

# Elder FSM statesman and former President Joseph J. Urusemal passes on

*FSM Information Services*

*September 18, 2025*

**FSM** - It is with deep respect and profound sadness, that the Federated States of Micronesia announces the passing of the Honorable Joseph J. Urusemal, Sixth President of the Federated States of Micronesia, who passed away on September 16, 2025, in the Republic of Palau.

Born on March 19, 1952, on Woleai in the State of Yap, President Urusemal dedicated his life to public service, education, and the advancement of our nation. After completing his early schooling on Woleai and graduating from Xavier High School in Chuuk, he

pursued higher education at Rockhurst College in Kansas City, Missouri, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Administration of Justice in 1976. He went on to work in the United States before returning home in 1982 to serve as a teacher and counselor at the Yap State Department of Education, where he contributed significantly to the Yap State Education Plan.

In 1987, he was elected as the State of Yap's at-large representative to the Fifth Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia, a position he held with distinction for many years. Known for his humility, strong principles, and commitment to traditional values, he served as Floor Leader for twelve years before being elected the Sixth President



of the Federated States of Micronesia, serving from May 11, 2003, to 2007.

Following his presidency, he continued his service in Congress, most recently as Chairman of the Committee on Education and the Yap Congressional Delegation. Throughout his career, he was a member of several key congressional committees, including Ways and Means, Health and Social Affairs, and Transportation and Communication. His leadership and vision helped guide the Nation's development while remaining grounded

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# Pohnpei's Compact challenge rejected as FSM Court grants Congress's motion to dismiss

*By Bill Jaynes  
The Kaselehlie Press*

*September 18, 2025*

**Palikir, Pohnpei** - The FSM Supreme Court has sided with the FSM Congress in a closely watched legal battle over Compact of Free Association funds, granting Congress's motion to dismiss a lawsuit brought by the Pohnpei State Legislature and its Speaker, Marvin T. Yamaguchi. The ruling, issued on September 11, closes the case and upholds Public Law No. 23-30, which reserves ten percent of Compact funds for the FSM government and centralizes oversight of infrastructure funding in

the FSM Department of Transportation, Communications, and Infrastructure (TC&I).

At the heart of the dispute was Public Law No. 23-30, enacted in 2023 after the FSM Congress overrode President Wesley W. Simina's veto. The law established that beginning in fiscal year 2024, the FSM government would receive ten percent of Compact of Free Association sector grants, reducing the shares of the four FSM states. The law also mandated that all Compact-funded infrastructure projects be administered by the FSM government through TC&I.

Pohnpei's leaders objected strongly, arguing that the law contradicted earlier agreements and undermined State autonomy. They pointed to the so-called Arngel Accords, a 2023 consensus reached between the President, the four governors, and presiding officers of the five legislatures. That agreement had set the FSM government's share at eight percent for a two-year period, with a commitment to reconsider the formula afterward. Pohnpei argued that by raising the share to ten percent, the FSM Congress ignored the states' consent and violated established law.

Congress also challenged the provision

centralizing infrastructure funds, claiming it stripped states of their ability to manage their own projects and constituted an unlawful "taking" of State authority.

## *The Court's Ruling*

In its detailed opinion, the FSM Supreme Court rejected these claims, concluding that Pohnpei had failed to state a cause of action upon which relief could be granted. The justices emphasized several key principles:

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# Lt. Governor Movick represents Pohnpei at funeral services for former Yap Lt. Governor Joseph Habuchmai

*Pohnpei Public Information*

September 18, 2025

*Kolonia, Pohnpei* – The Office of the Governor announces that the Honorable Herolyn S. Movick, Lt. Governor of the State of Pohnpei, represented Governor Stevenson A. Joseph and the Government of Pohnpei at the funeral services of the late Honorable Joseph Habuchmai, former Lt. Governor of Yap State (2003–2007).

Mr. Habuchmai, who passed away recently, lived in Pohnpei for many years and was a respected member of the community, contributing greatly to education through his work at the College of Micronesia–FSM.

Through official correspondence from the Acting Governor of Yap, Honorable Francis Itimai, to Governor Joseph, assistance was rendered in ensuring that the late Lt. Governor Habuchmai was honored

with full dignity. In a solemn and historic first, Lt. Governor Movick presented the Yap State Flag to Mrs. Habuchmai on behalf of the people and Government of Yap State. An Honor Guard was also provided, symbolizing the close cooperation between Pohnpei and Yap States and the shared respect for the life and service of the late leader.

In addition, Lt. Governor Movick read an executive proclamation issued by Governor Joseph, which declared:

“That the Government and People of Pohnpei join in mourning the passing of the late Joseph Habuchmai, and celebrate his extraordinary achievements in education, public service, and national leadership.

That the Government of the State of Pohnpei extends its deepest condolences to the family, friends, and colleagues of Mr. Habuchmai, recognizing his life as a legacy of service and inspiration.

That this Proclamation stands as an official tribute to his enduring impact on the educational, cultural, and civic life of Micronesia.”



## Pohnpei honors the life and legacy of Joseph Habuchmai

By Bill Jaynes  
*The Kaselehlie Press*

September 16, 2025

*Kolonia, Pohnpei* - The Government and People of Pohnpei are mourning the passing of Joseph Habuchmai, a respected educator, leader, and public servant whose life’s work left a lasting impact across the Federated States of Micronesia.

Governor Stevenson A. Joseph issued Executive Proclamation No. 25-08 to honor Habuchmai’s extraordinary achievements, describing his life as “an enduring example of scholarship, service, and leadership that will inspire future generations.”

Habuchmai dedicated more than three decades to the College of Micronesia–FSM, where he served as instructor, professor, chairperson, director of academic programs, and ultimately as vice president of administrative services. His leadership helped strengthen the institution into the premier center of higher education

in the FSM.

Beyond his work in education, Habuchmai also served with distinction as Lieutenant Governor of Yap State from 2003 to 2007. In that role, he represented Yap at national and international gatherings, advanced state priorities, and contributed to policymaking in education, culture, and governance. He continued his service to the nation as Chairman of the FSM Insurance Board until his untimely passing.

Known as a tireless advocate for education and cultural preservation, Habuchmai represented the FSM at regional and international conferences, mentored young professionals, and played a pivotal role in preparing accreditation reports that secured the future of COM-FSM.

“His legacy will live on in the classrooms, communities, and institutions he helped shape,” the proclamation reads, extending the government’s “deepest condolences to the family, friends, and colleagues of Mr. Habuchmai.”

## The Kaselehlie Press

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Bill Jaynes  
Managing Editor

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

**Monday, October 6, 2025**

# Governor Joseph, First Lady and Lt. Governor Movick attend funeral of the late Joses Gallen

## Pohnpei Public Information

September 19, 2025

**Kolonia, Pohnpei** – Governor Stevenson A. Joseph, First Lady Dr. Aina Garstang, and Lt. Governor Herolyn S. Movick attended the funeral services of the late Joses Gallen on Friday, September 19, 2025, at the residence of the late Mr. Gallen.

Pohnpei for Mr. Gallen’s life and legacy.

The presence of the Governor, First Lady, and Lt. Governor signified the solidarity of the Pohnpei State Government with the family and community during this time of mourning.

Governor Joseph presented an Executive Proclamation in honor of the late Joses Gallen to a family member, recognizing his many contributions and service to the people of Pohnpei. The proclamation reflected the gratitude and respect of the Government and People of

The Pohnpei State Government extends its deepest condolences to the family, friends, and loved ones of the late Joses Gallen. His memory and contributions will be remembered by the people of Pohnpei.



# Governor issues proclamation in memory of Joses R. Gallen

By Bill Jaynes  
The Kaselehlie Press

**Kolonia, Pohnpei** — Governor Stevenson A. Joseph has declared a period of mourning to honor the late Joses R. Gallen, Esq., former Secretary of the Federated States of Micronesia Department of Justice, whose passing marks the loss of a distinguished public servant and community leader. In Executive Proclamation No. 25-09, Governor Joseph recognized Gallen’s decades of service across state and national governments, where he held

senior roles in legal affairs, diplomacy, and administration.

Gallen’s career included service as Secretary of the FSM Department of Justice, Assistant Attorney General in litigation and international law, Attorney General in both Yap and Chuuk States, General Counsel at the Pohnpei Utilities Corporation, and multiple posts within the FSM Congress and Pohnpei and Chuuk legislatures. He also represented the nation abroad as Deputy Chief of Mission and Minister Counselor at the

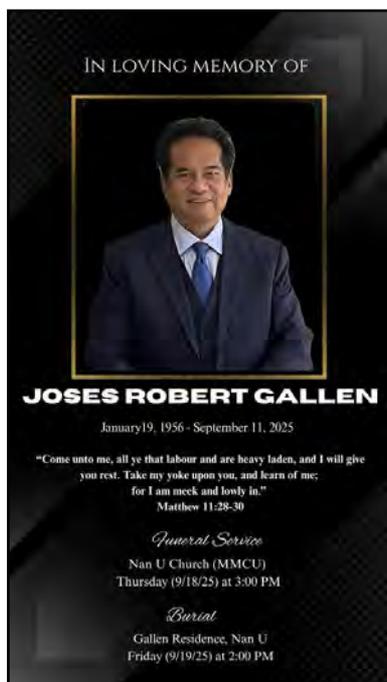
FSM Permanent Mission to the United Nations.

Beyond his public service, Gallen was also a pastor with the United Church of Christ in U Municipality, Pohnpei, where he provided spiritual leadership and guidance to his community

The proclamation extends condolences to Gallen’s wife, Grace Tereas Gallen, their children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, siblings, and extended family, as well as to friends and colleagues who will remember him for his dedication and accomplishments.

Governor Joseph ordered that the Pohnpei State Flag be flown at half-staff for up to three days, in coordination with the national government, as a visible expression of mourning and respect.

“His legacy is carried not only in the laws he helped shape and the offices he strengthened, but also in the faith and guidance he shared as a pastor,” the proclamation affirms.



# Pohnpei mourns the passing of former Chief Justice Benjamin Rodriguez

By Bill Jaynes  
The Kaselehlie Press

September 20, 2025

**Kolonia, Pohnpei** — Governor Stevenson A. Joseph has declared a three-day period of mourning to honor the life and service of Benjamin Rodriguez, former Chief Justice of the Pohnpei State Supreme Court, who passed away on September 2, 2025, at the age of 60.

Rodriguez's public career was marked by rare breadth and dedication. He began as a lab assistant at Pohnpei State Hospital, later moved into legislative service, and went on to hold roles that touched every branch of government.

His distinguished path included serving as National Justice Ombudsman at the FSM Supreme Court, Associate Justice of the Pohnpei State Supreme Court, and ultimately Chief Justice of the court from 2010 to 2019.

After stepping down from the judiciary, Rodriguez continued his commitment to the people of Pohnpei in new capacities. He worked as an attorney with Micronesian Legal Services, served as executive director of the Pohnpei Chamber of Commerce, provided legal counsel to the Nett District Government, and most recently acted as Chief of Staff to the Governor.

Governor Joseph noted that Rodriguez was among the very few leaders in

the state's history to have served in all three branches of government — legislative, judicial, and executive — a testament to both his versatility and his deep commitment to public service.

The proclamation recognized Rodriguez's reputation for integrity, fairness, and dedication to justice, stating that his work left institutions stronger and inspired future generations of public servants.

All flags in Pohnpei will be flown at half-staff during the official mourning period, in remembrance of a leader whose lifelong service helped shape the state's governance and whose loss is deeply felt across the island.



# Pohnpei pays tribute to longtime law enforcement leader Lucas Carlos

By Bill Jaynes  
The Kaselehlie Press

September 16, 2025

**Kolonia, Pohnpei** - The State of Pohnpei has formally recognized the passing of Lucas Carlos, a lifelong public servant remembered for his steadfast commitment to law enforcement and

community safety.

Governor Stevenson A. Joseph issued Executive Proclamation No. 25-07 honoring Carlos, who served as Director of the Department of Public Safety and devoted his career to protecting the people of Pohnpei.

Carlos was widely respected for his professionalism, integrity, and

leadership throughout his years of service. Colleagues describe his example as one that will continue to inspire future generations of law enforcement officers in the state.

In his proclamation, Governor Joseph emphasized that Carlos' work left a lasting mark on the state, noting that

his contributions to public safety would not be forgotten. The government extended its condolences to his family, friends, and colleagues, acknowledging the deep loss felt across the community.

“This proclamation serves as a lasting tribute to his life, service, and the enduring impact he has made on Pohnpei State,” the document declares.

# Vice President Palik represents the FSM at 4th PNA Leaders Summit

FSM Information Services

September 10, 2025

**Funafuti, Tuvalu** — On September 1, 2025, Vice President Aren B. Palik of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), accompanied by members of his delegation, arrived in Funafuti to represent the FSM at the 4th Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) Leaders' Summit hosted by Tuvalu.

On September 3, Vice President Palik attended the official opening of the Summit at the Tumasi Puapua Convention Center, where leaders convened under the theme “Our Shared Path to Sustainable Development and Full Control of Our Tuna Fisheries.” In his opening remarks, Vice President Palik expressed deep gratitude and warm congratulations to Tuvalu for its successful hosting of the Summit.

He also extended heartfelt thoughts and prayers to the people and Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands on the passing of former President Christopher Loeak, emphasizing the solidarity of Pacific communities.

Vice President Palik highlighted the East New Britain (ENBi) initiative as a decisive regional effort, stressing that it transcends fisheries development to represent a broader political and economic realignment that strengthens collaboration among PNA Parties and participating members. He reaffirmed the FSM's strong support for full PNA+ ownership and operational independence



of FIMs Inc. and acknowledged the PNA Office (PNAO) for its vital coordination in facilitating the Summit.

Within the Summit framework, Vice President Palik also paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister of Tuvalu, Hon. Feleti P. Teo. Their discussions centered on enhancing air connectivity and broadening cooperation. Both leaders emphasized the importance of unity and solidarity among Smaller Island States (SIS), aiming to elevate their influence within the wider regional architecture.

As part of the Summit program, leaders participated in a reflection retreat that included a symbolic day-at-sea activity, reaffirming their shared responsibility to sustainably manage Pacific Ocean resources. The Summit concluded with the signing of the Funafuti Communiqué, marking consensus among leaders on the future of Pacific tuna fisheries management. Vice President Palik also confirmed that the Federated States of Micronesia will host the next PNA Leaders' Summit in 2027.

The FSM delegation to the 4th PNA Leaders' Summit included Acting Executive Director of NORMA Limanman Helgenberger, Assistant Secretary of Foreign Affairs Kenmore Salvador, and the Second Lady of the FSM, Madame Adelita Palik.

# President Simina meets with U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau in Port Moresby

*FSM Information Services*

September 15, 2025

**Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea** –

On the sidelines of Papua New Guinea’s 50th anniversary of independence celebrations, His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), met with the Honorable Christopher Landau, Deputy Secretary of State of the United States of America. The meeting, which was also attended by Admiral Samuel Paparo, Commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM), and senior U.S. officials, reaffirm the strong and enduring partnership between the FSM and the United States under the Compact of Free Association.

