

Micronesian leaders call for regional commitments to become action

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

August 19, 2026

Pohnpei, FSM — Leaders and representatives from across Micronesia opened the 28th Micronesian Islands Forum in Pohnpei Wednesday with calls for stronger cooperation on health and education, but a broader message repeatedly emerged from their statements: regional discussions need to produce practical results.

From air and sea transportation to energy security, climate change, health care, workforce development and ocean protection, speakers returned repeatedly to problems that cross jurisdictional boundaries and cannot easily be addressed by individual island governments acting alone.

Pohnpei Governor Stevenson Joseph, who assumed the chairmanship of the Forum from Republic of the Marshall Islands President Hilda Heine, set that tone early.

“As we deliberate on the common issues we share, let's focus and find solutions, tangible, practical solutions, and most importantly, put those solutions into action,” Joseph told the gathering.

The Forum is meeting under the theme “Promote Healthy Communities, Open Doors to Learning.”



Photo by Micronesian Productions

Joseph said the theme focuses attention on two sectors that are essential to social and economic development but argued that governments too often accept existing health and education systems rather than make difficult changes.

He focused particularly on noncommunicable

diseases, saying Micronesia's health systems remain largely reactive, devoting enormous resources to treating people after they become ill rather than preventing disease.

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FSM men and women qualify for 2027 Pacific Games basketball competition

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

August 21, 2026

Hagåtña, Guam — Both the Federated States of Micronesia men's and women's national basketball teams have earned places in the 2027 Pacific Games in Tahiti following their performances at the FIBA Micronesian Cup competitions held August 14-16 at the University of Guam Field House.

The FSM men won the 2026 FIBA Micronesian Cup and the region's qualifying berth for the Pacific Games after defeating Palau by 12 points in the first of two qualifying games and



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MIF leaders set broad regional agenda at Pohnpei Forum

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

August 24, 2026

Pohnpei — Leaders of the Micronesia Islands Forum concluded their 28th annual meeting in Pohnpei with a broad set of agreements aimed at some of the region's most persistent problems, including high fuel costs, limited transportation, shortages of health workers, non-communicable diseases, climate change, telecommunications resilience and barriers to regional trade.

The Forum, held August 19-21 brought together leaders or representatives of the Federated States of Micronesia and its four states, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Palau, Naoero, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Pohnpei Governor Stevenson A. Joseph served as chairman of the 28th MIF, succeeding Marshall Islands President Hilda C. Heine as chair.

The leaders adopted a 19-page joint communiqué and 10 resolutions, several of which move beyond general expressions of regional cooperation by establishing working groups, directing committees to pursue specific initiatives or committing the Forum to coordinated advocacy.

Among the more immediate economic issues was



Photo by Micronesia Productions

the continuing regional fuel crisis.

The leaders endorsed establishment of a Micronesia Petroleum Procurement Working Group to determine whether jurisdictions could reduce costs and strengthen fuel security by purchasing petroleum collectively.

The proposal stops short of committing members to a regional fuel-buying

arrangement. Instead, the working group is to examine whether coordinated or aggregated procurement is technically, economically, legally and commercially feasible.

The initial group would include representatives from the FSM, Marshall Islands and Naoero, with other MIF jurisdictions able to participate voluntarily.

The Forum called for technical assistance from the Pacific Community, the Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility and other partners to analyze such issues as regional fuel demand, storage, shipping routes, fuel specifications, legal and regulatory requirements, financing and procurement.

The working group is to report back to leaders with a preliminary feasibility assessment and recommendations on whether and how a regional petroleum procurement system should proceed.

The initiative follows concern throughout the meeting about Micronesia's vulnerability to fuel-price volatility, shipping disruptions and the relatively weak negotiating position of small island markets purchasing petroleum individually.

Transportation emerged as a closely related concern.

Leaders called for stronger regional air

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**Bill Jaynes
Managing Editor**

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Pacificnesian Equities floats regional airline concept

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlle Press

August 25, 2026

Guam - A Guam-based consulting firm is circulating a preliminary proposal among Micronesian leaders suggesting that Palau, the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and the Federated States of Micronesia explore jointly establishing a regional airline — an idea its author says is intended to start a conversation rather than present a completed feasibility study.

Tewid Meresbang, CEO and co-founder of Pacificnesian Equities, said the company sent the report to several government ministers in Micronesia and to organizations in Palau expected to participate in or help shape discussions surrounding the Pacific Islands Forum.

Pacificnesian Equities has not been invited to make a presentation at the Forum, Meresbang told The Kaselehlle Press.

“This was last minute so we weren't invited or approved,” he said by email. “We hope that by sending this report to several leaders, they can initiate conversations about an intergovernmental airline carrier and seeking alternative and collaborative ways to reduce our dependence on monopolistic airlines.”

Meresbang said the firm hopes to conduct additional research and develop the concept sufficiently to seek a formal presentation at a future Micronesian Islands Forum and Pacific Islands Forum.

The six-page document, titled *Feasibility Report: Intergovernmental Aviation Consortium*, proposes a jointly owned regional carrier serving Palau, the four FSM states, the Marshall Islands, and Kiribati, with connections to Guam and Honolulu. Its stated objectives are improved regional connectivity and a target round-trip fare of \$400 for resident travelers.

Despite its title, Meresbang

cautioned that the document should not be regarded as a completed feasibility study.

“We conducted a brief research with AI support so we can't confidently say we did a thorough and complete research, therefore the note at the bottom,” he told The Kaselehlle Press.

The report itself ends with the disclosure: “This is an inspiration report developed using AI.”

Meresbang said the disclosure was included specifically because the work is preliminary. He described the firm's objective as encouraging Pacific leaders to consider whether greater regional cooperation could produce a transportation system that better serves island communities.

“Our main objective of the report is to inspire our leaders to have discussions at the PIF about collaborating in ways that connect us to help build self-sustaining systems that benefit our community,” he said.

Under the concept outlined in the report, the four participating governments would enter a multilateral aviation agreement and create a jointly owned holding company, with each country initially receiving a 25 percent interest. The proposed board would have equal representation from the participating countries, with major scheduling and aircraft allocation decisions requiring a supermajority.

The concept also proposes distributing various airline functions among the participating countries. Palau would house corporate and legal headquarters; the FSM would host primary flight operations and turboprop maintenance; the Marshall Islands would serve as the financial and accounting center; and Kiribati would host catering and regional supply operations.

The proposed east-west route would stretch from Palau through Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae to Majuro and Tarawa. Additional

routes would connect Palau and the FSM with Guam and the Marshall Islands with Honolulu.

The preliminary fleet concept calls for one leased regional jet, such as an Airbus A220-100 or Boeing 737 MAX 7, and two turboprop aircraft, such as ATR 42-600s, for shorter routes and airports with more limited runway infrastructure.

The report estimates startup capital of between \$15 million and \$35 million, assuming aircraft would be leased rather than purchased. Divided equally, that would require an initial contribution of between \$3.75 million and \$8.75 million from each participating government. It estimates annual operating costs for the three-aircraft network at between \$20 million and \$45 million.

Those figures, however, are part of the AI-assisted preliminary concept and have not been established through the kind of detailed market, regulatory, engineering, or financial analysis that would ordinarily accompany a formal airline feasibility study.

One of the proposal's central ideas is a \$400 round-trip fare for residents of the participating countries. The report assumes an estimated underlying passenger cost of \$650 round-trip and proposes making up the difference through a combination of cargo revenue, higher fares for non-residents and tourists, government fee waivers, and direct public subsidies.

Under the proposed two-tier system, residents would pay a capped \$400 round-trip fare while tourists and other non-residents would pay market fares estimated in the report at \$900 or more. Cargo, particularly inbound e-commerce shipments and outbound seafood, would provide another source of revenue to offset passenger fares.

Even under those assumptions, the concept anticipates government financial support. It estimates a combined annual subsidy of \$6

million under what it calls an optimized operating scenario and as much as \$16.8 million under a conservative scenario, equivalent to between \$1.5 million and \$4.2 million annually for each participating country.

The report suggests that Compact of Free Association funding, international development assistance, and tourism levies could potentially be investigated as sources of that support. Those potential funding sources are presented as proposals rather than commitments from any government or development partner.

The document also presents a less ambitious alternative that would not require the four governments to establish a new airline from the ground up. Under that model, the consortium would essentially establish a common regional airline brand and contract with an existing carrier, such as Nauru Airlines or Fiji Airways, through an Aircraft, Crew, Maintenance, and Insurance, or ACMI, arrangement.

An existing airline would supply and operate the aircraft while flights were marketed under the consortium's regional brand. The report argues that approach could reduce certification, staffing, and operational risks associated with creating an entirely new airline.

Meresbang described Pacificnesian Equities as a Guam-based consulting firm working on equitable and sustainable development projects in Guam, Saipan, and Hawaii, including work with partners in the United States and the International Cooperative Alliance-Asia Pacific.

For now, he said, the airline document is intended principally as a starting point.

“We hope to develop more research and presentation on this matter and submit one for the next MIF and PIF to be invited to provide a formal presentation,” Meresbang said.

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“We must shift our focus and our resources to prevention,” he said, pointing to clean water, healthier local nutrition and early screening as investments that cost far less than chronic disease treatment and off-island medical referrals.

Joseph made a similar argument about education, asking whether Micronesian schools are providing young people with skills that match the actual needs of island economies. He called for greater emphasis on technical fields including sustainable aquaculture, mechanics, maritime skills and technology, along with closer partnerships with the private sector.

Climate change, he said, can no longer be treated as an occasional emergency. Drought, rising seas and other effects must instead be incorporated into development plans, budgets and infrastructure projects as permanent realities.

Whipps calls for a more action-oriented MIF

Palau President Surangel Whipps Jr. carried Joseph's call for implementation further, arguing that the Micronesian Islands Forum itself should become the mechanism through which regional political commitments are turned into results.

Whipps recalled the dispute five years ago that brought the Micronesian countries close to withdrawing from the Pacific Islands Forum after Micronesia's candidate for Secretary General was passed over. The resulting reforms under the Suva Agreement, he said, demonstrated what Micronesian unity could accomplish.

“Proof that when Micronesia speaks with one voice, the region listens,” Whipps said.

He said designated representatives had reviewed the terms of reference of 14 MIF committees and found overlap, leading to recommendations that education and workforce development be combined, tourism, trade and transportation be brought together, and environmental, climate

and ocean work be better coordinated. Work was also proposed toward terms of reference for a regional climate change committee.

Whipps said the reforms point toward a larger role for the MIF.

“We have the Micronesian Presidents' Summit, where we as leaders set a direction,” he said. “But the Micronesian Islands Forum should be where that direction becomes action. Not a parallel conversation, but an implementing one.”

He said the wider Pacific does not lack ideas or communiqués but sometimes suffers from a gap between what leaders decide and what actually reaches their people.

Whipps, who was scheduled to leave Pohnpei ahead of the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Palau, urged Micronesian leaders to arrive at that meeting already aligned on regional priorities.

Ocean stewardship was among those priorities. Whipps said it was a Micronesian responsibility long before ocean conservation became a prominent international cause and called for a coordinated Micronesian position on the Unlocking Blue Pacific Prosperity initiative.

He also identified transportation and energy as foundations on which many of the region's other ambitions depend.

“Better inner island and interstate transportation is not a project alongside our economic goals,” he said. “It is a precondition for achieving them, whether in tourism, trade, or access to health and education.”

Whipps noted that while individual governments have established renewable energy targets, Micronesia does not yet have a shared renewable energy ambition comparable to its regional commitments on ocean stewardship and climate resilience. He called on MIF committees dealing with transportation and energy to produce practical work plans rather than additional studies.

He also called for greater regional coordination against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, transnational crime and drug trafficking, and for improved access



Photos by Micronesian Productions

to climate finance and adaptation funding.

Palik calls north-south transportation essential to FSM development

Representing the FSM National Government in place of President Wesley Simina, Vice President Aren B. Palik placed transportation, energy, ocean protection, climate change, health and workforce development among the FSM's regional priorities.

Palik said the FSM's tourism sector has long depended heavily on the east-west aviation corridor and

United Airlines' island service, leaving the country vulnerable to limited access and high travel costs.

“If we truly want to unlock the economic potentials of our islands, we must think beyond the traditional corridors,” he said, calling for development of north-south connectivity within the region.

On ocean protection, Palik said the FSM has continued marine spatial planning and is working with partners on area-based management and marine protected area proposals.

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He said individual national efforts are insufficient to confront threats to the ocean and that Micronesia's collective action and unified voice remain its greatest strength.

Energy security has taken on additional urgency following the recent fuel crisis, Palik said. He called for accelerated renewable energy development, more resilient infrastructure and regional cooperation, including bulk fuel procurement, shared technical expertise and coordinated investment.

The FSM is targeting 70 percent renewable energy by 2030, 80 percent by 2035 and net-zero emissions by 2050, he said.

Palik also called for regional investment in institutions that train health professionals, saying Micronesia needs to develop more of its own health workforce while upgrading health facilities that have reached the end of their useful lives.

He urged MIF members to support gender equality initiatives and recommended endorsement of the Kamorale Declaration from the recently concluded Micronesian Ministerial Women's Conference.

On education, Palik said skills development is more than an educational issue and is central to job creation, nation building and economic growth. He pointed to international accreditation of the FSM Skills Testing and Certification Unit and said regional cooperation could help align qualifications and expand opportunities for workers across borders.

Heine urges revival of regional purchasing proposals

Marshall Islands President Hilda Heine also called for practical regional cooperation, particularly in education, energy, medicine procurement and transportation.

Heine said Micronesia should strengthen vocational education and revive earlier regional efforts to train skilled tradespeople, including work begun through Palau Community



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College. She advocated cross-border educational pathways, digital literacy, science and technology, entrepreneurship and lifelong learning.

She announced that the Marshall Islands will host the third Conference of Pacific Education Ministers in April 2027, which she said will be the first Pacific Education Ministers meeting held in Micronesia. Heine said RMI hopes the meeting will be approached as an opportunity for collective Micronesian leadership rather than solely as a Marshall Islands event.

On climate change, Heine called for continued defense of the 1.5-degree Celsius temperature limit and a transition away from fossil fuels, particularly by major emitters. She endorsed Whipps' proposal for a 100 percent renewable energy goal for Micronesia and suggested establishing target dates.

She also called for Micronesia to use its combined purchasing power.

Regional bulk purchases of medicines and medical supplies could improve the sustainability of health systems, she said, while the same principle could apply to fuel.

Heine noted that Micronesian leaders agreed in 2024 to develop a regional energy security plan and explore bulk fuel procurement, but said progress had stalled. The 2026 Pacific fuel crisis, she said, demonstrated the urgency of returning to the proposal.

Aggregating regional demand could strengthen purchasing power, improve prices, increase supply reliability and reduce transportation costs, she said. Similar cooperation could eventually be applied to renewable energy infrastructure.

Heine also called for air connectivity to be elevated to the political level and for ministers and officials to continue exploring more reliable and affordable services.

Nauru says airline expects FSM

service by November

Nauru's delegation offered perhaps the most specific transportation proposal of the opening statements.

Speaking on behalf of Nauru President David Adeang, Special Envoy Rennier Gadabu said Nauru Airlines expects to begin service to the FSM by November following the recent signing of a memorandum of understanding with the FSM.

Gadabu described aviation as an essential lifeline connecting Micronesians to families, education, employment, health care, trade, tourism and government services. Current regional travel, he said, remains costly and unreliable, sometimes requiring travelers to fly far outside Micronesia to reach another island relatively close to their own.

Nauru Airlines previously operated as far as Palau with Australian

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government support but now operates only as far as Majuro following the end of that funding. Gadabu said the airline has also held discussions with One Pacific Airways on possible cooperation.

Nauru proposed development of a regional aviation framework identifying priority routes and the actions required of participating governments, including work on traffic rights, airport access and passenger and cargo demand.

Nauru also expressed interest in joining the Micronesian Shipping Commission and offered to explore whether its two vessels could contribute to regional services. Gadabu said successful shipping cooperation would require coordinated schedules, sufficient cargo volumes and workable cost-sharing arrangements.

"Our discussions must lead to tangible outcomes," he said. "We should leave this forum with agreed responsibilities, realistic timelines, and a mechanism for measuring progress."

On health, Gadabu said Nauru is putting greater emphasis on prevention and physical activity in response to high levels of noncommunicable disease. Among its initiatives is a public service walk every Friday in which government employees are required to participate.

