

Chuuk challengers file sweeping appeal, demand Weno re-vote

By *Bill Jaynes*
The Kaselehlie Press

August 22, 2025

FSM—The March 4 Chuuk gubernatorial election that ended in violence, confusion, and competing claims of legitimacy is now back in court. Former gubernatorial candidates Mark Mailo and Joe Enlet have filed a 225-page appeal with the FSM Supreme Court, alleging ballot tampering, unlawful arrests, judicial conflicts of interest, and the use of an election commission repeatedly rejected by the Senate. They are asking for the March 13 certification of results to be declared invalid and for a new election in Weno, the state’s largest municipality.

Two Commissions, One Election

At the heart of the appeal is the question of

which election commission was lawful: the Senate-confirmed “holdover” members, or Governor Alexander Narruhn’s “new” nominees, who were never confirmed by the Senate. The Governor’s commission nevertheless seized control of the Election Office, oversaw the March 4 vote, and certified results favoring Narruhn and Lt. Governor Mekioshy William.

On March 14 and again on April 4, the Senate formally rejected most of Narruhn’s nominees. But by then the election had already been conducted under their authority. The “holdover” commission, excluded from the process and in some cases threatened, ordered a re-vote in Weno. The April 8 re-vote produced a landslide win for Mailo and Enlet, but was rejected by the Governor’s commission as illegitimate.



Ballot Boxes in the Governor’s Office

The appellants allege widespread misconduct during the March 4 election. Sworn affidavits claim that 10 ballot boxes from Weno and three from the

Mortlocks were taken to the Governor’s conference room, where they remained for more than two days under the control

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FSM celebrates historic submarine cable landing in Kosrae



FSM Information Services

August 18, 2025

Lelu, Kosrae—The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) marked a historic milestone in its digital development journey with the successful landing of the East Micronesia Cable (EMC) in Kosrae State. The event was attended by The Honorable Aren B. Palik, Vice President of the FSM; The Honorable Tulensa K. Palik, Governor of Kosrae; members of the FSM Congress; members of the Kosrae State Legislature; and municipal leaders from across Kosrae. They were joined by representatives from key development partners—Australia, the United States, and

Japan.

This momentous occasion signifies the completion of submarine fiber optic cable landings in all the four FSM states, a major achievement in the nation’s ongoing efforts to enhance connectivity and foster inclusive development.

The EMC is a transformative project

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



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Pacific Foreign Ministers endorse strong regional unity ahead of Leaders' Summit

By *Bill Jaynes*
The Kaselehlie Press

August 14, 2025

Suva, Fiji – The 2025 Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting (FFMM), hosted by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat in Suva and chaired by Tonga, concluded with a strong call for unity and decisive regional action on pressing challenges, including climate change, security, and sustainable development.

Pacific Way at the Core

In his first time chairing the FFMM, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Tupouto'a 'Ulukalala of Tonga underscored the Pacific Way as the foundation of unity in an era of growing geopolitical competition. He urged ministers to strengthen collective action ahead of the upcoming 54th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting (PIFLM) in Honiara.

Forum Secretary General Henry Puna commended Tonga's leadership, highlighting key priorities: peace and security, sustainable economic growth, climate action in the lead-up to COP31, ocean stewardship, technology, and people-centered development.

Regional Governance and Political Issues

Ministers welcomed progress on the Review of the Regional Architecture (RRA), emphasising that reforms must reinforce Pacific unity. They endorsed in principle the 2025 Progress Report on Regional Collective Actions and agreed to finalise a Leaders' Policy Statement on Partnerships by late August.

Political developments in New Caledonia and West Papua were central discussion points. Ministers reaffirmed support for New Caledonia's ongoing dialogue with France, while acknowledging Indonesia's sovereignty over West Papua but calling for constructive engagement, including a possible Forum mission in 2026.

Nuclear legacy issues also featured strongly. Ministers marked the 40th anniversary of the Rarotonga Treaty, welcomed the Marshall Islands' signing, and urged all remaining members and the United States to sign and ratify.

Peace and Security

The FFMM endorsed the Blue Pacific Ocean of Peace Declaration, a framework that integrates Pacific values and approaches to conflict prevention and stability. Ministers stressed that Pacific-led solutions, backed by trust and strong partnerships, remain essential in a contested global environment.

Climate Change: COP31 and the ICJ Advisory Opinion

Climate change dominated discussions, with ministers reaffirming that it remains the region's greatest existential threat. They issued a statement backing Australia's bid to host COP31 in 2026 as a "Pacific COP," co-chaired with Tonga. The campaign will be guided by

a regional taskforce.

Ministers also celebrated the landmark International Court of Justice (ICJ) advisory opinion on states' obligations to address climate change, spearheaded by Vanuatu. They urged all members to integrate the opinion into national and international efforts to maintain the 1.5°C global warming goal.

Economic Development and Resilience

Ministers hailed the Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF) as a flagship initiative for climate adaptation and disaster preparedness, with a treaty set for signing at the Honiara Leaders' meeting. They also advanced the Pacific Regional Labour Mobility Principles to safeguard workers' rights, welcomed progress on the draft Kava Declaration, and encouraged support for Fiji's bid to host a Green Climate Fund regional office.

People-Centered Development and Technology

The meeting reinforced commitments to education, gender equality, and health. Ministers backed outcomes from the 4th Women Leaders Meeting, endorsed the Healthy Islands Vision 2050, and called for stronger investment in foundational education.

They also endorsed the Pacific ICT Ministers' Communique, which calls for greater digital transformation, including investments in undersea cables, data storage, and cloud solutions.

Looking Ahead

The Solomon Islands briefed members on preparations for the 54th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting, scheduled for September in Honiara. Foreign Ministers also supported Samoa's proposal for a Pacific-Centered Leadership Initiative and noted Papua New Guinea's upcoming 50th Independence anniversary celebrations.

Concluding the meeting, ministers endorsed the full set of outcomes, reaffirming that Pacific solidarity and decisive action will be crucial in shaping the region's future

The Kaselehlie Press

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Bill Jaynes
Managing Editor

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September 10, 2025**

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

Monday, September 8, 2025

One Pacific Airways Presents vision for expanding air service in Micronesia

Pohnpei Public Information

August 21, 2025

Kolonia, Pohnpei – The Pohnpei State Government welcomed a presentation from 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).

Representing One Pacific Airways, Mr. Apis shared that the airline is backed by Da Yang Corporation, a company with more than \$200 million invested in fisheries in Kosrae. Building on this foundation, Da Yang now seeks to expand into aviation through One Pacific Airways, offering a new opportunity for economic growth, connectivity, and resilience across Micronesia.

The airline’s proposed services include domestic and outer island flights that will complement existing carriers while addressing critical gaps in inter-island travel. Beyond passenger transport, the airline aims to support cargo services, tourism growth, and job creation, while also providing essential search and rescue, maritime surveillance, and medical evacuation capabilities for island communities.

To begin operations, the fleet will include a Cessna 337 with plans to acquire a Dash 8 aircraft, both known for their short takeoff and landing capabilities, ideal for Micronesia’s airstrips. Looking ahead, One Pacific Airways also plans to establish a training academy for pilots, aircraft mechanics, and aviation administration staff, creating local expertise and preparing Micronesians for careers in aviation.



Governor Stevenson A. Joseph expressed strong support for the initiative, noting that reliable and affordable air service has been a priority of regional leaders at recent Micronesian Islands Forums. The Governor welcomed the vision of One Pacific Airways as an opportunity to advance connectivity and economic development for the people of Micronesia.

Koa Moana blood typing event in Chuuk leads to immediate-response donation

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

August 14, 2025

Chuuk - U.S. Marines and sailors with Koa Moana 25 partnered with Chuuk State Hospital and Grace International Baptist Church, to conduct a community blood-typing event in an effort to educate residents on the public health benefits of knowing their blood type and to encourage lifesaving blood donations.

Chuuk, one of four states in the Federated States of Micronesia, consists of dozens of islands scattered across the Western Pacific. Health care services are centralized at Chuuk State Hospital on Weno Island, which serves the entire state’s population. While the hospital’s medical staff provide critical care, its capacity to store and manage blood supplies is limited by infrastructure and equipment constraints. Every urgent case requires a donor to be identified and tested in real time — a process that can delay treatment when minutes matter.

In the absence of long-term blood storage, building a roster of community members who already know their blood

type can mean the difference between life and death. Medical personnel from Koa Moana’s team made the event possible, providing blood-typing services, explaining the significance of blood compatibility, and starting what could become a sustainable community blood-type registry.

“This is about empowering the people of Chuuk to help their families and community fill a critical need,” said Lt. Cmdr. Syed Hussain, medical officer for Koa Moana 25. “By knowing their blood type, they’ll be able to answer the call to save a life when someone requires an urgent blood donation.”

That message quickly became reality. During the event, the medical team learned of a young boy in need of a critical blood donation. Hussain spoke at length with the boy’s relatives about the vital role blood donors play in saving lives, emphasizing how an immediate donation could make the difference for their loved one.

The following morning, Chuuk State Hospital contacted Hussain with a request for AB-positive blood — the rarest Rh-positive blood type, found in only about 3% of the global population

— for the boy. Having been tested the day before, Capt. Jared Swart, officer in charge of Koa Moana 25, confirmed he was a match and immediately volunteered to donate.

“An opportunity like this is exactly why we prioritize community outreach,” Swart said. “We are reminded that it’s not just about training and the mission, it’s about human connection and doing what we can to have a positive impact on the lives around us.”

The event underscored the vital role of collaboration between the local community, Chuuk State Hospital and the Koa Moana team.

What began as a simple educational initiative became an immediate, tangible example of how preparedness and partnership can save lives. By combining medical expertise, local engagement and shared commitment, the blood-typing effort not only addressed an urgent medical need but also laid the groundwork for a more resilient health care response in Chuuk



for years to come.

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

FSM joins Yap State Funeral honoring the Late Governor Robert A. Ruecho

FSM Information Services

August 20, 2025

Colonia, Yap—The Federated States of Micronesia joined the people of Yap State yesterday in mourning the passing of the late Honorable Robert A. Ruecho, former Governor of Yap, during a state funeral held in Yap.

His Excellency President Wesley W. Simina dispatched Secretary Andrew Yatilman of the Department of Environment, Climate Change, and Emergency Management (DECEN) to represent him at the solemn occasion. On behalf of the President and the National Government, Secretary Yatilman presented the Presidential Proclamation directing that the flag of the Federated States of Micronesia be flown at half-mast across the nation in honor of Governor Ruecho's life and service.

Delivering remarks on behalf of President Simina, Secretary Yatilman extended the President's condolences to Governor Ruecho's family, the people of Yap, and all who mourn his passing. He conveyed the President's profound respect for the late Governor's many years of service, stating:



"Governor Ruecho was a leader who carried his responsibilities with dignity and honor. His contributions will be remembered, and his legacy will continue to inspire. As we bid farewell to our late Governor, we hold firmly the values he stood for—commitment to his people, unity within our islands, and service to our beloved nation."