President Simina expressed appreciation to Deputy Secretary Landau for his high-level visit to the Pacific region following the important outcomes from the recent Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Honiara.

To that end, the President conveyed his gratitude for the United States’ role in expediting the \$60 million payment under the Pacific Islands Tuna Treaty for 2024. He stressed the unique importance of the Treaty, which reflects the special partnership between the Pacific and the United States to support fisheries, a sector critical to the livelihoods of the FSM’s people and the wider region.

Turning to issues affecting COFA citizens in the United States, President Simina raised concerns regarding the recent halt by the Department of Veterans Affairs on discussions with the Freely Associated States regarding veterans’ health benefits, and thanked Deputy Secretary Landau for his support in ensuring that these important talks continue.

He also expressed concern about a recent U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services memorandum that inaccurately described FSM citizens in the U.S. as “lawful and temporary” rather than “lawful and permanent.” The President emphasized that this misclassification runs counter to the spirit of friendship enshrined in the Compact, and he welcomed the continued support of the Deputy Secretary and his staff in resolving this matter.

President Simina also noted the importance of sustaining reliable postal service arrangements between the FSM and the United States, which were carefully negotiated under the Amended Compact, and called for mutually beneficial solutions to ensure this essential link remains strong. He further reaffirmed his government’s commitment to the effective implementation of the Compact, welcoming the constructive spirit demonstrated during the recent Joint



Economic Management Committee meeting that concluded in Honolulu.

In response, Deputy Secretary Landau and Admiral Paparo both expressed strong support for addressing these concerns. Admiral Paparo described the COFA states as “Covenant States” built on a “sacred trust,” noting this bond is reflected in the high enlistment of FSM citizens in the U.S. military and pledged to continue advocating for FSM veterans to receive their benefits. Deputy Secretary Landau likewise affirmed his commitment to keeping open lines of communication with FSM leaders to ensure these issues are resolved through continued dialogue and cooperation.

President Simina welcomed

growing U.S. interest in private sector investment across the Pacific and pointed to opportunities for deeper cooperation in areas such as infrastructure and telecommunications, citing the FSM’s ongoing collaboration with U.S. companies such as Google as examples of the strong potential for innovation and partnership.

The President reaffirmed that the United States remains a valued and trusted partner for the Federated States of Micronesia, expressing his government’s appreciation for the enduring friendship and cooperation that continue to define FSM-U.S. relations, grounded in shared history and mutual commitment to the prosperity and security of the Pacific region.

# USDA RUS approves \$25 million grant for FSMTC to expand high-speed internet under the ReCONNECT program

*FSM Telecommunications Corporation*

September 11, 2025

**Pohnpei** - The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development agency, under the ReConnect Program, has approved a grant of \$25 million to the FSM Telecommunications Corporation (FSMTC). This vital funding will enable the expansion of high-speed internet access and target to provide up to 100 Mbps upload and download speeds to both currently served and unserved areas across the islands of Pohnpei, Chuuk, Yap, and Kosrae.



Anguiano met with FSMTC representatives led by FSMTC President & CEO, Fredy Perman, and shared USDA’s commitment to prosperity for Micronesia and people throughout its island communities.

This initiative is expected to deliver numerous socio-economic benefits, including enhanced educational opportunities, improved healthcare services, increased business productivity, and broader participation in the Federated States of Micronesia. It also aligns with global efforts to bridge the digital divide and promote sustainable development in remote island regions.

The ReConnect Program is a key component of the United States’ commitment to fostering digital expansion and economic growth in Micronesia. The grant will facilitate the deployment of critical broadband infrastructure, ensuring that more communities gain reliable access to fast internet, transforming lives, and supporting local development initiatives.

The US government remains committed to supporting Micronesia’s growth and resilience through innovative and impactful programs. Funding and technical support for the project will be managed by USDA’s Rural Utilities Service, working closely with FSM Telecommunications Corporation (FSMTC).

During a recent trip to Pohnpei, USDA Rural Development State Director Bryan

# Chargé d’Affaires Mut-Tracy delivers remarks at Pacific Partnership 2025 Closing Ceremony

By U.S. Embassy to the FSM

September 22, 2025

**Pohnpei** - U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Vincent Mut-Tracy delivered remarks at the closing ceremony of Pacific Partnership 2025, held at Pohnpei Gym on September 17. The event marked the conclusion of the Pacific Partnership mission in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

Pacific Partnership, a U.S. Navy-led multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster response exercise, brought together approximately eighty servicemembers to collaborate with FSM national and state governments, local community leaders, and non-governmental organizations. This year’s mission represents the third Pacific Partnership engagement in the FSM, underscoring the enduring commitment to strengthening ties and fostering resilience in the region.

The Pacific Partnership team implemented a diverse range of initiatives aimed at enhancing community resilience and disaster preparedness. Activities included health outreach, infrastructure improvements, interfaith dialogue with local faith and government leaders, veterinary services, emergency care training, and a tabletop exercise focused on public health.

“I’ve had the privilege of witnessing some of these outstanding efforts firsthand here in Pohnpei. The medical expertise, resources, and goodwill shared during this visit have undoubtedly made a lasting and positive impact on the health and well-being of Pohnpei’s residents,” said U.S. Embassy Chargé d’Affaires Mut-Tracy. “Together, we share a vision for an open, connected, prosperous, resilient, and secure Indo-Pacific.”

Dignitaries attending the closing ceremony included Pohnpei Governor Stevenson Joseph, Pacific Partnership Mission Commander Captain Mark Stefanik, Officer in Charge of FSM National Government Secretary of Finance and Administration Rose Nakanaga, Deputy Secretary of FSM Finance Sos John, Special Assistant to the FSM President for State Affairs Jack Harris, Pastor of Every Home for Christ Church Herman Sado, distinguished members of local cabinets, officials, representatives of the National and State Governments, and U.S. military personnel as well as colleagues and friends from international organizations, NGOs, and the local community.





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## REMEMBERING PROFESSOR JOE HABUCHMAI WITH GREAT FONDNESS & RESPECT

Joseph J. Habuchmai was a visionary leader, educator, and statesman whose lifelong dedication to the people of Yap, the College of Micronesia-FSM and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) leaves an indelible mark on the region's educational legacy and governmental institutions.

### A Life of Service and Leadership

Joseph Habuchmai's career was defined by service. From 2003 to 2007, he served as Lieutenant Governor of Yap State, working alongside the late former Governor Robert Ruecho to guide the state through a period of growth and transformation. His leadership was grounded in humility, wisdom, and a deep commitment to community values.

He also served as Yap State's representative on the Board of Regents for COM-FSM, contributing to the prudent oversight of the college's financial resources and creation of educational policy. Following his tenure in government, Mr. Habuchmai returned to higher education, where he became a cornerstone at the College of Micronesia-FSM (COM-FSM). Professor Habuchmai had first started at COM-FSM as a faculty member in 1981 before later serving as an Associate Professor and then as the Director of Academic Programs.



For over 16 years, he served as Vice President for Administrative Service (VPAS), overseeing infrastructure development, strategic planning, and institutional governance. His work helped shape COM-FSM into a resilient and forward-looking institution. On many occasions, VPAS Habuchmai served as the Acting President of the college to ensure that stable and continuous leadership at the highest level was maintained.

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# 2025 marks the 80th anniversary and the 46th edition of the Liberation Day Games

*Aurelio Joab  
Pohnpei Sports Coordinator*

*September 11, 2025*

*Dolonier, Nett* - Pohnpei celebrates its 80th Liberation Day since the 2nd World War ended in September 1945 and its 46th Liberation Day Games. This year's theme is: "Kapingki oh Kolokol Pwung, Minim in oh Saledek Pwehki Mwehi Mwahu".

There were 12 sporting events facilitated this year which included Athletics, Basketball 5 A-side, 3x3 Basketball, Fast Pitch Softball, Futsal Soccer, Lawn Tennis, Micronesia All Around, Spear Fishing, Swimming, Table Tennis, Indoor Volleyball and Wrestling. The 2025 Liberation Day Games kicked-off on August 4th and was concluded on September 11th. There were lots of spectacles and excitements taken on the fields, in the water, in the coconut trees and on the courts throughout the games. With regional events lined up in 2027, 2028 and 2029 the Liberation Games is just

another ladder for Pohnpeian athletes have to go through to get selected to represent their state or country.

A once in a lifetime component was included in this year's celebration commemorating all the elders of Pohnpei who were born on the year 1945 and prior. Special recognitions and gifts were presented to over 150 elders as a token for the hardship they endured during that era.

The 2025 Liberation Day Organizing Committee would like to thank all supporters for this annual multi-sporting event namely the Governor's Office, the 11th Pohnpei State Legislature, FSM Olympic Committee, FSM Telecommunication, Pohnpei Utilities Corporation, Head of Delegates in the FSM Congress T.H. Peter M. Christian, Ace Hardware, Blacksand Store and the Adams Bros Company and to all contributors to the 46th Liberation Day Games.

[CLICK HERE for Medal Tallies](#)

# Pohnpei commemorates 80th Liberation Day with gratitude, unity, and hope

*Pohnpei Public Information*

*September 15, 2025*

*Pohnpei* - On September 11, The Pohnpei State Government, under the leadership of Governor Stevenson A. Joseph, proudly joined citizens, traditional leaders, athletes, and international partners in commemorating Pohnpei's 80th Liberation Day on September 11, 2025. This year marks eight decades since the end of World War II in the Pacific and 46 years since Pohnpei began officially celebrating Liberation Day.

Governor Joseph expressed deep gratitude to Pohnpei's resident embassies, international donors, local chiefs, athletes, and all who gathered to honor this significant milestone. "This chapter of our history was quite dark, involving great loss of life across the world. But today, we recognize that this day marked the end of an era and the beginning of a new one — a future where we work together to create strategies and take action to improve the livelihood of our people," Governor Joseph stated.

The Governor reminded all in attendance that while the past cannot be changed, the future is in the hands of today's leaders and citizens. "What is done is done — there is nothing we

can do to change that. We must look forward, and as representatives of our people, we must do what is best for them," he urged.

This year's celebration was made especially meaningful as citizens aged 80 and above were recognized for the first time and presented with gifts in honor of their lives and their witness to history.

Governor Joseph also encouraged athletes to compete with humility and good sportsmanship, and called on families and fans to celebrate with joy while maintaining peace and respect.

Speaker of the 11th Pohnpei Legislature, the Honorable Marvin T. Yamaguchi, delivered remarks alongside IsoNahnken of Madolenihmw. The event was further graced by the presence of Wasalalpal Soukiseleng, Nahmwarki of Kitti, adding cultural and traditional significance to the commemoration. The day concluded with athletic competitions, cultural performances, and a renewed commitment to unity and progress for all the people of Pohnpei.

Kalahngan to all who made this 80th Liberation Day a truly memorable and meaningful celebration.

*All photos by Darcy Augustine*



# Lt. Governor Movick welcomes delegates to inaugural All4US meeting

*Pohnpei Public Information*

*September 9, 2025*

*Peilapalap, Pohnpei* - The Honorable Lt. Governor of Pohnpei State, Herolyn S. Movick, delivered opening remarks this morning at the inaugural meeting of the Association of Legislatures for Unity of the States (All4US). The gathering, hosted in Pohnpei, brings together legislative leaders from the four states of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) to strengthen cooperation and address shared priorities.

In her remarks, Lt. Governor Movick warmly welcomed the delegates to Pohnpei, highlighting the island's cultural heritage and natural beauty. She encouraged visitors to take time to experience Nan Madol, the UNESCO World Heritage Site, as well as Pohnpei's waterfalls and other unique attractions.

"It is indeed an honor standing here before you this morning to be a part of this auspicious occasion, the coming together of the legislative leadership of the four FSM States in a newly formed organization called the Association of Legislature Leadership for Unity of the States. The acronym, All for US, reflects the spirit of unity and cooperation this body represents," Lt.



Governor Movick stated.

Reflecting on her own time as a legislator, Lt. Governor Movick expressed optimism about the potential of All4US. She noted the importance of such a forum alongside existing platforms such as the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures (APIL) and the regular meetings of FSM's chief executives.

"Our governments are shaped by our Constitutions—national and state—which set out the roles and responsibilities of each level and branch of government. The recent

constitutional convention and the slate of amendments adopted by our people demonstrate the strength of our national spirit and unity," she said.

Lt. Governor Movick also suggested that, in time, the forum might expand to include leadership from the FSM Congress, stressing the importance of all levels of government working together in unity to address the needs and aspirations of the people.

Quoting Henry Ford, she emphasized: "Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success."

Before concluding, Lt. Governor Movick encouraged delegates to enjoy their stay in Pohnpei and to support the local economy during their visit. "Please enjoy the hospitality of your hosts in Pohnpei. Spend your per diem locally, buy gifts to take back to your families and colleagues, and leave with good memories of our island," she said.

Lt. Governor Movick closed by wishing the participants a successful and fruitful meeting, ending with words of gratitude in multiple languages of the FSM: "Kamagar, Kinisou Chapur, Kulo, Kalahngan."

# Governor Joseph attends handover ceremony at SDA Gymnasium

*Pohnpei Public Information*

*September 18, 2025*

*Pohnpei - SDA School Gymnasium, Nett, Pohnpei: September 16, 2025* – Governor Stevenson A. Joseph joined school officials, community leaders, and the Japanese Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia, Kagomiya San, at a handover ceremony at the SDA School Gymnasium. The event marked the completion of renovations funded through the grassroots Japan aid program, totaling approximately \$78,000.

Principal Franky Edward welcomed Governor Joseph and thanked the Japanese government for its continued support. Renovations included improvements to an elementary classroom, the school's bathroom facilities, and the gymnasium wall and floor.

A symbolic turnover of the gymnasium was made when Richie Adams, President of ABCOR, the contractor responsible for the renovations, presented a basketball to Principal Franky Edward, marking the official completion and readiness of the facility for student activities.

Ambassador Kagomiya San highlighted the importance of education and praised the students for their punctuality and discipline, leaving a strong impression on all attendees.

Governor Joseph expressed his appreciation for the Japanese government's support, noting the tangible impact of such programs. "This school has consistently produced successful graduates who contribute meaningfully to our society," said Governor Joseph. "We are grateful to Ambassador Kagomiya San for this

assistance and for the ongoing support that helps strengthen education in Pohnpei."

Governor Joseph also commended the students for their exemplary behavior and encouraged them to continue striving for excellence in their studies. Destiny Esiel, Student Association President, delivered closing remarks on behalf of the students, expressing gratitude and concluding with a heartfelt, "Arigato Gozaimasu."

The ceremony was attended by the SDA School Board members, including Ringlen Ringlen, Mrs. Charley, Shirley Jano, Daisy Cantero, and Walter John, as well as Stanley Etse, PTA President.