Successful health policy, he said, must extend beyond hospitals and clinics into schools, workplaces, sporting organizations, churches, families and communities.

Guam seeks regional cooperation on health, transportation and seabed mining

Guam's representative, Rikki Rae Orsini, speaking on behalf

of Governor Lou Leon Guerrero, said increasing global attention on Micronesia makes it increasingly important that Micronesians establish their own priorities.

"Our political relationships may differ, but the challenges before us do not stop at jurisdictional boundaries," she said.

Orsini called transportation essential to regional prosperity and resilience and said Guam continues to seek relief from U.S. federal restrictions that limit its ability to attract additional international air service.

She said better connections could improve food security, business opportunities and movement of people, goods and expertise while increasing regional self-reliance.

Drawing on Guam's experience during the COVID-19 pandemic, when Guam tested samples for neighboring islands and assisted with quarantine, medicines, treatment and protective equipment, Orsini advocated greater sharing of health and emergency personnel.

She also described Guam's plans for a new medical campus, including a proposed veterans clinic that could potentially expand access to care for veterans throughout Micronesia.

Guam is seeking claims-processing capacity so regional veterans can obtain help navigating U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs benefits without traveling long distances.

"Our Pacific veterans should not have to cross an ocean simply to receive the services they need," Orsini said.

She also devoted substantial attention to conservation and the growing outside interest in Micronesia's ocean resources.

"Others may look at our islands and the oceans surrounding us and see strategic location and natural resources," Orsini said. "But our home cannot be reduced to a balance sheet."

On deep-seabed mining, Orsini said Leon Guerrero's position is that development should pause until more is known.

"We need more science, we need more data, and until we have them, we need to pause," she said.

Orsini said questions remain about environmental consequences, whether affected communities will have a meaningful role in decisions and who will ultimately receive the benefits while island communities bear the risks.

Guam asked the MIF to give attention to deep-seabed mining and called for



Photos by Micronesian Productions



additional independent science and data and greater engagement before activities move forward that could irreversibly alter the ocean environment.

Chuuk seeks regional action on lagoon oil threat

Chuuk Governor Alexander Narruhn linked the Forum's health and education theme to environmental protection, infrastructure and opportunities for young

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people.

Narruhn described healthy communities as requiring healthy people, a healthy environment and strong culture. He called for stronger responses to noncommunicable diseases and mental health needs, clean water and food security, while protecting marine resources for future generations.

He said Chuuk has expanded its dispensaries and recently opened a dialysis facility, allowing more patients to receive treatment without leaving their families. Plans for a new hospital are also moving forward.

Narruhn renewed Chuuk's call for regional assistance to address the threat posed by oil remaining in World War II shipwrecks in Chuuk Lagoon. He said more than six million gallons threaten the lagoon and its people.

On education, he called for early childhood and technical training and preparation for employment in blue and green economies.

Narruhn also sought support for development of a sports complex in Chuuk, saying the lack of such a facility has limited athletes and Chuuk's ability to host regional sporting events.

"The time for discussion has passed. The time for implementation is now," Narruhn said.

States emphasize health, education and regional cooperation

Yap Governor Francis Itimai and Kosrae Governor Tulensa Palik also tied health and education to broader questions of regional resilience.

Itimai described climate change, health, education, preservation of cultural heritage and sustainable development as shared challenges requiring continued regional cooperation. He called for collaboration on public health, health infrastructure and capacity

building while describing education as an engine for opportunity and innovation.

Palik similarly said health and education represent investments in Micronesia's future. His statement linked quality health care, nutritious food, clean water and safe environments to resilient communities and called for continued cooperation against noncommunicable diseases and the health consequences of climate change.

Education, he said, should include not only classroom learning but knowledge passed through families, communities, culture and elders.

"The future of our islands depends on the choices we make today," Palik said, calling on leaders to invest in children, protect community health and choose cooperation over isolation.

The CNMI's representative, Clement Joseph Bermudes Jr., said the Commonwealth's different political status does not diminish its connection to the rest of Micronesia.

He pointed to rising seas, natural disasters, energy security, economic development, tourism and aviation, health care, education and natural resource protection as challenges shared throughout the region. Recent powerful typhoons in the Marianas, he said, again demonstrated the importance of neighboring islands supporting one another and sharing resources and knowledge following disasters.

"Our political status may be different, but our challenges, our responsibilities, and our aspirations in specific communities are often the same," Bermudes said.

Across the statements, differences in political status, geography and economic circumstances produced different priorities. Guam raised deep-seabed mining and veterans' access. Nauru concentrated heavily on aviation and shipping. Chuuk sought assistance with the continuing threat from World War II wrecks. The FSM emphasized north-south transportation, renewable energy, climate and workforce development. The



Photos by Micronesian Productions



Marshall Islands pressed for regional purchasing and greater educational cooperation.

But the opening statements repeatedly returned to the argument that the region's size and isolation make cooperation a necessity rather than simply an aspiration.

For Whipps, the approaching Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Palau offered an immediate test. He said Micronesia should arrive not seeking an opportunity to be heard, but having already agreed on its priorities.

"Micronesia does not need to arrive in Palau asking to be heard," Whipps said. "We arrive having already done the work of speaking with one voice."

For Nauru, the test was even more concrete: commitments should have responsibilities, deadlines and a way to determine whether they have been carried out.

And for Joseph, beginning his tenure as MIF chairman, the standard was established at the outset of the meeting: find practical solutions and put them into action.

Audit finds procurement concerns in \$3.8 million of tested construction contracts

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlle Press

August 21, 2026

Palikir, Pohnpei—An FSM Office of the National Public Auditor review of national government construction contracting found widespread noncompliance with financial regulations, including contracts awarded without required competitive bidding, potential conflicts of interest, unauthorized contract increases, missing project records and completed projects showing defects after contractors had been fully paid.

The performance audit of the Department of Transportation, Communications and Infrastructure's procurement of construction contracts examined projects completed between October 2021 and August 2024 throughout Pohnpei, Chuuk, Yap and Kosrae.

Auditors examined \$5.3 million, or 41 percent, of \$12.7 million in completed construction contracts. They identified concerns involving \$3.8 million, or 73 percent, of the contracts tested because of departures from requirements of the FSM

Financial Management Regulations.

The Office of the National Public Auditor said the problems included contracts awarded without required competitive bidding, project obligations and payments reaching as much as twice the original appropriation without proper justification or authorization from FSM Congress, and spending that could not be verified because project files and supporting documents were missing.

The audit also found weaknesses in the Department of Finance and

Administration's oversight of construction procurement and said matters identified during the audit have been referred to the Public Auditor's Compliance Investigation Division for further review.

Among the cases cited was a \$170,000 contract, including a change order, that auditors said was awarded without competitive bidding. The contract was originally initiated in 2018 and extended through 2022 with additional

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Public Auditor finds FSM climate efforts at intermediate level; financing lags behind

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlle Press

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—An assessment by the FSM Office of the National Public Auditor found that the national government has established many of the structures, policies and commitments needed to address climate change, but significant gaps remain in coordination, planning, monitoring and particularly climate financing.

The Office of the National Public Auditor, or ONPA, assessed the FSM Government's climate-change efforts using the international ClimateScanner methodology, examining governance, public policies and climate finance.

Overall, the FSM was rated at the "intermediate" level of implementation. Governance and public policies each received scores of 61 percent, while climate finance received a substantially lower score of 36 percent.

Of 19 components examined, eight were assessed at the advanced level, eight at the intermediate level, two at the early stage

of implementation and one as having no implementation or being inapplicable to the FSM.

The assessment does not measure whether the FSM's climate policies are successfully achieving their intended results. Instead, the ClimateScanner methodology examines whether the necessary systems, policies and structures are in place. The assessment used a standardized framework consisting of 19 components and 66 individual items, assigning implementation ratings ranging from none and early implementation to intermediate and advanced.

The ClimateScanner initiative is led by Brazil's Federal Court of Accounts, the country's Supreme Audit Institution, together with the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions Working Group on Environmental Auditing. ONPA participated as the FSM's Supreme Audit Institution.

In the governance category, auditors found the FSM at an advanced level in several areas, including its institutional, legal and regulatory frameworks, governance structure, long-term strategies and risk-

management approaches. The assessment also placed the FSM at the advanced level for climate-change inclusiveness, oversight and litigation.

However, ONPA rated the government at the intermediate level for coordination between different levels of government, monitoring, transparency and accountability mechanisms.

Public policies also received an overall score of 61 percent.

The auditors found the FSM at the advanced level in fulfilling its international climate commitments. The FSM submitted its 2022 Nationally Determined Contributions to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, documenting its greenhouse-gas reduction and adaptation goals and identifying policies, financing and technology needed to carry them out.

However, ONPA found some policies and plans were outdated or had not been approved, resulting in an intermediate rating in that area. The report also found that the FSM has yet to develop a National Adaptation Plan, which the

auditors said would improve coordination, implementation, monitoring and reporting of climate-change mitigation and adaptation activities.

Climate finance emerged as the weakest of the three major areas assessed.

ONPA gave the FSM a 36 percent implementation score for climate financing. The assessment examined whether plans and budgets are aligned with climate goals, whether systems exist to track and report domestic and international climate financing and whether mechanisms are available to mobilize private financing.

"The FSM Government largely depended on donors to fund climate change actions in the FSM," the report said. "There was no funding from the FSM Government."

According to the report, a climate-finance strategy remains under development and is expected to be produced through the Green Climate Fund-supported FSM National Adaptation Plan Planning Project. ONPA said such a strategy is needed to

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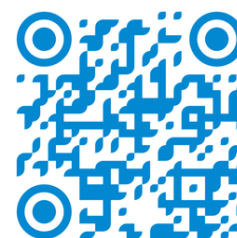
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EXCITING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY!

Parties to the Nauru Agreement Office



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO)

The Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) invites applications from interested candidates to fill the vital role of CEO of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement Office (PNAO). The successful candidate will have exceptional and relevant skills and qualifications, including extensive experience in senior tuna management and commercial management roles, a strong focus on good governance, and the ability to lead and manage the Office in a business-like manner.

The CEO leads the PNAO, a globally recognized institution at the forefront of innovative fisheries governance and ocean resource management. The position is accountable to the Parties through a complex governance structure comprising senior officials, Ministers, and country leaders, requiring strong leadership, diplomacy, and stakeholder engagement.

The CEO provides strategic, operational, and commercial leadership, ensuring the organization delivers high-impact outcomes for its member Parties while maintaining strong financial performance, institutional integrity, and operational excellence.

The role demands a dynamic leader capable of:

- navigating complex regional and international fisheries regimes, with a strong focus on maximizing the economic returns from tuna resources;
- advancing sustainability and reinforcing the sovereign rights of PNA Parties over their marine resources; and
- driving the implementation of cutting-edge management frameworks, strengthening strategic partnerships, and positioning the PNAO as a leader in the global fisheries sector.

This is a pivotal leadership position at a time when the PNAO continues to shape international best practice in sustainable fisheries and resource economics.

Success in this role requires deep expertise across political, legal, policy, and commercial domains, coupled with strong diplomatic engagement and commercial acumen.

APPLY NOW

Eligibility

Applications are invited **only** from citizens of the PNA member countries.

Applicants **must provide written letter of endorsement of their candidacy from their national governments** in order to be considered.

Essential Requirements

- Postgraduate tertiary qualification in fisheries science, fisheries economics, fisheries law, fisheries management, business management, commerce, or a relevant discipline
- Minimum 10 years' experience in senior management positions with extensive knowledge of the tuna industry
- Extensive experience in formulating budgets and plans, including extensive knowledge and experience in project management
- Experience and ability to communicate effectively with public and private sector leaders
- Demonstrated commitment to ethical business practices, fraud prevention, and a workplace free from harassment and discrimination
- Ability to manage and work effectively in multidisciplinary and multicultural teams, supported by strong analytical skills

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The successful applicant will be based in **Majuro, Marshall Islands** and will be offered a three-year contract with an attractive benefits package including salary, superannuation, relocation, travel, accommodation, and

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Applicants are strongly encouraged to obtain the **Position Information Pack** from Vanguard Solutions before lodging an application.

Email: PNAapplications@vanguard.com.pg

Subject Line: **PNAO – CEO information pack**

Application Process

To Apply

Email: PNAapplications@vanguard.com.pg

Subject Line: **PNAO – CEO Application**

Follow all instructions and ensure that your application includes:

- Cover letter
- Government Endorsement letter
- Updated CV
- Completed Vanguard Application Form
- Copies of qualifications
- Names and contact details of three referees

Enquiries

Phone: (+675) 322 8400

Email: PNAapplications@vanguard.com.pg

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Applications close Friday, 11 September 2026.

Incomplete or late applications may be deemed invalid and excluded from consideration.

Only applicants shortlisted for interview will be contacted.

...Climate Financing

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improve access to climate funding as well as coordination, monitoring and accountability for funds donated to the FSM Government.

The assessment comes as the FSM continues to face substantial climate-related risks despite contributing comparatively little to global greenhouse-gas emissions.

The report identifies food and water security among the country's vulnerable areas. Sea-level rise contributes to coastal erosion and threatens agricultural production and freshwater supplies through saltwater intrusion, while ocean acidification and coral bleaching threaten reef ecosystems important to food security.

According to the report, the FSM's 2022 Nationally Determined Contributions set a target of reducing carbon dioxide emissions from electricity generation by more than 65 percent below 2000 levels. The country has not yet established a 2050 emissions target.

In summarizing the assessment, ONPA identified four principal areas for improvement: stronger coordination between levels of government; greater capacity to plan, implement and track climate activities; improved access to and management of climate financing; and better data systems to support government decision-making.

The report characterized limited technical and institutional capacity, gaps in national-state coordination, inconsistent access to funding, and weak data and monitoring systems as the principal challenges confronting the FSM's climate response. ONPA said the assessment is intended to provide a baseline against which the country's future climate efforts can be measured.

The full Assessment of FSM Government's Performance on Climate Change Governance, Public Policy and Finance, Report No. 2026-01, is available from the FSM Office of the National Public Auditor at:

<http://www.fsmopa.fm/files/onpa/2025/FSM%20Government%20ClimateScanner%20Assessment%20Report,%202026-01,%2010.30.25.signed.pdf>

...Pacific Games

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playing Palau to a tie in the second.

The FSM women finished second behind Guam in the FIBA Women's Micronesia Cup. The top two women's teams qualified for the Pacific Games, sending both Guam and FSM to Tahiti next year.

The men's competition used a two-game aggregate format to determine the qualifier between FSM and Palau.

FSM defeated Palau 80-68 in the first game, taking control during a 28-point second quarter after the teams finished the opening period tied at 20. FSM led 48-38 at halftime and maintained the advantage through the second half.

Noah Adams led FSM with 23 points in the victory. The win gave FSM a 12-point advantage entering the second game.

Palau then pushed FSM considerably harder in the second meeting. The teams were tied at 13 after the first quarter before FSM took a 34-29 lead into halftime. Palau responded with 32 points in the third quarter to take a 61-49 advantage into the final period.

FSM came back in the fourth quarter, outscoring Palau 22-10 to finish the game tied 71-71.

Under the FIBA classification rules used for the competition, the two games were treated as a single 80-minute contest and the combined score determined the winner. Because FSM had won the first game by 12 points, the tie in the second left FSM with the higher aggregate score and the Micronesia Cup championship.

Adams scored 30 points in the second game.

His performance throughout the competition also earned him selection to the FIBA Micronesia Cup All-Star Five. FSM teammate Connor Boylan was also selected.

FIBA tournament statistics listed Adams as the competition leader in efficiency at 25.3 per game and rebounds at 17 per game. He also averaged 2.7 blocked shots. Boylan

averaged 17.7 points per game and 2.3 steals.

FSM's Aurelio Pluhs was also among the tournament's leading rebounders, averaging eight per game.

The championship followed an opening game against a Guam development team that did not count toward Pacific Games qualification. Guam defeated FSM 92-63.

Guam's senior men's team was not eligible to compete for the Pacific Games berth during the Micronesia Cup. According to FIBA, Guam had already qualified for the 2029 FIBA Asia Cup Qualifiers and could not participate as an official contender in the Pacific Games qualification competition because of the Games' place in FIBA's World Cup qualification pathway. Guam instead fielded a development team.

That left FSM and Palau competing for Micronesia's men's berth at the 2027 Pacific Games.

The FSM women's route to Tahiti was different.

Three teams — FSM, Guam and Palau — competed in the women's tournament, with the top two advancing to the Pacific Games.