The National Government joins the State of Yap in honoring the memory of Governor Ruecho, recognizing his enduring impact on Yap and the entire Federated States of Micronesia.



...Appeal

Continued from front page

of the Governor and Lt. Governor.

Other irregularities included ballot shortages across multiple precincts, boxes seized by the Director of Public Safety despite a court order, and evidence that ballots were altered between election day and tabulation. In Guam, where Chuukese citizens also voted, Assistant Attorney General Johnny Meippen—allegedly serving both as election supervisor and campaign operative—was accused of campaigning during voting, hand-picking poll workers, and permitting extra ballots.

The appeal also cites deep conflicts of interest: Commission chair Oncher Walter was simultaneously on the Governor's campaign committee, Tabulation chair Etop Sos was campaign chair, and Meippen was both an election supervisor and the father of a candidate.

Judicial Conflict and Due Process

The appeal challenges the impartiality of the FSM Supreme Court's appellate panel, particularly Chief Justice Jason Robert. Robert had previously recused himself from similar cases, citing family ties—his wife is a cousin of Narruhn's wife—but nevertheless sat on the March 28 panel that dismissed Mailo and Enlet's complaint.

Affidavits from former commissioners also allege lack of due process. They say they were never served with appeal papers, yet were arrested without warrants in March, echoing scenes of intimidation and lawlessness already reported at the time.

Certification and Outcome

Despite court orders requiring missing boxes to be counted, the March 13 certification went forward without them. The certification was signed by members of the Governor's commission, though the Election Office's Executive Director refused, citing tampering.

Official tallies show Narruhn and William leading most outer island districts, while Mailo and Enlet dominated Weno. The appellants argue that manipulation of

Weno's vote was decisive and that without it, the outcome would be reversed.

What Comes Next

Mailo and Enlet's appeal asks the FSM Supreme Court to nullify the March 13 certification, invalidate Weno's results, and order a new election under neutral supervision.

The filing confirms much of what unfolded publicly in March and April—uncounted ballots, dueling

commissions, warrantless arrests, and a last-minute court decision that allowed the incumbents to be sworn in on April 15 amid a state of emergency and a U.S. Embassy travel warning.

The case is now before the appellate division of the FSM Supreme Court. A ruling could determine not just who holds Chuuk's governorship, but also set precedent for how future elections in the FSM are run and overseen.

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Groundbreaking ceremony for Palikir Elementary School and gymnasium marks milestone for education in Pohnpei

Pohnpei Public Information

August 15, 2025

Palikir, Pohnpei – Governor Stevenson A. Joseph, joined by Lt. Governor Herolyn S. Movick, state and national leaders, and traditional leaders of Sokehs, presided over the groundbreaking ceremony today for the new Palikir Elementary School and Gymnasium—a long-awaited project that will strengthen educational opportunities for future generations.

The \$7 million project, funded through the Compact Sector Grants, began planning in 2017 and will feature 10 classrooms capable of serving up to 300 students, as well as a modern gymnasium with seating for 500.

Speaking on the lasting impact of the investment, FSM Assistant Secretary of Transportation, Communications & Infrastructure, Dickson Wichep, stated that the facility “will echo for generations,” highlighting its role in shaping the lives of students and the wider community.

Daniel Isaac, Administrator of Pohnpei’s Department of Transportation & Infrastructure, and David Hawkins, Acting Manager of the Pohnpei Project Management Office, both noted in their remarks the length of time it took for the project to reach this stage, but expressed their gratitude that the groundbreaking was finally taking place.

Dennis Coster, Public Affairs Officer for the U.S. Embassy in Kolonia, spoke on behalf of Her Excellency Jennifer

Johnson, U.S. Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia, conveying the United States’ continued commitment to supporting education and infrastructure development in partnership with Pohnpei State and the FSM.

The ceremony was attended by HRM Nan Pwutak Pikiniap, Nahnmwarki of Sokehs, and the IsoNahnken of Sokehs, whose blessing was given for the project. Governor Joseph expressed deep gratitude for their continued support.

Design work for the school was completed by Jack Edward of TG Engineers in Guam, a proud son of Pohnpei whose vision shaped the facility’s plans. Construction will be carried out by Black Sand Construction, acknowledged for its partnership in bringing the project to life.

Governor Joseph recognized the lengthy journey to this groundbreaking event and called for improvements to project implementation timelines. “This is another milestone, but it is one that took time. I urge our technical teams to continue finding ways to streamline processes so that funds can be allocated and used as soon as possible,” he said.

The Palikir Elementary School and Gymnasium is expected to serve as a hub for both education and community activities, symbolizing Pohnpei’s commitment to nurturing learning, health, and unity for years to come.

Thank you to Deacon Francisco Ifamilik, who is also the Principal of Palikir Elementary School for blessing the opening and ending of the ceremony.



...EMC

Continued from front page

valued at approximately USD \$90 million, jointly funded by the governments of Australia, the United States, and Japan. It aims to deliver faster, more reliable, and affordable internet connectivity to the people of FSM, Kiribati, and Nauru—replacing the current dependence on slower and

costlier satellite services. Spanning approximately 2,250 kilometers from Tarawa to Pohnpei, the EMC will connect to the existing HANTRU-1 cable, which links Pohnpei to Guam.

Once operational—expected by late 2025—the EMC will benefit up to 100,000 people across the three Pacific nations, unlocking new opportunities in education, healthcare, business, and governance.

During the ceremony, Governor Palik

welcomed guests and emphasized the importance of digital infrastructure in Kosrae’s development. Development partners reaffirmed their commitment to supporting FSM’s progress. In his keynote address, Vice President Palik highlighted the transformative power of technology, stating that “technology is the future,” and warned that failure to embrace it could leave FSM behind in the rapidly evolving digital age.

The government of the FSM expresses its deep appreciation to its development

partners for their continued support and collaboration in building a more connected and resilient Pacific.





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YOUTH IN ACTION: WATER SAFETY SURVEY LAUNCHED IN POHNPEI & KOSRAE!

Clean water is a right—and our youth are leading the charge! From May to July 2025, the Center for Entrepreneurship (CFE), with support from UNICEF and the New Zealand Government, trained 8 youth interns to carry out a baseline survey on access to clean drinking water in vulnerable communities. 6 youth in Pohnpei (including 2 high school students) and 2 youth in Kosrae went door to door—interviewing residents, collecting water samples, and conducting field tests. So far, they’ve visited 50 households in Nett, Pohnpei, and 20 in Utwe, Kosrae. Early results are showing a high number of households consuming unsafe water, confirming the urgent need for support.

This project is more than just data collection. These young interns are gaining real-world experience in:

- Water testing
- Community engagement
- Data gathering
- Public health and sanitation

To ensure community trust and scientific accuracy, CFE also partnered with the EPA offices in Pohnpei, Kosrae, and Yap, supplying them with test kits to independently verify filter effectiveness. These agencies will support us during the upcoming distribution of Sawyer water filters—a sustainable solution that requires no electricity, no replacement parts, and lasts up to 10 years!



Interns From CFE Conducting the Water Assessment Survey

What’s next? Community training on water safety, hygiene, and filter use begins soon—and our interns will help lead the way!

This project wouldn’t be possible without the support of our amazing partners—UNICEF and the New Zealand Government—who share our vision for a healthier, more resilient future for our island communities.

Together, we’re empowering youth to create cleaner, healthier futures—one household at a time.

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Matson and Amcres sponsored tournament features good sized yellow fin tuna

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

August 23, 2025

Pohnpei – On yet another bright and sunny day, the Pohnpei Fishing Club held the annual Matson and Amcres trolling tournament.

Despite the sunny conditions, several boats got onto flocks of birds feeding on bait balls yielding them some nicely sized yellow fin tuna. Without a doubt, Jesse Panuel was the biggest winner of the tournament with a total of \$1,525 in cash prizes for three yellow fin in the biggest fish category. Panuel's

first prize winning yellow fin was 64.8 pounds. He won second prize for a 59.8-pound fish and tied for fourth place with a 58.4-pound yellow fin.

Taylor Paul won the \$350 third place prize for a 59.2-pound yellow fin and tied for fourth place with Panuel with a twin 59.8-pound yellow fin for a total cash prize for Taylor of \$575.

The tournament also featured cash prizes for biggest of species caught. Prizes of \$150 and \$100 were awarded for first and second prizes for four different species though only three species were landed.

Not surprisingly, Dave Spencer, Jr., fishing about Jesse Panuel's boat, "Dolphin" had the biggest skipjack at 19.2 pounds. His "skippy" was followed by Yoma Edward's 19-pounder.

Wilmar Aquino had the biggest barracuda a 11.6 pounds. His was followed by Tony Optaia's 9.4-pound barracuda.

