

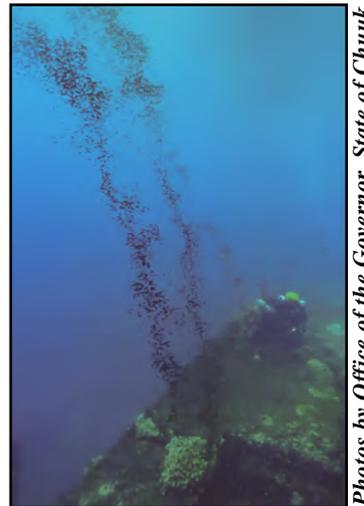
Oil from WWII wreck fouls Chuuk Lagoon; FSM declares national emergency, seeks international support

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

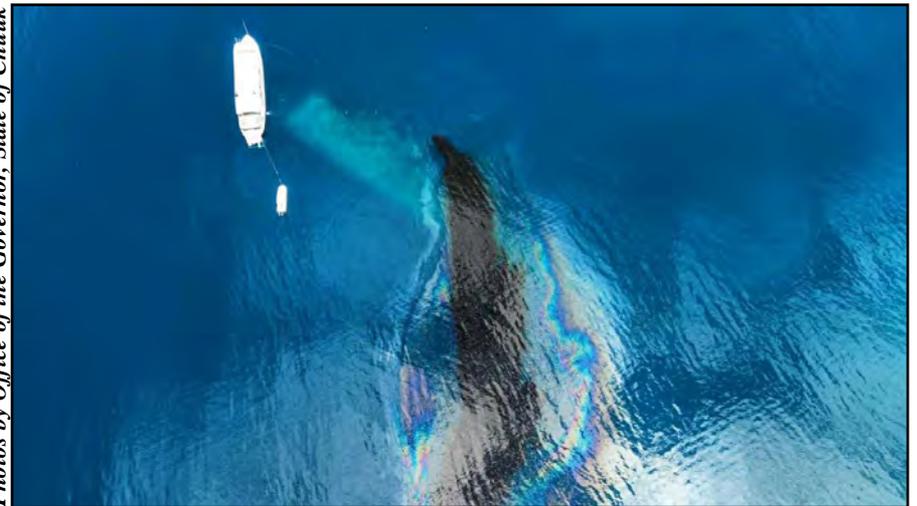
October 2, 2025

Weno, Chuuk — An oil leak from the World War II shipwreck Rio de Janeiro Maru in Chuuk Lagoon has triggered emergency declarations at both the Chuuk State and national FSM levels. President Wesley W. Simina used his address at the UN General Assembly on September 26, 2025 to announce the national emergency and appeal for urgent international assistance—as documented by the FSM government and covered in regional media such as Pacific Island Times.

Divers first observed the leak on September 11 near Uman Island, when oil was seen rising from the hull of Rio de Janeiro Maru, a Japanese ship sunk during Operation Hailstone. Reports by Dive Magazine and other outlets detailed how



Photos by Office of the Governor, State of Chuuk



slicks then spread toward nearby islets including Panitiw, Nukanap, and Sopota. On September 15, Governor Alexander R. Narruhn declared a Chuuk State emergency, warning of toxic fumes, contaminated water, and risks from consuming local seafood and produce.

[Click here for continuation](#)

Unlicensed company allegedly pocketed State funds for undelivered radio equipment

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

October 6, 2025

Kolonia, Pohnpei — The Pohnpei Office of the Public Auditor (POPA) has issued a management advisory report revealing that more than \$119,000 in public funds were paid to a locally owned company, THERMATECH, for an AM transmitter that was never delivered to the Pohnpei Public Broadcasting Corporation

(PPBC).

According to the report, the payment of \$119,494.40 was made on April 4, 2022, from a grant awarded to PPBC by the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) under Grant D21AP10187. The funds were intended to improve the island's emergency broadcasting and energy systems. However, three years later, the transmitter remains undelivered.

The Office of the Public Auditor confirmed that THERMATECH received the full payment and that the company's owner admitted to using the funds for personal expenses, including loans and school tuition, instead of purchasing the transmitter.

The auditors noted that although the company is locally owned, they found no evidence that THERMATECH held a valid business license, raising

further questions about the procurement process.

The report criticized both PPBC management and the Office of Development Assistance (ODA) for failing to properly oversee the procurement and delivery of the equipment, calling it a "significant lapse in accountability and project

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Kiribati and Marshall Islands deliver contrasting but complementary messages at UNGA

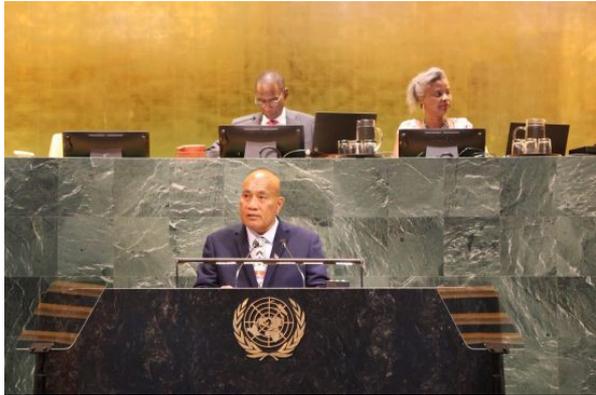
By *Bill Jaynes*
The Kaselehlie Press

September 24, 2025

New York – Three Micronesian Island leaders including President Wesley Simina of the FSM took the global stage at the United Nations General Assembly this week, presenting messages that drew attention to shared regional priorities while also revealing distinct national perspectives. The FSM's press release on President Simina's statement is on the front page of this issue. President Taneti Maamau of Kiribati and President Hilda Heine of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) also addressed the Assembly on September 24, offering views shaped by their countries' unique histories and vulnerabilities but rooted in a common Pacific identity.

Shared Pacific Priorities

Both leaders left no doubt that climate change remains the central existential issue for small island developing states (SIDS). Maamau reminded the Assembly that global action to



President Taneti Maamau

limit warming to 1.5°C is essential to the survival of island nations like Kiribati, stressing the need to operationalize the Loss and Damage Fund to support frontline communities. Heine struck an even more urgent tone, describing climate change as the Pacific's "number one security threat" and warning that only immediate, large-scale global action can protect her nation's youngest generations.

Oceans also figured prominently in both addresses. Maamau spoke of tuna's role in Kiribati's economy and identity, pledging to maximize economic returns from this resource while ensuring sustainability through the Parties to the Nauru Agreement. Heine took a firmer line on emerging threats, joining 37 nations calling for a moratorium on deep seabed mining until safeguards are in place. Both leaders portrayed the ocean as not just an economic lifeline but a vital element of sovereignty, culture, and global ecological health.

On nuclear issues, the two leaders expressed solidarity with a Pacific tradition of resistance to nuclear threats. Maamau denounced nuclear testing, waste dumping,



President Hilda Heine

and submarine traffic that endanger Pacific waters, reaffirming Kiribati's commitment to a nuclear-free world. Heine, by contrast, spoke from direct experience: recalling the legacy of 67 U.S. nuclear tests conducted in the Marshall Islands between 1946 and 1958. She demanded contemporary acknowledgment and even apology from the UN for having permitted testing under its Trusteeship flag.

Both leaders also emphasized the importance of multilateralism and international law. Maamau welcomed UN reforms aimed at strengthening support for vulnerable states, while Heine pointed to the International Court of Justice's ruling that nations have binding obligations to prevent climate harm, and that maritime zones remain fixed despite sea-level rise.

Contrasting Tones and Emphases

Despite these shared themes, the speeches diverged sharply in tone and content.

Kiribati's statement was framed in optimism and resilience. President Maamau described progress in governance reforms, community initiatives like Gospel Day that foster tolerance, and investments in renewable energy such as household solar lighting. He invoked traditional wisdom and offered blessings of "Abundant Health, Peace, and Prosperity," focusing on collective prosperity and resilience in the face of adversity.

In contrast, RMI's address was sharper and more confrontational. President Heine repeatedly called out broken promises, failures of wealthy nations to deliver climate finance, and the dangers of global geopolitical rivalry. She warned of the risks posed by Russian aggression in Ukraine and voiced strong support for Taiwan's inclusion in international institutions, openly rejecting China's interpretation of UN Resolution 2758. The Marshall Islands also pressed for Security Council reform, backing Japan and India as permanent members.



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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 20, 2025

Click here for continuation

PTA audit finds major accounting errors, unrealistic budgets, and fuel policy violations

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

October 6, 2025

Kolonia, Pohnpei — The Office of the Public Auditor (OPA) has issued an adverse opinion on the financial statements of the Pohnpei Transportation Authority (PTA) for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, concluding that the beleaguered state-owned corporation’s books do not fairly present its financial position in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles in the United States.

According to Audit Report No. 006-25, the OPA found material misstatements in PTA’s financial records involving accounts receivable, fixed assets, inventories, liabilities, revenues, and expenditures. The report said that PTA management declined to correct the errors, leading to significant distortions in the agency’s reported results.

Among the discrepancies noted were:

- Current assets understated by \$441,228
- Current liabilities understated by \$9,312
- Non-current assets overstated by \$311,410
- Total expenses understated by \$899,061
- Non-operating income understated by \$250,000
- The audit concluded that the statements were “materially misstated as a whole.”

Operating Loss and Shrinking Revenues

The PTA recorded an operating loss of \$139,134 for the year, a modest improvement from the previous year’s loss of \$472,895. Total operating expenses dropped to \$870,046—about 63 percent less than the 2023 total of \$2.3 million—largely due to reduced construction activity and payroll cost controls.

Operating revenues also fell sharply to \$730,912, down from \$1.87 million

the year before, reflecting fewer contractual road projects due to rainy weather and equipment breakdowns. Payroll-related costs accounted for 76 percent of total expenses, and the authority ended the year with net assets of \$128,290.

Five Major Audit Findings

The OPA identified five findings that, if addressed, could strengthen PTA’s financial management and operations:

Failure to Properly Record and Prepare Financial Statements – PTA omitted several key accounts, including unrecorded inventories, receivables, payables, depreciation, and legislative appropriations totaling nearly \$2 million in adjustments.

Unrealistic Budget Forecast – PTA’s budget projected \$3 million in revenues but collected less than half, exposing weaknesses in planning and forecasting. The OPA recommended that PTA adopt data-driven budgeting, quarterly variance reviews, and contingency planning.

Noncompliance with Fuel (POL) Procedures – The audit uncovered numerous instances of incomplete or unauthorized fuel issuance, including cases where the same employee both requested and approved fuel vouchers. Auditors urged stricter oversight and segregation of duties.

Unrecorded Procurement of Fixed Assets – Two cellphones purchased in 2022 were never recorded in PTA’s asset registry. The OPA said this lapse violated the Pohnpei Financial Management Regulations, calling for annual physical verification and clear custodian accountability.

Persistent Failure to Resolve Past Audit Findings – Issues first raised as far back as 2018 remained unresolved, including incomplete accounting, disregard for state financial regulations, and weak internal controls. The OPA directed the PTA Board to enforce a time-

bound corrective action plan and report progress monthly.

Auditee’s Responses

In its official response, PTA management agreed with most findings but offered clarifications and partial disagreements.

On the misstated financial statements, PTA acknowledged some omissions but maintained that certain expenditures totaling \$833,515.86 had already been recorded by the Department of Treasury and Administration (DOTA). The PTA accountant’s proposed adjustments were rejected by the DOTA director pending a meeting with auditors for clarification.

Regarding the unrealistic budget, PTA agreed that revenue projections were overstated and said the FY2026 budget would reduce staff from 92 to 72 to align expenses with realistic income levels.

On fuel policy violations, management accepted the finding and said new procedures were in place requiring the Commissioner’s signature on all fuel issue receipts and monthly summaries from the Fuelmen Supervisor.

PTA disagreed with the finding on

unrecorded assets, arguing that the State Finance Department only records assets with official transfer-of-ownership documents.

On the matter of unresolved prior findings, management partly disagreed, insisting that accounts receivable and payable are reconciled daily, and that financial reports are regularly reviewed by the Board. However, they acknowledged continuing issues with project documentation and attendance tracking and said a time clock system will be introduced in FY2026 to strengthen oversight.

Next Steps and Oversight

Under Pohnpei State Law SL-08-00, the PTA must submit monthly progress reports to the OPA outlining corrective measures until all findings are resolved—no later than one year after the audit’s release. The first report is due by October 31, 2025.

The OPA thanked Commissioner Welsin Helgenberger and the PTA workforce for their cooperation during the audit but emphasized that full compliance with financial standards and timely corrective actions remain essential to restoring credibility in the troubled public corporation.



...Chuuk oil

Continued from front page

In his UN address, President Simina acknowledged that the spill's scale exceeds Micronesia's capacity to handle alone. According to ABC Pacific and other media, he asked for technical, financial, and logistical support—both to stop this leak and to assess other wrecks across the lagoon that may pose similar hazards.

The Rio de Janeiro Maru rests on its starboard side in roughly 34 meters of water and is one of more than 60 wrecks in Chuuk Lagoon. The chamber holds liquids and structural deterioration over decades heighten the risk of sudden leaks. The International Spill Control Organisation (ISCO) has warned that oil has already reached multiple shorelines and is advising residents to avoid contaminated areas and exposures.

Observers and government bodies have long described these wrecks as latent dangers. Japan's Mine Action Service (JMAS) has been actively removing oil, monitoring ship integrity, and training Chuuk personnel. Yet experts caution that even aggressive retrieval efforts may struggle to keep pace with corrosion, storms, and structural collapse.

Joint reclamation & prevention projects: existing efforts and how they relate to this spill

Prior to this leak, several cooperative efforts have been underway involving Japan, Australia, SPREP/MPF (Major Projects Foundation), and the United States, aimed at reducing the risk of oil release from WWII wrecks in Chuuk Lagoon.

Japan / JMAS

JMAS began systematic work around 2017, aiming to recover oil from wrecks before catastrophic failures occur. Their approach involves using diaphragm pumps, compressed air systems, and other controlled extraction techniques to bring oil to the surface without destabilizing the

wrecks. They have also focused on monitoring structural integrity and training local personnel to sustain efforts over time. As of mid-2025, JMAS reported having recovered approximately 60,000 liters of oil in total, with over 21,000 liters recovered since mid-2024 alone.

Their priority targets have included wrecks such as Shinkoku Maru and Kiyosumi Maru, both identified as holding significant volumes of fuel. In some instances, leaks reappear even after prior extraction, highlighting the difficulty of fully exhausting all oil safely.

Australia / SPREP / Major Projects Foundation (MPF)

In May 2022, Australia committed AUD 2.12 million to bolster ongoing oil-removal work in Chuuk. This funding was structured to complement existing Japanese efforts and to support SPREP and MPF in technical capacity building, equipment, surveys, and risk assessments. The partnership was announced as a strategic response to Chuuk's concentration of high-risk wrecks.

Australia's support has been designed to help the FSM government better characterize wrecks, plan interventions, and respond to pollution hazards more independently over time. The MPF has also conducted surveys and modeling to rank wrecks by risk and plan prevention strategies.