FSM opened its competition with a 58-33 victory over Palau. The result ultimately proved sufficient to secure FSM's Pacific Games berth.

Guam defeated FSM 110-44 in their meeting and went on to win the Women's Micronesia Cup without a loss. Guam later defeated Palau 142-37 to secure the championship, leaving FSM with the silver medal and the second qualifying position.

FSM's performance also resulted in individual recognition for two members of the women's team.

Sylvania Amor and Leila Lane were selected to the Women's All-Star Five along with Guam players Mia San Nicolas, Elysia Perez and Joylyn Pangilinan.

FIBA cited Amor's scoring and willingness to take responsibility during important portions of FSM's games, while Lane was recognized for contributions on both ends of the court, including defense and scoring.

The men's All-Star Five consisted of Adams and Boylan of FSM, Jerry Ngriraremiang and Wallace Worswick of Palau, and Christopher Conner of Guam.

The results mean the FSM will

be represented in both men's and women's basketball when the Pacific Games are held in Tahiti in 2027.

Game results, tournament statistics and All-Star selections used in this report were compiled from official FIBA records and reports from the 2026 FIBA Micronesia Cup and FIBA Women's Micronesia Cup



TC&I Audit

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congressional appropriations. According to the audit, the contractor was known to be affiliated with a national government official, raising concerns about impartiality and compliance with conflict-of-interest requirements.

The contract was initially awarded for \$70,000. It was increased by \$50,000 in fiscal year 2022 and again by another \$50,000 in May 2024. The increases, representing 71 percent and 42 percent respectively, were made without the independent panel review required under the Financial Management Regulations for change orders increasing an original contract price by 10 percent or more.

Auditors found another contract initially valued at \$644,265 was increased by \$282,162.65, or 44 percent, without the required independent panel review.

In another case, TC&I entered into a \$600,000 road construction contract although the legislative appropriation identified by auditors was only \$300,000. TC&I staff told auditors another \$300,000 had been appropriated, but auditors said they could not trace or verify the additional amount in an appropriation law and TC&I did not provide documentation substantiating the authorization.

The audit also identified two renovation contracts totaling \$761,840 that auditors said were awarded under circumstances raising potential conflicts of interest.

One \$449,801 contract was awarded to a company owned by the second-in-command of the department benefiting from the project. That individual was also a close relative of a member of the bidding panel, according to the report. A second contract worth \$312,039 was awarded to another close relative of the same panel member.

Two additional contracts totaling \$37,000 could not be reviewed because supporting documents were missing.

Auditors also found problems extending beyond the procurement process itself.

A \$50,000 contract remained incomplete well beyond its expected completion date, with no assessment of liquidated damages. The report identified that project as the Kepin Awak U Bridge.

Four completed projects totaling \$1.56 million were found to have defects after completion even though full payments, including the 10 percent retainage intended to protect the government against deficient work, had already been released.

Photographs included in the audit show conditions auditors documented at the private room facilities at Pohnpei State Hospital, the Nanpohnmal-to-Sekere Road, the TC&I Annex and Parking project, and the Office of the National Public Auditor.

The report also singled out a Yap isolation unit project with an allocated budget of \$187,651. Auditors said the project had “significantly deteriorated” within four years, primarily because of inadequate construction planning and ineffective project administration.

The audit found problems in TC&I’s basic handling of procurement records as well.

Auditors described widespread disorganization, poor recordkeeping, missing files and insufficient documentation needed to determine whether internal controls and legal requirements were being followed.

Many hard-copy files were disorganized or missing documents. Auditors found bidding-panel meeting minutes absent from the files they reviewed, apart from some scorecards showing how contractors were evaluated. They also found no documentation verifying bidder qualifications.

The audit said TC&I had no established procedures for dealing with situations in which only one bidder responded.

Auditors also raised concerns about the security of sealed bids, reporting that bids were stamped “received” and then left with secretaries until they were retrieved by the contracting officer.

The Public Auditor attributed the problems in part to TC&I and Finance continuing to operate under procedures and workflows that had not been updated to reflect the 2021 Financial Management Regulations. The report also attributed noncompliance to “departmental negligence.”

The audit said Finance had not consistently ensured compliance with the revised regulations before certifying contracts and approving payments. Finance also had not maintained the

required current roster of pre-qualified contractors, including information identifying proven contractors as well as high-risk or unstable contractors.

A separate audit finding concluded that TC&I lacked formal policies and procedures for administering construction contracts despite a previous Public Auditor recommendation issued in September 2022.

The absence of those procedures contributed to inconsistent contract administration, documentation and oversight errors, possible project delays, increased risks to public funds, reduced construction quality assurance and inadequate accountability, the report said.

Auditors additionally found insufficient separation of duties among TC&I personnel responsible for projects.

According to the report, a single engineer could serve simultaneously as project manager, contracting officer representative and, in some cases, project inspector. Project managers and inspectors also served on bidding panels.

The Public Auditor said concentrating those functions in the same individuals increased the risk of potential conflicts of interest and biased decisions while reducing checks and balances in procurement and project administration.

The audit recommended that TC&I assign the contracting officer, project manager and project inspector functions to different people.

It also recommended that TC&I and

Finance jointly strengthen procedures for open bidding, bid documentation, change orders, conflict-of-interest disclosures and contractor vetting, and develop comprehensive operating policies for construction procurement.

Both TC&I Secretary Carlson Apis and the Secretary of Finance and Administration agreed with the audit’s findings and recommendations and submitted proposed corrective actions, according to the Public Auditor.

TC&I said it was committed to developing standard operating procedures collaboratively, applying them uniformly and periodically reviewing them. The department also requested assistance from Finance and the Department of Justice in organizing joint training and capacity building to strengthen procurement and project-management practices.

The audit concluded that TC&I “did not fully comply” with Financial Management Regulations in managing and administering construction contracts, had weak internal controls over procurement and contract management, and had not implemented recommendations from the Public Auditor’s previous 2022 audit.

The complete Office of the National Public Auditor Report No. 2026-02 is available at:

http://www.fsmopa.fm/files/onpa/2025/Final%20Report%20for%20issue_11.26.2025-Revised.pdf





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MUNRO LEYS

FSM leaders adopt Sustainable Tourism Policy and State Investment Plans 2026-2031

FSM Tourism – ARPA Project

August 14, 2026

Chuuk - The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) has launched the Sustainable Tourism Policy 2026-2031 and the State Investment Plans 2026-2031, setting a unified course for sustainable tourism development across the nation. The launch was endorsed by President Wesley W. Simina, together with the four State Governors, during the 5th Chief Executive Council (CEC) meeting in Weno, Chuuk State.



The Sustainable Tourism Policy provides a framework that strengthens FSM's identity, enhances visitor experiences, and ensures development benefits communities. It emphasizes sustainability, cultural preservation, and innovation, positioning FSM as a destination of choice in the region.

In addition, the State Investment Plans outline priority projects and opportunities for collaboration. These plans are designed to attract responsible investment, create jobs, and build resilient infrastructure that supports tourism, trade, and broader economic growth.

The Tourism Division, working in close collaboration with the State Tourism & Visitors Bureau Offices, including Pohnpei Tourism Office, Yap Visitors Bureau, Chuuk Visitors Bureau, and Kosrae Visitors Bureau, contributed valuable expertise and insights in shaping the policy and investment framework, ensuring it reflects community priorities and long-term sustainable development goals.

The commitment of municipal local leaders, stakeholders, and tourism partners was recognized as vital in championing sustainable growth

and prosperity for the people of FSM.

Their collective engagement reflects the shared determination to move forward together.

FSM's national and state leaders reaffirmed their collective commitment to coordinated action and partnerships with communities, the private sector, civil society, and development partners to ensure tourism contributes to resilient economic development while safeguarding heritage for future generations.

Coast Guard suspends search for nine missing boaters on 20-foot skiff

Katerine Plummer
Military.com

August 11, 2026

FSM - Coast Guard forces have suspended a search some ten days after a vessel with nine people on board went missing in the Hall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

USCG and Sector Guam had received news of the 20-foot skiff on July 31 as it was scheduled to return to Ruo Island, some 625 miles southeast of Guam, on July 30, but did not do so.

After a ten-day search which involved numerous partners including the FSM's FSS Tosiwo Nakayama and covered 250,000 square nautical miles and more than 31 search patterns, the USCG stopped the search.

"We have made the difficult decision to suspend our active search," said Lt. Adeeb Ahmad, search and rescue mission coordinator, Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam. "Our hearts go out to the families and loved ones of the missing during this challenging time. We are also

extremely grateful to the international and U.S. military partners who worked tirelessly alongside us."

The Vincent Danz, the USCG's newest Guam-based cutter, joined the search shortly after arriving at its new home port, according to Stars & Stripes. The service postponed the vessel's welcoming ceremony so it could take part in the search, per the publication.

The Coast Guard did not announce details about the individuals onboard the vessel.

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- Applications close 5:00PM on Monday, August 31st , 2026

ABOUT THE FORUM FISHERIES AGENCY (FFA)

The information offered in this package is for information only and does not form part of the employment contract.

The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) traces its origins to the South Pacific Forum meeting in Port Moresby in 1977 which adopted a Declaration on the Law of the Sea and the establishment of a regional fisheries agency and outlined its functions. In recent years FFA has been mandated to concentrate on the management and development of the tuna fishery in the Central and Western Pacific Ocean. The Agency is responsible for assisting its 17 members to coordinate sustainable tuna fishery management policies in their exclusive economic zone waters, and for promoting the development of their tuna fishery resources.

The 16 country members and 1 territory member of the FFA are Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

Under the 1979 FFA Convention, the FFA consists of the Forum Fisheries Committee (FFC) which is the governing body, and a Secretariat. The Secretariat, with a current establishment of approximately eighty-five positions, is organised into four divisions: Fisheries Management, Fisheries Development, Fisheries Operations, and Corporate Services. FFA is led by an executive management unit headed by the Director-General. In order to provide greater ministerial oversight of the fisheries sector the FFC Ministerial Meeting was established and was elevated to the highest policy making organ of the FFA.

Vision

Our people enjoying the greatest possible economic and social benefits from the sustainable utilisation of offshore fisheries resources.

Mission

Empowering FFA Members to take national and collective action to maximise the long-term economic and social value of their offshore fisheries resources.

The work of the Agency is delivered through programs that support Members with their challenges in: Fisheries Management, Fisheries Development, and Fisheries Operations.

The Fisheries Management program assists FFA members to refine and maintain effective policy and legal frameworks to support the sustainable management of their tuna fisheries resources. Appropriate technical services are also provided under this program to support regional and sub-regional fishery management.

The Fisheries Development program assists FFA members with long term social, economic and development planning for the fisheries sector, in response to the Forum Leaders' call to identify ways to ensure greater returns from the sustainable use of fisheries resources.

Fisheries Operations involves administration of the regional Vessel Monitoring System (VMS), development of regional compliance policy, training and capacity development, and coordination of multilateral compliance operations.

The core operations of the Agency are funded by member and donor contributions from Member Governments. The Agency also receives funding from a variety of non-member donors and from cost recovery for services.

FFA is an equal opportunity employer with professional staff currently employed from Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Federated States of Micronesia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and the USA, with staff attachments from Japan and Australia.

Your Next Opportunity

As our next Director of Corporate Services, your key responsibility will be to lead the Corporate Services Division by providing oversight to the essential functions that support the Agency's strategic objectives. Reporting to the Deputy Director-General, you will implement policies and procedures that ensure the efficient and effective use of resources while also ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements.

Your key responsibility areas will include:

- Leadership and effective management and coordination of the Corporate Services Division activities
- Agency business planning and Annual Work Program and Budget
- Policy and technical advice
- Oversee the management of all HR management and development functions
- Oversee the management of all functions
- Oversee the management of administration, property, facilities and contracts
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework
- Effectively contribute to the strategic and operational development of FFA as part of the Executive Team
- Higher Duties

What You'll Bring to the Team

To be considered for this position, you will hold a Bachelor's Degree in Finance, Business, HR or Public Administration in a similar or relevant field, further post relevant graduate training or qualifications, as well as a minimum of ten years of senior executive leadership experience at the national level in public service, or operational experience in corporate and support services within an organisation of 100+ staff, regional or international organisations, or equivalent private sector experience.

You will also have an excellent awareness of fisheries issues and challenges in the region and knowledge of appropriate protocols for engagement with a wide range of stakeholders.

Our ideal candidate will have a strategic mindset, with highly developed communication skills that enable them to disseminate information to audiences with and without a technical skillset. An understanding of systems implementation and change management, as well as a familiarity with Organisation Performance Management Systems, will be critical to successfully performing this role.

Benefits on offer

The position attracts a competitive salary package based on current levels of experience and qualifications, of between USD \$99,066 - \$139,858 excluding COLDA, 7.5% superannuation, and Location Allowances - TAX-FREE for citizens of most countries!

You will also have all reasonable medical, dental, and optical expenses covered for yourself and any dependents you may have. Insurance coverage is also available for personal accidents, life, medical and repatriation.

If you have any dependent children, we will reimburse 75% of their tuition fees . If your dependent child is studying overseas, paid school travel may be available for you or your child to visit each other once a year.

Relocation expenses will be paid, with an establishment grant paid on arrival in Honiara. Accommodation assistance is also available, paying the majority of rental costs for a quality house.

Conditions apply to all allowances and benefits.

To apply for the position all candidates must submit the following to the email recruitment@ffa.int

1. Cover Letter addressed to the Manager Human Resources and Administration
2. Application Form
3. Curriculum Vitae

...MIF Communique

[Click here to return](#)

and maritime connectivity, saying limited and expensive transportation restricts tourism, trade, healthcare access and economic development.

The Regional Tourism Committee identified costly and limited air access as a major obstacle to tourism and reported establishment of a Regional Air Service Committee intended to improve coordination.

On maritime transportation, leaders noted high shipping costs, delays and limited service options, and supported further examination of a regional shipping vessel and other measures intended to make maritime services more reliable and affordable.

Health occupied a substantial portion of both the communiqué and the resolutions adopted by leaders.

The Forum reaffirmed the 2010 Pacific Island Health Officers Association declaration of a regional health emergency over non-communicable diseases and called for NCD prevention and response to become more closely integrated into local and regional emergency preparedness.

Leaders called for increased prevention efforts among children and young people, including improved nutrition, physical activity, childhood obesity prevention, HPV vaccination and screening.

A separate resolution made oral health a regional priority and called for greater investment in dental services and infrastructure. Leaders also supported stronger surveillance, laboratory diagnostic capacity, border protection, early-warning systems and biosecurity measures to prepare for emerging health threats.

The Forum also turned to one of the region's longstanding health problems: the shortage and movement of qualified healthcare workers.

Leaders supported creation of a Regional Health and Social Services Workforce Development Cross-Jurisdictional Committee to review professional licensing, certification and credentialing requirements and identify opportunities for reciprocal recognition of qualifications between jurisdictions.

They also backed coordinated advocacy to the U.S. government for permanent

removal of the federal Medicaid funding cap applying to Guam and the CNMI.

For veterans in the Freely Associated States, leaders supported proposed U.S. legislation intended to expand healthcare access through telehealth and telemedicine, postal pharmacy delivery, coverage for eligible medical-referral travel and visits by Veterans Affairs physicians.

The communiqué also records interest in exploring collective regional purchasing of medicines and medical supplies to obtain better prices, as well as renewed consideration of a regional health insurance mechanism.

Deep-seabed mining, an issue on which Pacific governments hold sharply different positions, produced a deliberately cautious resolution.

Rather than taking a collective position for or against mining, leaders called for meaningful, science-based regional dialogue and said potentially affected Micronesian jurisdictions should be given relevant scientific information and meaningful opportunities to participate when proposed mining activities could affect them.

The resolution acknowledges Guam's call for a precautionary pause on deep-sea mining pending sufficient independent science and regional engagement while explicitly recognizing that members hold differing views.

Leaders also reaffirmed protection and sustainable stewardship of the Pacific Ocean for present and future generations.

Climate change produced another regional resolution.

The Forum described climate change as a continuing and urgent regional priority and endorsed the continuing role of the Regional Climate Change Committee in coordinating policy, information sharing and regional priorities.

Among other measures, leaders supported continued collective action on sea-level rise, maintaining the 1.5-degree temperature target and curbing methane emissions. They also called for greater cooperation in obtaining climate finance, technical assistance, capacity building and technology.

Regional telecommunications and digital infrastructure were also addressed.