Governor Joseph's participation underscores the state government's commitment to supporting educational development and fostering international partnerships that benefit Pohnpei's students and communities.



# State Legislatures come together to reaffirm their cooperation and national unity

Australian Embassy to the FSM

September 10, 2025

**Pohnpei** - The Australian Embassy Ambassador Jenny Grant, Deputy Head of Mission Sarah McCarthy, and Maritime Security Adviser Lt. Commander Paul Norton were honored to attend the inaugural Association of the General Assembly of Legislature Leadership.

The "ALL4US" General Assembly brings together state delegations from Pohnpei, Chuuk, Yap, and Kosrae. The event was addressed by Pohnpei Governor Stevenson Joseph and Lieutenant-Governor Herolyn Movick.

"This first Assembly of state Senators and Representatives is truly a demonstration of national unity. As we hear in your national anthem, it is about joining hands on every side. Australia is a dependable partner and supports FSM through our development partnership



in the four states." said Ambassador Jenny Grant.

Pohnpei State Legislature Speaker Marvin Yamaguchi chaired this important gathering that serves a platform for legislative collaboration.

It provides an opportunity for state representatives to strengthen governmental relationships, align priorities, and reaffirm their commitment to development in the FSM.

# Ambassador Kagomiya attends ALL4US general assembly

Embassy of Japan to the FSM

September 10, 2025

**Pohnpei** - On September 10, 2025, Ambassador Kagomiya attended the 1st General Assembly of the Association of Legislature Leadership for the Unity of the States (ALL4US), which was attended by the Presidents and Speakers, Vice Speakers, Floor Leaders, and members of the legislature of the four states, the traditional leaders of Pohnpei State, the Governor and Lieutenant Governor of Pohnpei State, along with members of the diplomatic corps present in the FSM.



Ambassador Kagomiya, in his remarks, stated the importance of strengthening unity and mutual understanding in the FSM where the four states have differing cultures. The Ambassador touched on the historical ties between Japan and the four states of the FSM, and stated that Japan and the FSM share common values including democracy, human rights, rule of law, peace, maritime security, and sustainable development. The Ambassador emphasized the legislatures' essential role for democracy. Furthermore, the Ambassador mentioned Japan's

development assistance towards the four states of the FSM, including in the field of infrastructure, health, and education, along with the dispatch of over 20 JICA volunteers (JOCV), and reaffirmed Japan's commitment to strengthening the friendship between Japan and the FSM through economic, social development, and people-to-people exchanges.

9<sup>th</sup> September 2025

**ADDENDUM 1**

For the following project:

| Bid  | Extended Closing Date (2025)     | Public Opening (2025)            |
|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <u>Palikir, Pohnpei</u>  |                                  |                                  |
| <i>SRRIP Nonconsulting Services External Audit Consultants - FSM</i> | October 1 <sup>st</sup> , @ 10am | October 1 <sup>st</sup> , @ 11am |

See clarifications below:  
Electronic submission is expected to: [pmu@tci.gov.fm](mailto:pmu@tci.gov.fm)

Appendix A : ToR attached

The closing date for the submission of bids is extended as detailed in table above(all times are local Pohnpei Times). Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Contracting Officer  
Acting Secretary, DTC&I

# Committee To Wait on the Governor visits Governor Joseph

## Pohnpei Public Information

September 16, 2025

**Pohnpei** - On September 10, 2025, Governor Stevenson A. Joseph received the Committee to Wait on the Governor, a special committee of the 11th Pohnpei State Legislature tasked with formally informing the Governor of the opening of a legislative session and relaying matters requiring the Governor's attention.

The Committee was chaired by Vice Speaker McGarry Miguel, with Senator Mitaro Simina joining. The visit reflects a long-standing tradition that promotes communication and collaboration between the Legislative and Executive Branches, ensuring that both branches are aligned on key priorities for the people of Pohnpei.

### Significance of the Committee to Wait on the Governor:

The Committee to Wait on the Governor is a historic parliamentary tradition in Pohnpei, symbolizing mutual respect between the Legislature and the Governor. It formally conveys the Legislature's agenda, requests, and priorities, and serves as an opportunity to strengthen collaboration, ensure



transparency, and promote good governance. The Committee also plays a ceremonial role in marking the opening of legislative sessions and communicating matters that require the Governor's action.

### During the meeting, the Committee discussed several important issues:

**Nominations and Boards:** The Committee followed up on pending nominations, including the Pohnpei

Utilities Corporation (PUC) Board. Governor Joseph committed to act promptly so that the boards can move forward early next week.

**Strategic Development Plan (SDP):** The Governor and Committee discussed the State's Strategic Development Plan, which requires legislative endorsement. The Lieutenant Governor will submit a second SDP package to address requirements for the Joint Economic

Management Committee (JEMCO).

**Healthcare Coverage:** The Governor emphasized that while full health coverage is not yet available, efforts will begin with limited coverage as a first step toward comprehensive healthcare for the people of Pohnpei.

**Ethics Regulations:** Both branches reaffirmed the importance of finalizing ethics regulations to strengthen transparency and good governance.

**Education:** The Chair of the Education Committee joined the meeting to provide updates on initiatives to strengthen vocational education and improve curriculum development.

The Governor also shared that a formal letter will be sent regarding the upcoming Health Symposium to ensure coordination among stakeholders.

Governor Joseph thanked the Committee for its visit and reiterated his commitment to working closely with the 11th Pohnpei Legislature to move forward on these priorities for the benefit of all Pohnpeians.

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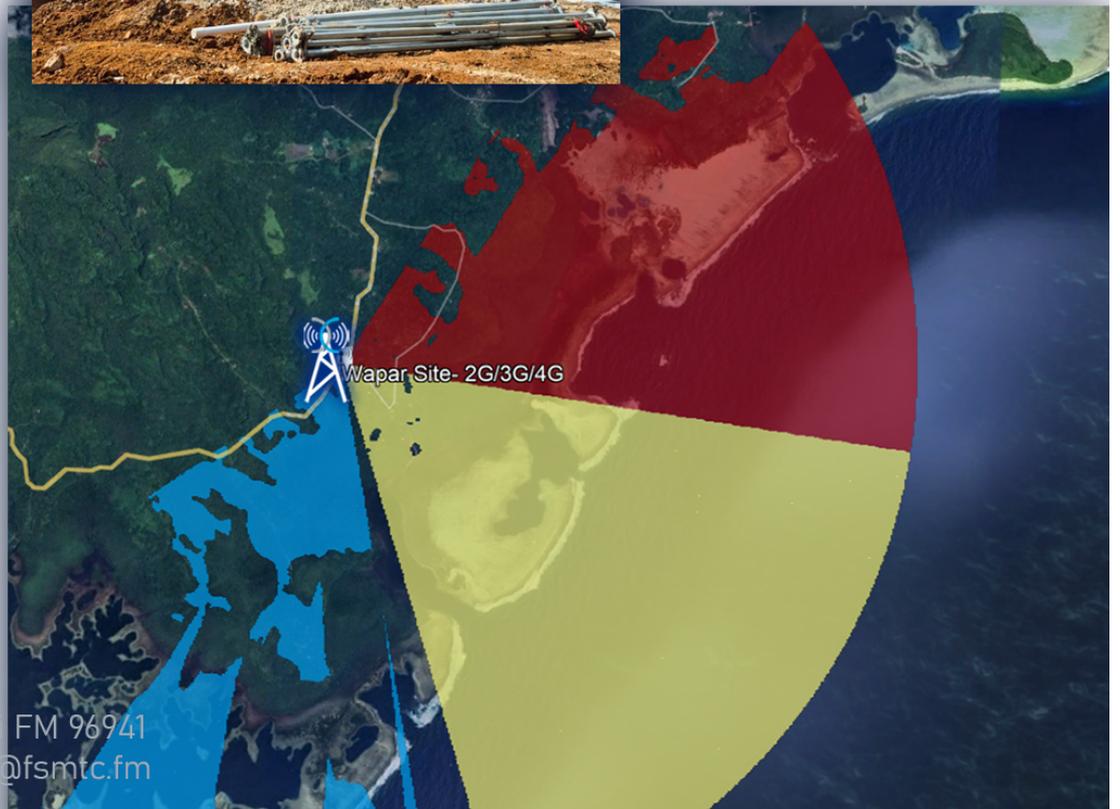
# SOON TO RISE WAPAR CELL-TOWER

**Predicted Coverage for Wapar Cell Tower is based on three sectorized antennas.**

> Sector 1, **Red:**  
Coverage will be pointing to Enipoas & Para Nuii area.

> Sector 2, **Yellow:**  
Coverage will be pointing to Wapar Church area.

> Sector 3, **Blue:**  
Coverage will be pointing to Lohd Pah area.



FSM Telecommunications Corporation  
Kaselehlie Street, P.O. Box 1210, Pohnpei FM 96941  
p: 691-320-2740 | e: customerservice@fsmctc.fm

# Marissa Boylan: Shaping conservation through community and culture

*The Nature Conservancy*

September 15, 2025

**Micronesia** - Marissa Boylan is the Micronesia Coral Reefs Program Advisor at The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Micronesia and Polynesia. She helps coordinate projects that protect reefs, restore damaged areas, and support sustainable livelihoods. Overall, she ensures communities have the tools and support they need to lead conservation in ways that reflect their cultures and priorities.

Her path to TNC started in high school, when she chose to complete her service hours at the Pohnpei office. What began as volunteering turned into an internship, and years later into a full-time role. “Two different family members sent me the same job posting,” Marissa recalls. “It felt like such a natural step, and now I get to work alongside some of the same people I first met as a teenager.”

Marissa studied Environmental Science and Women & Gender Studies at Santa Clara University. Before joining TNC, she worked in California supporting newly relocated



refugees, and later consulted on bringing a gender perspective into conservation projects in Micronesia.

Since joining TNC, Marissa has helped manage projects across Micronesia, keeping work on track through partners, contractors, and community teams. She also gathers data to guide decisions, supports reporting, and represents the program in regional and global spaces, ensuring Micronesian voices are part of broader conservation conversations. For her, the most meaningful moments come from working directly with communities across Micronesia. Growing up in Pohnpei, she was familiar with just one culture, but meeting and working alongside other island communities has given her a much deeper appreciation for the diversity and nuance that exists across the region.

Outside of work, Marissa stays active and outdoors, often hiking, swimming, or diving. She traces her love for nature back to her childhood spent exploring mangroves, climbing trees, and swimming in Pohnpei’s waters. Those early experiences gave her a deep appreciation for her island home and its people, which continue to drive her commitment to conservation today.

## ...Court Ruling

[continued from front page](#)

1. FSM Congress cannot be bound by past laws or agreements

The plaintiffs argued that the FSM Congress was required to honor both Public Law No. 18-57, which had set the FSM government’s share at zero percent unless changed by mutual agreement, and the Arngel Accords’ eight percent figure. The Court disagreed, stressing that the legislative power of the FSM Congress cannot be limited by past statutes or executive agreements. “The power to legislate is the power to repeal,” the Court wrote, citing precedent that no Congress can bind its successors. Therefore, Public Law No. 23-30 — as the most recent expression of legislative will — controlled.

2. The President must execute the law

While President Simina had vetoed the ten percent allocation in an effort to align with the Arngel Accords, the Court noted that once the FSM Congress overrode his veto, the law became binding. Under Article X of the FSM Constitution, the President is obligated to faithfully execute all FSM laws, including Public Law No. 23-30.

3. Policy wisdom belongs to the FSM

Congress, not the courts

The Court acknowledged that Pohnpei considered the centralization of infrastructure projects “unwise and ill-advised,” but it found no constitutional violation. Courts, the ruling stated, have no authority to judge the wisdom or fairness of legislation so long as it falls within the FSM Congress’s constitutional powers. That responsibility lies with the political branches.

4. Foreign assistance clause

Both sides referred to the FSM Constitution’s provision requiring equal shares of foreign assistance between the FSM government and the states unless otherwise dictated by the nature of the funding. The Court noted that Compact funds clearly fall under the category of assistance with special distribution requirements. Thus, the provision did not override the FSM Congress’s statutory authority to allocate shares.

implications for Pohnpei and the States

For Pohnpei, the dismissal represents a significant setback. The state legislature had argued that the additional two percent shift — from eight to ten percent for the FSM government — deprived it of funds necessary to sustain its budget and infrastructure

programs. By centralizing control of Compact infrastructure projects in the FSM government, the law also limits the state’s ability to directly oversee construction priorities within its borders.

The ruling affirms the FSM Congress’s authority over Compact funds, which remain a lifeline for the nation’s development. While states continue to play an important role in planning and executing local projects, their financial leverage over Compact funding streams has been reduced.

historical context: a long debate over shares

The dispute is the latest chapter in a long-running debate over how Compact funds should be divided between the FSM government and the states. Over the past two decades, the FSM government’s share has fluctuated:

2005–2006: 8.65%  
2007–2013: 10%  
2014: 5%  
2015–2023: 0%  
2024–present: 10%

The Arngel Accords represented an attempt by the States and the national executive to strike a cooperative balance, but the Court’s ruling clarifies that only the FSM Congress can legally set and change the formula.

Broader significance

The decision reflects the ongoing tension in the FSM’s federal system, where the national government and the states share responsibilities under the Compact of Free Association. The Court reaffirmed that the FSM Congress is the sole body empowered to legislate funding formulas, even when state governments and the President favor a different arrangement.

By closing the case, the Court avoided issuing advisory opinions on draft regulations that TC&I may adopt to manage infrastructure grants, noting that such issues could only be considered if and when they become law.

With the lawsuit dismissed, Public Law No. 23-30 stands unchallenged as the governing law for Compact fund distribution and infrastructure oversight. For now, the FSM government retains its ten percent share, and the states must navigate infrastructure development through the FSM TC&I.

While Pohnpei and other States may continue to press the FSM Congress for adjustments in future sessions, the Court’s ruling makes clear that legal challenges are unlikely to succeed. Political negotiation — not litigation — will determine the next phase of the Compact funding debate.

# President Simina joins PNG's 50th Independence Jubilee in a show of Pacific solidarity

*FSM Information Services*

**September 16, 2025**

**Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea** - His Excellency President Wesley W. Simina joined the people of Papua New Guinea in celebrating the nation's 50th Independence Anniversary in Port Moresby. The occasion became a show of Pacific solidarity, as leaders from across the region came together in the wake of the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Honiara.

President Simina congratulated Papua New Guinea for its 50 years of independence, calling its national journey "an inspiration to all Pacific nations." He reaffirmed FSM's enduring commitment to work hand-in-hand with its Pacific neighbors toward a resilient and united Blue Pacific Continent.

The Golden Jubilee drew a distinguished gathering of leaders whose presence symbolized regional unity: Palau President Surangel Whipps Jr., Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown, Nauru President David Adeang, Niue Prime Minister Dalton Tangelagi, Tuvalu Prime Minister Feleti Teo, Solomon Islands Prime Minister Jeremiah Manele, and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese among others were also in attendance along with President Simina in honoring PNG's milestone.

