

# 24th Congress seated and ready to do business

By Bill Jaynes  
The Kaselehlie Press

May 11, 2025

**Pohnpei**—The 14 members of the FSM Congress were seated and sworn in this morning in Palikir to constitute the 24th Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia. Despite the fact that the swearing in ceremony was held on Sunday and particularly a Mother’s Day, the gallery was packed with standing room only.

The choice of day was not made by the members of Congress. The FSM Constitution requires that the new Congress be sworn in on May 11. This year it happened to fall on a Sunday morning.



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# ODA and PPBC push back on Public Auditor’s findings in broadcast project review

By Bill Jaynes  
The Kaselehlie Press

May 10, 2025

**Pohnpei**—Pohnpei’s Office of the Public Auditor (POPA) recently released a compliance audit of the Pohnpei Public Broadcasting Corporation (PPBC) regarding a U.S.-funded project aimed at improving emergency disaster communication, public announcements, and energy production systems.

In their responses, Pohnpei’s Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) office and PPBC stated that POPA

overstepped the bounds of the audit requested by the governor. They claimed the audit was intended solely to review procurement-related concerns, not to draw conclusions about potential mismanagement or make other findings or observations.

POPA staunchly defended its audit and noted that it has referred certain “matters,” which are undisclosed in the report, to its Compliance Investigation Division for further review. The division investigates issues uncovered during audits to determine whether referrals to the Pohnpei State Attorney General are

warranted.

One of the key issues in the audit is a \$119,494.40 payment for an AM transmitter ordered under the grant. The payment was made to the vendor on April 4, 2022, but as of the date of the audit, the transmitter had still not arrived in Pohnpei. The auditors also noted, “Certain documentation of the grant and information regarding the vendor were not readily available for review during our fieldwork.”

The audit cited long delays in procurement and noted “other matters

of concern,” stating that PPBC did not take appropriate action early on. It also found that ODA, the PPBC Board of Directors, and/or the Department of Treasury and Administration (DOTA) failed to intervene before more serious issues developed.

“Due to a lack of timely remedial action, in addition to insufficient management and failure of oversight monitoring, the government is now facing the risk of losing over \$119,000,” the audit stated. “Even more concerning, PPBC did not

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# Australia-backed EMC project hits major milestone in Kosrae



### Australian Embassy to the FSM

May 9, 2025

**Kosrae**—Another major milestone for the East Micronesia Cable (EMC) has been reached, with the arrival of FSM’s second cable landing station in Kosrae.

Australian Ambassador Jenny Grant-

Curnow and Governor Tulensa Palik visited the new landing station together with Tim Gill of the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific (AIFFP) and Jolden Johnnyboy of FSMT Cable Corporation.

This follows the installation of the EMC’s Pohnpei landing station in

February, with the project on track for a December 2025 completion.

The East Micronesia Cable project is funded by Australia, Japan and the United States and will improve connectivity across FSM, Kiribati and Nauru. The 2,250-kilometre-long cable will provide more than 100,000 people across the three countries with more

reliable and affordable internet and better access to services, information and worldwide markets.

Western Australian company DXN manufactured the cable landing stations in Perth and is installing the stations in FSM.

Australia is supporting the AUD135 million project via the #AIFFP, with a grant of AUD60 million. Australia is proud to play a role in bringing faster, high quality and more reliable internet to FSM.



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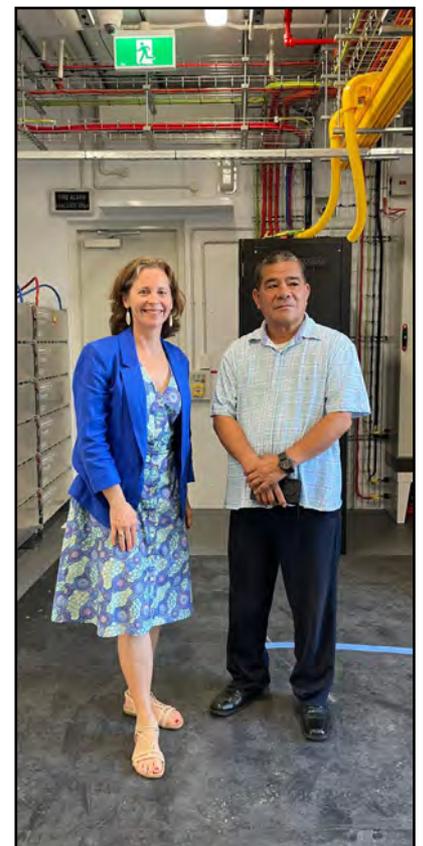
Bill Jaynes  
Managing Editor

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

**May 28, 2025**

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

**Monday, May 26, 2025**



# Pacific Fleet Commander travels to Pohnpei and Yap States

## U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs

04 May 2025

FSM—Admiral Steve Koehler, commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, visited the states of Pohnpei and Yap during a trip to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) May 1-2, 2025. As Pacific nations, the U.S. and FSM share values, a deep history, and a common vision for peace and security in the Indo-Pacific, underpinned by the Compact of Free Association.

In Pohnpei, Koehler met with FSM President Wesley Simina, Vice President Aren Palik, and delegation, as well as U.S. Ambassador to FSM Jennifer Johnson, to reaffirm the U.S. commitment to protecting the security, freedom, and prosperity for our allies and partners in the region. The discussion focused on future challenges, shared goals, and security commitments toward a free and open Indo-Pacific.

While in Yap, Koehler met with Yap Acting Governor Thomas Tun, Speaker



Nicholas Figirlaarwon, and the Yap State Legislature, where he highlighted the importance of the partnership between FSM and the U.S. and discussed local opportunities for continued cooperation.

Joined by Amb. Johnson, Koehler visited Yap's airport and seaport facilities, and met with Sailors assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) Three engaged in infrastructure projects. On March 27, U.S. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth and FSM President Simina announced a mutual understanding to enable the Department of Defense (DoD) to begin planning and construction on key infrastructure projects in Yap –



including airport and seaport upgrades that will provide strategic operational and exercise capabilities for U.S. forces, such as disaster response, and benefits to FSM's economy and security. NMCB 3 is forward deployed to Yap to deliver in-theater expeditionary logistics via expeditionary shore infrastructure, forward damage repair, and mobile construction to strengthen deterrence and force posture in the region.

Koehler and Amb. Johnson also met with Sailors assigned to Commander, Task Group 73.6/Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit One, Company 1-6 (CTG 73.6/MDSU 1-6), where they received

a brief on the operations being conducted by CTG 73.6/MDSU 1-6 in Yap. As the designated Executive Agent for salvage and diving operations in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations, Commander, Task Force 73 has deployed CTG 73.6 to Yap in support of abandoned derelict vessel removals. This project lays the groundwork for the forthcoming military construction port expansion in Yap.

The visit to FSM underscored Koehler's commitment to strengthening partnerships and maintaining a secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific.



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## ...Congress

*Continued from front page*

Senator Peter Christian, Pohnpei's At-Large representative and veteran member of Congress functioned as Temporary Speaker. He appointed former FSM President and also veteran member of Congress Joseph Urusemal to serve as Temporary Floor Leader.

Wahnpoaron Marstan Tribon Ernest Henry of the United Church of Christ gave the invocation.

Temporary Speaker Christian appointed the credentials committee consisting of one senator from each FSM State. While the credentials committee met in the caucus room deliberating the credentials of each senator the always amazing choir from the College of Micronesia FSM entertained the audience in the gallery and those standing outside looking into the windows.

Credentials having been accepted and their report adopted, Acting Chief Justice of the FSM Supreme Court Bealeen Carl-Worswick presided over the oath of office.

Members of the FSM Congress are:

### Yap State

Andy P. Choor - Election District 1  
Joseph J. Urusemal - At-Large

### Chuuk State

Julio M. Marar - Election District 1 - Mortlock Island  
Victor "Vicki" Gouland - Election District 2 - Northern Namoneas

Perpetua S. Konman - Election District 3 - Southern Namoneas  
Tiwiter Arritos - Election District 4 - Faichuuk

Robson U. Romolow - Election District 5 - Halls and the Northwestern Region

Fabian Nimea - At-Large

### Kosrae State

Johnson A. Asher - Election District 1  
Yoslyn G. Sigras - At-Large

### Pohnpei State

Merlynn Abello-Alfonso -

Election District 1 - Kolonia, Sokehs, Sapwuahfik, Nukuoro, and Kapingamarangi

Jermy W. Mudong - Election District 2 - Madolenihmw and Kitti

Esmond B. Moses - Election District 3 - Nett, U, Pingelap, and Mwoakilloa

Peter M. Christian - At-Large

Congress having been seated, all members adjourned again to the caucus room to elect leaders while the COM-FSM choir was again tasked with entertaining the crowd—a feat they accomplished to great effect.

On their return, the 24th Congress again elected Senator Esmond Moses to continue in the role of Speaker. Senator Robson Romolow was again elected as Vice Speaker. Senator Julio M. Marar will serve as Floor Leader.

Speaker Moses took his seat and appointed the following senators as chairs of standing committees:

Fabian Nimea - Chair of the Ways and Means Committee

Andy Choor - Chair of the Justice and Governmental Operations Committee

Johnson Asher - Chair of the Resources and Development Committee

Victor Gouland - Chair of the Transportation and Communication Committee

Peter Christian - Chair of the External Affairs Committee

Joseph Urusemal - Chair of the Education Committee

Perpetua Konman - Chair of the Health and Social Affairs Committee

Congress proceeded with business as usual including Miscellaneous Business during which time Senators were allowed to enter into the record, their speeches on whatever topic they wanted to address including thanking their constituents. Much was said which can be accessed on the Congressional Journal.

Senator Victor Gouland said that he would be making a longer statement from a written statement during Mondays session and that he wanted The Kaselehlie Press to publish it. At press time, that statement had not yet arrived.

## SPC and Direct Relief: A coordinated approach to Pacific Health

*Secretariat of the Pacific Community*

April 29, 2025

**Fiji--**The Pacific Community (SPC) and Direct Relief signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that will facilitate collaboration and coordination in strengthening health systems and emergency preparedness by improving disaster management, information sharing, and capacity building.

The MOU was signed during the margins of the Pacific Heads of Health Meeting and is timely as it boosts the support provided to Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) during disaster-related emergencies.

Dr Berlin Kafoa, Director of SPC's Public Health Division, said this collaboration solidifies the importance of the Pacific regional health architecture and structured pathway to working in the health space with PICTs. "While the Pacific Health sector welcomes health partners such as Direct Relief, it is important that we align with PICT's regional frameworks, goals and strategies and Direct Relief shares this vision with us."

