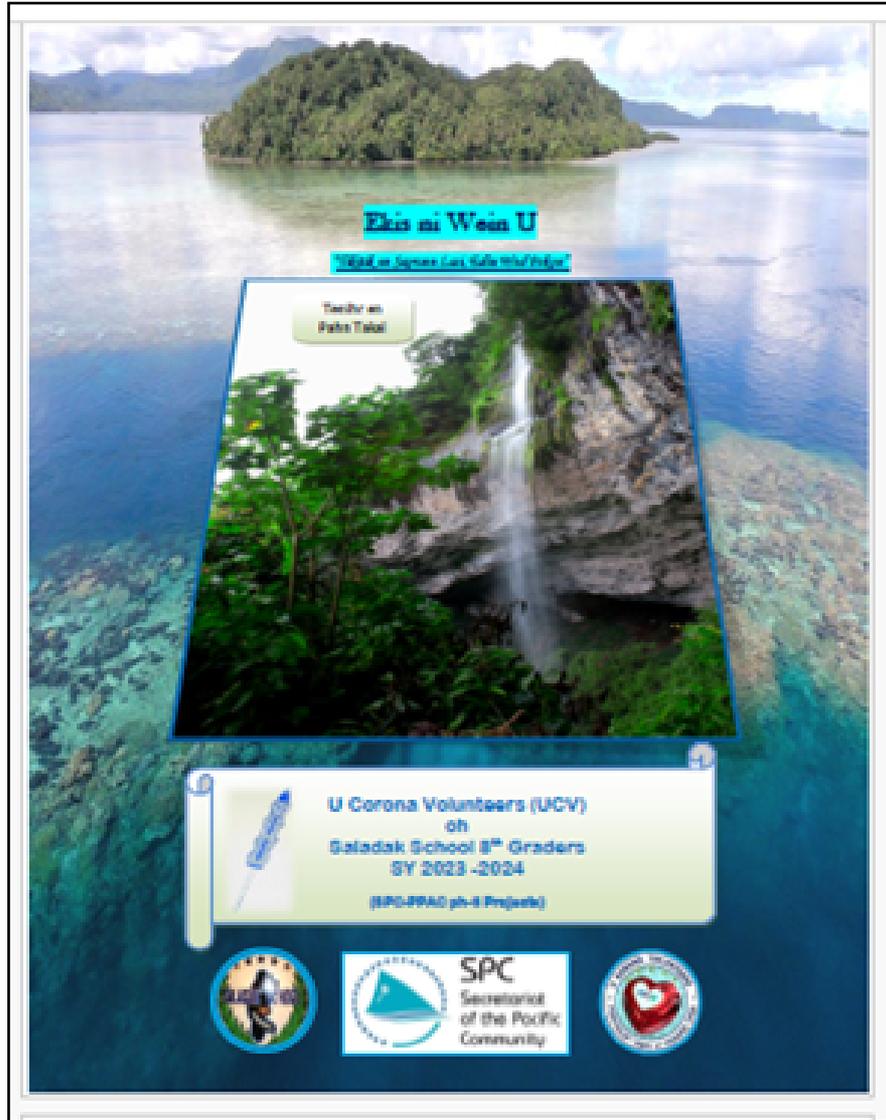
### Undocumented stories

In Pohnpei, like in many other places in the Pacific, much of the history is oral history which is passed through 'word of mouth', often found in chants, songs, folklores, legends, and stories. Over time, it is found that knowledge of our cultural heritage is diminishing, and parts of history are lost because of the lack of documentation. Furthermore, in Pohnpei culture it is taboo to share stories with someone who is not a member of the same clan or community, hence past attempts to document our cultural sites and stories by government workers were futile

With support from SPC's Pacific People Advancing Change programme, community-based organisation called the U Corona Volunteers led a project to help preserve knowledge of U cultural heritage by identifying the important cultural sites in U Municipality, one of the local governments of Pohnpei State, and capturing the stories connected with these sites.



U Corona Volunteers



### Engaging local school students

Recognising the importance of preserving the knowledge of U cultural heritage amongst youths and future generations, U Corona Volunteers engaged 33 Saladak Elementary School grade 8 students, teachers, and the principal, to develop a first cultural heritage booklet encompassing stories from over 20 historical sites in U.

The engagement process included collaborating with the students and their parents for parental consent, and organising meetings that provided the students the opportunities to plan the field visits to the cultural sites. Respecting cultural protocols, the students

went to the villages and sought permissions from the respective traditional leaders. They then returned to the classroom to share the cultural sites they identified, and the teachers compiled the list of the cultural sites and shared it with UCV. UCV selected the important ones and booked the dates for the visits.

Teams were then formed accordingly to students' familiarity with specific site locations, with students allocated to the areas they came from. Field missions were carried out over a weekend with students divided into eight groups, led by teachers and

UCV members. The task was for the students to talk to villagers and leaders in their respective communities to acquire the full stories to these important sites. Since the sites were already pre-identified, the visits focused on physical identification, followed by storytelling and documentation.

When conducting the site visits it became evident that there were no written materials available, and that elders and community members were the ones familiar with these sites and backgrounds.

The process of actively documenting the stories enabled the young people involved to further increase their awareness about the existing cultural sites.

Principal Raymond Joseph said: "This is a first ever project of this nature at our school and I am very excited to be a part of it because I know that it creates the potential to impact the school curriculum in our educational system, i.e., creating a course under customs and traditions. In the existing curriculum, imported from abroad, we are learning about historical sites from the western worlds, while little emphasis is put on ours and it leads to the loss of many of our customs and traditions."

Student, Ashley Tulunsure, commented that "After our site visits, I now understand why the little water-well on our land never dries up. During droughts it provides water to all residents of our village" ... "I am very happy that the stories we wrote will be



Saladak Elementary School Principal Raymond Joseph receives the Booklet at the Launch ceremony on 12 July

## ...U continued

passed on to the younger generations.”

Iverson Abraham, another student said: “I love the fact that I now know where my ancestors came from and learning about the traditional sites in our village makes me want to care for these sites to preserve their importance.”

### The booklet

The cultural booklet was launched on 12 July. During the event, copies of the booklet were handed over to Saladak Elementary school to be utilised as an educational resource. Copies of the booklet were also provided to Saladak Elementary School, the Department of Education, the Municipal Government, and traditional leaders.

The booklet consists of traditional knowledge stories of 20 important



*Team Adoroi with Moniz Sehna, village guide, UCV Advisor Mason Albert, and students*

cultural sites.

Mason Albert, Adviser for U Corona Volunteers commented: “We must preserve our cultural identity because it is what makes us unique, and to understand our cultural identity, we must know our cultural heritage. This project is about learning and protecting who we are”.