U.S. / U.S.–Japan collaboration

In August 2024, the United States and Japan issued a joint statement on the safe removal of oil from wrecks in Chuuk Lagoon, affirming shared responsibility and interest in supporting JMAS operations and exploring further collaboration. Under that agreement, oil recovered from some wrecks is expected to be shipped off Chuuk for proper disposal.

While the above programs focus primarily on preventive extraction and monitoring, the onset of the Rio de Janeiro Maru leak may push them into an emergency-response posture. The existing partnerships provide a foundation of expertise, equipment, and bilateral/multilateral relationships. However, the spill likely exceeds what these programs alone were designed to



address—they may need to be scaled up rapidly, with new funding, faster deployment of salvage crews, and perhaps new agreements to permit rapid intervention on Rio de Janeiro Maru.

The fact that collaborative structures and technical capacity are already in place is a major advantage. But with this leak, the challenge is now real time: to contain, recover, and mitigate damage before ecosystems, food systems, and livelihoods suffer irreversible harm.

What comes next

Priority actions include cutting off the leak at its source, protecting vulnerable coastal zones (mangroves, reefs, seagrass beds), and cleaning oil that has reached land. The FSM and Chuuk governments have formally requested assistance from Japan, the U.S., and others. Organizations like MPF, SPREP, and JMAS are expected to coordinate or lead emergency efforts, leveraging their existing knowledge, equipment, and local presence.

Given the high complexity and risk of salvage operations like hot-tapping or fuel pump extraction, a rapid mobilization of skilled international teams and logistical support will be essential. Observers caution that delays could yield long-term damage to coral, fisheries, human health, and the socioeconomic base of many communities.

The Rio de Janeiro Maru, built in 1929, was requisitioned by the Japanese during WWII for military service. It was sunk on February 17,

1944 during Operation Hailstone. Today, it remains one of the more intact and dived wrecks in Chuuk Lagoon.

What residents are being told

Officials in Chuuk State have issued safety and health directives following the oil leak from Rio de Janeiro Maru. Key instructions include:

- **Avoid consuming local fish & produce.** Do not eat seafood or crops from affected areas.
- **Avoid polluted water.** Do not swim, bathe, or use lagoon or shoreline water until declared safe.
- **Steer clear of toxic fumes.** Avoid areas with a strong oil smell, which may indicate harmful vapors.
- **Medical monitoring will be carried out.** Authorities are implementing a system to track health impacts among residents.
- **Report new leaks or dead marine life.** Citizens are asked to notify local agencies if they spot fresh slicks or fish carcasses.

These precautions are intended as short-term protective measures until cleanup and containment activities make the area safer.

This article draws on reports from Pacific Island Times, ABC Pacific, Dive Magazine, the International Spill Control Organisation, the Japanese Mine Action Service, and official statements from the FSM National and Chuuk State governments, as well as published agreements and project announcements concerning wreck oil recovery.

EU Ambassador backs FSM’s economic progress, Fefan electrification, and Water Policy Plan

By *Bill Jaynes*
The Kaselehlie Press

October 6, 2025

Pohnpei — At the close of her visit to the Federated States of Micronesia, the European Union’s Ambassador for the Pacific, Barbara Plinkert, expressed optimism about deepening cooperation between the EU and FSM in trade, sustainable development, and climate resilience. Speaking in an interview shortly before her departure, Ambassador Plinkert said she was encouraged by the progress made during meetings with national leaders and government departments.

“We are very happy to really strengthen relations between the European Union and FSM,” she said. “Our discussions were both political and practical—focusing on our cooperation and the next steps for economic and development partnerships,” she said.

Strengthening Economic and Trade Relations

Ambassador Plinkert said the FSM’s ongoing accession process to the EU’s Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) would open significant trade opportunities once completed.

“FSM has submitted its market access offer, and we have agreed to it,” she explained. “Now it needs

to go through the national process for approval before moving to our internal procedures with the European Parliament and the 27 EU member states.”

Once finalized, the agreement will grant quota- and duty-free access for FSM products to the European market—especially seafood, a key export interest.

She added that FSM is “on a very good track” toward becoming the third Pacific Island nation, after Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, to export fishery products to the EU. However, she noted that progress also depends on meeting EU sanitary and quality standards.

“These two elements must come together,” she said. “The accession to the Economic Partnership Agreement and the sanitary requirements. Once all this is in place, FSM will be in a position to export fishery products to the European Union.”

An EU audit to assess FSM’s compliance is tentatively planned for 2026. Ambassador Plinkert also welcomed news that FSM’s Ambassador to Geneva, Akillino H. H. Susaia, will soon be accredited to the EU, saying this will strengthen “direct contacts between our services in Brussels and FSM.”

Expanding Development Cooperation

While trade relations were a central topic, the Ambassador said development cooperation remains a pillar of the EU-FSM partnership.

“Our main focal sector of cooperation with FSM is the energy sector, and it still remains so,” she said.

Energy work is currently focused on outer-island electrification, with a tender underway for the electrification of Fefan Island in Chuuk State, implemented through the Pacific Community (SPC). “That is a very significant procurement that is going on,” she said, expressing hope that implementation can begin next year.

At the same time, Plinkert said the government has requested that the EU broaden its cooperation into water and sanitation. During her visit, she joined a kick-off meeting with the Department of Resources and Development and SPC for a €3 million (US\$3.3 million) initiative to support the creation of a National Water Policy. The policy will align national and state efforts on water management and sanitation, especially in outer island communities.

“FSM currently doesn’t have a unified water policy for the whole country,” she explained. “This new initiative will help bring together all the efforts already going on, identify gaps, and see what needs to be done at the state level.”

A further €6 million has been reserved for implementation once the policy framework is in place. The projects are being implemented through SPC and the Department of Resources and Development, which will establish a project management unit to oversee progress.

Shared Commitment on Climate and Global Cooperation

Ambassador Plinkert said climate change remains the highest priority in the EU’s work with Pacific nations.

“We are strong advocates both for climate action and resilience,” she

said. “In the European Union, about 70 percent of all our development cooperation supports responses to climate change and resilience—and this is clearly reflected in FSM as well.”

She also emphasized FSM and the EU’s shared commitment to multilateralism and the UN Charter, noting that both work together to defend “the global rules-based order.”

“We in the European Union are very much aware of the vulnerabilities of the Pacific,” she said. “We stay the course together on climate and other global challenges.”

Visit to MERIP Demonstrates EU-Funded Initiative

During her visit, Ambassador Plinkert toured the Marine and Environmental Research Institute of Pohnpei (MERIP), part of the EU-supported KIWA Initiative, a regional partnership with France, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

“It’s always such a big difference to see what our projects are doing rather than just reading about them,” she said. “MERIP shows what is possible in the blue economy—sustainable aquaculture and community-based livelihoods.”

She visited both MERIP’s facilities and a household participating in rabbitfish aquaculture, saying she was “very impressed with what I saw.”

Ambassador Plinkert’s visit included meetings with the Vice President, Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Resources and Development, and DECEM, among others. As she departed, she expressed confidence that the relationship between the EU and FSM is “moving in the right direction”—from sustainable development to growing economic partnerships and shared global advocacy.

“Next time you see me,” she said with a smile, “hopefully a lot more will have happened.”

...V6AH Radio

Continued from front page

execution.” The auditors said this lack of oversight resulted in the loss of \$119,494.40 from the state’s general fund, as the DOI grant has since expired and the money can no longer be reimbursed.

“This loss is not merely a financial setback—it is a breach of public trust,” the report stated. It urged swift action from the PPBC Board, the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTA), ODA, and the Office of the

Attorney General (AG) to recover the lost funds.

The Office of the Public Auditor also recommended tighter monitoring of grant-funded projects, stricter adherence to procurement rules, and the establishment of stronger internal controls to prevent similar cases of misuse.

A confidential version of the report submitted to the Attorney General’s office identified the owner of THERMATECH, but the management report withheld the individual’s name pending potential legal action.

As of this date, the Office of the Attorney General has not yet filed any criminal or civil charges in the matter.

“Climate Change is Not Up for Debate”: President Simina calls for urgent action at UN Climate Summit



FSM Information Services

September 25, 2025

New York -- At the UN Climate Summit this week, His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) warned that continued debate over the reality of climate change is “a distraction and a waste of precious time we do not have.” He urged world leaders to match science with action, stressing that small island nations are living the climate crisis daily.

“For Micronesia, the impacts are constant—king tides, storms, droughts, saltwater intrusion, and shifting rainfall that devastate our 607 islands,” President Simina said. “In 2024, severe droughts forced us to declare a State of Emergency, showing how quickly circumstances can turn dire at the frontline of this crisis.”

The President highlighted FSM’s record of global leadership, from championing the phase-down of harmful chemicals to being the first country to sign the BBNJ Treaty and co-leading the Global Methane Pledge. He announced that FSM will launch a new Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and Methane Roadmap at COP30, reaffirming its commitment to ambitious climate action.

“But no country can meet this challenge alone,” he stressed. “These commitments require solidarity.”

President Simina also renewed FSM’s call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and welcomed Colombia’s invitation to host the first international conference on the equitable phase-out of fossil fuels. “To keep 1.5 alive and secure our survival, we must act now—for today, and for all generations to come,” he concluded.

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REMATHAU'S FIRST SHOWING HELD AT CTEC CAMPUS

Dr. Nicole Yamase's film, Remathau, debuts at the College of Micronesia-FSM's CTEC campus on October 1, 2025. The College is deeply honored to be collaborating with Dr. Yamase to bring her documentary home. Her story poignantly and powerfully captures and celebrates our culture, our identity as Micronesians, and our profound connection to our homeland, our roots, and ocean. As Dr. Yamase aptly named her film Remathau, so does it eloquently advocate for the voices and stories of our home islands in Pohnpei, Chuuk, Kosrae and Yap; the Federated States of Micronesia, within the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean. When introducing the film and in the Q & A session after the screening Dr. Yamase shared her reflections focused on the question, "Why me?" in relation to "representing Micronesia" In positioning her storyteller perspective to answer the question, she also accepts the responsibility for including "all things Micronesian" around her journey to the "bottom of the world". Layer upon layer of Micronesian culture, tradition, oral and modern histories illuminated the narrative, coupled with masterful cinematography and luminous graphics. With each cadence the viewers were buoyed along oscillating between nostalgia, excitement, humility and chests bursting with pride and tears in their eyes. Dr. Yamase the first Micronesian to graduate with a Ph. D in Marine Science also demonstrates her skillful dexterity in negotiating genres with this history-making documentary.



Furthermore, she holds the remarkable achievement of being the first Micronesian and Pacific Islander to explore the depths of the Mariana Trench, also known as the Challenger Deep, joining the elite group of only 20 people worldwide who have reached this extraordinary depth. The screening was met with great enthusiasm from school and college students, teachers, staff, faculty and friends alike who not only enjoyed the film but also engaged actively in the interactive Q&A session that followed, with the students of SDA demonstrating particularly lively and insightful participation.

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Pohnpei State celebrates successful conclusion of the first Pohnpei State Health Symposium with farewell party

Pohnpei Public Information

September 24, 2025

Pohnpei – The Pohnpei State Department of Health and Social Services proudly hosted a farewell party at AA Getaway in Sekere, Sokehs, marking the successful conclusion of the 1st ever Pohnpei State Health Symposium. The event, a milestone in advancing healthcare discussions, was attended by distinguished guests, including Governor Stevenson A. Joseph, First Lady Dr. Aina Garstang, Director of the Department of Health and Social Services Stuard Penias, Secretary of the FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs Marcus Samo, and Chairman of the Committee on Health at the 11th Pohnpei Legislature, Senator Shelten Neth.

The farewell party opened with a heartfelt prayer led by Luhkenmoanlap Emerson Eperiam, setting a reflective tone for the evening. In her special remarks, Lt. Governor Herolyn S. Movick highlighted the symposium's critical discussions on the adequacy of Pohnpei's health system and the need for transformative changes. "We must ask ourselves if our systems are truly holistic and inclusive, ensuring no one is left behind—sick or otherwise," Lt. Governor Movick stated, emphasizing the constitutional mandate to provide accessible healthcare for all.

Lt. Governor Movick praised the collaborative efforts between the executive and legislative branches, noting significant progress in increasing the number of healthcare workers and improving access to services. "We are better off in health, financially, and in resources," she said, while also applauding the dedication of Doha's service and staff. However, she urged continued improvement, asking, "Is this all adequate? Do our systems reflect compassion in their heart, ensuring the right supply of medication and care?" She called for ongoing leadership and collaboration, stating, "Let us not close with a pat on the back for this first-ever symposium. Tomorrow, we work to make a better, upgraded, and evolved system a reality."

Senator Shelten Neth, Chairman of the Committee on Health, delivered remarks on behalf of the Speaker and the 11th Pohnpei Legislature, extending congratulations and reaffirming the legislature's commitment to supporting healthcare advancements in Pohnpei.

Director Stuard Penias also spoke, acknowledging and recognizing the tireless efforts of the Chiefs of the Health and Social Services divisions and all staff who contributed to the symposium's success. He extended heartfelt gratitude to key donors, UNICEF, and WHO, for their invaluable support in making the event possible.

Secretary Marcus Samo expressed gratitude to all participants for their dedication to improving Pohnpei's healthcare landscape, reinforcing the importance of collective action.

The farewell party celebrated the symposium's success while setting a forward-looking vision for a more inclusive, compassionate, and effective health system. The Pohnpei State Government remains committed to working with all stakeholders to ensure a healthier future for all residents.

For more information, please contact the Pohnpei State Public Information Office at 320-2235 or pohnpeipublicinformation@gmail.com



Pohnpei Fishing Club Presents:
Budweiser catch 8 tourney



October 18th, 2025

...UNGA

click here to return

Nuclear Legacy Versus Nuclear Future

Both leaders condemned nuclear risks, but from different vantage points. Kiribati cast nuclear issues as ongoing external threats to the Pacific’s fragile environment. The Marshall Islands, however, focused on its lived legacy of nuclear devastation—human displacement, environmental contamination, and health burdens still borne by its people. Heine framed this as unfinished business for the UN, demanding accountability and closure nearly 80 years after the first test on Marshallese soil.

Domestic Development and Social Issues

Kiribati’s statement devoted significant attention to domestic development priorities, including youth and women’s empowerment, sports, culture, sea ambulances to improve healthcare, and digital innovation to overcome isolation. RMI, on the other hand, placed heavier weight on external obligations, particularly the failure of wealthier nations to deliver the trillions needed in climate financing, and the Pacific’s growing burden of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.

A Complementary Regional Voice

Taken together, the two addresses offered a broad and complementary picture of Pacific priorities. Kiribati conveyed an optimistic message of resilience, cultural strength, and constructive engagement with multilateral institutions. The Marshall Islands delivered a more urgent and forceful appeal for justice, accountability, and action—whether on climate finance, nuclear legacy, or geopolitical fairness.

Both, however, carried the same core message: for small island nations, survival depends on urgent global action to address climate change, protect oceans, and reform international systems to better serve the vulnerable.

As President Heine concluded, quoting U.S. President John F. Kennedy’s 1961 warning that the UN must grow to meet modern challenges or be “gone with the wind,” the Pacific’s leaders reminded the Assembly that their survival, and perhaps the credibility of the UN itself, depends on whether the world listens.