Direct Relief has worked in the Pacific previously and has mounted emergency responses to Cyclone Pam in

Vanuatu in 2015, Cyclone Winston in Fiji in 2016, the volcanic eruption in Vanuatu in 2017, it supported medical teams during the 2019 measles outbreak in Samoa, it supported partners across the region during the Covid pandemic between 2020-2022, and most recently offered emergency support to Vanuatu after the 2024 earthquake in Port Vila.

Gordon Willcock, Director for Direct Relief Asia Pacific, said We welcome the opportunity to collaborate and build new long-term partnerships with hospitals and ministries of health across the Pacific. "This is in line with our mission to connect vulnerable communities with medications and medical services and to support them during disasters. We look forward to working closely with the SPC Public Health Division and other PICT partners.



## ...Audit

*Continued from front page*

expend the entire grant in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and/or the grant agreement, and its credibility in securing and managing future grant funds may be affected."

The audit also noted that the "amount of the check [for a new phone system] differs from DOTA and PPBC reports by \$570."

As an appendix, POPA included a summary of disbursements under the grant. A total of \$195,545 was disbursed for solar panels, an FM

transmitter, a phone system, and an AM transmitter — the latter of which has still not arrived. The payment for the AM transmitter was listed as drawn from the General Fund, suggesting it may not have been paid from U.S. grant funds, though the audit provided no explanation. The total grant amount was \$237,444.

"The grantor was informed and remained aware of both the delayed equipment delivery and the pending audit," ODA said in its response. "ODA submitted a no-cost extension request for this grant, which was approved by the Office of Insular Affairs, extending the grant's period of performance through the end of 2025 for drawdown purposes."

# Conservation Standards training event and launch of Micronesia Conservation Coaches Network

*The Nature Conservancy*

*April 29, 2025*

**Guam**—The Conservation Standards Training event, held from April 22 to 25, 2025, at the Guam Plaza Resort in Tumon, Guam, successfully concluded with the participation of 25 dedicated conservation practitioners from across the region. As part of The Nature Conservancy’s (TNC) support of the Micronesia Challenge 2030 (MC2030) regional initiative, this event marked a significant milestone in continued building in-region capacity by advancing conservation efforts through the application of the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation. The last training in Micronesia was held over 5 years ago and with high turnover of staffing in the region and new staff coming onboard, this training was very much welcomed. “It was great to get back out there and teach a new group the Open Standards. Looking forward to holding more of these trainings in the future.” Said Ms. Elizabeth Terk, TNC Director of Conservation for the Micronesia/Polynesia Program. This activity was funded by The Nature Conservancy through the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Insular Affairs, Technical Assistance Program; the United Nations Development Programme’s Global Fund for Coral Reefs; and other generous donors.

**Workshop Objectives and Activities**  
The primary goal of the workshop was to train and enhance the capacity of conservation practitioners to become facilitators and coaches. Participants were introduced to the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation. The workshop also focused on improving facilitation skills, strategy effectiveness measures for adaptive management, and the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool version 4 (METT4) evaluation tool for protected areas. Additionally, discussions were held on the Pacific Islands Managed and Protected Areas Community (PIMPAC) Local Early Action Planning (LEAP) tool for initial community engagement.

**Commitment to Excellence**  
As part of the training, participants committed to promoting evidence-based excellence, supporting continuous improvement, fostering collaboration and inclusivity,

encouraging innovation, sharing responsibility, and achieving tangible results. This commitment was formalized through the signing of the Commitment Statement by 22 participants becoming part of the Micronesia Conservation Coaches Network.

**Micronesia Conservation Coaches Network**

The Micronesia Conservation Coaches Network aims to strengthen conservation actions and results by leveraging the expertise and dedication of its members. The network promotes a culture of cooperation, respect, and open exchange of ideas, supporting the inclusion of multiple languages, culturally sensitive approaches, and ecologically distinct adaptations. This regional network is part of the global network of the Conservation Coaches Network (CCNet) with 700 Coaches from more than 200 organizations operating in over 60 countries on all continents.

**Key Highlights of the Training Event**

- Day 1: Participants were welcomed and introduced to the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation. The day included sessions on the history of the Open Standards, different conservation planning tools, and the planning process.
- Day 2: Focused on conservation targets, threat identification and ranking, and developing conservation strategies.
- Day 3: Covered developing goals and specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timebound (SMART) objectives, measures of success, adaptive management, and the introduction of the METT4 evaluation tool for protected areas management effectiveness highlighting the 13 indicators for tracking management effectiveness for the MC 2030.
- Day 4: Introduced LEAP as a planning facilitation tool for initial community engagements, including vulnerability assessment for climate change impacts and facilitation guidance for new communities going through planning.

**Looking Ahead**  
The workshop concluded with participants identifying next steps for integrating Conservation Standards, LEAP, and METT4 in their conservation



efforts. The event also marked the formal establishment of the Micronesia Conservation Coaches Network, with members pledging to uphold the values of excellence, collaboration, and innovation in conservation practices.

## Pohnpei Election Commission announces certified candidates for Lt. Governor Special Election

*KPress*

*May 5, 2025*

**Pohnpei**—The Pohnpei Election Commission has certified five candidates who have filed to run for the office of Lt. Governor. The Special Election will be on July 1, 2025.

The certified candidates are Bermance Aldis, Brian P. Etscheit, Herolyn S. Movick, Joseph Phillip, and Welson Panuel.

Acting Election Commissioner Alperina Donre announced the certified candidates.

## Japanese-funded garbage truck project passes audit review

*By Bill Jaynes*  
*The Kaselehlie Press*

*May 6, 2025*

**Pohnpei**— The Pohnpei Office of the Public Auditor recently released an inspection report on a Japanese-funded project for garbage trucks procured by the Kolonia Town Government. The inspection report was a requirement of the donor and was requested by the Kolonia Town Government.

them. They also found that the trucks are still operational and functioning well.

As is typical with audit reports, the auditors identified some areas for improvement. One observation and recommendation was that certain email communications between the government and the Embassy of Japan had not been maintained. They also found that maintenance plans for the trucks had not been created when the trucks were first received. Auditors were informed that these oversights occurred during the previous administration.

In March 2021, the Kolonia Town Government signed a contract and grant agreement with the Embassy of Japan for a total of \$177,088 for the procurement of the trucks, which have been in use by the government since March 2022.

In 2024, the new Kolonia Town Government implemented a formal and systematic maintenance plan for the trucks, which they have been following since. Auditors commended the new management for taking the initiative to establish the plan and for following through with its implementation.

Auditors reviewed Kolonia Town Government’s compliance with each requirement under the grant and found that the government had met all of

# President Simina meets with U.S. Admiral, reaffirms strategic partnership

*FSM Information Services*

*May 2, 2025*

**Pohnpei**—His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), today welcomed Admiral Stephen T. Koehler, Commander of U.S. Naval Forces Pacific, for a courtesy meeting at the Office of the President.

During their discussions, President Simina reaffirmed the FSM's deep appreciation for the enduring partnership between the FSM and the United States under the Compact of Free Association. The President emphasized that this partnership is not only strategic, but also personal, rooted in shared history, values, and mutual respect.

The meeting highlighted ongoing U.S. military engagement in the FSM, including the contributions of the U.S. Navy Seabees and preparations for Pacific Partnership 2025. President Simina also raised key national priorities, including the development of Yap port, reinstatement of Civic Action Team (CAT) camps, support for FSM veterans, oil pollution mitigation in Chuuk Lagoon, and critical infrastructure projects identified under the Joint Committee Meeting (JCM) process.

President Simina expressed gratitude for Admiral Koehler's leadership and reiterated FSM's commitment to advancing peace, stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific through close collaboration with the United States.



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## Opportunity at the Forum

### The Pacific Islands Forum

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

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

### The Opportunity - 2050 Strategy Coordination Officer

The **2050 Strategy Coordination Officer** role will support the Team Leader 2050 to enhance the collective impact of partners working towards our 2050 Vision, through supporting efforts to coordinate, monitor, and report, on the strategies implementation. The key responsibilities are summarised as:

- Support the implementation of the 2050 Strategy
- Support the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL), activities for 2050 Strategy implementation
- 2050 reporting and communication
- Facilitate work to progress the 2050 Strategy Strategic Pathways
- Project Management

Applicants should have a university bachelor's degree in economics and finance, development studies, international development, planning and statistics, public policy, or any other related discipline (or postgraduate degree in same areas would be desirable), with at least five years of experience and demonstrated success supporting national and/or regional policymaking, coordination, or MEL processes.

Candidates with knowledge and experience in contributing to policy development or project implementation in areas relevant to the 2050 Strategy, are encouraged to apply.

### The Package

The position carries a competitive and attractive remuneration and benefits package including allowances for housing and education; and medical, accident and life insurance coverage. This position is based at Band 9 of the PIFS salary scale. The starting salary for the position is **SDR 28,750** per annum, which is equivalent to **FJD 86,779**

### How to apply

Interested applicants are encouraged to apply through the PIFS website: [www.forumsec.org](http://www.forumsec.org) where an information package containing the position description and full remuneration details are available. Candidates must include in either their application or Curriculum Vitae the full contact details of three referees.

To be eligible for the position, applicants must be nationals of Forum member countries. The Forum Secretariat is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The deadline for applications is **Friday 6 June, 5pm (Fiji Time)**.

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



# College of Micronesia-FSM

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## Empowering Entrepreneurs: Financial Literacy and Business Planning Workshop

From April 22 to April 25, 2025, the Center for Entrepreneurship, in partnership with the FSM Development Bank (FSMDB), successfully hosted a four-day Financial Literacy and Business Planning Workshop designed to strengthen the skills of aspiring entrepreneurs in our community!

The event, led by FSMDB and organized in collaboration with the Center, provided participants with practical, hands-on training covering essential topics such as the basics of bookkeeping, how to prepare an income statement, pricing strategies, and how to write a business plan. FSMDB representatives also conducted a session on how to apply for a

commercial loan, helping participants better understand the financial services available to support their business goals. Throughout the sessions, participants engaged in interactive exercises, working on real examples to build their confidence and capacity to manage their own businesses. To make the learning experience even more rewarding, the Center for Entrepreneurship also gave away calculators to participants who actively answered questions during the workshops! This training marks only the first step of our ongoing effort to assist clients in preparing to apply for business loans. The ultimate goal is to inspire and equip more individuals across FSM to launch

successful business ventures and drive economic growth in our communities. We extend our deepest appreciation to the FSM Development Bank for their leadership and commitment to supporting the entrepreneurial spirit in FSM. Their expertise,



resources, and passion for community development have been critical to the success of this event, and we look forward to continuing this important partnership to nurture new business opportunities across the nation.