Leaders reaffirmed work toward the

Micronesia ICT and Digital Transformation Action Plan, including redundant fiber routes, satellite backup, disaster-recovery capacity and improved connectivity for remote and underserved communities.

The Forum supported stronger cybersecurity legislation, policies and institutional capacity, along with legal and regulatory frameworks intended to protect government systems, private networks, infrastructure and network-connected public services.

Leaders also supported further assessment of regional data hosting and data-center capacity, including the possibility of sustainable and climate-conscious facilities supported by reliable and renewable energy.

Fisheries discussions included support for Guam and the CNMI in seeking greater opportunities to develop commercial fisheries.

The Forum encouraged consideration within the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission framework of mechanisms including Pacific Insular Area Fishing Agreements, quota arrangements and conservation and management measures that could provide Guam and the CNMI with greater access to highly migratory fisheries while maintaining sustainable management.

The communiqué said Western and Central Pacific tuna stocks remain generally healthy but warned that climate-driven changes in tuna distribution could threaten fisheries revenues and long-term regional benefits.

Leaders also moved to formalize the role of young people within the Forum.

A resolution provides for youth participation within MIF standing committees, with youth representatives able to organize and distribute their participation among committees under their respective terms of reference. Implementation is to begin by the next Forum.

The decision followed presentations by Micronesian youth during the Pohnpei meeting and builds on youth participation recognized at the previous MIF.

Changes are also coming to the Forum itself.

The MIF Secretariat reported available funds of \$819,845 and continuing difficulties involving access to a \$400,000 U.S. Department of the Interior grant administered through the Guam government.

Leaders approved increasing annual MIF membership dues from \$15,000 to \$20,000 beginning in 2027 and supported efforts to obtain additional development-partner funding.

They deferred broader proposed amendments to the MIF Rules of Procedure until the next Forum to allow members additional time for review and consultation.

The proposed reforms include procedures for recruiting an independent, dedicated Secretary General and changes to the Forum's standing committee structure. Leaders also asked designated representatives to examine creation of a steering committee that could improve continuity between past, current and future MIF chairs.

The communiqué reflects an effort to consolidate some of the Forum's numerous standing committees, which leaders said have overlapping mandates.

Other regional issues considered during the meeting included recycling and waste management, invasive species, gender equality, workforce development, the Micronesia Challenge, regional security, tourism, education, trade and civil-society participation.

Leaders called for education and training to be more closely tied to regional workforce needs as Micronesian jurisdictions confront shortages of technical professionals and continued migration of skilled workers overseas. The Forum supported development of a regional workforce strategy, a centralized system for tracking skills and vacancies, and increased investment in vocational and digital training.

The leaders also said Micronesia should approach the upcoming Pacific Islands Forum meeting in Palau with a unified voice on issues affecting the region.

The 28th MIF communiqué was signed by the delegations of Palau, the Marshall Islands, FSM, Naoero, Pohnpei, Chuuk, Kosrae, Yap, Guam and the CNMI and formally adopted in Pohnpei on August 21.

The meeting's agreements now move largely to the Forum's Secretariat, standing committees and member governments for implementation, feasibility studies and further negotiation, meaning several of the initiatives endorsed in Pohnpei — including regional petroleum purchasing, health workforce mobility, transportation improvements and digital infrastructure — remain proposals whose practical and financial viability has yet to be determined.

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MUNRO LEYS

Pohnpei Legislature calls on FSM to raise concerns with China over missile test

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

August 14, 2026

Pohnpei - The Pohnpei State Legislature has formally expressed "grave concern" over China's test launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile into the Pacific Ocean and has called on the FSM national government to register its concerns with China and strengthen cooperation with the United States and regional partners.

Legislative Resolution No. 173-26, adopted July 21 during the Eleventh Pohnpei Legislature's 29th Special Session, describes the launch as a threat to regional peace, maritime safety and the security and economic welfare of Pohnpei, the FSM and the broader Pacific region.

The resolution concerns the People's Republic of China's launch of an ICBM carrying a dummy warhead into the Pacific Ocean. According to the Legislature, it was the first time in more than four decades that China had publicly acknowledged firing an ICBM into the Pacific.

The Legislature said the test was

conducted without adequate advance notification or consultation with Pacific Island countries and raised concerns about civilian aviation, maritime transit and the sovereignty of Pacific nations.

"The Pacific Ocean is not an open testing ground for weapons of mass destruction," the resolution says, adding that the Blue Pacific has long been regarded as a zone of peace, security and environmental preservation.

The resolution is notable for its strong language despite Pohnpei's longstanding relationship with China.

It acknowledges that the FSM has maintained close and mutually beneficial diplomatic relations with China for many years and notes that Pohnpei has participated in that relationship by hosting the Chinese Embassy and the Chinese Tropical Demonstration Farm. The State has provided land for those facilities without charge or other encumbrances.

Against that background, the Legislature characterized the missile launch as a "destabilizing action" that increases the possibility of miscalculation, raises geopolitical tensions and threatens the security, safety and economic welfare of people in Pohnpei, the FSM and elsewhere in the Pacific.

The Legislature also based part of its position on the FSM's security relationship with the United States under the Compact of Free Association. The resolution notes that the United States has authority and responsibility for the FSM's security and defense under the Compact.

It further says the welfare of Pohnpei's people depends on maintaining a secure, open and peaceful maritime environment without threats from military coercion or environmental damage from missile debris and military exercises.

Beyond expressing concern, the resolution calls on the FSM national government to formally register its concerns with China regarding the missile tests.

It asks the national government to work closely with the United States to improve regional monitoring, early-warning capabilities and civil defense readiness. It also calls for the FSM to declare its alignment with the United States and regional partners in criticizing the missile test as a threat to regional peace, maritime safety and international stability.

The Legislature further called for the FSM to reaffirm its defense partnership with the United States and acknowledge U.S. security guarantees as important to protecting FSM sovereignty and peace in the Micronesian region.

At the same time, the resolution broadens its appeal beyond China, calling on all nations to respect the Pacific Ocean as a zone of peace, cease unilateral military activities that threaten regional safety and comply with international standards for transparency, notification and maritime law.

Copies of the resolution were directed to Pohnpei Governor Stevenson A. Joseph, FSM President Wesley Simina, the Speaker of the FSM Congress and the Secretary of the FSM Department of Foreign Affairs, as well as the governors and legislative leaders of the other FSM states.

The Legislature also directed that copies be transmitted to the ambassadors of China, the United States, Australia and Japan to the FSM and to the chairman of the Mwoalen Wahu Ileile en Pohnpei.

The Legislature adopted the resolution on July 21, 2026.



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Fifth Chief Executive Council Meeting convenes in Chuuk

FSM Information Services

August 12, 2026

Weno, Chuuk — His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, together with the Honorable Aren B. Palik, Vice President of the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Honorable Governors of the four states, convened in Chuuk State for the 5th Chief Executive Council Meeting.

The opening proceedings featured remarks from each of the four State Governors, who shared perspectives and priorities from their respective states and reaffirmed their commitment to working collectively on shared national priorities.

In his opening remarks, President Simina emphasized the importance of shared responsibility, accountability, and

collective action.

“We have come together this week to align our collective vision, to hold each other accountable, and to forge the practical pathways that will secure our nation's prosperity for generations to come,” President Simina said.

As outgoing Chair of the Chief Executive Council, President Simina transferred the chairmanship to the Honorable Alexander R. Naruhn, Governor of Chuuk State. In doing so, he underscored the importance of rotating the chairmanship to foster inclusivity and diverse perspectives in the Council's leadership.

Scheduled from August 12–15, 2026, the meeting brings together the National and State Executive leadership to review financial performance, address

implementation challenges, and strengthen alignment between national and state development priorities.

Building on the growing momentum of the spirit of Kamorale, the leaders reaffirmed the importance of unity among the States and their shared commitment to working together in addressing common priorities.

The CEC was also strategically timed ahead of the 28th Micronesian Islands Forum, providing the National and State Governments an opportunity to align on shared priorities and strengthen coordination as the FSM prepares to engage with regional leaders.

The Council's deliberations will cover key areas including Compact implementation, fiscal and financial management,

disaster assistance, fisheries revenues, development financing, infrastructure and connectivity, environmental resilience, energy security, and social development and human capital.

President Simina called on the leaders to translate the Council's discussions into practical and meaningful outcomes.

“Together, let's turn our discussions into meaningful actions that not only address the current challenges but also set a solid foundation for sustainable development.”

The 5th Chief Executive Council Meeting will continue through August 15, with deliberations focused on strengthening coordination, advancing sustainable development, and improving services for the people of the Federated States of Micronesia.



President Simina and U.S. officials reaffirm cooperation on Yap Defense Site Project

FSM Information Services

August 20, 2026

Palikir, Pohnpei — His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, met with Rear Admiral Joshua Lasky and members of his delegation on August 10 to discuss continued progress on the Defense Site Project in Yap State.

The meeting also marked President Simina's first meeting with new U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Andrew Wylie since his arrival at the U.S. Embassy in Kolonia. President Simina warmly welcomed Chargé d'Affaires Wylie and expressed his appreciation for his engagement in the strong partnership

between the FSM and the United States.

The meeting focused on the continued progress of the Defense Site Project and the next steps toward advancing its implementation.

The FSM will continue to work closely with the Yap State Government and the United States as the project moves forward. President Simina expressed appreciation to Rear Admiral Lasky, Chargé d'Affaires Wylie, and their delegation for the constructive and positive discussions and reaffirmed the FSM's commitment to continued coordination and cooperation with both the United States and Yap State.

The meeting reflected the positive

and enduring partnership between the Federated States of Micronesia and the

United States under the Compact of Free Association.



U.S. Military visit brings first aid training to Yap Catholic High School library

Yap State Government

August 21, 2026

Yap - On August 11th, Yap Catholic High School shared highlights of the recent special visit of the United States military at the Joyce Memorial Library, where they provided valuable First Aid training to educators from Yap Catholic High School and Faith Christian Academy.

The training focused on equipping teachers and educators with essential First Aid knowledge and skills that can be useful in responding to emergencies. The session provided participants with

an opportunity to strengthen their preparedness and confidence in handling potential medical situations at school.

The visit was also an opportunity for the school community to engage with members of the U.S. military and learn from their experience and expertise.

The First Aid training highlights the importance of emergency preparedness in schools and the value of partnerships that help strengthen the safety and well-being of students and educators throughout the community.

U.S. Military Visit Brings First Aid Training to Yap Catholic High School Library



Vice President Palik represents the FSM at the 28th Micronesians Islands Forum

FSM Information Services

August 20, 2026

PALIKIR, Pohnpei — August 19, 2026 — The Honorable Aren B. Palik, Vice President of the Federated States of Micronesia, represented the FSM at the 28th Micronesians Islands Forum (MIF), where he addressed regional leaders, dignitaries, development partners, youth representatives, and other participants on the Forum's opening day.

Vice President Palik acknowledged the outgoing Forum Chair, Her Excellency Hilda C. Heine, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and welcomed the new Forum Chair, the Honorable Stevenson A. Joseph, Governor of Pohnpei State. He also extended his respect and appreciation to the Traditional Leaders, Government, and people of Pohnpei State for hosting the regional gathering.

The Vice President congratulated Governor Joseph on assuming the chairmanship and commended the organizers for bringing the Forum together.

In his remarks, Vice President Palik addressed several priorities for the FSM and the wider Micronesians region, including tourism and transportation connectivity, trade and investment, ocean conservation, energy security, climate change, health, gender equality,

and skills development.

On tourism, he called for greater air connectivity beyond the traditional east-west aviation corridor, including stronger north-south connections that could create new opportunities for economic development and sustainable tourism.

"If we truly want to unlock the economic potential of our islands, we must think beyond the traditional corridors," Vice President Palik said.

These priorities were also reflected in the opening remarks of His Excellency Surangel S. Whipps Jr., President of the Republic of Palau; President Heine; and Governor Joseph, who spoke about the shared challenges and opportunities facing the region, including climate change, tourism, education, and workforce development.

"Truly, we are stronger together... When Micronesians speak with one voice, the region listens," President Whipps said.

Speaking on the urgency of climate action, Governor Joseph said, "We can no longer treat climate change as an emergency that catches us by surprise."

Vice President Palik also emphasized the importance of protecting Micronesians' shared ocean and highlighted the FSM's Marine Spatial

Planning efforts and partnerships to advance marine conservation.

"Our collective actions and unified voice represent our greatest strength in ensuring the health and resilience of our shared ocean and the Blue Pacific," Vice President Palik said.

Turning to energy security, he said the recent fuel crisis demonstrated the region's vulnerability to external shocks and reinforced the need for renewable energy, resilient infrastructure, shared technical expertise, and closer subregional cooperation. He also reaffirmed the FSM's goals of achieving 70 percent renewable energy by 2030, 80 percent by 2035, and net-zero emissions by 2050.

The Vice President further called for stronger regional health systems, greater investment in the local healthcare workforce, expanded opportunities for young people and workers, and continued action to advance gender equality.

He highlighted the recently concluded 2026 Micronesians Ministerial Women Conference and encouraged the Forum to note and endorse the Kamorale Declaration, which promotes the



participation, safety, and economic empowerment of women and girls throughout Micronesia.

On workforce development, Vice President Palik pointed to the recent international accreditation of the FSM Skills Testing and Certification Unit as an important step toward strengthening professional qualifications, expanding employment opportunities, and improving the recognition of skills across borders.

In closing, Vice President Palik encouraged participants to approach the Forum's discussions with openness, collaboration, and a commitment to consensus, with the shared goal of delivering better outcomes for the people of Micronesia and building a more resilient and prosperous region for future generations.

Governor Joseph delivers remarks at opening ceremony of the Fifth CEC in Chuuk

Pohnpei Public Information

August 12, 2026

Weno, Chuuk — Speaking at the 5th Chief Executive Council (CEC) meeting, Pohnpei State Governor Stevenson A. Joseph highlighted the critical role of state-national alignment as Pohnpei prepares to host the 28th Micronesians Islands Forum (MIF) next week.

In his opening remarks, Governor Joseph expressed gratitude to Governor Alexander R. Naruhn, the Chuuk State Government, and the people of Chuuk for their warm hospitality before turning to the core challenges facing the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

"We gather at a critical juncture for our nation," Governor Joseph said. "The agenda before us over the next two days directly addresses the everyday realities of critical tasks before us for the benefit of our citizens: strengthening Compact

implementation and financial governance, tackling energy security and fuel costs, advancing transportation and digital connectivity, and building human capacity across our four states."

Governor Joseph emphasized that achieving progress on key issues—including subrecipient and bonding matters under the Compact of Free Association, securing marine resources, and expanding economic opportunities—requires actionable solutions and direct coordination between national and state leaders.

He noted that the outcomes of the 5th CEC are directly connected to the regional summit Pohnpei will host next week.

"This gathering holds special significance for Pohnpei State as we prepare to host the 28th Micronesians Islands Forum immediately following this summit," Governor Joseph stated. "The work we do here at the Chief Executive Council serves as a vital anchor to harmonize our FSM leadership priorities before stepping into the broader regional discussions of the MIF and aligning our national stance for the upcoming Pacific Islands Forum. The CEC remains our essential forum for internal strength, alignment, and unity."

Governor Joseph reaffirmed Pohnpei State's commitment to collaborating with the national government and sister states to deliver concrete outcomes for the people of the FSM.



Governor Joseph Assumes Chairmanship of 28th Micronesians Islands Forum, calls for transformative action in health and education

Pohnpei Public Information

August 19, 2026

Pei Lapalap, Pohnpei — Governor Stevenson A. Joseph officially assumed the Chairmanship of the 28th Micronesians Islands Forum (MIF) during its opening ceremony in Pohnpei, taking over leadership of the regional body from President Hilda Heine of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

The forum gathers regional heads of state, governors, and delegations from across the Pacific, including leaders from the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Nauru, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the FSM states.

In his opening address to executive leaders, diplomatic corps members, international development partners, and community stakeholders, Governor Joseph emphasized a shift from rhetoric to measurable outcomes.

"As we deliberate on the common issues we share, let's focus and find solutions—tangible, practical solutions," Governor Joseph stated. "And most importantly, put these solutions into action."

Addressing this year's theme, "Promote healthy communities, open doors to learning," Governor Joseph challenged leaders to overhaul existing public frameworks rather than accepting the status quo.