This important work contributes directly to the implementation of the Pacific Regional Culture Strategy (PRCS) 2022 -2032, priority area



*UCV, Community Leaders, Teachers and Students*

*“The Municipality of U, Pohnpei State, in the Federated States of Micronesia, was created after the defeat of the Soudelour Dynasty in Madolenihmw Municipality, an oppressive era of Pohnpei history, by a foreigner called Isokelekel who came on a canoe with 333 warriors from Katau Peidak. After the defeat, Isokelekel took control of Pohnpei and decentralized the Kingdom. He had a son named Nahnkepwei, member of the Lasialap Clan through his mother, who became dissatisfied with his family in Madolenihmw and left on a canoe to find a new home on the east side of the island. He founded a new municipality, and, with the blessing of his ruling family, they named it U. One can find his canoe and sail, where he landed, in the form of two rocks still standing there to this day. To afford him his proper royal status, they bestowed on him the title of Iso Sahngoro. Iso in the traditional system is a princely title where only the sons of the Paramount Chiefs (Kings) can inherit it by custom. Sahngoro is one of the Godly figures Pohnpeians worship in the past. The decentralisation led to the creation of the Nahmwarki system, which still exists. Today, the title remains with the ruling clan in U and some of our own UCV members come from that clan. By hierarchy, the Municipality of U ranks second in status, after Madolenihmw Municipality, where the Original Rulers resided and and continue to reside into this day.”*



*Team Alohapw with teacher Saper Raymond, Marvin Andon of UCV and student*

two, which calls on Pacific Island Governments to safeguard Pacific cultural heritage.

### What next?

U Corona Volunteers hopes to extend this initiative, and work with the 7th and 8th Graders of Awak Elementary School, the other elementary school in U Municipality, in order to gather the remaining stories from U Municipality. The idea would be to consolidate both outputs (developed by both groups) into one booklet for the entire Municipality, which will require the availability of resources in the future.

“We hope that our work will result in the Pohnpei State Department of Education expanding similar project to the other Municipalities. Someday, we would like to see the project output inserted into the school curriculum at the primary school level” Mason



*Village Chiefs, Principal and UCV members*

explains.

NGO President, Kenely Marquez, commented: “If successful, our entire municipality will have written documentation of all our important cultural sites and the knowledge of our cultural heritage will be passed on to the next generation”.

PPAC aims to build advocacy capacity among Pacific Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) engaged with human rights issues and advance those issues by supporting specific campaigns. PPAC has been supporting campaigns on disability inclusion since 2020.

The programme is currently funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Promoting Just, Engaged, Civic-minded and Transparent (PROJECT) Governance, and the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) through the Pacific Women Lead at SPC programme.

# Church of Jesus Christ builds playground for children with special needs

Kosrae Special Parent Network expresses appreciation

*Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints*

*August 10, 2024*

**Kosrae** - When special education students arrive for the start of school this year on Kosrae, a new playground will be waiting for them.

Donated by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as part of its humanitarian program, the new specialized playground toys will greatly increase the ability of teachers to meet the needs of Kosrae's special needs students, particularly those with severe disabilities.

The playground toys are designed specifically for students with special needs. Included in the donation are swings, climbing bars, a mini-climbing wall, a slide, a teeter-totter, a rocking horse, a sandbox, and more.

"This will be a great benefit, not just for our students, but for the community and neighborhood," said Isao Mike, President of Kosrae Special Parent Network (KSPN). "After school hours the playground will be open so that families from the community can come and enjoy it."

Isao also stated that plans are also in place to provide lighting, a perimeter fence, and appropriate ground covering to assure cleanliness and safety. An eventual overhead shade cover for the playground is also in the planning stages. "I would possibly like to add a small water slide," he added.

Fencing for the playground has already been delivered and is scheduled to be installed by volunteers from the United States Army.

"There will be an opening ceremony to celebrate when everything is in place," said Isao.

Likiaksa Elesha, Coordinator of Special Education in Kosrae, described the equipment's value in meeting the needs of the school's severely multi-disabled group (SMD) in the least restrictive environment:

Of the school district's 127 enrolled special education students, 19 are



classified as SMD. Most are also autistic. Special education students receiving services from the Kosrae DOE range from 3 to 21 years of age. Daily opportunities for play and physical activity are paramount in providing these students with a learning environment in which they can learn and thrive, but resources such as appropriate playground equipment

are essential. The donated equipment is designed specifically for the needs and limitations of SMD students. "Previously, due to limited resources the SMD children were only pulled in for specialized instruction once a week," Elesha explained. "The new playground equipment helps allow us to pull them in on a daily basis so that we can better meet their developmental

needs." Bill Davis, Welfare and Self-reliance Manager for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who directs the church's humanitarian efforts in Micronesia, gave his assurances that the Church will continue its efforts to serve those in need in the Kosrae community.



# CALL FOR SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

The University of the South Pacific Pacific-European Union Marine Partnership Scholarship

## MICRO-QUALIFICATION IN MAINTAINING SEAFOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY

Applications are invited for **Pohnpei based, FSM nationals** from the fisheries sector, such as deckhands, fishers, market vendors, seafood market intermediaries, small-scale processors, aquaculture farmers, seafood retailers or suppliers to undertake the above course at the University of the South Pacific (USP), Pacific TAFE.

The USP Pacific European Union Marine Partnership (PEUMP) project providing scholarships to 20 eligible candidates. This course will be offered face-to-face from **7-11 October, 2024**, in Pohnpei, FSM

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This micro-qualification focuses on seafood safety and quality, outlining the causes and reduction methods of seafood spoilage; quality control factors; critical control points of hazards and high-risk factors of contamination and spoilage; practicing personal, equipment and workplace hygiene; maintaining cold chain; value adding; disposal and commercial merits of waste products; and best practice guidelines of seafood safety and quality standards. The programme is divided into 3 modules delivered face-to-face over 5 days:

1. Outline causes of seafood spoilage and quality control factors
2. Demonstrate basic post-harvest seafood handling skills.
3. Apply inspection, techniques and guidelines to maintain seafood quality.

### CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

A holder of this micro-qualification will be equipped with key knowledge and skills that are required to ensure that safety and quality of seafood is maintained from 'hook to plate'.

### ELIGIBILITY/ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must have:

1. Satisfactorily completed Year 12 level of education or equivalent.
2. A good command of English reading and writing skills, including basic numeracy skills.
3. Be involved in seafood handling and/or processing activities.
4. Any special case where the above requirements are not met can be approved by the Director or nominee on a case by case basis.

### WORKSHOP DATE:

**7-11 October 2024**

### WHAT IS COVERED:

Tuition fees and transportation arrangements to and from training venue.

Training sessions include meals.

**DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS: 25 August 2024**

### HOW TO APPLY

[CLICK HERE](#)

TO ACCESS THE  
ADMISSION FORM

Incomplete applications will not be accepted.  
Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted.

# Governor Joseph and First Lady visit Pohnpei State Hospital

## Pohnpei Public Information

July 30, 2024

**NETT, Pohnpei**—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph and First Lady Dr. Aina Garstang visited the Pohnpei State Hospital today, where they were warmly received by Director Stuard Penias and the hospital’s leadership team. During their visit, Governor Joseph was given a comprehensive tour of the hospital facilities, highlighting key patient care and technology areas. The Governor shared his insights on the critical use of ventilators and the importance of remote patient monitoring, underscoring the need for advanced medical equipment and innovative healthcare solutions.

Governor Joseph’s tour included a detailed overview of the hospital’s current capabilities and the challenges faced by the healthcare staff. He expressed his appreciation for the dedicated work being done and stressed the significance of teamwork and communication within the hospital. “You have a big job,” Governor Joseph told Director Penias and the Division Chiefs, emphasizing the importance of their collective efforts and the effective use of the chain of command.

