

The Office of the President hosts second annual Christmas Lighting Ceremony at the Office of the President



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Auditor inquiry raises issues over inmate treatment, fuel use, and DOC asset handling

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

December 8, 2025

Pohnpei — A management advisory report issued by the Pohnpei Office of the Public Auditor (POPA) on December 4 outlines several concerns with the operations of the Division of Corrections & Rehabilitation under the Department of Public Safety. The review was undertaken after an anonymous complaint alleged mismanagement of the inmate community outreach program, questionable fuel authorizations, and problems in safeguarding DOC-owned

boats.

The Compliance Investigation Division conducted what it described as a preliminary review and administrative investigation. It found that although a written but unsigned policy exists to govern the community outreach program, the policy was not followed. The document limits inmate work activities to Tuesdays and Thursdays between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., with returns to the facility required by 4:00 p.m. Investigators reported that inmate work trips occurred on almost any day except Sunday and often extended

beyond permitted hours, with no written justification.

Daily logs reviewed by POPA showed that the Chief of Corrections regularly directed inmates to perform personal tasks for him—such as cutting grass, feeding pigs, and cutting bamboo. Similar practices were reported among other officers. The investigation also documented 16 occasions when inmates were taken out for fishing even though no policy authorizes such activities.

POPA also examined the division's fuel authorization practices. It found that

174 gallons of fuel were requested and approved, mostly by the DOC Chief, Captain, and Secretary. The Chief alone authorized 133 gallons. According to the Financial Management Regulations, only the lawful allottee—in this case, the Director of Public Safety—may approve such expenditures unless another delegation is made.

The report further noted concerns regarding DOC boats, which were found docked at the private residence of a DOC officer. POPA wrote that

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Public Auditor flags bidding irregularities, conflicts in TC&I contracts

By *Bill Jaynes*
The Kaselehlie Press

December 13, 2025

Palikir, Pohnpei — A performance audit by the Office of the National Public Auditor (ONPA) has found that the FSM Department of Transportation, Communications and Infrastructure (TC&I) did not fully comply with national financial regulations in the procurement and administration of construction contracts, raising concerns about transparency, internal controls, and the management of public funds.

The audit, released November 25, 2025, reviewed TC&I's handling of construction contracts completed between October 2021 and August 2024 and concluded that procurement practices frequently violated the Financial Management Regulations (FMR) of 2021. The report also found that the department failed to implement recommendations from a prior audit issued in 2022.

According to the report, auditors reviewed construction contracts valued at \$12.7 million and tested \$5.3 million worth of projects across all four FSM states. Of the contracts examined, \$3.8 million — or 73

percent — showed deviations from required procurement rules.

Among the most significant findings were contracts awarded without open competitive bidding, contracts modified through large change orders without required independent review, and instances where project costs exceeded legislative appropriations without clear authorization from Congress. In one case, a \$600,000 road project proceeded despite having only \$300,000 appropriated, with auditors unable to verify any lawful authorization for the additional funding.

The audit also raised conflict-of-interest concerns involving two renovation contracts totaling more than \$760,000 that were awarded to companies owned by or closely related to individuals connected to the bidding panel or beneficiary department. In addition, two contracts totaling \$37,000 could not be reviewed at all because key project files were missing.

Auditors further noted deficiencies in project oversight and quality control. Four completed projects totaling \$1.56 million were found to have defects shortly after completion, despite full payment — including retainage — having already been released. Another project remained incomplete well beyond its expected completion date, with no assessment of liquidated damages.

Beyond procurement violations, the audit identified weak internal controls stemming from TC&I's lack of formal standard operating procedures. Recordkeeping was described as disorganized, with missing documents, inconsistent filing systems, and little evidence of bidder qualification reviews or properly documented bidding panel deliberations.

The report also found a lack of segregation of duties within TC&I, with single individuals sometimes serving simultaneously as project manager, contracting officer representative, and inspector — roles that should be

separated to reduce the risk of error, bias, or abuse.

The Department of Finance and Administration (DOFA) was also cited for lapses in oversight, including certifying contracts and approving payments without ensuring full compliance with the revised FMR. Auditors noted that DOFA failed to maintain a current roster of pre-qualified contractors, a key requirement under the regulations.

ONPA attributed many of the problems to both TC&I and DOFA continuing to operate under outdated procedures that were never updated to reflect the strengthened requirements of the 2021 FMR. As a result, the audit concludes that procurement irregularities became systemic, undermining accountability and public trust.

The report recommends that TC&I and DOFA jointly strengthen compliance with procurement regulations, develop and implement comprehensive standard operating procedures, and restructure staff assignments to ensure proper segregation of duties. ONPA also referred certain matters to its Compliance Investigation Division for further review.

In their management responses, both TC&I and DOFA agreed with the audit's findings and recommendations. TC&I Secretary Carlson D. Apis stated that the department is committed to developing uniform documentation standards, improving recordkeeping, and working with DOFA to establish a joint training and capacity-building program to harmonize procurement practices across government.

National Public Auditor Haser Hainrick said the audit was intended not only as an oversight tool but also as an opportunity to improve government operations and safeguard public resources.

Copies of the final audit report were provided to President Wesley W. Simina, members of the 24th FSM Congress, and the secretaries of TC&I and DOFA, and are available to the public through the ONPA website www.fsmopa.fm.



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Bill Jaynes
Managing Editor

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**Deadline for submission of articles or
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of working hours on:**

Monday, December 29, 2025

Opposition brief claims election law was rewritten by appellate court in Chuuk election appeal

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

December 10, 2025

FSM Supreme Court - The appellants in the ongoing Chuuk election dispute have filed a detailed opposition to a motion to dismiss, arguing that their appeal was timely filed and that the lower appellate court erred by redefining when the statutory deadline for election challenges begins.

In their opposition, filed November 23, appellants Mark Mailo and Joe Enlet ask the FSM Supreme Court Appellate Division to deny the motion to dismiss submitted by appellees Alexander Narruhn and Mekioshy William, and to hear the appeal on its merits. The appeal stems from a decision of the Chuuk State Appellate Court dismissing their election complaint as untimely.

At the heart of the dispute is the interpretation of Chuuk election law, specifically the provision requiring that an election complaint be filed within five days after the “declaration of the results.”

Public Declaration vs. Notice to Candidates

The appellants argue that the Chuuk State Appellate Court wrongly concluded that the five-day filing period begins when individual candidates receive notice of the results, rather than when the Election Commission publicly declares those results.

They contend that Chuuk law requires a public declaration of election results before the statutory deadline is triggered, and that no such declaration was made following the March 4, 2025 election.

According to the filing, the Election Commission never publicly announced the results through radio broadcast, government postings, or other public means. As a result, the appellants maintain that the five-day filing period never commenced.

The opposition relies heavily on past Chuuk appellate precedent, particularly *Doone v. Chuuk State Election Commission*, which held that the declaration of results must be made public and that the filing deadline begins on the date of that public declaration, not on certification or individual notice to candidates.

The appellants argue that the lower appellate court departed from this precedent without authority, effectively rewriting the statute by substituting “notice to candidates” for “public declaration.”

Attempted Radio Announcement

The filing acknowledges that an attempt was made to broadcast election results on V6AK radio on March 17, 2025, but asserts that the broadcast was unsuccessful and incomplete due to discrepancies in the results.

Testimony cited in the opposition indicates that the attempted broadcast was interrupted and never completed, and therefore could not constitute the required public declaration under the statute.

The appellants further argue that even the lower appellate court recognized that no valid public declaration occurred, but nonetheless treated service of results on the candidates as sufficient to trigger the filing deadline.

Separation of Powers Argument

The opposition raises constitutional concerns, asserting that the Chuuk State Appellate Court violated the separation of powers by effectively amending the election statute through judicial interpretation.

The appellants argue that only the Legislature has authority to alter statutory requirements, and that courts are bound to apply the law as written. By replacing the public declaration requirement with notice to candidates, they claim, the court exceeded its constitutional role.

They also argue that the public declaration requirement serves an important policy function by ensuring transparency, uniformity, and equal notice to all candidates, rather than creating multiple filing deadlines based on when individual candidates receive notice.

Alleged Defects in Certification

The opposition further claims that the election certification itself was defective, alleging that the certification document lacked the proper signature of the Election Director and was therefore void.

If the certification was invalid, the appellants argue, it cannot be used as the basis for triggering any statutory deadlines. They contend that using a defective certification to bar an election challenge would unfairly penalize candidates for failures by election officials.

Authority to Hear the Appeal

Responding to the appellees’ claim that the FSM Supreme Court lacks jurisdiction, the appellants argue that both the FSM Constitution and Chuuk Constitution expressly grant appellate jurisdiction where constitutional issues are raised.

They assert that their appeal raises constitutional questions, including due process and separation of powers, and therefore falls squarely within the FSM Supreme Court Appellate Division’s authority.

The opposition also cites statutory provisions allowing appellate review of cases decided by the Chuuk State Supreme Court Appellate Division, arguing that election disputes are not exempt from review when constitutional issues are involved.

Request to Proceed on the Merits

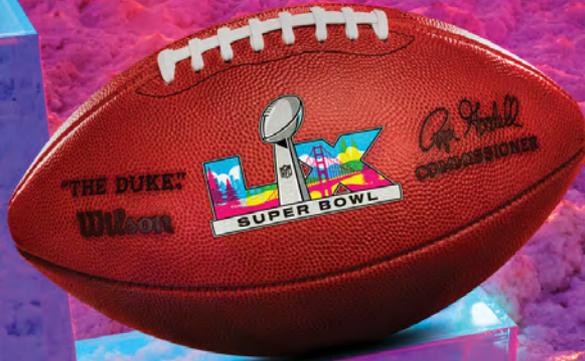
The appellants conclude by urging the FSM Supreme Court Appellate Division to deny the motion to dismiss and to address the appeal on its merits, arguing that dismissal would elevate procedural technicalities over substantive election law and constitutional protections.

They assert that the lower appellate court’s ruling has created uncertainty in Chuuk election law and undermined the statutory requirement for public announcement of election results.

The FSM Supreme Court Appellate Division has not yet ruled on the motion to dismiss.



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The Office of the President hosts second annual Christmas Lighting Ceremony at the Office of the President

FSM Information Services

December 2, 2025

Palikir, Pohnpei – The Office of the President proudly hosted its Second Annual Christmas Lighting Ceremony on the grounds of the President’s Office and National Convention Center, bringing together community members and national government employees for a festive evening of unity and celebration.

President Wesley W. Simina opened the event with welcoming remarks, expressing gratitude to attendees and emphasizing the spirit of togetherness that Christmas brings. In his speech, the President reflected on the meaning of the season, noting that “Christmas is a time that we all come together in unity... it is my hope that these lights remind us of the bright future we share when we come together as a nation.” He also acknowledged the resilience of the FSM throughout the year and highlighted the importance of carrying forward a sense of hope and gratitude.

Following the President’s remarks, guests joined in a lively countdown

to the official lighting of the Christmas decorations. In a heartwarming moment, the honor of switching on the lights was given to the one of the First Granddaughters of the First Couple, who illuminated the grounds to the delight of families and children in attendance.

As the lights shone across the compound, First Lady Simina and Second Lady Palik shared holiday treats with the crowd, adding a personal and joyful touch to the celebration and creating a warm, family-friendly atmosphere.

Vice President Aren B. Palik joined the President, the First Lady, and the Second Lady in embracing the holiday spirit, actively participating in the ceremony, engaging with families and the crowd, and sharing in the joy of the occasion.

The Office of the President extends its appreciation to all staff, national employees, and community members who helped make the event a success. The Christmas Lighting Ceremony has quickly become a cherished annual tradition, and the President expressed hope that it will continue to grow in the years ahead.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays from the Office of the President.



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Lien Kolonia Town group makes community donations ahead of holidays



By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

December 12, 2025

Kolonia, Pohnpei – Some officers and members of the Lien Kolonia Town women’s group gathered this morning on the lawn of the Kolonia Town Municipal Office to distribute donations made possible through the fund-raising efforts of the group’s more than 30 members.

The club presented \$700 worth of water coolers to the principal of Kolonia Town Elementary School. Organizers said they had initially asked Ohmine Elementary School if there were any physical needs the club could help meet. Ultimately, they opted to present \$700 in cash to Ohmine Elementary to be used for items the school needs.

The club also presented a \$500

donation to Kolonia Town Mayor Kummer Biza to support the town’s annual Christmas candy run. Mayor Biza said that due to increased holiday traffic, the town has decided to hold the candy run on December 29.

Club officials said during an informal meeting prior to the ceremony that they intended to give each Kolonia Town senior citizen \$25 to be used for a dinner out, sakau, or however recipients chose. However, they learned that the funds raised would not cover all registered senior citizens in the town and decided the plan would need to be reconsidered. The club did present \$25 and some household items—donated separately by Kolonia businesses—to a few seniors who were present at the ceremony. Officials said more information on the arrangement will be forthcoming.



...DOC

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this practice increases the risk of unauthorized use and weakens asset accountability. One boat was relocated during the review.

Other issues surfaced during interviews, including reports that inmates were receiving very limited breakfasts—only two pieces of bread or donuts—and that food contributed by communities working with the outreach program had in some cases been diverted for staff use, including funerals and officer meals. Witnesses reported that officers consumed most of the contributed food while inmates received only small portions.

The advisory report concludes that “significant violations, internal control deficiencies, and management failures exist within DOC operations,” and recommends a series of corrective actions. These include a full review of the outreach program policy, establishment of stricter approval and reporting requirements, ensuring all fuel requests are authorized solely by the Director, and adopting clearer systems for safeguarding government-owned boats. POPA also urged immediate steps to improve food distribution practices to ensure inmates receive adequate meals.

A detailed investigation report has been forwarded to the Office of the Attorney General for further evaluation and possible legal action. The management letter was copied to the Governor of Pohnpei and the Speaker of the 11th Pohnpei State Legislature.

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COM-FSM STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN THE TOKYO METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Tokyo, Japan — November 16-21, 2025.

Eight College of Micronesia-FSM (COM-FSM) students and two faculty members participated in an exchange program hosted by the Tokyo Metropolitan Public University Corporation and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government from November 16 to 21, 2025. This exchange program emphasized academic communications between the COM-FSM students and students from the Tokyo Metropolitan University (TMU) and the Tokyo Metropolitan College of Industrial Technology (TMCIT). Moreover, it served to strengthen the friendship between Tokyo and the Federated States of Micronesia.

The college's internal selection process started early in June, with a total of 26 applications received. The final decision was made by the Vice President of Instructional Affairs (VPIA) Office, selecting students with both the highest cumulative GPA and the highest QP credits earned. The selected students must have taken at least 41 credits and maintained a cumulative GPA of 3.84 or above at the time of selection.

The students visited the Embassy of the FSM in Japan, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of General Affairs office, the TMCIT Arakawa and Shinagawa campuses, and the TMU Minami-Osawa campus. Additionally, the students also visited the Sumida Incineration Plant, a waste management station, and the Ikebukuro Life Safety Learning Center to learn the latest practices from Japan.

The TMU exchange program has been inviting COM-FSM students annually for three years following the Covid-19 suspension.