Key Priorities Highlighted in Executive Address:

Preventative Healthcare Systems: Calling Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) a crisis threatening regional stability, Governor Joseph urged a shift from reactive care and costly off-island medical referrals toward preventative investments, including clean water infrastructure, localized nutrition, and early screening programs.

Targeted Vocational & Technical Education:

The Governor urged regional educational institutions to align training directly with local market demand. Priorities include technical trades, sustainable agriculture, mechanics, maritime skills, and technology to retain local talent and strengthen domestic economies.

Integrated Climate Resilience: Highlighting the immediate threats of El Niño cycles, drought, and sea-

level rise, Governor Joseph stated that climate adaptation must be standard criteria across all future public infrastructure projects, budgets, and municipal development planning.

The 28th MIF will continue sessions throughout the week in Pohnpei, focusing on multilateral agreements, regional security, trade, and sustainable development strategies.



Congressional delegation and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Under Secretary Samuel Brown pay courtesy visit to Governor Joseph to advance support for FSM veterans

Pohnpei Public Information

August 24, 2026

Pei Lapalap, Pohnpei—A United States congressional delegation, alongside U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Under Secretary Samuel Brown and senior officials, paid a courtesy visit to Pohnpei State Governor Stevenson A. Joseph to advance expanded healthcare services and benefits for veterans in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

Under Secretary Brown introduced the delegation—including Trey Smith, Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary for Health; Dr. Teresa Lloyd; and Holly Wall—reaffirming the VA's commitment to improving benefit access for eligible

FSM veterans. Governor Joseph welcomed the delegation, emphasizing the need for practical solutions that allow veterans to return home without facing prohibitive medical travel costs. Hainrick Panuelo, Director of the FSM Office of Veterans Affairs, joined Governor Joseph.

Healthcare Integration and Regional Support

Discussions focused on leveraging regional facilities, including Guam and Tripler Army Medical Center, to support FSM veterans. Governor Joseph proposed certifying locally based, U.S.-trained medical providers to deliver on-island care and evaluations, reducing costly off-island travel. The delegation agreed to review the proposal with VA leadership.

Phased Strategy for FAS Veterans

Trey Smith outlined a phased implementation strategy currently being explored by the VA for the Freely Associated States, which includes:

- **Mail - Order Pharmacy:** Streamlining medication delivery to local

veterans.

- **Telehealth:** Expanding virtual healthcare and remote consultation models.
- **Travel Support:** Providing assistance and reimbursement for required off-island care.
- **Local Provider Reimbursement:** Establishing mechanisms to cover locally delivered care.

The delegation noted that the VA is preparing options under existing discretionary authority, independent of pending U.S. legislation, to bring to upcoming bilateral negotiations. Logistical and Data Considerations

Participants addressed the challenges of tracking the local veteran population, noting that approximately 50 to 75 FSM citizens enlist annually, though many remain in the U.S. due to healthcare accessibility. Solutions discussed included formal veteran registration portals and improved demographic data collection.

To address infrastructure constraints—such as postal

system limitations and varying dispensary capacities—the VA is evaluating local pharmacy contracts, centralized distribution points, and electronic health record integration to ensure secure, reliable service delivery.

Next Steps

Governor Joseph reiterated that dependable local healthcare is vital to encouraging veterans to return home. The VA delegation reaffirmed its commitment to refining a tailored service package under current authorities while preparing for broader bilateral engagement as U.S. legislation progresses.



Australia supports FSM Maritime Border Control infrastructure

Embassy of Australia to the FSM

August 24, 2026

Pohnpei – The Australian Embassy recently celebrated the official opening of the FSM Division of Border Control and Maritime Surveillance's FSM Maritime Border Control building extension and refurbishment. This marks another milestone in the enduring maritime security partnership between Australia and FSM.

Delivered through Australia's Pacific Maritime Security Program, this important project reflects more than 36 years of cooperation and a shared commitment to maritime security, regional stability, and the protection of FSM's maritime sovereignty. The new facility will strengthen maritime surveillance capabilities and support operations well into the future.

"This project is a tangible demonstration of Australia's enduring commitment to our partnership with the FSM as we work together to promote peace, stability and security across our region," said Ambassador Jenny Grant.

Together, Ambassador Jenny Grant and Department of Justice Chief of the Law Division Josephine Joseph opened the new extension and refurbishment. The event was lead by Maritime Security Advisor Lieutenant Commander, Paul Norton and Commander FSM National Police Maritime Wing, Steward Peter.



FSM delegates gather in Kosrae to align Multi-Year Fisheries strategy

FSM NORMA

August 21, 2026

Kosrae - Delegates representing the national government and all four FSM states—Chuuk, Yap, Kosrae, and Pohnpei—gathered in Kosrae beneath the iconic backdrop of the Sleeping Lady Mountain for the annual PROPER Project meeting. The multi-day meeting brought together FSM

leadership, state coordinators, and technical experts to align strategies and ensure local communities are directly supported through sustainable ocean management.

As a World Bank-funded initiative, the PROPER project (Pacific Islands Regional Oceanscape Program – Second Phase for Economic Resilience) empowers FSM states by backing local

initiatives that strengthen economies, safeguard marine habitats, and improve coastal fisheries. During the weeklong session, delegates reviewed proposed multi-year budgets and activities while finalizing key agreements to streamline project execution. To boost operational efficiency, the delegation formally adopted a modernized implementation strategy designed to accelerate timelines and eliminate

past administrative bottlenecks across national and state teams.

With full consensus reached and community feedback seamlessly integrated into the multi-year plan, the meeting concluded with an agreed path forward. The next stage of our workplan will take place in Chuuk this coming January to track progress.



Groundbreaking ceremony for the new water well at Wone Elementary School

Embassy of Japan to the FSM

August 24, 2026

Wone, Pohnpei - On August 14, Ambassador Kagomiya attended the Groundbreaking Ceremony for the new water well at Wone Elementary School in Pohnpei State.

The project aims to ensure a stable

supply of safe and sanitary water at the school by constructing a new water well, thereby improving the educational environment.

The ceremony was attended by traditional leaders of Kitti region, Mr. Jermy W. MUDONG, Senator of the FSM Congress, Mr. McGarry MIGUEL, Vice Speaker of the Pohnpei

State Legislature, and Mr. Emerson EPERIAM, Mayor of Kitti Municipal Government.

In his remarks, Ambassador Kagomiya expressed his hope that the new water well would provide a reliable supply of safe and clean water to students and staff at Wone Elementary School, while helping prepare for future water supply needs amid concerns over reduced rainfall during the upcoming dry season due to El Niño.

Acting Governor Herolyn S. MOVICK of Pohnpei State expressed her gratitude for Japan's continued support for Pohnpei State. She stated that Japan's

assistance has further strengthened the friendly relations between Japan and Pohnpei State. She also expressed her hope that this close and mutually beneficial relationship would continue for many years to come.

Mr. Marson ROSARIO, President of PTA for Wone Elementary School, expressed his appreciation for Japan's support. He stated that this project would provide not only the school community but also local residents and future students of Wone Elementary School with access to safe and reliable water. He also stated to ensure that the construction work proceeds promptly.



SIDS solidarity strengthened as Micronesia and Seychelles establish diplomatic relations

By Kenneth Welles
FSM UN Mission

August 19, 2026

New York - The Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Seychelles today, August 19, 2026, formally signed a Joint Communiqué establishing diplomatic relations, marking a significant expansion of cooperation between two Small Island Developing States (SIDS) whose identities, challenges, and aspirations are deeply shaped by the ocean.

The signing ceremony, held at the Permanent Mission of Seychelles in New York, was officiated by the two countries' respective Permanent Representatives to the United Nations, H.E. Mr. Jeem Lippwe of Micronesia

and H.E Ms. Vivianne Fock Tave of Seychelles, who both underscored the natural affinity between island nations and the importance of reinforcing SIDS partnerships within the multilateral system. Both representatives also highlighted that this new relationship is rooted in shared vulnerabilities, shared opportunities, and a shared determination to ensure that island voices remain central in global decision-making.

The two nations new diplomatic relationship creates a platform for strengthened collaboration across core SIDS priorities, including: Climate resilience that advances adaptation



finance, early warning systems, and protection of communities on the frontlines of climate impacts; Ocean stewardship to safeguarding marine ecosystems, promoting sustainable fisheries, and championing the

blue economy; Sustainable development in support of tourism recovery, renewable energy transitions, and capacity-building for small island nations, and Multilateral advocacy that strengthens cooperation through the Alliance of Small Islands States (AOSIS).

Both governments affirmed that this partnership reflects a broader SIDS commitment to collective action, mutual support, and principled engagement grounded in the UN Charter.

The Joint Communiqué is deposited with the United Nations in accordance with established practice.

OneReef WorldWide Stewardship appoints Mendiola as Director of the Oceania Collective

OneReef WorldWide Stewardship

August 21, 2026

FSM - OneReef Worldwide Stewardship is thrilled to announce that Micronesian marine conservation leader Jasmine Jas Mendiola has joined us as Director of the Oceania Collective, marking an important milestone in the Collective's continued growth and evolution.

Jasmine is from the Dipwinmen Clan of Pohnpei. She describes herself as having mixed Micronesian roots – her family being Kosraean, Pohnpeian, Marshallese and Chamorro, while Pohnpei has always been home. For the Dipwinmen clan, Jas explains, “our totem is the sabre squirrel fish. So I think I was really meant to end up in this career.”

Jasmine has been inspired on her path by a deep love of the ocean and the desire to “pair my passion for the ocean, but also my values in serving my people.”

What excites her about this role is “using my values, passion, and skills that I have established over the years to serve my communities.”

Jas brings around a decade of experience in marine science, conservation and

program implementation. In her new role, she will guide the Collective's strategic direction, strengthen support for its partners and help expand its reach across the Pacific.

Jas studied marine science at the College of Micronesia before undertaking undergraduate research internships at the University of Hawai'i and the Pacific Community (SPC). She has worked at the Marine and Environmental Research Institute of Pohnpei (MERIP), Rare, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the National Oceanic Resource Marine Authority (NORMA) as well as work with the Pacific Islands Ocean Observing System (PacIOOS) in various roles focused on fisheries and marine conservation. Most recently, Jas was the Director of Operations for the Conservation Society of Pohnpei.

These experiences have shown her that effective conservation begins with the people who depend most directly on the ocean.

Jas first became involved with the Collective through her work with the Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP). What stood out to her immediately was the common purpose connecting its members.

The Oceania Collective is spearheaded by OneReef Worldwide Stewardship. It brings together Pacific Island partners—the Fiji Locally Managed Marine Area, the Rahui Center in French Polynesia, One Reef Micronesia in Palau and Yap, Ocean Kiribati in Kiribati, the Naoero Fisheries and Marine Resource Authority (NFMRA) in Naoero, the Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP) in Pohnpei and the Marshall Islands Conservation Society (MICS) in the Marshall Islands —committed to strengthening community-driven solutions for ocean-climate resilience. Its work is guided by shared values of community-centred action, stewardship, integrity, equity, respect, humility and unity.

As Director, Jas will work with the Collective's members to shape and operationalize its strategy and ensure its work responds to the needs of partners and the communities they serve. Her priorities include identifying new opportunities and resources, building a strong team and expanding the Collective's partnerships throughout the region.

At the country level, she will lead the Oceania Collective to offer support tailored to the circumstances and priorities of each partner. Regionally and globally, she hopes it can connect

Pacific organizations and communities with greater resources, impact, opportunities and visibility.

She would also like to grow the network, saying “I would also like to see more partners engaged on a regional level. I would really like to see at least a few projects or partners from all over the Pacific.”

“I want the Collective to have a reputation where people associate the name with how effective and how significant our support is to the communities that we serve.”



Three-day engagement strengthens project coordination and community implementation in Yap

Yap State Government

August 20, 2026

Yap - On August 18, the FSM GCF Food Security shared highlights of a three-day engagement in Yap that brought together the MCT Senior Technical Advisor, Project Management Unit (PMU) staff, Yap State partners, and community representatives to review project progress, address implementation challenges, and plan for the completion of remaining activities.

The engagement began with a consultation with the Yap State R&D Deputy Director, State Coordinator, Farmers Association of Yap representatives, Agriculture staff, and the Yap CRE Coordinator. Discussions focused on implementation progress, outstanding activities, and the way forward for the remaining project period.

On the second day, project

progress presentations highlighted achievements, challenges, and key responsibilities across project components. The presentations were followed by discussions and clarifications to strengthen coordination and ensure a shared understanding of priorities.

The final day included visits to community project sites in Thabeth, Makiy, Thol, and Bael Elementary School. The visits provided an opportunity to observe activities on the ground and engage with communities involved in project implementation.

Overall, the three-day engagement strengthened collaboration between the project team and Yap State partners and helped establish a clearer path toward completing the remaining project activities.



UNICEF and IOM strengthen water security in Maap and Gagil ahead of El Nino

Yap State Government

August 18, 2026

Yap - On Sunday, August 9, UNICEF and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) conducted community outreach activities in Maap and Gagil to engage communities on water tanks and the importance of strengthening water security ahead of the upcoming El Niño conditions.

The outreach is part of a project funded by the Government of Japan and implemented jointly by IOM and UNICEF to support communities in preparing for potential water shortages and other impacts associated with El Niño.

During the outreach, community members received information on the water tanks, their intended use, and the importance of proper water management and conservation. The activities also provided an opportunity for UNICEF and IOM to engage directly with communities, listen to their concerns, and

promote preparedness for the anticipated dry conditions.

Access to reliable and safe water is particularly important during periods of prolonged dry weather. By supporting communities with water storage capacity, the project seeks to enhance their resilience and help ensure access to water when supplies become limited.

The initiative reflects the continued commitment of the Government of Japan, IOM, and UNICEF to supporting communities in building resilience to climate-related challenges and strengthening preparedness for El Niño.

Through these efforts, communities in Maap and Gagil are better positioned to manage water resources and prepare for the potential impacts of the upcoming El Niño period.



WED celebrates first batch of certified traditional skills trainees

Yap State Government

August 20, 2026

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Overall, the three-day engagement strengthened collaboration between the project team and Yap State partners and helped establish a clearer path toward completing the remaining project activities.



The Division of Youth Services conducted its last day of the Annual 2026 Youth Summit

Yap State Government

August 18, 2026

Yap - This past Friday, the Division of Youth Services, in collaboration with the U.S. Army and COM-CRE, successfully concluded its Annual 2026 Youth Summit this past Friday at the Small Business Development Center Conference Room.

The final day of the summit began at 8:30 a.m. with participant registration, followed by an informative presentation on Family Planning and Public Health delivered by the Behavioral Health and Wellness Program (BHW). The session provided youth participants with valuable information while encouraging open discussions about important topics affecting their health and overall well-being.

Following the presentation, participants enjoyed a 30-minute break with light refreshments before returning for a presentation by the Marine Resource Management Division (MRMD) on Climate Change. The presentation highlighted the importance of understanding climate-related challenges and their potential impact on communities and natural resources.

After the climate change session, participants took a quick lunch break before returning for the final presentation of the day, which focused on Cybersecurity. The session provided participants with important information on online safety, cybersecurity awareness, and the importance of protecting personal information in an increasingly digital world.

To conclude the summit, youth participants were divided into several groups for a discussion and reflection activity. In their groups, participants shared what they had learned throughout the day's presentations and discussed how they could apply the knowledge and information gained from the summit in their everyday lives.

The successful conclusion of the Annual 2026 Youth Summit provided participants with an opportunity to learn, engage in meaningful discussions, and develop greater awareness of issues related to health, the environment, and technology.



FSM and Palau AOSIS fellows pay courtesy visit on Ambassador Sigrah

FSM Embassy in Fiji

August 18, 2026

Suva, Fiji — His Excellency Ambassador Carson K. Sigrah receives a courtesy visit from Ms. Ann Albert of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and Ms. Imade Tellei of the Republic of Palau, Fellows of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), at the margins of the Regional Conference of Youth (RCOY Oceania 2026) in Suva, Fiji.

The two fellows, representing the Micronesian region, will be participating in the August 18–20, 2026 regional youth conference, convened under the theme, “Our Islands to the World: Oceania’s Youth Charting the Course to COP31.”

The conference provides an important platform for young people from across Oceania and the wider Pacific to exchange perspectives, strengthen regional cooperation, and develop priorities that Pacific youth will carry forward to the 55th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting, to be hosted by the Republic of Palau.

Ambassador Sigrah welcomed the fellows and expressed his support for their engagement and contribution to advancing Pacific priorities on the international stage. He also conveyed his encouragement as they continue their important work and engagement in Fiji.