Following the tour, Governor Joseph addressed the hospital leadership, encouraging them to continue their hard work and to always strive for excellence. He empowered each staff member to make judgment calls within their capacity and to seek guidance from Director Penias when necessary. Governor Joseph highlighted the



importance of continuous improvement and the need to address areas requiring enhancement.

The visit concluded with Governor Joseph thanking the hospital team for their unwavering dedication and commitment to providing quality healthcare to the people of Pohnpei. He reiterated his support for the hospital’s initiatives and assured them of the government’s commitment to improving healthcare infrastructure and resources. The visit underscored the Governor’s dedication to enhancing the healthcare system in Pohnpei and his belief in the potential of the hospital staff to achieve great outcomes through collaboration and innovation.

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### BYD ATTO 3 UP

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Email: [trademarks@munroleyslaw.com.fj](mailto:trademarks@munroleyslaw.com.fj)  
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[www.munroleyslaw.com](http://www.munroleyslaw.com)

# Office of Insular Affairs awards \$4.5 million in Maintenance Assistance Program Funds

U.S. Department of the Interior

August 5, 2024

Washington D.C.—The Department of the Interior’s Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs Carmen G. Cantor today announced \$4,537,239 in fiscal year 2024 Maintenance Assistance Program grant funding that will go towards supporting programs and projects benefitting American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) and the freely associated states: the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Republic of Palau.

“These programs will provide a range of opportunities for maintenance and related renovation projects that will protect against adverse weather, strengthen power utilities, and provide important maintenance-related equipment,” said Assistant Secretary Cantor. “This year we received millions more in funding requests than we could support as this program continues to rise in popularity for the differences it is making in the Insular Areas.”

Projects and programs funded through the Maintenance Assistance Program in fiscal year 2024 for the Insular Areas are itemized and briefly described as follows:

## American Samoa - \$780,212

- \$283,326 to Department of Veterans Affairs for perimeter fencing and surveillance cameras to secure the Veterans Memorial Monument;
- \$280,000 to the Office of Search and Rescue to support maintenance training and emergency support staff training under the Emergency Transportation and Maintenance MAP Program; and
- \$216,886 to the Department of Health, Office of Community Health Centers for Building Resilience: Enclosing the Well Baby Clinic Waiting Area at the Tafuna Community Health Center. Funds will be used to renovate the open-air patient waiting room into a fully enclosed area and provide a safe, comfortable space for patients with protection from adverse weather conditions.



## Guam - \$861,606

- \$338,021 to the Guam Community College to train up a skilled workforce in building maintenance and repair under the Maintenance Training Bootcamps: Raising the Career Technical Education Ladder for Building Maintenance Project;
- \$250,000 to the Guam Preservation Trust to replace damaged wooden shutters and mamposteria walls as part of the Historic Jose P. Lujan House - Guam Institute Critical Repair Project;
- \$224,462 to WestCare Pacific Islands, Inc. for repairs to the roof, plumbing, electricity and fresh paint at the youth shelter the Jose P. Lujan House as part of the Repair of Sanctuary Facilities Project; and
- \$49,123 to the University of Guam’s Global Learning & Engagement Office for the Shutter Project, to renovate building #5 with new doors and storm windows to better protect against adverse weather. The building to be renovated houses the Micronesian Area Research Center and the Office of Information Technology/Computer Center.

## Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands - \$824,257

- \$345,295 to the Department of Corrections for the Commercial Kitchen Renovation and Rehabilitation Project to bring the food-service program back in-house with updated equipment and kitchen appliances;
- \$286,771 to the Department of Public Works for a 10-cubic yard dump truck related to road maintenance and transportation of vegetation debris, coral aggregate washout, and garbage collection, as part of the Dump Truck Acquisition For Roadways and Stormwater Maintenance Project; and
- \$192,191 to the Department

of Public Works to purchase a backhoe with rock breaker attachment and compactor to assist with military funeral burials and other road projects for the CNMI Veterans Cemetery Equipment Acquisition Project.

## U.S. Virgin Islands - \$703,000

- \$483,000 to the Bureau of Information Technology for procurement, installation, and integration of advanced battery backup systems within the Government’s Territorial Data Centers and Telecom Sites, as part of the Battery Backup System Upgrade for Government Data Centers and Telecom Sites Project; and
- \$220,000 to the VI Water and Power Authority (WAPA) to purchase mulchers for vegetation management and clearing as part of the Purchase of Mulchers Project.

## Federated States of Micronesia - \$644,386

- \$280,000 to the Yap State Public Service Corporation’s Pacific Lineman Training Program to train 75 professionally certified power linemen for the public power utilities from the CNMI, Guam and Palau, as well as the utilities from Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap in the Federated States of Micronesia;
- \$276,286 to Pacific Mission Aviation to convert a storage facility into an airplane hangar maintenance bay in Yap for the PMA’s MAP to Hope 2024 – Yap Project; and
- \$88,100 to the Madolenihmw Municipal Government in Pohnpei to purchase equipment for solid waste removal to prevent health hazards in Madolenihmw municipality under the Solid Waste Collection Program.

## Republic of the Marshall Islands - \$723,778

- \$312,134 to the Marshall Islands Shipping Corporation to procure essential maintenance tools necessary to maintain intra-atoll transportation services under the MISC Maintenance Equipment Project;
- \$297,109 to the Assumption School on Majuro to renovate a dilapidated 3-classroom building as part of the Assumption School Hacker Hall Classroom Renovation Project; and
- \$114,535 to the Ministry of Cultural and Internal Affairs for renovation and repair of V7AB’s broadcasting building as part of the Majuro V7AB Transmission Building Renovation Project.

While the Republic of Palau did not submit any applications for MAP funding this year, OIA has recently announced \$1,098,699 million in Technical Assistance Program (TAP) funding support to Palau for a Household Listing project, a Street Naming and Addressing project, and for Bureau of Reclamation technical assistance to the Palau Public Utility Corporation for water treatment support. Palau also receives TAP funding support for economic advisory services through the Palau Economic Advisory Group.

MAP funding provided through the Office of Insular Affairs is directed towards maintenance-related needs and training in the Insular Areas. Applications for MAP and TAP grant funding may be submitted for consideration each year in October through grants.gov under CFDA 15.875. More information about these competitive, discretionary grants and other funding may be found at [www.doi.gov/oia](http://www.doi.gov/oia).

# “Navigating Our Island Ocean for Prosperity and Resiliency” Successful Third Micronesia Expo concludes in Chuuk State

*FSM Information Services*

**July 29, 2024**

**WENO, Chuuk**—The 3rd Micronesia Expo 2024 commenced with a spectacular opening ceremony on July 22nd in Weno, Chuuk State, under the theme “Navigating Our Island Ocean for Prosperity and Resiliency.” The event brought together community members, youth, and leaders from the States of Pohnpei, Kosrae, Yap, and the host State of Chuuk for five days of cultural celebration, exhibition, and boosting domestic trade activities.

The opening ceremony featured a vibrant parade with captivating songs performed by delegations from each state, symbolizing the spirit of celebration and unity. T.H. Alexander Narruhn, the Governor of Chuuk State, delivered the welcoming remarks, followed by statements from the Heads of Delegation, highlighting the diversity of cultures and the importance of unity.