On behalf of the Government and people of the Federated States of Micronesia, President Simina extended heartfelt congratulations to Papua New Guinea on this historic Golden Jubilee.



# President Simina in Honiara for 54th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting

*FSM Information Services*

**September 10, 2025**

**HONIARA, Solomon Islands** — H.E. President Wesley W. Simina is currently in Honiara leading the Federated States of Micronesia's (FSM) delegation in the ongoing 54th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting.

During his engagements thus far, President Simina opened the Smaller Island States (SIS) Meeting and formally handed over the chairmanship to Kiribati, which focuses on the unique needs and aspirations of smaller island states within the Pacific Islands Forum.

The President also participated in the P-ACP meeting, the Pacific subgroup of the wider African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) group of countries, engaged with the European Union under the new Samoa Agreement, aligning the FSM's voice with other Pacific nations on issues of trade, development cooperation, and climate resilience within the broader ACP framework.

In addition, President Simina convened an informal meeting with fellow Micronesian leaders of the Micronesian Presidents' Summit (MPS) to discuss matters of shared concern, reflecting the continued commitment of Micronesian states to speak with a united voice

on sub-regional priorities within the Forum.

The Leaders Meeting continues in Honiara with plenary and retreat sessions, where leaders are expected to deliberate on and endorse two key outcomes. The first is the "Ocean of Peace" Declaration, a landmark statement reaffirming the Pacific's collective commitment to peace, security, and regional stability, rooted in the shared heritage of the Pacific Ocean as a unifying and peaceful space. The second is the Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF), to support the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, which is a Pacific-led initiative designed to finance resiliency projects and enable countries to better prepare for and respond to the impacts of climate change, natural disasters, and other crises, representing a practical and sustainable financing mechanism to address the region's most pressing vulnerabilities.

President Simina is also using the opportunity to underscore the Federated States of Micronesia's strong advocacy for the Global Methane Pledge, seeking the support of Forum members to accelerate collective action on methane emissions. The pledge, launched in 2021, calls for a global reduction of methane emissions by at least 30 percent by 2030, recognizing methane as one of the most potent greenhouse gases driving climate change.



For the FSM, which faces irreversible impacts from rising sea levels and intensifying weather events, curbing methane is critical to reaching the 1.5-degree celsius target and slowing warming in the near term. The call gains further significance in light of Australia's bid to host the 31st Conference of Parties (COP31) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in partnership with Pacific Island countries, where the Pacific region rallies to elevate and accelerate climate ambition and leadership.

President Simina reaffirms the FSM's commitment to the Pacific Islands Forum family and advancing regional solidarity on key issues.

## ...Urusemal

*continued from front page*

in respect for culture, education, and the sustainable use of our limited resources.

President Urusemal is remembered as a soft-spoken but resolute leader, a devoted husband to Olania Latileilam of Satawal, and a loving father to their four children: B.J., Tarsis, Craig, and Elenita.

The Federated States of Micronesia mourns the loss of a great leader, statesman, and son of our islands. We extend our deepest condolences to his family, the people of Yap, and all who were touched by his life and service.

State funeral arrangements will be confirmed in due course, at which time a Presidential Proclamation will also be issued declaring a period of national mourning, including the lowering of flags to half-mast throughout the Nation.

# Pacific leaders conclude historic meeting in Honiara, FSM welcomes outcomes

FSM Information Services

September 14, 2025

**Honiara, Solomon Islands** – From September 8-12, His Excellency President Wesley W. Simina, on behalf of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), joined Pacific leaders in endorsing a series of historic agreements at the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders’ Meeting in Honiara. These outcomes – the Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF) Treaty, Ocean of Peace Declaration and Forum Communiqué – are milestones for regional unity and resilience.

President Simina and fellow leaders signed the Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF) Treaty, establishing the Pacific’s first community-owned financing mechanism to strengthen resilience against climate change and disasters. President Simina emphasizes that the PRF reflects “Pacific leadership at its best—designed by us, for us, to protect our communities.” He also affixed his signature to endorsing the Ocean of Peace Declaration, reaffirming the Blue Pacific’s shared vision of safeguarding

the region as a zone of peace and stability, and stressed the FSM’s commitment to advancing peace and cooperation in an evolving strategic environment while ensuring the Pacific voice remains united and strong.

The Forum Leaders’ Communiqué adopted in Honiara included a clear regional commitment to reducing methane emissions—a priority consistently championed by FSM. Methane is a short-lived climate pollutant with outsized impact on global warming, and action to cut methane is essential to preserving the survival of island nations. President Simina stated: “Today the Pacific has spoken with one voice. By signing these outcomes, we are showing the world that small island states are not only united, but leading in securing our future. The commitment to reduce methane emissions reflects the urgency our people live with daily. I am proud that the Federated States of Micronesia has helped shape this agenda for the survival of our Blue Pacific.”



The methane commitment also holds wider global significance as the Pacific Islands Forum has endorsed Australia’s bid to co-host COP31 in partnership with Pacific nations. President Simina emphasized that for COP31 to truly be a “Pacific COP,” the host nation must demonstrate climate ambition that matches the urgency of Pacific priorities. “Australia’s bid to host COP31 with the Pacific carries responsibility. The commitment we have secured here in Honiara on methane is a benchmark. Pacific leaders will expect this ambition to be matched by the host country and reflected in COP31 outcomes. Our communities cannot afford half-measures—this is about survival,” he said.

Through his direct participation in Honiara, President Simina reaffirmed the FSM’s pledge to actively implement the PRF Treaty, uphold the Ocean of Peace Declaration, and advance ambitious climate action. The FSM will continue to work with Forum members and international partners to turn these commitments into concrete outcomes for Pacific peoples and to ensure COP31 delivers meaningful results.



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# How the Pacific can become the world's first 100% renewable energy region

## Proposed initiative to transform the Pacific into beacon for energy security and rapid decarbonization

### Island Minds

September 11, 2025

**Honiara, Solomon Islands** - The Pacific could become the first region in the world to be 100% powered by renewable energy, according to a new discussion paper launched yesterday on the sidelines of the annual Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' meeting in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

The discussion paper *Powering Up the Blue Pacific: How the Pacific can be the world's first 100% renewable energy region* finds Pacific island countries can save billions of dollars by switching to renewables, freeing up budgets for sustainable development and leading the global shift away from fossil fuels.

Switching to clean energy from wind and solar, backed up by battery storage, would offer immediate savings on fuel bills, create new jobs and industries, and expand access to electricity to all Pacific Islanders.

The proposal, championed first by President Surangel S. Whipps, Jr. of the Republic of Palau, builds on the region's existing renewable energy achievements, ambitious targets, and advances in the cost and efficiency of green energy technology.

"Palau and our brothers and sisters in the Pacific contribute the least to global emissions, however, we suffer the most from the climate crisis," says President Whipps in the Discussion Paper's foreword, adding "...we have long believed that the best form of leadership is leadership by example."

Pacific Island countries on average spend between 10 and 25% of their GDP on importing fossil fuels, with some dedicating 40% or more of national budgets towards buying diesel for power generation and transport.

"Imagine how different our societies will be if we can keep that money in our communities and give everyone access to clean affordable electricity," said President Whipps.

Pacific Island nations are working with Australia to host the COP31 global climate summit in late 2026, and Palau will host Pacific Island Forum Leaders in the run-up to the event in November.

If the bid is successful, it will be the biggest summit ever held in the region, with tens of thousands of delegates expected to attend.

President Whipps said, "bringing COP to the Pacific would allow the world to witness both the climate crisis and Pacific leadership to tackle the crisis".

"Hosting COP31 in our region is not just about symbolism," said Whipps. "We cannot let the opportunity of COP31 go by without demonstrating to our people the tangible benefits. A partnership for a "100% Renewable Pacific" could be a landmark outcome from the summit

and attract the international investment required for the Pacific's renewable energy transition."

Speaking at the launch, Tuvalu's Prime Minister, Feleti Teo, echoed President Whipp's sentiments: "This Partnership demonstrates to the rest of the world how we are united in terms of our collective efforts to make our region the first 100% renewable energy-powered region in the world."

Vanuatu's Minister of Climate Change, Energy & Environment, Ralph Regenvanu, also speaking at the launch, said Pacific Island communities would benefit greatly from the shift to renewables. But all nations needed to move away from fossil fuels as fast as possible to tackle the climate crisis.

"We need wealthy countries and

major polluters to do their share," said Regenvanu. "That means an immediate end to new or expanded fossil fuel projects and setting a real plan to phase out fossil fuels".

"A Partnership for a 100% Renewable Pacific is a regional approach that develops standards and shares resources to make it easier for our region to work together and access renewable energy,"

"I'm very happy to see this discussion starter being launched today. I'm also very happy to see the commitment from our leaders such as President Whipps and PM Teo and others, and to working with Australia to progress this Partnership as a key outcome of an Australia-Pacific COP31," said Regenvanu.

**Rotary Pohnpei, FSM**

**Rotary Club of Pohnpei**

**2025-2026 Rotary Club of Pohnpei Scholars!**

**Scholarship Awardees:** Pia Nelbirina Aaron, K'con Andon, Augustine Ardos, Frann Billy, Daiana David, Bethlyanne Lebehn Williams, Sanjay William, Reenomilyn Merma Mori, Estania M Dema, Noelani DeOrio, Janaja Edilyong-Reichardt, Martin Edilyong-Reichardt, Natron Endor, Charlotte Ray, Marsandrea Russel, Brenda Saimon, Lucia Cindy Fagallayan, Carl Aruo Grant Ismael, Hedweag Miguel Jr., Pelma George, John Gilken, Chemina Namper, Aniken Perman, Derenza Deven Iriarte, Amelia Giltamngin, Sheridan Giltmag, Zachary Helgenberger, Hitomi Iriarte, Sharlynn Sakios, Leann Saplaelug, Benereen Shirai, Jaedon Waay.

**Vital FSM PetroCorp**

**Mobil**

Rotary wishes a special thank you to Vital FSM Petroleum Corporation, Mobil, and the family of Mr. Harumi Kumagai of the Tokyo Chuo Rotary Club for their support for the scholarship program.

# Bridging Two Worlds: Gunnery Sgt. Sigrah returns home to Kosrae with Koa Moana 25

By 1st Lt. Emily Zito  
1st Marine Logistics Group

September 9, 2025

**Kosrae** — U.S. Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Jr Sigrah, a Kosrae native and motor transport operations chief with Combat Logistics Regiment 3, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, returned home for the first time in more than 20 years during Exercise Koa Moana 25's scheduled stop in Kosrae. Sigrah's presence adds a unique dimension to this mission, blending operational objectives with a deeply personal story of return, resilience and cultural connection.

Born in Kosrae and raised in Hawaii from the age of 6, Sigrah carried the spirit of his island heritage into a life of service. In 2009, he enlisted in the Marine Corps while his father, an Army noncommissioned officer, was deployed to Iraq. As a second-generation service member, the values of duty and sacrifice were instilled in him from an early age, guiding his decision to wear the uniform. In 2011, during his first

deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Sigrah served as a motor vehicle operator. He was wounded in action on two separate occasions, earning two Purple Hearts and exemplifying the courage, resilience and dedication that define the very best of the Marine Corps.

In 2012, just before his second deployment to Afghanistan, Sigrah earned his U.S. citizenship, further strengthening the bond between his sacrifice and the nation he had chosen to defend. Now, with 16 years of honorable service, he has come full circle — returning to Kosrae, the island of his birth. In doing so, he bridges the two worlds that shaped him: the deep-rooted heritage of his island home and the proud legacy of the Marine Corps.

“Being a Marine is an honor, but representing the Federated States of Micronesia as a Kosraean Marine is greater,” said Sigrah. “After 20 years away, to return home in uniform — to be welcomed by family, to embrace my grandmother who lived the



history I was taught, and to paddle canoes like those of my ancestors who once crossed vast oceans — alongside my people and my fellow Marines on Liberation Day — these moments came together as one story.”

During the visit, Sigrah reconnected with

family and joined in the island's Liberation Day celebration, which commemorates the end of Japanese occupation and the restoration of Kosrae's sovereignty after World War II. His grandmother, a Kosrae resident, lived through that era and remains part of the island's elder generation who carry direct memories of wartime and the subsequent liberation. Her experiences tie Kosrae's history to the U.S. role in the Pacific as a long-standing partner and advocate for regional peace and stability.

“It is a story of legacy and resilience, of a people who endure, and of the enduring strength of a nation that stands with us in our sovereignty,” Sigrah said. “I am humbled and deeply grateful to be a vessel for that story — as a Marine, as a Kosraean and as a son of the Pacific.”

For Sigrah, Liberation Day was both a family milestone and a professional one — an opportunity to honor his heritage while representing the enduring U.S.-Kosrae partnership. Sigrah's addition to the KM 25 detachment during the Kosrae portion of the deployment underscores the United States' commitment to maintaining enduring regional ties — both strategically and personally.

As a Marine from a Compact of Free Association nation, Sigrah is part of a unique community of service members who choose the uniform not only as a profession but also as a bridge between cultural identity and military service. Their contributions reinforce the U.S. commitment to Pacific Island nations and lend new meaning to the Marine Corps' motto: The Few. The Proud.

Koa Moana 25 is an annual partnership in the Indo-Pacific region that strengthens established relationships, bolsters theater security cooperation, and enhances the resilience of our allies and partners through community outreach, medical and civic assistance, infrastructure improvement projects, and key leader exchanges.

**Congratulations**  
to the 2025-2026 Vital Scholars!

**Rita Mae Keller**  
Major: Master of Arts in Economics at the University of Hawai'i

**Anthony Rutmag**  
Major: Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering at the University of Hawai'i

**Natasha Runman**  
Major: Bachelor of Science degree in Marine Biology at the College of Natural Sciences, University of Hawai'i

**Moerisha Rran**  
Major: Marine Biology course at the College of Natural Sciences, University of Hawai'i

**Vital**



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## Internal Policy & Governance Officer

### The Pacific Islands Forum

The 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. PIFS is committed to achieving gender balance and being fully representative of its member countries. Currently the PIFS workforce is over 50% female, with 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

The Internal & Policy Governance Officer exists to ensure the Secretariat's internal corporate governance instruments (corporate policies, procedures, frameworks, Standard Operating Procedures, Process Maps, Manuals, Guidelines and Tool Kits), in addition to the oversight of institutional strengthening of business process and systems in alignment to best practices. The key responsibilities are summarised as:

- Corporate Governance (Internal Policies & Procedures)
- Institutional Strengthening (Business Process and Systems)
- Strategic Planning & Coordination
- Support

Applicants should have a first degree (bachelor's level) in any of the following disciplines of Management, Business Administration, Commerce, Governance, Information Systems, Organisational Development, Project Management, or similar, from a recognised higher-learning institution with sound experience of at least 5-7 years' experience working at officer level in corporate governance and business process management in a large organisation.

Candidates with working experience at least particularly in either government or non-government organisation in Fiji or any other member country are encouraged to apply.