Together, we are building a brighter, more empowered future for FSM!

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### Student Services Specialist II (Pohnpei)

Under the supervision the UBP Director, assesses each individual participant's college and career goals; prescribes and monitors the progress of individual's action plan goals and objectives. Monitors individual's progress in submitting college applications, financial aid forms and other associated matters.

### Maintenance Program Specialist (Yap)

Manage and supervise the facilities maintenance and security and safety operations at the campus. Plan, lay, and inspect the work of a group of maintenance workers and/or other relevant workers engaged in the maintenance and repair of the Campus' building, grounds, paved and unpaved areas, and other structures; Inspects buildings, structures, equipments and grounds to locate conditions needing maintenance and schedules a preventive maintenance program; Receives work orders for needed repairs and assigns personnel to perform repairs.



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## Soccer Comp-A glorious day of sport and friendship

*Pohnpei Soccer Association*

*May 10, 2025*

**Pohnpei**—On May 10, 2025, the Pohnpei Soccer Association Kids Club received a wonderful invitation from Britannia Mae Salas and Rodney Salas to play at Henry Nanpei Memorial Elementary School. Teachers and students were eagerly waiting—how could we disappoint them?

And so began a memorable day of sport and friendship.

The Journey Begins

It was an early, quiet, overcast Saturday morning. But in both Kipar and Kolonia, excitement buzzed in the air. The kids quickly ate breakfast and got ready for a new kind of match—soccer was a fresh experience for some!

The Kolonia kids met at PICS at 8:00 AM, the usual meeting spot for ‘away’ games. Adults with cars, trucks, and flatbeds organized transport for all the players. After a few snacks, the “soccer car parade” rolled out!

For some children, it was their first time having a match outside Kolonia. In the ride, they were all amazed by the scenic beauty of the island’s west side: crossing the bridge to Sokehs the group turned left toward Palikir, passing the capital they left the College of Micronesia at their right, then the Seinwar School, while they were surrounded by more and more lavish green and incredible mountains—and finally, they arrived at the destination.

Arrival in Kipar

Sixteen eager children were already waiting when we arrived, though a softball game at the field delayed our start a bit. Once the game wrapped up, it was time for soccer!

It was agreed to organize five small teams of 6–7 players each, grouped by age. What began as an overcast morning turned into a blazing sunny day—so a smaller field was the smart choice.

Match Highlights

To honour the effort of everyone, here are the match results (though we know the fun and experience mattered more than the score!):

- Kolonia A vs Kipar A: 1–0
- Kipar A vs Kolonia B: 0–2

- Kolonia C vs Kipar B: 3–0
- Kipar B vs Kolonia A: 2–3

The final match, Kipar B vs Kolonia A, was the most thrilling of the day. Kipar launched into a fast-paced offence and scored quickly. Kolonia equalized, but Kipar surged ahead again. The heat and fatigue took their toll in the second half, slowing the game—but with bursts of energy and determination, Kolonia equalized again and secured a last-minute victory.

Wrapping Up

After an hour of fun and spirited play, the kids gathered for a group photo, promising to meet again soon—either at PICS or for the next soccer clinic in Kipar.

To cool off from the midday sun, the group took a refreshing dip in the river at Enipein—what a perfect end to the day!

Thank You!

The Pohnpei Soccer Association Kids Club extends heartfelt thanks to everyone at Henry Nanpei Memorial Elementary School—the principal, teachers, organizers (especially Adele Robinson), the visiting children, the Sport Commission, and the accommodating softball players.

Thanks to Mr Ramsei Joab and the Sport Commission we will deliver a set of new goalposts. With continued support, we hope to soon provide other essential materials so soccer can continue to grow in Kipar and all of southern Pohnpei. Until next time!



## The FSM Launches National Energy Policy 2024–2050 and SDG 7 Roadmap

*FSM Information Services*

*May 6, 2025*

**Kosrae, Federated States of Micronesia** – The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) proudly launched its National Energy Policy 2024–2050 and SDG 7 Roadmap, marking a transformative step towards a sustainable and inclusive energy future. The launch event, attended by distinguished officials, development partners, and community representatives, underscored FSM’s commitment to energy accessibility, affordability, and sustainability.

Department of Resource & Development Secretary, the Honorable Elina P. Akinaga in her keynote address highlighted the National Energy Policy provides a strategic framework to ensure reliable, cost-effective energy services for all FSM citizens, with a particular focus on inclusivity and affordability. A key priority of the policy is bridging the energy divide, especially for remote outer island communities. The policy also emphasizes the promotion of renewable energy and capacity-building initiatives to foster a skilled workforce for FSM’s energy transition.

Transparency and efficiency remain central to FSM’s vision for a fair energy market. To support this, the policy advocates for the establishment of an independent energy regulator and explores financing mechanisms such as public-private partnerships and collaboration with Independent Power Producers (IPPs).

The accompanying SDG 7 Roadmap highlights pathways to sustainability and enhanced use of renewables. Leveraging the NEXSTEP tool developed by ESCAP, FSM policymakers will evaluate strategic energy scenarios including an ambitious net-zero emissions goal by 2050.

Achieving universal access to electricity and clean cooking technology by 2030

*Click here for continuation on next page*

# ...Energy Policy

Continued from previous page

remains a challenge, but FSM is committed to diversifying its power generation mix with indigenous sources such as solar and wind energy. Strengthening energy efficiency measures will further lower energy intensity while supporting FSM's transition to a cleaner, greener future.

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) extends its deepest appreciation to the European Union (EU), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

(ESCAP), and The Pacific Community (SPC) for their unwavering support in shaping the nation's sustainable energy strategy. Their steadfast commitment has been instrumental in driving forward initiatives that align with FSM's vision for a cleaner and more resilient energy future.



Building upon this foundation, ongoing efforts in the North Pacific continue to reinforce FSM's dedication to fostering sustainable energy solutions, ensuring long-term benefits for the nation and the wider region.

Download a copy of the National Energy Policy 2024-2050: <https://www.spc.int/digitallibrary/get/usz68>

## POHNPEI CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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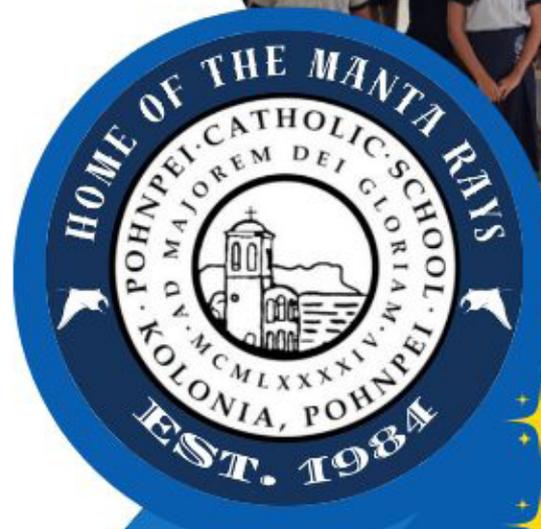
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# Ambassador of Italy visits Ambassador Kagomiya

*Embassy of Japan to the FSM*

**May 8, 2025**

**Pohnpei**—On May 5, 2025, Ambassador Kagomiya received a courtesy call from His Excellency Davide Giglio, Ambassador of the Italian Republic newly accredited to the FSM. Ambassador Giglio is a non-resident Ambassador with residence in Manila, Philippines.

Both Ambassadors discussed the friendly relations between their own countries and the FSM and confirmed that Japan as well as Italy share common values such as rule of law and maritime security with the FSM. They also argued that global challenges such as climate change and free trade are the issues for which Japan and Italy can cooperate with each other and with the FSM.



Furthermore, on May 7, 2025, Ambassador Kagomiya as well as the diplomatic corps attended the Presentation

of Credential Ceremony for H.E. Davide Giglio, who presented his Credentials to His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia.





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# New volunteers dispatched by JICA

*Embassy of Japan to the FSM*

**April 30, 2025**

**Pohnpei**—On April 24, Ambassador Kagomiya welcomed four Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV), who have been dispatched by JICA under the third Batch of JOCV in FY2024 to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). The JOCV program aims to support economic and social development at the grass-roots level and has made a substantial contribution to people-centered development. Among the four volunteers, one is to be dispatched to Yap State, two to Pohnpei State and one to Kosrae State. The volunteers will be in charge of various activities including education and healthcare.

Below are for detailed descriptions of each volunteer's job type, assigned organization, and (3) The Embassy wishes the best to the new volunteers.

**Ms. Yuka Segawa**  
Nurse Yap State Hospital, Yap State  
Technical guidance and support for nursing staff



**Ms. Nanae Maruo**  
Mathematics educator Ohmine Elementary School, Pohnpei State  
Mathematics education and introduction to Japanese culture



**Ms. Ayaka Hoshi**  
Mathematics educator Nett Elementary School, Pohnpei State  
Mathematics education and introduction to Japanese culture



**Mr. Takahiro Koma**  
Pharmacist Kosrae Community Health Center, Kosrae State  
Proper management of medications and explanation of medication usage to patients.



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# Ambassador Soram presents credentials as FSM Cross-Accredited Ambassador to Israel

*FSM Information Services*

*May 7, 2025*

**JERUSALEM, Israel**—On April 28, 2025, His Excellency Jackson T. Soram, the newly appointed Ambassador of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) to the State of Israel, officially presented his Letter of Credence to His Excellency Isaac Herzog, President of Israel, in a ceremony at the Presidential Residence in Jerusalem. This formalizes the 5th FSM Ambassador officially accredited to the State of Israel, with Ambassador Soram serving cross-accredited as a resident Ambassador to the United States of America in Washington, DC. In the same ceremony, Ambassador Soram also presented the Letter of Recall of his predecessor, Ambassador Asterio Takesy.

This momentous occasion commemorates the unique and enduring friendship between the State of Israel and the Federated States of Micronesia. Israel was among the first nations to recognize and supported Micronesia's sovereignty during FSM's early efforts to establish itself on the international stage, and notably, was the first country in the Middle East to establish full diplomatic relations with the FSM. Through its short history on the world stage, Micronesia has been consistent with its support of the State of Israel at a multilateral level and especially of late with the conflict of October 7, 2023, widely regarded as the Hamas terrorist deadliest attack waged against Jewish people since the Holocaust.