T.H. Vice President Aren B. Palik, officially inaugurated the Expo with an inspiring keynote address, emphasizing the significance of preserving our island’s ocean in the face of climate change. He stressed the need for wisdom, knowledge, and unity to navigate these challenges and highlighted the educational value of cultural events for children, youth, and visitors, allowing them to learn about traditions, customs, stories, and Micronesian ways of life.

The week-long celebration brought together local communities, dancers, musicians, craftsmen, performers, weavers, artists, youth, dignitaries, and leaders to showcase and celebrate shared cultural diversity. Musical performances by the Mechitiw Village Youth and songs from the Kosrae and Pohnpei delegations showcased the event’s diverse cultural celebration. The Micronesia Expo underscored our determination to thrive despite environmental threats, recognizing the interconnectedness of our islands and the impact of our actions on the entire Pacific region.

The Expo concluded on Friday, July 26th, at the cultural village at Andersen Field. Attendees enjoyed a wide range of cultural activities, including traditional dances, songs, marine activities, cultural and tattoo demonstrations, local cuisine, storytelling, and much more. Each day was dedicated to showcasing the unique heritage of a specific state. The event successfully concluded with a closing ceremony held at Rachel’s Beach Resort where His Excellency President Wesley W. Simina officially closed the event with closing remarks.

The closing ceremony commenced with remarks by the State Heads of Delegation, who emphasized the importance of cultural exchange and unity. President Simina delivered an inspiring address, stating that the Micronesia Expo emphasizes the importance of nurturing and conserving our traditions and artistic expressions. He noted that cultural heritage is not just a source of pride but also a catalyst for economic growth, supporting local artists, musicians, dancers, and craftsmen, and contributing to the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and creating employment opportunities.

Throughout the event, people from different backgrounds came together, celebrating shared values and embracing differences. It is through this unity that we find the strength to overcome challenges and create a brighter future for ourselves. The Micronesia Expo is a testament to the enduring spirit of the Micronesian people and their unwavering dedication to protect, preserve, and promote their cultural identity and rich heritage.

As the event drew to a close, President Simina urged attendees to carry forward the spirit of unity, prosperity, and growth, emphasizing that investing in the promotion and preservation of our cultural essence opens doors to new opportunities in tourism, various industries, and sustainable development.



# Expo photos from FSM Information Services



## Governor Joseph welcomes Pohnpei Port expansion team

### *Pohnpei Public Information*

July 29, 2024

**Pohnpei**—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph welcomed the Acting General Manager of Pohnpei Port Authority, Mr. Baron Mendiola, along with Mr. Koji Kobune, Team Leader for Port Planning from Ides Consulting Inc., and Mr. Yoshinori Miyake, responsible for Social and Environmental considerations, also from Ides Consulting Inc., in a meeting to discuss the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Port expansion project.

Governor Joseph expressed his full support for the project, which aims to significantly expand the capacity of Pohnpei State Port operations. The Governor highlighted the importance of this initiative for the economic development of Pohnpei and its potential to enhance trade and connectivity in the region.



The meeting underscored the strong partnership between Pohnpei State, JICA, and Ides Consulting Inc., emphasizing a shared vision for the future of Pohnpei's port facilities. The project will include enhancements in port capacity, safety measures, and environmental sustainability.

## Giant clams inspire breakthroughs in solar energy efficiency

### *PICRC*

August 10, 2024

**Palau** - A recent study published in the journal *PRX Energy* has revealed that giant clams have crucial insights for more efficient solar energy systems. The work was done by Dr. Alison Sweeney and Dr. Amanda Holt from Yale University, and Dr. Lincoln Rehm—a former researcher at the Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC) and current Fisheries Resource Management Specialist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Giant clams are found in the shallow coral reefs of the Indo-Pacific region. These animals have a symbiotic relationship with algae, which live inside their tissues. Algae perform photosynthesis, providing nutrients to the clams in exchange for shelter and access to sunlight. Key to the clams' efficiency are their iridescent cells (called iridocytes) which manipulate light. This allows clams to maximize their use of sunlight, benefiting the photosynthesis of their algal partners. In their study, the researchers were

inspired by giant clams in the shallow waters of Palau to create an analytical model to assess the maximum possible efficiency of large photosynthetic systems in intense sunlight. This model considers the geometry, movement, and light-scattering properties observed in these marine creatures. They were surprised to find that large living clams easily meet the maximum possible efficiency predicted by this model.

Algae inside giant clams are arranged in vertical columns on their surfaces – a critical adaptation that allows them to absorb sunlight optimally. This arrangement, coupled with the light manipulation by iridocytes, ensures effective utilization of scattered sunlight. Researchers also speculate that these algae columns adjust throughout the day in response to changes in sunlight intensity. This behavior enhances the clams' ability to absorb light optimally.

In fact, researchers calculated a quantum efficiency of 67% - which measures how effectively photons are converted into electrons. To put it into perspective, the typical quantum efficiencies for green plants found on land range from



2 to 4%, while those for algae used in biofuel production vary from 5 to 10%, and rooftop solar panels are around 20%. This means giant clams may be the most efficient solar energy system in the natural world!

This unique way in which giant clams manage light could inspire advancements in solar technology. Current light-harvesting technologies, such as photovoltaics and algae biofuels, often lose efficiency due to uneven light

distribution, leading to energy loss. By incorporating structures that mimic the iridocytes of giant clams, solar panels could improve their ability to absorb and convert sunlight into energy.

“This research is exciting because it shows how much we can learn from nature,” remarks biophysicist Alison Sweeney of Yale University. “By understanding and applying these natural principles, we can make solar energy more efficient and accessible.”

# Chuuk celebrates completion of Typhoon Wutip Reconstruction Project with vibrant ceremony

*International Organization for Migration*

*August 1, 2024*

**Chuuk**—The successful completion of the Typhoon Wutip Reconstruction Project (TWRP) was celebrated on 25 July 2024 with a vibrant closing ceremony in Chuuk State, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). The event celebrated TWRP’s significant achievements in supporting affected islands in Chuuk, Pohnpei and Yap States, which included the construction of 135 new homes and the renovation of 34 public infrastructures.

In 2019, Typhoon Wutip swept through the Pacific and parts of Asia, causing widespread destruction to homesteads, infrastructures, agricultural crops and water sources. An estimate of 11,500 people fell into vulnerable situations. Supported by USAID, the TWRP addressed housing needs for remote outer island communities and the renovations of public buildings, including schools and health facilities that were deemed entirely or partially unusable.

Simultaneously, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) partnered with community working groups, supporting training sessions and providing on-the-job mentorship from field engineers. Furthermore, IOM implemented an innovative voucher approach, allowing community members with minor damages to their homes to access necessary supplies through a catalogue system, thereby bringing the market to some of the most remote outer islands.

The closing ceremony was attended by Aren B. Palik, Vice President of the FSM; Jennifer Johnson, US Ambassador to FSM; Andrew Yatilman, Secretary of FSM Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management; Alexander Narruhn, Governor of Chuuk; Stevenson Joseph, Governor of Pohnpei; and Francis Itimai, Lieutenant Governor of Yap.

Representatives from the Chuuk State legislature, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Chuuk State Mayors also attended the ceremony along with community stakeholders.