The COM-FSM participants paid the Embassy of the F.S.M. in Japan a visit, hosted by Minister Yoriko Nanpei. Photo credit: Dr. Nelchor Permitez

The host covered the airfare, hotel, food, and transportation expenses during the 6-day stay in Tokyo, with the participants self-paying the ¥20,000 participation fee. The students were able to exchange learning and visiting experiences with the students from TMU and TMCIT and experienced the traditional Japanese tea ceremony. Additionally, the students acquired knowledge of Tokyo's valuable waste management system and its proactive disaster prevention measures.

On behalf of the college, the participants wish to extend their gratitude to the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of General Affairs and the Tokyo Metropolitan Public University Corporation for inviting and hosting the COM-FSM group. Special thanks to Mr. Jyotaro Kondo for the contact and wholehearted communication. The participants also thank the Embassy of the FSM in Japan and acknowledge the hospitality of Minister Yoriko Nanpei in supporting the COM-FSM students while overseas. Finally, the participants also extend their gratitude to the VPIA Office and the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Services (VPEMSS) Office for their continuous support.

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Construction Notice: SRRIP Road Program – CW 2B & CW 2C (Peilapalap and Nantuelek Roads)

FSM Department of Transportation, Communication and Infrastructure

December 7, 2025

Pohnpei - The Department of Transportation, Communications & Infrastructure (DTC&I) wishes to inform the public that construction activities have commenced on the SRRIP Road Program CW 2B and CW 2C—the Peilapalap Road and Nantuelek Road improvements. These projects are funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and implemented by DTC&I, following prioritization and selection by the Pohnpei State Government.

The Department regrets the temporary inconvenience caused by ongoing works and assures the travelling public that it is coordinating closely with all relevant stakeholders to minimize impacts on surrounding communities.

Project Updates and Key Technical Information

1. Road Subbase Improvements

Each road will undergo full subbase verification through laboratory testing and compaction to required specifications before asphalt works begin.

2. Peilapalap Road Springs

Peilapalap Road lies above several sub-terranean springs. DTC&I and the Contractor are actively identifying and channeling these springs into appropriate drainage systems to prevent weakening of the road subgrade.

3. Asphalt Concrete Layers

Both roads will receive three (3) Asphalt Concrete layers:

- 2-inch Asphalt Concrete base
- 2-inch Asphalt Concrete intermediate layer
- 2-inch Asphalt Concrete wearing course

The layers will be placed separately, with 3–4 weeks between the second and final layer to allow traffic movement and the identification and repair of any weak areas prior to final surfacing.

4. Current Status

As of the date of this release:



- Peilapalap Road has received its first 2-inch Asphalt Concrete base layer.
- Nantuelek Road is expected to complete its first base layer within 1–2 days.

5. Public Safety Advisory

Manholes, drainage channels, and business or residential entrances may sit above the level of the first and second asphalt layers until final surfacing is complete. The public is strongly advised to exercise caution when traveling along these routes.



Construction Schedule

- Working Hours: 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday to Saturday
- Sunday Work: Limited activities may be undertaken to address urgent issues and reduce inconvenience to the public.

For inquiries related to:

CW2C (Nantuelek Road): Mr. Henry Norman – (691) 320-4925

CW2B (Peilapalap Road): Mr. Henry Norman – (691) 320-4925

Additional Information

The Department greatly appreciates the public’s patience and cooperation as we upgrade and improve Pohnpei’s road infrastructure for the benefit of all. Any temporary inconvenience is sincerely regretted.

The SRRIP road works are projected for completion by 15 April 2026.

- Supervision Consultant: SMEC Engineering Ltd.
- Contractor: VCS Construction Ltd.

For further updates, please visit the DTC&I website at: <https://tci.gov.fm/>

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2025 Governor's Office Christmas Drop

Pohnpei Public Information

December 2, 2025

Pohnpei - The Pohnpei State Government extends its deepest gratitude to Pohnpei State Hospital and Genesis Hospital for welcoming the spread of Christmas cheer during this year's Governor's Office Christmas Drop on December 1, 2025.

Led by Lt. Governor Herolyn S. Movick and First Lady Dr. Aina Garstang, the annual Christmas Drop brought gifts, warm wishes, and uplifting holiday spirit to patients and staff across both hospitals. Your hospitality and dedication made it possible for us to share joy with our community during this festive season.

To the hardworking healthcare teams and to every patient we were able to visit—kalahngan lap for allowing us to be part of your day. May this season bring peace, comfort, and renewed hope to all.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays from the Office of the Governor.



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DECEM and IOM launch Strategy to Enhance Accountability for Disaster-Affected Communities in FSM

International Organization for Migration

December 8, 2025

Pohnpei – The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management (DECEM) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) formally launched a new strategy for the Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) on Wednesday, 3 December 2025. The launching event, hosted by Pohnpei State and attended by development partners, Civil Society Organizations and United Nations agencies, concludes a United States Government-funded initiative which was kicked-off in 2024 to improve community feedback, complaints, and participation in FSM’s emergency response and recovery.

The AAP Strategy and its accompanying Standard Operating Procedures are designed to ensure that aid distribution to disaster-affected populations, and recovery and reconstruction processes are fair, dignified, and responsive to the

needs of impacted communities.

Key objectives of the strategy include:

- Promoting Transparency and Information Sharing: Strengthening open communication between government agencies and affected communities to build trust and clarify roles, responsibilities, and assistance processes.
- Establishing Feedback and Complaint Mechanisms: Developing reliable systems for community members to provide feedback and lodge complaints as needed, ensuring that concerns are addressed and programs improved accordingly.
- Empowering Communities through Active Participation: Engaging vulnerable groups and all affected populations in every stage of emergency response, recovery and reconstruction efforts, empowering them to voice their views and contribute to improved and needs based response.



The strategy is guided by lessons learned from previous emergency events in FSM and aligns with National Disaster Management policies and international humanitarian frameworks. During the meeting, DECEM and IOM presented key findings from recent consultations conducted with state departments, communities and stakeholders, and discussed stakeholder responsibilities to integrate the strategy into their respective emergency response efforts. Development partners present during the meeting, including from The Pacific Community, Pacific Humanitarian Team, UNICEF, Catholic Relief Services and the United Nations Multi-country Office in Micronesia, further provided valuable insights to ensure the strategy is inclusive and its

implementation creates greater impact for disaster-affected populations.

DECEM Assistant Secretary, Abigail Kim-Lambert, thanked partners for their participation and underscored the significance of the new strategy in enhancing accountability and ensuring emergency response and recovery programs reflect the priorities of affected communities.

The AAP Strategy is a notable development in the region, as it is the first time this approach has been led by Government counterparts, demonstrating accountability and setting a precedence for collaborative emergency management in the Pacific. SDGs 10 and 11.



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Office of Fisheries and Aquaculture conducts workshop on the new State Aquaculture Law (S.L. 11L-42-25) with aquaculture practitioners

Pohnpei Public Information

December 11, 2025

Pohnpei - The Office of Fisheries and Aquaculture (OFA) convened a meeting to review and update stakeholders on the newly passed State Aquaculture Law (S.L. 11L-42-25).

The gathering allowed OFA to introduce the content of the law and matters to expect in the coming days. As mandated by law, a mapping exercise was conducted to identify all existing aquaculture farms currently

located in marine areas throughout Pohnpei State, including potential aquaculture sites that can be utilized in the future.

The outcome of the mapping exercise will be transmitted to the Governor's Office for review and approval before it is sent to the 11th Pohnpei Legislature for designation. OFA wishes to thank CSP for co-facilitating the meeting.

Feel free to contact OFA if you have any questions about the Aquaculture Law.



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Vice President Palik meets with Governor Lou Leon Guerrero



FSM Information Services

December 8, 2025

Nimitz Hill, Guam – Vice President Aren B. Palik met with the Governor of Guam, Lou Leon Guerrero, during an official visit on December 5, 2025. The meeting highlighted the close partnership between the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and Guam, as both leaders discussed current developments in the Micronesian region and areas of shared cooperation within international organizations to which both Guam and the FSM are parties.

Governor Leon Guerrero shared updates on Guam’s ongoing efforts to construct a new hospital, emphasizing its critical role in enhancing medical services for the people of Guam and for the broader region. She noted, “There is no regional security without human health security.”

Vice President Palik emphasized the importance of COFA Title III and its role in supporting broader efforts to promote peace, stability, and shared security across the region. He

highlighted the recent Joint Committee Meeting held in Pohnpei between the FSM and the United States, noting productive discussions and the ongoing support provided to the FSM through Joint Task Force–Micronesia (JTF-M), headquartered in Guam.

The meeting also addressed shared concerns regarding Deep Seabed Mining (DSM), with both parties agreeing on the need for robust scientific research and environmental assessments before any further actions are taken. Vice President Palik reaffirmed the FSM’s precautionary approach, stating, “The FSM is currently establishing its legal framework on seabed mining, while remaining mindful of the need for more scientific research and assessments to guide environmentally sound decisions moving forward.”

The meeting concluded on a positive note, with Vice President Palik presenting a gift to Governor Leon Guerrero as a gesture of goodwill.

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



The **Pacific Community (SPC)** invites applications for the position of **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Assistant** within its Micronesia Regional Office (MRO).

Description

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

The **Micronesia Regional Office (MRO)** situated in Kolonia, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), is the main hub for SPC's projects and partnerships with the Micronesia members of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), the Republic of Palau, and the United States territories of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), and Guam. The MRO opened in January 2006.

The role – the **MEL Assistant** will provide essential support to the EDA Programme in implementing its Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning framework.

The key responsibilities of the role include the following:

1. **Results Monitoring**
2. **Training and Capacity Building**
3. **Evaluation and Learning**

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

Qualifications

- A diploma in a relevant field such as development, social sciences, evaluation or equivalent body of knowledge and experience

Technical expertise

- At least 2 years relevant experience in MEL.
- Strong organizational skills with attention to detail and accuracy.
- Ability to collect, organize, and maintain data and documentation systematically.
- Good communication skills for coordinating with multiple stakeholders.
- Basic proficiency in Microsoft Office (Excel, Word) and willingness to learn new tools.
- Ability to follow procedures and meet deadlines consistently.
- High level of Professional Integrity and Ethics.

Language skills

- Good communication skills in English.

Interpersonal skills and cultural awareness

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

Remuneration – the **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Assistant** is a Band 6 position in SPC's 2025 salary scale, with a starting taxable salary range of USD 28,047–35,058 per year, plus local staff benefits.

Benefits – SPC provides medical and life insurance for eligible employees. Employees are entitled to 25 days of annual leave. Provident Fund and/or Social Security will be according to FSM's local legislation.

Closing date: 11 January 2026 – 11:00 pm Noumea time

Job Reference: CR000529

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

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

Screening questions (maximum of 2,000 characters per question):

1. Describe an experience where you supported a project's monitoring and evaluation. What steps or processes did you follow to ensure this was successfully undertaken?
2. The Enhancing Direct Access Programme will provide grants to Municipalities and State Governments for their climate adaptation priorities. Why is Monitoring and Evaluation important, and how does it support achieving the Programme's objectives?
3. Grantees under the Enhancing Direct Access Programme must submit quarterly reports. What are at least three challenges a MEL Assistant may face in obtaining these reports on a timely basis?

Ambassador Akillino Harris Susaia presents credentials to His Holiness Pope Leo XIV

FSM Information Services

December 10, 2025

Rome, Italy — His Excellency Akillino Harris Susaia, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) to the European Union, presented his Letters of Credence to His Holiness Pope Leo XIV at the Clementine Hall of the Apostolic Palace in Vatican City on Saturday, December 6, 2025. Ambassador Susaia was among 14 non-resident ambassadors who presented their credentials to His Holiness.

During the ceremony, Ambassador Susaia conveyed sincere gratitude to His Holiness on behalf of His Excellency President Wesley W. Simina and the people of the FSM. He also sought the Pope's blessings and prayers for the FSM's continued success, resilience, and prosperity as a Christian nation and Small Island Developing State (SIDS).

Following the official proceedings, Ambassador Susaia presented a carved wooden turtle to His Holiness, emphasizing its cultural significance in Micronesia society and its symbolic reminder of the severe impacts of climate change on the FSM's communities.

In his remarks, His Holiness

Pope Leo XIV expressed his pleasure in receiving the new ambassadors, noting that the gathering came at the beginning of his pontificate and within the context of the Jubilee Year of Hope inaugurated by his predecessor, Pope Francis. He underscored that true peace begins with rejecting pride and resentment and resisting the "temptation to use words as weapons."

The FSM established diplomatic relations with the Holy See in January 1994. The Apostolic Nuncio accredited to the FSM is Archbishop Giambattista Balvo, who has represented the Holy See in the FSM and other Pacific Island nations since 2006.

Ambassador Susaia was accompanied by his spouse, Madam Mihpel Olter Susaia, First Secretary Johnny Hadley Jr., and Mrs. Belinda Suzuki Hadley.



Matson Championship League match report

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

December 15, 2025

Pohnpei - The Matson Championship League continued this week with two lively matchdays that showcased both the growing skill level of the teams and the enthusiasm that makes youth football in Pohnpei so engaging.



absence from midfield removed SDA's primary source of depth and tactical direction, and the team struggled to regain its early rhythm.

Matchday 6
St. Paul 3 – Ohmine 8

Despite the final scoreline, St. Paul produced an encouraging performance against league leaders Ohmine. Under the energetic guidance of Principal Esau, St. Paul played with confidence and ambition, particularly when holding a high defensive line that placed Ohmine under sustained pressure at times.

Two penalties conceded proved costly, but such mistakes are common early in the season and form part of the team's learning process. Overall, St. Paul showed promising signs that suggest positive development as the league

progresses.

Ohmine responded with a composed and powerful display, led by Jacob, who was in outstanding form and consistently drove his team forward. Ohmine's girls played an aggressive and confident game, contributing significantly to the team's commanding victory.

Matchday 7
SDA 4 – Kolonia 9

SDA began the match in dominant fashion, controlling the opening ten minutes with disciplined positioning and sharp movement. Will impressed in the number 10 role, while Jubali was effective on the right wing, linking midfield and attack.

The momentum shifted after Kolonia's equaliser. SDA began to lose structure, and a key turning point came when Kanoe was moved to goalkeeper. While Kanoe performed well in goal, his

Kolonia, initially under pressure, showed resilience and composure. Strong leadership from players such as

Champions League Standings

Updated Table

Team	Points	Matches	W:D:L	Goals
Ohmine	9	3	3:0:0	16 : 7
Kolonia	9	3	3:0:0	21 : 8
PCS	4	4	1:1:2	13 : 12
SDA	3	3	1:0:2	12 : 20
Sekere	1	4	0:1:3	12 : 22
St Paul	0	1	0:0:1	3 : 8

valuable match experience for young players while delivering entertaining football for supporters. As teams settle into the season, further improvement and closely contested matches are expected in the weeks ahead.

Australia strengthens partnerships in Yap

Embassy of Australia to the FSM

December 8, 2025

Yap - Deputy Head of Mission Sarah McCarthy and Consular Officer Sackett Peter this week visited the State of Yap, meeting with various Yap State government agencies to discuss consular assistance and crisis preparedness.

During their visit, they had the honor of meeting Governor Francis Itimai and engaging with local leaders on shared priorities.