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



Pacific Community
Communauté du Pacifique

The Pacific Community (SPC) invites applications for the position of Project Assistant, FSM Outer Island Electrification Project within its Geoscience Energy and Maritime (GEM) Division. This position will be located at its regional office in Pohnpei, Micronesia.

Description

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

The **Geoscience Energy and Maritime (GEM) Division** provides advice, technical assistance, research and training support to Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs). There are three (3) areas of scientific programming and two areas of focus within this division: Oceans and Maritime Programme (OMP), Georesources and Energy Programme (GEP) and Disaster and Community Resilience Programme (DCRP).

The role – the Project Assistant, FSM Outer Island Electrification Project within the Project Management Team (PMT), the position assists with the overall administration of the project activities in the Federated States of Micronesia and coordinates duties associated with the project including travel by project staff and compiling all data for reporting and inputting to project databases. The position will also support the project with communication and outreach work.

The key responsibilities of the role include the following:

1. **Assist with the overall administration of the project**
2. **Assist with arrangements for travel by project team and all coordination and logistical arrangements for project meetings**
3. **Assist the project team with communication efforts**

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

Qualifications

- Tertiary qualification in business administration, accounting, financial management or a related field or equivalent body of knowledge and experience

Technical expertise

- At least 3 years’ experience in administration in a large organization including experience with logistics, travel, information systems and financial management.
- Understanding of budgeting, financial reporting, donor reporting, audit requirements
- Sound coordination, administrative, networking, and collaborative skills
- Driver’s license.

Language skills

- Fluency (both written and spoken) in English is required.

Interpersonal skills and cultural awareness

- Knowledge of Pacific Island countries and territories is an advantage.

Contract Duration – This position is budgeted until 31 March 2027.

Remuneration – the Project Assistant, FSM Outer Island Electrification Project is a Band 6 position in SPC’s 2025 salary scale, with a starting taxable salary range of USD 28,047–35,058 per year, plus local staff benefits. An offer of appointment for an initial contract will be made in the lower half of this range, with due consideration being given to experience and qualifications. Progression within the salary scale will be based on annual performance reviews.

Benefits for Staff in a position advertised locally (EPAL) whose duty station is Pohnpei – SPC provides medical and life insurance for eligible employees. Employees are entitled to 25 days of annual leave. Provident Fund and/or Social Security will be according to FSM’s local legislation.

Closing date: 12 October 2025 – 11:00 pm Noumea time

Job Reference: CR000501

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

For your application to be considered, you must provide us with: an updated resume with contact details for three professional referees, a cover letter detailing your skills, experience and interest in this position and responses to all screening questions

Please answer all of the screening questions, if you do not answer these questions your application will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed at shortlisting stage.

Screening questions:

1. Can you share an example of a project you’ve supported in FSM that involved working with local communities or government agencies? What was your role and what impact did the project have?
2. How do you manage multiple tasks and deadlines in a project support role? Can you describe a time when you had to coordinate logistics or documentation for a field activity?
3. What experience do you have in preparing reports, minutes, or correspondence for development projects? How do you ensure accuracy and clarity in your communication?

President Simina urges for methane action and ocean protection at Global Leaders' Forum

FSM Information Services

September 24, 2025

New York – His Excellency President Wesley W. Simina joined world leaders at the Bloomberg Philanthropies Global Forum, held alongside the 80th United Nations General Assembly, where he delivered interventions at two high-level events: the High-Level Solutions Dialogue on Methane and the High Seas Treaty Roundtable Discussion.

Speaking at the Methane Dialogue, co-convened with the UN Environment Programme, President Simina underscored the critical role of methane reduction as the most immediate and effective step to slow global warming.

He reaffirmed the FSM's longstanding leadership in championing the Global Methane Pledge, calling for compulsory oil and gas standards, scaled-up finance and technology, and stronger market incentives for low-methane production.

"The problem is not technical but political. Voluntary pledges are failing,"

he warned. "Yet methane action is the most powerful, science-based, and cost-effective step this decade to slow warming and avoid tipping points. It is both a moral and legal obligation."

"We have done this before. Faced with the ozone crisis, leaders forged the Montreal Protocol—a treaty that saved lives and restored balance. We must summon that same courage for methane," President Simina declared.

At the High Seas Treaty Roundtable, President Simina reaffirmed the FSM's commitment to the full and timely implementation of the landmark Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement, also called the High Seas Treaty.

Highlighting the FSM's pioneering role as the first State to sign and among the earliest to ratify the Agreement, he praised its groundbreaking recognition of coastal States' rights, the needs of Small Island Developing States, and the traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

President Simina also welcomed ongoing partnerships with Germany's Living High Seas Project and Chile's First Movers initiative, announcing that the FSM is strongly considering a proposal to establish a marine protected area around the Remetau Group EBSA—a biodiversity-rich high seas area bordered by the FSM, Palau, Papua New Guinea, and Indonesia.

"This initiative will serve as a test case

for implementing the Agreement's key innovations, requiring close cooperation among States, communities, and international authorities," he said.

President Simina's interventions highlights FSM's global leadership on two of the most urgent planetary challenges: slowing near-term climate change through methane reductions and safeguarding ocean biodiversity through the High Seas Treaty.



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FSM and US Presidents meet

FSM Information Services

September 28, 2025

President Simina and First Lady Simina met with President Trump and First Lady Trump on the margins of the

UNGA High-Level week in New York, where the two Presidents reaffirmed the strong and enduring friendship between the FSM and United States, underpinned by the Compact of Free Association



President Simina addresses the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly

FSM Information Services

September 26, 2025

New York – Addressing the 80th United Nations General Assembly, His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia spoke to the UNGA80 theme, “Better together: 80 years and more for peace, development and human rights.” while linking this global theme with local focus on the FSM’s top issues - including urging for renewed focus on climate action and highlighting the ongoing state of emergency due to oil leaks from WWII shipwrecks in Chuuk lagoon.

“The climate crisis is not up for debate – the only question is whether we will act with the urgency it demands,” President Simina told world leaders.

The President welcomed the recent International Court of Justice advisory opinion confirming that states are legally obliged to act on climate change, urging the Assembly to endorse it.

“The ICJ opinion points to the simple truth that at the core of this climate

crisis lies the pursuit of justice – justice for the most vulnerable, justice for future generations, and justice for our shared planet,” he declared.

President Simina also pushed for methane mitigation as a global priority, warning that “cutting methane now could slow ocean heating and buy us time to build the clean energy future.”

President Simina reaffirmed Micronesia’s fight against plastic pollution and called for a strong global treaty covering the full lifecycle of plastics. “Despite the failure of the INC to produce a plastics treaty in Geneva, we are not giving up.” he stated.

President Simina also urged caution on deep seabed mining, insisting that “comprehensive science and consultation with Pacific communities must come first.”

President Simina also revealed that he has declared a state of emergency due to toxic oil leaking from a World War II shipwreck in Chuuk Lagoon. “These remnants of war now threaten our fisheries, our communities,

and our livelihoods,” he said, appealing for urgent international assistance.

“The scale of this crisis far exceeds Micronesia’s capacity to address alone. As we mark the 80th anniversary of the war’s end, we appeal to the international community to work with us in transforming this legacy of war into an opportunity for cooperation.” he said.

Underscoring the UNGA80 theme, President Simina pressed for reforms to ensure peace, development, and human rights remain central to the UN’s future. He advocated for adoption of the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index to better target aid for small island states and called for Security Council reform to include underrepresented regions.

Reflecting on the milestone 80th anniversary, President Simina closed with underscoring the founding principles of the United Nations and reaffirming the FSM’s strong



commitment to them, despite size or circumstance.

“Micronesia may be small, but our voice, our vote, and our place within the international community is committed to choosing that we are in fact “Better Together”.

“Because big or small, every nation has the power to choose peace over conflict. Big or small, every nation has the duty to protect our planet from harm. Big or small, every nation has the responsibility to defend justice and human dignity. Big or small - we always have been, and always will be, “Better Together”.” he concluded.

Australia and Pacific Partners working towards sustainable fisheries

Embassy of Australia to the FSM

September 25, 2025

Pohnpei - Australia is pleased to be participating in and chairing the 21st Technical and Compliance Committee meeting of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) in Pohnpei this week.

We join our Forum Fisheries Agency colleagues from across the Pacific and other partners to strengthen transshipment measures and improve the monitoring of long-line fishing.

"Australia is committed to working with our neighbours to promote responsible fishing practices, support regional sustainability and protect shared marine resources for future generations," said Ambassador Grant.

As Executive Director of the WCPFC Rhea Moss-Christian said: “Healthy tuna means healthy oceans. We

are prioritising the Commission’s work on climate change effects, the impact on bi-catch, data needs and monitoring requirements.”

The TCC has been ably chaired for the last five years by Australian Mat Kertesz of our Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry.

The TCC is also reviewing its Compliance and Monitoring Report to consider a broader range of risks facing Pacific fisheries.



Australia and Chuuk: working together for development

Embassy of Australia to the FSM

October 1, 2025

Chuuk - Ambassador Jenny Grant and Second Secretary Josh Critchley-Evans were honoured to meet with Chuuk State Governor Alexander Narruhn and Lt.

Governor Mekioshy Williams to discuss the strong and growing partnership between Australia and the FSM, including Chuuk.

Shared priorities include our ongoing support for counselling services provided

by the Chuuk Women's Council, addressing action on climate change and disaster resilience, opportunities to apply for the Direct Aid Program and the Australia Awards Scholarships.

"Australia remains committed to

deepening our partnership with Chuuk and working together to strengthen governance, community development, and regional cooperation, including the completion of our outer island electrification projects in Etten and Piis," said Ambassador Grant.



Australian Volunteer at Pohnpei Library heads home

Embassy of Australia to the FSM

September 27, 2025

Pohnpei - Australia's Volunteer librarian Andrew Trigg is finally heading home after a year of service at Pohnpei Public Library.

The Australian Volunteers Program is an Australian Government initiative that supports global volunteering, supporting partner organisations across the Pacific, Asia and Africa to achieve locally led change and the realisation of Sustainable Development Goals.

Andrew worked closely with Head Librarian Trueleen J. Albert and team on setting up the mobile van library service for Pohnpei schools.

He was also part of the committed staff who ran the Summer Reading Program and a range of after school learning activities.

Andrew must have read many of the library's 42,000 items and he was always wowing us with historic facts about Pohnpei culture and history from these catalogues.

Thank you, Andrew, for your service.

"We would love to see more volunteers like Andrew in Micronesia to help support community groups and government entities," said Ambassador Grant.

If you are interested in applying for an Australian Volunteer, click on link below for more information:

<https://www.australianvolunteers.com>
Australian Volunteers Program
Pohnpei Public Library



Australia joins the FSM 10th National Women's Conference

Embassy of Australia to the FSM

September 29, 2025

Chuuk - Today marks a significant milestone as Ambassador Grant and her delegation joined women in Weno, Chuuk for the 10th FSM National Women's Conference, a powerful platform for advancing gender equality, amplifying women's voices, and shaping a more inclusive future for FSM. Attendees were treated to an array of cultural performances involving traditional song and dance.

This year's theme 'Kieki' means woven mat and signifies the importance of the interconnectedness of gender issues across all sectors of society, incorporating tradition, leadership, governance and the strengthening of institutions.

Vice President Aren Palik delivered inspiring remarks focused on the critical role of women in leadership, sustainable development, and national progress. He said "sacred traditions remain important and are

not static, ensuring that women, girls, men and boys come together as agents of change. Both girls and boys should be given the all the opportunities they are entitled to!"

Chuuk State Governor Alexander Narruhn offered words of welcome and reaffirmed the commitment of state leadership to empower women and girls across all sectors of society.

"Australia is committed to supporting the FSM and our Pacific family on gender-related issues because we know that greater political and economic participation by women make societies wealthier and more peaceful," said Ambassador Grant.



...Foreign investments

Continued from previous page

doing business. Telecommunications has improved somewhat with 4G rollout in Pohnpei and Chuuk and ongoing undersea cable projects, but rivalries among state-owned operators continue to slow progress.

Limited Investment Incentives

Unlike some Pacific Island neighbors, FSM offers no special economic zones, free trade areas, or significant tax breaks to attract investors. There are no government programs promoting green energy or industrial development, though officials frequently cite tourism, agriculture, aquaculture, and fisheries as priority sectors.

The lack of concrete policies has left tourism underdeveloped, despite rich cultural heritage and pristine marine environments. Prohibitions on foreign land ownership, limited accommodations, and the remoteness of the islands restrict growth. The sector was devastated by COVID-19 border closures in 2020, and while borders reopened in 2022, recovery

remains slow.

Labor Shortages and Skills Gap

Labor market dynamics further limit growth. The government sector dominates employment, especially after a 45 percent wage increase in 2022–23, which outstripped private-sector salaries and worsened labor shortages for local businesses.

The workforce lacks technical skills, forcing employers to rely heavily on foreign workers, particularly from the Philippines and other Pacific nations. Despite an agreement in 2023 to ease restrictions on Filipino workers, bureaucratic hurdles remain, delaying much-needed labor inflows.

Minimum wage laws exist for government workers in all states, but only Pohnpei has a private sector minimum wage. Occupational safety standards are minimal, and collective bargaining is rare.

Financial Sector Constraints

The financial system is small and limited. The country has no central bank, no stock exchange, and only two commercial banks: the Bank of Guam and the Bank of the FSM. Both are

FDIC-insured but provide only small, unsecured loans due to prohibitions on using land as collateral and weak debt collection systems.

While remittances remain an important inflow, there are few restrictions on repatriation of profits, except in Chuuk where transfers above \$50,000 require state approval.

Political and Security Context

Despite economic weaknesses, FSM enjoys political stability and close ties with the United States. Under COFA, the United States guarantees FSM’s external defense. The last presidential transition in 2023, when Wesley Simina assumed office, proceeded smoothly.

At the state level, however, tensions occasionally flare. Chuuk’s 2025 gubernatorial election sparked violence and politically motivated arrests, though foreigners and businesses were largely unaffected.

The security environment remains peaceful overall, but the State Department cautions that health care facilities are limited, and medical evacuation is often necessary for serious conditions.

Outlook: Growth Potential vs. Structural Hurdles

The 2025 Investment Climate Statement concludes that FSM faces steep challenges in creating a more attractive investment environment. Land ownership restrictions, institutional weaknesses, corruption, and inadequate infrastructure weigh heavily against potential opportunities.

Yet, the report also notes areas of potential growth. Fisheries and aquaculture remain lucrative, telecommunications is expanding, and the vast maritime territory offers opportunities for sustainable development. Tourism, while still struggling, could benefit from strategic investment if regulatory and land-use barriers are eased.

For now, however, the FSM remains what the World Bank calls a “sovereign rent-led” economy—dependent on external assistance and struggling to transition to a more self-sustaining path. Until deep reforms are undertaken, foreign investment is likely to remain limited, leaving the country reliant on grants and trust fund returns to finance its development.

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U.S. State Department cites structural hurdles to foreign business in FSM

By *Bill Jaynes*
The Kaselehlie Press

October 4, 2025

Washington D.C. — The United States Department of State’s 2025 Investment Climate Statement for the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) paints a picture of a nation struggling to attract and sustain foreign investment, despite its rich ocean resources and close ties with the United States under the Compact of Free Association (COFA). The report emphasizes persistent structural barriers, weak institutions, and heavy reliance on external assistance, while noting pockets of opportunity in fisheries, tourism, and telecommunications.