### The Benefits

The position carries a competitive and attractive remuneration and benefits package including medical and life insurance, education, and housing allowance. The position is placed at Band 10 / Officer level of our salary scale, starting at **SDR 32,437 equivalent to FJD 99,287**.

**Note:** Amounts are based on 1 August foreign exchange rates, but the final salary will be dependent on foreign exchange rates at the time of payment.

### How to apply

Interested applicants can find out more information on the PIFS website: [www.forumsec.org](http://www.forumsec.org) where an information package containing the full responsibilities, selection criteria, and remuneration details, are available.

Candidates must include in either their application or Curriculum Vitae the full contact details of three referees. For non-Fijian nationals, this salary may be tax-free. To be eligible for this position, the applicant must be a national of a Forum member country\*. Applicants must be willing to travel periodically via economy class.

**The deadline for applications is Friday 17 October 2025.**

\*Member States of the Pacific Islands Forum: Australia, 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.

# Chinese Embassy in the FSM holds reception for 76th Anniversary of China's founding and 36th Anniversary of FSM diplomatic relations

Embassy of China to the FSM

September 22, 2025

**Pohnpei** - On September 17, the Chinese Embassy in the FSM held the reception celebrating the 76th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and the 36th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the FSM. Ambassador Wu Wei attended the reception with over 150 guests, including T.H. Peter M. Christian, FSM former President and Chairman of Committee on External Affairs of the FSM Congress, T.H. Rose Nakanaga, Secretary Department of Finance and Administration, T.H. Lorin S. Robert, Secretary of Foreign Affairs, T.H. Kandhi A. Elieisar, Special Advisor to the President, T.H. Stevenson A. Joseph, Governor of the Pohnpei State and other officials, members of the Diplomatic Corps in the FSM, representatives of Chinese companies in the FSM and the local Chinese community.

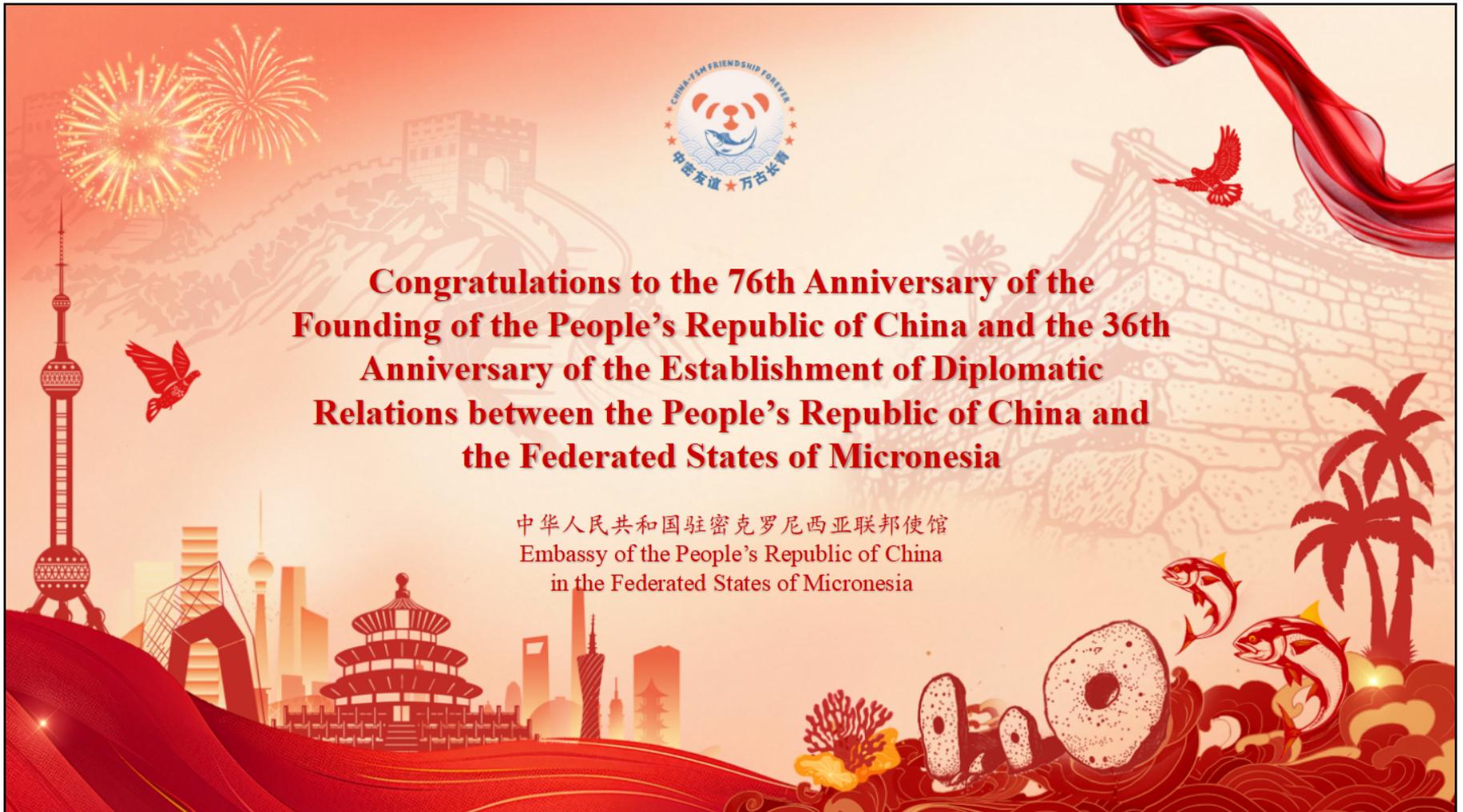


Ambassador Wu Wei delivered remarks highlighting the achievements of Chinese modernization and the progress in the China- FSM relations, and introduced the Global Governance Initiative proposed by H.E. President Xi Jinping. He stressed that China stands ready to work with the FSM to earnestly implement the important common understandings reached by the two heads of state, advance the development of

the China- FSM Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, and jointly build a community with a shared future for humanity.

Secretary Robert, on behalf of the FSM Government, addressed the reception and congratulates China on the 76th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. He noted that the FSM firmly adheres to the one-China policy and will work with China to promote the relations between the two countries.

The guests highly praised China's development achievements, and the atmosphere at the reception was friendly and warm.



# A special story hour with 1st Lt. Emily Zito and the U.S. Navy: Feeling like a kid again

Friends of the Pohnpei Public Library

September 17, 2025

**Pohnpei** - On September 4, our library was filled with excitement, laughter, and wide-eyed curiosity as the children eagerly awaited the arrival of two very special guests. Long before story hour even began, little voices could be heard asking, "Are they coming today?" And when 1st Lt. Emily Zito of the U.S. Marine Corps and her comrade from the U.S. Navy walked through our doors, the room lit up with smiles.



who serve with such honor take the time to nurture a love of reading reminded us all of the power of community, kindness, and connection.

As the final story ended and the last goodbyes were said, the children knew they would miss their special readers dearly. We, too, hope this isn't the last time we'll see 1st Lt. Zito and her Navy comrade. Perhaps next time, it will be for a relaxing vacation—one where they can enjoy the same peace and joy they gave so freely to our little ones.

From all of us at the library: thank you for making this story hour truly unforgettable.

These two highly respected service members—dedicated not only in their fields but also to the joy of giving back—took the time to sit down and share stories with more than twenty children from all around. They read aloud with warmth and expression, turning each page into a new adventure. The children listened intently, laughed at the funny moments, and clapped with delight as the stories came to life before their eyes.

It wasn't just a story hour—it was a memory in the making. Seeing leaders



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## New humanitarian warehouse to be built in Pohnpei

Australian Embassy to the FSM

September 12, 2025

**Pohnpei** - When disaster strikes, it's essential to have clean water, shelter and other life saving supplies ready to go. The first 48 hours are critical.

Australia and the FSM National Government are pleased to announce the site for a Humanitarian Warehouse to be built in Palikir, Pohnpei. The facility will help store and pre-position relief supplies to support emergency responses in FSM.



This will be one of 15 humanitarian warehouses established across the Pacific over the next six years

together with our partner the Pacific-Community-SPC.

For the Pacific, by the Pacific, with the support of Australia and our partners.

# Pacific symposium builds evidence to address climate loss and damage

## Pacific Loss and Damage inaugural Symposium unites leaders and researchers to turn evidence into action for communities most at risk

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

September 16, 2025

**Savusavu, Fiji** - The region has convened its inaugural Research Symposium on Loss and Damage in Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Held in Savusavu, Fiji and co-hosted by the Pacific Community (SPC), the [Fiji National University](#) (FNU) and [Monash University](#), the three-day event is bringing together more than 150 researchers, policymakers and community leaders to strengthen the evidence base for addressing the irreversible impacts of climate change.

Loss and Damage refers to the permanent costs of climate change that go beyond adaptation from the destruction of homes and crops by cyclones, to saltwater intrusion that makes land uninhabitable, and the erosion of cultural heritage when villages are forced to relocate.

The symposium is made possible with major funding from [the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark](#) and the [Pacific Action for Climate Transitions](#) (PACT) Research Centre, with additional support from the [New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade](#) (MFAT).

For decades, Pacific Island countries have been at the forefront of international advocacy on this issue, helping to secure the establishment of a global Loss and Damage Fund at COP27 and its operationalisation at COP28.

Yet, despite these milestones, Pacific negotiators continue to face challenges in accessing finance due to a lack of locally generated data and methodologies that reflect island realities.

Opening the symposium, Hon Mosese Bulitavu, Minister for Environment and Climate Change said Loss and Damage is already shaping the lives of Pacific communities.

“Cyclone Winston wiped out one-third of our economy in just 36 hours. These are not projections this is our reality. This symposium strengthens our negotiating position and helps design systems that truly serve those most at risk. Fiji has already taken pioneering steps, from enacting the Climate



Change Act 2021 to establishing the Climate Relocation of Communities Trust Fund.”

Hon. Minister Bulitavu added that Fiji has already relocated six villages, with 17 more awaiting urgent action, highlighting why Pacific-led research is critical for future planning.

Ms Maria Fuata, SPC Deputy Director-General for Operations and Integration, said the focus must remain on practical outcomes and this symposium is about ensuring evidence translates into systems change.

“This is about knowledge that governments can use for relocation planning, for water security, for accessing finance. By bringing together lived experience, traditional knowledge and scientific data, we can shape responses that are regionally led and globally credible.”

Ms Fuata further stressed that SPC along with its key partners, FNU and the Monash University are supporting members in turning research into applied solutions, ensuring Pacific realities are visible in global policy debates.

The three-day symposium includes sessions on the operationalisation of the Loss and Damage Fund, regional water security, and the non-economic dimensions of climate change such as the loss of culture, heritage and identity. Presentations are being delivered by a mix of national governments, regional organisations, multilateral development banks, private sector specialists and Pacific universities, reflecting the breadth of expertise needed to build an evidence base for action

Professor Paul Dargusch, Director of the Pacific Action for Climate Transitions Research Centre at Monash University, said the event demonstrates the importance of linking science and policy.

“Strong policy depends on strong evidence. By bringing governments, researchers and regional organisations together, this symposium builds the case for finance that flows directly to Pacific communities.”

He added that credible research is essential for accessing the Loss and Damage Fund and ensuring resources reach the most vulnerable.

Highlighting the urgency of climate action and the role of Pacific institutions, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba, Vice-Chancellor of Fiji National University, said the symposium is a moment to turn words into impact.

“Our islands resist their future under water, and our people persist to survive the impacts of climate change. At FNU, we are committed to strengthening partnerships on loss and damage, and to finding solutions together. This symposium must be more than words it is in our communities that our thinking must show impact. With powerhouses from across the Pacific gathered here, I believe this symposium will spark real change.”

She added that FNU is committed to embedding traditional knowledge alongside scientific methods, ensuring that Pacific research reflects the realities of island communities.

The symposium runs from 16–18 September 2025 in Savusavu, Fiji. Findings will inform national systems, strengthen Pacific negotiating positions, and guide the implementation of the Loss and Damage Fund ahead of COP30.

# Emergency Legal Responders deploy to Micronesia for disaster law preparedness with Airlink and United

## Closing the gaps the map creates: Emergency Legal Responders teams up with Airlink and United to strengthen disaster preparedness in the South Pacific

*RIMS Guam*

*September 4, 2025*

**New Orleans, Louisiana** - This September, Emergency Legal Responders (ELR) will launch a multi-island initiative to strengthen disaster response across the Pacific in partnership with local leaders. Working with Micronesian Legal Services Corporation (MLSC), the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) Disaster Recovery Team, and national collaborators including Airlink, the Information Technology Disaster Resource Center (ITDRC), and Mutual Aid Disaster Relief (MADR), ELR will lead attorney-led workshops on legal preparedness alongside broader efforts to expand disaster rights and regional recovery.

"These places are not peripheral, they are leading the way," said Amelia Hoppe, Executive Director of ELR and program lead. "Communities here have been navigating the frontlines of climate change and disaster recovery for generations. If we want systems that work, we need to start by listening, learning, and building alongside them. This initiative continues ELR's fieldwork that delivers legal support where it is most needed."

Airlink, a non-government organization (NGO) based in Washington, DC, is coordinating the logistics of the travel plan, in addition to providing transportation. In recent years, Airlink has expanded its network and access throughout Asia and the Pacific, increasing the programs offered to communities both in advance of and following a disaster, to both strengthen infrastructure and offer recovery support with a number of other NGOs working in the region.

This deployment is part of ELR's CIRCLE Initiative — Capacity Infrastructure for Regional Community Legal Ecosystems. The effort includes a series of free workshops and community clinics across Guam, Saipan, Palau, Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, and Majuro. In each location we are bringing together social service providers and legal aid staff, leading community discussions on disaster rights, and hosting Document Days where families bring vital records to be reviewed, copied, and secured in waterproof and fireproof folders. The goal is immediate and long-term: families leave prepared for the next storm, and local systems leave stronger for the recovery to come.

These jurisdictions - U.S. territories and nations in the Compact of Free Association with the United States - are navigating overlapping climate, legal, and infrastructure challenges. Many recovery systems in use today were not designed for island conditions or regional governance structures, which can lead to delays, documentation issues, housing instability, and barriers to long-term recovery.

United Airlines, in partnership with Airlink, has donated passenger seats for the attorneys and liaisons hosting the clinics with ELR. United has supported responses and NGO partners throughout Airlink's 15-year history.

"As Guam and Micronesia's hometown airline, we are committed to playing an active role in the community and utilizing our network in this region for good," said Sam Shinohara, Managing Director for APAC Airport Operations at United. "United's Island Hopper, which connects Micronesia - the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands - between Guam and Hawaii is a unique and special service, and a vital lifeline for the communities. It's our honor to support Airlink in bringing the Emergency Legal Responders to this

beautiful part of the world to ensure local families and communities are as prepared as they can be, should the worst occur."

