

Former Pohnpei Speaker Nelson Pelep laid to rest; Leaders declare period of mourning

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

March 20, 2026

Kolonia, Pohnpei — Former Pohnpei Speaker and long-serving Senator Nelson Pelep was honored with a state funeral at the Pohnpei State Legislature on March 20, 2026, following his passing earlier this month. National and state leaders issued formal proclamations recognizing his decades of public service and declaring periods of mourning in his honor.



President Wesley W. Simina, in a presidential proclamation issued from Palikir, announced a national mourning period and ordered that the FSM national flag be flown at half-mast for

three consecutive days following the arrival of Pelep's remains in Pohnpei. The proclamation described Pelep as a dedicated leader whose life reflected a deep commitment to public service and

the people of Pohnpei.

At the state level, Governor Stevenson A. Joseph issued Executive Proclamation No. 26-02, similarly declaring a period

of mourning across Pohnpei State. Flags were lowered to half-staff for three days from March 20 to March 22, 2026, in

[Click here for continuation](#)

Additional filings outline competing claims in Independent Prosecutor case before FSM Supreme Court

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

March 20, 2026

FSM — A series of new court filings in Civil Action No. 2026-004 has deepened the legal dispute between the Office of the Independent Prosecutor (OIP) and the FSM national government, with both sides now sharply contesting the court's authority, the prosecutor's legal status, and whether the case should proceed at all.

The case, first reported in The Kaselehlie Press, stems from efforts by Independent Prosecutor Lucas M. Cupps to gain access to funds appropriated

by Congress for the newly created office, and to operate independently of executive branch control.

Cupps is represented in the matter by Pohnpei attorney Salomon M. Saimon. The respondents—the FSM national government and officials including Secretary of Finance Rose Nakanaga, Personnel Director Samson Pretrick, and Secretary of Justice Leonito Bacalando, Jr.—are represented by attorneys from the FSM Department of Justice, including Assistant Attorneys General Jesse Mihkel and Josef Rold, along with Acting Attorney General Josephine Lebehn James.

As previously reported, the Office of the Independent Prosecutor was created through a constitutional amendment and subsequent legislation, with Congress appropriating funding for its operation.

Cupps has argued that the executive branch has failed to transmit those funds, preventing the office from functioning. He has also taken steps indicating the start of potential investigations, including public statements and communications referencing possible criminal actions related to the handling of those funds.

The national government, however, has maintained that the office must comply

with existing laws governing public finance, personnel, and administration before it can operate.

In a newly filed motion, government attorneys ask the FSM Supreme Court to dismiss the case entirely, arguing that the court lacks jurisdiction and that the issues raised belong to Congress or fall under the political question doctrine.

The motion contends that the Independent Prosecutor must comply with existing statutes—specifically provisions of Titles 11, 52, and 55 of the FSM Code—and cannot unilaterally

[Click here for continuation](#)

Historic six-month elementary soccer league concludes in Pohnpei

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

March 21, 2026

Pohnpei - The Pohnpei Soccer Association Kids' Club has brought to a close its first-ever six-month elementary school football league.

Despite logistical challenges, weather disruptions, and limited resources, the extended competition proved successful, drawing strong participation from schools, coaches, and young players across Pohnpei. Organizers described the league as a historic achievement, saying that it moved beyond the traditional short-format tournaments to establish a sustained, structured competition for youth football.

The association acknowledged the support of school administrators, sponsors, coaches, and volunteers, while emphasizing the role of the players themselves. Their commitment, resilience, and enthusiasm carried the league through months of matches played under difficult conditions, including heavy rain and intense heat.

FINAL STANDINGS

#	Team	Pts	M	W · D · L	Goals
1	Kolonia	24	9	8 · 0 · 1	46 / 20
2	Ohmine	20	9	5 · 2 · 1	25 / 16
3	PCS	12	9	3 · 3 · 3	22 / 17
4	Sekere	8	9	2 · 2 · 4	23 / 24
5	SDA	7	9	2 · 1 · 5	16 / 37

A medal ceremony is scheduled for March 27 at the China-Kolonia Gym, where all participants will be recognized for their contributions, regardless of final standings.

The closing weeks of the league featured tightly contested matches and decisive results that confirmed the final standings.

Ohmine and PCS battled to a scoreless draw in a high-tempo, tactical encounter. Both teams created chances through effective wing play, but strong defensive organization on both sides kept the match level. The result left both teams dissatisfied, as Ohmine sought to push for first place while PCS aimed to secure third.

Sekere delivered one of the most dominant performances of the late season with a 4–0 victory over SDA, keeping pressure on the standings. Meanwhile, the race for the title narrowed, with Kolonia requiring just one more win to secure first place.

PCS strengthened its hold on third place with a 3–1 win over SDA, using width effectively to break through a congested midfield. In another fixture, Sekere showed determination against league leaders Kolonia but fell 3–0. Notably, Sekere fielded a squad largely composed of fourth-grade players, underscoring the developmental nature of the league.

Kolonia ultimately secured the championship, becoming the inaugural winners of what organizers describe as the first long-format youth football league in both Pohnpei and the FSM. Ohmine finished second, with PCS claiming third place.

In the final round, Kolonia capped its season with a commanding 6–1 win over SDA, while Ohmine edged Sekere 1–0 in a closely contested match. Though the results did not alter the standings, both games reflected the competitive spirit maintained throughout the league.

Beyond results, organizers pointed to the broader impact of the league: fostering teamwork, discipline, and unity among young players from diverse backgrounds.

Organizers say that the six-month competition has set a new standard for youth football in Pohnpei, demonstrating that sustained grassroots development is possible. With strong community backing and growing participation, the league is expected to serve as a foundation for future sporting initiatives in the State.



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Bill Jaynes
Managing Editor

**THE NEXT ISSUE OF
THE KASELEHLIE PRESS
WILL BE RELEASED ON:
April 8, 2026**

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

Monday, April 6, 2026

U.S. Army’s Oceania Engagement Team arrives in the Federated States of Micronesia

U.S Embassy to the FSM

March 6, 2026

Pohnpei— The U.S. Army’s Oceania Engagement Team (OET-FSM) arrived in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) on February 22, underscoring the United States’ enduring commitment to its partnership with the FSM and the broader Pacific region.

Oceania Engagement Team Federated States of Micronesia (or OET-FSM) will be in the FSM until January 2027 and will be present on the islands of Pohnpei, Kosrae, Yap, and Chuuk. During their stay, Oceania Engagement Team FSM will work closely with local authorities and communities, participating in a range of activities such as humanitarian assistance, partner nation capacity building, and regional security cooperation.

Oceania Engagement Team FSM is a specialized unit of the U.S. Army focused on supporting locally identified priorities, enhancing economic development, and strengthening relationships with partner nations. Since its establishment in 2019, Oceania Engagement Teams have operated throughout the Pacific, engaging in infrastructure projects, community outreach, economic development, and disaster preparedness response. The team is composed of U.S. Army Civil Affairs-trained Soldiers, each with a unique skillset including critical care nursing, bioengineering, childhood education and therapies, religion, and business development, and is dedicated to fostering collaboration, supporting local infrastructure development, enhancing disaster response capabilities.



Major Richbert Sim, Team Leader of the Oceania Engagement Team in Yap, stated, “The OET is dedicated to the overall stability, sustainability, sovereignty, and security of communities all across the FSM further solidifying the partnership and mutual

collaboration between the United States and the FSM.”

U.S. Ambassador to the FSM Jennifer Johnson added, “The arrival of the U.S. Army’s Oceania Engagement Team demonstrates the United States’ commitment to supporting FSM and the Pacific region. We are proud to collaborate on initiatives that promote security, resilience, and prosperity for all.”

...Nelson Pelep

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tribute to Pelep’s life and legacy.

Pelep’s career in public service spanned more than four decades. He began in June 1974 as a Journal Clerk and later served as Assistant Legislative Clerk and Information Officer. In 1981, he was elected as Senator representing Madolenihmw, a position he

held until 2015, becoming the longest-serving senator in the history of the Pohnpei Legislature.

He later served as Speaker of the Pohnpei Legislature from 2004 to 2011, where he played a central role in guiding legislative development during a critical period for the state. Beyond the legislature, Pelep also served as Director of the Department of Lands and as President of the 2nd Constitutional Convention, further shaping governance and land policy in Pohnpei.

Both proclamations recognized Pelep not only for his institutional knowledge and leadership, but also for his cultural grounding and service to his community. He was a respected member of the Soukoupul clan of Sokehs and was known for his role within the Wahnapora congregation.

During the funeral service at the Legislature chamber, Governor Joseph offered condolences to Pelep’s family and presented the state proclamation to his widow. Leaders and community members gathered to pay their respects, remembering Pelep as a steady and committed public servant whose contributions left a lasting mark on Pohnpei.

The joint recognition by national and state governments reflects the breadth of Pelep’s influence and the respect he earned over a lifetime of service.



Government monitors international fuel prices and supply conditions

FSM Information Services

March 20, 2026

Palikir, Pohnpei – On Wednesday, March 18, 2026, His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), concluded a meeting with Vital Energy – the FSM Petroleum Corporation (FSMPC) – board and management to discuss and receive an update on supply chain and energy price risks given the rapid developments amid heightened tensions in the Middle East and reported disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz, a critical corridor for global oil and LNG shipments.



been four (4) price increases in the last two (2) weeks in Guam, with average retail gasoline prices now exceeding \$6-\$8 per gallon.

Discussions with Vital FSM Petroleum Corporation (Vital FSMPC) confirmed that new cargoes of fuel have already been impacted by cost increases, and that due to the velocity and magnitude of this risk, it is inevitable that domestic fuel prices will be affected in the coming months if prices are sustained at these levels for many weeks.

Consumers should be aware that FSM operates under a price monitoring arrangement and a pricing policy framework model implemented and maintained by the FSMPC. The Government wishes to assure state governments, businesses, and the public that any domestic price movements over the coming months will only reflect the actual increased costs of procurement and transportation of products to the FSM.

His Excellency, President Wesley W. Simina, stated, “The foremost responsibilities are to safeguard supply, uphold stability, and maintain transparency with the people.”