They also met Sylvia Fanasog, Vice President of the Worwoo Women's Association, to see the progress of the Women's Meeting House, one

of Australia's Direct Aid Program (DAP) projects. This space provides a safe and welcoming place for the women of Worwoo village to gather, celebrate, and discuss community matters. It also supports activities like communal cooking and skills development.

Ms Fanasog expressed her gratitude to the Australian Government for making this possible. The Association is excited to soon receive five industrial sewing machines, which will further empower local women through training and income-generating opportunities.

The Embassy delegation visited Wanyan village and met Joshua Tun from the New Generation Club, a DAP-supported initiative. This project seeks to build a basketball court to promote youth engagement and healthy activities. The delegation was warmly welcomed by Chief Victor Pluw and other community leaders, who shared updates on the progress. We look forward to seeing the project move ahead and reach completion, as the court will serve as a valuable space for people to gather, play, and strengthen community ties.

Australia is proud to support initiatives that strengthen communities, empower women, and create opportunities for youth across the Pacific.



AI risks sparking a new era of divergence as development gaps between countries widen, UNDP report finds

United Nations Development Program

December 2, 2025

New York – Artificial intelligence (AI) unmanaged could increase inequality between countries by widening divides in economic performance, people’s capabilities, and governance systems, as the starting point is so vastly different, according to a new report from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The report, titled *The Next Great Divergence: Why AI May Widen Inequality Between Countries*, highlights that while AI opens important new avenues for development, countries begin this transition from highly uneven positions to capture benefits and manage risks. Without strong policy action, these gaps can grow, reversing the long trend of narrowing development inequalities.

Asia and the Pacific region, home to over 55% of the world’s population, is at the center of the AI transition. The region now hosts more than half of global AI users and is rapidly expanding its innovation footprint, from China’s rise to nearly 70% of global AI patents to over 3,100 newly funded AI companies across six economies. AI could lift annual GDP growth in the region by around 2 percentage points and raise productivity by up to 5% in sectors such as health and finance. ASEAN economies alone could see nearly \$1 trillion in additional GDP over the next decade.

At the same time, millions of jobs, especially those held by women and young people, face significant exposure to automation, if core principles of ethical and inclusive governance of AI are not considered. “AI is racing ahead, and many countries are still at the starting line,” said Kanni Wignaraja, UN

Assistant Secretary-General and UNDP Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific. “The Asia and Pacific experience highlights how quickly gaps can emerge between those shaping AI and those being shaped by it.”

For much of the last half-century, many lower-income countries have gradually closed the gap with higher income countries through advances in technology, trade, and development. This “era of convergence” brought significant improvements in health, education, and income. The report warns that without deliberate and inclusive policy choices, AI may now cause the erosion of these convergence gains.

Digital readiness varies significantly across the region. Countries such as Singapore, South Korea, and China are making substantial investments in AI infrastructure and skills, while others are still working to strengthen foundational digital access and literacy. Building these digital capabilities will be critical to ensuring that all countries can benefit from the opportunities AI presents.

Limited infrastructure, skills, computing power, and governance capacity constrain the potential benefits of AI while amplifying risks, including job displacement, data exclusion, and indirect impacts such as rising global energy and water demands from AI-intensive systems.

Women and young people face particular vulnerabilities. Jobs held by women are nearly twice as exposed to automation, and youth employment is already declining in high-AI-exposure roles, especially for those aged 22–25, threatening early-career pathways. In South Asia, women are up to 40% less likely than men to own a smartphone. Rural and indigenous

communities often remain invisible in the datasets that train AI systems, increasing the risk of algorithmic bias and exclusion from essential services.

Looking at the opportunities AI is transforming governance and public services across the region. Bangkok’s Traffy Fondue platform has processed nearly 600,000 citizen reports, enabling city agencies to respond more efficiently to everyday problems. Singapore’s Moments of Life service has reduced paperwork for new parents from about 120 minutes to 15 minutes. In Beijing, digital twins, a virtual representation that serves as the real-time digital counterpart of a physical object or system, are supporting urban planning and flood management. These examples show the potential of AI to enhance public administration and service

delivery.

Yet only a limited number of countries have comprehensive AI regulations, and by 2027, more than 40% of global AI-related data breaches may stem from misuse of generative AI, underscoring the need for robust governance frameworks. This is a key area of “catch-up” for many countries in the region and elsewhere.

“The central fault line in the AI era is capability,” said Philip Schellekens, UNDP Chief Economist for Asia and the Pacific. “Countries that invest in skills, computing power and sound governance systems will benefit, others risk being left far behind.”

This report is about how to turn that risk into a path for shared progress.

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Ambassador Wu Wei meets with FSM Former President Manny Mori



Embassy of China to the FSM

December 8, 2025

Pohnpei - On December 8, 2025, Ambassador Wu Wei met with H.E. Manny Mori, former President of the Federated States of Micronesia and Executive Director of Institutional Advancement and External Affairs of the College of Micronesia-FSM, and made a donation to the College of Micronesia-FSM on behalf of the Chinese Embassy.

Ambassador Wu Wei said that in recent years, under the strategic guidance of President Xi Jinping and President Wesley Simina, China and the FSM have achieved fruitful results in cooperation across various fields, including education. The Chinese Embassy's donation to the College of Micronesia-FSM demonstrates its support for development of education in the FSM. China is willing to work jointly with the FSM to actively implement the important consensus of the two heads of state, continuously deepen and expand practical cooperation on the basis of the one-China principle, and further promote the China-FSM comprehensive strategic partnership, better benefiting the people of both countries.

H.E. Manny Mori thanked China for its long-term support of the College of Micronesia-FSM, and said that he will continue to firmly support the one-China policy and do his utmost to promote the development of friendly relations and educational cooperation between China and the FSM.

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



The Pacific Community (SPC) invites applications for the position of **Project Assistant, Strengthening Water and Sanitation Governance in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM WASH)** within its Geoscience Energy and Maritime (GEM) Division.

Description

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

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

The role – the Project Assistant (FSM WASH) will be responsible for supporting the administrative and financial delivery of the Strengthening Water and Sanitation Governance in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM WASH) project in accordance with SPC, Government and donor requirements.

The key responsibilities of the role include the following:

1. **Financial and procurement support services**
2. **Travel and Logistics Management**
3. **Administration and Operations Support**

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

Qualifications

- A diploma in a relevant field such as accounting, financial management or business administration or equivalent body of knowledge and experience.

Technical expertise

- At least 3 years of experience in project finance and administration
- Demonstrated experience in donor project finance and administration
- Demonstrated experience in financial audit administration
- Sound experience in logistics management inclusive of travel for workshops and training programs

Language skills

- Fluency in English (written and verbal)

Interpersonal skills and cultural awareness

- Knowledge of Pacific Island countries and territories is an advantage

Contract Duration – This position is budgeted until 31 December 2028, subject to renewal depending on funding and performance.

Remuneration – the **Project Assistant (FSM WASH)** is a Band 6 position in SPC's 2025 salary scale, with a starting taxable salary range of USD 28,047–35,058 per year, plus local staff benefits.

Benefits – SPC provides medical and life insurance for eligible employees. Employees are entitled to 25 days of annual leave. Provident Fund and/or Social Security will be according to FSM's local legislation.

Closing date: 11 January 2026 – 11:00 pm Noumea time

Job Reference: CR000530

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

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

Screening questions:

1. Briefly describe your experience in organising and providing support to meetings, workshops and conferences, including travel arrangements.
2. Outline your experience in the procurement of goods and services and in contract management, and the best practice considerations that you have followed.
3. Briefly describe your experience in administrative and financial tasks, including the filing of documents, acquittal of funds and project payments that meet audit requirements or donor contractual obligations.

United Brings Holiday Magic to Guam's Children Through Fantasy Flight to the North Pole

Guam joins 12 United stations worldwide in the annual Fantasy Flight tradition

United Airlines

December 6, 2025

Guam – Guam's hometown airline once again brought the spirit of Christmas to life as United Airlines hosted its 11th annual United Fantasy Flight. Aboard a Boeing 737-800, United transported children of all ages on a magical journey to the North Pole and transformed the United Guam Hangar into Santa's winter wonderland.

Each year, United's Fantasy Flight is a cherished tradition in which deserving children and their families board a United aircraft at the A. B. Won Pat International Airport Guam for a special flight (UA 3775) to Santa's hometown, the North Pole (airport code JOY). This year's Fantasy Flight welcomed children from the Make-A-Wish Foundation and The Children's Ark.

Make-A-Wish is partnering with United this year to send wish kids on select Fantasy Flights in Denver, Chicago, Cleveland, Houston, and Guam. Tens of thousands of volunteers, donors, and supporters advance the Make-A-Wish® vision to grant the wish of every child diagnosed

with a critical illness. In the U.S. and its territories, a wish is granted every 34 minutes. The Children's Ark, Inc. funds and supports individuals and families in need of assistance by providing medical and health expenses, housing assistance, legal assistance, and accommodation to protect children and families.

Community Support

The experience is entirely volunteer-driven and supported by community partners who work together to deliver a festive holiday celebration complete with Happy Meals from McDonald's, crafts, games, and prizes. The children were invited to submit personal wish lists before the event, and United volunteers worked diligently to ensure that Santa delivered every item on their lists. Before the night was through, the children took photos with Santa and his magical 737 aircraft.

"Each year, Fantasy Flight gives us the chance to bring pure joy and wonder to Guam's children," said Sam Shinohara, Managing Director of Airport Operations – Asia/Pacific at United. "Seeing the children's excitement as they step onto a plane, most for the first time, and then arrive at the North Pole reminds us why this



tradition is so close to our hearts. It's a privilege to create a magical escape for the children and their families and be part of a moment that they'll carry with them long after the holidays."

"The United Fantasy Flight event is a true reflection of what Guam can accomplish when a community comes together," said Stuart Suarez, Manager, Passenger Service at United. "Our volunteers and partners generously pour their time, talent, and resources into making this experience unforgettable for the children. They

help us bring Fantasy Flight to life each year, and we deeply appreciate their support of this unique holiday tradition."

United thanks the Guam International Airport Authority, ALTERXEGO Entertainment, Crowne Plaza Resort Guam, Island Woodworking, Lorzalyn Artistry, McDonald's of Guam, Pacific Charlie Co., Power 98, and Ruder Integrated Marketing Strategies for contributing to the magic of this year's event.

PICRC Staff attends MATE ROV Academy Workshop to strengthen underwater robotics education in Palau

PICRC

December 5, 2025

Palau - Communications & Outreach Officer, Lucy Dickie, from the Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC), participated in the MATE ROV Academy Introductory Level Workshop: Underwater Robotics & Engineering Design held in Savannah, Georgia from November 15-16, 2025.

The two-day training, hosted at the Georgia Institute of Technology and sponsored by the MATE ROV Academy, provided participants with a hands-on introduction to underwater robotics and engineering design for educational settings. The workshop was funded through a grant from the National Science Foundation.

During the workshop, participants learned

key skills in assembling and operating the Pufferfish ROV kit, including soldering and wiring components, designing and building an ROV frame, and conducting safety checks and pool testing. The training also covered effective approaches for teaching these STEM concepts to students and educators.

In addition to technical training, the workshop introduced participants to the regional and international MATE ROV competitions, which engage students in real-world ocean technology challenges.

Understanding the structure and goals of these competitions will support PICRC's efforts to expand science and technology learning opportunities for Palau's youth.



Lucy returned with a full Pufferfish ROV toolkit and textbook provided by the program, which will support the Center's initiative to implement underwater robotics activities with teachers and students in Palau.

"This workshop offered practical

skills and a clear pathway for developing engaging, hands-on robotics programs for Palau's classrooms," Lucy said. "I'm excited to share what I learned and help introduce local students and teachers to ocean technology and engineering."

PICRC looks forward to incorporating these new tools and knowledge into its education

and outreach programs, fostering the next generation of ocean scientists and innovators in Palau. PICRC extends its sincere thanks to the Georgia Institute of Technology, MATE ROV Academy, and the National Science Foundation for this opportunity, as well as Conservation International for supporting PICRC's attendance at the workshop.

President Simina administers oath of office to FSM Consul General Henry H. Shrew

FSM Information Services

December 10, 2025

HONOLULU, Hawai'i – His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Henry H. Shrew, officially installing him as the new FSM Consul General to Hawai'i. The appointment restores official leadership at one of FSM's overseas missions, which had been without a formally appointed Consul General for several years. The FSM Consulate in Hawai'i plays a vital role in supporting FSM citizens, strengthening community ties, and representing the nation's interests across the State of Hawai'i.

The ceremony opened with an invocation delivered by Reverend Elwel Taulung, offering a solemn and meaningful start to the proceedings.

Mr. Shrew has served in various capacities within FSM's overseas missions, including leadership roles in the Honolulu and Portland consulate offices. Since 2020, he has been Acting Consul General in Hawai'i, and his extensive experience reflects a strong commitment to supporting FSM citizens

abroad and advancing the nation's diplomatic presence in the Pacific.

In his remarks, President Simina extended his best wishes to Consul General Shrew and underscored the importance of strong leadership within the mission. He expressed confidence in Mr. Shrew's ability to continue advancing the work of the Consulate and concluded with a toast in his honor.

Consul General Shrew offered brief remarks, expressing gratitude for the confidence placed in him and reaffirming his commitment to fulfilling the responsibilities of the office. He noted the importance of supporting FSM citizens in Hawai'i and emphasized his readiness to continue serving the community and representing the nation.

Among those in attendance were the Honorable Carl Apis, Secretary of Transportation, Communications and Infrastructure (TC&I); the Honorable Johnson Asher and the Honorable Merlyn Abello-Alfonso, Members of the 24th FSM Congress; the Honorable Tulensa W. Palik, Governor of the State of Kosrae; staff from the FSM Consulate Office; as well as family members and friends who gathered to witness this occasion.

The Simina-Palik Administration extends its appreciation to the 24th Congress for its support in the confirmation process, acknowledging the role of continued collaboration in ensuring effective leadership across the nation's diplomatic missions.



President Simina receives Ambassador of India during third official visit to the Federated States of Micronesia

FSM Information Services

December 3, 2025

Palikir, Pohnpei —On November 28, 2025, His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), received His Excellency Harsh Kumar Jain, Ambassador of the Republic of India to the FSM, during the Ambassador's third official visit to the nation. Ambassador Jain was accompanied by his wife, Mrs. Vandana Jain, and Mr. Sunny Kukreja, Attaché of the Embassy of the Republic of India in Manila.

During the meeting, President Simina and Ambassador Jain reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening the FSM-India partnership. Discussions highlighted mutual areas of interest, including development cooperation, capacity-building opportunities, and support for ongoing national priorities. Ambassador Jain's visit highlighted

the deepening cooperation between the FSM and the Republic of India, with engagements focused on health advancement, development partnerships, and strengthened diplomatic relations.

A key highlight of the visit was Ambassador Jain's participation in the Signing Ceremony for the Tripartite Agreement on the project "Community Access to Resilient Essential Health in the Federated States of Micronesia (CARE FSM)." The agreement, signed by the Honorable Marcus Samo, Secretary of the Department of Health and Social Affairs, and Ms. Gulbahor Nematova, UNDP Country Manager and Deputy Representative, marks a significant milestone in advancing accessible and resilient health services across the FSM.