"For years, Airlink has proudly supported ELR's initiatives and deployment of its volunteer legal experts to aid communities after disasters," said Stephanie Steege, Vice President of Humanitarian Programs at Airlink. "Often, families are left to recover and rebuild their lives while also navigating a complex, bureaucratic system to get back on their feet. Airlink believes in empowering communities to be prepared before disaster even strikes, by developing relationships built on trust and by expanding access to resources – core values of our organization. This is especially important for communities in the Pacific that are experiencing the effects of climate change today while still recovering from typhoons in years past."

Workshop schedules and locations are still being finalized. Journalists, partners, and community members can follow updates at [www.emergencylegalresponders.org](http://www.emergencylegalresponders.org) or on social media- Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn.

# Governor Stevenson A. Joseph receives courtesy visit from Shanty Asher Sigrah, J.D. of The Nature Conservancy

*Pohnpei Public Information*

*September 16, 2025*

**Peilapalap, Pohnpei** – Governor Stevenson A. Joseph welcomed Shanty Asher Sigrah, J.D., currently serving as the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) Government Relations & Partnership Manager at The Nature Conservancy (TNC), for a courtesy visit at the Governor's office.

During the visit, discussions focused on collaborative efforts to strengthen government partnerships, advance sustainable resource management, and promote climate resilience and conservation initiatives across the FSM. Lt. Governor Movick also

participated in the meeting, where general discussions centered on the conservation and management of natural resources.

Governor Joseph also shared his vision for food security in Pohnpei, highlighting how sustainable management of natural resources is critical to ensuring the availability, accessibility, and resilience of local food systems.

This visit underscores ongoing collaboration between government leaders and conservation organizations to support sustainable management of Pohnpei's natural resources, promote



climate resilience, and strengthen food security initiatives across the State and the wider FSM

# Governor Stevenson A. Joseph honors Golden West Humanitarian Foundation at COM-FSM CTEC Campus reception

## Pohnpei Public Information

September 10, 2025

**Kolonia, Pohnpei** – Governor Stevenson A. Joseph attended a special dinner reception at the College of Micronesia-FSM (COM-FSM) Career and Technical Education Center (CTEC) campus to honor the Golden West Humanitarian Foundation for their vital work in detecting, safely transporting, and detonating unexploded remnants of war found on the campus grounds.

COM-FSM President Theresa Koroivulaona delivered welcoming remarks, acknowledging the importance of this work for the safety of students, staff, and the wider community. She was joined by Deputy Head of Mission of the U.S. Embassy in Kolonia, Mr. Vincent Mutt-Tracy, who reflected on the lasting legacy of World War II and its continuing impact on the lives of Pacific Islanders today.

Chairperson of the COM-FSM Board of Regents, Ms. Suzanne Gallen, also offered remarks, noting the lasting legacy of World War II while expressing gratitude to the Golden West Humanitarian Foundation’s technicians and personnel for their expertise and dedication.

In his remarks, Governor Joseph thanked Golden West and US Embassy Kolonia for their service to the people of Pohnpei, saying, “Your professionalism and skills have helped protect and keep safe our communities from these remnants of war.” He highlighted the importance of ensuring the safety of public spaces, especially educational institutions where future generations learn and grow.

Together, Governor Joseph and Chairperson Gallen presented a plaque of appreciation to the Golden West Humanitarian Foundation on behalf of the Pohnpei State Government and COM-FSM.



The evening’s program featured entertainment by the COM-FSM Choir and a traditional sakau ceremony performed by students and staff, reflecting the cultural traditions of Pohnpei and adding to the spirit of gratitude and community.

Governor Joseph emphasized that partnerships between local institutions, international partners, and humanitarian organizations remain key to keeping communities safe and fostering resilience.

# Courtesy call on Ambassador Kagomiya by Ritsumeikan University Student Association “natuRable”

## Embassy of Japan to the FSM

September 8, 2025

**Pohnpei** - On September 8, Ambassador Kagomiya received a courtesy call from ten students from Ritsumeikan University Student Association “natuRable”. The natuRable, established in 2016, conducts activities both domestically and internationally aimed at improving environmental issues in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). Their efforts include environmental awareness campaigns utilizing radio stations in the country, environmental education activities at elementary schools, cultural exchange events such as yukata dressing and sports festivals, and introducing Japanese culture to government agencies.



the FSM.

Ambassador Kagomiya expressed his respects towards the students’ long-standing efforts and expressed his high expectations and encouragement for their commendable efforts.

During the meeting, students introduced its activities, and a lively exchange of views regarding the current situation in

# ECA’s U.S. Speaker Program launches first workshop in the Federated States of Micronesia

## U.S. Embassy to the FSM

September 15, 2025

**Kolonia** - From September 8–10, the U.S. Embassy, in collaboration with the Education and Cultural Affairs Bureau (ECA)’s U.S. Speaker Program, hosted an introductory workshop on artificial intelligence (AI) at the national campus of the College of Micronesia in Palikir. The event featured Associate Professor Christoffer Heckman from the Department of Computer Science at the University of Colorado.

The ECA U.S. Speaker Program is a public diplomacy tool that advances U.S. interests by recruiting prominent American experts to interact in-person or virtually with foreign decision-makers and other professional interlocutors to explain and further key policy priorities that protect, strengthen, and benefit the United States.

The three-day program is key to promoting the U.S. as a preferred partner and leader in AI technologies, educating participants about the evolution of AI, fundamentals of machine learning, data security considerations, and responsible

use of AI. Over eighty participants, including representatives from the local government, academia, and development organizations, attended the lecture. “One of the greatest strengths of modern AI techniques is that they are accessible to everyone through conversation,” said Heckman. “They give us the chance to interact with knowledge in new ways that are relevant to us, while also providing us tools for better addressing issues of food security and maritime domain awareness.”

“Last July, the United States government unveiled America’s AI Action Plan, outlining a comprehensive strategy to support the development and export of American AI technologies to allies and partners. This ECA U.S. Speaker Program workshop demonstrates our commitment to supporting and empowering the Federated States of Micronesia in adopting and developing AI infrastructure that prioritizes human flourishing and economic competitiveness,” U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Officer Dennis Coster said.

To learn more about the ECA U.S. Speaker Program, visit [exchanges.state.gov/us/program/us-speaker-program](https://exchanges.state.gov/us/program/us-speaker-program)

# Bezos Earth Fund invests AUD57 million to accelerate Pacific-led ocean protection

*Secretariat of the Pacific Community*

*September 16, 2025*

**Washington D.C.** - A groundbreaking effort led by Pacific Island leaders to safeguard the ocean took a major step forward today, with the Bezos Earth Fund announcing AUD57 million in grants to support marine protection across 12 countries and territories. The funding advances implementation of national and regional plans, including the Pacific's shared vision to sustainably manage 100 percent of its ocean and protect areas of high biodiversity and cultural significance. These efforts also contribute to the global goal of protecting 30 percent of the planet's land and ocean by 2030. If fully realised, the region's work would form the world's largest coordinated network of marine protected areas.

The announcement is part of the Bezos Earth Fund's \$100 million commitment to support Pacific Island nations and territories in safeguarding their ocean. This initial AUD57 million sets that vision in motion by funding the design of marine protected area networks, enforcement at sea, and long-term financing to ensure protections last. It advances "Unlocking Blue Pacific Prosperity" (UBPP), coordinated by the Pacific Community (SPC), an initiative endorsed by Pacific leaders to sustainably manage 100 percent of their waters and protect at least 30 percent by 2030.

"The Pacific isn't just a beautiful backdrop, it's a lifeline," said Lauren Sánchez Bezos, Vice Chair of the Bezos Earth Fund. "Pacific Island nations and territories are setting the pace. We're here to match that ambition and help turn it into protection at scale. We are so proud to be part of one of the boldest ocean protection efforts ever attempted."

The initiative builds on diverse starting points across the Pacific. In Solomon Islands and Tuvalu, new areas for protection will be identified through inclusive consultation and careful design. In Samoa and Fiji, the focus is on putting existing national plans into action – expanding and operationalising marine protection across 30 percent of national waters. Meanwhile, in Niue and Palau, where protections are already in place, efforts

will strengthen enforcement, advance ecological monitoring, and secure long-term sustainable funding.

"Unlocking Blue Pacific Prosperity is a Pacific-made finance and investment programme. It is our canoe for change. With the Bezos Earth Fund's support, we are showing the world that Pacific people lead with courage and wisdom as guardians of the ocean we all share," said President Surangel Whipps Jr. of Palau. "What makes UBPP powerful is that it supports solutions designed by our communities – solutions that protect our ocean, strengthen food security, and keep traditional knowledge alive."

What sets this effort apart is the scale of regional coordination. Each country retains sovereignty over its waters, but the initiatives will collaborate across borders, creating a cohesive system that supports migratory species, builds climate resilience, and honours the leadership of Pacific communities.

The grants support marine protection efforts across Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia. Each project was co-designed by national governments and local leaders, with regional coordination from the Pacific Community (SPC). In total, the work now underway will secure more than 835,000 square miles (2.16 million km<sup>2</sup>) of ocean through new protections, stronger enforcement, and durable financial mechanisms.

"We're linking marine protections into a single regional system, rooted in Pacific priorities," said Dr. Stuart Minchin, Director General of SPC. "This isn't about drawing lines on a map. It's about implementation. It's about financial durability. And it's about respecting the communities who have cared for these waters for generations."

The Earth Fund is closely collaborating with other funders already supporting this work in the region including, the Global Environment Facility, the Australian Government, the Waitt Foundation, the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, Blue Nature Alliance, Oceans 5, Bertarelli Ocean Legacy, and the Te Moana Collective.

The grants announced today are designed to unlock further support as countries reach milestones in legal



designation, readiness, and community consultation. As progress builds, more countries, territories, and partners can join, expanding the network's reach and resilience.

Here is a closer look at the grants supporting this work:

Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands | The Nature Conservancy (\$6.5M) – Strengthening enforcement, management, and long-term financing across 278,000 square miles (720,000 km<sup>2</sup>) of protected ocean through the Micronesia Challenge initiative.

Fiji | Charities Aid Foundation America (\$4M) – Finalising Fiji's Marine Spatial Plan, designating new marine protected areas, and developing a blended finance facility to support long-term ocean management and community stewardship.

French Polynesia | Oceans 5 (\$4M) – French Polynesia will finalise, designate, and begin managing new large-scale marine protected areas and artisanal fishing zones, with a focus on sustainable finance and community engagement.

New Caledonia | Conservation International (\$4M) – Expanding high-protection coverage of national waters in the Coral Sea Natural Park, while deploying advanced monitoring systems and bolstering the new Coral Sea Conservation Fund to support long-term conservation and community stewardship.

Samoa | Conservation International

(\$4M) – Strengthening marine protection across 30 percent of national waters by operationalising nine newly designated marine protected areas, strengthening enforcement across all waters, and designing Samoa's first long-term Ocean Financing Framework to support sustainable, community-led management.

Niue | Niue Ocean Wide Trust (\$4M) – Doubling the endowment of Niue's national conservation trust fund and supporting monitoring, enforcement, and community stewardship of its 49,035 square miles (127,000 km<sup>2</sup>) of marine protected area.

Solomon Islands | Wildlife Conservation Society (\$4M) – Scaling marine protection of national waters by designating new protected areas through an inclusive planning process, while strengthening enforcement and piloting a sustainable finance mechanism to support long-term, community-led stewardship.

Tuvalu | Wildlife Conservation Society (\$4M) – Expanding marine protection of national waters through a national planning process and establishing a sustainable financing mechanism to support long-term, community-driven management.

Regional Collaboration | Rare (\$3M) – Supporting the Unlocking Blue Pacific Prosperity coalition of 22 countries and territories to collaborate on a regional approach to ocean protection rooted in Pacific plans and priorities, including advancing the designation of transboundary marine protected area network.

# Nauru charts bold path toward 2028 Micronesia Games

## Regional sports leaders unite to reshape future of sport at MGC Annual Meeting

*Micronesian Games Council*

*September 7, 2025*

**Yaren, Nauru** - The Republic of Nauru welcomed sports leaders from across Micronesia this weekend for the Annual General Meeting of the Micronesian Games Council (MGC), held at the Nauru Parliament. Delegates from all ten member nations gathered to discuss the future of the Games and celebrate a shared commitment to athletic development and regional cooperation.

The meeting was led by MGC President Joey Miranda III and featured opening remarks from Nauru’s Minister for Sports, Hon. Jesse Jeremiah, and Speaker of Parliament Marcus Stephen, who also serves as President of the Nauru Micronesia Games Association (MGA). Their messages reflected Nauru’s deep pride and readiness to host the Micronesia Games for the first time.

Due to ongoing construction on Nauru’s first national stadium, the Council approved a proposal to reschedule the 11th Micronesian Games from 2026 to an established date of January 14-23, 2028. Representatives from China Harbour Engineering Company, the firm overseeing stadium development, confirmed that work is underway and on track for completion by December 2027.

The new timeline aligns with Nauru’s 60th Independence Anniversary, promising a month of celebration, competition, and cultural pride.

“This is a moment for our youth and our nation to shine,” said Speaker Marcus Stephen. “We’re ready to rise to the occasion and welcome the region with open arms.” said Sean Oppenheimer, Nauru MGA Secretary-General.

The 2028 Games will feature a robust lineup of traditional and modern sports, including: Athletics, Basketball (5x5 and 3x3), Volleyball (Beach and Indoor), Wrestling, Judo, Table Tennis, Tennis, Weightlifting, Wrestling, Beach Wrestling along with the traditional sports of the Micronesian All Around and Underwater Spearfishing.

In addition, Nauru MGA proposed five new optional sports to broaden participation and celebrate local culture: Boxing, Cycling, Darts, Judo, Powerlifting, and the inclusion of Fishing Trolling in the traditional sports program. These proposals will be reviewed during a virtual meeting scheduled for January 10, 2026.

Following the AGM, the delegate embarked on guided tours of proposed venues, including athlete accommodations, competition sites, and cultural event spaces.



# Guam’s Fish Eye Observatory reopens with crystal clear views

Fish Eye

*September 16, 2025*

Piti, Guam – Fish Eye Marine Park is pleased to announce that its iconic Underwater Observatory has officially reopened following the successful replacement of six of its twenty-four viewing windows. The upgrades, completed on September 14, 2025, allow visitors to enjoy clearer and brighter views of Piti Bay’s thriving marine life, offering a refreshed experience at Guam’s only Underwater Observatory.

“This project begins a thoughtful process of phased improvements, ensuring that guests continue to enjoy vibrant views of Piti Bay,” said Akihiro Tani, General Manager of Fish Eye Marine Park. “The new windows

already provide a noticeably clearer look into the reef, and we are excited to welcome back visitors to see the difference for themselves.”

### *Special Reopening Promotion*

To celebrate the observatory’s reopening, Fish Eye Marine Park is offering an exclusive lunch package that combines dining with discovery.