At the ceremony, His Excellency President Isaac Herzog warmly welcomed Ambassador Soram to the State of Israel and formally accepted both the Letter of Credence and the Letter of Recall. In his remarks, President Herzog expressed deep admiration and appreciation for the Federated States of Micronesia, stating, "First of all, we love your country. You're one of the closest friends Israel has... Israel sees you as a

great nation and friend. We hope to see your President, (H.E. Wesley Simina), in Israel, it would be a dream of ours, and a great dream of mine to visit your country."

Ambassador Soram respectfully accepted the invitation on behalf of President Simina and expressed his gratitude for Israel's warm hospitality extended to his delegation during his visit. While expressing appreciation for Israel's support to his predecessor, he also reaffirmed Micronesia's commitment to further strengthening the enduring partnership between the two countries. The ceremony, while brief, resonated throughout the halls of the presidential residence with Micronesia's national anthem orchestrated by a band and ending with the Israeli anthem.

Prior to the presentation of credentials, Ambassador Soram and Deputy Chief of Mission Teresa Filepin had productive meetings with different divisions within the Israeli's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chief of Protocol for the State of Israel, and ended the official meetings with the head of Israel's Agency for Development Cooperation, MASHAV (Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation), where focused is on development support and training opportunities for FSM. The delegation was also honored by a surprise 'meet and greet' from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Gideon Sa'ar.

Ambassador Soram was accompanied by Madam Soram and Deputy Chief of Mission, Teresa Filepin. Micronesia's Permanent Representative Ambassador Jeem Lippwe, on a different mission to Israel, also attended the ceremonies and so was FSM Honorary Consul to Israel, Ms. Ragolsky Dayan Rimon. Along with the Federated States of Micronesia, President Herzog also received diplomatic credentials of new ambassadors to the State of Israel from Cambodia, Fiji, and Nauru.





**Opportunity – Ocean Engagement Officer**

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

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

**The Opportunities**

Applications are invited to fill the **Ocean Engagement Officer** vacant international position at the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner (OPOC), initially based at the Secretariat in Suva, Fiji and later moving to its permanent office based in Palau. The establishment of OPOC, with dedicated professional support, would provide the necessary high-level representation and commitment that is urgently required to ensure dedicated advocacy and attention to ocean priorities, decisions and processes at national, regional and international levels.

The role will report to the Engagement Adviser to advance the responsibilities of the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner and work closely with staff across the Secretariat responsibilities include, but not limited to:

- Facilitate the proper and effective governance of Pacific Ocean Alliance (POA), including the finalisation of the POA Charter, in accordance with role as envisaged by the Forum Leaders Mandate.
- Responsible for OPOC’s dealing with POA including the organisation of meetings and maintenance of the POA database and national ocean policy focal point contacts.
- Ensure effective utilisation of POA to address issues of national, regional and global importance.
- Engaging POA stakeholders to ensure the advocacy of existing regional ocean priorities by Leaders and by the Pacific Ocean Commissioner.
- Engaging POA stakeholders to coordinate through various mechanisms such as the Forum Officials Sub Committee on International Engagement and Advocacy, Counsel of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) Ocean Taskforce on ocean advocacy messaging of the region at key global and regional ocean events.

Applicant should have a University Degree in Politics/Public Policy, International Relations, Communications, or other related discipline with experience working in a policy and/or advocacy agency and possess an excellent oral and written communication skills

Candidate with experience of working with oceans and / or development challenges in the Pacific region and likewise experience of attendance and involvement in high-level meetings of technical / political nature.

**The Benefits**

The position carries a competitive and attractive remuneration and benefits package including allowances for housing and education; and medical, accident and life insurance coverage. The salary range is from SDR 28,750 to 32,437 - Band 9-10 of our Salary scale (Equivalent to FJD 86,779 to 97,908 on 1 March 2025 foreign exchange rate).

**How to Apply**

Interested applicants are encouraged to apply through our website: [www.forumsec.org](http://www.forumsec.org) where an information package containing the position description and remuneration details for respective positions are also available therein. Candidates must include in either their application or Curriculum Vitae the full contact details of three referees.

To be eligible for the international positions, applicants must be nationals of Forum member countries\* Deadline for applications is at 5pm (Fiji time), 30 May 2025.

The Forum Secretariat – Officer of the Pacific Oceans Commissioner is an Equal Opportunity Employer

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

# Italian Ambassador David Giglio pays courtesy call on Acting Governor Belsipa Mikel-Isom

*Pohnpei Public Information*

May 7, 2025

**Pohnpe**—His Excellency David Giglio, Ambassador of the Republic of Italy to the Federated States of Micronesia, paid a courtesy call on Acting Governor Belsipa Mikel-Isom today at the Governor’s Office in Kolonia. The meeting served as an opportunity to strengthen diplomatic ties and share mutual priorities for sustainable development.

Ambassador Giglio conveyed Italy’s ongoing commitment to overseas development assistance, with a focused emphasis on climate change resilience. He shared that his visit to Pohnpei is part of his broader effort to build and maintain close relations within his area of diplomatic responsibility as a representative of the Italian Government.

Acting Governor Mikel-Isom, accompanied by Acting Attorney General Tyson Elias warmly welcomed Ambassador Giglio and expressed her appreciation for the visit, extending apologies on behalf of Governor Stevenson A. Joseph, who was unable to meet with the Ambassador in person, due to duty travel to the FSM R&D conference in Kosrae. She

relayed Governor Joseph’s priorities in key areas such as food security, water security, and energy security, and emphasized the importance of preventative health measures, including efforts to combat non-communicable diseases through healthier diets and the promotion of local foods.

In closing, Ambassador Giglio extended an open invitation to Governor Joseph to visit him at the Italian Embassy in Manila, where he is based.

Earlier in the day, Ambassador Giglio presented his credentials to His Excellency President Wesley W. Simina in a brief ceremony witnessed by Acting Governor Mikel-Isom.

The Pohnpei State Government thanks Ambassador Giglio for his visit and looks forward to continued engagement with the Government of Italy in shared areas of concern and cooperation.



# Yap State Legislature honors Polynesian Voyaging Society, Nā Kālai Wa‘a, and the people of Hawai‘i and Polynesia for commitment to traditional wayfinding

*Polynesian Voyaging Society*

*May 1, 2025*

**Honolulu, HI**—In honor of Hōkūle‘a’s 50th Birthday, the 11th Legislature of the State of Yap presented a formal resolution expressing profound and sincere appreciation to the Polynesian Voyaging Society (PVS), Nā Kālai Wa‘a (NKW), and the people of Hawai‘i and Polynesia. The resolution, which was formally presented by Yap Senator Gabriel Ramoloilug to PVS CEO Nainoa Thompson and Shorty Bertelmann of NKW in Niu Valley, O‘ahu on March 6, 2025, proclaims recognition for their unwavering support and enduring commitment to the State of Yap—especially the people of Satawal Island and the traditional chiefs, the Council of Tamol—by honoring and perpetuating traditional wayfinding and voyaging.

This landmark resolution acknowledges the invaluable role played by master navigator Pius Mau Piailug of Satawal Island, Yap State, Federated States of Micronesia, who shared his ancestral knowledge of celestial navigation and wayfinding with the people of Hawai‘i. This knowledge helped spark a cultural renaissance and reawakened the art of traditional Polynesian navigation across the Pacific.

“This resolution is more than ceremonial—it is a reaffirmation of our shared voyaging heritage and a heartfelt expression of gratitude to those who have carried the flame of wayfinding across oceans and generations,” said Senator Ramoloilug.

Among the notable milestones recognized in the resolution:

The historic 1976 voyage of Hōkūle‘a from Hawai‘i to Tahiti, under the guidance of Piailug, proved the validity and vitality of ancient navigation techniques, without the use of modern instruments.

Earlier, in 1975, the Chechemeni canoe, guided by Louis Rapanglug of Satawal, sailed to Okinawa, followed by his 1987 voyage to Fukuoka, Japan aboard the canoe Tipiew, and the reopening of the Mathawalwol sea route in 1970—all monumental in renewing connections of heritage, strengthened cultural identity, and revitalizing the unity within the community of Pacific peoples.

The ongoing commitment of Hawaiian and Polynesian navigators who were mentored by Mau Piailug and who received traditional rites of Pwo in 2007 and 2008, was also acknowledged.

The Yap State Legislature recognized how the teachings of Mau Piailug—through PVS, Nā Kālai Wa‘a, and Polynesian navigators—have endured and flourished, inspiring future generations through cross-cultural exchange and ancestral knowledge. The voyages of Makali‘i in 1999, the E-Mau voyage to return the master navigator to his home, and the delivery of the Alingano Maisu canoe to Satawal in 2000 were all named as pivotal events strengthening Pacific unity.

The resolution commends PVS, Nā Kālai Wa‘a, and the voyaging communities of Hawai‘i and Polynesia for their continued leadership and stewardship in perpetuating the sacred art of traditional navigation.



# U.S. delegation visits Yap for a high profile meeting

*Yap Department of Youth and Civic Affairs*

*May 02, 2025*

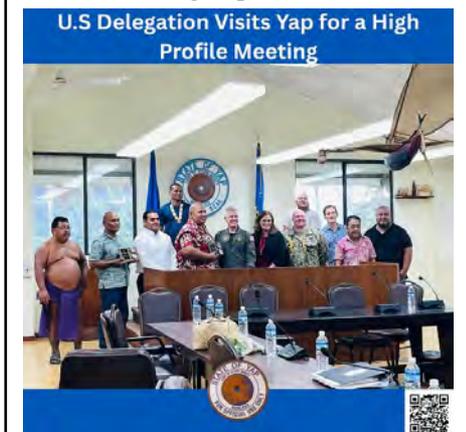
**Yap**—Today at 1:30 PM, a U.S. delegation, including the U.S. Ambassador Jennifer Johnson and the Pacific fleet Commander Stephen Koehler as well and the rest of their delegation arrived in Yap on a private jet. They came to meet with Yap State Leadership, which consists of the 4 branches of Government of the state of Yap and cabinet members.

The main focus of the meeting was to discuss the Operational Control Letter and its components of agreement, which are key topics in the partnership between the U.S. and Yap State.

The meeting began with a warm welcome from the Acting Governor Thomas G. Tun, who thanked the visitors for coming and expressed how grateful Yap State is to receive such honored guests.