*Community members from the Polap community perform traditional dance at the closing ceremony.*



*Typhoon Wutip Reconstruction Project closing event participants in Chuuk, FSM.*



*FSM Vice President, Aren B. Palik, and US Ambassador to FSM, Jennifer Johnson explore photo exhibit at TWRP closing ceremony.*



*Governor of Pohnpei, Hon. Stevenson Joseph and Herman Semes, USAID, observe photo exhibition showcasing the various stages of project implementation at closing ceremony.*



*IOM Micronesia Chief of Mission, Salvatore Sortino, delivers remarks at closing ceremony of TWRP.*

*All photos IOM 2024  
Haimanot Abebe*

All the dignitaries also attended the annual Micro Expo held in Chuuk this year.

In his opening remarks, Governor Narruhn recalled the great destruction caused by Typhoon Wutip and commended the great display of coordination in the recovery efforts – both the immediate response and the successful reconstruction afterwards.

In his speech, Vice President Palik said, “Our island nation is among the most vulnerable in the world facing natural hazards, while having limited resources to prepare and respond to them. This is why the concept of building back better is an important approach for

our nation – to reduce vulnerability to future disasters, build community resilience, and address physical, social, environmental and economic vulnerabilities.” He also expressed gratitude to the US Government, IOM, state-level agencies and communities for their vital contributions to TWRP’s success.

Ambassador Johnson highlighted the US Government’s commitment to supporting disaster preparedness, relief and recovery assistance through the recently renewed Compact of Free Association Agreement 2023-2043 with the FSM.

IOM Chief of Mission, Salvatore

Sortino, emphasized the importance of continued collaboration and support for resilience building in disaster-prone areas. “Importantly, the aim is not just to rebuild, but to build back better – to build houses and infrastructures that are more resilient to climate change and to build skills in affected communities that will increase capacity to withstand the impacts of climate change,” stated Sortino. He further acknowledged the significant roles played by government organizations, communities and private sector partners.

The TWRP underscored the positive outcomes of community engagement, strong partnerships and collaboration, contributing to the FSM’s recovery and resilience-building efforts.

# FSM establishes taskforce to develop first National Migration Policy

*International Organization for Migration*

*August 13, 2024*

**Kolonia** – The Government of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), convened a meeting in Kolonia on 9 August 2024 to launch a taskforce that will lead the development of FSM's first National Migration Policy.

The meeting, chaired by Hon. Leonito Bacalando, Acting Secretary of the Department of Justice, was attended by Hon. Elina Akinaga, Secretary of the Department of Resources and Development and Assistant Secretaries from the Department of Emergency, Climate Change and Disaster Management (DECEM); the Department of Health and Social Services; and the Department of Foreign Affairs. Also joining the task force meeting were



President of the FSM, on 8 May 2024, calling for the launch of a taskforce composed of various departments to identify migration-related priorities.

At the meeting, the representatives appointed the Department of Justice as the chair and DECEM as the vice chair of the taskforce, which will include the Departments of Justice, Foreign Affairs, Resources and Development, Health and Social Affairs and Education.

Hon. Bacalando also stressed the need to ensure representation and active participation from all four FSM States – Pohnpei, Chuuk, Kosrae and Yap – as well as non-governmental stakeholders throughout the policy development process.

Under the Compact of Free Association (COMPACT) agreement with the United States, FSM citizens can travel and work in the United States without a

visa. This offers opportunities for education and employment in the U.S., whilst also fueling significant rates of emigration. Additionally, FSM hosts foreign nationals annually, who work in various governmental and non-governmental agencies and contribute to frequent travel within the Micronesia sub-region and the North Pacific.

Despite these dynamics, migration-related data is limited. The new policy development project will be evidence-based, FSM Task Force-driven, and will contribute to systematic collection of migration-related data to inform the policy drafting process and future programmes.

IOM will support the policy development process through funding from the IOM Development Fund (IDF). Natasha Katusiime, Migration Management Program Officer, affirmed that IOM will provide technical assistance and conduct participatory capacity-building sessions for the taskforce to identify key focus areas for the migration policy. She underlined that the policy development process will be driven by the taskforce while IOM will play a supporting role.

IOM, with support from IDF, is assisting similar initiatives in the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Republic of Palau.



heads of the Anti-Human Trafficking Services Division (AHTSD), Division of Immigration and Passport Services, and Division of Labor.

In his opening remarks, Hon. Bacalando emphasized the importance of formulating a policy to strengthen migration governance and to harness the potential of migration for national development. He stated, "The taskforce will address key migration areas of concern, to FSM citizens including those living abroad and to ensure the protection needs of people in vulnerable situations."

A comprehensive migration policy is expected to facilitate consultation on labour mobility issues and migration strategies.

This initiative follows an Executive Order issued by H.E. Wesley Simina,



# Setbacks to Comebacks: Spirited U17 Games pave way for young women athletes in the FSM

UNDP

August 12, 2024

Eight months after a runner-up finish in the inaugural 17 & Under Games (17U Games), Chuuk Girls High School achieved a remarkable redemption 12-months later. Representing the State of Chuuk, the girls side dominated the second 17U Games in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) with a decisive 3-0 series victory, proving that with teamwork, discipline, and determination, anything can be achieved.

“Winning the 17U Games this time feels incredible, especially now that we are representing the entire state,” said Power Forward Awleen Werner.

“It shows how hard we trained and how far we can go when we work together.”

“We didn’t win at the first 17U Games, but that only pushed us to do better,” said Chuuk Girls Basketball Team Captain and this year’s Most Valuable Player, Amy Aritos.

“I am happy and proud we took home the championship this year. This is an exciting moment for all of us.”

The 17U and Holiday Games, spearheaded by the Department of Health and Social Affairs (DHSA), highlight the importance of athletics, particularly for the young women of FSM. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pacific Office shares this vision, viewing these tournaments as a crucial platform to hone skills, boost the confidence of



young women athletes, and foster camaraderie among players across the states.

Through the Strengthening Gender Machinery (GM) Project, UNDP has been instrumental in enabling the Chuuk Girls High School team to compete in the Holiday Games. This year at the 17U Games, UNDP recognized their hard work and excellence through sponsorship arrangements.

“UNDP’s work on gender equality strives to build a society where opportunities are accessible to everyone, regardless of age, gender, race, or ethnicity,” said Kevin Petrini, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative in the North Pacific, during a gathering with the team and staff.

“This includes empowering women and girls in all aspects of life—education, employment, decision-making, and, as we witnessed today, in sports. We are proud to support such a talented group of young athletes on their path to excellence.”

Supported by the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, the GM

Project in the FSM, in collaboration with DHSA, strives to elevate women and girls through policy advocacy, addressing structural barriers, promoting women’s leadership, initiating income-generating projects, and improving access to essential small-scale infrastructures. It works with traditional and community leaders in key sectors across the states of Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae. It also supports initiatives that provide women and girls opportunities to engage in activities like sports that contribute to personal development and overall well-being.

DHSA’s Sports and Physical Wellness Coordinator Sebastian T. Tairuwepiy expressed gratitude for the support given to the teams.

“Chuuk Team almost didn’t make it to Pohnpei for the Holiday Games, but with the GM Project’s help, they were able to fly in to show how much they have grown since their first 17U tournament,” Mr. Tairuwepiy shared.

“We extend our heartfelt congratulations to all athletes, organizers, coaches, and thanks to

UNDP and partners. We look forward to stronger collaborations to further the empowerment of FSM’s young athletes.”