Every lunch buffet at Fish Eye’s Garden Restaurant now includes a complimentary visit to the Underwater Observatory. Guests can savor a freshly prepared island-style buffet, then proceed to the observatory for an unforgettable, up close view of the marine life in Piti Bay.

This promotion is perfect for families,

tour groups, and residents to enjoy the best of both worlds – a delicious cuisine paired with one of Guam’s most unique attractions in a single visit.

The refurbishment is part of Fish Eye’s preparations for its upcoming 30th Anniversary in April 2026. Other initiatives include the establishment of Friends of Fish Eye, a nonprofit organization focused on the preservation of the Piti Marine Preserve and environmental education for Guam’s youth.

“Our anniversary is not just about celebrating the past three decades,” added Tani. “It’s about looking ahead, investing in the observatory, protecting the bay, and inspiring future generations



to appreciate Guam’s natural beauty.” Fish Eye’s Underwater Observatory remains the centerpiece of the park’s offerings, alongside the Island Cultural Dinner Show, snorkeling tours, dolphin and sunset cruises, and the Island Heritage & Coconut Experience, making it a must visit destination for both visitors and residents.

# The Pacific Community and the Pacific GIS and Remote Sensing Council sign an MoU to strengthen Pacific geospatial work

*Secretariat of the Pacific Community*

**September 18, 2025**

**Suva, Fiji** – The Pacific Community (SPC) and the Pacific GIS and Remote Sensing Council (PGRSC) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on outreach, training, and promotion of regional networking in support of strengthening geospatial and earth observation work for Pacific communities, thereby better informing decision-makers and the public about the importance and great potential of these technologies.

The MoU establishes a practical framework for collaboration, including joint promotion across platforms, audience-friendly materials that explain how satellite and geospatial data support everyday decisions, and coordinated workshops and webinars aligned with the PGRSC conference cycle. It also strengthens country-level engagement through PGRSC's national focal points network.



Bradley Eichelberger, PGRSC Chair, stated, "We are both honoured and excited to collaborate with the Pacific Community on ways to expand geospatial and earth observation capacity and knowledge sharing across the Pacific Islands countries. Geospatial and remote sensing applications are essential services that provide science-based solutions to solve some of the key issues in the region, and the outcomes of this partnership will build strong, resilient Pacific Islander communities."

As part of a joint promotion, SPC will utilise the Digital Earth Pacific (DE Pacific) programme events to showcase PGRSC's community activities, while PGRSC will direct users to accessible public data, products, and tools such as provided in DE Pacific.

Dr Stuart Minchin, SPC Director General, said " This MoU is not the beginning of our relationship, but a way of being more intentional and focused—so that together we can maximise the benefits of Earth observation and geospatial technologies for Pacific countries and territories. By joining forces, we can ensure that satellite-based solutions empower our communities to protect their resources, build resilience, and secure a sustainable future."

This collaboration matters for people and decisions. By aligning training, focal-point outreach, and simple explanatory materials, the partners aim to help officials, practitioners, and communities apply geospatial insights to address practical needs, including planning services, climate resilience, supporting fisheries and agriculture, and enhancing local projects.

The MoU also encourages private-sector engagement and youth opportunities, highlighting the business value of geospatial information and supporting internships and entrepreneurship in GIS and satellite applications.

The partnership includes regular consultations to reduce duplication and maximise coordination of efforts, minimising the burden on members.

## **Next steps**

The organisations will begin partnering on the delivery of the PGRSC Conference, to be held on 24 – 28 November 2025 in Suva, Fiji, through sponsorship, conference organising, and hosting of technical sessions and workshops. As part of this collaboration, workshops will be scheduled in consultation with PGRSC's national focal points to strengthen country-level engagements. The partners will also confirm private-sector and youth engagement plans and identify opportunities to utilise existing communication hubs for knowledge sharing.

Learn more about Digital Earth Pacific: <https://digitalearthpacific.org/>  
Learn more about the Pacific GIS and Remote Sensing Council (PGRSC): <https://pgrsc.org/>



## Friends of the Pohnpei Public Library presents at the FSM Judicial Training Conference

*Friends of the Pohnpei Public Library*

**September 16, 2025**

**Pohnpei** - Mr. Andrew Trigg (FPPL Volunteer), Nercy Simina (Library of Congress), Jordan Ligorio (Library Aide-FPPL), Beaulen Carl-Worswick, (Associate Justice, FSM Supreme Court), Mary Gilmete (Library of Congress), Betty William (FSM National Archivist)

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) Judicial Training 2025 brought together judges, clerks, and legal professionals from across the nation for an intensive program designed to strengthen the judiciary's efficiency and effectiveness. The training focused on equipping participants with updated knowledge, tools, and best practices in areas such as legal research, case management, court procedures, and compliance standards. It was an important step toward ensuring that the FSM judiciary continues to uphold the highest standards of justice and accessibility for all.

As part of the program, the Friends of the Pohnpei Public Library was invited to deliver a presentation highlighting the intersection of information management and judicial practice. The session was presented by Mr. Andrew



Trigg, an Australian Volunteer working with the library, and Mr. Jordan Ligorio, the Library Aide. Together, they shared insights into:

Steps in information management – how information can be systematically collected, organized, and retrieved efficiently.

Preservation of information and data – practices to safeguard records for long-term accessibility.

Court compliance considerations – aligning information handling with legal and regulatory standards to support transparency and accountability.

The presentation was well received and underscored the importance of libraries and information professionals in supporting not just education and community learning, but also critical institutions like the judiciary. By bridging the fields of librarianship and law, the Friends of the Pohnpei Public Library contributed to strengthening the foundations of justice in the FSM.

# Weilbacher dominates with multiple wins in Annual Dr. Panuelo Memorial Fishing Competition

By Bill Jaynes  
The Kaselehlie Press

September 13, 2025

**Pohnpei** – Though the Kaselehlie Press was unable to attend today’s Annual Dr. Panuelo Memorial Fishing Tournament, it is obvious from the results that it was a pretty good fishing day. 17 Pohnpei Fishing Club boat owners signed up to win significant cash prizes for their day of angling.

The ever present and prodigious young fisherman, Marvey Spencer had the top fish, a 52.8-pound yellowfin tuna for a whopping first place biggest fish top prize of \$800.

The next two biggest fish were both wahoo. The \$700 second prize went to Kevin Sehpin with a 47.6-pound wahoo. Rosa Weilbacher, who won several prizes during the tournament had the third-place biggest fish with a wahoo of 31.6 pounds. She also caught a 25.6-pound yellow fin for fourth biggest fish and the prize that carried of \$500. Allois Malfitani had the fifth prize winning fish for a prize of \$400, a mahi mahi of 22 pounds. The last prize-winning fish in the big fish

category was caught by Oneal Optaia, barracuda of 18.6 pounds.

There was also a prize category for biggest of several species that didn’t qualify under the biggest fish category. Three top prizes were awarded for prize winning fish in that category; \$200 for first prize, \$150, for second prize, and \$100 for third prize.

Rosa Weilbacher again won prizes for the top two wahoo in the biggest fish of species category; a 17 and 15 pounder. The third prize for wahoo went to Freeman Hadley for his 10.2-pound wahoo.

Three skipjacks were awarded prizes. Mark Panuelo caught a 5.8-pound skippy. His was followed by Ricky David fish of 5.2 pounds. Third place winner was Westcott Panuelo for a 2.2-pound skipjack.

Barracuda were next on the list with Kevin Sehpin winning first with a 16.6-pound barracuda. His was followed by that of Trasleen Neth, slightly smaller one at 15.8 pounds. Last prize was for a 9.2-pound barracuda awarded to an angle identified on the



results only as JM.



for a Lady Angler with a 6.6-pound grand trevally.

Good sized prize-winning grand trevallies were caught starting with Oneal Optaia’s GT of 15.8 pounds. Junior Perman’s Trevally was 8.8 pounds. Last prize in that category went to Evan Boylan with 6.8 pounds of good eating.

Canally Torres had the \$150 top prize

The Pohnpei Fishing Tournament has recently announced that it’s Annual Tournament will be the next tournament of the year but has not yet announced a date. Look for an announcement here and on signs hanging in the usual places throughout town.

# Beyond the Blue internship concludes, preparing next generation of Palauan ocean leaders

Palau International Coral Reef Center

and marine science.

September 16, 2025

**Palau** - The Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC) and NOAA Ocean Exploration today announced the successful conclusion of the 10-week Beyond the Blue Summer Program. The program, which ended on August 18, 2025, equipped five Junior Regional Advisors (JRAs) with the skills and knowledge to become future leaders in marine science and ocean conservation.

A pivotal part of the program was the JRAs’ time aboard the NOAA ship Okeanos Explorer. On the expedition, they conducted the most extensive eDNA sampling effort to date in Palau, collecting 312 samples from depths of up to 4,000 meters. The team also used multibeam sonar to map 39,358 km<sup>2</sup> of previously uncharted seafloor.

Upon returning to shore, the JRAs created technical reports and presentations based on their research, including an analysis of deep-sea data from a previous expedition aboard the E/V Nautilus. The program concluded with the JRAs sharing their experience on a special episode of PICRC’s *Berius el Chais* talk show and presentations of their group projects followed by their awarding ceremony at PICRC.

According to King Sam the PNMS



Program Manager, the program successfully equipped the interns with new technical skills and a strengthened commitment to safeguarding Palau’s ocean heritage, ensuring that the discoveries of today help protect the islands for generations to come.

PICRC extends its gratitude to NOAA Ocean Exploration, the Ocean Exploration Trust, the crews of the Okeanos Explorer and E/V Nautilus, and the many mentors and partners who supported the JRAs throughout their journey.

## USCGC Myrtle Hazard (WPC 1139) crew completes successful operational period, support GIUE in Tinian

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

September 16, 2025

**Santa Rita, Guam** - The USCGC Myrtle Hazard (WPC 1139) crew completed a robust operational period from Aug. 11 to Sept. 1, patrolling the maritime borders of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) to ensure border security and territorial integrity.

The crew met all objectives, including enforcing federal laws, enhancing maritime domain awareness, and maintaining readiness for Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam and Oceania District operations.

The crew logged over 219 operational hours during the period with notable readiness efforts. They conducted the vessel's first anchoring evolution in Rota and supported a senior leader engagement with local elected officials strengthening local relationships. They delivered supplies to Marine Safety Unit Saipan and transported four maritime safety team members for a Government Initiated Unannounced Exercise in Tinian. This was an efficient use of resources, reducing travel costs by \$10,000 and ensured the success of the GIUE which tested the Mobil Tinian team. During the GIUE the Mobil team demonstrated

the ability to adequately respond to a simulated oil spill within the defined standard timeframe of four hours and make all necessary notifications.

This period provided a necessary window for training new and existing crew. A gunnery exercise qualified several mount captains and gunners on the 50-caliber machine guns. Additional trainings qualified seven members as boarding team members and boarding officers, quartermasters of the watch, small boat coxswains, deck operations, and a firearms marksmanship coach – all essential roles to ensuring the continuity and success of operations at sea and needed for the cutter's ongoing participation in Operation Rematau.

Operation Rematau represents the Micronesia-specific implementation of Operation Blue Pacific by U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam. The operation focuses on patrols in the U.S. exclusive economic zones of Guam and the CNMI and those of the Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau, and the Marshall Islands. It reinforces U.S. commitment to Pacific regionalism, enhances maritime security, and builds trust with local communities. Through these efforts, the Coast Guard deters illegal activities, protects vital resources, and strengthens alliances.

"The value of our routine operations



lies in their role in safeguarding U.S. interests and supporting allied nations," said Lt. Emma Saunders, commanding officer of Myrtle Hazard. "Our patrols deter and disrupt threats such as smuggling and unauthorized fishing, which saves lives, preserves marine ecosystems, and enhances economic opportunities for island communities."

The purpose extends beyond enforcement to community engagement. Local visits and supply deliveries build positive relationships with residents in more remote areas like Rota and Saipan. These interactions educate the public on U.S. Coast Guard missions and encourage collaboration and cooperation in maritime security and safety.

The impact resonates across the region. Enhanced maritime domain awareness provides real-time information

on potential risks and regional needs, reducing vulnerabilities to transnational crimes. Qualifications and gunnery exercises improve operational effectiveness, which directly supports national security objectives. Overall, these operations fortify the U.S. reputation as a reliable trusted partner in the Blue Pacific, promoting peace and prosperity.

"The Myrtle Hazard crew demonstrated exceptional professionalism and versatility during this period. Our efforts ensure this crew maintains high readiness levels, enabling rapid response to emergencies like emergent law enforcement or search and rescue missions." said Saunders. "Their dedication to training, operational excellence, and community engagement strengthens our mission to protect the maritime borders of Guam and the CNMI."

## Pacific Island Tuna supports Arno community with \$100,000 for coastal resource management

The Nature Conservancy

September 15, 2025

On August 18, 2025, Pacific Island Tuna (PIT) presented \$100,000 to the Arno community in the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) to support the implementation of Arno's Atoll Management Plan and strengthen local coastal conservation. The ceremony, held at the Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority (MIMRA) Conference Room, brought together national and local leaders, including Minister Tony Muller, Arno Senator Gerald Zackios, Arno Mayor Baji Danny, PAN coordinator Alicia Edwards, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Micronesia and Polynesia Marshall Islands Program Manager Chloe Abraham, and PIT General Manager Gene Muller.

Launched in 2022 by TNC and MIMRA, PIT is a public-private venture that sources and supplies sustainably caught tuna products to global retailers, directing its profits into island communities and conservation efforts. Its co-ownership structure –with resource owners and TNC, which does not take profits– means that revenue from harvest, processing, and sales flows directly back to the resource owners: Pacific Island people. Through this model, 40% of proceeds from offshore tuna fisheries are reinvested into community improvement, marine conservation, and climate resilience projects across the Pacific.

"Tuna is central to Pacific Island communities –economically and culturally," said Gene Muller, PIT General Manager. "What makes PIT different is that profits don't leave our waters. They

return to support communities like Arno, helping to manage reefs and protect the marine ecosystems that sustain us."

PIT also sets high standards for sustainability and accountability in the global tuna industry. The company only buys fish from vessels that follow strict codes of conduct, including onboard monitoring to reduce bycatch of at-risk species such as sharks, rays, and marine mammals, while ensuring safe and fair working conditions for crew. Partnerships with leading retailers such as Walmart show that responsibly caught tuna can succeed in global markets while supporting conservation at home.

"PIT is more than a fisheries enterprise – it's a blueprint for how sustainable harvests can fuel conservation and community

resilience," said Keobel Sakuma, Interim Deputy Director of TNC Micronesia and Polynesia. "By reinvesting profits into reef management and local stewardship, PIT is helping ensure that Pacific Island communities remain at the heart of ocean protection."

Looking ahead, PIT will continue to strengthen its role as a sustainable financing mechanism for conservation and community resilience across the Pacific. With support from the Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR) through TNC's Micronesia Coral Reefs Program, PIT is exploring opportunities to expand markets for responsibly caught tuna and diversify income streams. The goal is to secure long-term revenue while ensuring that the benefits of tuna fishing flow directly back to Pacific Island people and ecosystems.