The FSMPC team informed the President that effective controls are in place and that preparations have been made for the weeks ahead. The public is encouraged to remain calm but prudent as near-term risks are managed collectively. The team further reassured that, in the longer run, efforts will be accelerated to transition to cleaner, more resilient energy to reduce exposure to external shocks.

The Office of the President will continue working with Vital FSMPC and relevant agencies to monitor international markets and domestic impacts. Periodic public updates will be issued as the situation evolves.

Supply is Secure:

The Government wishes to assure state governments, businesses, and the public that fuel supply in the country remains secure at this early stage, and there are currently no issues with the supply of petroleum products to the FSM.

Though there are a number of high-profile media releases at international and regional levels reporting oil shortages, and some petroleum suppliers invoking ‘force majeure’ clauses of supply agreements, the Government has been reassured in its meeting with Vital FSM Petroleum Corporation (Vital FSMPC) that the strategic oil reserves across the FSM continue to be maintained, catering for short-term disruptions, and that the future pipeline of supply cargoes under contracted fuel supply arrangements with reputable supplier(s) remains on schedule.

Reports from around the region indicate escalating oil prices and oil shortages, and government entities, businesses, and the public are urged not to engage in panic buying or hoarding. There is sufficient product to meet requirements based on past purchasing practices and demand.

Vital FSM Petroleum Corporation (Vital FSMPC) continues to monitor this closely and will advise if there is a change in the situation.

Domestic Price Escalation Risks:

The Government notes with concern the velocity of price escalation being experienced regionally, noting that international crude oil prices have increased by 70% and that there have

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST INDIVIDUAL CONSULTING SERVICES

Country: FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA
Project: Sustainable and Resilient Road Improvement Project
Grant No.: Grant 0967-FSM: SRRIP
Assignment Title: Financial Management Officer

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is assisting the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia (the government) under the Sustainable and Resilient Road Improvement Project (SRRIP) Grant Number: 0967. The overall project objectives are to upgrade about 16 kilometers of roads in the four states, and a bridge, with measures to increase climate resilience and road safety, design features that are gender responsive and disability-inclusive. The Government received this grant and intends to apply part of the proceed for consulting services.

The Department of Transportation, Communication and Infrastructure (DTC&I) intends to hire a Financial Management Officer to provide project accounting support to the executing and implementing agencies, consultants and other PMU staff for SRRIP. The Financial Management Officer will support the Project Manager to establish and administer the financial management of the projects in accordance with ADB guidelines.

The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) is attached to this request for expressions of interest.

The assignment is expected over a period of 24 months (intermittent over 4 years).


The Department of Transportation, Communication and Infrastructure (DTCI) now invites eligible individuals (“Consultants”) to indicate their interest in providing the Service needed. Interested individuals should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services (attach curriculum vitae with description of experience in similar assignments, similar conditions, etc.). It is expected that the successful candidate will meet the following selection criteria:

- Professional qualification in accounting.
- Minimum of 10 years of experience in accounting and at least 5 years of experience in accounting or contract management.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours *i.e.* 0800 to 1700 hours.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail, or by e-mail) by **4:00 p.m. (1600 hrs) Pohnpei Time on Monday, April 20, 2026**

Shankarah Lessey
Interim Project Manager
Sustainable and Resilient Road Improvement
Department of Transportation, Communication and Infrastructure (DTC&I)
Palikir, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)
Office: +691 320-2080
Email: pmu@tci.gov.fm
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Carlson D. Apis
Secretary of DTC&I

Vital monitors global fuel volatility, urges public to avoid panic buying

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

March 20, 2026

Kolonia, Pohnpei — The Vital FSM Petroleum Corporation says it is closely monitoring global fuel markets as tensions in the Middle East continue to drive sharp increases in international prices, with potential impacts expected in the Federated States of Micronesia in the coming weeks.

In a press release issued March 12, the corporation pointed to disruptions linked to the ongoing conflict involving Iran, particularly around the Strait of Hormuz — a key route for global oil and liquefied natural gas shipments. Any prolonged instability in the region could affect supply chains worldwide, including those serving the FSM.

Vital reported that international fuel prices have risen rapidly over a short period.

Between February 22 and 27, the average price across major fuel products was about \$88 per barrel. By March 2 to 6, that average had climbed to \$136 per barrel — an increase of

roughly 55 percent in two weeks.

By product, unleaded petrol rose to \$113 per barrel, ultra-low sulphur diesel reached \$156 per barrel, and Jet A-1 climbed to \$230 per barrel — its highest level since 2022.

The company said such volatility is likely to affect both wholesale and retail fuel prices locally.

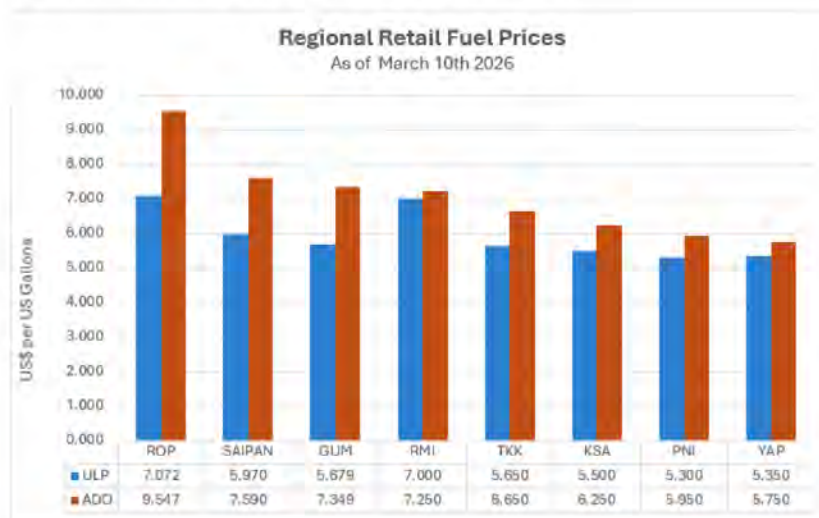
While supply remains stable for now, Vital warned that global conditions will likely influence fuel costs across the FSM.

The corporation said customers should be aware of how international developments are affecting regional pricing, noting that local prices typically follow global trends.

Vital also urged the public not to engage in panic buying or hoarding, saying such behavior could place unnecessary strain on supply systems.

The company said maintaining normal purchasing patterns will help ensure that fuel remains available across the country.

Figure 2 below shows the regional retail fuel prices as of March 10, 2026



To manage potential disruptions, Vital said it is taking several steps to maintain supply:

- Increasing fuel inventories within available storage capacity
- Reviewing procurement schedules as global shipping conditions tighten
- Strengthening communication with suppliers to identify alternative

sources

- Continuing to monitor global developments and provide updates as needed

CEO Jared Morris said the corporation remains focused on maintaining secure and reliable fuel supply throughout the FSM while keeping stakeholders informed as conditions evolve.

...Independent Prosecutor

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disregard them in the name of independence.

Government lawyers also argue that Congress, not the court, is the proper forum for resolving disputes about how the law creating the OIP should be implemented.

In addition, the motion raises questions about whether Cupps has legally assumed office, asserting that his oath—taken before a notary public in Kansas—is invalid because it was not administered by the FSM President or an authorized designee.

Cupps, through counsel, has filed a detailed opposition urging the court to deny the motion to dismiss and allow

the case to proceed.

The opposition argues that the court does have jurisdiction to interpret the Constitution and determine whether laws passed by Congress are consistent with the constitutional independence granted to the OIP.

It further disputes the government’s reliance on the political question doctrine, asserting that constitutional interpretation is a core judicial function and not reserved exclusively for the legislative or executive branches.

On the issue of the oath, the filing argues that no FSM statute requires the oath of office to be administered within the country or by a specific official, and that an oath taken before a notary public is legally sufficient.

The filings also revisit one of the central disputes in the case—whether the Independent Prosecutor is subject to existing financial and administrative controls.

Government filings argue that allowing

the OIP to operate outside established systems for public funds and personnel would place it “above the law” and undermine accountability, particularly in relation to public auditing and financial management.

They further claim that halting enforcement of these laws through a court order would interfere with the executive branch’s constitutional duty to implement national laws.

Cupps, however, maintains that such controls—if applied in full—would undermine the constitutional independence of the office and defeat the purpose of its creation.

In a separate filing, Cupps has asked the court to schedule an urgent hearing on his request for injunctive relief, arguing that the matter requires prompt resolution.

The filing notes that time has passed since the original request for a temporary restraining order and suggests that the issue should now be addressed through a hearing on a

preliminary injunction.

The case is one of the first major legal tests of the constitutional amendment establishing the Independent Prosecutor and could determine how the office functions in practice.

At issue are fundamental questions, including whether the office operates independently of existing executive branch systems, whether its funding can be controlled by the executive, and whether the current officeholder has been properly sworn in.

The outcome may also shape the broader balance of power between the branches of government, particularly in areas involving oversight, prosecution, and control of public funds.

The matter remains before the FSM Supreme Court. The court has not yet ruled on the motion to dismiss, the request for injunctive relief, or the broader constitutional questions raised in the case.

Romalum race settled as Appellate Division affirms Walter win

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

March 20, 2026

Chuuk, FSM —The Appellate Division of the Chuuk State Supreme Court has confirmed Siramino Walter as the duly elected mayor of Romalum Municipality, resolving a disputed 2025 municipal election and overturning an earlier certification in favor of his opponent.

In a decision entered March 10, 2026, the court upheld the Chuuk Election Commission's certification of Walter as the winner of the June 3, 2025 election.

The case arose from conflicting election results following the Romalum mayoral race. Initial election night totals—excluding Guam ballots—showed incumbent Tom Hebwer leading. However, once the Guam votes were verified and added, the outcome

shifted.

The final tally certified by the Chuuk Election Commission gave Walter 195 votes to Hebwer's 188, making Walter the winner.

Despite this, the Romalum Election Commissioner certified Hebwer as the winning candidate based on incomplete earlier results, and Hebwer was subsequently sworn in as mayor.

Walter challenged that certification and filed an appeal after no timely action was taken by the Chuuk Election Commission.