This December, the 2024 Holiday Games will once again be held in Pohnpei, while the 3rd 17U Games are set to take place in Weno. The Chuuk Girls Basketball Team is poised to defend their title, and Head Coach Raisa Ruda couldn’t be prouder of the team’s performance, determination, and grit.

“It’s always a blessing to be part of youth and women in sports and to have the opportunity to positively impact their lives,” Coach Raisa shared.

“I’m very proud of them—they’ve come a long way since last summer. It truly shows that hard work pays off. To God be the glory!”

The success of these young athletes is not just a testament to their talent but also to the supportive framework provided by initiatives like the 17U Games. With continued support and commitment, the future looks bright for young women athletes in the FSM.

## Maritime Operations Planning Course for FSM maritime agencies concludes in Pohnpei

U.S. Embassy to the FSM

August 9, 2024

**Pohnpei** - Joint Inter-agency Task Force-West (JIATF-W) and Joint Special Operations University conducted a Maritime Operations Planning Course in Pohnpei from 23 July to 3 August 2024.

The course was designed to enhance the maritime security of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) by fostering cohesion among the various

agencies responsible for protecting the natural resources within the FSM’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and responding to natural disasters as part of a multinational maritime task force. The instructors came from the Joint Special Operations University and hold notable backgrounds in interagency planning,

The course included twenty participants from the FSM National Police Maritime Wing (Border Control and Maritime Surveillance), Pohnpei Local Police

Maritime Patrol Unit, FSM National Oceanic Resource Management Authority (NORMA), Customs and Tax Administration (port customs enforcement), FSM Department of Transportation, Communication, and Infrastructure’s Marine Division, and the Department of Environment, Climate Change, and Emergency Management.

Throughout the course, students learned common planning languages and were challenged with new concepts

and complex problem solving. The training team praised the participants’ enthusiasm and willingness to learn.

By instituting common maritime planning techniques, the FSM maritime agencies can generate more cohesive and better coordinated responses to illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing in the FSM’s EEZ as well as improve interoperability with U.S. military planning efforts during humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations.

## Dekehtik Causeway clean-up efforts: Volunteers collect 250 pounds of trash

U.S. Embassy to the FSM

August 7, 2024

**Pohnpei**-Ambassador Jennifer Johnson, U.S. Embassy Staff, Sailors and Marines, in partnership with the FSM Office of Veterans Affairs and the [US Veterans Of Pohnpei Association](#) (USVPA), led a group clean-up activity at the Dekehtik Causeway on Friday afternoon, 26 July.

Joining this clean-up effort were employees and volunteers from the FSM Department of Environment, Climate Change, and Emergency Management (DECEM), FSM National Oceanic and Resources Management Authority (NORMA), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Catholic Relief Services, and the College of Micronesia-FSM. More

than 250 pounds of trash was collected – a substantial amount of which consisted of plastics.

Ambassador Johnson gave her remarks by the end of the activity, thanking the more than sixty people who took part in the initiative. The U.S. Government has been working with local partners and experts to implement sustainable practices to reduce plastic pollution and its impacts through the Clean Cities, Blue Ocean (CCBO) Program.

“This clean-up activity is one of the many meaningful ways the U.S. Government has contributed voluntarily to our communities,” said Director of the Office of Veterans Affairs Hainrick S. Panuelo in a statement to Ambassador Johnson.

During their military presence on the island, the U.S. Marines and Sailors



with Combat Logistics Battalion 13, Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Logistics Group, and Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 5 have worked to strengthen alliances and partnerships with development of interoperable capabilities, combined operations, theater security cooperation, and capacity-building efforts.

## USAID promotes over ten savings clubs in Pohnpei

U.S. Embassy to the FSM

August 12, 2024

Pohnpei - U.S. Ambassador Jennifer Johnson joined Pohnpei Women’s Savings Club Share-out Ceremony in Kolonia on August 2. The occasion celebrated the great work of the Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT) in supporting over 10 local communities in Pohnpei to build a more economically viable approach to conservation efforts.

The United States Government, through USAID’s Pacific American Fund, provided grants for MCT and its local partners - The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Rare - to work with women leaders in the municipalities of Pohnpei to design, implement, and manage nature-based solutions for evolving issues such as climate change. Through this grant, MCT developed financial literacy and savings practices among these communities to help limit indebtedness and promote beneficial practices among local fishery management.

Establishing a more manageable financial system for women’s groups through programs like the Savings Club is a goal that MCT, TNC, and Rare have been working toward. Savings Club also seeks to improve fishing households’ ability to retain income and provide assistance in times

of financial downturn or emergencies. Club members said this savings system has helped them improve their financial literacy, savings, and access to appropriate services, and their households are able to avoid informal debts.

In her remarks, Ambassador Johnson noted that, “Women play a pivotal role in community well-being, resource management, and adaptation. Harnessing these groups’ knowledge, skills, and determination will create a more resilient future.”

She also commended MCT, TNC, and Rare for their dedication and hard work in making these projects possible. It was their efforts that made the difference in the lives of many and set a powerful example for conservation initiatives worldwide. “By supporting women’s groups and fostering nature-based solutions, we pave the way for a brighter, more sustainable future”, she added.

Currently, thirteen savings clubs have been established across the municipalities in Pohnpei. The share-out ceremony gathered these clubs on Friday to demonstrate how savings club meetings are conducted, to present the financial status of each group, and to celebrate the share-out with the



clubs. Pohnpei savings clubs include the following women’s groups:

- Rohi PGS Savings Club
- Lien Onohnleng Savings Club
- Olepel Lien Deidei Savings Club
- Pahnpei Family Savings Club
- Onohnleng Tikpeieng Savings Club
- Enipein Savings Club
- Lien Peidie Savings Club
- Lien Roie Savings Club
- Lih Tohrohr Savings Club
- Family Alliance Savings Club
- EWA Savings Club
- MD Ahi Pwukoah Savings Club
- Lohd Pah Savings Club

Launched in 2020, the Pacific American Fund awards grants to local civil society organizations, aiming to teach vulnerable communities how to lead and respond to future climate-related challenges and reduce the risks associated with disasters. “Rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and shifting ecosystems threaten our livelihoods, culture, and environment. In the face of these adversities, it is crucial that we come together to take action”, Ambassador Johnson concluded.

# Pohnpei Public Library thanks Senator Glenn Wakai and others for large donation of books

By Trueleen J. Albert  
Head Librarian

August 12, 2024

**Pohnpei** - In a world where the power of community and generosity can change lives, there are moments that shine particularly bright. One such moment has been made possible through the collective efforts of dedicated individuals and organizations who have come together to make a profound impact on the Micronesians people. Today, we extend our deepest gratitude to Hawaii State Senator Glenn Wakai and all those who have played a pivotal role in this remarkable initiative.

### A Vision Turned Reality

It all began with the vision and commitment of State Senator Glenn Wakai, whose unwavering dedication to fostering educational opportunities has brought to life a project of immense value. Senator Wakai recognized a pressing need and saw an opportunity to make a difference. His support has been nothing short of transformative, providing Micronesia with a true (in his perfect words) "God-sent" opportunity for educational enrichment.

### A Community of Heroes

This initiative was not a solo effort but a testament to the power of collaboration. We owe a special thank you to the Friends of Hawaii Library Association and the Farrington High School football team whose incredible dedication and tireless work led to the packing of an astounding 30,000 books. Their commitment to this cause exemplifies the spirit of giving and community support.