# Pacific countries review impact of biosecurity capacity building programs

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

September 19, 2025

**Nadi, Fiji** - Biosecurity officers from across the Pacific met in Fiji recently to review the impact of biosecurity training programmes delivered under the [Safe Agricultural Trade Facilitation through Economic Integration in the Pacific](#) (SAFE Pacific) project over the past four years.

The workshop, held from 8 to 12 September 2025, brought together representatives of national plant protection organisations to validate the findings of a tracer study, which measured the effectiveness of the project's biosecurity capacity-building efforts.

Funded by the [European Union](#) and implemented by the [Pacific Community](#) (SPC), SAFE Pacific has been conducting biosecurity training for Pacific Island countries to enhance safe trade efforts and manage pests. Through these initiatives, the project aimed to help Pacific countries guard against the introduction, establishment and spread of pests and diseases that threaten agriculture, biodiversity, food security, and livelihoods.

Through its Biosecurity team, the project has delivered in-country, sub-regional and regional trainings and workshops, and provided essential equipment to support the crucial work

of biosecurity officers. Training has focused on pre-border, border, and post-border risk mitigation; import risk assessment; emerging threats; pest surveillance; treatment methods; cross-agency collaboration; and practical on-the-ground applications. Hands-on exercises and field visits have been a key feature, helping officers build confidence and apply technical knowledge in real-world situations.

Undertaken this year, the tracer study showed that these efforts have strengthened pest surveillance skills, improved the ability to identify plant pests, enhanced coordination with stakeholders, and improved data collection and reporting procedures, among many other benefits. At the Fiji workshop, country representatives validated the study's findings and refined recommendations for future action.

SPC Pacific Plant Protection Organisation (PPPO) Coordinator Riten Gosai said the validation exercise marked a significant step in ensuring sustained benefits. *"It not only addresses what has been immediately achieved but will also help shape efforts for long-term impacts for national and regional biosecurity systems across the Pacific,"* he said.

*"This will strengthen national systems, enhance regional coordination, and build resilience against emerging biosecurity threats. In the long run, it*



*will help safeguard Pacific agriculture and maintain safe and sustainable trade pathways that are a lifeline for the region's economies and communities."*

Sharing their experiences and insights at the workshop, participants said they valued the "training plus equipment" model because it gave them both new skills and the tools to use them - such as traps, lures, consumables, even X-ray machines and incinerators. The training also helped strengthen inter-agency coordination, with customs, health, and ports authorities now working more closely with national biosecurity teams.

Participants also worked on finalising priority Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for biosecurity operations to ensure they meet regional needs, reflect international best practice, and remain practical for everyday use. They examined how SOPs and training modules could be better integrated into

national-level biosecurity capacity building.

Additionally, officers engaged in skill-building sessions in data collection utilising digital platforms like KoboCollect® and EpiCollect® for pest surveillance and record keeping, as well as developing training modules that can be used to train officers and communities.

SAFE Pacific provides targeted assistance to support small Pacific Island countries and territories to increase their export capacities and improve economic growth. SAFE Pacific is implemented across 15 Pacific countries, including Cook Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, PNG, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

# Secretary General, Baron Divavesi Waqa, on the passing of former President of FSM, H.E Joseph J. Urusemal

Pacific Island Forum Secretariat

September 20, 2025

**Fiji** - Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General, Baron Divavesi Waqa, has expressed his deepest condolences at the passing of His Excellency Joseph J. Urusemal, the sixth President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

The Secretary General paid tribute to the late former FSM President's immense contribution to nation building through his years of service as a legislator in the Fifth Congress

of FSM and during his presidency from 2003-2007, playing a pivotal leadership role in guiding his country's national development priorities.

Late President Urusemal attended his first Forum Leader's meeting as President of FSM at the 34th Pacific Islands Forum in New Zealand in 2003 and continued his unwavering commitment and contribution to regionalism through his consistent participation at Forum Leaders's meeting during his term.

This week, as we look forward to the high-Level week of the 80th anniversary of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), we also remember the former President as a strong advocate on the impacts of climate change in the Pacific.

In his statement to the UN assembly in 2003, he highlighted the need for immediate international action to combat climate change, calling for more urgent attention towards the "... war against climate change – a war that Mankind cannot afford to lose."

The late Hon. Urusemal served in the Congress in various capacities after his Presidency including as a member of multiple congressional committees, ensuring there were tangible outcomes for his people and communities in the Pacific.

*"We join his family and the people of FSM in honoring a great leader and I extend my heartfelt condolences on behalf of my wife and Secretariat staff to his wife, Madam Olania Latileilam and their four children."*

# U.S. Coast Guard in Guam honors inaugural Global Search and Rescue Day

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

September 10, 2025

**Santa Rita, Guam** - In the vast expanse of the Pacific, where U.S. Coast Guard operations safeguard homeland security, ensure defense readiness, enforce border control, and uphold territorial integrity, the echoes of a groundbreaking 1982 rescue still guide our major Search and Rescue (SAR) missions. Just 40 days after the launch of the first Cospas satellite, a distress signal from a downed aircraft in northern Canada alerted Mission Control Center (MCC) operators, who coordinated Rescue Coordination Center (RCC) teams to save three survivors—the inaugural validation of the COSPAS-SARSAT system’s global lifesaving power.

“U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia personnel, responsible for a 1.9 million square nautical miles search and rescue zone, monitor and respond to emergent search and rescue to ensure the safety of life at sea for all,” said Lt. Cmdr. Derek Wallin, one of Forces Micronesia Sector Guam’s Search and Rescue Mission Coordinators. “This observance underscores the Coast Guard’s commitment to safeguarding maritime interests and security across the Blue Pacific, steadfast in serving our nation’s citizens and mariners.”

Today, COSPAS-SARSAT technology remains a cornerstone of our tools in the Pacific, where Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) drastically reduce search times, turning hours of uncertainty into swift responses that preserve lives and keep our crews gainfully employed on high-stakes operations. In 2024 alone, it aided in rescuing 411 people across 159 U.S. incidents, with 77 percent in the maritime domain, vital for mariners in distress amid remote waters.

Consider the May 2025 case of the 47-foot vessel *Lucky Harvest*, disabled by an electrical failure 125 nautical miles west of Guam’s Apra Harbor. At 6:30 a.m. on May 16, the two mariners activated their EPIRB, instantly pinpointing their location via COSPAS-SARSAT satellites after days of searches. U.S. Coast Guard watchstanders at Joint Rescue Sub-

Center (JRSC) Guam enabled a rapid U.S. Coast Guard response: An HC-130 Hercules airplane crew from Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point in Hawai’i vectored a Navy MH-60 Knighthawk crew from Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25 for the hoist of one mariner, while the USCGC *Myrtle Hazard* (WPC 1139) crew rescued the second mariner and towed the vessel through challenging 15-knot winds and 6-foot seas, ensuring safe arrival at Hagåtña boat basin the following day. This operation not only saved lives but bolstered defense readiness and territorial integrity by showcasing seamless interagency coordination with the Navy, maintaining a robust U.S. presence in the Indo-Pacific—a region critical to countering maritime threats and securing national interests—and ensuring operational assets remained mission-ready for homeland security and border control tasks.

Similarly, in July 2024, the USCGC *Oliver Henry* (WPC 1140) crew responded to an Inmarsat C distress alert—an EPIRB variant—from the yacht *Black Pearl*, stranded 200 nautical miles from the Republic of Palau. The precise signal enabled JRSC watchstanders to guide the *Oliver Henry* crew directly to the vessel, executing a rapid rescue in a strategically vital region. The *Oliver Henry* crew towed the 154-foot 497-ton motor yacht back to Palau. The 11-person yacht crew, who reported a locked rudder and flooding in the bilge, was assisted by *Oliver Henry*’s crew with dewatering and damage control as they headed toward Palau in 25 mph winds and 4 to 6-foot seas. This mission underscored the U.S. Coast Guard’s ability to project power and maintain security and safety in the Pacific through regional patrols, while highlighting the critical role of EPIRBs in shrinking vast search areas into pinpoint targets.

“An EPIRB turns the ocean’s chaos into a clearer path to safety and brings mariners home safely,” said Lt. Ray Cerrato, commanding officer of *Oliver Henry*. “In the Pacific’s immense search grid, beacons cut search time reducing risks to our crews and returning them to countering illegal activities and protecting territorial waters sooner.”

Properly registering EPIRBs and PLBs, now more affordable than ever, ensures MCC watchstanders can instantly



verify distress signals and contact owners. Registration is free.

On Sept. 10, the anniversary of that first 1982 save, the International COSPAS-SARSAT Program inaugurates Global Search and Rescue Day, honoring MCC and RCC personnel who stand watch, transforming signals into safety and security. From Guam’s harbors to Micronesia’s atolls, their vigilance supports our core priorities, saving an average of 10 lives daily worldwide while fortifying the U.S. maritime borders and approaches.

More information on the new observance can be found at <https://www.cospas-sarsat.int/en/search-and-rescue/global-sar-day>.

# USP calls for bold vision and collective resolve at PIF Leaders Meeting

University of the South Pacific

September 9, 2025

**Fiji** - For nearly six decades, The University of the South Pacific (USP) has produced close to 70,000 graduates whose impact resonates across our 12 member countries and beyond.

This reflects the transformative of education in shaping villages, classrooms, hospitals, businesses, industries, governments, and communities throughout the region.

USP Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council, Siosua 'Utoikamanu highlighted the University's significant role at the Leaders Dialogue with CROP session this morning at the 54th Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Leaders Meeting.

The week-long Leaders Meeting is currently underway in the Solomon Islands.

'Utoikamanu added that education is a public good and must be made more affordable and accessible.

"We do not lack talent in the Pacific – talent is everywhere. But across our region, there are 1.86 million young people aged 15 to 24, and less than 5 percent of them are estimated to be engaged in formal tertiary education. The challenge before us is to build the bridge between this vast ocean of talent and the opportunities that can unlock it, so that the next mind to cure disease, engineer climate resilience, or design a governance model for our region is not lost to circumstance but empowered to rise," he said.

"We see the challenges clearly: climate change, the rise of non-communicable diseases, and persistent inequality. Emerging technologies are also reshaping our world. Artificial intelligence, in particular, will transform how we learn, work, and govern. We must adapt and shape how they are used in ways that reflect our cultures, our values, and our sovereignty."

"The ambitious 2050 vision for our Blue Pacific Continent demonstrates that we have already imagined a different future. But imagination alone is not enough. It must now be matched by resolve – by a willingness to reshape our institutions and confront the risks of fragmentation."



In reaffirming the University's role as a unifying force for the region, 'Utoikamanu emphasised the importance of a shared vision and collective responsibility for the Pacific's future.

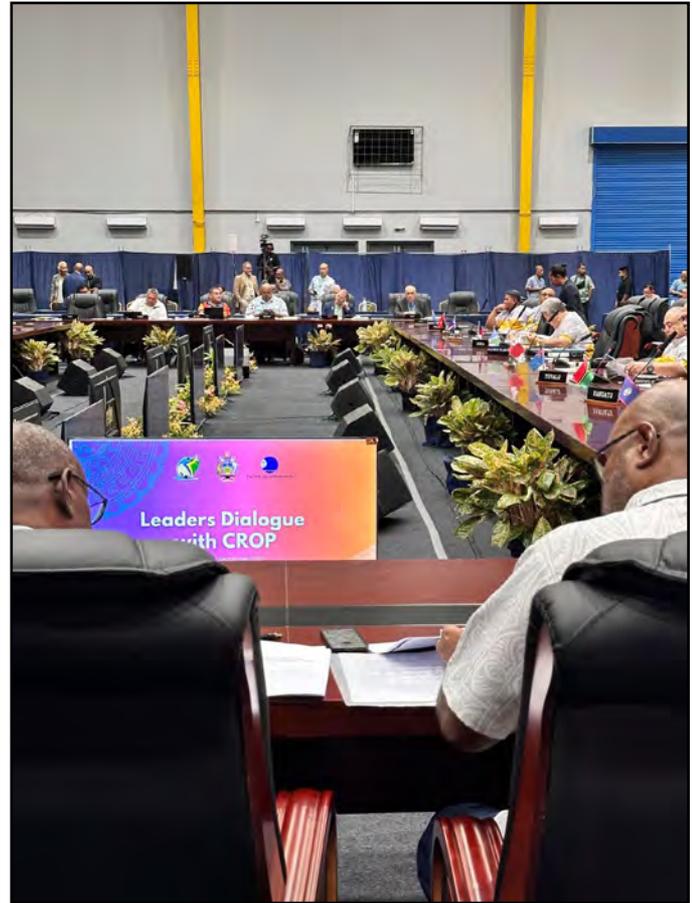
"Our vision for the Pacific must be as bold as our potential. That must be our spirit. Our unity is our strength, and our future depends on it."



"Of the Pacific, for the Pacific, by the Pacific - this is how we protect our collective vision so that our priorities are set by us, not for us."

The Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) includes USP, PIF and The Pacific Community (SPC),

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO), Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP), Pacific Power Association (PPA), Pacific Aviation Safety Office and the Forum Fisheries Agency.



## Coconuts, kids, and lickabouts: Sport and Health Day lights up Kolonia

Pohnpei Youth Soccer Association

September 22, 2024

**Kolonia, Pohnpei** - If you thought Sunday in Kolonia was going to be quiet, think again! On 21 September, the CTEC Gym turned into a happy storm of soccer balls, squeaky sneakers, health checks, and — let's be honest — a whole lot of coconuts.

Almost 40 children, some as young as five, showed up well *before* the official 2:00 pm start, proving that kids have more energy than any of us adults could ever dream of. While some were lining up for the medical checkup (with plenty of giggling as they compared who could read the tiniest letters during the eyes check), others were already chasing balls around like mini World Cup stars.

The College of Micronesia deserves a gold medal for hosting the event, feeding everyone, and serving the true champions of the day: fresh coconuts. Forget soda — nothing says "victory" like sipping cold, sweet coconut water after running for hours!

The prizes? Well those come from the US Embassy in Kolonia, thanks to Ambassador Johnson and her staff, they were superlative in the choice. Kids loved them, but the stickers in particular. Surely they are everywhere at their homes now.

Big cheers go to Crystal Jackson, the behind-the-scenes hero, and to young Latifa Pelep, who juggled kids, doctors, and schedules like a pro. PSAKC is proud to welcome her as the new *Youth Coordinator*.

We can't forget Principal Loriano Martin, who rallied his Sekere Elementary kids, or Dr. Epi Tamanitoakula and Mrs. Kay Schwendinger, who cheered, supported, and made sure everything ran smoothly.

At the end of the day, sweaty kids left with smiles, parents left with pride, and everyone left with coconut-sticky fingers. Sport and Health Day was more than just an event — it was a reminder that health and happiness go hand in hand... preferably with a futsal ball nearby.