Hebwer argued that certain Guam ballots should be excluded, claiming some voters were not properly registered. He contended that removing those votes would restore his lead.

At trial, Walter was represented by attorney

Salomon Saimon, while the Chuuk Election Commission was represented by Assistant Attorney General Johnny Meippen. Hebwer, as the real party in interest, was represented by Picho Cheida.

The Appellate Division declined to determine whether any Guam votes were invalid. Instead, it ruled that Hebwer failed to bring his challenge in the proper forum.

The court said that any claims regarding illegal votes or the conduct of the election must first be raised before the Chuuk Election Commission, which administered the election. Because Hebwer did not pursue such a complaint there, the court could not consider those arguments.

The decision also clarified the respective roles of the election bodies involved. The court held that once Romalum delegated administration of the election to the Chuuk

Election Commission, the municipal election commissioner's duty became ministerial.

That meant the Romalum Election Commissioner was required to certify the results as determined by the Chuuk Election Commission, rather than issue a conflicting certification.

Based on these findings, the court affirmed the Chuuk Election Commission's certification of Walter as the winning mayoral candidate.

Walter was awarded court costs, though the court ruled that attorney's fees are not recoverable in election contests under Chuuk law.

The ruling brings finality to the contested race and confirms Siramino Walter as mayor of Romalum Municipality.

Sound legal fight over Faichuk seat continues with appeal

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

March 20, 2026

Chuuk - Jay Sound has appealed the dismissal of his court challenge over the disputed Faichuk Senate seat, keeping alive a case that has already gone through a recount and raised questions about the power of the Chuuk Senate to decide who may be seated as one of its members.

Attorney Salomon Saimon filed a notice of appeal on Feb. 22 in the FSM Supreme Court appellate division, appealing a Jan. 26 order that dismissed Sound's case against the Senate of the 18th Chuuk State Legislature, Senate President Takamichy Mori and seated senator Efta Ichita.

In the Jan. 26 dismissal order, the FSM Supreme Court trial division in Chuuk said it lacked jurisdiction because the Chuuk Constitution makes each house of the Legislature "the sole judge of the elections and qualifications of its members." The court ruled that the dispute was a nonjusticiable political question and could not be decided by the judiciary.

The dispute stems from the March 4, 2025 Chuuk general election for the two Faichuk seats in the House of Senate. According to the dismissal order, Sound's poll watchers believed he had finished second and had won

reelection, but the Chuuk Election Commission later certified results showing Ichita ahead of him. Sound sought a recount, and after the Election Commission denied that request, he appealed to the Chuuk State Supreme Court appellate division.

In an April 2025 opinion, the Chuuk State Supreme Court appellate division ordered a recount of the ballots cast for Sound and Ichita, saying there appeared to be a substantial question of fraud or error because of the discrepancy between the results recorded by Sound's poll watchers and the certified election results. The court ordered the Election Commission to vacate Ichita's certificate of election, conduct a recount, and issue a certificate to whichever candidate had the most votes.

The FSM trial division dismissal order says the recount was conducted and a certificate of election was issued to Sound and transmitted to the Senate. Despite that, when the new Legislature convened on April 15, 2025, the Chuuk Senate seated Ichita, not Sound.

Sound then filed a petition seeking declaratory and injunctive relief, arguing that the Senate had violated the Chuuk Constitution and the rights of voters by seating

Ichita after the recount. But the trial division said that once the Senate had seated a member unconditionally, the issue was committed to the legislative branch and was no longer reviewable by the courts.

In his statement of issues on appeal, Saimon argues that the trial court relied on the wrong precedent and that the case should instead be treated as one involving unconstitutional exclusion of a duly elected member. He contends

that the unappealed April 2025 Chuuk State Supreme Court decision established that Sound, not Ichita, was the legally elected candidate.

The documents attached to the appeal do not show that the FSM Supreme Court appellate division has yet ruled on the merits of the new appeal. For now, the latest development in the long-running dispute is that Sound is asking the higher court to reverse the dismissal and revive his challenge.

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Rotary Club of Pohnpei

Emergency Assistance to the FSM in response to the oil leak - technical training in Chuuk State

Embassy of Japan to the FSM

March 16, 2026

Chuuk - From February 23 - 24, experts from The Nippon Salvage Co., Ltd. visited Chuuk State to provide technical training on the proper use of emergency relief supplies provided by the Government of Japan to Chuuk State through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in response to the request from the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia.



In addition to lectures on the purpose and usage of the provided emergency relief supplies, practical training such as demonstrating how to deploy oil

fences outdoors, visiting sites affected by oil spills to assess the current

situation, and providing instruction on how to use equipment tailored to the

local terrain were conducted.

Chuuk Legislature seeks court ruling on election authority and process

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

March 13, 2026

Weno, Chuuk — The Chuuk State Legislature has filed a motion in the Chuuk State Supreme Court seeking a decision within the next month on a case tied to the ongoing dispute over the state’s election process and the authority of election officials.

The filing, stamped as received on March 13, 2026, asks the court to resolve key legal questions before April 10, arguing that delays are affecting the legitimacy of government actions and the will of the people.

In its motion, the Legislature maintains that a vacancy in the House of Representatives—declared following the death of a member

in 2025—triggered constitutional and statutory requirements for a special election. The Chuuk State Constitution and election law, it argues, require such an election to be declared within a specific timeframe.

Central to the case is whether the so-called “holdover” Election Commission has the legal authority to act after the Senate failed to confirm new nominees earlier this year. The Legislature contends

that under state law, unconfirmed nominees are prohibited from exercising the duties of their office.

The filing also revisits earlier court actions surrounding the March 4, 2025 election and the April 15, 2025 oath of office taken by members of the Alexander-Mekioshy government. According to the Legislature, those actions should be set aside because they were carried out by commissioners who had not been confirmed and therefore lacked legal authority.

delays,” the motion argues, “the more the Alexander-Mekioshy group continues usurping the functions and authorities of the Government,” depriving the people of Chuuk of “the true expression of their will.”

The Legislature is asking the court to issue a ruling as soon as possible, describing the situation as unprecedented and alleging widespread election irregularities. It claims that a timely decision is the only meaningful remedy available under the circumstances.

The motion was submitted by attorney Sabino S. Asor on behalf of the Legislature.

A separate but related appeal challenging the March 2025 election remains pending before the FSM Supreme Court. That case, brought by election challengers, has seen little movement in recent weeks, with court officials indicating that an appellate panel has still not been impaneled. As a result, no substantive progress has been made on the appeal.

With both cases unresolved, questions surrounding the authority of election officials and the legitimacy of the process remain unsettled.

“The longer the Court



JOB OPPORTUNITIES

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*Subject to SDR/USD exchange rates.

These positions will be based in Honiara, Solomon Islands but may be expected to travel extensively in the region.

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- The minimum offer amount is \$ 7,900.00.
- FSM Development Bank reserves its right to reject any and all offers made for the parcels, for any reason whatsoever.

For more information, please contact: Nora E. Sigrah, General Counsel at email: noras@fsmdb.fm

Pohnpei State government visits local poultry project in U, reinforcing state food security priorities

Pohnpei Public Information

March 13, 2026

Nan Welin Rohi, Pohnpei — Governor Stevenson A. Joseph recently visited the residence of Mr. Mihkel Bernardo, Souen en Depehk Powe, in Nan Welin Rohi, U. The visit served as a direct inspection of Mr. Bernardo’s poultry operations, a key component of the administration’s broader mission to strengthen food security across the state.

Joining the Governor were the Director of the Department of Resources and Development, Mr. Mark Kostka, and the Chief of the Division of Agriculture, Mr. Kordy Carl, whose department spearheads the initiative. Their presence underscored the technical and administrative support provided to local farmers to ensure the long-term success of these agricultural investments.

The Governor highlighted that the success of individual projects like this

one is essential for achieving Pohnpei’s goal of food security and self-reliance. He noted that by empowering local leaders and families to produce their own food, the government is helping to create sustainable income and reliable access to fresh, local protein.

This visit follows the Governor’s State of the State address, which detailed significant progress in agricultural development. Over the past fiscal year, the administration oversaw the distribution of 2,007 chickens to boost household production. This effort included building and stocking nine community coops in Madolenihmw, Nett, Uh, Sokehs, Kitti, and Kolonia, alongside the direct distribution of 1,674 chicks to families.

By focusing on these community-level initiatives, the Joseph-Movick Administration and the Department of R&D aim to reduce dependence on imported goods while improving the livelihoods of citizens throughout every municipality.





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33rd

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Celebration

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APRIL 1, 2026

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Joseph-Movick administration strengthens ties with U.S. Veterans of Pohnpei and U.S. Army OET

Pohnpei Public Information

March 13, 2026

Peilapalap, Pohnpei — Governor Stevenson A. Joseph and Lt. Governor Herolyn S. Movick recently welcomed the newly installed leadership of the U.S. Veterans of Pohnpei (USVP) and members of the U.S. Army Oceanic Engagement Team (OET) to the Executive Building.

The visiting delegation included USVP President Eddie Musrasrik and Vice President Ray John, alongside CPT Samantha Lacroix and SGT Myles Luera from the OET based at the U.S. Embassy in Kolonia. The meeting underscored the Joseph-Movick Administration's commitment to honoring Pohnpeian service members and fostering international cooperation.

Key Discussion Highlights:

- Pohnpei Veterans Memorial: The administration and USVP leaders held productive discussions regarding the construction and

strategic location of a future memorial. This site will serve as a permanent tribute to Pohnpeians who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces, and for ceremonial purposes.

- Humanitarian Mission: CPT Lacroix and SGT Luera detailed the OET's role in strengthening regional partnerships through humanitarian assistance and community engagement initiatives.
- Exchange of Honors: In a gesture of mutual respect, the USVP presented Governor Joseph and Lt. Governor Movick with official organization shirts, while the OET presented commemorative challenge coins, symbolizing the strong bond between the military and the local government.

Governor Joseph and Lt. Governor Movick expressed their deep gratitude for the continued dedication of Pohnpeian veterans and the ongoing support provided by the U.S. Army OET to the people of Pohnpei.