The courtesy visit underscored the importance of meaningful youth participation in regional and international processes, particularly on issues affecting Small Island Developing States and the future of the Pacific.

Ambassador Sigrah wished Ms. Albert and Ms. Tellei continued success as they conclude their engagements in Fiji and carry forward the voices and priorities of Pacific youth.



FSM President Simina calls gender equality a fundamental pillar of sustainable development in Micronesia

FSM Information Services

August 16, 2026

Palikir, Pohnpei – His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, officially opened the third Micronesian Ministers for Women Conference (MMWC) in Palikir on August 3, 2026, calling for stronger regional action to advance gender equality, women’s leadership, and inclusive development across Micronesia.

Delivering the keynote address, President Simina said women have a central role in strengthening families, communities, economies, and national development. He reaffirmed the FSM Government’s commitment to creating an enabling environment for women to participate fully in economic and public life through targeted policies, partnerships, and programs.

“The empowerment of women is not only a social imperative but an economic necessity. When women succeed, families prosper, communities flourish, and the nation grows stronger,” President Simina said.

The Conference convened ministers responsible for women’s development from the Federated States of Micronesia, U.S. Territory

of Guam, the Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of Naero, the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, together with national leaders, senior government officials, development partners, private sector representatives, and women leaders. Discussions focused on practical measures to expand women’s economic participation, strengthen leadership pathways, and promote inclusive and sustainable development.

The Conference endorsed the KAMORALE Declaration, which sets a renewed regional agenda for gender equality, women’s leadership, human security, and inclusive development.

The Declaration further advances the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Micronesia by recognizing the links between peace, security, climate change, nuclear legacy issues, maritime security, cyber threats, transnational crime, and economic resilience. It affirms the importance of women’s leadership in peacebuilding, climate diplomacy, disaster preparedness, community resilience, and security decision-making.

Secretary Marcus Samo noted that the KAMORALE Declaration reflects the growing role of the MMWC as both a regional dialogue platform and an accountability mechanism

within the Micronesian Islands Forum architecture. He emphasized that ministerial commitments should be integrated into the Micronesian Gender Equality Framework implementation and monitoring programs, and reported through the Gender Equality Committee to the Micronesian Islands Forum to support implementation and measurable progress.

“By connecting the outcomes of the MMWC to the priorities of the MIF and GEC, we are creating a pathway that ensures women’s voices,

aspirations, and contributions are built into national development planning and implementation,” Secretary Samo said.

The Conference concluded with renewed commitments from governments, partners, and stakeholders to advance women’s empowerment, support women-led initiatives, and strengthen regional partnerships that promote equality, resilience, and sustainable development across Micronesia.



President Simina receives Japan's State Minister for Foreign Affairs Iwao Horii

FSM Information Services

August 13, 2026

Palikir, Pohnpei — His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), received the Honorable Iwao Horii, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, during a courtesy visit to the Office of the President on August 10, 2026.

Discussions centered on bilateral relations, the upcoming Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), and the regional security environment, reaffirming the KIZUNA, the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the FSM and Japan.

State Minister Horii was accompanied by His Excellency Nobuo Kagomiya, Ambassador of Japan to the FSM, and senior officials from Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Joining President Simina were His Excellency John Fritz, FSM Ambassador to Japan; Chief of Staff Yolanda Joab Mori; and senior officials representing relevant departments and agencies.

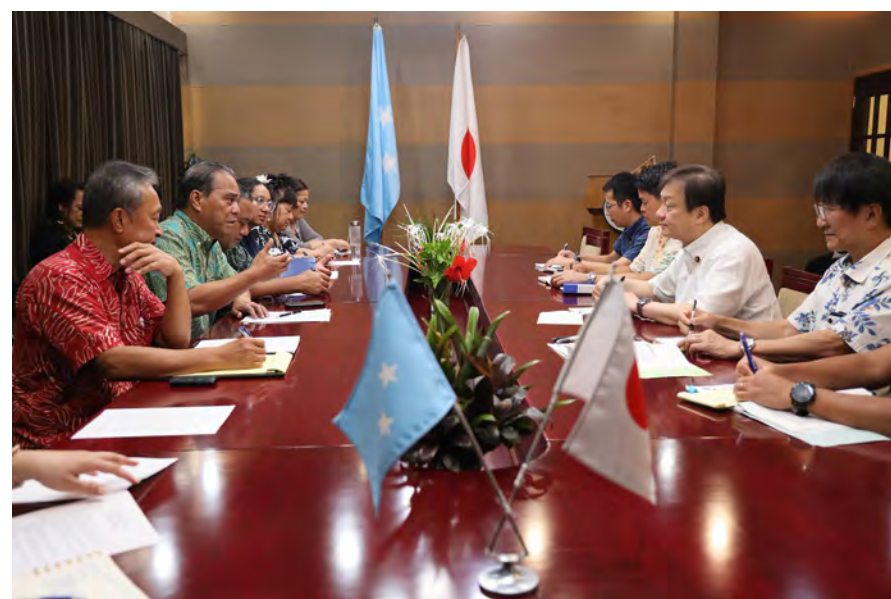
President Simina conveyed the FSM's condolences to the families who lost loved ones and expressed solidarity with the people of Japan affected by the recent earthquake. State Minister Horii, in turn, conveyed Japan's sympathy to the people of Chuuk State affected

by Typhoon Sinlaku and expressed appreciation at seeing the Japan-funded Navigator vessel actively engaged in response and recovery efforts.

On bilateral relations, President Simina highlighted practical development and economic cooperation, including support through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). He also welcomed the Overseas Fishery Cooperation Foundation (OFCF) project to install ice-making machines on Moch and Fanapanges Islands in Chuuk State, noting that OFCF cooperation with the FSM dates back to the 1970s and remains a tangible example of economic cooperation between the two countries.

The two sides also discussed expanding student, people-to-people, and economic exchanges, including an economic exchange mission planned for January 2027. State Minister Horii expressed Japan's appreciation for the FSM's cooperation in the recovery and repatriation of the remains of Japanese war dead. President Simina also acknowledged the appointment of Mr. Kembo Mida, Jr. as Japan's Honorary Consul in Chuuk and the important role of people-to-people ties in strengthening bilateral relations.

Turning to the upcoming Pacific Islands Forum, State Minister Horii



expressed that he looked forward to participating in the Forum and reaffirmed Japan's support for Pacific-led priorities and initiatives, including the Pacific Resilience Facility.

On the regional security environment, State Minister Horii reiterated Japan's continued respect for the sovereignty and independence of the FSM and reaffirmed Japan's commitment to peace and stability in the Pacific.

President Simina expressed appreciation for Japan's friendship and cooperation and reaffirmed the



FSM's commitment to continuing to build on the kizuna between the two countries and their peoples.

Pohnpei ingenuity heads to the global robotics stage

Habele Fund

August 19, 2026

Pohnpei - Five 12th-grade students from across Pohnpei are preparing to represent the Federated States of Micronesia at the 2026 FIRST Global Challenge in Incheon, Republic of Korea, October 7–10.

Three team members—Giselle, Rodrick, and Natasha—represent Pohnpei Island Central School. Jenamy, a Nanpei Memorial High School student, and Yumelinda, a Madolenihmw High School student, join the team through the Upper Bound Program. Together, the students come from Kitt, Madolenihmw, Nett, and Sokehs.

In Incheon, Team FSM will join national teams from more than 190 countries. This year's "Igniting Innovation" challenge asks students to design and build robots for tasks inspired by wildfire prevention, mitigation, and recovery.

Pohnpei-based students have carried the FSM flag at every FIRST Global Challenge since 2022. That year, a PICS team returned from Geneva recognized as "First among small countries."

Habele helped build the foundation for school-based robotics across Micronesia. Today, local students and educators carry the work forward, while Habele continues to provide targeted practical support and publicity. Last year, that included equipment and

travel support for the Pohnpei team competing in Panama. This year, Habele is designing and providing Team FSM's send-off shirts and helping share the students' story.

At the heart of the new team shirt is a basalt gateway inspired by Nan Madol. The stacked stones recall a Pohnpeian achievement that UNESCO recognizes for its monumental architecture and technical sophistication. Circuit lines rise from the gateway toward the four stars of the FSM flag, joining two eras of island ingenuity in a single image.

Within the design, the gateway becomes a threshold between inheritance and possibility. Its message is simple: these students are not leaving their culture behind as they enter the technologies of the future—they are taking it with them.

Habele is proud to stand behind Team FSM and wishes the students every success as they carry Pohnpei's creativity, determination, and problem-solving spirit onto the world stage.



Habele names six memorial scholars across Micronesia

Special designations within the 151-member scholarship class connect promising students with legacies of service

Habele Fund

August 14, 2026

Colonia, Yap - Six students in Habele's 2026-27 tuition scholarship class have been named memorial scholars, connecting the work of young Micronesians today with the legacies of individuals whose lives demonstrated exceptional commitment to the islands.

Earlier this year, Habele awarded 151 K-12 tuition scholarships totaling \$80,844.75. The students come from all four states of the Federated States of Micronesia and attend 13 independent elementary and high schools on Yap, Chuuk and Pohnpei.

The six memorial scholarships are not additional awards. They are special designations given to selected students within the larger scholarship class. Each honors an American or Micronesian whose life and work embodied the best of service to the islands and the longstanding U.S.-Micronesian partnership.

"Remembering a life of service should inspire more service," said Neil Mellen, Habele's founder and executive director. "Each memorial scholarship helps a student with a real tuition bill today while carrying forward an example of courage, integrity or sustained personal commitment."

The 2026-27 memorial scholars are:

Su-young Augustine — Jim Stovall Memorial Scholarship

James "Jim" Stovall III devoted more than five decades to Micronesia as a trusted legal adviser and advocate. His work supported the development of the FSM, its relationship with the United States and its standing in the international community.

Su-young Augustine, whose family is from Sengehs in Madolnihmw, Pohnpei, enters grade 10 at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School. She completed her freshman year with a cumulative 3.28 GPA and consistently submitted the reports, letters and photographs required of Habele scholars.

Mason Moon Foruw — Hon. Martin Yinug Memorial Scholarship

Born in Guror Village in Gilman Municipality, the Honorable Martin G. Yinug devoted four decades to public service. As Chief Justice of the FSM Supreme Court, he embodied integrity, educational achievement and dedication to constitutional government and the rule of law.

Mason Moon Foruw is from Neff in Kanifay Municipality in southern Yap. A returning Habele scholar, he enters grade 9 as a member of the Yap Catholic High School Class of 2030.

Kisa Janika Chipen — Lee Huddleston Memorial Scholarship

Lee Huddleston served as a Peace Corps Volunteer on Moch in the Mortlock Islands and later worked with the Chuuk Department of Education. He lost his life attempting to rescue children in the waters off Moch.

Kisa Janika Chipen, whose family is from Losap Atoll in the Mortlock Islands of Chuuk State, enters grade 12 at Xavier High School. She is beginning her third year as a Habele scholar.

Neichen Xyanne Tawermai — Dr. Marshall Wees Memorial Scholarship

Dr. Marshall Paul Wees was a U.S. Navy physician who served the people of Ulithi during the Second World War. Working with limited supplies and local assistance, he led the effort to eliminate yaws, a debilitating disease then affecting the atoll's population.

Neichen Xyanne Tawermai is from Ulithi Atoll and attends Saint Mary's Catholic School on Yap. She enters grade 8 in her fourth year as a Habele scholar.

Jeron Mattson Ruben — Ichiro Robert Memorial Scholarship

Ichiro Robert was a respected Fefan educator, traditional leader and longtime principal of Sapore Elementary School. He championed education on Fefan and supported generations of students, teachers and Peace Corps Volunteers.

Jeron Mattson Ruben is from Fefan Island and attends Chuuk Seventh-day Adventist School. He enters grade 5 in his third year as a Habele scholar and has consistently reported his academic progress.

Rejoice Malea Ileragiir — Leona Peterson Memorial Scholarship

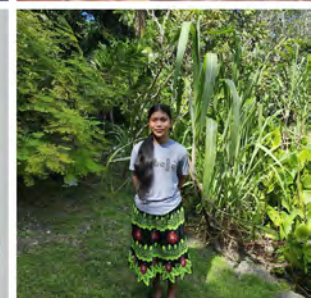
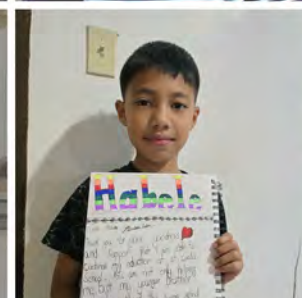
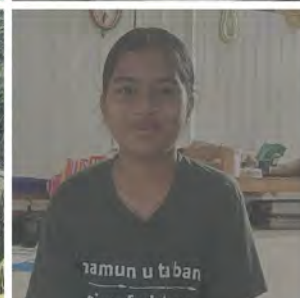
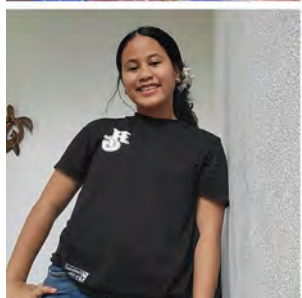
Leona Peterson served Micronesian communities as a nurse, social worker and leader of the Trust Territory's programs for older islanders. Her career reflected sustained, person-to-person service across the islands.

Rejoice Malea Ileragiir, whose family has roots in Lamotrek and Ifalik Atolls, enters grade 11 at Yap Catholic High School. She is a fifth-year Habele scholar with a strong record of consistently reporting her progress.

Habele scholarships are paid directly to participating schools and cover only part of tuition. Families remain responsible for a portion of the cost, while students submit report cards, letters and photographs documenting their progress. Returning scholars must apply again and demonstrate continued effort and responsible reporting.

The scholarships are funded by individual donors, including former Peace Corps Volunteers and other Americans with longstanding personal ties to Micronesia. Their contributions provide direct, people-to-people support for students and families.

Established in 2006 by former Peace Corps Volunteers, Habele is a U.S. nonprofit serving students, schools and community institutions across Micronesia. In addition to tuition scholarships, Habele provides books to young children and school libraries, supports traditional carving and weaving instruction, and assists locally led educational and cultural projects.



PSAKC signs historic service contract with Micronesia Justice Initiative to provide free transportation for young footballers

Pohnpei Soccer Association Kids Club

August 14, 2026

Pohnpei - The Pohnpei Soccer Association Kids Club (PSAKC) is proud to announce the signing of a new service contract with the Micronesia Justice Initiative (MJi) to provide free

transportation for footballers aged 8 to 14 to and from training at the Kolonia Track and Field, every Tuesday and Thursday.

Starting Tuesday 18 August, children from the Chinatown and Ohmine areas of Kolonia town will be picked up and safely driven to training, and returned home once the session ends — removing one of the biggest barriers that has kept many young athletes from taking part in organized sport: the simple challenge of getting there.

How It Works

Transportation will be provided by church minister Robinson Jack, a trusted member of the community, who will run the following pick-up route:

5:10 PM — ABC Bakery

5:20 PM — Island Palm parking

From there, children will be driven directly to the track and field for training, and returned to the same pick-up points once training concludes.

This new service is made possible thanks to the generous contribution of the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI), administered by the Canadian Embassy in Manila, as part of PSAKC's ongoing "Kick Forward: Girls in the Game" project.

PSAKC is deeply proud to launch this innovative service — the first of its kind in Kolonia — and is committed to ensuring that every child, regardless of their family's means or access to transportation, has the chance to play, grow, and belong.

A Word from PSAKC

Other organizations who should understand the importance of grassroots sport, have made promises

before — and did not keep them. Yet here we are, resilient no matter what, offering these children a chance that many otherwise would never have had: the chance to develop into the inclusive, community-loving people they deserve to become.

Thank you, Canada, for believing in us and in these children. You promised, and you maintained.

We would also like to thank the US Army Oceania Engagement Team (OET), the Kolonia Town mayor Biza, senator Joab, PDoE director Etse, the Pohnpei Sport Commission, and the school principals for the full support of our many incoming initiatives.

For more information about PSAKC programs, contact the Pohnpei Soccer Association Kids Club (psa.kidsclub@gmail.com), Kolonia, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia.