Furthermore, The Director of the Department of Youth and Civic Affairs introduced the Yap State entire Yap State Leadership who were present to include the Speaker of the 11th Yap State Legislature and its members, Chairman of the Council of Tamol, Cabinet members, and the Mayor of the Municipality of Rull and other members of the Yapese Community.

This visit reflects the strong relationship between the U.S. and Yap State and their shared commitment to continued cooperation. The commencement will end tonight with a dinner hosted by the Admiral hosting Yap State Leaders.



**The Project for Pacific Co-learning towards Resilient Health System**

**VACANCY ANOUNCEMENT**

The Project for Pacific Co-learning towards Resilient Health System (JICA ResPACT) which is implemented under a technical cooperation scheme supported by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in accordance with mutual agreement between JICA and FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs is now seeking a qualified person to work as **Technical officer (MCH)**.

**Position:** Technical Officer (Maternal and Child health)

**Duty Office:** Project Office in Public Health, Pohnpei State Government, Kolonia, Pohnpei

**Contract type:** One year renewable (in principle)  
(Maximum 3 as project period until June 2028, 3 months probationary period)

**Gross monthly salary (inclusive of tax and pension):**  
Minimum \$1,500.00- for University Graduates (Negotiable depending on the qualifications)

**Duties will include, but not limited to:**

- Assist in the design and development of MCH programs,
- Support the implementation of MCH interventions,
- Maintain accurate records and documentation related to MCH activities,
- Assist in logistic arrangements for conferences, meetings, workshops and trainings,
- Collaborate with other stakeholders including government / international agencies, etc.
- Participate in meetings, workshops, and conferences related to MCH, and
- Other technical and administrative support, as required

**Must be competent in:**

- Strong understanding of MCH guidelines, protocols, and best practices,
- Excellent communication and time management skills,
- Competent skills in MS office applications: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook,
- Ability to adapt and multi-task, and
- Flexibility and responsibility.

**Skills and experience**

To be the successful candidate, you will possess the following:

- More than 15 years of relevant experience in the field of MCH,
- Relevant experience in MCH program management or technical support,
- Ability to work collaboratively in a multidisciplinary team environment,
- Proficiency in data management, analytical and reporting tools,
- Strong Interpersonal and organizational skills,
- Strong Interpretation and translation skills (English),
- Relevant experiences with the government body,
- Relevant experiences with international organizations (advantage),
- A "Can Do" proactive attitude and attention to details, and
- Retention of memory and a fast learner.

**Application**

All Interested persons are asked to send the following documents to: **pcrhs2@k-rc.co.jp**

- A cover letter, briefly stating applicant's qualifications and will to apply (within 1 page)
- A Curriculum Vitae (CV) / Resume, articulating applicant's personal, educational, and occupational backgrounds, skills, and contact information (Within 2 pages)
- A reference letter from someone who knows you well if available.

**Application deadline: 19 May 2025**

# The First Horizon Youth Summit: Expand Your Vision, Discover Your Purpose, Shape Tomorrow

*FAS Athletic Association*

*April 28, 2025  
Tamuning, Guam--*

“Know God, find your purpose’, ‘God is Real’, ‘Dream big without limitations’, ‘Take pride in your skin culture, take the island culture with you wherever you go’, ‘Embrace learning in any forms, ‘Stand Up to be a leader in your family, sports, school, and community’.



These are some of the remarks made by the inspiring speakers to our island youth at the First Horizon Micronesia Youth Summit held at Sinajana Art Center on Saturday, April 26, 2025.

In his opening remarks, the Honorable Frank Blas, Speaker of the Legislature, spoke about the “Captain of the Ship,” who is in charge of the ship, responsible for the welfare of everyone onboard, and ensuring it sails in the right direction. The Speaker told the youth to continue learning, getting knowledge and the confidence necessary because one day they will be asked to be a leader in our community. One day they will be the Captain of the Ship.

The keynote speaker at the First Horizon Micronesia Youth Summit was Stephen Gatewood, who told the young people, “Don’t let where you come from define where you can go. We are masters in reading the stars, genius navigators. Embrace learning in any form. Skills never stop. Progress over perfection, it’s okay to fail, keep growing.”

Gatewood is the son of Honorable Frances Tydingco-Gatewood, the first Guam - Pohnpei Chief Judge of the Federal District Court of Guam and a proud Micronesia. “You don’t have to leave the island to work, but if you do, take the island with you. Bring pride, knowledge, and respect,” he said.

Pastor Jared Baldwin shared words of encouragement and faith to the young people. “Know God, find your purpose,” he said, “God’s creation is beautiful. Know God through its creation and have a relationship with

Him.

The pastor told the youth to build their lives on two pillars: to love your Lord God with all your heart, soul, and mind; and to love your neighbors as yourself. “Glorify God in what you do and help others,” the pastor said, and continued, referencing Romans 11:36, “For everything comes from God, exist to God and give back to God.”

The success of the First Horizon Micronesia Youth Summit was made possible through collaboration and partnership with the Guam Wave Clubs and sponsored by the Tourism Education Council, Foneni Achocho Senu Athletics (FAS Athletics), and Mañe’lu.

Our deepest gratitude to our sponsors: McDonald’s Guam, Matson Navigation, Pacific Island Development Bank, and Bank of Guam.

The First Horizon Micronesia Youth Summit would like to thank our guest speakers: the Honorable Frank Blas Jr., Speaker of the 38th Guam Legislature, Stephen Gatewood from Matson Navigation, and Pastor Jared Baldwin from Harvest ministries.

We want to express our appreciation to our partners: Trades Academy, Guam Department of Agriculture, Guam Department of Education, and Guam Crime Stoppers for sharing their amazing experiences.

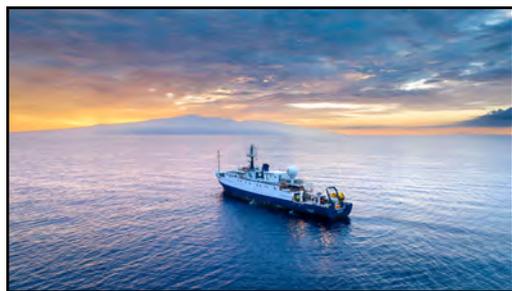
A special thank you to the parents of the students who participated in the First Horizon Micronesia Youth Summit. You are encouraging your children to engage in productive experiences which can help them gain coping skills and the ability to navigate challenges in their lives.

# Expedition sets sail to explore active underwater volcanoes and deep sea of the Mariana Islands with advanced technology

Ocean Exploration Trust

May 7, 2025

Apra, Guam—Today, the Ocean Exploration Trust (OET)'s exploration vessel (E/V) Nautilus sets sail on its first expedition of 2025 to explore the ocean surrounding the Mariana



Islands. This region is largely shaped by the forces of plate tectonics, with some of the oldest seafloor on the planet being driven into the Mariana Trench (the deepest ocean trench) and then remelted to bubble up as magma, forming a chain of volcanic islands and subsea volcanoes. West of the Mariana Islands, there are more than 60 underwater volcanoes and a complex back-arc spreading center where new seafloor is created. Here, active hydrothermal vents support life in extreme conditions, where unique biology derives energy from the chemicals in vent fluids, rather than most life on Earth that relies on photosynthesis to thrive.

Using the remotely-operated-vehicle (ROV) Hercules and Orpheus Ocean's Orpheus autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV), the team will explore deep-sea areas, including those prioritized by the local management and science community, including sites with signatures of active volcanism, abyssal plain habitats, and areas in and around the Mariana Trench Marine National Monument. This 22-day expedition is supported by NOAA Ocean Exploration, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, and US Geological Survey via the Ocean Exploration Cooperative Institute.

"OET is thrilled to have the opportunity

to collaborate with the local communities of the Mariana Islands on exploring the deep-sea wonders surrounding their islands," says Expedition Leader and OET Mapping Manager Derek Sowers. "Our mapping systems will be able to detect changes in the seafloor due to recent seismic or volcanic activity, and we will use our deep-diving robots to reveal new discoveries at hard-to-reach hydrothermal vents, volcanoes, and other deep-sea ecosystems."

The Mariana Arc is a chain of seamounts and islands, which are all active volcanoes. ROV Hercules exploration will be aimed at investigating active hydrothermal systems at some of the submarine volcanoes and the unique biological communities that live alongside them. Additionally, scientists hope to gain a better understanding of the recent geological history and potential geohazards of the region.

"The Mariana region is one of the most volcanically active places on Earth, but most of the action is underwater. E/V Nautilus will provide us with the technologies needed to explore these exciting, dynamic sites on the seafloor," says Bill Chadwick, Oregon State University.

Sailing onboard E/V Nautilus for the first time will be the Orpheus AUV, built and operated by Orpheus Ocean. The



Orpheus AUV will allow the team to explore the abyssal seafloor at depths up to 6,000 meters, which has to date been virtually unexplored around the Mariana Islands. During missions, Orpheus AUV will operate near or on the seafloor, performing high-resolution camera surveys as well as water and seafloor sampling.

"The Orpheus Ocean team is honored to contribute to this important exploration work in the Mariana region alongside the OECI. This expedition is perfectly aligned with our mission to provide scalable methods of access to the world's most challenging and unknown subsea environments, and will serve as a key early demonstration of our technology's capabilities and reliability," says Jake Russell, CEO of Orpheus Ocean.