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FSM Development Bank is announcing its vacancy for a suitable candidate to fill the position of **LOAN OFFICER at **FSMDB CHUUK** in Weno, Chuuk.**

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President Simina proclaims National Public Defender Day in the Federated States of Micronesia

FSM Information Services

March 18, 2026

Palikir, Pohnpei — His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), has proclaimed March 18, 2026, as National Public Defender Day in the Federated States of Micronesia.

The proclamation recognizes the

essential role of public defenders in upholding the Constitution, protecting the rights of individuals, and ensuring equal access to justice for all citizens, regardless of economic status.

In his proclamation, President Simina commended public defenders throughout the FSM—Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae—for their dedicated service and unwavering

commitment to due process and the rule of law. He noted that recognizing this day reinforces the importance of their work and encourages continued diligence within the nation’s justice system.

The proclamation further acknowledges the contributions of the FSM Public Defender’s Office and its legal professionals, whose efforts ensure that justice remains

accessible and equitable across the nation.

President Simina calls upon government agencies, institutions, civil society organizations, and the public to recognize and honor the important work of public defenders and their staff, and to reaffirm the FSM’s commitment to the principles of justice, fairness, and equality under the law.

Pohnpei State prepares to host 28th Micronesian Islands Forum this July

Pohnpei Public Information

March 19, 2026

Kolonia, Pohnpei — Governor Stevenson A. Joseph recently chaired a strategic planning meeting to coordinate Pohnpei’s hosting of the upcoming Micronesian Islands Forum (MIF).


The MIF is the premier annual summit for leaders across the Micronesian region, including the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, the U.S. Territory of Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. It serves as a vital platform for regional heads of state to address shared challenges such as economic development, environmental conservation, and maritime security.

As the host for 2026, Pohnpei will welcome delegations and international partners to strengthen the collective sovereignty and sustainable growth of our island nations.

The public should anticipate a significant increase in visitors and official activity throughout the state in mid-July. Peak arrivals are expected during the week of July 12, 2026.

Governor Joseph emphasizes that this forum is a unique opportunity to showcase Pohnpei’s hospitality and leadership on the regional stage. Further updates regarding event schedules and public engagement will be shared as the summit approaches.





SEABEES SOCCER SHOWDOWN

POHNPEI, FSM — MARCH & APRIL 2026

CAN THE SEABEES BUILD A WIN? COME FIND OUT!

MATCH SCHEDULE

MONDAY, MARCH 30		KICK-OFF 4:00 PM
SPANISH WALL PARK		
SEABEES	VS	OHMINE
SEABEES	VS	PCS
TUESDAY, MARCH 31		KICK-OFF 4:00 PM
TRACK & FIELD		
SEABEES	VS	SEKERE
SEABEES	VS	SDA
THURSDAY, APRIL 2		KICK-OFF 4:00 PM
TRACK & FIELD		
SEABEES	VS	KOLONIA
SEABEES	VS	UNAFFILIATED

The Seabees can build roads, bridges, and entire bases — but can they score a goal against our kids? Come and see!

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BRING YOUR FAMILY AND CHEER FOR POHNPEI

PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE U.S. EMBASSY KOLONIA — FREEDOM 250

UNICEF Pacific representative makes first visit to Pohnpei, meets Joseph-Movick administration

Pohnpei Public Information

March 18, 2026

Kolonia, Pohnpei — Hamish Young, the newly appointed UNICEF Pacific Representative, paid a courtesy visit to Governor Stevenson A. Joseph and the Joseph-Movick Administration during his first official trip to Pohnpei, as part of a regional tour to engage with leaders and communities across the Pacific.

Mr. Young was accompanied by Cromwell Bacarezza and UNICEF staff. The visit underscores UNICEF’s continued partnership with the Pohnpei State Government in advancing child welfare and development initiatives.

Governor Joseph welcomed the delegation and acknowledged UNICEF’s longstanding contributions in Pohnpei, particularly highlighting the progress achieved under Mr. Bacarezza’s leadership. He expressed appreciation for the organization’s commitment to improving outcomes for children and families across the

state.

Mr. Young reaffirmed UNICEF’s commitment to supporting children in Micronesia, emphasizing that early childhood education remains a cornerstone of healthy development and long-term success. He noted that “children will ultimately bear the consequences of the future we shape today,” and stressed the importance of including young voices in planning and decision-making processes.

Discussions between Governor Joseph and Mr. Young covered key challenges affecting the region, including vaccination efforts and the growing impacts of climate change. Governor Joseph reiterated Pohnpei’s frontline experience with climate change, referencing rising sea levels and the realities already facing island communities.

Mr. Young also commended Governor Joseph for his leadership in advancing regional cooperation, including his successful advocacy for the establishment of the One UN Micronesia House.

The meeting concluded with both parties reaffirming their shared commitment to strengthening collaboration in support of children’s health, education, and resilience in Pohnpei and across the Federated States of Micronesia.



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Schedules are subject to change at the discretion of the Company, and may be dependent on scheduling considerations, weather/sea conditions or the needs of the operations.

Pacific partners convene to strengthen collective action on climate security

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

March 17, 2026

Brisbane - Senior officials from Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) member countries and regional stakeholders have convened this week in Brisbane, Australia for the Regional Dialogue on Climate Security in the Pacific, a platform to strengthen collective understanding of the security implications of climate change in the Pacific and to explore practical responses within the region’s evolving peace and security architecture.



climate change as the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of our people. Climate change does not operate in isolated sectors; its impacts cut across environmental systems, economic systems, governance structures and social relationships. Understanding the peace and security implications of climate change therefore requires bridging these fields of knowledge and practice,” said Desna Solofa, Deputy Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum.

The Dialogue builds on regional commitments under the Boe Declaration on Regional Security, endorsed by Forum Leaders in 2018, which expanded the region’s concept of security and placed human security at its center. It also reflects the vision of the Ocean of Peace Declaration endorsed in 2025, which emphasizes cooperation, prevention and the collective stewardship of the Pacific Ocean and environment.

The three-day gathering brings together sixty-five participants from Forum Member Governments, the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific (CROP) agencies, academia and international partners.

The Dialogue draws on expertise from climate science, adaptation and climate finance, alongside practitioners working in peacebuilding, governance and regional security. Bringing these perspectives together helps deepen understanding of how climate impacts interact with environmental systems, economic stability, governance structures and social cohesion across the Pacific.

noticing stresses and tensions occurring in the way our communities attempt to deal with the impacts of climate change. These impacts are not only exacerbating existing social and political challenges but are also having a direct impact on security. We are gathering here to better understand how climate change and security intersect and to map a way forward to respond to their increasingly linked challenges,” said Sefanaia Nawadra, Director General of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

“The Pacific has consistently recognized


Forum Members are currently advancing the development of a Regional Peace and Security Action Plan that will bring together the Boe Declaration and the Ocean of Peace Declaration within the framework of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

Through cross-sectoral engagement, participants will exchange emerging practices, strengthen regional coordination and identify opportunities for partnerships and financing to address climate-related security risks across the Blue Pacific. Outcomes from the Dialogue are expected to identify emerging regional priorities on climate security to help inform the draft Regional Peace and Security Action Plan.

The Dialogue is coordinated through collaboration between the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, with support from the United Kingdom.

“Our member countries are increasingly

Sustaining Tuna, Sustaining Nations



World Tuna Day 2026

This year, the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) Office invites all residents and citizens of its Member Countries to take part in celebrating World Tuna Day on May 2, 2026.

This year’s theme highlights a simple truth. When tuna is sustained, our nations are sustained.

The theme builds on last year’s celebration and strengthens the focus on long-term stewardship, economic stability, and national resilience.

Competition Categories

Category	Entry Types	Key Requirements	Top Prize
Art & Craft	Drawing, Painting, Collage, Digital, 3D/Recycled	Max A2. Submit JPEG/PNG. One entry per person.	\$500
Music & Video	Original Song, Choir, Rap, Spoken Word, Documentary	1080p min. Max 20 mins. Clear audio. No watermarks.	\$1,000
Literature	Poetry, Essay, Short Story	Children 300–500 words, Teens 700–1000, Adults 1000–1500	\$500 (Adults) \$500
Photography	JPEG or PNG	Min 300 DPI. Minimal editing. No watermarks.	

Further information on the different type of categories for the competition can be found on our website at <https://pnatuna.com/articleworld-tuna-day-2026-call-entries>.

Come Share your Talents!!

For more information and details on the World Tuna Day 2026 please email worldtunaday@pnatuna.com or info@pnatuna.com.

Handover ceremony of Japan-Funded classroom building at COM-FSM Fisheries and Maritime Institute

FSM Information Services

March 3, 2026

YAP, Federated States Of Micronesia

— The Honorable Aren B. Palik, Vice President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), joined His Excellency Nobuo Kagomiya, Ambassador of Japan to the FSM, for the handover ceremony of a newly constructed classroom building in Yap.

The facility was delivered through the project “Enhancing the Capacities of the COM-FSM Fisheries and Maritime Institute,” funded by Japan’s Economic and Social Development Program. The building is expected to strengthen FMI’s ability to provide quality maritime education and training for students preparing for careers in the maritime sector.

In his remarks, Vice President Palik underscored the significance of the project for the nation, describing it as “a symbol of vision, sacrifice, and teamwork.”

He emphasized that strengthening maritime education is essential to the nation’s development and future workforce.

“Strengthening maritime education is not simply an institutional objective. It is a national priority,” he said.

Vice President Palik also encouraged FMI students to take full advantage of the improved facilities and remain committed to excellence and discipline in their studies.

The Vice President further reaffirmed the Federated States of Micronesia’s commitment to maintaining the facility and strengthening its partnership with Japan, highlighting the enduring “Kizuna”, or bond of friendship, between the two nations.

Vice President Palik also expressed, on behalf of the Simina-Palik Administration, appreciation to the Government and people of Japan for their continued partnership and support to the Federated States of Micronesia, particularly in advancing education and capacity-building initiatives.

The project reflects the longstanding partnership between the Federated States of Micronesia and the Government of Japan in supporting education, infrastructure, and human resource development across the country.



