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# FSM and United States Reaffirm Partnership During High-Level Consultations

📍 Marly Fredrick 🗑️ Gov News, Politics 📅 January 22, 2026



PALIKIR, Pohnpei – January 21, 2026 – His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), joined by Vice President Aren B. Palik, welcomed a United States Government delegation led by Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, the Honorable Michael DeSombre, during high-level bilateral consultations in Palikir.

The visit marked the first official visit to the FSM by Assistant Secretary DeSombre and Mr. William Hague, Acting Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs, underscoring the importance of the enduring partnership between the FSM and the United States, underpinned by the Compact of Free Association.

The U.S. delegation included Her Excellency Jennifer S. Johnson, U.S. Ambassador to the FSM; Mr. LaJunes Barnes, Chief of Staff, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs; Mr. Antone “Tony” Greubel, Director for Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands; Mr. Justin Rhee, Special Advisor, U.S. Department of the Interior; and Mr. Ryan Edgar, Education Policy Specialist and Grants Manager, Office of Insular Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior. Cabinet members and key staff from the Office of the President also joined the meeting.



The discussions focused on advancing shared priorities under the Compact of Free Association. Key areas of discussion included economic and commercial cooperation, infrastructure development, connectivity, environmental protection, and institutional capacity-building.

Economic and commercial diplomacy featured prominently, with emphasis on strengthening private sector development, improving the investment climate, and expanding opportunities for local businesses. Both sides also discussed ongoing efforts to enhance infrastructure and connectivity to support essential services, including healthcare and digital access.

President Simina underscored the importance of the Compact partnership in supporting the FSM's long-term development goals.

“I want to assure you of my continued commitment to the implementation of the Compact. I am encouraged by the spirit of collaboration through the various cooperation between our governments, and while there are challenges, I am confident that we will continue to work through

them” President Simina said.

Assistant Secretary DeSombre emphasized the importance of the Freely Associated States and the longstanding and unique relationship with the United States, noting that commercial development remains a priority area for cooperation in support of sustainable economic growth.



“It is a priority for me to make this one of my first trips because I really believe in the importance of the Freely Associated States and the relationship with the United States of America,” said Assistant Secretary DeSombre.



President Simina highlighted the importance of continued technical collaboration in addressing environmental challenges, including concerns related to the oil leak in Chuuk Lagoon. In addition, President Simina expressed appreciation for the U.S. Coast Guard’s survey efforts, which support ongoing resource mobilization and response planning. The Government reaffirmed its commitment to continued coordination with partners on this matter.

President Simina expressed gratitude to Acting Assistant Secretary Hague and U.S. counterparts for support provided through grant assistance for the Pacific Connect Initiative with Google, noting its importance in enhancing digital connectivity and complementing telehealth services for FSM veterans.

Additionally, President Simina raised concerns regarding the revocation of commercial driver’s licenses (CDLs) for FSM citizens in the United States, noting the significant hardship it places on families whose livelihoods depend on such employment. Assistant Secretary DeSombre responded that he



has addressed this matter with the US Secretary of Transportation and reaffirmed that COFA citizens under the Compact of Free Association should remain eligible for commercial driver's licenses.

The meeting concluded with both sides expressing appreciation for the open and constructive dialogue and reaffirming their commitment to continued cooperation in support of peace, stability, and prosperity in the region.

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