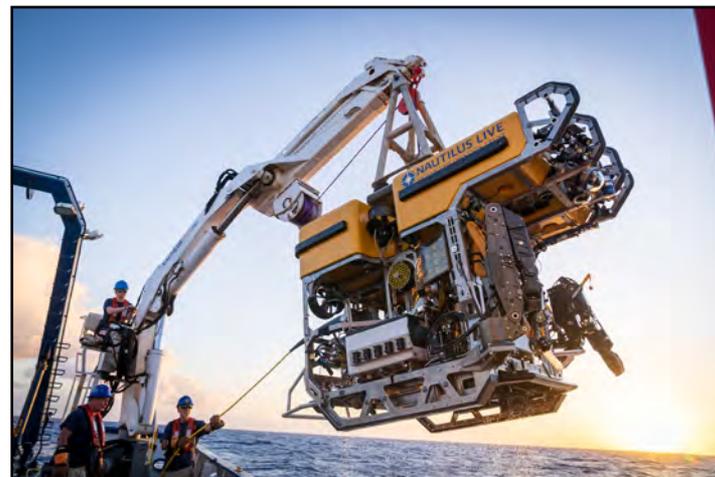
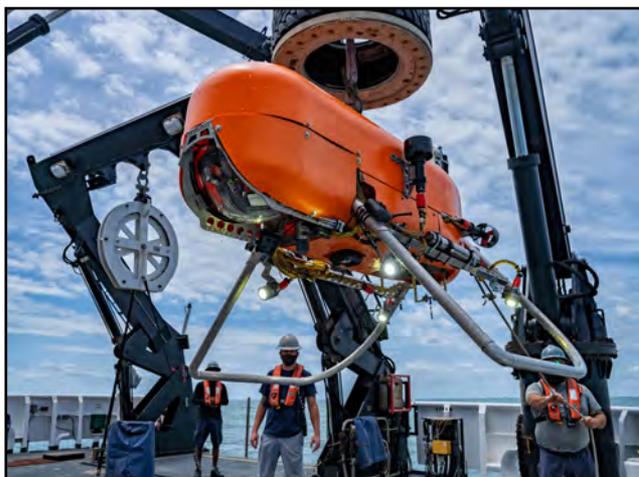
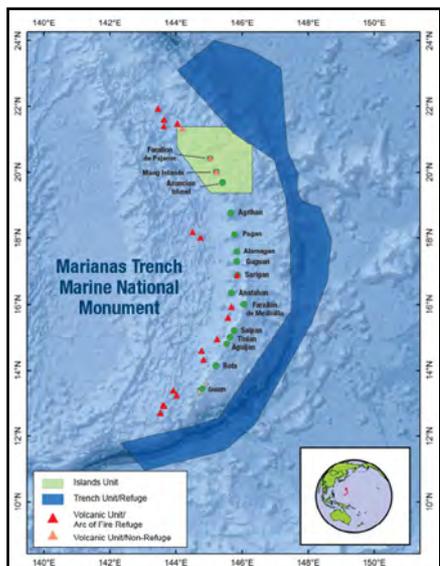
Joining the Corps of Exploration for this expedition are local educators, students, scientists, and resource managers from Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Ocean Exploration Trust is committed to building connections with local communities in expedition regions

through co-developing expedition plans, making data publicly accessible, and coordinating outreach with schools and community groups.

The upcoming E/V Nautilus expedition to the Mariana Islands is just the beginning of an exciting 2025 field season, which will also include explorations around the Solomon Islands, the Marshall Islands, and Wake Atoll. Our five 2025 expeditions will build ocean knowledge supporting international scientific and U.S. governmental priorities, particularly understanding the deep sea, sharing that knowledge with others, and contributing new discoveries and data to inform future resource management decisions. Like this one, future expeditions are co-developed with national exploration priorities and input from scientists, resource managers, and local community stakeholders in the regions where the expeditions will take place.

Through the open sharing of data collected during these expeditions, we will build upon decades of study,

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



## ...Expedition

*Continued from previous page*

stewardship, and discoveries. Mapping and ROV operations will directly contribute to the US National Strategy for Ocean Mapping, Exploration, and Characterization, the Beyond the Blue: Illuminating the Pacific campaign, and other coordinated initiatives. The integration of different technologies into operations on E/V Nautilus continues to advance national priorities for increasing the efficiency and sophistication of ocean exploration.

From May to September 2025, E/V Nautilus expeditions will be streamed live on NautilusLive.org, a 24-hour platform that brings ocean exploration directly to viewers on shore. Telepresence technology allows viewers to engage with the team at sea, asking questions and receiving real-time behind-the-scenes updates via social media. Classrooms worldwide are invited to connect with the at-sea team of STEAM professionals via free educational Q&A interactions. Additionally, OET offers free educational resources for K-12 learners in English, Spanish, Palauan, Samoan, and 'Ōlelo Hawai'i, including national-standard aligned activities, engineering design challenges, and creative projects for learners in the classroom or at home.

As E/V Nautilus operates in the Western Pacific, OET recognizes and respects the deep cultural connections many have to this region. OET's expeditions are planned in consultation with local communities to ensure mutual respect and collaboration. We welcome partnership inquiries at [info@oet.org](mailto:info@oet.org).



# MicSem Library, treasure trove of Micronesian history and resources, reopened on Yap

*Habele*

*May 3, 2025*

**Lamer, Yap**—MicSem Library, an internationalized recognized collection of books, recordings, videos and historical source documents, was formally reopened to the public on May First in the south of Yap. Traditional, political, religious and educational leaders were in attendance, along with community members and students, to observe and celebrate the long-anticipated event.

Micronesian Seminar (known popularly as MicSem) was founded in 1972 by the Catholic Church in Micronesia to help people integrate faith and life, as rapid modernization brought new social and political challenges to the many small, scattered islands of the western and central Pacific.

During its tenure, MicSem was first based in Chuuk and later in Pohnpei, where it provided education to the public on contemporary social issues. MicSem produced hundreds of articles, several books, and numerous videos addressing social issues, even as its founder and director, Jesuit Father Fran Hezel, continued his own prolific research, authoring historical and cultural books, monographs, and articles.

Over this period, MicSem built an internationally recognized library that began with a dozen boxes of books on the Pacific. Today MicSem boasts over 24,000 print titles, 82,000 historical photos, more than 800 videos, and 22,000 audio tracks. When MicSem Pohnpei operations ended in 2012, its library was stored at Xavier High School (Chuuk). Following Fr. Hezel's relocation to Guam, interest grew in re-establishing the library. MicSem's physical collection made its way to Yap, where a new building was constructed in 2023 at Yap Catholic High School to house the collection.

Ribbons spanning the entrance to the new building were cut in unison by Father Francis Hezel, Chief Louis Lukangw, Senator Isaac V. Figir, Senator-Elect Andy P. Choor, Acting Governor Thomas Tun, and Speaker Nick Figirlaarwon of the Yap State Legislature. Opening prayers, closing prayers and a blessing were offered by Father Rich McAuliff, Director of Yap Catholic High School. Remarks were given by Acting Governor Tun and Habele Fund's Neil Mellen.

"For decades Father Hezel lived among, served and loved the people in these islands," said Mellen. "Being smart and curious, he wanted to make sense of the people and things around him. He also saw, over decades, tremendous changes, some of them which entailed very practical problems or opportunities, and he recognized that an understanding of the past was the real foundational key to making sense of the present and future."

"Micronesian Seminar, as a collection, and an institution, is the practical application and the embodiment of how Fran thinks about and pursues his own work. It is dynamic; and both deeply grounded in the past and very practically concerned with the present and future. Somewhat analogously, the Yapese approach to, and understanding of its own histories and present, is perhaps the best, and longest standing example of a people who deeply understand and govern themselves in that same, wonderfully unique, way."

Father Hezel himself addressed the crowd, sketching a history of what became MicSem began with "a dozen boxes of books on the Pacific, a few rusty shelves and a battered Olympia typewriter" sent out in 1969.

"The early generation of island leaders, many of them members of the newly formed Congress of Micronesia, were dealing with big issues: the challenge of economic development in small island societies and the choice of political status as starters....



A major theme throughout was the effect of modern life on the physical and mental health of island people. What are all these social changes doing to folks here in Micronesia?"

Grounded in the past, but always looking ahead, Father Hezel observed: "Thanks to the generosity of key Yapese government leaders and the efforts of Fr. Rich McAuliff, this collection is able to be housed here in the islands where it belongs. Yet, our concern is that the library not be confined to a single small island and its population. That's why we are working to ensure that this rich collection of resources documenting the life and history of the islands can be searched on the MicSem website."

"Over the years we've come a long way, on a winding journey—one that has brought us over the years from east coast US to Chuuk to Pohnpei to Yap. Or, as we might put it, a journey that has progressed from cartons to containers to the cloud. And on we go!"

## Senior Indo-Pacific Command officials, Republic of the Marshall Islands representatives host first Joint Committee Meeting; reaffirm commitment to security, peace and prosperity

*Joint Task Force-Micronesia*

May 9, 2025

**CAMP SMITH,**

**Hawaii**—U.S. Indo-Pacific Command's Senior Military Official to the Republic of the Marshall Islands, U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Greg Huffman, commander, Joint Task Force-Micronesia, the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of the Marshall Islands Laura Stone and the RMI Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Kalani Kaneko each led a delegation to host the first bilateral RMI-U.S. Joint Committee Meeting with JTF-M at the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command headquarters building in Honolulu, Hawaii, April 28-29.



“This is an exciting and historic time as JTF-M participates in the RMI-U.S. JCM for the first time. The JCM exemplifies the strength and unity we share and provides an opportunity to not only reaffirm our commitments, but to specifically address security, peace and prosperity for the Marshall Islands,” Huffman said. “This is an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the unique challenges facing the community, expand upon the strong partnerships we have built over the years, and to ultimately get to work on actionable tasks.”

Senior leaders convened with a robust agenda, which included briefs from the delegations and centered on four lines of effort that define and articulate priorities. They included defense responsibilities and train and equip; internal security and law enforcement; maritime security/maritime domain awareness, and environmental threats and hazards exceptions. Through a whole-of-government approach, these priorities help to frame discussions and set the tone for open and transparent communications between the two partner nations.

Topics ranged from maritime security in

the region and the island's infrastructure improvements to increasing ship visits and establishing defense sites in the RMI. The RMI delegation outlined immediate and future opportunities that could lend themselves to DoD partnerships and investments. “We appreciate the opportunity to meet with you in person today and to share the priorities that matter most to the people of the Marshall Islands,” said Kaneko. “While we recognize that the threats posed by our adversaries are real and pressing, it is equally important for us to know that we can rely on our U.S. military partners to increase presence in the region.”

“By viewing our islands not just as distant nations, but as integral to the defense of the region and the U.S. homeland, we will enhance security and peace on our islands.”

The JCM is in accordance with the Compact of Free Association (COFA) Title III: Security and Defense Relations and promotes ongoing dialogue between nations to enhance security and defense responsibilities in the region.

Established in 2024, JTF-M synchronizes operations and activities across all domains, enabling a robust warfighting posture while enhancing partner nation capacity. Dedicated to promoting regional stability, JTF-M will perform homeland defense, Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA), and foreign humanitarian assistance through a whole-of-government approach within its assigned joint operations area.

## Fiji Prime Minister breaks new ground for SPC facility strengthening regional collaboration and job opportunities

*Secretariat of the Pacific Community*

May 2, 2025

**Fiji**—The Fiji Government today hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for a new Pacific Community (SPC) facility in Suva, reaffirming its commitment to regional cooperation, scientific excellence, and collective progress across the Pacific.