Context: A U.S. Government Assessment

It is important to note that the Investment Climate Statement reflects the perspective of the U.S. Department of State. While the report is intended as guidance for American businesses considering overseas ventures, it does not necessarily mirror how FSM’s leaders or regional partners view the nation’s economy. Instead, it provides Washington’s assessment of risks, opportunities, and obstacles for U.S. investors, shaped by the Department’s long-standing reporting framework.

This year’s publication of the report carried an unusual caveat. At the top of the State Department’s webpage, a “red notice” warned: “Due to the Democrat-led shutdown, website updates will be limited until full operations resume.” For veteran observers, such blunt political framing in an official government communication is remarkable. In two decades personally covering U.S. reports, such a disclaimer is unprecedented.

The shutdown has had other consequences as well. While the investment climate statement was accessible, the State Department’s Trafficking in Persons Report—another key annual assessment on FSM and other countries—was not available at all. For journalists and policymakers alike, the inability to access these reports underscores the fragility of information flow during a U.S. government funding lapse and raises concerns about transparency

and continuity in the dissemination of vital assessments.

A Subsistence Economy Underpinned by Grants

According to the report, FSM remains a lower middle-income nation with a population of just over 71,000, reflecting a dramatic 31 percent decline since the 2010 census. Spread across 607 islands, only 65 of which are inhabited, the country has a tiny landmass of 271 square miles but controls an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of over 2.9 million square kilometers—one of the largest in the Pacific.

Economic life in the FSM remains dominated by subsistence farming and fishing. Government salaries, financed largely by COFA funds, fuel the small cash economy, supplemented by remittances and U.S. Social Security payments to citizens who once worked abroad. The World Bank reported FSM’s GDP in 2023 at about \$460 million, or \$4,084 per capita.

U.S. assistance under COFA—renewed in 2023—remains the country’s largest source of revenue, with annual payments of around \$140 million. These funds are augmented by income from fishing license sales, offshore corporate registrations in captive insurance, and development grants.

The nation also holds two long-term trust funds. By mid-2025, the Compact Trust Fund had grown to \$1.8 billion following a major U.S. contribution, while the FSM Trust Fund held \$540 million. Despite these substantial reserves, leaders have resisted using them, preferring instead to let the funds grow indefinitely while continuing to rely on outside aid.

Investment Remains Sparse

The report says that foreign direct investment (FDI) in FSM is “almost nonexistent.” A series of legal and practical restrictions deter foreign investors, including prohibitions on land ownership, caps on foreign ownership in key sectors, weak contract enforcement, and poorly functioning courts. Other barriers include limited infrastructure, unreliable electricity,

high costs of energy and imports, and the scarcity of regular air connections.

As a result, the bulk of FDI is concentrated in the fishing sector, mainly in processing and transshipment facilities located in Kosrae and Pohnpei. Leaders at both the state and national level frequently acknowledge the need for reform, but progress has stalled due to political resistance, lack of capacity, and vested interests among local elites who dominate key business sectors.

Fragmented Political Authority

FSM’s political system further complicates investment, the report asserts. Power is heavily devolved to the four states—Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae—each of which maintains separate foreign investment regimes. Investors must navigate both national and state-level rules, permits, and bureaucracies. Land issues are particularly challenging, as ownership is tied to traditional clan structures, and most property lacks clear titles.

Foreign nationals may not own land outright but can lease it, often through complicated negotiations involving multiple claimants. These arrangements are fragile, as leases may be disputed or renegotiated when senior landowners die. Chuuk faces additional hurdles after its Land Commission records were destroyed in a 2012 fire.

Weak Institutions and Rule of Law

The State Department notes that while FSM’s legal system is based on U.S. common law, its courts remain weak, slow, and under-resourced. Few legal professionals are available, and many judicial positions are held by lay people. Contract enforcement is inconsistent, and even favorable court judgments against governments or companies may be unenforceable.

There is no dedicated competition authority or comprehensive bankruptcy process, while corporate governance remains weak. State-owned enterprises (SOEs) dominate key sectors such as fuel, telecommunications, fisheries, and banking. Some operate like private firms, while others rely heavily on subsidies.

Transparency and Corruption

Transparency in regulation is uneven. While laws are generally accessible online, regulations are often introduced without consultation or public comment, and government audits are frequently delayed by years. The State Department emphasizes that access to public records is limited, and enforcement of accounting standards is weak outside the COFA framework.

Corruption remains a concern. FSM passed a constitutional amendment in 2023 mandating the creation of an Office of the Independent Prosecutor, but as of mid-2025 the office had yet to be established. The National Public Auditor remains the most active anti-corruption body, though it lacks prosecutorial powers.

High-profile corruption cases have emerged in recent years, including procurement fraud and bribery. Traditional customs can sometimes override judicial accountability, with offenders resolving cases through compensation rather than formal punishment. Although the government is a signatory to the UN Convention Against Corruption, enforcement remains limited.

Energy and Infrastructure Struggles

Reliable energy supply is another constraint on business. FSM imports sufficient fuel, but blackouts are common, particularly in Pohnpei and Kosrae, due to outdated grids and tariff restrictions. Companies frequently resort to private generators.

The national Energy Policy (2024–2050) prioritizes affordability and renewable energy ahead of reliability, reflecting the high costs of imported fuel. Development partners, including the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, are funding projects to expand access and stabilize supply, but businesses still face frequent disruptions.

Transportation and logistics challenges are similarly acute. Limited flights, high shipping costs, and weak port infrastructure drive up the cost of

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The FSM Development Bank wishes to congratulate the recipients of the FALL 2025 FSMDB Scholarships. We take great pride in supporting the FSM's brightest scholars in their pursuit of academic excellence, as we anticipate their respective entries into their roles in leading our nation forward!

Countdown on for Micronesia Music Festival and Miss Micronesia

*The Republic of Nauru
Micronesia Musical Festival and Miss
Micronesia Pageant*

September 30, 2025
Nauru - With just under seven days until the Micronesia Music Festival and Miss Micronesia pageant, more music acts have been revealed for the event running from 6-9 October in Nauru.

Festival director Livingstone Hiram said excitement was building in anticipation of a “hugely talented” festival lineup, which will showcase the best of Micronesian music and culture.

“Music is in our veins and the festival will help to showcase this throughout the region,” he said.

Event organisers have also announced that Kiribati’s Broadcasting and Publications Authority would be a broadcast partner for the event, “to give the festival the widest possible audience.”

Mr Hiram said this will ensure the event is livestreamed to Kiribati, while Nauru Media would also be livestreaming.

“Those who can’t attend in person will still be able to participate and enjoy some

truly memorable performances in an event that’s all about culture, community, and celebration.”

The music festival features artists from Nauru, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Chuuk, Kosrae, Yap and the Northern Mariana Islands.

These include Garden Rootz from Kiribati, Barab Harris and Sugahspooks from Marshall Islands, and Zerobecoolin from FSM.

The theme for the event is “We are Micronesia! Navigating our legacy; Charting our future.”

Coinciding with the music festival, Nauru is also hosting the 2025 Miss Micronesia Pageant in a celebration of Micronesian nations.

Mr Hiram said the pageant would be colourful and exciting, and the contestants are looking forward to another opportunity to showcase their talents in a wider regional competition.

“Our culture, people, natural attractions and more will be on display in Nauru during this celebration as we come together in unity.”

EU Ambassador visits FSM, launches major water governance initiative

Embassy of the EU to the FSM

June 10, 2025
Pohnpei, FSM – The Ambassador of the European Union to the Pacific, H.E. Barbara Plinkert, concluded a high-level visit to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), reaffirming the EU’s commitment to sustainable development and regional partnership.

During her visit, Ambassador Plinkert held official meetings with Vice President Hon. Aaron Palik, Secretary of Foreign Affairs Hon. Lorin Robert, Secretary of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management Hon. Andrew Yatilman and Secretary of the Department of Resources and Development Hon. Elina Akinaga. Discussions centered on deepening EU–FSM cooperation in areas of climate resilience, environmental

protection, and inclusive governance.

Ambassador Plinkert also met with partners and local media, highlighting the EU’s longstanding commitment to supporting FSM through a wide range of development projects. She also visited several EU-funded initiatives focused on climate adaptation, community infrastructure, and environmental sustainability.

A key highlight of the visit was the official launch of the new EU-funded project aimed at Strengthening Water and Sanitation Governance in FSM. With an initial investment of EUR 3 million (USD 3.5million), the project will establish a dedicated Water Unit within FSM’s Department of Resources and Development, develop the country’s first national water policy and regulatory

“We are Micronesia” declared as Nauru prepares for inaugural Micronesia Festival

*The Republic of Nauru
Micronesia Musical Festival and Miss
Micronesia Pageant*

September 25, 2025
Nauru - Nauru is set to host a celebration of Micronesia through music and pageantry at the inaugural Micronesia Musical Festival and Miss Micronesia Pageant that will run from 6-9 October 2025.

The major cultural event will celebrate the region’s unity and history and will feature musical artists and pageant contestants from across the region.

The theme for the event is “We are Micronesia! Navigating our legacy; Charting our future.” Nauru’s Minister for Cultural Heritage Charmaine Scotty said the festival would celebrate Micronesia’s unique cultural identity, providing a platform for Micronesian nations to highlight their resilience and commitment to preserving their environment and heritage.

“Micronesian people have a deep-rooted connection to their ancestral traditions and this is an opportunity for us to come together in unity,” she said.

“Storytelling is at the centre of Micronesian culture and the artists gathering for the festival are going to keep this tradition alive, along with the Miss Micronesia Pageant contestants.

“If you love music, pageantry and storytelling, join the celebrations at the Micronesia Festival,” Minister Scotty said.

The festival is expected to draw strong local

and regional attendance, with events to be livestreamed, providing those unable to visit Nauru with the opportunity to be part of the celebrations.

Festival director Livingstone Hiram said the event was about culture, community, and celebration.”

“Each country will showcase its own unique culture but we are also celebrating all that unites Micronesian nations.

“Our love of the environment and cultural tradition will be brought to life by the festival’s performers, making it an event to remember.”

More than 20 artists will participate in the music festival from locations including Nauru, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Chuuk, Kosrae, Yap and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Contestants in the Miss Micronesia Pageant are Miss Nauru - Charlei Deiye, Miss Marshall Islands - Claret Taonang Chongum, and Miss Kiribati - Atiterentaai Rinimarawa.

Stay up to date with the inaugural Micronesia Festival via the Government of Nauru’s social media channels:

- X: https://x.com/Republic_Nauru
- Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/republic_nauru/
- TikTok: https://www.tiktok.com/@republic_nauru
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/republicofnauru>

framework, and strengthen institutional capacity through training and strategic planning. This initiative will enhance national capacity for water resource management, improve sanitation services, and ensure equitable access to clean water across FSM’s states.

“This project reflects the EU’s strong commitment to supporting FSM’s development priorities and improving the lives of its citizens,” said Ambassador Plinkert. “Water is a fundamental human right, and we are proud to partner with FSM in building resilient systems that serve communities now and into the future.”

The EU remains a steadfast partner for the Pacific region, working alongside governments and communities to

promote sustainable development, climate action, and good governance.



Governor Joseph welcomes plans for inter-island airline and aviation school in Pohnpei

Pohnpei Public Information

October 1, 2025

Pohnpei – Governor Stevenson A. Joseph met with executives from Dayang Seafood and One Pacific Airways to advance discussions on establishing One Pacific Airways as a new inter-island airline with Pohnpei as its hub, alongside a proposal to launch an aviation training school in the state.

This latest meeting follows an earlier presentation to the Pohnpei State Government by Mr. Aspen Apis, Public Relations Liaison for One Pacific Airways, who outlined the airline’s vision to strengthen both domestic and regional air service in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). At that time, One Pacific Airways anticipated operating a Dash 8 aircraft. Plans have since evolved, with the airline now preparing to introduce a modern Embraer Regional Jet (ERJ), offering greater efficiency, comfort, and range.

The October 1 meeting was attended by Chih Wang, CEO of Dayang Seafood and One Pacific Airways; Alexander Purges, COO of One Pacific Airways; Jean Marc, Chief Pilot; Lupa Palsis, General Manager of Dayang Seafood; Jay Liu, Southeast Asia Representative for Dayang; Robert Sigrah, Agent for Dayang Seafood; and Grilly Jack, General Manager of the Pohnpei Port Authority.

Key points from the discussions included:

- **Expanding Air Connectivity:** One Pacific Airways will complement existing carriers by offering inter-island passenger and cargo services, closing critical gaps in FSM’s air



transport network.

- **Aviation School in Pohnpei:** Plans are underway to establish a training academy for pilots, mechanics, and aviation administration staff, ensuring Micronesians can build long-term careers in the sector.

- **Economic Growth:** Improved connectivity will strengthen seafood exports, enhance tourism, and create new opportunities for local businesses and fishermen.

- **Infrastructure Needs:** Investment in hangars, maintenance facilities, and other support systems in Pohnpei will be vital for sustained aviation growth.

- **Community Benefits:** The airline also envisions providing search and rescue, maritime surveillance, and medical evacuation services—directly benefiting island communities.

Governor Joseph’s vision for Pohnpei aligns closely with that of One Pacific Airways: to establish the state as a hub for inter-island travel while ensuring outer islands are connected with reliable, affordable, and essential air services. He emphasized that such connectivity is vital for economic development, community well-being, and resilience across the FSM.

Dayang Seafood, the parent company of One Pacific Airways, is already deeply invested in the FSM with extensive fisheries operations in Kosrae and plans to develop a resort in the near future, demonstrating its long-term commitment to the region’s economic growth.

The Governor’s Office and One Pacific Airways will continue engagement in the coming months as plans move toward implementation.



Governor Joseph thanks researcher for critical coral findings

Pohnpei Public Information

September 30, 2025

Pohnpei - Governor Stevenson A. Joseph recently attended a presentation by Dr. Sonia J. Rowley (University of Hawai‘i) on the Senyavin Islands' Gorgonian Octocorals. The Governor engaged with the researcher by asking questions pertinent to the issues raised, particularly noting the critical state of the corals discussed, and personally thanked Dr. Rowley for her vital research and presentation. Dr. Rowley's decade-long study, which surveyed depths down to 140 meters, confirmed Pohnpei as a global biodiversity hotspot, notably by discovering approximately 30 new species of octocorals and a new species of seahorse unique to the area.

The study served as an urgent warning: the coral reefs are dying due to heat stress and converging stressors. This dire assessment was corroborated by Eugene Joseph of the Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP), who confirmed the decline and highlighted that local restoration work is currently underway to address it. The research also highlighted the decline of silky sharks due to unsustainable commercial fishing bycatch. In recognizing these critical scientific findings, Governor Joseph highlighted the importance of leveraging Dr. Rowley’s data to inform future policy decisions. He further expressed strong support for the expansion of existing local restoration initiatives, such as those led by the CSP, in the collective effort to ensure the long-term protection of Pohnpei’s vital oceanic resources.