- Pohnpei-based position
- Join the principal development org

The Pacific Community (SPC) invites applications for the position of Office Assistant/Messenger 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 Micronesian 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 Office Assistant/Messenger will provide receptionist, administrative, and messenger support services to the Micronesia Regional Office

The key responsibilities of the role include the following:

1. Office Administration and Reception
2. Messenger, Logistics, and Finance Support
3. Meetings, Workshops, and Fleet Management

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

Qualifications

- Qualifications in Administration or Business Administration or equivalent body of knowledge and experience
- Valid driver’s license

Technical expertise

- At least 2 years’ experience in providing administrative assistance, office assistance or messenger service
- Sound knowledge of MS Work, Excel and Windows computing environment
- Familiar or have working experience dealing with vendors

Language skills

- Written and oral communication skills
- Proficiency in English

Interpersonal skills and cultural awareness

- Ability to work well as part of a team

Remuneration – the Office Assistant/Messenger is a Band 5 position in SPC’s 2026 salary scale, with a starting taxable salary range of USD 26,072–32,590 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: 6 April 2026 – 11:00 pm Noumea time

Job Reference: CR000563

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 a situation where you had to support a large team, and why you were successful.
2. Explain how you would handle a situation where you were assigned multiple tasks by different team members?
3. What approaches would you take to ensure you are well organized to address priorities on time?

President Simina meets with U.S. Secretary of the Interior to discuss Compact Implementation at the Indo-Pacific Energy Security Ministerial and Business Forum

FSM Information Services

Tokyo, Japan – At the invitation of Secretary Doug Burgum of the United States Department of the Interior, the President of the Federated States of Micronesia, H.E. Wesley W. Simina, attended the 1st Indo-Pacific Energy Security Ministerial and Business Forum held in Tokyo, Japan from March 14–15, 2026. Co-hosted by the Government of Japan, the Forum provided opportunities for President Simina to participate in a series of engagements with senior officials of the United States of America and Japan to advance cooperation on critical issues, including infrastructure development, energy security, and environmental sustainability.

In addition to participating in a series of panel sessions on energy security in the Indo-Pacific region, President Simina held bilateral talks with Secretary Burgum, of the United States Department of the Interior, and discussed bilateral issues critical to progressing efficient and effective Compact implementation. During the meeting, the President raised matters related to progressing infrastructure development, ongoing efforts for veterans’ affairs to realize the extension of full benefits for FSM citizens who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces, as well as issues affecting FSM citizens residing in the

United States. Overall, the President reaffirmed the FSM’s commitment to strengthening cooperation with the United States to ensure that initiatives under the Compact continue to support the long-term prosperity and stability of the FSM.

President Simina also met with Mr. Lee Zeldin, Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), to exchange views on areas of cooperation related to environmental protection, including ways to address the leakage of oil remnants in Chuuk Lagoon. The President also had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Ryosei Akazawa, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan to discuss the many cooperative initiatives between the FSM and Japan.

During an engagement hosted by Ambassador John Fritz at the FSM Embassy in Japan, the President also met with Japanese officials with close ties to the FSM and its people, including Mr. Horii Iwao, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan.

On the final day of the Forum, President Simina also met with H.E. Surangel S. Whipps Jr., President of Palau, and H.E. Hilda C. Heine, President of the Marshall Islands, to discuss issues of shared interest. During the meeting, the three leaders



signed a joint letter addressed to Mr. Sean Duffy, Secretary of the United States Department of Transportation, regarding the continued eligibility of their citizens for Commercial Driver’s Licenses (CDLs).

President Simina’s participation in the Forum highlights the FSM’s commitment to strengthening partnerships with key international partners and advancing initiatives

that support sustainable development, economic resilience, and energy security for the people of the FSM.

With the support of Ambassador Fritz and the FSM Embassy in Japan, the President was accompanied by Mr. Leo A. Falcam Jr., Chief Advisor on Compact Implementation; Acting Secretary of Foreign Affairs Ricky F. Cantero; and Deputy Assistant Secretary Calvin Ehmes.



16th March 2026

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
for

Bid	Closing Date (2026)	Public Opening (2026)
<i>PMU Program Director</i>	April 22 nd , @4 pm	April 22 nd , @ 5 pm
<i>Grants Writer</i>		
<i>Legal Counsel</i>		
<i>PNI PMO Project Manager</i>		
<i>ADB Project Manager</i>		

NOTICE

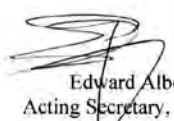
The Department of Transportation, Communications & Infrastructure (DTC&I), National Government of the Federated States of Micronesia is hereby issuing this Bid Invitation Notice to suitably qualified consultants for the **Various positions within the Project Management Unit, DTCl, Palikir, Pohnpei.**

Further information on this REOI may be obtained by submitting a written request for details to Ms. Eileen McKenzie, PMU Administrative Officer at email eileen.mckenzie@tci.gov.fm with Cc to the Project Management Unit pmu@tci.gov.fm with the subject heading:

“ Various positions within the Project Management Unit, DTCl, Palikir, Pohnpei.”

The related documents, including the terms of reference, scope of work and conditions of contract may also be directly obtained from the Department’s website: <https://www.tci.gov.fm/>.

The closing date for the submission of bids is **April 22nd 2026 at 4pm local Pohnpei Time. Late EOIs shall not be accepted.**


 Edward Albert
 Acting Secretary, DTC&I



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BANKGUAM HOLDING COMPANY AND SUBSIDIARIES

AUDITED CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CONDITION (Year ended December 31, 2025; in 000's US Dollars)

Assets		Liabilities and Stockholders' Equity	
Cash and due from banks	\$ 37,701	Deposits:	
Interest bearing deposits in banks	389,276	Non-interest bearing	\$ 914,249
Total cash and cash equivalents	<u>426,977</u>	Interest bearing	<u>1,819,728</u>
Restricted cash	400	Total deposits	<u>2,733,977</u>
Investment securities available-for-sale, at fair value	426,555	Accrued interest payable	2,613
Investment securities held-to-maturity, at amortized cost	309,408	Subordinated debt, net	24,675
Federal Home Loan Bank stock, at cost	1,540	Other liabilities	<u>50,228</u>
Loans, net of allowance for credit losses	1,696,805	Total Liabilities	<u>2,811,493</u>
Accrued interest receivable	9,089	Stockholders' equity:	
Premises and equipment, net	21,558	Common stock	2,034
Goodwill	13,014	Preferred stock	-
Intangible assets	7,760	Additional paid-in capital, Common stock	24,989
Other assets	<u>122,646</u>	Additional paid-in capital, Preferred stock	-
Total Assets	<u>\$ 3,035,752</u>	Retained earnings	237,662
		Accumulated other comprehensive loss	(38,063)
		Non-controlling interest	7,485
		Common stock in treasury, at cost	(9,848)
		Preferred stock in treasury, at cost	-
		Total stockholders' equity	<u>224,259</u>
		Total Liabilities and Stockholders' Equity	<u>\$ 3,035,752</u>

AUDITED CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF INCOME (Year ended December 31, 2025; in 000's US Dollars)

Interest income	\$ 136,145
Interest expense	<u>13,639</u>
Net interest income	122,506
Provision for credit losses	<u>12,497</u>
Net interest income, after provision for credit losses	110,009
Non-interest income	40,119
Non-interest expense	<u>118,446</u>
Income before income taxes	31,682
Income tax expense	6,183
Net Income	<u>\$ 25,499</u>

BANK OF GUAM FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA BRANCHES

AUDITED STATEMENT OF CONDITION (Year ended December 31, 2025; in 000's US Dollars)

Assets		Liabilities and Stockholders' Equity	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 2,338	Deposits:	
Loans, net of allowance for credit losses	20,712	Non-interest bearing	\$ 97,034
Accrued interest receivable	104	Interest bearing	<u>154,537</u>
Premises and equipment, net	406	Total deposits	<u>251,571</u>
Other assets	1,050	Accrued interest payable	863
Due from the Parent	<u>229,039</u>	Other liabilities	1,215
Total Assets	<u>\$ 253,649</u>	Total Liabilities	<u>\$ 253,649</u>

AUDITED STATEMENT OF INCOME (Year ended December 31, 2025; in 000's US Dollars)

Interest income	\$ 12,276
Interest expense	<u>1,306</u>
Net interest income	10,970
Provision for credit losses	<u>379</u>
Net interest income, after provision for credit losses	10,591
Non-interest income	1,473
Non-interest expense	<u>2,821</u>
Income before income taxes	9,243
Income tax expense	-
Net Income	<u>\$ 9,243</u>

Federated States of Micronesia calls for stronger protection of traditional knowledge and cultural expressions at WIPO IGC 52

FSM Information Services

March 13, 2026

Geneva, Switzerland — The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) reaffirmed its commitment to safeguarding traditional knowledge (TK) and traditional cultural expressions (TCEs) during the 52nd Session of the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC 52) at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

The 52nd session of WIPO's Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC) took place in Geneva Switzerland, from March 4-13 March 2026, with delegates and observers participating both in person and virtually.

As a new WIPO member, FSM highlighted the importance of international legal frameworks that recognize TK and TCEs as living and evolving systems central to cultural identity, environmental stewardship,

and sustainable development. The FSM delegation emphasized that Micronesian knowledge systems are collectively held, transmitted across generations, and deeply intertwined with customary relationships to land, ocean, and natural resources.

"Traditional knowledge and cultural expressions are not relics of the past. They are living systems that guide how our communities interact with the ocean, land, and each other," said Secretary Leonito Bacalando Jr., of the FSM Department of Justice. He noted that as a new WIPO member, FSM seeks to ensure that international standards protect the rights of FSM communities over their TK and TCEs while guiding the development of national policies that honor Micronesian customary systems.

Recognizing that FSM is in the early stages of developing national intellectual property laws, the delegation stressed the importance of international cooperation in supporting domestic frameworks that respect collective ownership and community control over TK and TCEs. The delegation also called for

stronger transparency and disclosure measures related to genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge to prevent misappropriation.