Prior to the ceremony, Ambassador Jain paid a courtesy call on the Honorable Ricky F. Cantero, Acting Secretary of the

Department of Foreign Affairs, where he conveyed the Government of India's condolences on the passing of the late Secretary of Foreign Affairs, the Honorable Lorin S. Robert. The meeting also touched on shared values and ongoing bilateral priorities.

During his stay, the Ambassador and his delegation were also hosted on a tour aboard the FSM Patrol Boat FSS Tosiwo Nakayama, accompanied by Secretary of Justice T.H. Leonito Bacalando Jr.

As part of his program, Ambassador Jain and his delegation will continue their engagements with a visit to the State of Chuuk where he will call pay a courtesy call on Governor Alexander R. Narruhn and meet with Chuuk State leadership to

advance bilateral cooperation at the state level.

The Government of the FSM extends its sincere appreciation to Ambassador Jain for his continued commitment to enhancing the longstanding friendship and partnership between the FSM and the Republic of India.



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Class 7: Agricultural machines; hair cutting machines for animals; incubators for eggs; mechanized livestock feeders; aerating pumps for aquaria; salt harvesters; mechanized horse walkers; woodworking machines; paper diaper manufacturing machines; papermaking machines; printing machines; industrial inkjet printing machines; spinning machines; dyeing machines; tea processing machines; food preparation machines, electromechanical; juice extractors, electric; robotic arms for preparing beverages; cigarette machines for industrial purposes; leather-working machines; sewing machines; bicycle assembling machines; potters' wheels; engraving machines; battery machines; pen making machines; chopstick making machines; cord making machines; candle making machines; straw mat weaving machines; dual-purpose peeling and shelling machines; silkworm egg washing machines; silkworm egg dehydrators; enamel making machines; light bulb making machines; packaging machines; coal briquette machines; kitchen machines, electric; dishwashing machines; coffee grinders, other than hand-operated; washing machines [laundry]; wringing machines for laundry; bioreactors for use in manufacturing biopharmaceuticals; embossing machines; glass-working machines; fertilizer manufacturing machines for chemical industry; extractors for mines; cutters [machines]; drilling rigs, floating or non-floating; excavators; pneumatic jacks; electric hammers; foundry machines; steam engines; igniting devices for internal combustion engines; wind turbines; paper clip making machines; zipper making machines; electric wire and cable manufacturing machines; industrial robots; screwdrivers, electric; semiconductor manufacturing machines; optical cold working machines; machines for generating gas by electrolysis; painting machines; filters for cleaning cooling air, for engines; dynamos; pneumatic cylinders [parts of machines]; pumps [parts of machines, engines or motors]; compressed air machines; valves [parts of machines]; control mechanisms for machines, engines or motors; belts for machines; bearings [parts of machines]; electric welding apparatus; dust exhausting installations for cleaning purposes; machines and apparatus for cleaning,

electric; vacuum cleaners; 3D printers; 3D printing pens; 3D bioprinters; reservoirs [parts of machines]; ice-resurfacing machines; refrigerated automatic vending machines; brake fluid replacement and filling machines; fluid dispensing machines for industrial use; automatic clothes folding machines for industrial purposes; drums [parts of machines]; racket stringing machines; shoe polishers, electric; curtain drawing devices, electrically operated; rice grain sorting machines; ticket vending machines; confectionery vending machines; vending machines; automatic tire removing and installing devices; aviation refueling truck connectors; labellers [machines]; filtering machines; ceramic 3D printers; robotic exoskeleton suits, other than for medical purposes; electroplating machines

Class 9: Computer software applications, downloadable; computer programs, downloadable; computer software platforms, recorded or downloadable; smartwatches; smartglasses; downloadable application software for virtual environments; computer peripheral devices; credit card terminals; holograms; dictating machines; mechanisms for coin-operated apparatus; voting machines; lottery drawing machines; biometric scanners; ticket dispensing terminals, electronic; hemline markers; pedometers; apparatus to check stamping mail; photocopiers [photographic, electrostatic, thermic]; bathroom scales; weighing apparatus and instruments; measures; electronic notice boards; cell phones; computer network routers; camcorders; smart speakers; dashboard cameras; cameras [photography]; video projectors; inductors [electricity]; teaching robots; range finders; surveying apparatus and instruments; humanoid robots with artificial intelligence for use in scientific research; connected bracelets [measuring instruments]; speed checking apparatus for vehicles; diagnostic apparatus, not for medical purposes; optical apparatus and instruments; materials for electricity mains [wires, cables]; optical fibres [light conducting filaments]; control panels [electricity]; amplifiers; chips [integrated circuits]; video screens; remote control apparatus; wafers for integrated circuits; electric apparatus for commutation; lightning conductors; Ionization apparatus not for the treatment of air or water; fire extinguishing apparatus; apparatus and installations for the production of X-rays, not for medical purposes; protection devices for personal use against accidents; alarms; locks, electric; eyeglasses; charging stations for electric vehicles; batteries, electric; battery chargers; animated cartoons; portable remote control car stop; fridge magnets; humanoid robots with artificial intelligence for preparing beverages; dog whistles; sunglasses for pets; electrified fences; egg-candlers; humanoid robots with artificial intelligence for use in household cleaning and laundry; decorative magnets; sports whistles; pigeon training whistles; computer programs for Internet and World Wide Web; downloadable mobile phone software applications; servers for home network system; computer software

for controlling self-service terminals; chatbot software for simulating conversations; user-programmable humanoid robots, not configured; computer programs for user interface design; computer software to maintain and operate computer systems; computers; computer operating programs; computer software, recorded; telepresence robots; computer software for controlling the operation of audio and video devices; face identification apparatus; network communication devices; routers; security surveillance robots; webcams; humanoid robots having communication and learning functions for assisting and entertaining people; multimedia projectors; sensors.

Class 11: Lamps; lighting apparatus and installations; germicidal lamps for purifying air; lights for vehicles; curing lamps, not for medical purposes; gas lamps; lava rocks for use in barbecue grills; cooking apparatus and installations; cooking stoves; coffee machines, electric; kettles, electric; air fryers; refrigerators; ice machines and apparatus; humidifiers; extractor hoods for kitchens; hair driers; air purifying apparatus and machines; air conditioning installations; fans [air-conditioning]; heating apparatus; fog machines; heating installations; watering installations, automatic; faucets; sanitary apparatus and installations; showers; heaters for baths; water purifying apparatus and machines; water softening apparatus and installations; disinfectant apparatus; filters for drinking water; radiators, electric; gas lighters; polymerisation installations; personal cooling packs, not for medical purposes.

Class 12: Electric vehicles; remote control vehicles, other than toys; rolling stock for railways; vehicles for locomotion by land, air, water or rail; automobiles; autonomous cars; push scooters [vehicles]; self-balancing scooters; pumps for bicycle tyres; aerial conveyors; carts; sleighs [vehicles]; repair outfits for inner tubes; tires for vehicle wheels; air vehicles; water vehicles; safety seats for children, for vehicles; upholstery for vehicles.

Class 35: Presentation of goods on communication media, for retail purposes; advertising; online advertising on a computer network; providing business information; sales promotion for others; provision of an online marketplace for buyers and sellers of goods and services; marketing; personnel management consultancy; compilation of information into computer databases; accounting; sponsorship search; rental of cash registers; rental of vending machines; rental of sales stands; retail or wholesale services for veterinary preparations; retail services for pharmaceutical, veterinary and sanitary preparations and medical supplies; retail or wholesale services for pharmaceutical preparations; consumer profiling for commercial or marketing purposes; providing an online commercial information directory on the Internet; providing business information via a website; marketing

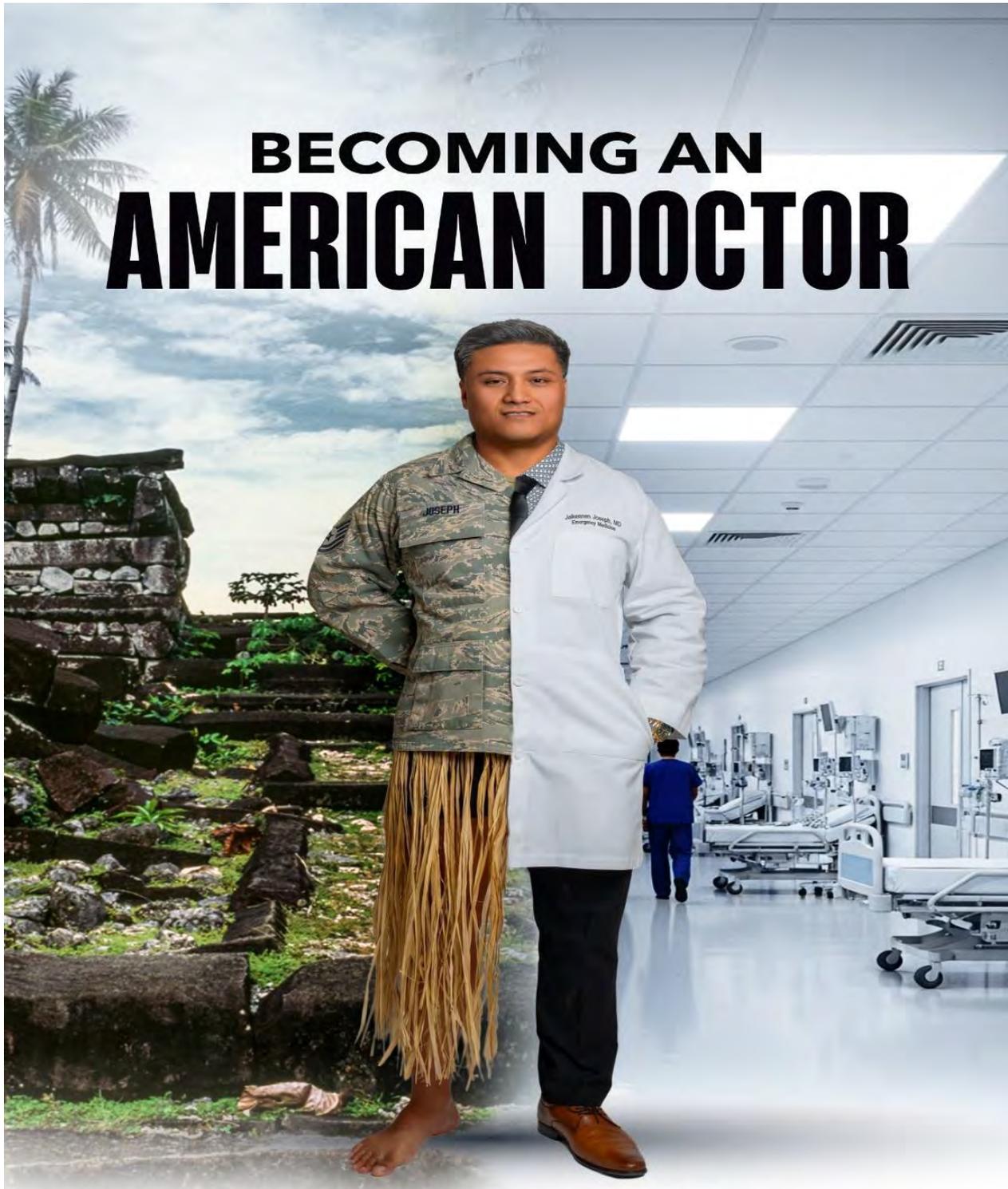
through product placement for others in virtual environments; systemization of information into computer databases.

Class 38: Television broadcasting; providing telecommunications connections to a global computer network; providing internet chatrooms; providing user access to a global computer network [service providers]; providing online forums; providing access to databases; providing virtual private network (VPN) services; streaming of data; videoconferencing services; communications by computer terminals.

Class 42: Research in the field of artificial intelligence technology; technological research; quality control; providing online geographic maps, not downloadable; chemical research; biological research; meteorological information; vehicle roadworthiness testing; industrial design; interior design; dress designing; platform as a service [PaaS]; providing online non-downloadable computer software; electronic data storage; computer software design; software as a service [SaaS]; providing virtual computer systems through cloud computing; monitoring of computer system operation by remote access; authenticating works of art; cloud seeding; weighing goods for others; animation design for others; providing scenery design services for theatre companies; testing and analysis of goods being imported or exported for quarantine clearance purposes; calligraphy, painting and seal carving art design; fridge magnet sticker design; cartography services; design of customized books; design of clothing for pets; graphic arts design; rental of telescopes; logo design services; radon detecting; rental of scientific microscopes; handwriting analysis [graphology]; rental of meters for the recording of energy consumption; art work design; naming services; artificial intelligence consultancy; technology consultancy in the field of artificial intelligence; research in the field of artificial intelligence; online data storage services; hosting software platforms for virtual reality-based work collaboration; providing search engines for the internet; rental of user-programmable humanoid robots, not configured; design and development of virtual private network (VPN) operating software; hosting virtual environments; development of driver and operating system software.

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DR. JALKENNEN JOSEPH, MD

Becoming an American Doctor is a short and inspiring memoir by Dr. Jalkennen Joseph narrating his journey from Pohnpei, Micronesia, to becoming a US-trained physician. His early years, shaped by rich indigenous traditions and culture, set the stage for a challenging journey through immigration and war in pursuit of higher learning, ultimately leading him to become both a US citizen and a physician. Dr. Joseph's arduous journey from Micronesia paved the way for the resilience he needed to survive two tours in Iraq and to become a physician. His success is a true testament to the American Dream.

Available on Amazon

Kindle eBook \$8.99

Paperback soft cover \$19.95

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Xiaomi Hyper

In relation to:

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valves [parts of machines]; compressed air machines; pneumatic cylinders [parts of machines]; control mechanisms for machines, engines or motors; bearings [parts of machines]; belts for machines; electric welding apparatus; machines and apparatus for cleaning, electric; vacuum cleaners; dust exhausting installations for cleaning purposes; steam mops; washing installations for vehicles; filtering machines; curtain drawing devices, electrically operated; labellers [machines]; shoe polishers, electric; racket stringing machines; vending machines; robotic exoskeleton suits, other than for medical purposes; drums [parts of machines]; 3D printers; 3D bioprinters; fluid dispensing machines for industrial use; 3D printing pens; ticket vending machines; automatic tire removing and installing devices; refrigerated vending machines; liquid reservoirs [parts of machines]; brake fluid replacement and filling machines; ceramic 3D printers; confectionery vending machines; ice-resurfacing machines; aviation refueling truck connectors; reservoirs [parts of machines]; rice grain sorting machines; automatic clothes folding machines for industrial purposes; electroplating machines.