Japan's State Minister HORII visits the FSM

Embassy of Japan to the FSM

August 19, 2026

Pohnpei - From August 9 to 11, Mr. HORII Iwao, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, visited the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

- Courtesy Call on President Simina
On August 10, State Minister HORII paid a courtesy call on H.E. Wesley W. SIMINA, President of the FSM. At the outset, President SIMINA welcomed State Minister HORII to the FSM and expressed his sympathy and solidarity in light of the significant damage caused by the 2026 Kumamoto Earthquake. In response, State Minister HORII expressed his appreciation.

State Minister HORII expressed his hope to further strengthening bilateral relations in the lead-up to the 11th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM11) scheduled to be held in the summer of 2027 in Yokohama, as well as the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan

and the FSM in 2028. In response, President SIMINA stated his hope to further develop our friendly bilateral relations. In addition, both sides exchanged views on regional issues, and President SIMINA welcomed the updated Free and Open Indo Pacific (FOIP) vision and its initiatives.

- Exchange of views with Secretaries of the FSM

On August 10, State Minister HORII exchanged views with Hon. Leonito BACALANDO Jr., Secretary of the Department of Justice, Hon. Gardenia AISEK, Secretary of Education, Mr. Kehlen HALBERT, Acting Secretary for Foreign Affairs and other high government officials of the FSM. State Minister HORII stated that, toward PALM11 and the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and the FSM in 2028, he would like to further strengthen cooperation in a wide range of fields. In response, they stated that their hope to further develop our friendly bilateral relations.

- Site Visits and Other Meetings

During his visit, State Minister HORII exchanged views with Japanese citizens and members of the Overseas Volunteers (JOCVs) working in the FSM and conducted inspections of the Pohnpei Port, where an expansion project is underway with Japan's grant aid.

State Minister HORII visited a memorial monument in Pohnpei for Japanese who died there before World War II and for the World War II dead to lay a wreath and offer a silent prayer.



Pacific countries strengthen the data behind climate action

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

August 21, 2026

Port Vila , Vanuatu - Every emissions target, climate policy and climate investment proposal depends on the quality of the data behind it. Across the Pacific, that information may be incomplete, recorded in different formats or held across several government agencies.

Around 50 participants are meeting in Port Vila, Vanuatu, from 17 to 21 August 2026 to strengthen how climate information is collected, checked and reported. They include government officials working on climate data and reporting from Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, the Federated States of Micronesia and Cook Islands.

The workshop focuses on applying the Paris Agreement's Enhanced Transparency Framework. Participants are working on greenhouse gas inventories using Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change software (IPCC Software), climate-target tracking, and Biennial Transparency Reports, known as BTRs.

Submitted every two years, BTRs cover national greenhouse gas emissions, progress towards climate targets, adaptation and support needs. Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands have submitted their first BTR reports and are sharing lessons from the process.

Vanuatu's Minister for Climate Change, the Honourable Ralph Regenvanu, said

transparency must support national priorities as well as international reporting.

"For Vanuatu, transparency is not simply about meeting an international reporting requirement. It is about strengthening our ability to understand our climate actions, measure progress, improve decision-making and ensure that our national priorities are properly reflected in international climate processes."

National greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories combine activity data such as fuel use, livestock numbers, crop production, fertiliser use, forest records and satellite observations with scientifically established emission factors. Together, these are used to estimate the greenhouse gases released or removed.

Gaps in the underlying data increase uncertainty, making emissions trends, policy results and proposed investments harder to assess.

During practical sessions, participants are using the relevant methods, IPCC software and common reporting tables (CRTs) to prepare inventories and track nationally determined contributions (NDC) the targets and actions countries commit to under the Paris Agreement.

Visits to solar photovoltaic and waste-oil recycling facilities in Port Vila will connect this technical work with projects on the ground. Participants will examine how measurements such as electricity generated from renewable energy sources, waste oil processed and fossil-fuel use replaced feed

into national emissions estimates.

Agriculture, forestry and other land uses present particular data challenges. Production is dispersed across islands and farming systems, while records may be held by government agencies, farmers, producers and landowners.

Ms Mirella Salvatore, Senior Climate Change Specialist at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), said stronger agricultural and land-use data systems were also important for attracting investment.

"Improving agricultural and land use data systems is critical to unlocking climate finance. This is why FAO is supporting countries in transparency."

Countries are also sharing practical challenges encountered while preparing their first reports. These include resolving conflicting figures, coordinating information across ministries, maintaining datasets and retaining specialised staff.

Ms Esline Garaebiti, Deputy Director for Climate Change and Sustainability (CCS) at the Pacific Community (SPC), said countries could draw on approaches already being applied across the region.

"Peer-to-peer exchange is one of the Pacific's greatest strengths. Countries can learn from practical solutions already being applied across the region, while also speaking honestly about the difficulties that remain."

The programme will examine how the Enhanced Transparency Framework accounts for the special circumstances and capacity constraints of developing countries.

Global reporting is advancing. By July 2026, 134 Parties had submitted their first BTRs, 86 had completed technical reviews and 49 had discussed their progress with other countries. Following global trends, four PICs have submitted their first BTR by July 2026.

Participants in Port Vila will use lessons from these reviews to identify practical improvements for future reporting cycles.

Vanuatu's Department of Climate Change is hosting the workshop. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), FAO and the Regional Pacific NDC Hub are organising the programme.

The Australian Government's Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) and SPC are collaborating on its delivery. The NDC Partnership, Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency Global Support Programme (CBIT-GSP) and are providing technical expertise.

Success will depend not only on submitting reports, but on maintaining national systems that produce credible information for policy, investment and climate action.

PSAKC and CFLI donate new goalposts to Ohmine Elementary School

Pohnpei Soccer Association Kids Club

August 20, 2026

Pohnpei - The Pohnpei Soccer Association Kids Club (PSAKC), in collaboration with the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI), is proud to announce the donation of new goalposts



(OET) and the Pohnpei Department of Education.

The goalposts were delivered on Thursday, August 20, and mounted on the school grounds the same day. Students gathered around the new equipment with visible excitement, their curiosity and joy a reminder of why this work matters. For many of the kids, this was their first proper set of goalposts to play on.

This donation is part of PSAKC's ongoing commitment, through the "Kick Forward: Girls in the Game" initiative, to expand access to football for children across Pohnpei — building not just facilities, but opportunity, confidence, and community.

PSAKC extends its sincere gratitude to everyone who made this possible: the maintenance team who worked to install the goalposts, Director Etse, teacher and coach Paul Cantero, and Principal Rosalina Sienes, whose support and partnership were essential to bringing

this project to life.

Together, PSAKC, CFLI, OET, and the Pohnpei Department of Education continue to invest in the next generation of Pohnpeian youth — one goalpost, one game, one child at a time.



WHO - building mental health resilience across the North Pacific

World Health Organization

August 13, 2026

FSM - In small island communities, emergencies affect far more than buildings, roads and essential services. They can leave individuals, families and communities coping with uncertainty, fear, loss and prolonged stress. For frontline health workers, the challenges can be even greater, as they support others while experiencing the impacts of the emergency themselves. For geographically dispersed island settings, where health workforces are often small and access to specialized services can be limited, strengthening mental health and psychosocial support is an important component of health system resilience and emergency preparedness.

Across the North Pacific, national health authorities and the World Health Organization (WHO) are working to ensure that mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) is integrated into emergency preparedness, response and recovery. Recent activities in Yap and Chuuk States of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) demonstrate two complementary aspects of this effort: preparing health and emergency personnel before emergencies occur and strengthening frontline support during recovery.

Building skills before they are needed

From 20 to 24 July 2026, health and emergency personnel from FSM gathered in Yap State for a five-day training on strengthening mental health and psychosocial support in emergencies.

Participants included physicians, nurses, public health officers, Emergency Medical Team members, emergency coordinators, logisticians, social workers and other support personnel. The multidisciplinary approach is particularly important in Pacific island settings, where limited health workforces and geographic isolation can place significant pressure on health services during emergencies.

The training emphasized practical skills and operational readiness, strengthening participants' capacity to provide mental health and psychosocial support during emergencies. Practical exercises focused on identifying and responding to psychosocial and mental health needs, strengthening referral pathways, coordination and multidisciplinary response. The programme concluded with country action planning to translate learning into stronger preparedness and response systems.

The training forms part of ongoing efforts by national and state health

authorities, supported by WHO, to strengthen emergency preparedness and build resilient health systems that integrate mental health and psychosocial support before, during and after emergencies.

Taking practical support closer to communities

Later that month, this focus on strengthening frontline capacity continued in Chuuk State, where health workers and communities were recovering from the impacts of Typhoon Sinlaku.

As part of a broader technical support mission by the FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs, the Chuuk State Department of Health Services and WHO, support focused on the recovery and resilience of essential health services, including continuity of care for noncommunicable diseases, mental health and psychosocial support, Psychological First Aid and workforce resilience.

On 30 July, Health Assistants and other frontline personnel providing dispensary and community-level services participated in practical orientation on WHO's Doing What Matters in Times of Stress and Psychological First Aid.

Across Chuuk's dispersed island communities, Health Assistants play a vital role in maintaining access to basic health services and are often among the first people community members turn to following an emergency. The activity strengthened practical skills to recognize distress, communicate supportively, identify urgent needs and connect people with appropriate services. It also equipped participants with simple, evidence-informed approaches to manage their own stress and wellbeing while supporting others. These practical skills can support both emergency response efforts and routine community-based health services, particularly in remote island settings where frontline personnel are often the first point of contact for care.

Making mental health support part of emergency readiness

The experiences in Yap and Chuuk reinforce an important message: mental health and psychosocial support should not begin only after an emergency occurs, nor should it depend entirely on specialist mental health professionals.

For small and geographically dispersed island health systems, strengthening practical MHPSS skills among existing health and emergency personnel can bring support closer to communities, while stronger referral pathways can help connect people experiencing severe distress or possible mental health conditions with appropriate care.

Such investments contribute not only to emergency response capacity but also to longer-term strengthening of community-based mental health support and referral systems.

Together, the activities in Yap and Chuuk demonstrate how MHPSS can be integrated into preparedness, response, recovery and the continuity of essential health services. For the North Pacific, where emergencies can place extraordinary pressure on small health systems, strengthening the people who respond also strengthens the resilience of the communities they serve.

From building multidisciplinary preparedness in Yap to supporting recovery in Chuuk, the goal is to ensure that frontline health workers are better prepared to care for their communities while also protecting their own wellbeing.



Opinion Editorial

Message from the Director General on the 5th SPREP Executive Board Meeting in Samoa

Sefanaia Nawadra*

We live in such volatile times. The impacts of economic, political and social challenges right across the world, as well as the toll of war, is a reality we cannot escape.

Our Pacific people and communities are not immune.

But we are up against a much greater threat, forcing us into the fight for our lives. Despite contributing 0.01% of global emissions to the greenhouse gases that have warmed our planet, Pacific communities bear the brunt of the impacts of the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

Against this backdrop, SPREP's role in supporting all our Pacific countries to adapt and survive has never been more important, to ensure a resilient Pacific environment, sustaining livelihoods and natural heritage in harmony with cultures.

This week in Samoa, this effort continues with our fifth SPREP Executive Board Meeting (5EBM). The 5EBM membership comprises the Troika—United Kingdom (past Chair), Vanuatu (current Chair), and Wallis and Futuna (incoming Chair)—as well as Fiji for Melanesia, Cook Islands for Polynesia, FSM for Micronesia, Australia for the Metropolitan Members, and France for the French-speaking members.

The Executive Board Meeting provides us an opportunity to review our progress from the past year, share lessons and experiences, refine priorities where necessary, and agree on the work programme and budget for the year ahead. Most importantly, it allows us to ensure that our collective efforts are delivering meaningful and lasting outcomes for our countries and communities.

I extend a warm Talofa Lava to the Troika membership and all the

Officials who have travelled to Samoa for the Executive Board. I also extend warm greetings to our Members and our Partners from all corners of the world, who continue to actively engage in efforts to increase practical and tangible support for our member countries to better manage and protect their environment.

I look forward to the conversations and discussions this week because I believe they are very important in our efforts to continue to provide and mobilise assistance to protect and improve our environment. I believe in the past 12 months we have been able to make steady progress in our goals and ambitions for a more resilient Pacific. Indeed, 2025 was a rewarding and fruitful year of serving our members.

It marked the conclusion of several significant projects. After seven years, PacWastePlus funded by the EU, has ended having played a significant role, with its scope and reach, to 'ensure the safe and sustainable management of waste with due regard for the conservation of biodiversity, health and wellbeing of Pacific Island communities.

The Vanuatu Klaemet Infomesen blong Redy, Adapt mo Protekt (VanKIRAP) funded by the GCF, launched the weather radar system in Port Vila. As noted by the Honourable Jotham Napat, Prime Minister of Vanuatu during the launch: "We are not just launching technology; we are launching a new shield for our people...this radar fulfils a long-held vision to empower every Ni-Vanuatu with the knowledge needed to protect lives, livelihoods, and our future from a changing climate."

The GEF 6 Regional Invasives Project (RIP), supported by the Pacific Regional Invasive Species Management Support Services (PRISMSS), made significant progress to protect biodiversity in the Pacific by reducing the impact of invasive

species.

The African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA) Phase 3 Project (ACP MEA3) revitalised the Noumea Convention and link to the regional seas, as well as mobilised over USD 80 million in funding through Inform and the UNEP GCF project to build regional data acquisition and management capacity.

We are thankful that all these projects were completed fully and met, and in some cases, exceeded their objectives and key deliverables. But with every end comes new beginnings.

SPREP launched the Emma Luke Regional Earth Observation Centre (ELEOC), honouring the memory of the late Ms Emma Luke, who championed the role of Pacific countries in leading earth observation conversations and interventions for the Pacific. Ms. Emma Luke left a generous donation to allow SPREP to strengthen its capacity and capabilities in earth observation, which now serves in the form of a regional hub for geospatial collaboration and learning.

2025 was another pivotal year for amplifying our Pacific voyage across the international multilateral environmental agreement meetings. SPREP provided guidance and technical support for our hard-working member delegations at the UNFCCC COP30 in Belem, CITES COP20 in Uzbekistan, and INC-5.2 in Geneva. With Türkiye hosting COP31, Australia will be the 'President of Negotiations' and the pre-COP will be hosted in the Pacific. SPREP will support the Pacific Islands Forum process, already set in place and as agreed to by our Leaders. We will also have a direct role in supporting hosting and the Australian Presidency of Negotiations through our role as part of the joint Pacific COP 31 Secretariat with the Forum Secretariat and the Australian Government.

SPREP continues to be the partner of choice in our regional and where necessary, global environment space. We signed multi-year partnership arrangements with Australia (2025-2031) worth AUD 24.75 million and

New Zealand (2025-2029) worth NZD 10.5 million. I acknowledge the United Kingdom for additional core funding support which paid for much-needed upgrades to facilities on campus, ranging from greater disability access, staff safety and security measures in buildings and expanded car parks.

There are many more successes I can highlight but I will stop here for now. What I want to say is that SPREP, like the Pacific, is a family. Our success is about our collective effort as SPREP Members, SPREP Staff, SPREP Community and the SPREP Family.

The work we do with all our members, communities and partners to build a resilient Pacific environment is a movement where SPREP, has strategically built its capacity to advise, offer technical assistance, support and nurtured partners with resources to make a difference. We have also seen how our members have increased their capacity and ability to meet these challenges and for that SPREP is grateful to have been part of this growth.

I acknowledge our valued Members, development partners, donors, our CROP family, stakeholders, the Government of Australia (DFAT) and the Government of New Zealand (MFAT) for their significant contribution to SPREP core and programme funding including the annual contribution from the People's Republic of China. I also acknowledge the long term and increasing support from the European Union and Japan.

A message I often share with staff is that "the only sure reward for good work is more work!" Our workload will continue to get busier and heavier, as the world, continues to increasingly experience the impacts of the triple planetary crises. But I believe our work is a God given calling to serve and a journey of Faith.

I also believe that he who called us will continue to strengthen and provide! Vinaka!

**Mr Sefanaia Nawadra is the Director General of SPREP.*

New volunteer dispatched by JICA

Embassy of Japan to the FSM

August 18, 2026

FSM - On August 3, Mr. MASHITA Kazunobu, new Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer (JOCV), who has been dispatched by JICA under the first batch of JOCV in FY2026 to the Federated States of Micronesia paid a courtesy call to our embassy.

Mr. MASHITA will be dispatched to the Lemear community of Yap State. He will plan events and training sessions at the community center currently under construction, thereby ensuring its effective utilization and revitalizing the community.

The Embassy hopes that the new volunteer will contribute to the development of the Federated States of Micronesia and achieve great results.