The FSM delegation emphasized that protecting TK and TCEs is essential for sustainable cultural and creative economies, particularly for large ocean developing states whose heritage, biodiversity, and traditional practices are closely linked. The delegation urged enhanced technical assistance and capacity-building support to develop national institutions, policies, and legal frameworks that safeguard TK and TCEs while enabling community-led cultural industries.

IGC 52 marked the first session under the 2026–2027 WIPO negotiation mandate, focusing on revised draft articles for the protection of TK and TCEs. FSM reaffirmed its commitment to constructive participation in multilateral negotiations and to advancing international



frameworks that uphold Indigenous rights, protect living cultural heritage, and strengthen sustainable development.

The FSM delegation also held bilateral discussions with the WIPO Director General Daren Tang for technical assistance support towards the establishment of a national intellectual property office.

Representing the FSM were the H.E. Akillino H. Susaia, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the FSM Embassy and Permanent Mission in Geneva, the Honorable Leonito Bacalando Jr., Secretary of FSM Department of Justice, and First Secretary Mr. Johnny Hadley Jr.

President Simina welcomes newly appointed UNICEF representative

FSM Information Services

March 18, 2026

Palikir, Pohnpei — His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), received Mr. Hamish Drummond Young, newly appointed Representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), during a courtesy call following his presentation of credentials at the FSM Department of Foreign Affairs in Palikir.

Discussions focused on the impacts of climate change and opportunities to further strengthen cooperation between the FSM and UNICEF. Mr. Young reaffirmed UNICEF's commitment to supporting the Government and communities in protecting vulnerable populations, particularly children, who are most affected by climate-related challenges. He also provided updates on ongoing initiatives implemented in

close partnership with the FSM, including efforts to strengthen water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in schools—especially in the outer islands—solarization projects, and the integration of climate change into the education curriculum.

The meeting also highlighted UNICEF's collaboration with the FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs, particularly through national vaccination programs. Mr. Young commended the FSM for its strong vaccination rates, recognizing the Government's continued efforts to safeguard public health.

In the education sector, discussions



further underscored UNICEF's support for Early Childhood Education (ECE) in partnership with the National Department of Education. In this context, both sides acknowledged the importance of advancing the pending ECE bill currently before the FSM

Congress, as a key step toward strengthening foundational learning and development outcomes for children across the nation.

President Simina expressed the nation's appreciation for UNICEF's continued support and partnership. "I am deeply encouraged by your presence and your commitment, particularly in addressing the impacts of climate change," President Simina stated.

President Simina also congratulated Mr. Young on his appointment and conveyed the full support of the Simina-Palik Administration for UNICEF's work in the FSM, which continues to benefit vulnerable communities and the broader public.

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Class 9: On-line downloadable and electronic downloadable publications, namely, newsletters, brochures, pamphlets, and flyers relating to health, beauty, skin care, oral health, sun care; computer application software for mobile phones, namely, software to assist in tracking allergy information and controlling allergy symptoms; virtual assistant in the nature of a downloadable mobile chatbot software application for simulating conversations in the field of beauty, beauty products, and beauty product recommendations; downloadable mobile applications that enable users of a cosmetic medical device to receive education and training about use of the device, chatbot software for simulating conversations in the field of beauty, beauty products, and beauty product recommendations; downloadable computer chatbot software for simulating conversations leveraging artificial intelligence in the field of beauty, beauty products, and beauty product recommendations; downloadable mobile application to provide guidance concerning use of an otoscope for performing basic self-diagnostic tests and examination, to transmit the results of such tests and examinations to a healthcare provider, and to allow communication between the user and the healthcare provider; virtual consumer health products; downloadable multimedia files containing artwork, text, audio, and video files and non-fungible tokens featuring consumer health products; downloadable loyalty cards, incentive cards, reward cards that may be redeemed for or used towards the purchase of consumer health products.

Class 10: Medical device and apparatus for the cosmetic and medical treatment of skin conditions; Adhesive compression wrap bandages for medical purposes; Heat or cold releasing packs for therapeutic purposes; Heat releasing wraps for therapeutic purposes; medical apparatus, namely, a smartphone enabled otoscope that allows a patient to perform basic self-diagnostic tests and examinations, and for transmitting the results of such tests and examinations to a healthcare provider and allowing communication between the user and the healthcare provider; phototherapeutic light delivery apparatus for medical purposes.

Class 21: Dental floss, dental flossers, refills for dental flossers; toothbrushes.

Class 35: Providing consumer product information relating to skin and hair care, sun care, wellness, healthcare and healthy living, fitness, nutrition and lifestyle wellness; Online retail store services featuring skin and hair care, sun care, dental, cough, cold, allergy, nutritional products, cosmetics; online retail services featuring virtual consumer health goods and the physical delivery of same.

Class 41: Educational services, namely, conducting on-line programs in the fields of beauty, health care, hair care, pregnancy, baby care, and printable educational materials about skin and health care distributed therewith; Providing non-downloadable educational materials in the nature of articles and brochures in the field of beauty and health care; Providing on-line non-downloadable publications in the nature of articles, newsletters, and blogs relating to beauty and health care; entertainment services, namely, providing online, downloadable, virtual consumer health care products for use in virtual environments for entertainment purposes.

Class 42: Product research and development in the field of beauty, wellness, hair care, allergies, child care, baby care, and health care products.

Class 44: Providing information in the field of consumer products, beauty, hair care, health care, wellness, allergies, nutrition, pregnancy, baby care, and child care; providing a website featuring information on healthcare and healthy living.

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Pacific hosts first UN treaty law workshop to strengthen regional legal capacity

Pacific Island Forum Secretariat

March 13, 2026

Suva, Fiji - Senior Officials from Pacific Islands Forum member countries and legal experts from across the Pacific gathered this week at the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Secretariat for a Workshop on Treaty Law and Practice in the Pacific, marking the first time a treaty law workshop organized by the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs Treaty Section has been held in the region.

The three-day workshop, held from 11–13 March, brought together officials from Ministries of Foreign Affairs and other government agencies, as well as representatives from the judicial and legislative branches of Forum member governments.

Participants discussed key aspects of treaty law processes, including treaty negotiation, signature, ratification, implementation, and participation in the United Nations treaty system.

“Hosting the workshop in the Pacific represents an important milestone for the region, reflecting the

increasing engagement of Pacific countries with international law and the global treaty system. The workshop also provided an opportunity for officials to strengthen their understanding of treaty processes and share practical experiences on treaty implementation at the national level,” said PIF Secretary General, Baron Divavesi Waqa.

Participants highlighted the importance of international treaties in addressing key Pacific priorities, including sustainable development, ocean governance, climate action, and regional cooperation.

Pacific countries have played an increasingly active role in shaping and advancing key international agreements. Participants noted the region’s leadership in developing the treaty establishing the Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF), a Pacific-led initiative designed to strengthen community resilience to climate change and disasters.



The region also played a significant role in the negotiations leading to the Agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ). Adopted under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the agreement aims to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Strengthening national capacities to engage effectively with treaties and treaty-making is critical for ensuring Pacific perspectives and interests are reflected in global decision-making processes. The workshop

also highlighted the value of partnerships in advancing legal knowledge and capacity in the region.

Collaboration between regional organizations, international institutions, and academic partners helps ensure that Pacific governments have access to technical expertise and practical guidance in navigating treaty law.

The Workshop on Treaty Law and Practice in the Pacific forms part of ongoing efforts to strengthen regional cooperation and institutional capacity in support of the vision 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific.

The workshop was coordinated by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat in collaboration with the Centre for International Law of the National University of Singapore and organized by the Treaty Section of the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs, with the support of Austria.

CROP Heads meet amidst evolving regional and global environment

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

March 15, 2026

NADI, FIJI- Heads of Agencies of the Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific (CROP) met in Nadi, Fiji today to consider the ongoing evolutions to the regional and global environment and its impact on the regional architecture and how it responds to Members’ needs and priorities.

Reflecting on the 2050 Strategy, its implementation and the ongoing work of the Review of Regional Architecture, the meeting provided an opportune moment to consider, consolidate and agree on how best to position the CROP to address the Leaders views that had emerged from the 54th Pacific Islands Forum in Honiara in Solomon Islands.

“This was the first gathering of CROP Heads in Retreat format. It was a constructive opportunity for open and

frank discussions on a range of systems proposals including, coordination, harmonization and resource mobilization. I am encouraged by the discussions had today and look forward to working together with my CROP colleagues to deliver for our region and our Pacific people,” said Secretary General Baron Divavesi Waqa, the Chair of the CROP.

CROP Heads also had the opportunity to discuss the recent escalation in the Middle East and its potential implications for the Pacific region, particularly in relation to fuel prices, supply chains, and economic pressures facing Members.

CROP Heads reaffirmed the importance of stronger coordination across regional agencies, including ongoing efforts to advance CROP harmonization and a more integrated “One-CROP” approach to supporting Members at national and regional levels.

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to ensure that the regional system remains responsive, coordinated, and fit-for-purpose to

support Members in implementing the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent in an increasingly complex global environment.



FSM launches landmark digital library to strengthen vernacular education and cultural knowledge

FSM Department of Education

March 17, 2026

FSM - Teachers across the Federated States of Micronesia now have unprecedented access to culturally grounded teaching resources with the launch of the online Resource Guide and Resource Library—a platform created specifically to support the FSM National Vernacular Language Arts (VLA) Curriculum and strengthen the use of local languages in education.

Accessible to all, the guide and accompanying library were developed by the local non-governmental organizations Island Research & Education Initiative (iREi) and Center for Getting Things Started (C4GTS) on behalf of the FSM National Department of Education, with

enthusiastic support from Education Secretary Gardenia Aisek and Assistant Secretary Wayne Mendiola. The initiative reflects a strong national commitment to advancing culturally relevant education and equipping teachers to deliver instruction rooted in traditional knowledge and local languages.

The platform brings together close to 2,000 resources in Micronesian languages, all carefully curated and available to download or read instantly. The collection includes books, teaching materials, and reference works organized for easy classroom use, providing educators and communities with access to materials that were previously little known or difficult to obtain. Teachers will also be able to rate, review, and bookmark

resources, as well as exchange feedback and recommendations with colleagues—fostering collaboration and mutual support within the VLA teaching community.

iREi has contributed all of its publications from its decades of work and spent years inventorying and scanning materials throughout the region to ensure they remain accessible for future generations. The result is what that organization's director, Dr. Danko Taborosi, describes as the most comprehensive indigenous language digital library ever assembled in the Pacific. By pioneering this effort, FSM is paving the way for other Pacific nations and territories to follow if they wish to strengthen the use of local languages in education.