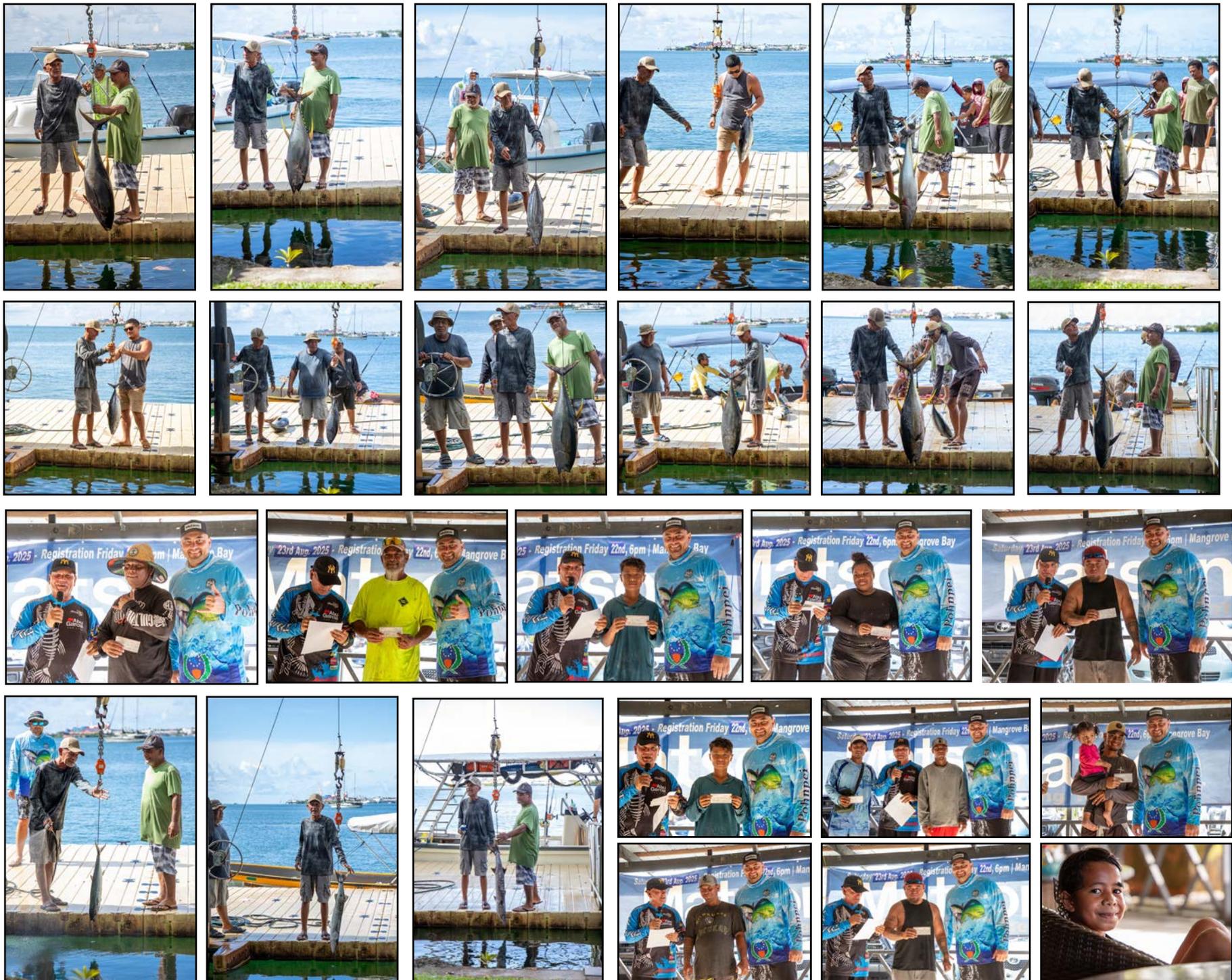
The yellow fin in this category of prizes were again very nicely sized and were just edged out of the biggest fish category by slightly larger yellow fin. Tony Samuel had a 57.8-pound yellow

fin for first prize. Shermick Ehsa had a 54.8 pounder for second prize.

Deana Paul had yet another yellow fin tuna at 54 pound capturing the \$150 prize for tip lady angler.

Dave Spencer, Jr. again won the junior angler prize of \$50 for his 48.4-pound yellow fin.

The next Pohnpei Fishing Club Tournament will be the Dr. Alexander Panuelo Memorial tournament on September 13.



FSM and United States launch Pacific Partnership 2025 in Chuuk

FSM Information Services

August 18, 2025

Weno, Chuuk - His Excellency President Wesley W. Simina and First Lady Ancelly Simina attended the opening ceremony of Pacific Partnership 2025, the U.S. Navy's largest multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster relief mission in the Pacific. The event was also graced by the presence of Governor Alexander Narruhn, Lt. Governor Mekioshy William, U.S. Ambassador Jennifer Johnson, Rear Admiral Mark Stephanik, Admiral Joshua Lasky, and Captain Alban Dervishi, Commanding Officer of the USS Pearl Harbor.

Pacific Partnership 2025 brings together officials of the FSM with representatives of the U.S. Department of State and Department of Defense, underscoring the deep and enduring ties between the FSM and the United States.



"There are no bonds greater than the bonds of those who fight side by side, and the citizens of the FSM and the United States have been doing this for decades," said Admiral Joshua Lasky.

"The Pacific Partnership mission is in line with the policy of the FSM: to serve the people, to improve lives, and to enhance the well-being of our citizens," stated President Wesley W. Simina.

The mission will continue throughout the FSM, beginning in Chuuk from August 16-27, 2025, and continuing in Pohnpei from September 7-18, 2025. Citizens are encouraged to participate and take advantage of the healthcare opportunities and services that will be made available through the program.



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Micronesia's new initiative empowers local teams to restore reefs with heat-tolerant corals

The Nature conservancy

August 18, 2025

Micronesia region - A groundbreaking coral restoration initiative is training and equipping local communities across Micronesia to lead the fight against coral decline using heat-tolerant corals. Led by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and funded by the G20's Coral Research & Development Accelerator Platform (CORDAP), the project brings together science and community leadership to scale up reef restoration and empower Pacific Islanders to protect some of the planet's most climate-resilient coral reefs.

The project —Scaling up identification, protection, and local management of coral reefs resistant to future climate stress— focuses on three Pacific nations: the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau. In collaboration with Stanford University and local partners, the initiative identifies corals that can survive rising ocean temperatures and trains local teams to use these species in reef restoration and marine planning. This approach builds on decades of experience in Marine Protected Area (MPA) management and strengthens community marine management.

At the heart of the effort is the Coral Futures Academy (CFA), an annual, hands-on training that teaches participants how to identify climate-resilient corals, conduct field tests, build and maintain nurseries, and manage scientific data. CFA graduates return to their home islands to establish Coral Restoration Teams, which design and lead their own community-based projects. Over time, experienced members return as trainers, creating a cycle of peer learning and local leadership.

“By building capacity in local communities to restore reefs with corals that are more likely to survive future heatwaves, this work offers a smarter, more



resilient approach to reef restoration,” said Dr. Yimnang Golbuu, Coral Resilience Director at TNC Micronesia and Polynesia. “As reefs continue to decline, it is a hopeful path forward, enabling those who rely on reefs to safeguard their future.”

Expected impacts of the project include:

- establishment of fully operational Coral Restoration Teams using climate-resilient coral species;
- new career pathways and job opportunities for young Pacific Island conservation professionals;
- community-led restoration projects integrated into local marine planning;
- a scalable, cost-effective model tailored to the realities of small island states.

By combining cutting-edge science with traditional stewardship and community action, this initiative offers a hopeful and practical solution to one of the greatest challenges facing ocean ecosystems. As global coral reefs face mounting threats, this Micronesia-based project could serve as a blueprint for regional action worldwide.

Vice President Palik leads delegation to Cook Islands for 60th Anniversary of Self-Governance

FSM Information Services

August 14, 2025

Rarotonga, Cook Islands – Earlier this month, the Honorable Aren B. Palik, Vice President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), led a delegation to Rarotonga to join the celebrations marking the Cook Islands' 60th Anniversary of Self-Governance. The visit underscores the warm friendship between the FSM and the Cook Islands, grounded in shared values and a mutual commitment to advancing regional cooperation, particularly through the Smaller Island States (SIS) platform.

During his visit, Vice President Palik paid an official courtesy call on Prime Minister Mark Brown. Their discussions covered a range of mutual interests, including the Cook Islands'

success in tourism, the ongoing review of regional architecture, seabed mineral exploration, air connectivity to the North Pacific, and other areas of cooperation. Both leaders affirmed the importance of strengthening unity and solidarity among SIS members to enhance their cohesion and collective influence within the broader regional framework.

The highlight of the celebrations was the 60th Constitution Day Ceremony on August 4, 2025, featuring a solemn flag-raising event at the National Auditorium. Prime Minister Brown delivered his Constitution Day address before an audience that included Vice President Palik and dignitaries from across the region.

While in Rarotonga, Vice President Palik toured the research vessel

Anuanua Moana, operated by Moana Minerals, where he received briefings on ongoing surveys for potential deep-sea mineral exploration within the Cook Islands' Exclusive Economic Zone.

Vice President Palik was accompanied by Second Lady Adelita Palik, Ambassador Carson K. Sigrah and his spouse, along with support staff from the Office of the Vice President and the FSM Department of Foreign Affairs.



COM-FSM, OFA, and R&D sign MOU to advance sustainable aquaculture in Pohnpei



Pohnpei Public Information

August 12, 2025

The College of Micronesia FSM - Through its Cooperative Research & Extension (CRE) program, the Pohnpei State Office of Fisheries and Aquaculture (OFA), and the Pohnpei State Department of Resources & Development (R&D) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to jointly develop and operate the Nett

Point Hatchery.

This five-year partnership aims to strengthen sustainable aquaculture research, enhance local food security, and build capacity in communities across the Federated States of Micronesia. Under the agreement, COM-FSM CRE will serve as the lead institution, coordinating research, student engagement, and community outreach in collaboration with OFA and R&D.

The MOU outlines shared responsibilities in aquaculture research and development, capacity building, extension services, and resource sharing. Together, the three parties will work to link hatchery operations with state and national goals, explore funding opportunities, and foster innovation in the fisheries sector.

The MOU was signed by Dr. Theresa Koroivulaono, President & CEO

of COM-FSM; Mr. Jorg Y. Anson, Administrator of OFA; and Ms. Michaela Saimon, Acting Director of R&D.

The Nett Point Hatchery project represents a step forward in promoting resilient food systems, supporting livelihoods, and advancing technical expertise in aquaculture for the benefit of Pohnpei and the wider FSM.

UNDP North Pacific Office Deputy Resident Representative visits Ambassador Kagomiya

Embassy of Japan to the FSM

August 22, 2025

Pohnpei—On August 15, 2025, Ambassador Kagomiya received a courtesy call from Ms. Gulbahor Nematova, Deputy Resident Representative for the North Pacific Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Ms. Nematova is based in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), overseeing the five countries of the Micronesia region: FSM, Palau, Marshall Islands, Nauru, and Kiribati.

During the meeting, Ms. Nematova touched on her longstanding relationship with Japan throughout her career and expressed her hope for continued good relations with Japan in the FSM. The Ambassador and Ms. Nematova also exchanged information on each other's

projects, as well as views on support and challenges facing the Micronesia region, confirming their continued cooperation.



Courtesy call on Japanese Ambassador by new and departing JICA representative

Embassy of Japan to the FSM

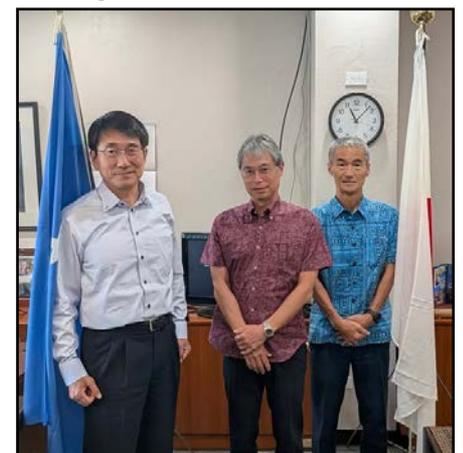
August 21, 2025

Pohnpei - On August 14, 2025, Mr. Takeshi Watanabe, new JICA Resident Representative, and Mr. Kunihiro Yamauchi, former JICA Resident Representative departing the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), paid a courtesy call on Ambassador Kagomiya. Mr. Yamauchi assumed his post as Resident Representative in May 2023 and has dedicated the past two years to a wide range of activities. Mr. Watanabe has assumed his post as the new JICA Resident Representative, after working in a Pacific Island nation of the Solomon Islands.