Outcomes of Micronesia Clean Up Day 2025

FSM DECEM

October 6, 2025

This year's Micronesia Clean Up Day activities included the following:

1) An informational session aimed at promoting awareness on environment issues and groups addressing them, the 3rs (reduce, reuse, and recycle), and the effects of using VAPE,

2) Municipality Clean-Ups where Municipalities throughout the FSM states were invited to clean up for a chance to win \$3,500,

3) Media Contest engaging elementary and high school students to vie for awards on the role of renewable energy on the islands.

Thank you to the following individuals and groups for your participation.

INFORMATIONAL SESSION HIGHLIGHTING PRESENTERS -2025

1. RITSUMEIKAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS (Activities in Environment)
2. CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES (3RS)
3. FSM HEALTH (Vape)

MUNICIPALITY CLEAN -UP 2025
WINNING MUNICIPALITY IN EACH STATE

YAP STATE

1. DALIPEBNAW MUNICIPALITY - \$1,500
2. TOMIL MUNICIPALITY - \$1,000
3. RULL MUNICIPALITY -\$1,000

POHNPEI STATE

1. UH MUNICIPALITY -\$3,500

MEDIA CONTEST -2025
HIGH SCHOOL

- 1 -Mr. Peter Haleyalgiy -Gift certificate
- 2 -Ms. Ionna Daidad -Gift certificate
- 3 -Mr. Adrian Yow -Gift certificate

ELEMENTARY

1. Mr. Clement Galthingag -Gift certificate



Governor Joseph welcomes participants to the first FSM Fisheries Investment Seminar

Pohnpei Public Information

October 1, 2025

Pohnpei - Governor Stevenson A. Joseph delivered the welcoming address at the opening of the First Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) Fisheries Investment Seminar held today, October 1, 2025, at Island Palms in Kolonia, Pohnpei. The seminar gathered stakeholders from across the FSM and abroad to discuss opportunities, challenges, and the future of fisheries investment in the nation.

In his remarks, Governor Joseph warmly welcomed participants, extending particular recognition to those who traveled from overseas as well as to those who call Pohnpei home. He emphasized the importance of the inaugural event, noting that it stemmed from the FSM National Fisheries Investment Policy adopted by the National Government in partnership with the four states.

Governor Joseph highlighted the global value of the tuna

industry, which is estimated to be \$40 billion annually. He underscored the FSM's central role within the Pacific through the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA), which governs some of the world's most lucrative tuna fishing grounds. He called for greater efforts to increase the FSM's share of benefits from these resources, whether through fishing fees, onshore support industries, or the development of local fleets crewed by Micronesian captains and seafarers.

"After all, these are our resources," the Governor said. "The value we are currently realizing from them is not adequate relative to the actual value realized in the global market. We must look for ways to strengthen our position in this industry, not just for today, but

for the generations to come."

Acknowledging the complexity of the fisheries sector and the many challenges it presents, Governor Joseph stressed that the FSM must not be discouraged by current limitations. Instead, he encouraged collaboration, innovation, and shared learning through gatherings such as this seminar.

"Let us harness our knowledge, experience, and ideas together, not as competitors, but as partners," he said.

The official opening ceremony was completed with additional remarks delivered by Secretary of the FSM Department of Resources and Development, Ms. Elina Akinaga, and Mr. Eugene Pangelinan, consultant

with the National Oceanic Resource Management Authority (NORMA). Their contributions underscored the shared national commitment to building a stronger, more resilient fisheries sector for the FSM.

The Governor closed his remarks with a local Pohnpeian proverb, "Ma e sohte kapwang ah kedeh wia, ma e kapwang ah wia, pwe ihme pahn mie katepe."

The First FSM Fisheries Investment Seminar marks a significant step toward strengthening the FSM's role in the global fisheries market. For Pohnpei and the nation as a whole, it represents not only an opportunity for economic growth but also a path toward a more sustainable future for its people, resources, and industries.



FSM and World Bank hold joint CPPR to accelerate delivery across a US\$354M portfolio

*Central Implementation Unit
Department of Finance &
Administration (CIU/DoFA)*

October 2, 2025

Pohnpei, FSM — The Government of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the World Bank concluded a two-day Joint Country Portfolio Performance Review (CPPR) in Pohnpei focused on faster delivery and visible results for communities across all four states.

More than 50 representatives from national departments, Project Implementation Units (PIUs), the Central Implementation Unit (CIU), and the World Bank met at the Bank's North Pacific Office to review 10 active projects with a total net commitment of about US\$354.35 million. With approximately US\$108.32 million (31 percent) already disbursed, roughly US\$246 million remains available to turn plans into better roads, more reliable power, affordable connectivity, relevant skills training, and stronger public service delivery.

Opening the review, the Honorable Rose N. Nakanaga, Secretary of Finance and Administration, set an action-oriented tone. "We're proud of the teams delivering for citizens—and where activities are behind, we'll unblock them quickly so no funding is lost." Her message—to celebrate results while fixing bottlenecks—framed two days of practical discussions and problem-solving.

Day 1 spotlighted project performance in energy (SEDAP and ARISE), transport (PRIME and SCORE), digital development and connectivity (Digital FSM and Connectivity project), skills and employability (SEE project), and implementation capacity (IMPACT). Project teams shared progress and agreed on specific next steps to sustain momentum. Day 2 addressed the cross-cutting enablers that keep delivery on track—procurement, financial management, environmental and social safeguards, and portfolio management—so the remaining funds can move quickly and transparently to the communities that need it the most. The review concluded with a time-bound action plan and a joint progress check set for March 2026 ahead of the World Bank Spring Meetings.

The sessions were co-moderated by Assistant Secretary Senny Phillip (Division of Investment and International Finance, DoFA) and Karlene Francis (Senior Operations Officer, World Bank), who kept the conversations tightly focused on implementation. As Francis noted, "We need to translate these discussions into day-to-day actions and measurable results on the ground." Phillip underlined the whole-of-government approach that the CPPR promotes: "This has been a joint effort. We'll keep a concise action log and track progress monthly."

From the World Bank side, Resident Representative Omar Lyasse highlighted national leadership as the accelerator: "FSM's leadership is clearly in the driver's seat. That ownership is what accelerates results." That emphasis on shared ownership is reflected in the agreed-upon actions, which include more active Project Steering Committees, continued hands-on procurement support, standard operating procedures to be incorporated into updated Project Operations Manuals, and targeted capacity-building for senior officials and PIU teams.

Portfolio momentum is visible in several areas. In the energy sector, the construction of outer-island mini-grids is progressing to bring more reliable electricity to remote communities. In digital development, a 200-gigabit (200 Gbps) upgrade to the Pohnpei-Guam international link is slated for commissioning in October 2025, improving speed, affordability, and network resilience. Through the Digital FSM program, community digital-safety outreach has already reached more than 3,000 people. On the skills agenda, 18 master trainers and 22 school counselors have completed training to strengthen classroom delivery and student support. On systems, the CPPR noted on-time financial reporting and continued safeguards training to ensure delivery compliance as projects advance.

The transport program remains a major priority, with investments designed to improve safety and climate resilience for critical road links that connect communities to schools, clinics, and markets. Connectivity and digital services are enabling citizens and businesses to participate more fully in the economy, while public financial management reforms aim to make service delivery more transparent and efficient in the long term.



The review concluded with a formal signing of the Agreed Minutes and the Portfolio Performance Improvement Action Plan by Secretary of Finance and Administration, Honorable Rose N. Nakanaga, and World Bank Resident Representative Omar Lyasse. The signing underscored a practical partnership built on accountability—clear task owners, deadlines, and monthly follow-up.

A focused action list, monthly follow-up, and strong government leadership—paired with World Bank technical expertise—will convert the remaining funds into tangible results: safer roads, reliable power, affordable high-speed internet, and better services statewide. In March 2026, a joint progress review will take stock and push the next round of improvements.

You can download the pictures from here in full quality: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/6o94V7tXJ9sPcn7u6>

Vice President Palik meets with EU Ambassador Plinkert to strengthen FSM-EU cooperation

FSM Information Services

October 3, 2025

PALIKIR, Pohnpei —The Honorable Aren B. Palik, Vice President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), today held a productive meeting with Her Excellency Barbara Plinkert, the Ambassador of the European Union to FSM, at the Office of the President. The discussions underscored the strong and growing partnership between FSM and the European Union (EU) and highlighted key areas of ongoing and future cooperation.

and Ambassador Plinkert emphasized the growing relationship between FSM and the EU, established in 2000, and expressed enthusiasm about increasing collaboration in various sectors. A notable focus was placed on fisheries, particularly FSM's strategic interest in expanding access to the European market for its high-quality tuna exports. Vice President Palik shared recent developments, including ongoing efforts to meet the Competent Authority requirements, critical for enabling FSM fishery products to enter and compete in the EU market.

On the bilateral front, the discussions were centered on the opening of the FSM Permanent Representative Mission in Geneva, upcoming presentation of credential for Ambassador-Designate Akillino Susaia to the EU, future EU presence in the FSM, and the upcoming 4th EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum.

The discussions also covered the advancement of FSM's application for Economic Partnership Agreement accession with the EU, which would provide FSM duty and quota-free access to the EU market. Ambassador Plinkert noted the EU's commitment to supporting FSM, including the facilitation of technical assistance to strengthen FSM's tuna value chain and fisheries management, ensuring

During the meeting, Vice President Palik

that tuna revenues remain within the Pacific region.

Climate change was a central topic, acknowledged by both as the foremost security and existential challenge to FSM and other Pacific Island states. They reaffirmed their shared commitment to multilateral climate action under the Paris Agreement framework, recognizing the urgency of global cooperation to mitigate impacts and finance adaptive measures.

The meeting also covered broader areas of cooperation, including support for FSM's water and energy sectors, women's empowerment, and regional security concerns. Vice President Palik highlighted FSM's desire for enhanced EU presence in the North Pacific, reinforcing the strategic importance of Pohnpei as a hub for regional organizations and UN agencies.

Ambassador Plinkert conveyed the EU's strong support for FSM's development

priorities and expressed her intention to maintain regular annual visits to deepen bilateral ties and ensure ongoing dialogue on mutual interests including supporting women issues. The Vice President extended an invitation to Ambassador Plinkert to attend the next 11th FSM Women's Conference.

This high-level engagement reaffirms the continued partnership between FSM and the European Union, fostering sustainable development, economic growth, and regional stability.



Team Andersen Airmen, leadership participate in dorm cleanup party

By Senior Airman Jordan McCoy
36th Wing



September 24, 2025

Andersen Air Force Base, Guam - 36th Wing Airmen, supervisors, first sergeants and commanders participated in a government issue party in support of wing-wide efforts to clean-up unaccompanied housing and improve quality of life and safety for Airmen residing in on-base dormitories, Sept. 24, 2025.

The Palau and Rota dorms were recently awarded contracts valued at a combined total of \$71 million for upgrades and renovation projects. In the meantime, efforts like these serve to improve Airmen's day-to-day by clearing storage rooms, pressure washing high-traffic areas, and beautify landscaping for the Saipan, Tinian and Kosrae Hall dorms.



"It was really good that leadership showed up," said Airman 1st Class Tucker Welch, 36th Civil Engineer Squadron electrical systems apprentice and Kosrae Hall dorm chief. "Having the support from the people that are teaching us how to

do our jobs and having them participate was a good feeling."

While taking care of unaccompanied housing was overarching goal, teamwork was at the forefront of the event.

"We had a lot of stuff damaged by Typhoon Mawar," said Alvin Pangelinan, 36th Civil Engineer Squadron unaccompanied housing dorm manager. "We took this time to proactively arrange proper disposal of unserviceable items that were damaged and stored after the typhoon."

Typhoon Mawar caused nearly \$9.7 billion in damage at Andersen Air Force Base in 2023, with nearly 500 facilities sustaining damage and more than 100 requiring significant repairs.

"We wanted all the servicemembers and leadership to work together," Pangelinan said. "It really does help with morale to see everybody come out with the same common interest and take the steps to make the servicemembers' homes better."

To add to the clean-up, the dorms' dayrooms received upgrades and

new amenities to increase morale and interaction.

"We got some new massage chairs and foosball tables," Welch said. "Some dorms also got pool tables."

"It was really good that the [36th] Wing gave us more amenities to be able to decompress after a long day of work," Welch added.

According to Pangelinan, there has been an increase in foot traffic since the new amenities have been installed.

"We wanted to make the dayrooms more servicemember-friendly," Pangelinan said. "We wanted to create a space where every servicemember can meet, use the massage chairs, watch TV or even use the karaoke machine. Since we've had the new amenities installed, we've had more people come in and the foot traffic has been increasing."

Team Andersen dorm managers plan to add more amenities as the dorms undergo more upgrades, and they plan to make GI parties a quarterly event to improve quality of life for unaccompanied Airmen.

Xavier High School Navigators welcome Australian Embassy delegation

Embassy of Australia to the FSM

September 30, 2025

Chuuk - Xavier High School Year 12 Seniors put on a warm welcome for Ambassador Grant where they engaged in thoughtful conversations about leadership, education and shared values between Australia and Micronesia.

Xavier Principal Martin Carl and Director Father Todd Kenny provided a tour of the multicultural school community.

The meeting was an opportunity for Ambassador Grant and her team, Second Secretary Joshua Critchley-Evans and Public Diplomacy Officer, Kawika Mendiola-Aldis, to promote the Australia Awards Scholarships

giving opportunities for FSM students to study abroad and to contribute to development in their home country.

The next scholarships round opens in February 2026.

As a gesture of friendship and support, the Ambassador presented the school with sporting equipment and merchandise from the PacificAus Sports Sports to help develop of student life and extracurricular programs.

“Australia extends its sincere thanks to Xavier High School for their warm hospitality and looks forward to continued engagement in support of education and youth empowerment in the region”, said Ambassador Grant.



Australia announces a new five year partnership with the Chuuk Women’s Council

Embassy of Australia to the FSM

October 3, 2025

Chuuk - At the 10th FSM National Women's Conference, Ambassador Jenny Grant was honoured to announce that Australia will expand our support for the Chuuk Women's Council (CWC), which we have steadfastly partnered with for over 40 years.

The five-year program valued at AUD 1.5 million will continue and expand the important work of the Tongen Inepwineu Counselling Center which has provided support to women and girls in Chuuk who have experienced domestic violence.

CWC members Dr Rita Mori, Lidy Jane and Nely Mori were on hand to receive the good news and a celebratory banner from the Australian Embassy.

We pay tribute to the to "Kiki" Stinnett, a true pioneer, leader, and advocate for women across Chuuk and the FSM and leading voice of Chuuk Women’s Council for many years. Her spirit, advocacy and support of women and girls in need lives on in those who

continue her mission.

"As the FSM launches its new Gender Equality Policy, Australia will continue to stand with the FSM and with our broader Pacific Family, to listen, to learn, and to support your leadership in ending violence against women and girls," said Ambassador Grant.

Gender equality is a matter of fairness and opportunity for everyone. When women and girls can participate fully in society, along with men and boys.



Pohnpei State hosts first-ever Health Symposium

Pohnpei Public Information

September 22, 2025

Kolonia, Pohnpei - On September 22, 2025, the Pohnpei State Government made history by convening the first-ever Health Symposium at the Governor's Conference Room—an unprecedented event for both Pohnpei and the Federated States of Micronesia.