Class 9: Downloadable application software for virtual environments; computer programs, downloadable; user-programmable humanoid robots, not configured; computer software applications, downloadable; smartwatches; computer peripheral devices; smartglasses; tablet computers; notebook computers; computer game software, downloadable; counters; apparatus to check stamping mail; point-of-sale [POS] terminals; mechanisms for coin-operated apparatus; voting machines; hemline markers; holograms; dictating machines; lottery drawing machines; biometric scanners; ticket dispensing terminals, electronic; photocopiers [photographic, electrostatic, thermic]; bathroom scales; measures; electronic notice boards; cell phones; intercommunication apparatus; navigation apparatus for vehicles [on-board computers]; computer network routers; wearable activity trackers; television apparatus; camcorders; smart speakers; headphones; humanoid robots having communication and learning functions for assisting and entertaining people; dashboard cameras; video projectors; cameras [photography]; surveying apparatus and instruments; air analysis apparatus; automatic indicators of low pressure in vehicle tires; connected bracelets [measuring instruments]; teaching robots; inductors [electricity]; humanoid robots with artificial intelligence for use in scientific research; material testing instruments and machines; optical apparatus and instruments; materials for electricity mains [wires, cables]; semiconductors; chips [integrated

circuits]; amplifiers; piezoelectric sensors; controllers for servo motors; video screens; remote control apparatus; optical fibres [light conducting filaments]; electric apparatus for commutation; lightning rods; ionization apparatus not for the treatment of air or water; fire extinguishing apparatus; radiological apparatus for industrial purposes; protection devices for personal use against accidents; alarms; locks, electric; eyeglasses; battery chargers; charging stations for electric vehicles; batteries, electric; chargers for cell phones; slides [photography]; sunglasses for pets; electrified fences; humanoid robots with artificial intelligence for preparing beverages; humanoid robots with artificial intelligence for use in household cleaning and laundry; dog whistles; egg-candlers; sports whistles; decorative magnets; portable remote control car stops; fridge magnets; pigeon training whistles.

Class 11: Lamps; lighting apparatus and installations; lights for vehicles; germicidal lamps for purifying air; curing lamps, not for medical purposes; gas lamps; kettles, electric; coffee machines, electric; air fryers; cooking stoves; cooking apparatus and installations; lava rocks for use in barbecue grills; refrigerators; ice machines and apparatus; air conditioning installations; air purifying apparatus and machines; extractor hoods for kitchens; fans [air-conditioning]; humidifiers; hair driers; heating apparatus; fog machines; faucets; heating installations; watering installations, automatic; heaters for baths; showers; sanitary apparatus and installations; disinfectant apparatus; water purifying apparatus and machines; water softening apparatus and installations; filters for drinking water; radiators, electric; gas lighters; polymerisation installations; personal cooling packs, not for medical purposes.

Class 12: Rolling stock for railways; autonomous cars; automobiles; bicycles; self-balancing scooters; push scooters [vehicles]; pumps for bicycle tyres; aerial conveyors; carts; sleighs [vehicles]; tires for vehicle wheels; repair outfits for inner tubes; air vehicles; water vehicles; upholstery for vehicles; safety seats for children, for vehicles; air pumps [vehicle accessories]; vehicles for locomotion by land, air, water or rail; remote control vehicles, other than toys; electric vehicles.

Class 35: Online advertising on a computer network; advertising; presentation of goods on communication media, for retail purposes; providing business information; marketing; provision of an online marketplace for buyers and sellers of goods and services; sales promotion for others; personnel management consultancy; compilation of information into computer databases; accounting; sponsorship search;

rental of sales stands; rental of vending machines; rental of cash registers; retail services for pharmaceutical, veterinary and sanitary preparations and medical supplies; retail or wholesale services for pharmaceutical preparations; retail or wholesale services for veterinary preparations.

Class 38: Wireless broadcasting; message sending; videoconferencing services; streaming of data; providing online forums; computer aided transmission of messages and images; providing access to databases; providing user access to a global computer network [service providers]; providing internet chatrooms; transmission of digital files.

Class 42: Research in the field of artificial intelligence technology; technological research; quality control; providing online geographic maps, not downloadable; chemical research; biological research; meteorological information; vehicle roadworthiness testing; industrial design; interior design; dress designing; monitoring of computer system operation by remote access; software as a service [SaaS]; providing online non-downloadable computer software; computer software design; electronic data storage; platform as a service [PaaS]; providing virtual computer systems through cloud computing; conversion of data or documents from physical to electronic media; authenticating works of art; cartography services; rental of telescopes; handwriting analysis [graphology]; testing and analysis of goods being imported or exported for quarantine clearance purposes; logo design services; cloud seeding; rental of scientific microscopes; graphic arts design; rental of meters for the recording of energy consumption; design of customized books; radon detecting; truck weighing services; design of artwork; fridge magnet sticker design; providing scenery design services for theatre companies; design of clothing for pets; weighing goods for others; naming services; calligraphy, painting and seal carving art design; animation design for others.

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President Simina joins Kuttu Community for the ordination of Father DJ Martin

FSM Information Services

December 4, 2025

Weno, Chuuk — His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), together with First Lady Ancelly Simina, attended the ordination ceremony of Reverend DJ Martin, held on December 3, 2025, at St. Francis Xavier Church in Kuttu, Mortlock Islands.

Accompanying the President were Congressman Fabian Nimea, Special Advisor Kandhi A. Elieisar, and the Secretary of Health and Social Affairs, Marcus Samo.

The ceremony began with a solemn church service led by Bishop Julio Angkel, joined by Vicar General Kelly Yalmadau, seminarians, and members of the Chuuk church clergy. The service was further enriched by beautiful church hymns offered by parish and community groups, creating a deeply meaningful and prayerful atmosphere.

Following the ordination ritual, the celebration continued with traditional island songs dedicated to the newly ordained priest, Father

DJ Martin. Communities from Chuuk and the Mortlock Islands delivered special performances that showcased unity, cultural pride, and shared joy across the region. The Honorable Istaro Mwarike, Mayor of Moch and President of the Mortlocks Parish, delivered the opening statement, warmly welcoming guests and offering a heartfelt reflection on Father DJ's calling and spiritual journey—recounting how his dedication to faith and service had been evident since his early years. His remarks set a meaningful and uplifting tone for the celebration that followed.

President Simina and his delegation joined the festivities, participating in lively songs, traditional entertainment, and the presentation of gifts in honor of Father DJ and the Kuttu community. In his remarks, President Simina congratulated Father DJ, wished him success in his spiritual mission, and reflected on their past encounters during Father DJ's years of seminary formation. President Simina concluded



Robson Romolow; Floor Leader, the Honorable Julio Marar; Governor of Chuuk State, the Honorable Alexander R. Narruhn, and First Lady; Floor Leader of the Chuuk State Legislature, the Honorable Wayne Olap; as well as traditional leaders, church leaders, and community representatives who gathered to witness and celebrate this significant spiritual milestone.

The Office of the President extends its heartfelt congratulations to Father DJ Martin and expresses deep appreciation to Bishop Angkel, the clergy, and the people of Kuttu for their warm hospitality and steadfast commitment to faith and service. The Office also offers its warm congratulations to Bishop Angkel on the anniversary of his own ordination—celebrated on the Feast of St. Francis Xavier on December 3, 1983—and commemorating his 42 years of enduring leadership and dedicated service to the Catholic community across the FSM.

by pledging monetary assistance to the singing groups from the sub-parishes in Chuuk and Weno that participated in the celebrations.

Congressman Fabian S.Nimea extended his congratulations to Father DJ and the Kuttu community and announced a donation of 500 sacks of rice to assist the community following the recent sea inundation. He also affirmed that his office stands ready to provide further support.

Also in attendance were the Vice Speaker of Congress, the Honorable



President Wesley W. Simina received credentials of the first Ambassador of Romania to the FSM, Her Excellency Răduța Dana Matache

FSM Information Services

December 2, 2025

Palikir, Pohnpei - On December 01, 2025, His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), received the official credentials of Her Excellency Răduța Dana Matache as the first non-resident Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Romania to the FSM, with residence in Manila, Philippines.

President Simina warmly welcomed all attendees, including representatives from national and state governments, the diplomatic corps, and regional and international organizations based in Pohnpei. He expressed his gratitude for their presence during the presentation of the “letter of credence” and noted that such ceremonies embody both formal diplomatic protocol and the spirit of mutual respect.

President Simina underscored the significance of the moment, reflecting on the foundations of the diplomatic relationship established between the two countries on February 05, 2019, grounded in a shared commitment to the principles of the United Nations, international peace and security, equality among states, and respect for

international law.

Looking ahead, President Simina expressed potential areas of collaboration, stating: “I am confident that we can collaborate in multiple areas of shared values and interest which, among many other includes climate action, global peace and security, opportunities to for high education program, people-to-people exchanges as well as opportunities to support small scale development at the community level.”

President Simina also highlighted the historical significance of the occasion, noting that the ceremony coincided with Romania’s National Day on December 01. He emphasized that this meaningful alignment added depth to the moment, symbolizing not only the formal strengthening of diplomatic ties but also the shared respect between the two nations.

Ambassador Matache expressed her gratitude for the warm reception and



reaffirmed Romania’s commitment to advancing the bilateral relationship. She emphasized the shared global challenges faced by both nations, stating: “Climate change is a common challenge for us... We have admired your leadership in the United Nations and in other forums. We have also done our part, and we are going to be with you in this important fight that we have to fight together.”

President Simina congratulated Ambassador Matache on her appointment and extended best wishes for Romania’s National Day. He reaffirmed the FSM’s and Romania’s shared values, notably mutual solidarity with Ukraine in light of Russia’s aggression and confirmed that the FSM’s support for Ukraine remains a firm commitment.

In closing, President Simina expressed his confidence in meaningful future progress under Ambassador Matache’s leadership, anticipating strengthened bilateral relations and tangible outcomes through upcoming

diplomatic engagements.

The ceremony was graced by distinguished guests, including Mr. Constantin Matache, spouse of the Ambassador; the Vice President of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Honorable Aren B. Palik; the Acting Chief Justice of the FSM Supreme Court, the Honorable Beaulen Carl-Worswick; and the Governor of Pohnpei State, the Honorable Stevenson A. Joseph. Also in attendance were Cabinet members of the FSM National Government, the Dean and members of the diplomatic corps—among them His Excellency Wu Wei, Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China; Her Excellency Jennifer L. Johnson, Ambassador of the United States of America; and His Excellency Nobuo Kagomiya, Ambassador of Japan. Representatives of international and regional organizations based in Pohnpei, along with staff from the Office of the President and other national and state departments, were also present.

Following the ceremony, a courtesy call was held with President Simina and Vice President Palik, with supporting staff provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs.

President Simina and Vice President Palik meet Nauru Special Envoy to discuss preparations for upcoming national commemorations

FSM Information Services

December 2, 2025

Palikir, Pohnpei —On November 28, 2025, His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), and Vice President Aren B. Palik, received a Special Envoy delegation from the Republic of Nauru, led by Ms. Kim Aroi, during an official courtesy visit at the President’s Office in Palikir.

President Simina warmly welcomed Ms. Aroi and her delegation, expressing his appreciation for their visit and the continued engagement between the two Micronesian nations. Ms. Aroi conveyed warm greetings from President David W.R Adeang and the Government of Nauru, and briefed President Simina on the purpose of the delegation’s visit. The advance technical team is in the FSM to conduct essential logistical and operational preparations in Chuuk in anticipation of Nauru’s 58th Independence Day Celebrations, scheduled for January 31,

2026. Next year’s commemoration holds special significance as it will also mark the 80th anniversary of the repatriation of Nauruans from Chuuk, following their displacement during World War II.

As part of the anniversary observance, Ms. Aroi shared that President Adeang plans to arrange a dedicated charter flight to Chuuk, allowing a group of Nauruans to visit locations where their ancestors had lived while in wartime exile. This visit is intended to honor their shared history, deepen understanding of past sacrifices, and further strengthen the bonds of friendship between the peoples of Nauru and the FSM.

During the meeting, Ms. Aroi formally presented an official invitation for President Simina to attend the 58th Independence Day celebrations in Nauru. She expressed her government’s appreciation for the FSM’s long-standing cooperation and the continued goodwill between both nations.

President Simina thanked the Special Envoy for the invitation and reaffirmed the FSM’s commitment to its close and enduring partnership with Nauru. Vice President Palik noted the importance of commemorating historical events that connect Pacific communities and emphasized the FSM’s readiness to support efforts that acknowledge shared heritage and promote regional unity.

The courtesy call concluded with both sides expressing optimism for the upcoming commemorations and their shared commitment to continued cooperation and friendship.



United Upgrades Guam Airport lobby experience and announces first MAX 8 Aircraft to arrive in february 2026

United Airlines

December 2, 2025

Hagåtña, Guam – United Airlines celebrated the completion of its Guam lobby refresh with a ribbon-cutting event at the Antonio B. Won Pat International Airport. The transformed United check-in experience includes 15 new and efficient next-generation kiosks, bag drop lanes, and upgraded customer service counters.

The new lobby experience is designed to save customers time during check-in and increase expediency with United’s new high-efficiency kiosks. The new kiosks are up to 55% faster than the previous kiosks and allow customers to check in, change seats, print bag tags, and use many other robust features to manage their travel. Customers save an average

of 19 seconds during check-in, with the average session time now under two minutes overall, and under one minute for customers who pre-pay for their bags.

Sam Shinohara, United’s Managing Director of Airport Operations in Asia-Pacific, said, “United continues to invest in elevating the Guam travel experience for our customers in the region. The Guam airport lobby now offers some of the most advanced and efficient kiosks in our system. Customers will enjoy our new check-in process, which aligns with other United hubs worldwide. The new process offers a more seamless check-in experience, faster technology, and shortens the wait time overall.”

The refreshed lobby comes ahead of the arrival of United’s first Boeing 737



MAX 8 in Guam, which is scheduled to arrive in February of 2026 and will replace its Guam fleet of Boeing 737-800s by the end of next year. The MAX 8 aircraft will offer up to 166 seats total, including up to 16 United FirstSM seats. Other features include United’s signature

interior with seatback entertainment in every seat, larger overhead bins for every passenger's carry-on bag, Wi-Fi available for purchase, more extra-legroom seating, and wireless Bluetooth connectivity.

FSM Vice President Aren B. Palik meets with Pohnpei State Leadership on National Tax Reform

FSM Information Services

December 5, 2025

Pohnpei — The Pohnpei State Government welcomed the Honorable Aren B. Palik, Vice President of the Federated States of Micronesia and Chair of the FSM Tax Reform Steering Committee, for a working visit focused on ongoing national tax modernization efforts.



The meeting, held in the Governor’s Cabinet Conference Room, brought together key national and state stakeholders. In attendance were Lt. Governor Herolyn S. Movick; Secretary of the FSM Department of Finance and Administration; Legal Counsel Lam Dang; private sector representative Mr. Richie Adams; and the Director of the Pohnpei State Department of Resources and Development.

Vice President Palik outlined the committee’s priorities and the importance of coordinated state-national engagement as the FSM moves toward a more efficient, transparent, and sustainable tax system. Pohnpei State leadership

reaffirmed its commitment to productive dialogue and to ensuring that any reforms support economic growth, fairness for taxpayers, and improved public services.

The discussion covered technical considerations, legislative timelines, and the need for continued outreach to the private sector and the community. Participants agreed to maintain close collaboration as the national process advances.

The Pohnpei State Government extends its appreciation to Vice President Palik and the FSM delegation for their engagement and looks forward to continued partnership in strengthening the nation’s fiscal future.

Ambassador of Japan attends International Day of Persons with Disabilities event in Pohnpei

Embassy of Japan to the FSM

December 3, 2025

Pohnpei - On December 3, 2025, Ambassador Kagomiya and his wife Kumiko participated in the ceremony for International Day of Persons with Disabilities held by Pohnpei State Government. Community members, students, government officials, and members of the diplomatic corps gathered at the meeting where students exhibited musical performances.