This was a very meaningful opportunity to exchange information on the progress and efforts of each project, as well as to exchange opinions on future

collaboration and information within the FSM.

The Ambassador expressed his gratitude to Mr. Yamauchi for his contributions and expressed his expectations for future activities under the leadership of Mr. Watanabe, who has experience working in an island nation.



Governor Joseph and Lt. Governor Movick receive updates on submarine cable project

Pohnpei Public Information

August 13, 2025

Kolonia, Pohnpei - Governor Stevenson A. Joseph and Lt. Governor Herolyn S. Movick visited the Submarine Cable Landing Station in Kolonia this week, where they received updates from Mr. Gordon Segal, Chief Executive Officer of FSM Cable Corporation. During the visit, Mr. Segal provided a detailed briefing on the ongoing submarine cable project and gave the Governor and Lt. Governor a tour of the facility.

Funded through the partnership of the United States, Australian, and Japanese governments, the submarine cable is designed to significantly increase the capacity and reliability of telecommunications services for Pohnpei and the wider Federated States of Micronesia. Completion is targeted for October or November 2025, offering faster internet speeds, improved connectivity, and more resilient communication infrastructure to support education, business, and

public services.

Mr. Segal highlighted the cable system's advanced technical capabilities, including high-capacity data transmission, robust redundancy features, and secure cable vaults equipped with state-of-the-art control systems and fire suppression mechanisms, ensuring long-term operational integrity.

Governor Joseph expressed appreciation for the progress made and emphasized

the importance of the project in connecting Pohnpei to global networks. Lt. Governor Movick noted the critical role of reliable communications in supporting community development and emergency response.

The submarine cable project represents a major step forward in Pohnpei's digital infrastructure, positioning the state to meet the growing demands of modern communications in an increasingly connected world.



First-ever High School Junior Police competition and graduation held at PICS Gymnasium

Pohnpei Public Information

August 11, 2025

Pohnpei, FSM – The Pohnpei State Government proudly celebrated the first-ever High School Junior Police Competition and Graduation on August 8, 2025, at the Pohnpei State Gymnasium at PICS High School.

Teams from PICS High School, Nanpei Memorial High School, and Madolenihmw High School showcased their drill and ceremony skills in an impressive display of discipline, teamwork, and precision. PICS High School emerged as this year's champion. Congratulations were extended to all students who took part in this historic event.

Governor Stevenson A. Joseph attended the ceremony, joined by United Church of Christ in Pohnpei (UCCP) General Secretary Rev. Midion Neth, Senator Nelbert Perez, Director of Education Stanley Etse, Director of Public Safety Eltes Pelep, and other officials.

In his remarks, Governor Joseph praised the students and instructors for their dedication, calling the program an inspiring example of unity and cooperation. He



described the performances as “an impressive and brilliant display of unity” and commended the graduates for completing their course of instruction. The Governor expressed his hope that their participation would help them decide their future paths, adding, “You give me hope that the future of Pohnpei is in good hands.”

The Junior Police program, a collaborative initiative between the Pohnpei State Department of Public Safety and participating schools, aims to instill discipline, leadership, and civic responsibility among Pohnpei's youth. The Police Officers who train and lead these students are part of a continuing education program in the Department of Public Safety, Field Training Officer (FTO) program. This year's competition and graduation marked the beginning of what is hoped to become a proud annual tradition.

Governor Joseph swears in new board members of Pohnpei Utilities Corporation and Environmental Protection Agency

Pohnpei Public Information

August 11, 2025

Peilapalap, Pohnpei - On August 8, the Pohnpei State Government announced the official swearing-in of Mr. Hainrick Panuelo to the Board of Directors of the Pohnpei Utilities Corporation (PUC) and Mr. Roseo Marquez to the Board of Directors of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Governor Stevenson A. Joseph administered the oath of office to both new board members, acknowledging and expressing thanks for the advice and consent provided by the 11th Pohnpei Legislature. Lieutenant Governor Movick presented certificates of appointment to Mr. Panuelo and Mr. Marquez, formalizing their roles in serving Pohnpei.

On behalf of both newly sworn-in directors, Mr. Roseo Marquez expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve. He committed to faithfully carrying out their duties to support their respective boards and to implement policies that benefit the people of Pohnpei.

Lieutenant Governor Movick extended appreciation to the new members for

their willingness to serve in two vital sectors and acknowledged the 11th Pohnpei Legislature and families for their support.

The Pohnpei State Government congratulates Mr. Panuelo and Mr. Marquez and looks forward to their contributions in advancing utilities and environmental protection for the State of Pohnpei.



Pacific Tourism Organisation and The University of the South Pacific sign MoU to launch Pacific Tourism Research Institute

University of the South Pacific Pacific Tourism Organization

August 18, 2025

Suva, Fiji — In a milestone moment for Pacific regional collaboration, The University of the South Pacific (USP) and the Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to jointly establish and operationalise the Pacific Tourism Research Institute (PTRI).

This strategic partnership marks a bold step forward in elevating tourism research, data systems, and human resource development across the Pacific.

The PTRI will serve as a regional hub for knowledge generation, capacity building, and innovation, ensuring that tourism development in the Pacific is not only sustainable but also culturally grounded and community-driven.

Through the partnership, USP and SPTO will collaborate across a broad spectrum of strategic initiatives designed to elevate tourism development in the Pacific. These include joint research efforts to inform policy and practice, the strengthening of tourism data systems for more

robust analysis and decision-making, and targeted capacity building to cultivate the next generation of Pacific tourism professionals.

The partnership also encompasses curriculum development that reflects regional perspectives, institutional hosting and operational support for the Pacific Tourism Research Institute (PTRI), and active policy engagement to amplify Pacific voices in global tourism discourse. The collaboration aims to ensure the sustainability and scalability of PTRI's impact across the region.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, SPTO Chief Executive Officer Christopher Cocker highlighted that the PTRI is the product of the collaborative spirit nurtured through the Pacific Tourism Research Cooperation Framework, generously supported by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (NZMFAT).

The PTRI also supports the 2050 Strategy, SPTO Strategic Plan (2025-2029), Pacific Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework, and the Pacific



Tourism Statistics Strategy, reinforcing institutional capacity, regional cooperation, and availability of context-specific research.

"Today marks a significant milestone for tourism in our Blue Pacific Continent with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between SPTO and USP," he said.

"This agreement formalises the creation of the Pacific Tourism Research Institute (PTRI) – a visionary and innovative partnership that will shape the future of tourism research and knowledge development across our region. We extend our sincere gratitude to NZMFAT for their foresight and commitment in

laying the foundation for this transformative initiative."

Echoing similar sentiments, USP Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Pal Ahluwalia highlighted the partnership's significance to both the University and the tourism sector.

"USP is proud to partner with the SPTO in launching the Pacific Tourism Research Institute. This collaboration leverages USP's research strengths and our commitment to regional cooperation and integration, ensuring that our students gain practical experience and contribute meaningfully to the sustainable development of tourism in the Pacific."

"This initiative will enhance the skills and knowledge of our graduates, positioning them as leaders in the global tourism landscape and fostering a sustainable future for our Blue Pacific." As the Pacific navigates evolving global challenges, this partnership stands as a powerful reminder that regional unity, knowledge, and cultural pride are the cornerstones of a thriving tourism future.

Republic of Palau, Peleliu government, DoD host public meetings on improvements to Peleliu South Dock

by Lt.Cmdr. Michelle Tucker
Joint Task Force – Micronesia

August 14, 2025

Palau - Representatives of the Palau Government, including Peleliu State officials, along with the U.S. Department of Defense hosted two public meetings in Peleliu and Koror states, Aug. 12 and 14 respectively, to share information about proposed Peleliu South Dock rehabilitation and improvements.

The rehabilitation and modernization of Peleliu South Dock is one of several U.S. Pacific Fleet-led infrastructure improvement projects in Palau that support U.S. Indo-Pacific Command posture initiatives to ensure operational readiness in the region.

The public meetings provided residents the proposed project scope, construction timeline, and environmental baseline survey results. The meetings also provided opportunities for residents to ask questions and share comments that will influence and become part of the environmental impact statement.

The proposed project would restore the channel width and depth back to its original 1945 dimensions. It would improve the existing South Dock wharves and laydown areas. Specifications would be to Republic of Palau standards and support U.S. military requirements to meet defense obligations under the Compact of Free Association and the ability of the DoD to meet mission requirements in the Indo-Pacific region.

The project is intended to provide infrastructure capable of supporting larger watercraft, including local barges. This shared-use facility would be suitable for use in all tidal conditions, improving upon existing limitations during low tide.

Planned work includes the removal of deteriorated and unusable World War II-era steel pier structures. It also includes vegetation clearance and grading of a beach area, dredging to the original 12-foot below low-tide line, and installation of aids to navigation to increase safety in the harbor entrance and channel in accordance with specifications from the Palau Bureau

of Marine Transportation. In addition, the project incorporates shoreline stabilization, a quay wall wharf with a roll-on/roll-off boat ramp, and construction of a public boat ramp to support safe launch and recovery of small craft for residents.

Naval Facilities and Engineering Command planners and engineers explained the various phases of the proposal, which are planned to cause minimum impact to dock operations. Discussion topics included environmental and cultural resource surveys that have been completed by a Palau-based environmental company, which is also preparing the environmental impact statement in accordance with Republic of Palau environmental regulations. The field surveys included identification and cataloging of marine and terrestrial habitats, biodiversity, and cultural areas of significance.

While the proposed improvements will enhance capabilities for U.S. military forces operating in the region, they will also provide significant benefit to the local community.

“This project is very important to improve and support the livelihood of people in Peleliu,” Palau Minister of Public Infrastructure and Industries Charles I. Obichang said. “Not only the daily lives, but to support improvements that will come in the future. Right now, there are limitations to the existing structure, which is failing. The South Dock improvements are essential to loading and unloading heavy equipment and materials.”

Peleliu South Dock was originally constructed by U.S. Navy Seabees in 1945 following the U.S. Marine Corps landing on the island during World War II. The proposed renovation project would be led by Marines and Navy Seabees under the guidance of 30th Naval Construction Regiment. The work could begin as early as the end of 2025 and would take approximately two years to complete.

The improvements would also increase access to Peleliu in emergencies, Obichang said.

“Twenty-four hour access is really important for business people, fishermen and all people in Peleliu. In an emergency we won’t have to wait until high tide to bring big vessels in and out of the South Dock,” he said, adding the project also represents Palau’s participation in the security of the Indo-Pacific region. “This dock is jointly beneficial for both countries [the United States and Palau], but the benefits are more tilted for Palau



and the people of Peleliu. We've been waiting for this improvement for a long time.”