The project was coordinated by Arts Specialist Lilly Abraham Jonathan of the National Department of Education, who described the initiative as “*an educational milestone for FSM teachers*” and a resource “*that weaves our rich culture with innovation to sustain heritage, empower teaching, and enrich learning.*”

Developers say the digital library is intended to grow over time as teachers, institutions, and communities contribute additional resources, ensuring that Micronesian students continue to learn in ways that reflect their languages, identities, and cultural knowledge.

For more information or to explore the library, visit <https://micronesian.school/>

Opinion Editorial

Keeping pehneinei alive in a time of change

Across Pohnpei, change is everywhere—new jobs, schools, and ways of living. Yet one of the most important shifts is quieter: it is happening within our families (pehneinei de keinek), in our homes and communities.

For generations, Pohnpeian culture was not learned in classrooms or from books. Children learned by watching, helping, and participating. Knowledge was woven into daily life. The Nahs our traditional meeting houses and spaces similar in nature were places where stories were told, decisions made, and values passed on. The Wenuhmw and cooking houses were not just for preparing meals—they fostered cooperation, respect, and a deep understanding of land and sea. Skills such as fishing, farming, weaving, and cooking were part of everyday living.

Today, this is changing. Many young people spend their days in school and their evenings on their cell phones and electronic devices, with fewer opportunities to learn on the reef, in the farmlands, or in the yam patches.

Families increasingly rely on imported foods instead of preparing meals together. In some communities, the Nahs stands quiet except during major community gatherings or ceremonies. Cultural knowledge still exists—but there are fewer everyday moments to pass it on.

Migration is accelerating this shift. Families are now spread across islands and overseas, connected more by social media and remittances than by shared daily practices. While these connections remain important, they cannot replace the hands-on learning that once defined family life.

The stakes go beyond tradition. When cultural knowledge fades, we also lose practical skills that support food security, environmental stewardship, and systems of care. We risk losing the sense of identity that connects us to who we are and where we come from.

We are already seeing the effects. Younger generations may navigate digital spaces with ease, yet struggle to read tides, recognize edible plants, or prepare traditional foods. Communities become more dependent on imports, while elders and knowledge holders have fewer opportunities to teach. Culture

does not disappear overnight—it fades quietly when it is no longer practiced.

This moment calls for action. Families alone cannot carry the responsibility of preserving culture. As family structures evolve, our governments and institutions must also adapt.

State and National agencies have a vital role to play. This includes those responsible for historic preservation, culture, natural resources, and development. Their work must go beyond preserving artifacts or organizing events—it must support living culture.

This means:

- Investing in community-based programs where elders teach young people through regular, hands-on learning.
- Revitalizing spaces like the Nahs and natural environments as places of learning and practice.
- Recognizing and supporting knowledge holders whose skills and stories are irreplaceable.
- Harnessing modern tools to document and share culture, turning digital spaces into platforms for transmission rather than distraction.

Preservation alone is not enough—

culture must be lived. Values such as respect, cooperation, and food sharing must remain part of everyday life, not only ceremonial occasions. At the same time, traditions must continue to evolve in ways that uphold dignity, inclusion, and well-being for all.

Pohnpei's strength has always been its people, bound together through family, culture, and shared responsibility. If these connections weaken, so does our foundation and our future.

The question before us is simple: will we allow our cultural knowledge to fade quietly, or will we take deliberate steps to sustain it?

Keeping culture alive requires action—from government, traditional leaders, communities, and families alike. By investing in knowledge, supporting elders, and creating spaces where traditions are actively practiced and passed on, Pohnpei's culture can remain strong—not just remembered, but lived. Our future should not stand apart from our heritage. It should grow from it—and carry it forward for generations to come.

Johnny Hadley Jr.
Saudel Deleur Madolenimw

Forum Deputy Secretary General calls climate change region's defining security challenge

By *Bill Jaynes*
The Kaselehlie Press

March 16, 2026

Brisbane, Australia — Pacific Islands Forum Deputy Secretary General Desna Solofa warned that climate change has become the central peace and security issue facing the Pacific, as she addressed regional leaders, experts, and partners at the Regional Climate Security Dialogue on March 16.

Speaking on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Solofa said Pacific leaders have long recognized climate change as “the single greatest threat” to livelihoods, security, and wellbeing across the region, a position formally established through the Boe Declaration on Regional Security.

She said the declaration broadened the concept of security beyond traditional defense concerns to include human and environmental security, as well as the resilience of communities and ecosystems.

Since its adoption, Pacific nations have taken steps to strengthen responses to climate-related security risks, including national security policies recognizing climate change as a major threat, and regional initiatives such as the Pacific Regional Framework on Climate Mobility and the Pacific Regional Guide

on Climate Security Assessment.

Solofa also pointed to key regional commitments, including the Forum Leaders' Declaration on Sea Level Rise and Statehood and the Kainaki II Declaration, which declared a climate crisis and called for urgent global action to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Despite these efforts, she said the situation has worsened.

“Global emissions continue to rise, and the world is not on track to meet the 1.5-degree limit that Pacific Leaders have consistently called for,” Solofa said, warning of increasing risks from climate tipping points.

She stressed that climate change is already disrupting coastal communities, food systems, water resources, and national development pathways, with disproportionate impacts on vulnerable groups, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

Solofa said addressing climate change must go beyond environmental policy, describing it as a “defining peace and security challenge” that affects the dignity, stability, and resilience of Pacific societies.

She linked this perspective to the Blue Pacific as an Ocean of Peace Declaration,

endorsed by Forum leaders last year, which promotes cooperation, prevention, and shared stewardship of the ocean as the foundation for regional security.

In this context, she said, climate, peace, and security must be treated as a core pillar of sustaining stability in the region.

Looking ahead, Solofa pointed to the importance of upcoming global climate discussions, including pre-COP31 meetings to be hosted in Fiji, where Pacific nations will continue advocating for stronger climate finance, progress on loss and damage, and protection of the 1.5°C target.

She said the regional dialogue in Brisbane is intended to strengthen the evidence base on the links between climate change and security, and to support Pacific leadership in global negotiations.

The gathering brought together climate scientists, finance specialists, peacebuilding experts, and security practitioners, reflecting what Solofa described as the need to bridge sectors in addressing complex climate impacts.

“Climate change does not operate in isolated sectors,” she said. “Its impacts cut



across environmental systems, economic systems, governance structures, and social relationships.”

Solofa also noted that Forum members are developing a Regional Peace and Security Action Plan under the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, with climate, peace, and security identified as a key focus area.

She encouraged participants to share lessons, identify gaps, and work toward practical solutions to strengthen regional responses.

“By working together, we can continue advancing a Pacific-led approach that protects our communities, strengthens resilience, and supports the vision of a peaceful and secure Blue Pacific Continent,” she said.

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and Japan advance dialogue through kizuna Talanoa

Pacific Island Forum Secretariat

March 13, 2026

Tokyo - The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), met with senior officials of Japan in Tokyo this week as part of the Japan–Pacific Islands Forum Kizuna Talanoa dialogue. The Kizuna Talanoa is a senior officials dialogue between Japan and PIFS, established to strengthen exchanges to support the implementation of the priorities agreed by the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum countries and Japan under their Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM) in 2024.

For the first time, the Government of Japan expanded the Kizuna Talanoa platform to include Forum Troika

Members (Tonga, Solomon Islands and Palau) as well.

The Kizuna Talanoa first convened on 11 July 2025 in Suva, Fiji and has since become an important platform complementing high-level engagements, including PALM and its related Ministerial Interim Meetings.

Ambassador Jiro Okuyama, Japan's lead representative for PALM, reaffirmed Japan's strong support for regional solidarity under the PALM framework and the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. He also provided updates on Japan's preparations for the upcoming PALM Ministerial Interim Meeting to



be held later this year and the PALM meeting next year.

The Forum delegation highlighted the importance of its partnership with Japan, a longstanding and trusted regional partner.

Discussions also covered preparations for

the 55th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting (PILFM55) in Palau, progress on the Review of the Regional Architecture, and Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy. Other issues discussed included Japan's upcoming Oceans Summit and the ongoing cooperation on ALPS treated water.

Japan has been a Forum Dialogue Partner since 1989. Through the PALM framework, Japan and Forum Members continue to work together to advance shared priorities, strengthen regional resilience, and address common challenges and opportunities across the Blue Pacific Continent.

Dr. Yimnang Golbuu named The Nature Conservancy's Conservation Director in Micronesia & Polynesia

The Nature Conservancy

March 11, 2026

Micronesia and Polynesia - The Nature Conservancy (TNC) announced the selection of Dr. Yimnang Golbuu as its new Micronesia & Polynesia Conservation Director. In this role, Dr. Golbuu will lead TNC's efforts to safeguard the region's extraordinary natural areas and develop solutions for island resilience.

As Conservation Director in Micronesia & Polynesia, Dr. Golbuu will continue to work with local communities and governments to advance four major priorities: accelerating and scaling coral reef restoration; strengthening critical Marine Protected Areas; supporting "ridge to reef" management through the implementation of policies and strategies to prevent harm to watersheds and nearshore ecosystems; and championing resilient communities across the Pacific Islands.

"Dr. Golbuu brings an extraordinary depth of experience, leadership and commitment to conservation across our region," said Keobel Sakuma, TNC Micronesia & Polynesia's Interim Deputy Director. "Yim is a respected scientist, dedicated steward of Micronesia's natural heritage, and a collaborative leader who understands both

the ecological and cultural dimensions of our work. His track record of advancing marine conservation, strengthening local capacity and building strong partnerships makes him exceptionally well suited for this role."

Prior to his role as Conservation Director, Dr. Golbuu served as Micronesia & Polynesia's Coral Resilience Director for over two years, significantly expanding TNC's coral resilience work and funding in the region. During this time, his team launched the Micronesia Coral Reef Program under the Global Fund for Coral Reefs, as well as multiple coral reef restoration projects across the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Palau.