The Health Symposium was designed to bring together State leaders, policy makers, healthcare professionals, and international partners to align health policies and best practices with the national government and regional stakeholders. This collaborative effort aims to address pressing health challenges, including non-communicable diseases (NCDs), health infrastructure, and access to care. Master of Ceremonies Mr. PJ Etnol coordinated the opening ceremony, which began with a solemn word of prayer from Reverend Nickontro Johnny.

Director of Health, Mr. Stuard Penias, delivered the official welcoming remarks and acknowledged the presence of Governor Stevenson A. Joseph, First Lady Dr. Aina Garstang, Lt.

Governor Movick, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the FSM, H.E. Wu Wei, U.S. Ambassador to the FSM, H.E. Jennifer Johnson, Australian Ambassador to the FSM, H.E. Jenny Grant, Keynote Speaker and Secretary of the FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs, Mr. Marcus Samo, and Guest Speaker Dr. Ofrin Roderico, WHO Northern Micronesia Representative, and UN, UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA representatives.



existential and imminent threat to our children. The beautiful thing about this threat, unlike some other much talked about threat, is that we can actually do something about it even at our level and with the resources we already have. We need not to pander or appeal or even rely on bigger and wealthier countries to make a difference. We can make a difference now. We have control. All we need, aside from the resources, is the WILL and the commitment.”

Guest Speaker Dr. Ofrin Roderico of WHO Northern Micronesia delivered remarks, noting:

“This is not only my first day in Pohnpei, but also the first event I have the honor of attending in the Federated States of Micronesia—and I could not have asked for a more meaningful beginning.” He emphasized WHO's ongoing and future commitment to supporting Pohnpei's health initiatives, stating:

“WHO is here to support your efforts to build resilient, inclusive, and people-centered health systems—systems that honor local realities while embracing global standards.”

Keynote Speaker Secretary Marcus Samo highlighted the significant progress made in healthcare since the FSM became a nation, noting improvements across nearly all areas. He extended his congratulations and support to Director Penias and Governor Joseph for the successful symposium, reaffirming their continued collaboration in advancing health and well-being for the people of Pohnpei and the FSM.

The first day of the symposium concluded with a dinner reception at the Governor's Office compound, providing an opportunity for participants to network and continue discussions in an informal setting.

Governor Stevenson A. Joseph delivered remarks officially opening the first Pohnpei State Health Symposium, noting the need to align policies with our partners for clarity and empowerment, to prevent sickness and provide the best care. Focusing on the urgency of addressing NCDs, in his remarks, Governor Joseph said, “I think we need bolder and more aggressive policies across all sectors, not just health, to curb NCD. We need to acknowledge that NCD is an



Pohnpei State Health Symposium highlights technology boost for outer islands

Pohnpei Public Information

September 24, 2025

Peilapalap, Pohnpei - The First Pohnpei State Health Symposium began its final day this morning with a major milestone for health care in the outer islands of Pohnpei. In a special ceremony, five Starlink internet satellite systems and over 2,000 solar lamps were officially turned over to the Pohnpei State Government by the FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs, represented by Secretary Marcus Samo.

The Starlink systems, which include one year of free subscription service, will be installed at the health dispensaries in each of Pohnpei's outer islands. This investment will significantly improve telecommunication capabilities, enabling faster reporting, telemedicine consultations, and better coordination of health services across the state.

Governor Stevenson A. Joseph and Lt. Governor Herolyn S. Movick were present to receive the equipment, along with Director of Health Services Stuard Penias. Governor Joseph, speaking on behalf of the Pohnpei State Government, expressed gratitude to Secretary Samo and the FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs for their continued support, emphasizing the importance

of this technology in bridging communication gaps and strengthening health care delivery for the outer islands.

The 2,000 solar lamps will be distributed among the outer islands to support lighting needs for health services, households, and emergency preparedness efforts.

The symposium will continue

throughout the day, with panel discussions and working sessions bringing together government leaders, health professionals, community stakeholders, and international partners to align health priorities and address pressing challenges such as non-communicable diseases. The event will officially conclude this evening with a closing reception at AA Getaway Resort in Sekere, Sokehs.



Governor Joseph and Director Penias Sign landmark resolution from First Pohnpei Health Symposium

Pohnpei Public Information

October 1, 2025

Pohnpei - In a ceremony held at the Governor's Office on October 2, 2025, Governor Stevenson A. Joseph and Director of Health and Social Services Stuard Penias signed Resolution No. 2025-01, formally adopting the outcomes of the First Pohnpei Health Symposium, which was held from September 22 to 24, 2025.

Joining Director Penias at the signing were Chief of Administration Merihter Etse and Public Relations Officer Santos Abraham of the Department of Health and Social Services, reflecting the Department's leadership team's commitment to the resolution's priorities.

The Resolution, entitled "To Recognize the Convening of the First Pohnpei Health Symposium and to Establish Shared Priorities for Strengthening the Health System of Pohnpei State," affirms the dedication of government

leaders, health professionals, and partners to work together to strengthen Pohnpei's health and social systems.

The Symposium brought together local leaders and stakeholders alongside regional, national, and international partners—including the FSM National Government, the 11th Pohnpei State Legislature, United Nations agencies, the World Health Organization (WHO), The Pacific Community (SPC), and members of the Diplomatic Corps—to align on a shared vision for a more inclusive, resilient, and effective health system.

Resolution No. 2025-01 outlines priority commitments to:

- Upgrade infrastructure, diagnostic services, and hospital accreditation, while ensuring reliable medical supplies.
- Recruit, train, and retain a strong



health workforce across all sectors.

- Expand quality primary and community-based care for both the main island and the outer islands.
- Strengthen social and dental services for children, women, elderly, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups.
- Advance prevention, early detection, and treatment of non-communicable diseases.

- Fully implement the Pohnpei State Sexual Harassment Policy and Case Management Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) launched during the Symposium.

- Maintain and expand partnerships with development, regional, and international organizations to ensure sustainable support.

Governor Joseph noted that the signing of the resolution represents a unified pledge to transform the outcomes of the Symposium into policies and

actions that will directly improve the health and well-being of the people of Pohnpei.

The Pohnpei State Government extends its deep appreciation to all institutions and partners whose contributions and support helped make the First Pohnpei Health Symposium a success.

Pohnpei State Government launches landmark Sexual Harassment Policy at First Health Symposium

Pohnpei Public Information

September 24, 2025

Pohnpei - On September 24, 2025, Assistant Attorney General Emma Sue Perman, representing the Attorney General and the Governor's Task Force, delivered a formal address at Pohnpei's inaugural Health Symposium, hosted by the Department of Health and Social Services, to launch the Pohnpei State Government Sexual Harassment Policy. This milestone underscores the government's constitutional and statutory commitment to promoting the health and social well-being of its people.

The policy, officially endorsed by Governor Stevenson A. Joseph and Lt. Governor Herolyn S. Movick, in a memorandum to all Department, Office, and Agency heads, reflects their vision to champion gender equality and social inclusion. The memorandum stated, "As your Governor and Lt. Governor for Pohnpei State, we are committed to fostering a work environment that

upholds the dignity, respect, and safety of all our valued employees. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that every individual who serves our government is treated with fairness and respect, free from any form of harassment or discrimination.

Sexual harassment in any form is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated within the Pohnpei State Government." The policy, enacted under Pohnpei Code Title 9 Chapter 8-117A, establishes essential safeguards and effective complaint mechanisms to protect all employees, regardless of classification, and ensures prompt and fair resolution of claims. The memorandum further urged, "We strongly endorse this policy and expect each and every employee to familiarize themselves with its provisions... to treat your colleagues with respect, and to report any violations promptly using the established procedures."

Assistant AG Perman emphasized, "This policy is a foundational step

toward positioning Pohnpei as a leader in social equity and justice." As the state's largest employer, Pohnpei aims to set a standard for fairness and respect within its institutions and across society. The policy aligns with Pohnpei's cultural values of fairness, respect, and community well-being, as well as international standards, including those of the International Labor Organization.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Human Rights and Social Development Division, provided expert review to ensure the policy aligns with domestic, regional, and international frameworks. "This policy strengthens our existing laws, code of ethics, and social values," Perman noted, highlighting its role as a renewed commitment to addressing sexual harassment with utmost seriousness.

Developed through extensive collaboration, the policy reflects

the dedication of stakeholders and partners, whose continued support was acknowledged with gratitude. The Governor and Lt. Governor called for collective action, stating, "By working together, we can maintain a safe and respectful workplace for everyone." The responsibility now lies with Pohnpei's leadership to ensure the policy's effective implementation across all sectors, advancing a gender-equitable and socially inclusive society.

To view the full policy, click the link: <https://pohnpeipublicinfo...>



Reitaku University students pay courtesy call on Ambassador of Japan

Embassy of Japan to the FSM

September 10, 2025

Pohnpei - On September 10, Ambassador Kagomiya received a courtesy call from Professor Matsushima and four students from Reitaku University. The students are active in Japanesia, which is a social contribution project group addressing environmental issues. They engage in exchanges with students from the College of Micronesia (COM) and conduct workshops on waste and environmental issues at local elementary schools.

During the meeting, we exchanged views on environmental issues such as the Federated States of Micronesia's (FSM) waste and coastal erosion, and we were introduced to an initiative where Reitaku University accepts FSM students for training programs.

Ambassador Kagomiya expressed his commendation for the students' activities and also expressed his high expectations for cultural exchange between COM students and Japan.



Japanese Ambassador visits the Yamaha Service Campaign

Embassy of Japan to the FSM

September 12, 2025

Pohnpei - On September 12, Ambassador Kagomiya visited a service campaign conducted by Yamaha Motor Co., Ltd. of Japan for outboard motor users in Pohnpei State, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). This campaign, held in Chuuk State and Pohnpei State, offered free engine inspections, guidance on identifying fake products and performing routine

maintenance, and discounted sales of oil and parts. Despite occasional rain, outboard engine users visited one after another.

The Ambassador observed the inspection process with keen interest, commending Yamaha's excellent activities in the FSM. He also expressed his hope for future collaboration, such as holding Japanese cultural exchange events through service campaigns like this.



Pohnpei Soccer Association Kids Club thanks Her Excellency the EU Ambassador Mrs Barbara Plinket and referee extraordinaire – Mr. Erik Lindebo

Pohnpei Soccer Association Kids Club

October 5, 2025

Pohnpei - The Pohnpei Soccer Association Kids Club (PSAKC) would like to extend its warmest thanks to Her Excellency, the Ambassador of the European Union to the Federated States of Micronesia, Mrs. Barbara Plinkert, and to Mr. Erik Lindebo, for graciously accepting our invitation to attend and even referee the test matches for the upcoming PSAKC Champions League, which will soon bring together eight elementary schools from across Pohnpei.

The entire PSAKC family gathered at the field at exactly 5:00 p.m. sharp— a small miracle in itself – with all teams perfectly on time, dressed, warmed up, and ready to go. Spirits were high, the kids were buzzing with excitement, and the refereeing whistle was about to make its international debut!

To everyone's delight (and slight surprise), Mr. Erik Lindebo bravely accepted to referee every single match – proving that true diplomacy sometimes requires serious cardio. With remarkable energy and an impeccable sense of fair play, he ran tirelessly behind the players, whistle in hand and a smile on his face. A true Ibrahimovic compatriot. If you don't know who he is, check youtube now.

Meanwhile, Her Excellency Mrs. Plinkert, demonstrating that true leadership includes sportsmanship and generosity, attempted to offer ice creams to the young athletes. But in a stunning display of dedication some the players politely refused, focused entirely on the match ahead. 'Keep one for me later!' was the pointless

request, the players on the benches were ready to go for another.

The PSAKC would also like to express heartfelt gratitude to the Ambassador for her generous donation of two official Adidas Pro match balls—shining like European stars on our island pitch and now safely guarded like priceless treasures (until the next kick-off, of

course).

The evening was a perfect blend of laughter, competition, and unforgettable moments – proving once again that football truly speaks every language. The kids, parents, and coaches all agreed: if every international meeting were refereed like this, the world would probably be a much happier place.



Kalahngan! Thank you, Your Excellency Mrs. Barbara Plinkert, and Mr. Erik Lindebo, for your enthusiasm, your energy, and for reminding us that joy, teamwork, and a good whistle can unite nations – one goal at a time.

Stay tuned for the official kick-off of the PSAKC Champions League – featuring eight schools, countless smiles, and maybe....

USCGC Oliver Henry conducts Operation Rematau patrol, deterring threats in Micronesia

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

September 30, 2025

SANTA RITA, Guam — The crew of the USCGC Oliver Henry (WPC 1140) returned to Guam Sept. 22, from a patrol blending maritime law enforcement and border security with community support, proving once again that strong partnerships and persistent presence are the anchor of regional stability.

The fast response cutter crew wrapped up their 22-day mission under Operation Rematau, logging 340 operating hours and covering over 4,200 nautical miles. From Guam's shores to the remote atolls of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the patrol accomplished multi-mission success including the delivery of 2,000 pounds of essential supplies, execution of five bilateral boardings with FSM authorities, and the expansion of maritime domain awareness across a region roughly the size of the continental U.S.

"Our Operation Rematau patrols are much more than patrolling lines on a chart as we continue to show up for our neighbors here in the Blue Pacific," said Lt. Ray Cerrato, commanding officer of Oliver Henry. "We sailed into FSM waters as partners and came back knowing we've deepened the ties that keep the Pacific safe and prosperous for everyone through our shared maritime law enforcement efforts."

Key highlights of the patrol included five boarding inspections on foreign-flagged tuna longliners in FSM's exclusive economic zone (EEZ), executed under the maritime bilateral law enforcement agreement between the U.S. and FSM. The Oliver Henry crew maximized the value of their transit time to Pohnpei by conducting bilateral boardings with FSM's approval under the enhanced protocol. Additionally, the cutter embarked FSM National Police Maritime Wing officers in Pohnpei for in person

boardings subsequently conducted. Boarding officers found the fishing vessels boarded to be compliant with established laws and regulations. The Oliver Henry crew also provided continuous regional search-and-rescue asset availability while deterring illegal fishing in U.S. and FSM waters through presence.

The mission's community element included deliveries of habitability supplies to the islanders of Sapwuahfik, Nukuoro, and Kapingamarangi atolls, coordinated with the U.S. Embassy in Kolonia. This effort underscored the U.S. Coast Guard's commitment to the Freely Associated States, where compact agreements tie security, safety, and economic growth to shared responsibilities and values.

Carlotta Leon Guerrero, founder and executive director with the Ayuda Foundation, highlighted the collaborative spirit, "Working hand-in-hand with the U.S. Embassy and outer island communities, we turned this patrol into a lifeline. These supplies

are a promise that Guam and the U.S. stand with our Micronesian family, building resilience against isolation and uncertainty. As an example, reclaimed lumber was turned into new benches and tables for the meeting house in less than 24 hours on Kapingamarangi."

As always, the patrol doubled as a training ground. The Oliver Henry crew qualified personnel as underway officer of the deck, quartermaster of the watch and shipboard damage control. They also brought Petty Officer second Class Clayton Garcia, from Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam for additional support.