Minimizing impact to the environment and protecting areas of cultural significance during construction are important considerations for planners. Construction areas will be isolated using temporary erosion controls such as cofferdams, silt curtains, and floating barriers to contain turbidity. There will also be strict oversight during construction to include environmental monitors to ensure the mitigation measures remain effective. An area identified to contain historical artifacts will be avoided completely to preserve Palauan history for future generations.

“The Peleliu South Dock improvements will provide great benefit and safety to the local community,” John Burke, environmental planning lead for U.S. Pacific Fleet, said. “We look forward to sharing the new facilities with the people of Peleliu.”

The South Dock improvement project is estimated to cost approximately \$12 million to include planning, materials, and labor.

A steadfast ally and strategic partner, the Republic of Palau is located in the Western Pacific Ocean about 500 miles east of the Philippines. Its position is crucial in projecting U.S. military power and presence, and for monitoring sea lanes in the Indo-Pacific region. Under the Compact of Free Association, the United States is responsible for Palau’s defense and many Palauans have served and continue to serve in the U.S. armed forces.



Investing in Pohnpei's future conservation leaders

Pohnpei Public Information

August 19, 2025

Pohnpei - Governor Stevenson A. Joseph presented a \$5,000 check to Mrs. Mae Bruton-Adams, CEO of Micronesia Conservation Trust, in support of the Bill Raynor Micronesia Conservation Scholarship.



This scholarship honors the

late Bill Raynor's legacy by supporting Micronesian students pursuing studies in environmental science, natural resource management, and sustainable development. Governor Joseph made this pledge during the 25th Micronesian Island Forum as part of his commitment to regional sustainability and education.

Governor Joseph meets PRIME XNLC

Pohnpei Public Information

August 14, 2025

Pohnpei - Governor Stevenson A. Joseph welcomed PRIME XNLC, a youth sports initiative building future leaders through the "Five Cs": community, character, competence, confidence, and consistency. Starting with Summer Hoops in 2016 and officially starting in 2023, the program now includes girls' fast pitch and men's slow pitch softball, with athletes selected for both skill and character.

Joining the courtesy visit were PRIME XNLC founders Sylvania Seneres Amor and Isako Peterson Ehsa, along with Mr. Jerome Silbanuz and Mr. Jordan Ehsa. The team shared their progress, upcoming fundraising for the Kona tournament in October, and their vision for empowering youth. Governor Joseph praised their work and encouraged them to submit a formal request for consideration at the government level.



Governor Stevenson A. Joseph receives courtesy call from incoming JICA Resident Representative

Pohnpei Public Information

August 11, 2025

Peilapalap, Pohnpei, FSM - On August 8, Governor Stevenson A. Joseph and Lt. Governor Herolyn S. Movick were honored to receive a courtesy call from Mr. Takeshi Watanabe, the incoming Resident Representative for the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in Pohnpei. Mr. Watanabe was accompanied by Mr. Kunihiro Yamauchi, the outgoing JICA Resident Representative.

During the meeting, Governor Joseph and Lt. Governor Movick warmly welcomed Mr. Watanabe to Pohnpei and expressed his sincere appreciation to Mr. Yamauchi for his dedicated service and valuable contributions over the years. Governor Joseph acknowledged the important role JICA has played in supporting Pohnpei through volunteer programs, training initiatives, and development projects that have benefited the community.



Governor Joseph looks forward to a continued strong partnership with Mr. Watanabe and the Japan International Cooperation Agency, working together to advance the development and well-being of the people of Pohnpei.

AOSIS resolve strengthened despite treaty setback

AOSIS

14 August 2025

Geneva - The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) expresses deep concern and disappointment that the plastics treaty negotiations have failed to deliver the binding commitments that science, justice, and island communities urgently demand to end plastic pollution.

“This was never going to be easy - but the outcome we have today falls short of what our people, and the planet, need,” said Surangel Whipps Jr, President of Palau, speaking as Chair of AOSIS.

“Still, even after six rounds of negotiations, we will not walk away. The resilience of islanders has carried us through many storms, and we will persevere - because we need real solutions, and we will carve pathways to deliver them for our people and our

planet.”

Delegates faced a mandate as vast as the ocean itself: plastic production, redesigning products, improving waste management, cleaning up existing plastic pollution, securing finance, protecting health, and ensuring countries have the institutional frameworks and enable cooperation to act. But despite negotiations spanning over three years, fundamental divisions remained on core issues.

In the early hours, SIDS stressed that we have committed significant resources and personnel to this process, and we are determined not to lose the progress achieved in Geneva. In our plenary statement, we underscored that transparency, cooperation, and trust are essential to moving forward. Even among members with different views, we saw flexibility and common ground emerge when there was space

for genuine engagement. Yet, in the end, broader political dynamics, a process that at times lacked necessary guardrails, and the constraints of the clock all combined to prevent us from advancing further.

The plastics crisis will not wait, and we cannot afford to remain idle. Every year, 19–23 million tonnes of plastic waste leak into aquatic ecosystems, polluting lakes, rivers, and seas. Without meaningful action, emissions are projected to nearly triple by 2040. The volume of plastics already in the ocean is estimated at 75–199 million tonnes - an enduring burden on our environment and communities that continues to grow. We will continue to press for stronger, binding measures on production limits, remediation of existing pollution, and the predictable financing needed to deliver solutions. (UNEP 2023)

SIDS remain firmly committed to the international rules-based order and multilateralism as the most effective way to resolve shared global challenges. While these are undeniably challenging times for

international cooperation, we believe that trust, persistence, and genuine dialogue can prevail – just as they have in other hard-won agreements.

Our unity, persistence, and the urgency of our circumstances mean we will continue pressing, in every possible forum, for a treaty that is binding, effective, and just. As a Pacific proverb reminds us: “A smooth sea never made a skillful mariner.” The INC experience has strengthened our resolve and sharpened our determination to continue to find ways to fight for our people, our planet, and the future we all share.

FSM announces Marine Spatial Planning Legislation at UN Ocean Conference

Blue Prosperity Micronesia

August 12, 2025

Nice, France - The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) reaffirmed its position as a global leader in ocean conservation at the third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC) in Nice, France.

At a side event titled “Leading by Doing: Three Years of Progress Toward 30x30,” President Wesley Simina announced the introduction of the FSM Marine Spatial Planning Bill to the national Congress.

“Once passed, this legislation will set a transparent, legally-binding process for developing a comprehensive and holistic Marine Spatial Plan in our national waters,” said President Wesley Simina. “This bill will provide the legal authority to implement 30% protection in our vast ocean territory with consistency, coordination and transparency.

“The time for promises has passed; the time for action is now. Let us leave France with a renewed determination to protect what sustains us all: our ocean,” he said.

The FSM is currently developing a Marine Spatial Plan for its offshore waters that will undergo extensive public consultations before adoption and implementation.



FSM establishes diplomatic ties with Pakistan

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

August 24, 2025

New York - According to an August 16 report from “Dawn” a publication based in Karachi, Pakistan and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) have formally established diplomatic ties, opening new avenues for cooperation between the two nations.

The agreement was signed at a ceremony in New York by both countries’ permanent representatives to the United Nations, Dawn reported, citing a press release from Pakistan’s UN Mission. Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad of Pakistan and Ambassador Jeem S. Lippwe of the FSM signed a joint communiqué to formalize relations.

Ambassador Ahmad described the development as a step that would “open up avenues for cooperation in the field of human resource management, capacity building and climate change,” Dawn reported. He added that the two missions intended to “work closely on key matters, especially promotion of international peace and security” at the UN.

According to Dawn, Ahmad also noted that the agreement coincided with Pakistan’s Independence Day anniversary, making the occasion particularly meaningful, and highlighted that Pakistan is the 100th country to establish diplomatic relations with Micronesia.

FSM’s Ambassador Lippwe, quoted in the Pakistan Mission’s statement, expressed “his happiness on the start of a new chapter in bilateral relations” and thanked Pakistan for its support. He said he looked forward to working with his Pakistani counterpart “to strengthen [the] bond of friendship.”

The signing ceremony was attended by diplomats from both countries, including Pakistan’s Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Usman Jadoon, Dawn added.

The Federated States of Micronesia, a Pacific island nation, joined the United Nations in 1991, according to the UN’s official website.

Groundbreaking ceremony for construction of a new school building and gymnasium in Palikir

By U.S. Embassy to the FSM

August 25, 2025

Palikir, Pohnpei - U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Officer Dennis Coster joined FSM and Pohnpei State leadership in celebrating the groundbreaking ceremony for a new Palikir Elementary School and Gymnasium facility at the Palikir baseball field on August 15, 2025. This occasion marked a new milestone for education in Pohnpei.

The well-constructed building, funded by over a 7 million USD investment from Compact funds, will provide a safe and comfortable learning environment for Palikir School children, teachers, and staff who serve in other support roles. Building One is a 12-class room building with one computer lab and one teachers reference center, and Building Two is a gymnasium. The space will also include a parking lot and a covered walkway connecting the new school building with the portion of the old school that remains in service. The groundbreaking of this project is one of many gestures representing the United States and the FSM's long enduring partnership and shared commitment to education and youth of the FSM.

Speaking on behalf of U.S. Ambassador to the FSM Jennifer Johnson, Coster emphasized that education is among the best investments that any society can make toward the success of today and tomorrow, conveying the United

States' continued commitment to supporting education and infrastructure development in partnership with FSM National and Pohnpei State governments.

His Majesty Nahnpwutak Pikiniap of Sokehs along with Iso Nanken of Sokehs represented the Pohnpei Traditional Leadership to the ceremony. Representing the FSM National and Pohnpei State governments were Governor Stevenson Joseph, Lieutenant Governor Herolyn S. Movick, Sokehs Chief Magistrate Stanley Ernest, Pohnpei Director of Education Stanley Etse, FSM Assistant Secretary of Transportation, Communications & Infrastructure Dickson Wichep, Administrator of Pohnpei Department of Transportation & Infrastructure Daniel Isaac, Acting Manager of Pohnpei Project Management Office David Hawkins, Black Sand Construction's General Manager Max Iriarte, and other government officials, architects, and builders who played a role in getting the project to its groundbreaking.

Ambassador Johnson and the U.S. Embassy team congratulate and thank everyone who contributed time, effort, and resources to make this project a reality. The groundbreaking is a tangible manifestation of the strong bonds of friendship and partnership that exist between the two nations.



East Micronesia Cable lands in Kosrae, transforms FSM's digital future

By U.S. Embassy to the FSM

August 21, 2025

Kosrae - Kosrae celebrated the August 16 landing of the East Micronesia Cable System (EMC) on August 18 with a ceremonial "Golden Buoy" event following landings in Nauru and Kiribati – a historic moment that will transform the Federated States of Micronesia's (FSM) digital future.