The new facility, supported by the Governments of Fiji and Australia in partnership with SPC, will enable stronger coordination, innovation and service delivery.

Officiating at the ceremony today, Prime Minister Honourable Sitiveni Rabuka emphasised Fiji's commitment to Pacific-owned and led organisations like the SPC, given the significant role they play in serving the needs and priorities of the Pacific.

“At a time of increased uncertainty around the world, where developments at the global stage shake the foundations of the multilateral system, it is encouraging to see our regional bodies forge ahead, in the true spirit of Pacific resilience,” said Prime Minister Rabuka.

SPC's Director General, Dr Stuart Minchin, also spoke at the groundbreaking ceremony and highlighted the broader regional impact of the expansion:

“This building is a symbol that we are actually expected to grow, not because SPC needs to grow, but because the challenges that the Pacific faces are so great that we need to grow to support our members with their challenges, such as climate change, managing our oceans, economic growth, public health and education.”

Bolstering this facility through its vuvale (family) relationship is the Australian Government, which reflects the ongoing long-term partnership and steadfast commitment to supporting Pacific-led sustainable development in meaningful ways. These ongoing, sustainable and impactful relationships have been and continue to be critical to the future sustainability of the region and organisations such as SPC to the region.

This support not only backs Fiji's leadership but also reinforces the vital role of regional institutions like SPC.

The facility, expected to be completed in 2026, will house 200 staff and represents another step forward in Fiji's commitment to building a stronger, more resilient Pacific for future generations.

Fiji is currently the host to SPC's largest regional offices, with over 500 staff in Suva across various campuses. Fiji is also home to the Pacific Seed Bank, a genetics lab that stores crops and trees critical for food security in communities across the entire Pacific region.

From the outset, Fiji has been a steadfast member, offering not only a home for SPC but also a key supporter of innovation and science that has an impact both locally and across our entire Pacific region. By hosting SPC, Fiji has enabled collaboration, built trust among regional partners, and helped shape a Pacific institution that reflects the region's values and priorities.

# Drawn to the Library – Celebrating community, learning, and legacy during FPPL Library Week 2025

## Friends of the Pohnpei Public Library

On April 29th, the warm halls of the Pohnpei Public Library (PPL) were filled with laughter, pride, and deep gratitude as we celebrated Library Week 2025 under the theme “Drawn to the Library.” More than just a program, the event felt like a family reunion—a vibrant tapestry of generations connected by a shared love for knowledge and community.

The ceremony opened with a heartfelt moment of acknowledgement led by our MC, Erika E. Billen, and was followed by a wonderful prayer by our every-gracious and dedicated Head Librarian Mrs. Trueleen J. Albert; who then offered a warm welcome to our distinguished guests and attendees, setting the tone for an afternoon of meaningful reflection and joyful celebration.

One of the highlights of the event was the presentations on the Library Week School Visits. Staff who participated in the week’s outreach efforts brought forward stories and moments that reminded us why our libraries matter so deeply. Contributions from Andrew, Emy, Erika, Resel, and Jordan captured the spirit of curiosity that the library continues to inspire in young minds.

To briefly recap, the library team had an outreach visit to Salapwuk Elementary S first on April 23rd then headed in the other direction on the map the next day to Temwen, and ended the week by

taking a boat out to the island of Parem on April 25th. During these visits the staff talked about the important work they do at the Pohnpei Public Library, had the guest speakers who hailed from those very areas deliver inspirational stories and had fun games with the grade schoolers where they got to go home with gift bags.

Special honors were extended in the certificate bestowments segment, where Suzanne L. Gallen, Chairwoman of the PPL Board, and Trueleen J. Albert recognized the Principals of Salapwuk Elementary School (Mr. Dosiwo Damian), Temwen Elementary School (Mr. Elcit Joseph) was not able to be present but was represented by Mr. Higgins from DOE, and Parem Elementary School (Mr. Marquin Victor) for their support of our outreach programs.

Our hearts swelled with pride as we also honored guest speakers and alumni of these very schools:

Nixon Alten, Lawyer with the Public Defender’s Office for Pohnpei State

Jerome Silbanuz, Physical Education Specialist with the Department of Education (unfortunately couldn’t make it but who’s presence was represented by Mr. Rickson Higgins of DOE)

Jordan Ligorio, PPL’s own Library Aide

Our remarkable role-models/guest speakers reminded us that the seeds



planted in local schools and nurtured by our library’s resources can grow into lives of impactful service.

We were equally honored by the presence of PPL Board Members including Mr. Rickson Higgins from the Department of Education, Mr. Vantslot Etse, IMLS Coordinator at the FSM National Archives, Culture, and Historic Preservation, and our Chairwoman Mrs. Suzanne L. Gallen from the World Bank. Their unwavering support and vision continue to guide the library’s mission forward.

The program concluded with closing remarks by Mr. Higgins, a cherished photo session with the PPL team, and refreshments shared among friends old and new.

Behind every successful event is a team of passionate people. This week would not have been possible without our incredible Australian Volunteer Mr. Andrew Trigg especially!

Alongside them stood our tireless volunteers: Asenaca Tamanitoakula, a student from the University of the South Pacific, and Lorelei Aldis from PICS High School. Your commitment embodies the true spirit of service and learning.

The Pohnpei Public Library extends its deepest gratitude to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), whose unwavering support through grants—channeled via the National Archives, Culture, and Historic Preservation (NACH)—has made our National Library Week celebrations not only possible but profoundly meaningful. Their commitment to uplifting libraries like ours through resources, vision, and encouragement has strengthened our ability to serve

our community with heart, history, and hope. We are truly honored to stand alongside such steadfast partners in preserving knowledge and culture for generations to come.

As we closed this year’s Library Week, one message resonated clearly: Libraries are not just places, they are people. People who care, who give, and who grow—together.

We also brought to everyone’s attention another important reason for the day’s celebration. This year marks the 37th anniversary of the Pohnpei Public Library, a beacon of learning and community since its opening in February 1988. Born from the vision of educators Christine Lebehn and Penny Weilbacher in 1985, the library has grown into a cherished institution, fostering literacy and connection across generations. As highlighted on the Friends of the Pohnpei Public Library blog, the library continues to serve as a “Sea of Information” for the island, celebrating milestones like Library Week and engaging the community through various programs. This anniversary not only honors the library’s rich history but also its ongoing commitment to enriching the lives of Pohnpei’s residents.

Thank you for being part of our story.



# University of Hawai‘i and College of Micronesia-FSM sign agreement to increase Social Work Degree access

*By Theresa Kreif, MSW, LSW. Director of Pacific Partnerships & Workforce Development Initiatives at the University of Hawaii at Manoa Thompson School of Social Work & Public Health*

**May 12, 2025**

**Kolonia, Pohnpei**—The University of Hawai‘i at Manoa Thompson School of Social Work & Public Health and the College of Micronesia (COM)-FSM have entered into a formal Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to create accessible and affordable pathways to online Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and online Master of Social Work (MSW) degrees for students across the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

The initiative reflects a long-standing commitment by both institutions to strengthening the Pacific region’s workforce through an education rooted in local culture, needs, and priorities. The MOA allows FSM-based students to apply to and undertake UH Manoa’s social work degree programs via distance education, which is of particular interest to students who choose to remain in their home communities.

“This agreement is about more than educational access—it’s about conversations regarding what social work means in Micronesia, how developing a culturally grounded social work workforce in Micronesia could improve health and well-being outcomes,” said Theresa Kreif, MSW, LSW, Director of Pacific Partnerships & Workforce Development Initiatives at the University of Hawai‘i. “As the FSM works to define and develop the social work profession, it can play a vital role in supporting families, promoting health, and advancing justice across the FSM.”

The most recent Compact of Free Association currently guarantees that students with FSM citizenship are eligible for in-state tuition at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa. Additionally, the BSW program is Pell Grant eligible, which currently allows qualifying students to apply to receive US federal financial aid. Students may consider applying for FSM or State level scholarships.

UH Manoa also partners with the University of Guam (UOG) and its Division of Social Work for a partnership connected to the Master of Social Work. The UOG Social Work program - a highly respected and nationally accredited in-person BSW program - has a long history of developing

social workers and the social work profession in the Micronesia region.

Kreif, whose connection to Micronesia began as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Yap in 1997, has worked for over two decades in partnership with Pacific communities to expand access to professional pathways in social work. During a recent visit to Pohnpei, she met with COM-FSM President Theresa Koroivulaono & the Senior Leadership Team at COM-FSM, FSM National and Pohnpei State leaders in education and social services, the FSM and Pohnpei Scholarship Offices, with Pohnpei State Senator and Chairman of the Health Committee Shelten G. Neth, and the UNICEF North Pacific Field Office continue to discuss this educational pathway and broader workforce goals.

The visit also included outreach to local youth on Pohnpei. “We had the opportunity to meet with students from the Upward Bound program and Madolenihmw High School. Their energy and curiosity about social work reaffirmed that the next generation is ready to serve their communities in powerful ways,” Kreif said.

The University of Hawai‘i at Manoa Thompson School of Social Work & Public Health is currently ranked #51 out of 318 accredited social work schools in the U.S., placing it in the top 16% nationally.

As part of the MOA’s implementation, articulation agreements are now being developed to help College of Micronesia-FSM students transfer into the UH Manoa BSW program. These agreements aim to ensure students get the most value from their educational experience.

The University of Hawaii at Manoa Pacific Partnerships has many success stories. One notable example is Sylvia Elias, MSW, an alumna of the UH Manoa MSW program and a proud graduate of COM-FSM and the University of Guam BSW Program. Sylvia received Associate of Arts degrees in Micronesian Studies and Liberal Arts from COM-FSM and a Bachelor of Social Work from UOG before earning her MSW through the UH Manoa program. She now serves as a Child Protection Specialist with the UNICEF North Pacific Field Office, where she advocates for children, families, and community well-being across



*Theresa Kreif, Sylvia Elias, Honorable Senator G. Neth, Andrea Glover*

Micronesia.

Sylvia is also a former Young Pacific Leader, a distinction awarded through the U.S. Government’s signature program to strengthen leadership development and networking in the Pacific.

Reflecting on the growing recognition of social work in the region, Elias said, “Developing the social work profession in Micronesia is critical to ensuring our communities are supported by people who understand the culture, the history, and the daily realities of life on our islands. I believe in the next generation of Pacific social workers—they are our future healers, educators, and protectors.”