Garcia, who bridged intel coordination between the cutter and FSM's maritime operations center, said, "This was real-time collaboration turning data into deterrence. Sharing insights with FSM partners allows us to collectively spot opportunities making the most of our time in FSM waters and build trust that lasts beyond any single patrol."

Operation Rematau, meaning "People

of the Deep Sea" in Micronesia, guides U.S. Coast Guard efforts in the Freely Associated States of the Republic of Palau, FSM, and the Republic of Marshall Islands. Managed by U.S. Coast Guard District Oceania and executed largely by Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam, it tackles 10 of the service's 11 missions, from search and rescue to living marine resources protection, in a 2.6 million square nautical mile area. By modeling good governance and partnering against illegal activities, malign influences and resource exploitation, the operation safeguards U.S. national security while fostering regional peace and prosperity.

"Our Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam team, under U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area and aligned with U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, executes these missions to honor commitments to allies and partners and protect the Pacific homeland and its resources," said Cmdr. Grant Johnson, response department head.



Pohnpei Fishing Club members line up to compete for cash and fuel vouchers in Vital competition

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

October 4, 2025

Pohnpei – Tournaments sponsored by Vital, the Micronesia Petroleum Corporation are always popular in Pohnpei and this year’s stop in Pohnpei of the Vital Annual Fishing Circuit with the Pohnpei Fishing Club was no different. 29 captains registered their boats and crews to participate in this year’s tournament where they competed for \$2500 in cash prizes and fuel vouchers. Additionally, each registered boat captain received fuel vouchers for their participation.

Pat Ryan had the biggest fish of the day, a 54.2-pound yellow fin tuna earning him \$500 in cash and a fuel voucher. Jesse Panuel’s 38.4-pound yellow fin was next for a cash prize

of \$400 closely followed by Calany Torres’s 32.8-pound yellow fin for \$300.

It’s somewhat unusual that skipjack tuna feature in the biggest fish category but today, Jesse Panuel had a really big skippy of 20.4 pounds earning him yet another \$200 in cash. Kasisdus Paulino’ skipjack was just behind for the last fish of the big fish category, a 19.8-pound skipjack for \$150.

Anglers also competed for prizes in the biggest of species caught on the day. \$150 and a fuel voucher was awarded for the first place-fish in each species and \$50 for the second-place fish.

Plangka David had a 14.8-pound yellow fin for first prize in the

category. Patterson Lawrence had a yellow fin of 13.2 pounds for second place.

Mark Panuelo and Eugene Eperiam split the cash award for bigger skipjack tuna not awarded a prize in the big fish category. They each took home \$75 for their twin 19.6-pound skipjacks.

Oneal Optaia had the biggest wahoo at 12.4 pounds. John Hedson had a small 6-pound wahoo for second prize in the category.

Marlon Yamaguchi landed a grand trevally of 6.4 pounds for first place in that species follow by a 4-pound GT caught by Burton Eliam.

Resihna Mix had the biggest barracuda at 10.2 pounds. Wescott Panuelo’s

barracuda was 9.4 pounds

Lady Angler winner Calany Torres won \$125 for her 12.8-pound barracuda.

Dave Spencer was the Junior Angler winner with a prize of \$25 for his skipjack of 5.6 pounds.

With future angler safety in mind, Vital also awarded five EPIRBS to registered boat owners who didn’t have one. The winners of those EPIRBS were Nile Panuelo, Q-zon Radfort, Marlon Yamaguchi, Acer Apis, and Kevin Sehpin.

The next fishing tournament of the Pohnpei Fishing Club will happen on October 18, the Budweiser Catch 8 tournament.



Clear calls to action in nine Pacific Island audits on climate change adaptation actions

PASAI

October 2, 2025

Auckland, New Zealand - The Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions (PASAI) has published a regional report on the audits of responses to climate-related matters by government agencies in 9 Pacific Island states.

Auditors from the government audit offices of the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, the Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu participated in the global cooperative audit initiative.

Each participating audit office in the Pacific region selected one of 3 audit topics; examining how well their governments are managing water resources, implementing climate change adaptation plans or actions, or taking action to adapt to the impact of sea level rise and coastal erosion.

Having provided guidance to the 9 Pacific Island audit teams since the audits started in 2024, PASAI Program Director and co-author of the report, Mike Scott, knows how personal this

work is to the contributing auditors, saying, "The effects of climate change are real and literally at their doorsteps.

"They are experiencing more intense and frequent cyclones, droughts and flooding, erosion and saline intrusion, causing loss of ancestral homes, displacement of people, and health risks, threatening food and water security, and endangering children's futures."

The Pacific regional report on climate change adaptation actions identified that governments need to act now to:

- secure available financing and expertise
- better plan and target measures where they are needed
- more effectively implement measures through more coordinated and inclusive action
- ensure accountability through monitoring and reporting of intended outcomes.

Staff from PASAI, the Office of the Auditor-General New Zealand and government audit offices in Australia (the Audit Office of New South Wales, the Audit Office of South Australia and the Queensland Audit Office) mentored

the Pacific Island auditors to plan, conduct, publish and promote their own audit work that contributed to the regional report.

PASAI Secretary-General and Auditor-General of New Zealand, Grant Taylor, launched the regional report today and stated, "This report shows the important roles audit offices can have as the voice of communities.

"The small teams involved in this audit initiative overcame significant obstacles to engage with communities so they could properly understand the real effects of climate change and adaptation actions on them and their livelihoods."

Deputy Director General at the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) Development Initiative, Archana Shirsat, said, "Pacific Island audit offices have, once again, contributed positively to climate adaptation, this time as a part of a global cooperative audit.

"We fully support the calls for action based on the audits and urge governments and key stakeholders to

work together for the benefit of people in the Pacific," she said.

Secretary General of the INTOSAI Working Group on Environmental Audit (WGEA), Dr Vivi Niemenmaa, said she was encouraged to see so many Pacific Island audit offices join this cooperative audit.

"Pacific Island nations are on the frontline of climate change impacts and their voices are essential in shaping global responses. The urgency for greater action extends to small island developing states across the world," she said.

The INTOSAI Development Initiative and WGEA were both involved in providing training and audit support to the Pacific Island audit offices. As part of this audit support, an experienced member of the Auditor General's Office of the Maldives, a fellow small island developing state audit office, also provided valuable advice.

The regional report, links to individual audit reports and videos from contributing auditors are at pasai.org/regional-reports.

Tower for Humanity's One Za'abeel to be completed Friday 3rd annual Cans for Humanity with Be Heartfelt this weekend

Tower for Humanity

- The toy timber One Za'abeel Tower is set for completion Friday afternoon
- The completed tower will contain approximately 102,000 toy timber logs, making it unofficially the world's largest toy timber structure
- The 3rd Annual Cans for Humanity Food Drive and Competition, in partnership with Be Heartfelt, takes place October 4 and 5
- 16 Teams to compete in the Cans for Humanity Competition on Saturday, October 4
- Public Voting will be on Sunday, October 5, from 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm
- Awards Ceremony to take place at 5:00 pm, Sunday, October 5

Hagatna, Guam – October 2, 2025 – After 9 days and nearly 200 person-hours of constructing the tower and more than 300 person-hours on the

project (construction and groundwork), the Tower for Humanity's 7th project, the One Za'abeel Tower and its "Link" is set to be completed Friday afternoon, October 3 at the Agana Shopping Center. Using approximately 102,000 toy timber logs, this is the largest of the 7 Tower for Humanity projects, and unofficially, the world's largest toy timber structure.

"This has been a humbling project based on its magnitude and the sheer engineering marvel of the tower's Link. It has been an adventure to piece this project together in an effort to recreate, with toy timbers, the One Za'abeel." - Landon Aydtlett, Tower for Humanity

Cans for Humanity Food Drive & Competition

As the tower nears completion, the Center Court will be reset to make way for the culminating event, the

3rd Annual Cans for Humanity Food Drive and Competition, in support of Be Heartfelt and their mission to feed children in need on Guam.

More than two dozen businesses and organizations across Guam joined the September Food Drive and will bring their collected canned foods and other items to the Agana Shopping Center Friday and Saturday, with more than a dozen organizations forming teams to build canned food towers and creations in the competition on Saturday, October 4.

Teams will have all day on Saturday, October 4 to build their creation at the shopping center. Public viewing, voting and judging will take place on Sunday, October 5, between 12:00 pm and 4:00 pm, with an awards ceremony taking place Sunday afternoon at 5:00 pm.

Schedule of Events:

Friday, October 3 -
All Day: Food Drive Drop Sites/Teams drop off collected items to the Agana Shopping Center. Teams can set up their construction site.
Saturday, October 4 -
All Day: 3rd Annual Cans for Humanity Competition: Teams will build towers and other creations with their collected food items.
Sunday, October 5 -
12:00 pm - 4:00 pm: Public voting for Cans for Humanity Team constructions/creations
4:00 pm - 5:00 pm: Judging of canned food construction/creations
5:00 pm: Awards ceremony and Legislative Certificates of Recognition
6:00 pm: Breakdown and packing of canned food creations, and transport to four Be Heartfelt pantries around Guam. Volunteers for this process are very much welcomed and appreciated.

A Matter of Equity: AOSIS leaders push for legal implementation of SIDS' Special Circumstances

Alliance of Small Island States

25 September 2025

New York – At the 2025 AOSIS Leaders Meeting, held on the margins of the 80th United Nations General Assembly, Heads of State, Government, and high-level representatives of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) issued a landmark normative Declaration asserting that the “Special Circumstances of Small Island Developing States (SIDS)” constitutes a principle of international law.

This high-level declaration marks a pivotal moment in the decades-long effort by SIDS to secure legal and operational implementation of our unique vulnerabilities across global governance, environmental treaties, and financial systems.

From recognition to implementation Despite being formally acknowledged in major agreements - including the Paris Agreement, the BBNJ Agreement, and multiple UN General Assembly resolutions - recognition of the Special Circumstances of SIDS remain inconsistently applied and under-implemented.

The Declaration outlines specific legal, financial, and institutional measures to rectify this gap, which include: tailored obligations that reflect capacity constraints without undermining sovereignty, simplified access to non-debt-creating financing, dedicated procedures for meaningful participation, protection against disproportionate exposure to environmental and economic risks.

“Too often, there are attempts to treat our nations as though they were no different from larger or more resilient countries, disregarding the unique vulnerabilities that define our reality,” said President Surangel Whipps Jr. of Palau. “This undermines not only our ability to access resources, but also the very foundation of the international community’s pledge to ensure that no one is left behind.”

A legal and moral imperative

The AOSIS Declaration also draws upon established international legal doctrines, including common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR-RC), the duty to cooperate, and the principle of sovereign equality, to affirm that operationalizing the Special Circumstances of SIDS is both legally grounded and morally necessary. “Belize proudly supports the Declaration on the Special Circumstances of Small Island Developing States,” affirmed John Briceño, the Prime Minister of Belize. “It is a powerful affirmation of our unique challenges and a strong call for the world to act on the realities facing small island states.”

Call to the international community AOSIS is urging UN bodies, treaty secretariats, international financial institutions, and donor countries to respond with tangible measures that institutionalize the Special Circumstances of SIDS across all multilateral frameworks - particularly those addressing climate change, biodiversity, pollution, chemicals, and ocean governance.

Failure to do so, the Declaration warns, undermines equity, weakens the legitimacy of international processes, and threatens the effective participation of SIDS in global decision-making.



Climate justice champions receive Right Livelihood Award

The University of the South Pacific

October 2, 2025

Fiji - The University of the South Pacific (USP) commends the accomplishment of the Pacific Islands Students Fighting Climate Change (PISFCC) after the group was awarded with the 2025 Right Livelihood Award. PISFCC shares the award with Chamoru lawyer and writer Julian Aguon.

The Right Livelihood Award recognises "change-makers" whose work provides essential support and visibility for critical global issues. PISFCC now stands among previous laureates, including Edward Snowden, Greta Thunberg, and Nobel Peace Prize winners such as Dr. Denis Mukwege.

At the centre of this global recognition is a campaign that began with 27 USP law students in a classroom in Vanuatu. This movement successfully brought the climate crisis to the world’s highest court, the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

In July, the ICJ delivered a groundbreaking Advisory Opinion, confirming that states have binding legal obligations to prevent climate harm, protect human rights, provide reparations, and safeguard present and future generations. The PISFCC’s powerful advocacy ensured that the frontline realities of the Pacific where cyclones devastate economies and the rising seas displace families, shaping this pivotal ruling.

PISFCC Director, Vishal Prasad who was at the forefront of the campaign, dedicated the Right Livelihood Award to the region.

“It is a testament to not just the power of young people but of our communities and nations who are not standing quietly as the climate crisis ravages but are demonstrating real climate leadership,” Mr. Prasad said.

“This award truly belongs to our whole region which continues to stand tall against the climate crisis.”

Head of USP’s School of Law and Social Sciences, Professor Afshin Akhtar-Khavari said that the award is only the beginning of what USP hopes will become a greater structural shift.

“This recognition gives us hope! That the lived reality of the people in the region will be acknowledged and that we might start to see steps taken towards structural change in consumption patterns that lead to climate change,” Professor Akhtar-Khavari reiterated.

“It highlights how at USP our law programme fosters the kind of critical conversations that sharpens focus and builds the capacity of our students to champion social justice

and focus on meaningful prosperity for Pacific communities.”

He added: “As law academics we aim to help them to learn about values and attitudes like justice, equality and fairness.”

“Our students however made us proud because they led and showed us that the values of the law energised and empowered them to try and make a difference.

“The youth of today want a better future and they will be the ones inspiring us as law academics to think differently about how we combine and integrate values with material progress.”

“We have to encourage them so we can learn about creating better futures.”

USP alumna & President of the PISFCC, Cynthia Houniuhui noted that the award is a testament to the vision of USP’s founders.

“This recognition is proof of the vision that the leaders before us had when they created USP, an institution where Pacific islanders could come together, share their challenges and create solutions together - shaping the very future of our region and contributing to the global community as well,” Honuihui added.

“When you understand the humble context in which this initiative started, you will appreciate that this recognition is very huge and it is for those that have worked so hard to enable a space in which such initiative could come out of it.

Ms Houniuhui also reaffirmed the commitment of young Pacific Islanders to Global Climate Leadership.

“It is very important for our young people in the Pacific to look at such initiative and be inspired and understand that although we might come from humble beginnings, we too have an important role to play in Global Climate Leadership,” she said.

“We come from communities at the frontline of the adverse effects of the greatest challenge of our century.”

“This is not the first time the Pacific has shown global climate leadership and as young Pacific islanders we have built on that very foundation.”

The announcement was made during the award ceremony in Stockholm, Sweden yesterday.

The Swedish Right Livelihood Award Foundation also honoured activists from Myanmar, the Sudanese Emergency Response Rooms network and Taiwan.

Opinion Editorial

Hope in the Unseen

At another memorable meeting with my friend and mentor, Dr. Samuel Betances, we discussed the academic gap that exists between high-need students and high-resource students, and how to help first generation island youth to graduate from high school and attend college. He gave me the book, "Hope in the Unseen" by Ron Suskind. The book is about the inspiring true story of a determined young man, Cedric Jennings, who struggled his way out of adversities with his intellect and determination.