Funded by the United States, Australia, and Japan, this \$95 million cable project will support state government agencies, service industries, health, and education sectors. It is the first high-capacity undersea cable to Kosrae and will bring fast, secure, trustworthy, and reliable internet connectivity once becomes operational. This cable, for the first time, will connect Kosrae, Nauru, and Kiribati to Pohnpei, then onwards to Guam, opening new opportunities for social and economic benefits for the people of the Micronesian region.

The ceremony marked the floating of the cable to the shore site at Sansrik Elementary School in Tofol. The U.S. Embassy's Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Amy Gradin stated that this project is all about bringing trustworthy connectivity to the people of Kosrae. "The United States is committed to secure, reliable, and redundant telecommunications for FSM," she said.

Funding partner representatives from Australia, Japan, the FSM National, and Kosrae State governments were also in attendance. Senior officials included FSM Vice President Aren Palik, Kosrae Governor Tulensa Palik, Australian Charg'e Sarah McCarthy, Japanese Deputy Chief of Mission Shigeru Hamano, FSM Senator Yoslyn Sigrah, and Kosrae Speaker Semeon Phillip, who gathered to discuss how the EMC will increase digital connectivity, which is crucial for modern daily operations.

The United States Government is proud to have partnered with Australia and Japan on this project giving Kosrae the same rapid and reliable access and benefits as other places. The cable is expected to be fully operational later this year and will provide service to thousands of islanders.

The United States, FSM, and partner nations are committed to sustainable telecommunications development. With the EMC's successful launch, Kosrae will stand poised to embrace the opportunities of the digital age. For more information on this project, visit: <https://www.eastmicronesiacable.com/about-english> and <https://www.submarinenetworks.com/en/systems/trans-pacific/emcs/japan-australia-us-to-fund-east-micronesia-cable-system-emcs>



East Micronesia Cable lands in Kosrae

Australian Embassy Pohnpei

20 August 2025

The East Micronesia Cable has landed in Kosrae, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), with the international telecommunications cable now just months away from being ready for service.

The East Micronesia Cable project will deliver the first submarine cable connection for Kosrae, marking a critical junction in FSM’s digital future by providing the community with faster, high quality, more affordable and reliable internet.

Funded by Australia, the United States and Japan, the cable will improve connectivity across Kosrae, Nauru, and Tarawa in Kiribati. Local partners are leading delivery of the project, which in FSM includes the Department of Transportation, Communications and Infrastructure and FSM Telecommunications Cable Corporation.

The cable lay ship – the Normand Clipper – successfully landed the cable at Lelu Harbor, Kosrae on 16 August. The occasion was celebrated with an event that marked the formal handover of the Cable Ceremonial Buoy, used to float the cable into shore.

The Honorable Aren B. Palik, Vice President, Governor Kosrae State, Tulensa W. Palik, and FSM Congress Senators, the Honorable Yoselyn Sigrah marked the occasion, alongside senior representatives from the FSM national and Kosrae state governments, and the project’s funding partners – Australia, the United States and Japan.

“The East Micronesia Cable is a symbolic realisation of a new era for Kosrae...and will provide opportunity for all citizens to participate in the digital economy” said Vice President Palik in his keynote address.

Australia, the United States and Japan, are proud to invest combined grant funding of USD95 million in this critical infrastructure asset that will have a real impact for the people of FSM.



The cable landing is an important milestone towards increased economic growth and development for the region. Once in service, the cable is expected to provide more than 100,000 people across FSM, Nauru and Kiribati with increased availability of digital services, enabling increased trade and employment opportunities.

“The East Micronesia Cable project will play an essential role in securing FSM’s digital future,” Australia’s Charge to FSM, Ms Sarah McCarthy said. “Australia is proud to celebrate this milestone alongside our partners and invest in critical infrastructure that meets the priorities of communities across the Pacific.”

The event follows successful cable landings in Kiribati and Nauru in recent weeks and marks the final connection point for the cable. The cable is expected to be ready for service in November 2025.

For more information about the project, visit the AIFFP website or the East Micronesia Cable website, which provides information in Kosraean, English, Nauruan and Gilbertese.

Pohnpei International Football Association launches with inaugural futsal competition

PIFA

August 25, 2025

Pohnpei — The Pohnpei International Football Association (PIFA) has officially been established as the newest sporting body in Pohnpei, with a mission that goes beyond the playing field.

PIFA’s central goal is to encourage healthy living by engaging young people and adults alike in organized sports. Leaders of the association emphasize that participation in athletics is one of the most effective ways to combat the rising rates of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the state, including diabetes and heart disease. Through football and other activities, PIFA hopes to instill discipline, teamwork, and a lifelong commitment to wellness.

The organization marked a major milestone this month by taking the lead in organizing the 2025 Pohnpei State Liberation Day Inaugural Futsal Competition. The tournament drew strong community interest and showcased the potential of futsal, a fast-paced version of soccer played indoors or on smaller outdoor courts.

PIFA officials said the event is just

the beginning. The association is planning future tournaments and training opportunities for both male and female athletes across the state. “We are fortunate to begin with the Liberation Day Futsal competition,” a spokesperson noted, “and we look forward to many more opportunities where sports can bring our communities together, inspire our youth, and promote healthier lifestyles.”

The establishment of PIFA adds momentum to ongoing efforts in Pohnpei to expand sports opportunities for young people and to address health challenges through community-based initiatives. With its inclusive approach and commitment to regular competitions, the association hopes to become a cornerstone of sporting life in the state.



USS Pearl Harbor arrives in Chuuk, FSM

By Chief Petty Officer Julio Rivera
Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific

August 15, 2025

Chuuk—On August 15, 2025, the USS Pearl Harbor (LSD 52) arrived in Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia, in support of Pacific Partnership 25.

The arrival of the Harpers Ferry-class amphibious dock landing ship USS Pearl Harbor to Chuuk marks another stop of Pacific Partnership 25, the largest multinational humanitarian and disaster relief mission conducted in the Indo-Pacific.

At the request of host nations, Pearl Harbor's arrival to Chuuk allows Pacific Partnership team to collaborate with partners as well as develop operations, activities, and investments along the primary lines of effort (disaster management, engineering, medical, and host nation outreach).

The crew of USS Pearl Harbor and the attached Pacific Partnership team is working alongside allies and partners to strengthen relationships bolster

host nation capacity while providing essential humanitarian and support efforts to reduce the risk of, prepare for, and respond to disasters.

In addition The Pacific Partnership multinational band, comprised of musicians from the U.S. Pacific Fleet Band, the Royal Canadian Navy, Australian Army and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, which will embark U.S. Navy mission platforms to support Federated States of Micronesia, and the will perform in a variety of community engagements.

"Alongside our allies, partners and friends, this stop in Chuuk provides us the opportunity to learn from our partners here in Micronesia while also allowing us to better refine their preparedness to respond in time of crisis. This includes several engineering projects and medical care designed to enhance the capabilities already present throughout the region," said mission commander, Commodore Mark B. Stefanik. "Now in its 21st year, Pacific Partnership 2025 is a very real demonstration of the commitment of the United States, our allies and

partners as we prepare in calm for times of crisis."

In addition to activities aboard Pearl Harbor, Pacific Partnership is focused on collective capacity building, which has evolved from the previous approach centering on providing direct care. Any direct care provided will be shoulder-to-shoulder with the host and partner nations to share knowledge and skills that are enduring and applicable well after the mission.

This year's mission will also feature nearly 1,500 U.S., allied and partner nation personnel supporting the Pacific Partnership 2025 mission.

In the aftermath of the December 2004 "Boxing Day" tsunami that devastated parts of South and Southeast Asia, the United States mobilized numerous military assets and personnel to support the relief effort. Recognizing the opportunity to build on the goodwill and lessons learned from that initial mission, the U.S. Navy planned and executed the inaugural Pacific Partnership (PP) mission in 2006; its primary aim was to proactively

prepare for a more effective response to natural disasters while strengthening relationships and security ties between nations.

Pacific Partnership, in its 21st iteration, is the U.S. Navy's largest maritime humanitarian and civic assistance mission conducted in the Indo-Pacific. Each year, the mission team works alongside partners and allies to strengthen relationships, bolster host nation capacity to provide essential humanitarian services, and support efforts to reduce the risk of, prepare for, and respond to disasters. The PP25 team is led by U.S. Navy Capt. Mark B. Stefanik, commander of Destroyer Squadron 31, serving as the mission commander.

For more information about Pacific Partnership visit www.facebook.com/pacificpartnership, www.instagram.com/pacific.partnership/ or <https://www.dvidshub.net/feature/PacificPartnership>. Pacific Partnership public affairs can be reached via email at, sean.t.foertsch.mil@us.navy.mil.

Forum Foreign Ministers united on regional priorities

Pacific Islands Forum

19 August 2025

Suva, Fiji – Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers met in Suva last week for the 2025 Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting (FFMM). Chaired by HRH Crown Prince Tupouto'a 'Ulukalala, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Tonga, the one-day meeting brought together Forum Foreign Ministers and Senior Officials of the 18 Forum member countries to consider key regional priorities, and emerging issues and challenges.

Ministers held robust exchanges on the political developments in the region, including ongoing developments in New Caledonia and West Papua (Papua). Ministers also discussed the ongoing reforms under the Review of the Regional Architecture, including the Partnership and Engagement Mechanism, and heard a presentation on the High-Level Political Talanoa Report developed by the High-Level Political Group. Recognising the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Rarotonga Treaty, Ministers welcomed the Republic of the Marshall Islands as a new signatory to the Treaty and encouraged ratification by all Forum Members.

Ministers endorsed the Blue Pacific Ocean of Peace Declaration for Forum Leaders' consideration at their meeting in the Solomon Islands. The concept note for the Ocean of Peace Declaration was introduced by the Prime Minister of Fiji at the Forum Leaders' meeting in the Cook Islands and has undergone a comprehensive regional



consultation process.

In relation to regional advocacy priorities, the meeting reaffirmed Forum Leaders' support for Australia's bid to host COP31 as a Pacific COP. Ministers welcomed the historic International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on climate change—initiated by Vanuatu—as a powerful tool for global climate advocacy. They emphasized the need to maintain momentum and advocacy on the issue, including in the development of a follow-up resolution in the UN General Assembly.

The meeting also discussed emerging regional efforts on digital

transformation as conveyed through the Outcomes of the Pacific ICT Ministers' Dialogue that was held at the Forum Secretariat earlier in August. Ministers welcomed the opportunity to discuss some of the regional approaches to key digital initiatives.

The outcomes of the FFMM will inform the 54th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting to be held in Honiara, Solomon Islands from 8 – 12 September 2025.

Pacific Partnership 2025 commences mission in Chuuk, fostering spirit of cooperation

By U.S. Embassy to the FSM

August 21, 2025

Pacific Partnership 2025 launched its mission in Chuuk with an opening ceremony held onboard USS Pearl Harbor on August 18, 2025. This mission brings together U.S. and FSM personnel along with international partners to collaborate on medical engagements, public outreach programs, and engineering projects aimed at

enhancing local capacities for crisis response and foster cooperation.