Her story, Kreif says, highlights the potential impact the social work profession could have in the Micronesia region. “Ms. Elias exemplifies what it means to build a career in social work rooted in culture, service, and leadership. Through this MOA, we hope to support many more future leaders like her.”

Social work, as a profession, is dedicated to helping individuals, families, groups, and communities enhance their well-being and solve problems through personal, communal, and systemic resources, in addition to working to advocate for policies that positively impact individuals, groups, and communities. In Micronesia, social workers could serve in key roles within health and health care, education, child protection, veterans services, mental health, working with elders, addressing substance abuse issues, community development, criminal justice, environmentalism and working with individuals with physical and mental differences, while working in position in the government, NGOs and the private sector.



*COM-FSM President Theresa Koroivulaono & University of Hawaii Representative Theresa Kreif*

The University of Hawai‘i at Manoa and COM-FSM invite local agencies, schools, and families to learn more about the social work degree options and how they can support students on this journey.

COM-FSM President, Dr. Theresa Koroivulaono President, said of the partnership, “Approved by the Board of Regents in September 2024, the new COM-FSM Strategic Plan 2025-2030 champions and renews the college’s commitment to quality FSM education in the three strategic goals; access, innovation and resilience. Mainstreaming Micronesia cultures and recognizing the newer elements of Micronesian identity in the modern world also necessitate the integration of critically important programs like social work. Dealing effectively with social issues and mitigating the challenges that emanate from increasing urbanization requires growing local capacities in social work. This agreement with UH Manoa exemplifies the college’s proactive response in partnering with UH Manoa as a regional specialist in social work programs thereby enabling access for our students.”

As part of the MOA’s implementation, articulation agreements are now being developed to help College of Micronesia - FSM students transfer into the UH Manoa BSW program. These agreements aim to ensure students get the most value from their educational experience.

For more information about the UH Manoa BSW and MSW distance education programs and scholarship eligibility, interested individuals can visit the UH Manoa Thompson School of Social Work & Public Health website or email kreif@hawaii.edu.

# FSM and World Bank hold joint review to accelerate project delivery across the nation

*FSM Central Implementation Unit, DoFA*

April 3, 2025

**Pohnpei, FSM** — The World Bank and the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) have reaffirmed their strong partnership through a high-level Joint Country Portfolio Performance Review (CPPR) aimed at bolstering the performance of a growing and impactful development portfolio.

With 10 active projects totaling US\$344 million, the World Bank’s support is helping to drive transformative change across key sectors in FSM—from improved connectivity, boosting access to jobs and training, and improving public services. Hosted at the World Bank’s North Pacific Office in Pohnpei, the CPPR brought together government officials, project teams, and development partners for a full day of technical discussions focused on accelerating progress, addressing delivery challenges, and ensuring real impact for communities across FSM. The World Bank’s portfolio in FSM continues to grow and now includes two new projects—the Strengthening Public Financial Management Phase II and the Access and Renewable Increase for Sustainable Energy Project—recently added.

Opening the event, Honorable Sohs John, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Finance and Administration (DoFA), emphasized the importance of collective ownership and accountability. “This portfolio review is a chance for all parties—implementing agencies, departments, and our key partner the World Bank—to reflect on how to further improve implementation, with the goal of ensuring timely delivery so that project benefits can be seen and felt by the people of FSM,” he said.

The agenda included detailed

sessions on flagship projects such as the FSM Skills and Employability Enhancement Project (SEE), the Digital FSM Project, the Sustainable Energy Development and Access Project (SEDAP), the Pacific Regional Connectivity Program, and major road infrastructure initiatives like the Strategic Climate-Oriented Road Enhancements (SCORE) and the Prioritized Road Investment and Management Enhancements (PRIME). Each session offered a platform to present updates, highlight systemic issues, and outline clear, time-bound actions.

“The World Bank’s growing portfolio in FSM is delivering real results for the people of this country—supporting job creation, expanding access to essential services, and helping government institutions better serve communities,” said Mr. Omar Lyasse, World Bank Resident Representative for FSM, RMI, and Palau. “We are proud of the progress made, and are committed to work with the government to build capacity for improved implementation across the portfolio for the people of FSM.”

Assistant Secretary Senny Phillip, who led the CPPR planning alongside her colleagues at DoFA and the Central Implementation Unit (CIU), underscored the importance of inter-agency coordination. “This CPPR was a joint effort, organized with dedication from across departments. Our goal is not just review but continuous improvement,” she said. “We appreciate the responsiveness of all implementing units and the guidance from the World Bank team.”

One session of particular focus was the FSM Skills and Employability Enhancement (SEE) Project, which highlighted how critical this year is for the project and its stakeholders. Key activities, such as school facility construction,

new curriculum development, and the training of master trainers, are currently underway. Hyunjeong Lee, SEE Project Manager, acknowledged that while challenges remain, the overall progress has been encouraging. “We’re proud of the progress and the collaborative spirit shown by all stakeholders,” she said. She added that disbursements are expected to continue improving as implementation advances.

Ms. Karlene Collette Francis, Senior Operations Officer for the World Bank, who co-moderated several sessions, commended the country’s momentum. “FSM’s portfolio is growing in complexity

and ambition, but the government has shown strong leadership. We are confident that with continued coordination and proactive risk management, we can exceed this year’s implementation targets,” she stated.

The CPPR also laid the groundwork for upcoming engagements, including further technical missions and strategic discussions to support FSM’s development goals. With just a few months remaining in the fiscal year, the joint review served as both a stock-take and a recommitment to shared priorities: transparency, inclusion, and impact.

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## Opinion Editorial

# The race to COP30: A global call for tangible climate action from the Pacific

*Andrew Yatilman, Secretary, FSM Department of Environment, Climate Change, and Emergency Management*  
*Kevin Petrini, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP North Pacific Office*

As we reflect on the outcomes of the 2024 Tri-COPs, the urgency of addressing the triple planetary crisis—climate change, biodiversity loss, and land degradation—has never been clearer. These interconnected challenges are not distant threats; they are shaping the lives of millions today, especially in vulnerable regions like the Pacific, where the stakes are highest.

For the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and other Pacific Island nations, the path to COP30 represents both a challenge and an opportunity. In the lead-up to this critical conference, the question is not whether action is necessary but how we can ensure it is decisive, inclusive, and impactful.

The 2024 Tri-COPs underscored a troubling reality: while global awareness is growing, the gap between commitments and tangible outcomes persists. Despite landmark decisions like the Baku Climate Unity Pact's ambitious goal to mobilise US\$300 billion annually for climate finance by 2035, many nations, particularly Small Island Developing States (SIDS), remain underfunded and overburdened.

For the Pacific, this shortfall is more than a number. Rising sea levels threaten entire communities, biodiversity loss undermines food security, and land degradation jeopardises the resilience of fragile ecosystems. The Pacific is not just on the frontlines of these crises; it is the region where solutions must be tested, refined, and scaled.

As we prepare for COP30, there is an urgent need to move beyond dialogue. The focus must shift to implementing integrated solutions that align Nationally Determined Contributions with National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans. For FSM, this means prioritizing nature-based solutions, such as restoring coastal ecosystems

to mitigate climate impacts while enhancing biodiversity and sustaining livelihoods.

Equally critical is addressing the persistent challenge of climate finance. Initiatives like the Cali Fund and Riyadh Global Drought Resilience Partnership show promise but must deliver for the communities that need them most. In FSM and across the Pacific, direct access to funding mechanisms is essential. These funds must empower local governments, Indigenous Peoples, and community leaders to lead on-the-ground solutions.

### *FSM's Journey Towards Resilience*

For the Pacific, the race to COP30 is not just about meeting global targets; it is about survival and unity. The region's unique vulnerabilities demand tailored approaches, but its strengths—deep cultural ties to the environment, traditional knowledge systems, and a spirit of resilience—offer valuable lessons for the world.

In the FSM, significant strides have been made through initiatives that address pressing environmental and disaster preparedness challenges, while laying the foundation for long-term resilience. One such initiative is Ridge to Reef (R2R), implemented with the Department of Environment, Climate Change, and Emergency Management (DECEM) and supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Through concerted efforts of R2R partners, we were able to conserve biodiversity across 10 percent of coastal and marine areas. With funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNDP and DECEM played a key role in strengthening ecosystem resilience through integrated land, water, and coastal management, innovative planning, and capacity building.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Enhancing Disaster and Climate Resilience project, generously funded by the Government of Japan, became a cornerstone of FSM's disaster preparedness. In Pohnpei, it facilitated



the construction of an Emergency Operations Center, improving coordination during crises. In Chuuk and Yap, it addressed critical needs by rehabilitating water treatment facilities, ensuring clean water access when hygiene was vital. Upgraded communication systems enabled faster coordination among responders. These efforts proved invaluable, not only during the pandemic but also in the severe drought of 2024, when enhanced water reservoirs in Yap ensured reliable supplies, efficiently transported to outer islands, bringing relief to affected communities.

Building on these efforts, FSM is now implementing the GEF-funded Securing Climate-Resilient Sustainable Land Management and Progress Towards Land Degradation Neutrality in the (FSM LDN) project. It aims to combat land degradation in FSM's terrestrial and coastal ecosystems, including mangroves. By engaging local communities as partners, FSM LDN emphasises hands-on learning and collaborative decision-making to promote sustainable land management, climate-smart agriculture, and ecosystem restoration. Through these efforts, it aims to protect biodiversity while empowering communities to adopt resilient practices for the future.

### *A Global Call to Action*

Pacific Island nations have long been champions of ambitious climate action, advocating for the 1.5°C goal

and leading by example through low-carbon development pathways. However, achieving these aspirations requires global recognition of the region's disproportionate burdens and a commitment to closing the finance and resource gaps.

As UNDP and DECEM, we call on the global community to rise to the occasion. COP30 must be a turning point—where promises are matched by action, and the voices of the most affected guide decision-making.

This means ensuring that climate finance mechanisms are accessible, transparent, and effective. It means fostering partnerships that bridge the gap between local needs and global resources. And it means recognizing that addressing the climate crisis is not just an environmental imperative—it is a moral obligation.

For the Pacific, the path to COP30 is a race against time. But it is also an opportunity to demonstrate that with the right support, even the most vulnerable regions can drive transformative change.

The question now is: will the world listen, and will it act?

Let COP30 be remembered as the moment the global community chose action over rhetoric, ambition over complacency, and unity over division. In doing so, we can chart a path toward a future that is not only sustainable but just—for the Pacific and the planet.