The FSM National Archives and President of the Pacific Islands Association of Libraries, Archives and Museums Mrs. Erlinda C. Naputi also played a crucial role in this endeavor. Their assistance has been instrumental in ensuring that this movement reached its full potential, further demonstrating the strength of partnerships in achieving shared goals.

### Logistical Support and Gratitude

We extend our sincere appreciation to Matson Shipping Co. for their generous donation of a free container to transport these invaluable resources. Their support was critical in facilitating the



smooth transition of these books to the Friends of Pohnpei Public Library, ensuring that they arrived safely and on time.

Our gratitude also goes to the U.S. Marines Koa Moana 24 (CLB-13), whose off-loading assistance proved invaluable. This logistical support was vital in ensuring that the books reached their final destination efficiently and without any issues in record time.

### A Bright Future for All

Thanks to the combined efforts of these remarkable individuals and organizations, countless lives will be touched through access to these books. The impact of this initiative extends beyond the immediate beneficiaries, contributing to a brighter future for the educational landscape in Micronesia and beyond.

In closing, we extend our deepest thanks to State Senator Glenn Wakai, the Friends of Hawaii Library and community members, the FSM National Archives, Matson Shipping Co., and the U.S. Marines. Your dedication, generosity, and hard work have made a world of difference, and for that, we are eternally grateful.

Together, you have shown that when we come together with a shared purpose, we can achieve extraordinary things.

Thank you for making this vision a reality and for being champions of education and community spirit. Mahalo nui loa from our end of the Pacific Ocean!



## Opinion Editorial

# China's further deepening reform comprehensively to advance Chinese modernization provides new opportunities to the world

From July 15 to 18, the third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China was successfully held in Beijing. This is a very important conference held at a critical time for China's development. It outlined a blueprint for further deepening reform comprehensively and advancing Chinese modernization. Today, I would like to take this opportunity to brief our friends in the FSM on this grand event.

The most important outcome of this plenary session is the adoption of the Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization, which defines the guiding philosophy, overall objectives and guiding principles for further deepening reform comprehensively, and emphasizes that China will continue to improve and develop the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics and modernize China's system and capacity for governance. By 2035, China will have finished building a high-standard socialist market economy in all respects, further improved the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, generally modernized our system and capacity for governance, and basically realized socialist modernization. All of this will lay a solid foundation for building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects by the middle of this century.

Reform and opening up is an ongoing process that will never be complete. The story of China's development success tells us that reform and opening up has always been the key—it was reform and opening up that enabled China to catch up with the times with big strides, it was reform and opening up that brought China's First

Centenary Goal to fruition since the 18th National Congress of the CPC, and it is still reform and opening up that will break new ground in Chinese modernization and lead China to the Second Centenary Goal.

The plenary session made systematic plans for further deepening reform comprehensively in the economic, political, cultural, social, ecological, national security, national defense and military sectors, and put forward over 300 important reform measures, with particular emphasis on changes in systems and mechanisms, strategic and overarching reforms, and the spearhead role of economic structural improvements. It set a deadline for completing these reform tasks within next five years, that is, by the 80th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China in 2029. This demonstrates China's strong confidence and determination to advance national modernization through further comprehensive reforms, and sends a strong message to the world about China's steadfast commitment to reform and opening up in the new era.

Opening up is a defining feature of Chinese modernization and China's door to the outside world will only open even wider. This plenary session made special arrangements for promoting high-standard opening up, involving expanding institutional opening up, deepening the foreign trade structural reform, reforming the management systems for inward and outward investment, optimizing the layout for regional opening up and improving the mechanisms for high-quality cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative. China will open its commodity, services, capital, and labor markets wider to the outside world in an orderly manner and unilaterally opening its doors wider to the world's least developed countries. China will safeguard the WTO-centered multilateral trading system, actively participate in the reform of global

economic governance, and provide more global public goods.

Chinese modernization is the modernization of peaceful development. The plenary session pointed out that China remains firm in pursuing an independent foreign policy of peace and is dedicated to promoting a human community with a shared future. China will stay committed to the common values of all humanity, pursue the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilization Initiative, and call for an equal and orderly multipolar world and universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization. China will get involved in leading the reform and development of the global governance system and resolutely safeguard China's sovereignty, security, and development interests.

I believe that the implementation of these reform measures will enhance various institutions and mechanisms, remove the obstacles, provide steady source of dynamism for Chinese modernization, and create more opportunities for China and the rest of the world to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation and thrive and prosper together.

The latest data shows that China's economy continues to recover, with new driving forces accelerating growth and new progress made in high-quality development. China's economy remains an important engine and stabilizer for global economic growth. In the first half of this year, China's gross domestic product (GDP) reached 61.7 trillion yuan (about \$8.6 trillion), a year-on-year increase of 5.0%, and its import and export volume exceeded 21 trillion yuan (about \$3 trillion) for the first time, a year-on-year growth



of 6.1 percent. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) upgraded its growth forecast for China's economic growth to 5% this year. A modern China that continues to deepen reform and promote high-quality development will bring more development opportunities to all countries in the world, including the FSM.

This year marks the 35th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the People's Republic of China and the Federated States of Micronesia. China looks forward to working with the FSM side to earnestly implement the important consensus reached by the two leaders during H.E. President Wesley W. Simina's state visit to China. On the basis of further deepening political mutual trust and strengthening exchanges and dialogue, we will focus on the new driving forces and new opportunities provided by Chinese modernization, accelerate the expansion of practical cooperation in political, economic, trade, cultural and sub-national areas, add new dimensions to the China-FSM Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, so as to bring more benefits to the two peoples.

**Mr. Zhang Weitao**  
*Charge d'Affaires ad interim*  
*Chinese Embassy in the FSM*

## Opinion Editorial

# Investing in Women through Collective Action: A Call to Redefine Leadership in Fiji

The call for gender equality may be resonating louder than ever before, yet its echoes often fall on deaf ears. We may stand on the precipice of change yet remain at the starting blocks when it comes to seeing concrete action. Progress has been made in many aspects of public life in Fiji, when looking at the active – and meaningful – participation of women; however, women continue to be underrepresented in our democratic space. Their voices lack the powerful amplification they deserve.

The idea that a parliament should mirror the society it serves has been widely discussed extensively. However, if current trends prevail, the gender gap that persists within our democratic space will persist beyond 2050. More broadly, when assessing key gender equality indicators under the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, our ambition to achieve these by 2030 has been pushed back to 2064, on current trends.

Large gender inequalities and low levels of women's empowerment have become the norm, with less than one percent of women globally living in a country where there is noticeable gender inequality. According to the Women's Empowerment Index from 2023, women worldwide are only enabled to realize 60 percent of their potential, while the Global Gender Parity Index shows that women score 28 percent lower than men,

on average, in all major areas of human development such as access to education, health and well-being, and skill building.

Cultural norms and societal expectations could be used to support gender equality. In Fiji, the concept of 'vanua' (land) and its connection to traditional leadership roles can be used to support women's participation in political spheres. Culture and traditions shift over time, as they are never static, standing still in age-old beliefs or hierarchies. We therefore must look to our current and future leaders to champion the cause and work collectively to create an inclusive democratic system. All parliamentarians have the capacity to support gender equality as strong allies and partners in strategy, helping to create more political space for women.