Pacific precision medicine leaders unite to shape future of Indigenous health

University of Auckland

August 11, 2026

Samoa - A landmark gathering in Sāmoa has brought together researchers, clinicians, community leaders and Pacific experts to shape the future of precision medicine, with a strong focus on ensuring Pacific peoples benefit from advances in genetic research.

The inaugural Precision Medicine Conference for Polynesian Peoples, held in Sāmoa on 29 - 31 July, marked a decade since the publication of groundbreaking research into the CREBRF gene variant, found at high rates among Māori and Pacific populations.

The conference, which grew from collaborations involving researchers from Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland, the Maurice Wilkins Centre and the Oceania University of Medicine Samoa, looked beyond scientific discovery to address the cultural, ethical and governance issues needed to ensure precision medicine serves Indigenous communities.

Dr Natalie Netzler, a University of Auckland researcher and conference organiser, says the gathering was intentionally different from a traditional scientific conference. "We wanted to bring together community voices, clinicians and researchers and weave those strands of expertise together,"

she says.

"The goal was to get everybody in the same waka, moving in the same direction for greater efficiency, greater collaboration and maximum positive impact for our communities."

Celebrating a decade of discovery The conference opened by reflecting on ten years of research since the publication of studies on the CREBRF gene variant, a genetic adaptation found predominantly in Māori and Pacific peoples, originally discovered in Samoa in 2016 by Asiatia Professor Satupaitea Viali and their research team from the US.

Research has shown the variant is associated with higher levels of lean muscle mass and increased bone density, while also appearing to offer protection against Type 2 diabetes.

The findings have contributed to growing evidence that Body Mass Index (BMI), a widely used measure of health, may not accurately reflect body composition in Pacific populations.

"One of the key messages is that BMI doesn't work well for Pacific peoples," says Netzler.

"The genetic adaptations we're learning about are helping us

understand that Pacific bodies may be fundamentally different in ways that aren't captured by conventional health measures."

The opening ceremonies reflected the gathering's cultural foundations. Delegates participated in an ava ceremony, while a carved hoe gifted from Aotearoa symbolised the deep connections linking Pacific peoples across Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa.

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Delegation represents PICRC at International Coral Reef Symposium

PICRC

August 21, 2026

Auckland, NZ - The Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC) was thrilled to send a delegation of 11 staff, including the Chief Executive Officer and Research Director, to represent PICRC at the 16th International Coral Reef Symposium (ICRS), which was held in Auckland, New Zealand last month.

ICRS, hosted by the International Coral Reef Society, brings together the global coral reef community every four years. In 2026, there were more than 2,100 attendees from 90 countries. The Symposium provides a platform to share the latest research, celebrate innovation, and strengthen international partnerships. Delegates explored the challenges facing coral reefs, including climate change, ocean

acidification and local human impacts, while showcasing practical solutions, emerging research and traditional knowledge systems that will help shape the future of reef conservation and management.

Representing PICRC's Research Department were Research Director Geraldine Rengiil, Chief Researcher Ikellau Otto, and Researchers Victor Nestor, Greta Satori, and Dr. Piera Biondi. From PICRC's Outreach Department were Researchers Lauren Piot and Dr. Cinzia Alessi, Program Manager Sophie Jehin, and Junior Researchers Dawnette Olsudong and Mengiau Sasao. CEO, Roxanne Sual Blesam was also in attendance.

The PICRC Researchers presented topics on a range of PICRC's coral reef research, including the ongoing monitoring of coral reef health and

reef fish populations, coral reef sedimentation patterns, the recently published climate-smart framework for coral reef restoration in Palau, heat tolerant coral experiments, and eDNA. Meetings, including one on crown-of-thorn starfish management and a new coral restoration initiative, and networking provided ample discussions on this work and the possibility of future collaborations.

"ICRS is an opportunity for PICRC to show the global coral reef community that the work we're doing right here in Palau is innovative, highly relevant, and at a high standard," stated Ms. Blesam. "I'm very proud of the work that we do at PICRC and being well represented at such a large international event is proof that we're contributing to global coral reef discussions."

PICRC will continue to send delegations to international conferences and meetings to continue the discussions on coral reef monitoring, restoration, and conservation.



...Medicine

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The carving featured the wheke, drawing on Pacific narratives that emphasise interconnectedness, shared whakapapa and relationships across the region.

Balancing innovation and Indigenous data sovereignty

A key focus of the conference was governance.

Netzler chaired a panel exploring how Pacific and Māori communities can help shape the future of genetic research while protecting cultural values, collective rights and data sovereignty.

Discussions addressed how genomic data should be managed, how community aspirations can be embedded in research programmes, and how emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence can be used responsibly.

"For Māori and Pacific peoples, DNA isn't viewed as belonging only to an individual," says Netzler.

"It is connected to our ancestors, our families and our communities. We have a responsibility to protect that while also ensuring we're not left behind as precision medicine advances around the world.

"Our ancestors carry many messages in their genes, that it is up to us Pacific researchers to read these accurately, understand them, so that we can translate these to benefit our generations now and the future".

The conference also considered how governance frameworks can ensure smaller Pacific nations are represented and protected alongside larger populations.

Participants included community leaders and experts from across Sāmoa, Aotearoa New Zealand, and the wider Pacific, creating what organisers described as a safe environment for open discussion around sensitive genetic research.

A Pacific approach to precision medicine
Researchers also explored the clinical potential of genetic variants unique to Pacific peoples.

Among the topics discussed were thousands of genetic adaptations that remain largely understudied because Indigenous populations are significantly underrepresented in global genetic datasets.

Much of the world's genomic research has been conducted using European populations, creating challenges when translating findings into healthcare settings for Indigenous communities.

Professor Peter Shepherd says this highlights the urgent need for Pacific-led research.

"This genomic research is already identifying ways to better target current medical treatment so they work best for Pacific people but, excitingly, we now also see how it can be used to develop medicines that specifically target the health issues that are most relevant to Pacific peoples" he says.

For conference participants, the solution is not simply greater participation in international studies, but building Pacific research capability and governance that ensures communities retain ownership and oversight of their own data.

Netzler warns that without Indigenous leadership, important decisions about Pacific genomic information could be made elsewhere.

"If we don't take ownership and governance over this work ourselves, then decisions about our data will be made by others without the protections that our communities expect and deserve."

Why precision medicine matters

One of the conference's most memorable explanations came from Asiatia Professor Satupa'itea Viali of the Oceania University of Medicine.

Describing precision medicine through a simple analogy, he compared modern healthcare to being offered a pair of shoes that only comes in one size. Treatments are often targeted for the "average patient".

"Precision medicine is about recognising that not everybody fits the same mould," says Professor Viali.

The analogy resonated strongly with delegates because it captures the challenge facing Indigenous communities whose health needs are often assessed using models developed for other populations.

Instead, precision medicine seeks to tailor prevention, diagnosis and treatment to an individual's genetic, environmental and cultural context.

Building momentum across the Pacific

Although attendance was by invitation to enable confidential discussions around sensitive genetic information, organisers say the gathering generated significant momentum.

New collaborations emerged, existing partnerships strengthened, and delegates agreed the conference should become a regular event.

"We all agreed this would be the first of many," says Netzler.

"There was a real sense that something important had started. People weren't just presenting research. They were building relationships, forming collaborations and working out how we move forward together."

The next conference is expected to return to Sāmoa in two years, with future gatherings potentially rotating through other Pacific nations.

For Netzler, one of the most encouraging outcomes was the response from participants experiencing Sāmoa and a Pacific-led research environment for the first time.

"It felt less like a traditional academic conference and more like a meeting of minds," she says.

"Community voices were valued equally alongside research expertise. That created conversations that were richer, more honest and ultimately more useful for improving health outcomes."

As precision medicine continues to develop globally, Pacific researchers and communities are determined not simply to be included in the conversation, but to help lead it.



Five-year plan endorsed for Pacific seismic network that warns communities

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

August 14, 2026

Honiara, Solomon Islands - Pacific geoscientists and disaster managers met in Honiara this week to map out their needs and put the region's shared earthquake monitoring network onto funding that does not run out with the donor project cycle, an arrangement its chair says is now the main constraint on getting warnings to communities.

That network, the Oceania Regional Seismic Network (ORSNET), links more than 50 seismic stations owned and operated by Pacific Island countries and territories, and underpins earthquake monitoring, tsunami early warning and technical cooperation across the southwest Pacific.

The meetings, which ran from 10 to 14 August brought together 40 participants and combined the Annual Meeting of ORSNET, the 11th Meeting of the Pacific Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System's Working Group for Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PTWS WG-PICT), and the Third Regional Geohazards Meeting.

The meetings were hosted by the Government of Solomon Islands, a member of ORSNET, and supported by the Pacific Community (SPC), with UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (UNESCO/IOC), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and the United States Geological Survey (USGS).

Over five days, participants from seven ORSNET member countries and territories – Fiji, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu – reviewed national monitoring capacities, identified shared technical and institutional gaps, and worked toward endorsing a regional roadmap for 2026–2030. Discussions also centred on financing ORSNET's own maintenance, the interoperability of national systems and peer learning.

The meetings also produced formal recommendations to be fed into the Pacific Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System and considered how regional efforts align with global initiatives such as the United Nations' Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiative, which aims to protect everyone on Earth with an early warning system by the end of 2027.

In his keynote address, Solomon Islands Minister of Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification Hon. Derrick Rawcliff Manu'ari said Pacific Island nations occupy one of the most geologically dynamic regions in the world, with earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis and landslides posing threats to communities, livelihoods, critical infrastructure, public services, national economies and development aspirations.

"ORSNET has developed into a principal regional mechanism for seismic data sharing and cooperation in the Southwest Pacific. Through this network, member countries have strengthened earthquake monitoring, tsunami early warning, technical collaboration and knowledge exchange. Its progress demonstrates the practical value of regional solidarity: countries sharing expertise, data and resources in pursuit of the common objective of protecting our people," Hon. Manu'ari said.

SPC's support was made possible through the European Union (EU)-funded Building Safety and Resilience in the Pacific Phase II (BSRP II) project. Addressing participants by video link from Suva, Jose Legarra, Programme Manager, Global Gateway – Enabling Environment at the Delegation of the European Union to the Pacific, reiterated the EU's support for work in this area which had real impacts on the lives of Pacific people.



"Effective disaster risk management depends on reliable monitoring networks, robust data-sharing arrangements, strong scientific partnerships, and coordinated warning systems," Mr Legarra said.

"These foundations enable countries and communities to better understand risks, issue timely warnings, and strengthen preparedness and response capacities and capabilities. The EU is proud to support this effort through our partnership with SPC through the Building Safety and Resilience in the Pacific project.

"To date, we have been supporting Oceania Regional Seismic Network countries in strengthening monitoring stations, analysis capabilities through the procuring of equipment and specialised software and supporting technical capacity buildings.

"We view the investments in ORSNET not only as investments in technology and infrastructure, but fundamentally as investments in protecting lives, livelihoods, and sustainable development in the Pacific," Mr Legarra said.

A station in one country can protect communities in another, the Chair of ORSNET, Rennie Vaimounga of Tonga's Ministry of Lands, Survey, Spatial Planning and Natural Resources, said in his opening remarks. The network, he said, is a

commitment by Pacific countries and territories to share data, expertise and responsibility.

"We saw the importance of regional cooperation in Tonga, when the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai eruption and tsunami damaged critical infrastructure and disrupted communications. We saw it again following the 2024 Vanuatu earthquake, when communication outages affected the flow of information during the initial response," Mr Vaimounga said.

Monitoring and alert systems have improved across the region. Keeping them running is the harder problem, because the financing for maintenance arrives project by project.

"Our science must lead to community action. Warnings must reach everyone. Achieving this requires sustained financing. Geological hazards do not operate according to project cycles," Mr Vaimounga said.

By the close on Friday, participants had endorsed priority actions and governance arrangements for ORSNET, and for the region's seismic, volcano, landslide and tsunami monitoring networks, along with recommendations linking that work to the Regional Geohazards Strategy and global early-warning frameworks.

UOG opens state-of-the-art nursing hub to prepare Guam's next generation of nurses

University of Guam

August 13, 2026

Guam - The University of Guam officially opened its new \$9 million Margaret Perez Hattori-Uchima School of Health Nursing Hub during a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 12, marking a major investment in healthcare education and Guam's future nursing workforce.

Behind every exceptional nurse is an exceptional education. For more than two decades, the University of Guam has built a reputation for preparing highly skilled nurses, achieving a first-time NCLEX licensure pass rate of nearly 100% over the past decade and producing graduates in high demand across Guam and beyond. The new Nursing Hub will build on that tradition of excellence by giving students access to advanced simulation, immersive virtual reality, and modern clinical learning environments before they ever care for a live patient.

The state-of-the-art facility represents one of the University's most significant investments in healthcare education and workforce development and will nearly double the capacity of nursing student admissions starting in 2027, helping address Guam's growing demand for healthcare professionals.

"The opening of the Nursing Hub represents much more than a new facility; it reflects the University of Guam's enduring commitment to investing in people who will be a part of building our future," said Dr. Anita Borja Enriquez, UOG President. "As we embrace Tulos Mo'na — propelling forward together — we continue expanding opportunities for students to thrive in an ever-evolving healthcare landscape. The innovative Nursing Hub prepares future nurses with the skills, experience, and confidence to deliver compassionate, high-quality care."

Designed to replicate the environment of a modern hospital, the Nursing Hub features 11 hospital simulation beds, high-fidelity patient simulators,

immersive virtual reality technology, specialized skills laboratories, modern medical equipment, and expanded simulation space, allowing students to practice complex clinical scenarios before caring for live patients.

"The new Nursing Hub is a symbol of innovation and transformation where students will have access to advanced technology that, with proper and responsible use, develops their clinical, critical thinking, teamwork, and communication skills in a safe learning environment," said Dr. Yvette Paulino, Dean of the Margaret Perez Hattori-Uchima School of Health.

The facility also includes high-fidelity patient simulators that communicate with students and respond dynamically to nursing interventions, allowing future nurses to assess patients, prioritize care, communicate effectively, and make clinical decisions as patient conditions change. Students will train in a realistic hospital environment equipped with electric hospital beds featuring integrated weighing systems, headwall systems, overbed tables, and healthcare-grade flooring—providing hands-on experience with the same equipment they will use in professional practice.

The Nursing Hub introduces specialized simulation technology that expands learning opportunities across multiple disciplines. Advanced wound care models allow students to practice wound assessment, documentation, pressure injury staging, dressing changes, and evidence-based treatment techniques before entering clinical settings.

One of the facility's most innovative features is its expanded Virtual Reality (VR) program. Using immersive VR headsets, students can enter realistic healthcare environments, including emergency departments, operating rooms, intensive care units, and labor and delivery suites where they interact with lifelike patients, family members, and healthcare professionals who speak,

respond, and react in real time.

"For a number of years, our students' clinical exposure to maternal labor and delivery has been limited to GMHA, the only civilian hospital with this capacity," Paulino said. "Our Nursing Hub will supplement our students' clinical exposure through labor and delivery simulation and VR technology."

The Nursing Hub also includes geriatric simulation technology that prepares students to care for Guam's growing manāmkō' population by replicating age-related physical conditions and strengthening students' ability to provide safe, compassionate, and age-appropriate care.

"Within this space, our students can safely practice essential nursing skills, make clinical decisions, and most importantly, learn from mistakes without risk to live patients," Paulino said. "The expanded capacity of the Nursing Hub will allow us to nearly double the number of nursing students admitted to our program in 2027, translating into more homegrown nurses prepared to provide safe, compassionate, culturally responsive, and evidence-based care."

Since 2002, the University of Guam has graduated 639 Bachelor of

Science in Nursing graduates and 17 Associate Degree in Nursing graduates, averaging approximately 26 graduates each year. The nursing program has maintained continuing accreditation through the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), reflecting its enduring commitment to rigorous nursing education and student success.

Construction of the Nursing Hub was made possible through a \$9 million investment, led by funding from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, with additional support from the University of Guam, the School of Health, the UOG Nursing Alumni Association, TakeCare Insurance, and other valued partners whose combined investment transformed the vision into reality.

"Every investment we make in our students is an investment in Guam's future," Enriquez said. "The graduates who learn in this facility will strengthen our healthcare workforce, improve lives, and help build a healthier, stronger Guam. Whether they choose to serve here at home or across the Pacific and beyond, they will carry the University of Guam's commitment to excellence into every community they touch."