The book is another excellent read that encourages dreaming bigger, working harder, and studying with more focus to make things possible. I highly recommend Hope in the Unseen to young people as a way to understand the importance of having an intelligent and determined mindset for a successful life journey. I learned three powerful lessons from Cedric's story: to live a life requires unwavering familial support, knowing God (nuwokus Kot), and studying harder.

Family support is essential because it encourages, motivates and guides us

forward on the straight path to achieve our goals. Cedric was raised by his mother, who provided unwavering support and guidance. His mother was his primary source of encouragement. His father, on the other hand, did not support and encourage him because he believed his background and skin color would prevent him from succeeding.

Nevertheless, consistent encouragement from a family member helped him build confidence and develop resilience.

My mentor, Dr. B, and I are interested in helping first-generation island youth succeed in school and finish college. This process requires support from family members and the community. Our islands will be positively impacted when our youth earn their high school diplomas, complete high-tech certificate in trade schools or enroll and graduate from college.

Acknowledging the Almighty and developing a spiritual life is crucial to our success. Growing up, I learned from Catechism that our talents are gifts from the Almighty and when we use them to serve others, we are glorifying His name. Following a God-centered script will keep us on the right track. We can then get involved in reading to younger sibling, engaging with peers in studying together, not wasting time

on screen-time, growing our word power by looking up new words from our readings and more-means that like Cedric, we are using our God given-talents wisely.

Cedric made sure to thank the Almighty for everything that came his way. Cedric sang in the choir at his church and listened to the lectures and advice from his Pastor, Bishop Long. These activities fueled his courage to keep pursuing his education despite difficult circumstances. He had travelled too far to change course and so he relied on his faith, intelligence, and determination to keep his hope alive in the unseen.

There is a wide academic gap between high-need and high-resourced youth in our FSM community. There is much work to be done in order that we help to bridge this academic gap, which requires willingness, determination, and a commitment to learn and study harder. We as successful members of our community need to advocate for more support and tutoring.

Cedric encountered a significant academic gap between his background and the other students with more resources attending an MIT summer program. The MIT summer program gave him a view of a different world and academic environment. He was

excited to be among other high-achieving students, even though he acknowledged that he had to work extra hard to catch up academically. He did not give up. Despite his challenges, the MIT summer program inspired him to pursue his academic goals and work towards a future where he could thrive in a rigorous learning environment. Throughout the book, Cedric's successes and learning from his failures are an inspiration.

Stories such as Cedric's are powerful case studies for our young generation to dream bigger and follow their passion, whether it is in sports, education, or your current work. My advice: Always listen to people who have your best interests in mind. Don't get stuck with "pretenders", people who will try to discourage you, poison your mind, and stop you from doing your best.

When you pursue your dream, you are stepping into the unknown and trusting that your efforts will lead to something meaningful. Trust in the Almighty and let Him guide you. If you truly believe in your dream, stand courageous and pursue it, regardless of any negative opinions or judgments from others.

*Kinisou Chapur
John R. Howard*

Empowering Women's Well-Rounded Development Lighting up a Better Future Together

The 10th Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) National Women's Conference was successfully held in Chuuk State from September 27 to October 4, 2025. I extend my heartfelt congratulations. This significant event provided a national platform for women across the FSM to engage in meaningful dialogue and pool consensus on advancing gender equality and women's well-rounded development. It was my honor, on behalf of the Chinese Embassy, for providing some funding assistance to the 10th FSM National Women's Conference, contributing our support for women's development in the FSM.



There's a Chinese saying that goes, "Women hold up half the sky." Over the past two years since taking office in the FSM, I've deeply felt that women

are at least as capable as men in the FSM. FSM women play an irreplaceable and unique role in family life, national construction and social development. As H.E. Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China, pointed out, women are creators of material and spiritual wealth and represent an important

force driving social development and progress. Without women, there would be no continuity of the human race or the human society. Thumbs up for all women!

In 1995, China hosted the Fourth World Conference on Women, organized by the United Nations. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Conference became a milestone in the global pursuit of gender equality. Over the past three decades, China has acted

on the spirit of the 1995 Conference and made historic achievements in women's development in China. We have upheld gender equality as our basic state policy and carried out national action plans dedicated to the well-rounded development of women. Countless outstanding women have become role models of our times, making their important contributions to Chinese modernization.

I would like to share with you the extraordinary stories of two ordinary Chinese women. Ms. Wang Peiling was from a poor peasant family. When she was a kid, her mother became severely disabled in the leg accidentally, and then the family fell on hard times. Depressed and disappointed about the future, she received financial assistance from the Spring Bud Project, a public welfare initiative launched by the All-China Women's Federation and the

China Children and Teenagers' Fund and committed to improve education for girls from impoverished families. Supported by the government, she was admitted to the first Spring Bud Class at Beijing Bailie University. After graduation, she started as an ordinary office worker and now becomes a co-founder of an international trading company, devoting herself to China's economic development. Education has changed her life, and helped her achieve a remarkable turnaround.

Another story is about Ms. Hou Youlin, a post-90s. Coming from a poverty-stricken background, she dared to fight for a better life and went alone to work in Yiwu (best known for hosting the Yiwu International Trade City, the world's largest wholesale market for small commodities), where she learned techniques, business marketing and management. With the strong support of local government, she returned to her hometown and established a handicraft workshop. Local rural women who stay behind to care for families while

Continued on next page

Five USP academics among Stanford's Top 2% scientists 2025

University of the South Pacific

30 September 2025

The University of the South Pacific (USP) is proud to announce that five of its academics have been recognised among the world's Top 2% scientists by Stanford University for 2025.

This prestigious ranking identifies researchers whose work is among the most cited globally, reflecting their significant impact on their respective fields.

This is a landmark achievement for USP, marking the highest number of USP academics featured on the list. It also highlights the University's growing international influence and commitment to research excellence.

The five distinguished academics and their research fields are:

- Professor Gurmeet Singh - Business & Management
- Professor M. Rafiuddin Ahmed - Mechanical Engineering &

Transport

- Professor Surendra Prasad - Analytical Chemistry
- Dr Shavneet Sharma - Sport, Leisure & Tourism
- Dr Vikas Gupta - Sport, Leisure & Tourism

Special congratulations are extended to Professor Surendra Prasad and Professor M Rafiuddin Ahmed, who have been recognised for career-long impact for four consecutive years, reflecting their sustained contribution and global influence in their respective fields.

This achievement highlights USP's dedication to producing world-class research that not only advances knowledge but also addresses the unique challenges and opportunities of the Pacific region. Our academics continue to demonstrate leadership in their disciplines, setting a benchmark for research excellence and inspiring

the next generation of Pacific scholars.

USP's presence on this prestigious list reflects the university's strategic focus on research that is globally relevant and locally impactful. Across the Pacific, USP academics are addressing pressing issues ranging from sustainable development and climate change to business innovation and public health, ensuring that research outcomes contribute both to academic discourse and to practical solutions for regional challenges.

This recognition highlights the outstanding contributions our academics are making to their fields, advancing knowledge and creating a global impact. We also commend all USP academics and researchers for their dedication, creativity, and diverse outputs that drive innovation, address



societal challenges, and enrich the broader academic community.

The Stanford Top 2% Scientists List is compiled by researchers at Stanford University using data from Scopus, one of the world's largest bibliometric databases. Scientists are ranked using multiple metrics, including total citations, h-index, co-authorship-adjusted hm-index, and career-long impact. Being listed is a highly regarded recognition, placing the researcher among the most influential and highly cited scientists globally.

...China Opinion Editorial

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their husbands work in cities went to the workshop to learn embroidery and beading techniques. After learning the techniques, they were allowed to take the raw materials home for free, made the products while taking care of their families, and got paid for delivering finished products. The "business on the fingertips" keeps expanding with 3,000 local rural stay-behind women involved. Poverty alleviation workshops has been set up in 21 villages and 7 manufacturers have established long-term cooperative relationships. The products cover multiple categories including 3D beads, diamond paintings, cross-stitch embroidery and shoe insoles. The business increases revenues for the local by more than RMB 1 million per month on average.

The stories like those of Ms. Wang Peiling and Ms. Hou Youlin are being played out every day in China in the new era. The Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee with Xi Jinping at its core has integrated China's work related to women into the overall planning and promotion of Chinese modernization. The women's development path with Chinese characteristics has shown vigorous vitality and unique advantages and contributed another vivid example of China's governance to the world with fruitful practical results.

Women's cause is an integral part of

state governance. China's national development plans have clarified the strategic tasks for women's development. China has established a mechanism for the work related to women, under which the whole of society participates. China has established a legal system anchored in the Constitution and centered on the Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests. China insists on protecting women's rights and interests in the process of development and relies on development to improve women's livelihood. As a matter of fact, China is recognized by the World Health Organization as one of the ten fast-track countries in women's and children's health. In China, women account for over 40 percent of the country's workforce, and more than half of China's Internet start-up businesses are set up by women. Women account for nearly half of successful candidates in the cultural talent program under the National Cultural Talent of Excellence Initiative. From large-aircraft development and biomedicine to deep-sea missions and AI, women are visible and vital across every frontier of science and technology. Women participate in and actively contribute to the whole-process people's democracy and social governance. More than 690 million Chinese women have ridden the wave of China's sustained, high-speed development, devoting themselves into the great endeavor of Chinese modernization. Braving headwinds and breaking new ground side by side, they have together composed a new chapter in which Chinese women bloom in full flower.

Women around the world have a shared future. China's endeavors concerning women are an integral part of the global cause. China upholds the concept of a community with a shared future for humanity and fulfills its obligations under international conventions. China supports the United Nations in prioritizing women's development. In partnership with UNESCO, China has co-established the UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education. China successfully hosted the Fourth World Conference on Women. China provides humanitarian assistance to women and children caught in conflicts and disasters. China has maintained friendly exchanges with more than 420 women's organizations in more than 140 countries around the world, expanding "circle of friends" for women's cooperation. China has implemented empowerment projects worth more than USD 40 million dollars in more than 20 countries, cultivated more than 200,000 female talents in more than 180 countries and regions, and provided employment assistance for women in more than 100 countries. These are concrete actions to eliminate the gender gap. The just-released white paper titled China's Achievements in Women's Well-Rounded Development in the New Era gives a systematic overview of China's philosophy, principles, and innovative practices in promoting gender equality and women's well-rounded development in the new era, highlights Chinese women's outstanding achievements, and contributes China's wisdom and experience to the global

endeavors for women's advancement. The Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative, and the Global Governance Initiative proposed by President Xi Jinping are being continuously transformed into practical actions to promote women's well-rounded development around the world.

The Chinese Embassy in the FSM will facilitate more woman exchanges and cooperation between our two countries and welcome more and more woman delegations to visit China in the future.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women. To implement the important initiatives proposed by President Xi Jinping, China will soon host a Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Beijing, working with all parties to write a new chapter in the global progress of women. Thirty years ago, Beijing witnessed the determination of women around the world to pursue equality. Thirty years on, all parties will gather in Beijing again to chart the course for women's development worldwide. China stands ready to work with countries around the world, including the FSM, to jointly pledge greater efforts to empower more women to achieve their dreams and fulfill their lives, making new contributions to advancing the world toward a bright future of peace, security, prosperity and progress! Beijing welcomes you!

Pacific to IMO: Fast-track the Net-Zero Fund or fail

MCST

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Pacific - Pacific leaders are calling for the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to fast-track setting up its Net-Zero Fund (NZF), warning that without urgent action the Organization will fail to deliver on its own commitment to contribute to a Just and Equitable Transition.

“Delay is the new denial,” said Hon. Ralph Regenvanu, Vanuatu’s Minister for Climate Change, Energy, Meteorology, Geohazards, Environment and Disaster Management. “By fast-tracking the Fund and ensuring equity in its governance, the IMO can prove it is serious about meeting its reduction targets — and serious about equity and justice for all nations. Without it, the IMO’s commitments collapse under its own weight.”

The Fund, designed to channel revenues from shipping, is expected to collect at least US \$11–12 billion annually as a by-product of the regulation. IMO Member States have identified these revenues as a means to both incentivise shipping’s transition, and to contribute towards a Just and Equitable Transition.

But under the current IMO plan, the Fund’s governing provisions will not be adopted until 2028, meaning the support needed by SIDS and LDCs could be significantly delayed, at a time when they are urgently needed. Pacific states say this delay is unacceptable.

RMI Ambassador Albon Ishoda added, “Our 6PAC+ commitment to a Just and Equitable Transition remains true to a future that is 1.5 degree aligned. I will not compromise our communities to anything less than what the 2023 GHG Reduction Strategy called for.”

6PAC+ is a group of Pacific nations that includes Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu, as well as alliances from Africa and the Caribbean.

Hon. Simon Kofe, Minister of Justice, Communication and Foreign Affairs, Tuvalu, highlighted the legal imperative: “Both the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and the International Court of Justice have ruled that greenhouse gas emissions are marine pollution under UNCLOS.

States have a duty to act consistently with this science and law. Delaying support to SIDS and LDCs would be inconsistent with that duty and with the IMO’s own Strategy.”

A submission to the IMO, co-sponsored by Fiji, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu, lays out a step-by-step accelerated timeline to fast-track the Fund’s creation, alongside temporary financing arrangements, such as interim loans or guarantees, so money can start flowing before shipping levy revenues arrive in 2029. It also spells out the core rules for how the Fund will be managed.

The goal is clear: make the Fund operational as soon as possible so it can start financing the shift to clean shipping, while ensuring that the countries most vulnerable to climate change — especially Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) — are put at the front of the line for support.

The Pacific submission also makes clear that who governs the Fund matters as much as when it becomes operational. Without equitable representation, the NZF risks being controlled by those least affected by both climate impacts, and the disproportionate negative impacts of the regulation (increase in transport costs) rather than those on the front lines.

The co-sponsors propose a 21-member governing board, divided equally: seven seats for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs), seven seats for other developing countries, and seven seats for developed countries. Board members would serve three-year terms with staggered renewal to balance continuity and fresh perspectives. The proposal also includes rotating chairs and observer roles for NGOs, industry, and Indigenous representatives — measures that mirror best practice in other global environmental funds.

For Pacific economies — which rely almost entirely on shipping for food, fuel, and connectivity — the Fund’s design will determine whether they can withstand the expected additional increase in transport costs, and benefit from the substantial opportunities generated by the transition, or be left

behind.

Hayes Moses of Palau Marine Transportation Bureau explained, “Our ports, ferries, and regional supply chains need urgent investment. We cannot afford to wait three more years for the Fund to trickle into operation. Fast-tracking the Fund and securing fair representation will allow small islands to chart a course toward resilient, clean, and affordable shipping.”

Pacific nations emphasise that readiness support cannot wait until 2029. Interim disbursements are critical to help vulnerable countries prepare their national systems, safeguard food security, and build the technical capacity required to access and deploy funds.

The proposals will be on the table when governments reconvene in London for two critical meetings: the Extraordinary Session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC ES/2) from 14–17 October, which will finalise and adopt the legal text of the Net-Zero Framework, and the Intersessional Working Group on Greenhouse Gas Emissions (ISWG-GHG 20) from 20–24 October, which will negotiate the detailed rules.

Pacific nations say these sessions are the moment for the IMO to prove that commitments made in the 2023 IMO Strategy can be delivered in practice — and that the Fund will be ready to support a just and equitable transition without delay.



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