In addition, long-term beneficial social change can be fostered by teaching the public – especially young men and women – about the value of equality and women's political and social inclusion. This, over time, will influence societal attitudes and enact much-needed behavioral change. We must also work to ensure that emerging women leaders, especially those at the grassroots level, have access to systems of support to refine the skills, experience, and confidence needed to plunge into the political space.

The Women's Practice Parliament – supported by the UN Development Programme, and the



governments and people of Australia, Japan and New Zealand – served as testament to this: a platform where women could learn about and experience actual parliamentary discussions, procedures, and decision-making. Through mock parliamentary sessions, participants gained experience in drafting legislation, advocating on behalf of their constituents, and saw them with a ready-made cadre of fellow women leaders; a network to share their respective challenges with, and to gain inspiration from in the hope that many, if not all, will one day run for office.

Our strength lies in unity, and our collective future depends on women's empowerment and their participation

in the democratic space. Fiji is now on the path of further strengthening its parliamentary democracy, taking incremental but decisive steps towards social inclusion and peacebuilding. And while it has made many strides, there is still opportunity for further growth.

Let us stand together, women and men alike, in solidarity and determination to redefine leadership and create a world where every individual, regardless of gender, can fulfill their potential.

**Munkhtuya Altangerel**  
*Resident Representative*  
*UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji*

## Women's business leadership is growing in the Pacific, but significant gender gaps persist

**PSDI**

The proportion of women in business leadership in the Pacific is steadily increasing, but persistent barriers slow the ideal rate of progress, according to a new report published today by the Asian Development Bank's (ADB's) Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative (PSDI).

Leadership Matters 2024: Benchmarking Women in Business Leadership in the Pacific expands on the baseline established in the 2021 Leadership Matters report to track advancements in women's representation as board directors, board chairs, deputy board chairs, and chief executive officers across 14 Pacific countries.

"The new Leadership Matters report finds that women's representation in business leadership in the Pacific has generally risen since 2021 and continues to exceed global averages," said the report's

author, PSDI Economic Empowerment of Women Expert, Sarah Boxall. "This is a promising trend toward more inclusive and diverse corporate cultures in the region, driven by a mix of organizational policies, greater family and community support for women's leadership aspirations, and a cohort of talented and ambitious women who are rising through the ranks and supporting others to do the same."

According to the report, the average proportion of women directors in the Pacific rose from 21% in 2021 to 26% in 2024, just above the 2023 global average of 23%. During the same period, the average proportion of women chief executive officers (CEO) in the Pacific rose from 13% to 20%, well above the global average of 6%.

The Cook Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, and Tuvalu stand out as having higher proportions of women directors and CEOs than most countries in the region, while Fiji and Papua New Guinea

are the only countries in the region to not meet or exceed the regional average on any measure.

"A myriad of global and local influences and social norms continue to shape Pacific women's aspirations and opportunities for leadership, and entrenched gender roles, particularly those around caring responsibilities, remain a significant challenge," said Ms Boxall. "While we celebrate the improvements in this updated report, many of the gains since 2021 have been modest and have been uneven across countries, sectors, and organization types."

"We must also recognize the persistent gender disparities these figures reveal and continue to strive for equal representation in leadership, both globally and in the Pacific."

Despite the improvements recorded, men still hold around three out of every four board director positions and four out every five CEO positions.

Meanwhile, almost one-quarter (24%) of all boards still have no women directors and progress in senior board positions has been notably slow, with only 12% of board chair roles and 18% of deputy board chair roles held by women.

The report draws on data from 397 organizations across ADB's 14 Pacific developing member countries (DMCs), as well as insights from more than 350 Pacific business leaders, gathered through a survey and in-depth interviews.

PSDI is an ADB technical assistance program undertaken in partnership with the governments of Australia and New Zealand. It supports ADB's 14 Pacific DMCs to improve the enabling environment for business and to achieve inclusive, private sector-led economic growth, including through reforms designed to enhance the economic empowerment of women.

# ...New Zealand

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Though the program will benefit students from throughout Pohnpei, for logistical reasons, only students from schools geographically close to the Nett kickoff ceremony were invited to participate in the event. These were Nett, Ohmine, and Sokehs Powe Elementary Schools, Pohnpei Catholic School, and Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School.

Two Nett Elementary eighth-graders served as remarkably effective masters of ceremony for the event.

“As we gather here, it is important to recognize the critical role that Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) play in shaping the future of our communities, especially in developing nations like ours,” said Pohnpei’s Governor Stevenson Joseph in his address. “The first three years of a child’s life, as we all know, are crucial, laying the foundation for their health, cognitive development, and emotional well-being. If we fail to provide nurturing care, proper nutrition, love, and opportunities for learning through play during these formative years, the consequences are dire. Deprivation at this stage can lead to long-term setbacks that impact not only the individual child but also require our collective investment to unlock. The challenges we face in ensuring that every child receives the care and opportunities they need are significant, but they are not insurmountable. Today’s initiative represents a critical step forward in addressing these challenges head-on. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to our partners who have made this initiative possible.”

“New Zealand is pleased to be supporting the work of UNICEF Pacific and the Government of FSM, as well as the Governments of the Marshall Islands and Palau, with a multi-million dollar project to help drive improved early childhood outcomes and better support the next generation of Pacific leaders,” Deputy Prime Minister Peters said. “This project aims to improve children’s access to nutritious local food, work with young families to improve the quality of caregiver and parental care, and help ensure children grow up in healthy and hygienic environments where they can thrive. And of course, if they get a bit of love at



home, as much as possible, that’s free. We can’t subsidize that. That’s down to the parents. To the students here today and to the excellent examples that were introduced to us at the beginning,” he said of the young MCs, “I think you’ll go a long way. It’s a very good start. Some of you might even become politicians.”

“The President has pledged his unwavering support to ensure that the efforts of the SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) Steering Committee are effectively executed,” said FSM Secretary of Education Gardenia Aisek, who spoke on behalf of President Simina. “This project complements our efficient multi-sectoral nutrition action plan, addressing issues such as childhood obesity, stunting, and micronutrient deficiencies. This initiative will improve WASH monitoring systems, policies, and standards, ensuring our children grow up in environments conducive to their health and well-being. Investing in the health and development of our children is, without a doubt, an investment in the future of FSM. We know that healthy brain development in the early years is critical to educational attainment, economic productivity, responsible citizenship, and lasting good health.”

Nett Elementary School next presented a cultural dance. Ohmine Elementary School students followed with a song written for the occasion and learned in the first few days of school.

Three elementary school students read excellent poems they had written especially for the event. A student from Pohnpei Catholic School read his poem about the importance of water. This was followed by a reading from an Ohmine Elementary School student, a poem about the importance of addressing mental health issues. Her presentation was followed by a Nett student’s poem about the importance of coconuts, both nutritionally and culturally. Each student presented framed plaques to the Deputy Prime Minister following their presentations.

Chief of UNICEF North Pacific, Cromwell Bacareza, then presided over a ceremonial handover of supplies to selected representatives of the elementary schools present at the ceremony. Bacareza gave short closing remarks, after which dignitaries were invited to visit booths prepared by students as they made their way out the doors to their next unspecified meeting.