U.S. Ambassador Jennifer Johnson, Rear Admiral Josh Lasky, Mission Commander Captain Mark Stefanik, along with FSM President Wesley Simina, Foreign Secretary Lorin Robert, Health Secretary Marcus Samo, Governor Alexander Narruhn, Lieutenant Governor Mekioshy William, Senator Perpetua Konman, and other senior leaders from the United States Navy, the FSM National, and Chuuk State governments attended the ceremony, which reinforces, strengthens, and enhances the strong and enduring relationship between the FSM and the United States.

Ambassador Johnson stated in her remarks that this partnership is more than just military cooperation; it represents a commitment to building a stronger future – one founded on mutual respect, shared values, and a common desire to uplift the communities served by the United States. “It is a partnership founded on shared history, built on trust, and sustained through our ongoing commitment to each other,” she said.



This year’s Pacific Partnership mission focuses not only on community outreach and engineering projects, but also on medical exchanges and disaster preparedness engagements with the FSM national and state governments. During their stop in Chuuk, the Pacific Partnership medical team is leading community health engagements in audiology, nursing, nutrition, environmental health, and healthcare.

“From working with dedicated professionals at the hospital to visiting schools and sharing the gift of music to making repairs to public buildings that benefit the community, these acts may seem small in isolation, but collectively, they symbolize something much larger,” Ambassador Johnson said, highlighting that the team’s work in Chuuk followed by Pohnpei over the next month is a perfect example of what both nations can achieve when they come together with open hearts and spirit of cooperation.

The Pacific Partnership 2025 team is composed of military personnel from the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Germany. Their engagements and efforts reflect a commitment to the Compact of Free Association with the Freely Associated States, the broader solidarity of the Pacific region, the well-being of the United States’ friends and allies, and the belief that when all sides work together, everyone benefits and grows stronger.

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U.S. Coast Guard, FSM partners strengthen maritime safety through successful SAR exercise

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

August 16, 2025

Pohnpei, FSM — The U.S. Coast Guard and partners in Pohnpei State, Federated States of Micronesia, successfully concluded the Federated States of Micronesia Search and Rescue (SAR) Exercise 2025 on August 1, demonstrating the value of recent enhancements in regional SAR capabilities and coordination.

The exercise, held from July 28 to August 1 in Pohnpei, involved comprehensive seminars, functional drills, and underway activities designed to strengthen SAR response across the

region and save lives.

"Participating in the SAR exercise in Pohnpei was both fun and deeply rewarding. Sharing my experiences handling search and rescue operations from Guam with our FSM partners strengthened our bonds, and the on-water drills highlighted how our combined skills can save lives in the Pacific," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Will Naden, a coxswain at Station Apra Harbor.

Key components of the training included SAR system fundamentals, alerting procedures, communications, alongside a tabletop exercise and hands-on underway activities with the FSM National Police Maritime Wing aboard

the Guardian-class patrol boats provided by Australia under the Pacific Maritime Security Program, the FSS Bethwel Henry and the FSS Tosiwo Nakayama.

Participants included the FSM National Police Maritime Wing and support from the deployed U.S. Coast Guard team which included members specializing in search and rescue from the Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam Joint Rescue Sub-Center and Station Apra Harbor, both in Guam.

"The successful conclusion of this SAR exercise in Pohnpei illustrates the direct impact of our engagement efforts. The communication was excellent. It's gratifying to see our partners use the training and coordination skills

effectively in real-world scenarios," said Lt. Cmdr. Derek Wallin, maritime advisor at Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam.

· On Aug. 17, 2024, six fishermen were rescued after their 22-foot fiberglass vessel's engine failed approximately 30 miles north of Satawal Atoll in the Caroline Islands. The group activated a personal locator beacon (PLB), which alerted authorities and narrowed the search area. Despite challenging conditions including low visibility and thunderstorms, the USCGC Oliver Henry (WPC 1140) crew, along with good Samaritans aboard a Panamanian-flagged cargo vessel, located and rescued the fishermen, who were in good health. The disabled vessel was towed safely to Satawal Atoll.

· On Jan. 24, the Pohnpei Division of Fire and Emergency Services, leveraging skills honed during prior SAR exercises, effectively coordinated with the FSM National Police (Maritime Wing) and U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam to respond to a local maritime distress case, showcasing enhanced readiness and response capabilities.

These efforts build upon previous U.S. Coast Guard Mobile Training Teams focusing on small boat operations and maritime boarding techniques, and annual SAR exercises in FSM conducted with partners from the FSM Maritime Wing, Fire and Rescue services, and Pohnpei Department of Public Safety in Pohnpei, and the Chuuk Department of Public Safety in Weno and Udot, the Chuuk Disaster Emergency Operations Center, the Chuuk Fire Division, and the Weno Municipal Police in Weno in April 2024.

The U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam oversees a vast area of responsibility spanning 1.9 million square nautical miles. Under the Compact of Free Association (COFA) agreements, the U.S. Coast Guard holds primary responsibility for search and rescue operations in the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Palau outside their territorial seas.



FSM Supreme Court holds annual National Law Day Debate on July 11 and 14, 2025 in Kosrae

FSM Supreme Court

FSM - The FSM Supreme Court commemorates the anniversary of its establishment as the highest court of the Nation on July 12, 1981. To celebrate this day, the Court sponsors the annual national law day debate among the high schools in the FSM. The annual debate has become a tradition whereby the students are given the opportunity to debate topics of significant importance to the nation. This year's national law day theme is:

“NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Federated States of Micronesia shall restrict access to all online social media platforms for minor children under the age of 18, including, but not limited to, Facebook, TikTok and YouTube”.

Schools that competed in this year's national law day debate are: Chuuk Xavier High School, Saramen Chuuk Academy High School, Yap Catholic High School, Kosrae SDA High School, Pohnpei Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School and Pohnpei SDA High School. Prior to the national law day debate, each State conducted debates among its high schools. Winners of the state debates are elevated to compete at the national debate. Any state with five or more schools competing at the state level is allowed to have two teams compete at the national debate.

The President of the FSM issued a Presidential Proclamation declaring

July 12 as the National Law Day. In the keynote address given by FSM Congress member, Honorable Johnson Asher, he congratulated the FSM Judiciary for its commitment in continuing the annual national law day debate, an important event to engage the younger generation who might be interested in becoming future lawyers and judges. The debates are available on YouTube: FSM Supreme Court – National Law Day 2025.

FSM Supreme Court Associate Justice Chang William gave the welcoming remarks and thanked President Simina and the FSM Congress for their continued support of the Court. Justice William thanked the Kosrae Leadership for hosting this year's debate. Justice William gave special recognition to all debaters and coaches and extended his best wishes and good luck to all teams.

All teams are required to debate both sides of the proposition. After two days of debate, the judges rated the overall scores as follows:

- First Place: Team Pohnpei Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School, with a total of 661 points
- Second Place: Team Yap Catholic High School, with a total of 659 points
- Third Place: Team Pohnpei SDA High School, with a total of 658 points
- Fourth Place: Team Chuuk Xavier High School, with a total of 609 points
- Fifth Place: Team Chuuk Saramen High School, with a total of 604 points
- Sixth Place: Team Kosrae SDA High School, with a total of 579 points

The FSM Supreme Court would like to thank the FSM President's Office, the FSM Congress, the State Departments of Education, all the high schools in the FSM, Senator Johnson Asher Kosrae State Leadership, Kosrae State Legislature, Kosrae State Judiciary, Kosrae State Governor Palik, Lt. Governor Nena, Speaker and Pastor Semeon J. Phill, Kosrae Chief Justice Edmond Salik, Pastor Eden Skilling, FSM National Police, the judges for this year's debate, all debaters and coaches, the Funenea sisters, the National Law Day Committee and FSM Supreme Court staff for making this year's national law day possible. The 2026 FSM National Law Day Debate will be held in the State of Yap.



Jasmae Rose Ringlen, debater, Karishma Paul, debater and Jessilyn Kiana Lebehn Pelep, alternate Coach: Ben Russell Figueras



Martin Edilyong, debater; Aryn Southwick, alternate; and Anthony Rutmag, debater Coach: Saralyn Wuyoch



Tony Pretrick, debater; Sjann Overhoff, debater; and Noaha Panuelo, alternate Coach: Leighton S. Edward



Vitalina Selina Masitubua, debater; Oleander Kinere, alternate; and Preeya Aiko Ned, debater Coach: Lyna George



Nyla Kealoha Yleizah, debater; Summer Mori, debater; and Mayumi Lomongo, alternate Coach: Micheal Kanas



Trinity Ilisouroam, alternate; Ha'anni Ynez Pangelinan Boichan, debater; and Miyah Mioko Yasu, debater Coach: Chrispino Houmarek

Pacific urged to define loss and damage in its own terms

By Sanjeshni Kumar
Pacnews

August 12, 2025

Apia, Samoa - Pacific countries must shape their own definition of “loss and damage” to ensure that responses to climate change reflect the realities of their people, Vanuatu’s Ministry of Climate Change representative told regional delegates at the Second Pacific Loss and Damage Dialogue in Apia, Samoa.

Speaking during a session on why the region should define loss and damage for itself, Florence Lautu, Manager of the National Advisory Board Secretariat, shared Vanuatu’s national loss and damage policy as an example of a country-led approach.

“What is loss and damage to us? What is loss and damage to our families, our communities, and our countries? Once we fully define loss and damage according to our own context, we will be able to address it fully,” Lautu said.

Vanuatu’s policy outlines 85 directives across 11 thematic areas, including governance, economic and non-economic losses, extreme and slow-onset events, traditional knowledge, displacement and human mobility, human rights, finance, and international advocacy. It also includes a fully costed implementation roadmap and identifies capacity gaps, technology needs, and research priorities.

“The policy makes it clear that we are dealing with a complex issue that needs contextual understanding, but at heart,

loss and damage for Vanuatu can be simplified as the negative impacts of climate change, including those that are permanent, irreversible, or difficult to address,” she said.

Lautu explained that for Vanuatu, loss and damage cannot be avoided entirely, even with strong mitigation and adaptation measures.

“Loss and damage can’t be entirely avoided, especially when we face soft limits like insufficient finance, or hard limits when temperature thresholds for organisms are breached,” she said.

“Loss and damage happens in a range of events and scales, linked to mitigation, adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and humanitarian response. For us, this is how we see it, and how we define it.”

She said the roadmap within the policy offers practical direction for government action.

“This roadmap gives us some comfort, especially from the government side, on what is really there for us to do and on how to address loss and damage in our country.

Lautu also underscored the need for regional cooperation.

“We heard this morning the importance of more collaboration among key institutions and stakeholders.