A leader in conservation for over two decades, Dr. Golbuu served as the CEO of the Palau International Coral Reef Center for 12 years. In 2012, he was recognized by the Palau National Congress for his contributions to the sustainability of the country's natural resources and in 2013, was awarded a Pew Fellowship in Marine Conservation. Dr. Golbuu earned his bachelor's degree at the University of California, Davis, his master's degree at the University of Guam and a Doctorate in Philosophy, Environmental Science and

Management from Southern Cross University.

Dr. Golbuu is both Palauan and Yapese and has spent his entire career in Micronesia, bringing Micronesian experience, perspective and culture to TNC's work in the region, and reflecting TNC's commitment to community-led conservation work.

In welcoming Dr. Golbuu, TNC Micronesia & Polynesia's leadership reaffirm their commitment to continuity and strong momentum across the region.

Dr. Golbuu steps into this role at a time when life in Micronesia and Polynesia is rapidly shifting. Climate change, an increase in demand for critical resources, expanding development and destructive harvesting techniques have resulted in significant habitat and species loss across the region. TNC has been working alongside local partners in the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, U.S. Territories of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, French Polynesia and American Samoa to support nature-based conservation efforts, generate sustainable livelihoods and help communities become more resilient in the



face of climate change.

"I am honored to have been chosen as Micronesia & Polynesia's Conservation Director at this pivotal time for our region," said Dr. Golbuu. "Micronesia and Polynesia are home to some of the most beautiful and bountiful natural areas in the world, and we must work collaboratively to ensure that these areas can continue to thrive. I am looking forward to bringing science, culture and community together to continue working towards a more resilient future."

TNC's collaborative and thorough selection process for this role ensures the chosen leader reflects the experience, vision and values essential for guiding its critical work in Micronesia & Polynesia.

Global Spotlight: Pacific Ministers for Women meet UN Secretary General

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

March 9, 2026

New York- On the margins of the 70th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70), Pacific Islands Forum Ministers and Senior Officials held a high-level dialogue with the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr António Guterres, to advance Pacific priorities on gender equality and social inclusion in line with Forum Leaders' vision under the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

The dialogue was an important opportunity for Pacific Ministers and senior officials responsible for women's affairs and gender equality to engage directly with the United Nations Secretary General on key regional priorities including Peace and Security, UN80, Pacific Pre-COP31 and Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

Through open and constructive Talanoa, Ministers highlighted Pacific-led and centered solutions and called for sustained global partnership and support to address

the interconnected impacts of climate change, economic vulnerability, and social inequality on women and girls across the region, consistent with the 2050 Strategy's emphasis on resilience, inclusion and collective action.

As chair of the meeting, Honorable Cathy Nori, Solomon Islands Minister for Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs, expressed the Forum's support for the UN80 initiative, while underscoring the importance of ensuring that reforms take into consideration the needs of small island developing states. "A more efficient and streamlined UN is necessary, but this must not compromise the UN's reach, effectiveness or presence in the Pacific. We must ensure that programs and activities focused on the most vulnerable, particularly those countries in special situations – such as Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs), are prioritized and preserved."

Honorable Fane Fotu Fituafae, Tonga's Minister of Internal Affairs, emphasized

the importance of ensuring Pacific women's experiences and leadership are meaningfully reflected across the United Nations system. "As you advance the peace operations review and the UN80 reform agenda, we urge for our Pacific's experience and women's leadership, to be meaningfully reflected, reiterating the need for our women's representation in UN decision-making on peace and security be consistent with Forum Leaders' call for Pacific representation across the UN system."

Honorable Ruth Kwansing, Kiribati's Minister of Youth, Sports and Social Affairs, highlighted key challenges to addressing Gender-based violence and access to justice in the Pacific. "We request that UN's support is tailored and best fit the Pacific's vulnerabilities and structural barriers, including geographical isolation and cultural and linguistic diversity." She further emphasized the need for a coordinated approach by UN Agencies operating in the Pacific to strengthen efforts to prevent and respond to gender based

violence.

"Underscore the need for UN agencies in the region to strengthen their own coordination and collaboration in order to support ending GBV and prevention initiatives and improved survivor services."

The Pacific Ministers and their delegations reaffirmed their commitment to advancing gender equality and social inclusion as a core pillar of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and look forward to the continued leadership and engagement of the United Nations Secretary-General in championing gender equality and amplifying Pacific priorities on the global stage.



USP study provides baseline data on Fiji's drinking water

March 20, 2026

Fiji - As the world marks World Water Day 2026 under the theme "Water and Gender Equality," research from The University of the South Pacific (USP) has established the first baseline evidence of microplastics in Fiji's drinking water, highlighting an opportunity for early and informed action.

The findings add to growing global evidence of plastic pollution as an emerging environmental and public health concern.

Led by Associate Professor David Rohindra with researchers Roselyn Lata, Timaima Waqainabete, and Steven Aru, the USP team conducted the first baseline assessment of microplastic contamination across multiple drinking water sources in Fiji, including tap water, groundwater, rainwater and bottled water.

Their work, published in *Environmental Monitoring and Assessment* in 2025, found that tiny plastic particles, less than 5 millimetres in size, are present in water that Fijians consume every day.

The study found microplastic concentrations ranging from 0.10 ± 0.03 to 2.90 ± 0.57 particles per litre in tap water, with bottled water also showing variable contamination and some brands containing up to 2.20 ± 0.41 particles per litre.

Rainwater, by contrast, recorded the lowest levels at 0.20 ± 0.05 particles per litre, indicating lower exposure.

The detected levels remain below critical pollution thresholds, although global standards for microplastics in drinking water are still evolving.

The team stresses that this provides an important opportunity to act early.

"Safe, reliable water is the starting point for healthier, more equal communities," Associate Professor Rohindra noted.

"Our findings show that people of Fiji are ingesting microplastics through drinking water, and this highlights the need for enhanced monitoring, treatment and public awareness to safeguard both people and ecosystems."

He adds that this baseline should be seen as an opportunity to act – rather than a cause for panic.

"We are still below critical thresholds, which means we have a window of time to respond wisely," he emphasised.

"If we strengthen our water systems now, we can protect our people, especially women and children, from bearing the heaviest costs of future pollution."

The presence of microplastics in drinking water is not only a scientific issue – it is also a question of equity.

In many Pacific Island communities, women and girls are responsible for securing, managing and using water for households, health care, food preparation and hygiene.

When water sources are polluted or unreliable, the burden of coping – walking longer distances, spending more time boiling or treating water, caring for sick family members – falls excessively on them.

Research such as USP's microplastics baseline study can help guide policies and investments to reduce this challenge and promote more equitable results.

"When water is unsafe, it is often women who must find alternatives, stretch already limited resources and care for the sick," Associate Professor Rohindra explained.

"By making our water safer, we are directly supporting gender equality and easing the invisible workload carried by women and girls."

While this first study focuses on Fiji, its implications extend across the region.

Pacific Island countries share many of the same vulnerabilities: small and fragile catchments, growing urban centres, limited waste management systems, and heavy reliance on surface and groundwater sources that are increasingly exposed to plastic pollution.

USP's research situates Fiji within a global and regional context where microplastics are now found from mountaintops to deep ocean trenches.

The results underscore the importance of protecting water catchment areas, especially those near densely populated or industrial zones where microplastic loads tend to be higher before water even reaches treatment plants.

For Pacific governments and utilities, the research findings highlight the need to integrate microplastics into routine water quality monitoring and to strengthen cross-border learning on regulation, treatment technologies and community awareness.

As the region advances the 2050 Strategy

for the Blue Pacific Continent, ensuring that "where water flows, equality grows" becomes a lived reality will depend on evidence-based decisions such as these.

As research on health impacts continues, there are already practical steps that households, communities and institutions can take to reduce exposure to microplastics and protect water quality.

At the household level:

- Use certified water filters (for example, filters that are tested to remove fine particles) where possible, and maintain them according to manufacturer guidelines.
- Prioritise protected rainwater harvesting systems, ensuring tanks are covered, regularly cleaned, and connected to clean roof catchments.
- Reduce single-use plastics at home, properly dispose of plastic waste, and avoid burning plastics, which can create other pollutants.

At the community level:

- Support local clean-up campaigns around rivers, streams and coastal areas to prevent plastic litter from entering water sources.
- Work with local leaders, schools and churches to educate communities about plastic pollution, the importance of protecting catchments, and simple water safety practices.
- Encourage village and settlement committees to discuss low-cost filtration and rainwater solutions, and to share local knowledge about safe water sources.

At the policy and institutional level, USP sees its role as a long-term partner in solutions.

"USP can help our communities not only by diagnosing the problem but by co-designing the solutions," said Associate Professor Rohindra.

"We are ready to work with governments, utilities and communities on better monitoring, new treatment options and awareness programmes across the region."

Beyond monitoring, the USP team is also exploring innovative ways to remove microplastics from the aquatic environment.

Building on the Pacific's long tradition of using marine resources wisely, the researchers are developing a hydrogel derived from waste crab shells that can



capture and remove microplastics from water.

If successful, this low-cost, locally sourced technology could offer Pacific Island countries a home-grown solution to a global problem, transforming fisheries waste into a tool for environmental protection and water security.

It is a powerful example of how Pacific science and innovation can help deliver not only on World Water Day's call to action, but also on Sustainable Development Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and broader ocean and climate commitments.

"It is important that the solutions come from the Pacific as well," Associate Professor Rohindra highlighted.

"By turning our own waste into part of the answer, we show that small islands can lead in big global challenges."

The World Health Organization (WHO) has called for more research into the human health impacts of microplastics, noting potential chemical, physical and microbial risks.

USP's study adds critical Pacific evidence to the global understanding of microplastics. It underscores the need to connect environmental monitoring with public health surveillance, including investigations into emerging illnesses that may be linked to microplastic ingestion.

On World Water Day 2026, the message from the Pacific is clear: when we protect our water, we protect our people – and we create the conditions for equality, opportunity and dignity to grow wherever that water flows.