Lieutenant Governor Herolyn S. Movick of Pohnpei State and other participants called for the empowerment of persons of disabilities and emphasized the importance of social inclusion, with which Ambassador strongly sympathized.



Acting Governor Movick attends swearing-in ceremony for new law enforcement officers

Pohnpei Public Information

December 12, 2025

Kolonia, Pohnpei – Acting Governor Herolyn S. Movick attended the swearing-in ceremony for new law enforcement officers joining the

Pohnpei State Department of Public Safety.

Following a pinning ceremony conducted by family members, Acting Governor Movick delivered remarks congratulating the new officers and

encouraging them in the important work they are undertaking to serve and protect the community.

Acting Governor Movick also participated in a personnel inspection of the officers alongside Director of

the Department of Public Safety Eltes Pelep and Chief of Police and Security Kehper Joel.

The Pohnpei State Government extends its congratulations to all the new officers and their families.



Pohnpei State Government receives dividend from Caroline Fishing Corporation

Pohnpei Public Information

December 15, 2025

Kolonia, Pohnpei – Governor Stevenson A. Joseph today received a dividend check from the Caroline Fishing Corporation (CFC) during a brief ceremony at the Governor's Office.

conveyed warm Season's greetings on behalf of the Board and Management.

Governor Joseph expressed his sincere appreciation to Mr. Perman and the Board members present – Mr. Kioshy Phillip, Mrs. Sihna Lawrence, and CFC CEO Mr. Marko Kamber – for their continued commitment and contributions.

appropriate processing in accordance with established procedures and legal requirements.

The Pohnpei State Government values its partnership with the Caroline Fishing Corporation and looks forward to continued collaboration in support of the state's development priorities.

Mr. Ferny Perman, representing the CFC Board of Directors, presented the check to Governor Joseph and

The check was subsequently entrusted to Director Sihna Lawrence for



Acting Governor Movick celebrates student achievement at annual Christmas Song contest

Pohnpei Public Information

December 12, 2025

Pohnpei — Acting Governor Herolyn S. Movick joined students, educators, and families today at the Department of Education's annual Christmas Song Contest, delivering remarks that celebrated music as a

powerful force for unity, healing, and human connection.

The competition featured two categories, with Wone Elementary School earning top honors in the Elementary division and SDA High School claiming victory in the High School category.

In her address, Acting Governor Movick reflected on music as more than mere notes in the air, describing it as a language that speaks directly to the heart and serves as a bridge connecting cultures, ages, and experiences. She noted that music transcends borders and generations, offering healing when hearts are heavy and bringing people together in harmony.

The Acting Governor connected the contest's theme, "The Greatest Gift," to the deeper meaning of music itself. She emphasized that the greatest gifts are not measured in wealth, but rather in the uplifting of the human

spirit through love and creativity, all of which music embodies.

Movick highlighted how music teaches essential life skills, including creativity, discipline, practice, and perseverance. She explained that every song begins with imagination and requires dedication to bring to life. The Acting Governor also praised the unifying power of music demonstrated at the event, where voices and instruments came together in harmony.

In closing, Acting Governor Movick told participants that while competitions produce only one winner per category, she considers all students winners for sharing their God-given gifts. She reminded them that the greatest gift is not just the music itself, but how they choose to share it with others. By sharing their talents, she said, students give hope, happiness, and inspiration to the world—gifts that no one can take away and that make the world a more harmonious place.



Ambassador of Romania visits Ambassador Kagomiya

Embassy of Japan to the FSM

December 2, 2025

Pohnpei - On December 2, 2025, Ambassador Kagomiya received a courtesy call from Her Excellency Răduța Dana Matache, Ambassador of Romania newly accredited to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). Ambassador Matache is a non-resident Ambassador with residence in Manila, Philippines.

Both Ambassadors discussed the

friendly relations between their own countries and the FSM and confirmed that Japan as well as Romania share common values such as rule of law, democracy, and peace with the FSM. They also discussed the economy and development cooperation, and how Japan and Romania can cooperate with each other and with the FSM.

Furthermore, on December 1, 2025, Ambassador Kagomiya as well as the diplomatic corps attended the Presentation of Credential Ceremony

for H.E. Răduța Dana Matache, who presented her Credentials to His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the FSM. In her remarks, Ambassador Matache explained that December 1 is Romania's National Day (Great Union Day), and that it is meaningful for the first Ambassador of Romania to the FSM to be accredited on its National Day.



Fiji's HIV Epidemic Escalates

New rapid assessment highlights urgent gaps in access to safe injecting equipment, HIV prevention, and stigma-free care among people who inject drugs

Joint Press Release

December 19, 2025

Suva, Fiji – A new rapid assessment reveals that unsafe injecting practices, driven by an absence of harm reduction services such as needle/syringe programmes, are putting people who inject drugs in Fiji at increased risk of HIV transmission. The findings come as the Pacific island-nation continues to face one of the fastest growing HIV epidemics in the world.

Commissioned by the World Health Organization's (WHO) Division of Pacific Technical Support and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the assessment was carried out on the request of Fiji's Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) by the Kirby Institute at the University of New South Wales, Fiji National University and the Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL). The study, funded by The Global Fund, provides an in-depth assessment of drug use, risk behaviors, health-seeking behaviours, and gaps in service delivery, to strengthen Fiji's public health response.

The study combined a desk review of quantitative data, one-on-one interviews with 56 people who inject drugs and five talanoas - a traditional, inclusive way of storytelling and dialogue - held with 50 key informants representing civil society, healthcare workers, government ministries, law enforcement agencies, and faith-based organizations.

HIV cases in Fiji, which has a population of just under 1 million, have been rising sharply. In 2024, 1583 new HIV cases

were reported nationally, while 1226 cases were notified in the first six months of 2025 alone. UNAIDS modelled estimates suggest that the total number of people living with HIV in Fiji is higher and has been increasing rapidly from around 2000 in 2020 to an estimated 6100 in 2024. Among people starting HIV treatment in 2024, 48 percent were people who inject drugs, highlighting the disproportionate impact on this group.

All participants in the rapid assessment interviews reported that because of a lack of access to sterile needle/syringes, they had at some time reused a needle/syringe after someone else. This places them at high risk of HIV, viral hepatitis, and other injection-related infections. While so-called "bluetoothing" has been widely reported in the media, the researchers found little evidence of this high-risk practice, which involves sharing blood between users after one person has injected a drug.

Methamphetamine was the most commonly injected drug. Many participants reported that their first injection - often with a potentially contaminated needle/syringe - occurred when trying the drug for the first time. This means that people, particularly young people, are at risk of HIV and hepatitis from the very first moment they use drugs. Compounding the issue, most had low awareness of HIV, and many faced difficulties accessing HIV testing and treatment services.

The most pressing recommendation of the rapid assessment is to make sterile needle/syringes available and accessible to people who inject drugs. Needle/

syringe programmes (NSP) are an evidence-based, public health and human rights intervention that enables people who inject drugs to protect their health and access essential services without stigma.

Fiji's Minister for Health and Medical Services, Hon. Dr Atonio Lalabalavu said, "The Ministry recognises the vital role of sterile needles and syringes in preventing new infections linked to equipment sharing. The National HIV Outbreak and Cluster Response Taskforce, with our international partners, is working to rapidly introduce a needle and syringe programme as part of our urgent public health response."

Such programmes are recommended by WHO and several other health partners, and implemented in over 90 countries worldwide.

WHO Director of Pacific Technical Support and WHO Representative to the South Pacific, Dr Mark Jacobs said, "Evidence-based interventions, such as needle and syringe programmes, are proven to prevent HIV and hepatitis, save lives, and protect communities. This assessment gives us the data that can guide action, strengthen public health responses, and ensure that every person at risk has access to the care and prevention services they need."

The lead researcher on the study, Kirby Institute Professor Lisa Maher, said that the findings provided important baseline data. "We are now working with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services and key partners on HIV prevention and harm reduction, including the

implementation of NSP. Additionally, in collaboration with AIVL, we recently trained 15 people who inject drugs to conduct peer education and outreach with their communities. People who inject drugs will need to be front and centre of the response in order to stop this epidemic."

UNDP Resident Representative in the Pacific Office in Fiji, Munkhtuya Altangerel emphasized, "The findings of this assessment are a wake-up call for all of us. Fiji's HIV epidemic is not just a health issue - it is a development and human rights challenge that threatens lives, communities, and progress. We must act decisively and urgently to scale up harm reduction, expand access to HIV testing and treatment, and ensure that no one is left behind."

To tackle Fiji's escalating HIV epidemic, the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, in collaboration with WHO, UNDP and partners, is implementing a comprehensive HIV Surge Strategy (2024-2027) and HIV Outbreak Response Plan. This includes expanding HIV testing and treatment services, strengthening outreach to key populations, and fast-tracking the introduction of harm reduction measures such as Needle/Syringe Programmes (NSPs).

These efforts aim to reduce new infections, improve access to treatment, and ensure stigma-free, confidential care for all. Without urgent intervention, the number of people living with HIV in Fiji is projected to rise dramatically, with severe health and social consequences.

Opinion Editorial

Human Rights Day 2025

By Miles Young

Last Wednesday, 10 December 2025, marked Human Rights Day across the globe, commemorating the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. Born from the devastation of World War II, the UDHR is an international legal framework designed to prevent atrocities, protect human dignity, and create conditions under which people and communities can flourish. This framework is not abstract – it belongs to each of us. When everyday people understand and claim their rights – and when States uphold their obligations to protect and promote rights – societies will thrive.

The theme for Human Rights Day 2025 was “Our Everyday Essentials,” to remind us that human rights are not distant legal principles but shape the lives we live each day. Whether raising a family in safety, practicing our faith, going to school or work, accessing health care, speaking freely, protecting our land and oceans, or simply enjoying clean water and nutritious food – these everyday essentials are made possible because of human rights in practice. When people know their rights and feel empowered to claim them, human rights become a living force, strengthening the social fabric and enabling everyone to fulfil their potential in all their diversities.

While we have every reason to celebrate Human Rights Day, there remains much to do in advancing human rights in the Pacific, particularly with respect to the rights of women and girls, persons with disabilities, and Pacific Islanders of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics. We must also recognise that the recent past has seen significant global backsliding in human rights, diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and good governance. We in the Pacific are not immune from these developments, particularly in the face of growing pressures, including climate impacts, social inequalities, demographic shifts, and increasing expectations on public institutions. These challenges highlight why human rights matter: they provide a blueprint for fairness, accountability, and dignity, and they help communities stay united in difficult times. Discrimination and exclusion weaken societies. When

some people are pushed aside, everyone loses. Potential goes untapped, trust erodes, and communities become less safe and less resilient.

Recently, the Pacific has demonstrated what becomes possible when the human rights framework is understood, claimed, and shaped by our communities. Human rights can flourish when rooted in Pacific cultures, Indigenous knowledge, and the relational values that bind our societies – values that emphasise collective wellbeing, mutual care and respect, and harmony with our environment.

One powerful example is the Pacific’s leadership in making the international human rights system more tangible and accessible. In 2020 and again in April this year, the Pacific – supported by the Pacific Community (SPC) – facilitated visits to Apia, Samoa, and Suva, Fiji, of UN human rights treaty bodies that traditionally undertake their work out of Geneva. Hundreds of Pacific government representatives, civil society groups, faith-based organisations, and community leaders engaged directly with these bodies in our own region. This grounded the talanoa in lived Pacific experience and empowered Pacific people to speak in their own voices about the issues affecting their lives. The visits also gave the UN bodies a deeper understanding of Pacific realities, resulting in guidance that is more relevant and useful for our context. Above all, having these bodies in our islands brought human rights sharply and deeply into public awareness, making them feel real, accessible, and owned by the people they are designed to protect.

A second example is the Pacific’s remarkable leadership in the global campaign that resulted in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) advisory opinion on climate change. Initiated by students at the University of the South Pacific and advanced by the Vanuatu government and other Pacific governments, the campaign united 13 Pacific Island countries and numerous regional organisations. The advisory opinion affirmed that States have legally binding obligations, including under human rights law, to protect the climate system for present and future generations. Using the frame of human rights and international law more broadly, Pacific peoples shared testimonies, scientific evidence, and

lived experience with the ICJ to shape this historic outcome to confront climate change, the greatest challenge facing our region. This was human rights in action: grounded in community stories, carried by youth leadership, and driven by Pacific solidarity. Moving forward, we look to Pacific leadership to ensure that the advisory opinion is effectively used to implement global actions to effectively respond to climate change.

A third example lies in the Pacific’s recognition of Indigenous and traditional knowledge (ITK) as a foundation for human rights and sustainable development. For example, traditional land and marine management systems in Fiji, Vanuatu, and Solomon Islands are informing contemporary environmental protections and biodiversity conservation. The Vanua Diploma programme, led by the Great Council of Chiefs and the Fiji National University, strengthens Indigenous leadership grounded in cultural values and aligned with international human rights instruments including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. These examples show how human rights gain strength and meaning when they resonate with cultural identity, community structures, and shared responsibilities.

Taken together, these three examples – alongside the Pacific Forum Leaders 2025 Ocean of Peace Declaration and the 2018 Boe Declaration which broadens the concept of security to include human rights, humanitarian assistance, and environmental resilience – tell a powerful story about the Pacific’s place in the global human rights ecosystem. We are not merely engaging with a system built elsewhere – we are shaping it, demonstrating how human rights can be applied creatively, culturally, and collectively to improve people’s lives while upholding universal principles.

As we acknowledge Human Rights Day 2025, we remember that the UDHR was created during a time of deep global crisis, to forge a path of hope, dignity, and unity. Today, as the Pacific faces its own challenges, the human rights framework remains one of our strongest tools for building societies where everyone is valued, safe,

and can contribute and thrive regardless of gender, age, ability, identity, culture, or background.

But human rights will only reach their full power in the Pacific when they are understood, embraced, and claimed by everyday people. When communities know how human rights protect them, when young people see human rights as tools for shaping their future, and when all Pacific peoples recognise human rights as aligned with our cultures and values, our region becomes stronger. So, in acknowledging Human Rights Day, we invite all Pacific peoples to learn and engage more deeply in human rights and use the human rights framework to achieve the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders’ vision of a “resilient Pacific Region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion and prosperity, that ensures all Pacific peoples can lead free, healthy and productive lives.”

Mr Miles Young is the Director of the Human Rights and Social Development Division at the Pacific Community (SPC) based in the organisation’s regional office in Suva, Fiji. Born and raised in Fiji, he has over 25 years of professional experience, largely working as a human rights and rule of law development practitioner across the Pacific, Asia and Africa, including with the Australia-Indonesia Partnership for Justice Programme in Indonesia, and the International Development Law Organization in Italy and Australia. Miles has worked on a wide range of substantive areas in the human rights and rule of law spaces including access to justice, women’s rights and gender equality, constitution-making, judicial administration, international trade law, and food security. Miles has also worked in private legal practice in Fiji, Australia, and Indonesia, and holds degrees in politics and law from the University of Sydney, Australia.



Photo credit International Court of Justice

Opinion Editorial

How Green Energy can help prevent Gender-Based Violence in the Pacific



Electrified households report lower acceptance of domestic violence. Why? Because



committees. They emphasised the need for more trainings on appliances, electrical safety, bookkeeping and business planning. Youth requested Wi-Fi and digital access to increase education and employment opportunities.

electricity brings radio, phones and internet, all tools that connect families to new ideas, rights information and positive role models.