“We all have experienced the same impacts in our countries. By defining it in our own terms, we can ensure solutions work for our people.”



Pacific Youth raise united Call for Action on Climate Loss and Damage at Samoa Dialogue

By Ednal Palmer
In-Depth Solomons

August 12, 2025

With voices as powerful as the tides that bind their islands together, young leaders from across the Pacific delivered an impassioned plea to regional decision-makers on Monday, urging urgent, tangible action on climate-induced loss and damage.

Gathered in Apia for a Dialogue on Loss and Damage, youth representatives from 14 island nations – including the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu – presented a unified declaration shaped during a two-day pre-dialogue summit.

Framed around the Samoan proverb “You cannot make enough coconut oil from one coconut”, the statement underscored the need for collective Pacific solidarity in facing the escalating impacts of climate change.

“No one person, no one island, can face the challenges of our time alone,” the youth told regional leaders. “We fear the loss of our home... the erosion of our culture, biodiversity, and livelihoods. But we also carry hope – and we are ready to lead.”

The Pacific Youth Loss and Damage Apia Declaration called for:

- Institutional change – including an annual Pacific Youth Forum on Loss and Damage and integration of the topic into school curricula.
- Youth inclusion – genuine participation in decision-making processes, with financial and technical resources to implement solutions.
- Education and capacity building – climate education grounded in science and traditional knowledge, youth mentorships, and training for teachers.
- Partnerships and finance – direct, transparent access to funding for youth-led initiatives, with representation in loss and damage



finance bodies.

The youth leaders stressed that their role is not symbolic.

“We are not waiting to be empowered – we are already powerful. But power alone is not enough; even the strongest canoe cannot cross the ocean without a sail, a paddle, and provisions for the journey.”

They urged governments, development partners, and elders to match their determination with resources, frameworks, and active collaboration to protect Pacific homes, cultures, and ecosystems.

“We ask for the space to lead, the resources to act, and the partnerships to equip us with the tools we need. When our strength is matched with opportunity, we can chart a course toward solutions that honour our Pacific heritage and secure our shared future.”

As the first generation to grow up fully in the climate crisis, the youth warned that delays will deepen losses already being felt — from disappearing shorelines to displacement, loss of income, and cultural erosion.

The platform offered in Apia, they said, is more than a chance to speak.

“It is a responsibility we carry with humility and determination... The youth are the rising tide of our islands — unshaken by fear, strengthened by hope, and united to protect our home.”

With the declaration now in the hands of Pacific leaders, the young delegates say they will continue to progress the issue — and ready to keep steering the course toward a climate-resilient future.

Momentum growing in Loss and Damage space as regional dialogue kicks off in Samoa

SPREP

11 August 2025

Apia, Samoa - Climate change-induced Loss and Damage has been a steadfast priority for the Pacific region during the past three decades, and as officials converge in Samoa for the Pacific Regional Loss and Damage Dialogue 2025, momentum in the space continues to grow.

This momentum revolves around understanding the concept, acquiring finance required to address it, planning and implementing actions to deal with climate-induced loss and damage.

“Loss and Damage remains a matter of critical importance for the Pacific,” said CEO of Samoa’s Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE), Ms Lealaisanoa Frances Brown Reupena.

“Climate change is already causing profound impacts on our families, communities, and nations and these impacts are projected to persist, even under the most favourable emissions scenarios.

“Our rich tapestry of cultures, languages, and ways of life are under threat from the climate crisis. That’s why it is so vital that we come together today—to exchange knowledge, share success stories, and collectively shape the priorities and plans for safeguarding our future.”

Since the inaugural Pacific Loss and Damage Dialogue held in Apia in 2023, significant progress has been made globally and regionally.

“It has been a long journey spanning over three decades for Loss and Damage to evolve from a concept in 1991, to a series of

milestone achievements,” said Ms Reupena.

Amongst those achievements are the establishment and operationalisation of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) and the growth of the Santiago network for Loss and Damage (SNLD) which have created new opportunities for Pacific countries to access funding and technical support.

At the national level, bottom-up insights gained through national dialogues in Niue, Tonga and the Cook Islands, along with lessons emerging from regional initiatives such as the MFAT New Zealand Loss and Damage Programme and the IKI Building our Loss and Damage (BOLD) Response Project, have strengthened the Pacific’s capacity to advance effective, locally driven solutions.

“Fighting for climate justice has never been easy—and the Pacific has been at the forefront of this fight, for many years,” added Ms Reupena.

To build on the momentum of the achievements highlighted, the Pacific Loss and Damage Dialogue 2025, hosted by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) in partnership with Climate Analytics, is bringing together Pacific governments, youth, civil society, academia, NGOs, the private sector and the media to collectively advance the region’s priorities on loss and damage. SPREP’s Deputy Director General, Ms Easter Chu Shing, said the Pacific Regional Loss and Damage Dialogue 2025 will not only build on the momentum, it will move beyond discussion towards action, with a strong focus on practical and locally relevant solutions.

“Loss and Damage action has long been and continues to be a priority of the Pacific SIDS,” said Ms Chu Shing.

“At the regional level, SPREP is currently implementing two regional projects to support our members including Loss and Damage Capacity and Capability project funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Building Our Loss and Damage Response funded by Federal Republic of Germany through its International Climate Fund.

“These projects will help our members in holding national dialogues to unpack and define loss and damage needs and priorities, support the establishment of evidence base of loss and damage, development of case studies and communication products as well as support for

implementation of community pilot projects to trial national and community-based loss and damage responses.”

Ms Chu Shing also acknowledged the role of youth, with the first Regional Youth dialogue on Loss and Damage held in Samoa last week.

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Vanuatu leads Pacific push on climate justice with groundbreaking Loss and Damage policy



By Ednal Palmer
In-Depth Solomons

August 11, 2025

Apia, Samoa - Vanuatu has cemented its place as a Pacific and global frontrunner in climate action, becoming the first Pacific Island nation to adopt a national Loss and Damage policy with a detailed 10-year Implementation Roadmap.

Speaking at the Climate-Induced Pacific Regional Loss and Damage Dialogue in Apia, Samoa, Vanuatu climate change and marine conservation expert, Dr Christopher Bartlett outlined how the policy addresses the most urgent and complex climate challenges—ranging from slow-onset impacts and non-economic losses, to research, finance, and governance.

“The policy sets out a range of targets and actions which address slow-onsetting path, non-economic losses and damages, research, finance, and everything Vanuatu is planning to do in the next 10 years,” Dr Bartlett told nearly 100 delegates from across the Pacific.

Hosted by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) in partnership with Climate Analytics, the week-long dialogue brings together Pacific governments, civil society, academia, NGOs, and the private sector to advance regional priorities on Loss and Damage.

Dr Bartlett praised the strong governance and institutional innovation of Pacific Island countries, noting that many have embedded Loss and Damage targets into their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement.

However, he also issued a stark reminder: “Are those NDCs enough? Are they actually lowering greenhouse gas emissions to the level we need, to keep us below 1.5°C? The signs are not



showing that action is forthcoming.”

“We need every country to show their highest ambition,” Dr Bartlett said. “The Pacific has a real chance to make the world see Loss and Damage as an integral part of NDCs.”

The Paris Agreement (Article 4) requires each Party to prepare, communicate, and maintain successive NDCs to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change impacts. But for the Pacific, Dr Bartlett stressed, leadership must also mean justice.

“We are at the cutting edge of innovation, leadership, advocacy, and motivation—but that’s not enough,” he said. “We must ensure our people stop carrying the burden of Loss and Damage, and that those responsible are held accountable.”

The Pacific Regional Loss and Damage Dialogue 2025 aims to deepen understanding and awareness of Loss and Damage in the Pacific, showcase good practices and tackle challenges in emerging initiatives, boost the capacity of governments, civil society, and the private sector to access funding and technical support and identify viable pilot projects tailored to Pacific realities.

It also aims to amplify Pacific voices globally, ensuring the lived realities of communities drive decision-making.

As climate change intensifies, Vanuatu’s pioneering policy could become a blueprint for other nations, reinforcing the Pacific’s moral authority in climate negotiations and its demand for climate justice.

“The Pacific has some of the most ambitious NDCs in the world,” Dr Bartlett said. “Now, we must turn ambition into action—and hold those responsible accountable.”

The Government of New Zealand announces additional NZD 5 million commitment to the Pacific Community Ocean Science Centre (PCCOS)

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

August 14, 2025

Suva, Fiji - The Government of New Zealand and the Pacific Community (SPC) have deepened their partnership with the announcement of NZD 5million to further enhance ocean science for and alongside 22 Pacific Island countries and territories.



New Zealand’s Foreign Minister, Hon. Winston Peters, made the announcement in Suva, Fiji, as Pacific Foreign Ministers met to discuss key priorities for our blue Pacific region. SPC’s Deputy Director General for Science and Capability, Dr. Paula Vivili, thanked New Zealand for its ongoing partnership and meaningful engagement with communities across the Blue Pacific, leveraging the integrated capabilities and scale of the region’s largest scientific and technical organisation to better serve our Pacific members.

“PCCOS is not just a science initiative; it’s a mechanism for collaboration and leadership across the region,” said Dr Vivili, Deputy Director-General of SPC. “Over the last years, this support has enabled close cooperation and joint actions on meaningful ocean science, ocean dialogue and coordination support among Pacific regional organisations to better align support for Pacific countries and territories. It has also improved access to ocean data, which is a key area where SPC is proud to focus its efforts.”

The NZD 5 million funding announced will support the following key areas:

- Strengthening Pacific-led ocean science: Pacific Island countries and territories will gain better access to a wide range of ocean-related data, including ocean acidification, sea level rise, and wave forecasts. This will support evidence-based decision-making and climate resilience across the region.

- Empowering Early Ocean Career Professionals (ECOP) programme: Since 2021, the ECOP Placement Programme has offered young professionals practical, on-the-ground experience in ocean science and governance. To date, the programme has supported 35 ECOP across nine countries (Vanuatu, Fiji, New Caledonia, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Niue, and Tuvalu). This new investment will further strengthen and expand the programme.

- Enhancing regional coordination and resilience: PCCOS will foster collaboration among countries, enabling them to share best practices and resources more effectively in projects such as the Marine Spatial Planning initiatives. By strengthening partnerships, the region can better tackle the challenges posed by climate change and ensure sustainable management of ocean resources.

- Building and implementing the Ocean Flagship integrated programme: This initiative aims to enhance the impact of SPC in supporting both national and regional ocean ambitions by providing targeted resources and technical expertise, while also adapting access to and use of these resources through fit-for-purpose approaches.

New Zealand’s renewed support reflects its broader goal of advancing regional integration and cooperation in and alongside the Pacific, as well as with Pacific-governed organisations such as SPC. As this work enters its next phase, it will continue to elevate Pacific voices and knowledge.