Every year, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV), an international campaign that runs from 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) to 10 December (Human Rights Day), unite people across the world to call for the end of violence against women and girls. And in the Pacific, this call is especially urgent. The region records some of the highest GBV rates globally, with 60% of women in Vanuatu having experienced physical or sexual intimate-partner violence according to UN Women — well above the global average of 1 in 3.

But across Vanuatu, the Department of Energy, the Government of Japan and UNDP are demonstrating how the energy sector can drive a safer and more inclusive society — and green energy is already opening new pathways for safety, dignity and empowerment.

What is Gender-Based Violence?

Gender-based violence (GBV) refers to harmful acts - physical, sexual, emotional, or economic - rooted in unequal power and control. Women and girls are disproportionately affected, but men, boys and LGBTIQ+ people can also experience GBV.

It may come as a surprise to many - because the Pacific is often seen as a peaceful, community-oriented region - but Pacific Island countries record some of the highest rates of GBV in the world. Studies from UN Women and UNDP show that in Vanuatu, 68% of women have experienced emotional violence, and many forms of violence remain socially normalised. After natural disasters, GBV spikes, as seen following the 7.3 earthquake in December 2024 in the country.

This crisis is not only a matter of personal safety, but it is a structural barrier to women's participation in

education, economic life, leadership and community development.

Why talk about GBV when we talk about energy?

Because energy access is never “neutral.” It shapes how people move, work, learn, and whether they feel safe.

The UNDP VGET project, as part of the regional Pacific Green Transformation Project, a \$37 million Japan-funded initiative, is establishing pico-hydro power stations on Pentecost Island in Vanuatu. Beyond providing reliable energy contributing to the government's National Energy Roadmap commitments, the project integrates GBV prevention strategies.

In rural areas of Vanuatu, women and girls spend hours collecting firewood in isolated areas, walk in unlit spaces at night, and give birth in clinics with unreliable power. These realities increase their exposure to harassment, assault and domestic violence. As the recently completed Gender Study of Green Energy Transition in Vanuatu shows, energy access can help reduce these risks.

Pentecost Island: women leading the Green Transition

Pentecost Island in Vanuatu provides a powerful example of how gender equality, green energy and GBV prevention intersect. Under the VGET project, 21 women participated in a Green Skills Training Programme, building capacity for entrepreneurship and safe use of electricity. Community consultations engaged women, youth and persons with disabilities in planning around future pico-hydro electricity. Leadership trainings supported women to gain confidence in public speaking and community roles.

Women in Pentecost also expressed strong interest in joining local energy

committees. They emphasised the need for more trainings on appliances, electrical safety, bookkeeping and business planning. Youth requested Wi-Fi and digital access to increase education and employment opportunities.

What we learned from our work in Pentecost Island:

1. Less firewood, fewer dangers
Clean energy solutions such as pico-hydro, solar home systems and efficient cooking reduce the need for long, risky trips to gather wood for women and girls. Fewer hours spent in isolated areas equals lower exposure to violence.
2. Lighting for safety
Women on Pentecost Island repeatedly prioritised safe lighting for homes, roads and pathways. Lights mean mobility. Lights mean girls can study. Lights mean women can walk safely to clinics or markets after dark.
3. Electricity strengthens health and protection services
Health workers in Pentecost shared stories of assisting births with only phone torches because solar lighting failed. Reliable electricity means safer deliveries, functioning equipment, availability of confidential counselling services and stronger support for GBV survivors.
4. Energy unlocks economic independence
One of the strongest protective factors against violence is women's economic autonomy. Energy enables women to run businesses—sewing, food processing, cold storage, retail—and generate their own income. In the VGET Household Survey, women ranked productive use of electricity as one of their top priorities.
5. Access to information reshapes harmful norms

16 Days of Activism: a Call to Action
The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence calls on everyone to unite for the elimination of violence against women and girls. From the evidence gathered in Vanuatu, one message is clear: energy access is not only an infrastructure issue. It is a safety issue. A gender issue. A justice issue.

To deepen the impact of the green energy transition, we call for:

- Greater awareness of the link between energy poverty and GBV.
 - Expanded green skills and leadership opportunities for women, youth and persons with disabilities.
 - Standard GBV risk mitigation across all energy projects, including safeguarding, grievance mechanisms and referral pathways.
 - Stronger partnerships between Government agencies, energy programmes, civil society, women's groups, youth groups, private sector and development partners.
 - Towards a safer, greener, more inclusive Vanuatu
- As Vanuatu advances toward a renewable future, the country has an unprecedented opportunity to position green energy as a driver of gender equality and GBV prevention. Through continued investment, collaboration and community-led approaches, Vanuatu can demonstrate that when women have light, they have safety. When they have energy, they have opportunity. And when they have power, violence has no place to grow.

Written by Misel Sisi, Acting Director of Energy from the Ministry of Climate Change Adaptation, Meteorology and Geo-Hazards, Energy, Environment and Disaster Management - Government of Vanuatu, and Munkhtuya Altangerel, UNDP Pacific Office Resident Representative.

Letter to the Editor

Independent Prosecutor term begins, relocation to FSM awaits release of funds by Executive Branch

Dear Editor: On December 1, 2025, I signed my written oath of office and began my six-year term as the FSM's first Independent Prosecutor. I am humbled by the trust placed in me by the people, and I am excited to have begun the monumental task of building a culture of fiscal transparency and accountability in the FSM.

As I have begun my work, it has come to my attention that a question is circulating on the coconut wireless: "Where is the Independent Prosecutor?" A fair question. The answer: I am forced to work remotely from my home in Kansas until the Executive Branch releases the funds appropriated by Congress to fund the Office of the Independent Prosecutor (OIP).

I am hopeful the Executive Branch will comply with the new constitutional

obligations placed on it (and the other branches) by the wise drafters of the OIP amendment, which the citizens of the FSM wholeheartedly approved:

"(f) The Office of the Independent Prosecutor shall be independent of administrative control. The Office shall be adequately funded by Congress. No statute, regulation, or directive shall be enacted or enforced which has the effect of reducing or eliminating the independence, power, or capability of that Office. The compensation of the Independent Prosecutor and staff shall not be reduced during the term in office. The Independent Prosecutor shall report at least once a year to the President and Congress."

Rest assured that I plan to guard the independence of the OIP zealously: to do otherwise would be to acquiesce

to "government as usual", which the people by their votes clearly wish to change. And change is most definitely coming.

But I will need the public's help to guide and inform this change. Once the Executive Branch complies with the law and releases the OIP's funds, I plan to undertake what I call a "Three Questions Listening Tour" in each of the four states. In each state I plan to meet with all manner of citizens who have entrusted me with this mandate to bring change: traditional leaders, youth, women, clergy, business owners, community leaders, state and local political leaders. I will pose three simple questions and listen carefully to their replies:

1. What do you think is the purpose of the Office of the Independent

- Prosecutor?
- 2. Where do you think corruption happens in the FSM?
- 3. What would you like to see happen if/when corruption is uncovered in the FSM?

The answers to these questions will help me know how and where to focus my initial efforts as the OIP takes shape. I hope that as people gather with family, friends, and colleagues during the Christmas season, they might reflect upon and discuss these three questions because I will be eager to hear their answers. I look forward to meeting the people of the FSM in their home states early in 2026. Let the change begin.

*Lucas M. Cupps
Independent Prosecutor*

Australia celebrates volunteers who make a difference

Embassy of Australia to the FSM

December 5, 2025

FSM - Today, we celebrate the incredible contributions of volunteers worldwide. Your commitment and passion create lasting change and stronger communities. Thank you for inspiring hope and building a better future!

Ambassador Grant was delighted to host a morning tea with the incredible

Australian Volunteers International (AVI) team working in FSM, Palau, and the Marshall Islands. It was a wonderful opportunity to hear about their work, shared experiences, and reflect on the positive impact they're making across the North Pacific.

Thank you to AVI Regional Directors Apai Rokotuni and Kiji Faktaufon for organising this gathering and for their dedication to managing AVI's programs in the region.

The Australian Volunteers Program, funded by DFAT, fosters strong partnerships between Australia and communities to achieve equitable development outcomes. Learn more about their inspiring work here: <https://www.australianvolunteers.com/>



Darcy Tom to participate in U.S. Government Accountability International Fellowship Program

Pohnpei Office of the Public Auditor

December 11, 2025

Pohnpei - The Pohnpei Office of the Public Auditor (POPA) is honored to announce that Ms. Darcy Tom, one of our distinguished auditors, has been selected to participate in the prestigious U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) International Auditor Fellowship Program (IAFP). This highly regarded program will be held in Washington, D.C., from April 1 to July 1, 2026, bringing

together supreme audit institutions from around the world to strengthen accountability, transparency, and good governance through shared learning and collaboration.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to the GAO for granting this invaluable opportunity to SAI (Supreme Audit Institution) Pohnpei. POPA is confident that Ms. Tom will excel in representing our office and our nation, contributing

meaningfully to the fellowship and returning with insights that will further enhance our commitment to public accountability.

Congratulations, Ms. Darcy Tom! Your achievement is a proud milestone for POPA and for the people of Pohnpei.



Australia's Burnet Institute undertakes HIV/TB rapid assessment



Embassy of Australia to the FSM

December 12, 2025

FSM - As part of the efforts to strengthen healthcare responses in the Pacific, the Australian Government in partnership with the Burnet Institute undertook a rapid assessment of the HIV and Tuberculosis (TB) programs in the FSM.

The Burnet Institute specialists met with FSM Health Secretary Samo, Assistant Secretary Moses Pretrick and Medical Director, Dr Mayleen Ekiek and her team from the Communicable Diseases Prevention Unit of the Department of Health and Social Services.

The team also engaged with FSM

states health departments TB and HIV coordinators, development partners, and women and youth groups to learn more about TB and HIV collaborative response and management practices across FSM.

A report detailing the findings and recommendations will be shared with government and partners to

identify focus areas where there are opportunities to provide technical assistance to the FSM on its TB and HIV programs.

Australia remains a proud partner in advancing public health and building stronger communities across the FSM.

Strengthening Disability Partnership for an inclusive future

Embassy of Australia to the FSM

December 4, 2025

Pohnpei - The Australian Embassy team was honored to join the celebration event of International Day of People with Disability in Pohnpei.

Pohnpei Lt. Governor Movick emphasized the importance of inclusion saying: "Today we amplify the leadership of persons with disabilities.

They bring unique perspectives that strengthen our community and guide us toward a more inclusive future."

Australia is committed to working with Pohnpei and the wider FSM to promote accessibility, empowerment, and meaningful participation for all persons with disabilities.

"People with disabilities provide strong and diverse leadership. We

celebrate potential over limitation and empowerment over marginalization," said Ambassador Jenny Grant.

Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong recently announced an AUD \$50 million initiative "Stronger Movements, Stronger Futures" to empower organisations of people with disability across the Indo-Pacific. This will help to break down barriers, protect rights and create opportunities

for participation.

Australia is also funding a national screening program working with the FSM Department of Health and Social Services and UNICEF. The program will screen FSM students for disability and provide hearing aids, eye glasses and wheelchairs to help improve the lives of these young people.



Pacific leaders advance fast payments agenda to strengthen regional financial resilience

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

December 3, 2025

Nadi, Fiji - Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General Baron Divavesi Waqa has stressed the importance of modern fast payment systems as a cornerstone of financial resilience, inclusion, and regional economic integration in the Blue Pacific, during remarks delivered at the Pacific Fast Payments Workshop in Nadi, Fiji.

The workshop, held on December 3, 2025, was co-hosted by the Reserve Bank of Fiji, the World Bank, and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, and brought together senior officials, central bankers, development partners, and technical specialists from across the region.

Although unable to attend in person due to a meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum Officials Committee in Suva, Waqa said the timing of the workshop was critical as Pacific economies continue to navigate an evolving global financial landscape marked by rising compliance costs, declining correspondent banking relationships (CBRs), and the need for greater digital connectivity.

“Modern, interoperable payment systems

are essential to achieving the aspirations of the Pacific Roadmap for Economic Development,” Waqa said, pointing to their role in reducing transaction costs, strengthening connectivity, and enabling deeper participation in regional and global markets.

He referred to ongoing regional efforts under the Pacific Strengthening Correspondent Banking Relationships Project, which is being implemented by the Forum Secretariat in collaboration with the World Bank and supported by partners including Australia, New Zealand, the United States Treasury, the Asian Development Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. Additional support has also been provided by the United Kingdom, Japan, the European Union, and the Alliance for Financial Inclusion.

The project currently brings together eight Forum Island Countries that have pooled their International Development Association (IDA) allocations to respond collectively to the withdrawal of correspondent banking services. Papua New Guinea is expected to join the initiative in 2026 as its ninth member.

Through this collaboration, participating countries are exploring the development

of a Pacific Payments Mechanism, which would aggregate transaction flows across the region to improve economies of scale, enhance security, and lower the cost of cross-border payments for governments, businesses, and individuals.

Waqa noted that fast payment systems have transformed economies globally by enabling secure, real-time transactions and are particularly vital for Pacific countries where remittances and trade remain economic lifelines. He added that such systems provide features that address many compliance concerns that have contributed to the loss of correspondent banking services in the region.

He also pointed to the recent establishment of Visa’s regional hub in Suva as a positive development supporting digital payment infrastructure and broader regional digital transformation.

Throughout the workshop, technical specialists were expected to share insights on emerging trends in digital and fast payment systems, with discussions focused on solutions tailored to the Pacific’s unique geographic and economic



circumstances.

Waqa expressed appreciation to the World Bank for its continued technical support, saying it has been instrumental in helping Forum Island Countries navigate complex compliance requirements and design payment solutions suited to regional needs.

He closed by wishing participants success in their deliberations and said he looked forward to outcomes aimed at strengthening regional financial integration and resilience across the Blue Pacific.

“Tubwa, I thank you,” Waqa said in closing.

Tuvalu, RMI, FSM and Cook Islands first up for FFA payout on U.S. Treaty funds

Pacific Journos Online

December 5, 2025

Manila – Four Pacific parties to the U.S.–Pacific Fisheries Treaty today welcomed signing of the latest schedule for their share of a regional fund worth USD 60m annually, or USD 600m for the decade to 2033. Renegotiated over the years, the signing of documentation today by the Cook Islands, FSM, RMI and Tuvalu means FFA can now process their annual allocations under 2023-2033 payment schedule for the US Treaty. Other FFA members will also be able to receive their funds once their paperwork is also received.

The annual payments for the decade 2023–2033 provide a critical and predictable source of public revenue for participating Pacific economies and support regional efforts to manage tuna resources sustainably.

Today’s formalities track a long history between Pacific nations and the US -- the 1988 US-Pacific Fisheries Treaty is the

only multilateral tuna fisheries agreement of its kind in the world, allowing access for US tuna fishing in the EEZs of FFA members – home to some of the healthiest tuna stocks in the world.

Speaking on behalf of Tuvalu following the signing formalities, Hon. Sa’aga Teafa, Minister of Natural Resources Development, underlined how central fisheries are to his country’s economy, “Fisheries revenues are the backbone of Tuvalu’s economy, contributing a very large share of government income and underpinning essential public services for our people. This schedule under the U.S.–Pacific Fisheries Treaty helps us to safeguard that vital revenue stream while we work with partners to manage tuna sustainably for future generations.”

Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority Director, Glen Joseph, stressed the importance of Treaty funds for jobs and resilience. “For the Marshall Islands, fisheries contribute a significant share of our GDP and are one of the main drivers

of jobs and export earnings. The continued U.S. Treaty payments channeled through FFA are not just numbers on a balance sheet; they are a direct investment in our communities, our infrastructure and our long-term economic resilience,” he said.

From the Federated States of Micronesia, Acting Executive Director of NORMA, Jamel James, highlighted the role of tuna in national development for his nation. “In the Federated States of Micronesia, tuna and other oceanic fisheries account for a substantial portion of national output and public revenue, making this sector central to our development plans. This Treaty schedule gives us greater certainty over fisheries income so we can plan investments in jobs, services and climate resilient growth with more confidence.”

Cook Islands Secretary for Marine Resources, Pamela Maru, emphasized the contribution of tuna fisheries and related revenues to economic growth, food security and livelihoods. “For the Cook Islands, fisheries make an important



contribution to GDP and are a key pillar of our blue economy strategy. The U.S. Treaty funds, alongside our own access revenues, help us to maximize the value of tuna while strengthening monitoring, control and surveillance across our vast ocean space.”

As the WCPFC session ended, FFA confirmed Niue had also completed the final signatures ahead of transfer of funds. With their updated documentation now in place, the five Pacific Island Parties jointly reaffirmed their commitment to regional solidarity under the Treaty, and ensuring that tuna resources continue to generate sustainable economic benefits for their peoples, and for future generations.

Micronesia advances reef fisheries research

The Nature Conservancy

November 30, 2025

Micronesia - The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Micronesia and Polynesia, is working with local organizations across Micronesia to fill critical gaps in fisheries data and support sustainable reef management. Through ongoing studies in Palau and the Marshall Islands, scientists are collecting detailed information on reef fish to help communities make informed decisions about their marine resources.

In Palau, TNC is collaborating with the Bureau of Fisheries, the Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC), and the Coral Reef Research Foundation (CRRF) on the country's largest-ever reef fish life history study. Since the project began in 2023, the team has sampled over 2,000 fish to study their growth, lifespan, and reproduction. For the first time, management decisions in Palau will be guided by data collected from local fish populations, rather than relying on information from other regions.

In the Marshall Islands, TNC and

the Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority (MIMRA) expanded fisheries monitoring at the Outer Islands Fish Market Center (OIFMC) in Majuro. The team has recorded length data from 106 species of coral reef fish from outer islands, totalling more than 35,000 measurements. Using this data, they completed the first fisheries assessment of six key species, including two grouper species that are particularly important to local fisheries, laying the foundation for evidence-based harvest strategies in the country.

Both projects are building local expertise in fisheries monitoring and strengthening partnerships among research agencies, government authorities, and communities. In both countries, local interns and partners are trained in fish sampling, data collection, and analysis using TNC's open-source FishKit toolkit, ensuring skills and knowledge remain in-country.

"These efforts are a major step toward fisheries management led by local science," said Dr. Alex Filous, Director of Sustainable Fisheries at TNC Micronesia and Polynesia. "By combining community knowledge with robust data, we're helping island nations manage their reef resources on their own terms."



1,000 heat-tested corals planted in Ngaraard to support reef recovery

The Nature Conservancy

November 30, 2025

Palau - Researchers from the Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC) have completed a new round of coral restoration work in Ngaraard State, in northern Palau. The team identified and planted corals that naturally tolerate higher temperatures, aiming to help reefs recover and better withstand future marine heatwaves.

This work is part of a collaborative project between PICRC, Stanford University and The Nature Conservancy, Micronesia and Polynesia, a three-year project funded by the G20 Coral Research & Development Accelerator Platform (CORDAP), titled Scaling up identification, protection, and local management of coral reefs resistant to future climate stress, aimed at building the capacity of Pacific Island researchers to identify and manage climate-resilient reefs.

PICRC researchers Dawnette Olsudong, Mengiau Sasao and Dr. Jue Lalas led the recent activity to collect coral fragments from source colonies from Ngaraard, test their heat tolerance in PICRC's lab, and outplant them onto the restoration site. So far, the team has outplanted about 1,000 corals from 24 species. The outplanted corals are regularly monitored to track their survival and growth and to compare how well laboratory results match real-world conditions.

Dr. Yimnang Golbuu, Coral Resilience Director at The Nature Conservancy, Micronesia and Polynesia, emphasized the broader significance of the work. "This work in Ngaraard is more than coral planting—it is about safeguarding the future of our reefs and the communities that depend on them. By combining the expertise of PICRC, Stanford University, and The

Nature Conservancy, Micronesia and Polynesia, we are building a powerful partnership that blends local knowledge, cutting-edge science, and global support. Together, we are demonstrating that resilience is not just a scientific concept, but a shared commitment to ensure Pacific reefs thrive in the face of climate change."

The restoration work in Ngaraard will continue in the coming years, with additional coral testing, outplanting, and site assessments planned, along with broader efforts across Micronesia under the CORDAP project. More activities that will involve local community members in the restoration efforts will also be conducted.

To learn more about the project Scaling up identification, protection, and local management of coral reefs resistant to future climate stress, visit CORDAP.



New exhibit 'Ocean of Peace' in Schaefer International Gallery opens Saturday, Dec. 6

Maui Now

December 6, 2025

Maui - The Maui Arts & Cultural Center has announced "Ocean of Peace," a new group exhibition featuring six artists of Micronesian heritage who integrate the beliefs and practices of their cultures with lived experiences in the Hawaiian Islands to build connections across island chains. The gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., with free admission.

The exhibit is the first in a collaborative series between the MACC, the East-West Center Arts Program and the Pacific Islands Development Program. The project builds on a framework endorsed by Pacific Island leaders in 2025 that envisions the Pacific as a space of harmony and cooperation drawn from traditional values and cultural customs. The project will take form through evolving initiatives that vary in regional focus, starting here with a timely focus on Micronesia, whose islands currently sit at a critical juncture of international diplomacy.

Curators for "Ocean of Peace" include Jonathan Yukio Clark, director of Schaefer International Gallery at the MACC; Mary Therese Perez Hattori, Ed.D., retired director of the Pacific Islands Development Program at East-West Center; Eric Chang, arts program manager at the East-West Center; and Annie Reynolds, Ph.D., who is curator of the East-West Center Gallery.

"The Pacific Ocean, our 'Blue Pacific Continent,' covers about 30% of the earth's surface," Hattori said. "Micronesia spans 2.6 million square miles of that ocean and is a major maritime region of growing geopolitical consequence and commercial interest to foreign nations. The challenges to our security, environment, ways of life and peace must be addressed. The first step to addressing challenges is awareness. To that end, these artists and curators hope to raise awareness and appreciation for our peoples, places and cultures; together we can realize an Ocean of Peace."

The installation is organized into thematic areas that interweave the works of six artists:

- James Bamba (Guåhan [Guam]/Northern Mariana Islands), a master of Chamorro weaving techniques, who uses a variety of hand-harvested fibers to recreate historic objects and interpret new forms.
- Poetry artist Carol Ann Carl (Pohnpei), who explores formats ranging from spoken audio to visual projection to present her compositions.
- Gillian Dueñas (Guåhan [Guam]), who works in digital rendering and mixed media painting to highlight regional narratives and Pacific interconnectedness.
- Kalany Omengkar (Belau/Northern Mariana Islands), who uses digital media to create contemporary designs, digital paintings and animated storyboards of timeless legends and cultural practices.
- Anthony Watson (Belau), who works in sculptural media of wood and metal, using techniques of carving, inlay and lashing to shape canoe vessel forms and utilitarian tools.
- Lissette Yamase (Chuuk), who through charcoal drawing and oil painting, explores a range of subjects, from quiet portrayals of everyday moments to pointed historical references.

"While rooted in both history and heritage, these artists' interwoven visions are distinctly contemporary," said



Clark, who runs the gallery. "They each show a great amount of nuance and respect in how they interpret historical narratives and forms, but they are also willing to push the boundaries of their chosen media to connect their stories with current-day experiences across Micronesia, Hawai'i and the greater Pacific."

The exhibition launches on Saturday, Dec. 6 with a free public event from 10 a.m. to noon, called "Observe & Play Family Day – In Honor of Shirley Yokouchi." Families and visitors of all ages are invited to visit the gallery to meet each of the artists at interactive art-making stations inspired by the themes of Ocean of Peace.

Additional free public programs will take place in January, which include a screening of the documentary film "Remathau: People of the Ocean" on Jan. 14 and the return of Activations: After Hours at the Gallery on Jan. 16.

USCGC Myrtle Hazard conducts routine port call in Pohnpei

Embassy of the United States to the FSM

December 8, 2025



FSM - The United States Coast Guard Cutter (USCGC) Myrtle Hazard conducted port calls in Kosrae and Pohnpei this past week, reinforcing the strong partnership between the United States and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

U.S. Ambassador Jennifer Johnson and members of the embassy team visited the vessel and met with the crew, recognizing their commitment to maritime security and regional cooperation. "The United States and the Federated States of Micronesia share a deep and enduring partnership," said Ambassador Johnson. "Visits like

this by the USCGC Myrtle Hazard demonstrate our ongoing commitment to working together for a stronger, safer, and prosperous Pacific."

The USCGC Myrtle Hazard's presence in Pohnpei is reflective of the long-standing cooperation between the United States and FSM in maritime safety, law enforcement, search and rescue, and disaster response. These joint efforts promote regional stability and prosperity, reflecting the shared values and mutual respect that define U.S.-FSM relationship.

Yap State audit office benefits from PASAI's organizational and HR support

PASAI

December 5, 2025

Colonia, Yap- Program Director for the Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions (PASAI), Sinaroseta Palamo-Iosefo, spent this week providing in-person technical support to the staff at the Office of the Yap State Public Auditor in the Federated States of Micronesia.

Early in the week Ms Palamo-Iosefo reviewed the office's strategic management systems and supported staff to establish processes to monitor and report on the office's performance against its strategic plan. Her organisational support included reviewing the office's overall audit plan for the fiscal year ending 30 September 2026 and working with the Audit Manager, Makereta Dyer, and Chief Investigator, Marie Lamaar, to establish processes to develop an overall audit plan.

Ms Palamo-Iosefo explained, "The established processes now ensure guidance is available and the audit office's organisational planning practices are sustained.

"One of my objectives was to train staff on the importance of strategic audit planning so the audit office can focus on key government priorities and matters of public interest, maximise its audit coverage, submit reports in a timely manner and conduct quality and impactful audits and investigations," she said.

As well as technical support, Ms

Palamo-Iosefo worked with Ms Dyer and the Administrative Assistance, Maxine Finnginam, to review the office's human resource (HR) management practices.

To implement the office's existing HR strategy, Ms Palamo-Iosefo also supported staff to identify competencies needed for individuals and create a learning and professional development (LPD) plan.

"Audit offices can support staff competency development by refining job profiles, creating LPD plans and maintaining databases of staff progress towards professional certification," Ms Palamo-Iosefo said.

Yap State Public Auditor, Bryan Dabugsiy, said, "We deeply appreciate the unwavering support of PASAI, whose guidance continues to strengthen our organisational operations, from human resource development and strategic planning, to clarifying the vital roles each team member plays in fulfilling our mandate.

"PASAI's consistent partnership empowers us to advance our mission with greater impact, capacity and purpose," he said.

PASAI acknowledges the support of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).



Korea–Pacific Islands Foreign Ministers advance cooperation for a resilient, peaceful and prosperous Blue Pacific

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

Pacific Islands.

December 11, 2025

Seoul, South Korea - Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Foreign Ministers concluded the 6th Korea-Pacific Islands Foreign Ministers Meeting in Seoul held from 8-9 December, reaffirming their commitment to deepening cooperation under the theme "Partnerships for a Resilient, Peaceful, and Prosperous Pacific".

This marked the first Korea – Pacific Islands Foreign Ministers' Meeting to include all Forum members, reinforcing the One Blue Pacific Principles of unity and solidarity as outlined in the Blue Pacific Principles for Dialogue and Engagement and the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

The biennial discussions, which are held to strengthen political dialogue and partnership, was co-chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, His Excellency, Hyun Cho, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Trade of Solomon Islands, Honourable Peter Shanel Agovaka. A PIF Secretariat delegation led by Secretary General, Baron Divavesi Waqa, provided support to the regional ministerial delegation.

The meeting was also attended by His Royal Highness, the Crown Prince of Tonga Tupouto'a 'Ulukalala, the President of New Caledonia, His Excellency, Alcide Ponga, Prime Minister of Niue, Honourable Dalton Talelagi, and Samoa's Deputy Prime Minister, Honourable Toelupe Poumulinuku Onesemo.

A joint statement released at the end of the meeting welcomed the continued elevation of Korea-PIF relations, including Korea's support for the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, as well as its focus on inclusive development, trade and investment, and regional solidarity.

Honourable Peter Shanel Agovaka in his opening remarks at the meeting highlighted the partnership between Korea and PIF is grounded in shared values and a shared commitment to the well-being of our peoples.

"Our partnership is strengthened when it aligns with Pacific-led mechanisms, and today's outcomes reflect our shared commitment to safeguarding our ocean, our resources, and the stability of our region," said Hon Agovaka.

Korea's Foreign Minister, His Excellency Cho Hyun reflected on the spirit of solidarity within the Pacific Islands Forum and how it also guides Korea's partnership with the

"Korea will keep convening our consultative mechanisms including the Foreign Ministers Meeting and the Senior Officials Meeting to build a more structured framework for collaboration, the Pacific must remain an arena of coexistence, harmony and cooperation," said H.E Hyun in his opening remarks at the meeting.

Korea reaffirmed its recognition of the Pacific Islands Forum as the region's premier political body and acknowledged the outcomes of the 54th PIF Leaders Meeting in Honiara in September and welcomed key regional achievements, including the establishment of the Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF), the Blue Pacific Ocean of Peace declaration, and progress on the Leaders' Policy on Partnerships and further expressed its commitment to advancing cooperation in technology and innovation and strengthening regional security. On this occasion, Korea announced its intention to contribute to the PRF next year.

On climate leadership, the Forum Ministers also stressed the urgency of global action and welcomed Korea's strong engagement on the climate agenda. Forum Ministers also expressed support for continued ambition aligned with the 1.5°C pathway and noted Korea's announcement of its 2035 Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).

Forum Ministers also reaffirmed the importance of sustainable ocean governance and acknowledged Korea's constructive role at the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

They commended Korea's support for combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, including initiatives delivered through the Korea-PIF Cooperation Fund, and emphasised the need for ongoing alignment with Pacific-led mechanisms.

Ministers committed to deepening cultural and people-to-people exchanges and strengthening cooperation to support innovation, digital connectivity, and trade.

The PIF Ministers welcomed Korea's initiative to co-host the 4th United Nations Ocean Conference with Chile in 2028, recognising this as a significant opportunity to amplify Pacific leadership and drive greater global investment and action to safeguard the ocean.

The first Korea-Pacific Islands Foreign Ministers meeting was launched in 2011, and the next meeting will be held in 2027.