



**FOURTEENTH REGULAR SESSION
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
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HEADQUARTERS MATTERS

**WCPFC14-2017-FAC11-07
14 November 2017**

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to table to the FAC the issues affecting the operations at the Commission Headquarters in Pohnpei.

Introduction

2. This paper discusses a number of issues related to Secretariat's operations in Pohnpei including headquarters' property, security, telecommunications, travel, Environmental Responsibility, and utility services.

Current Issues

Telecommunications and Internet

3. In December, 2016 the Secretariat notified Members that the internet connection to/from Pohnpei would be affected due to repairs to the fiber cable that provides the primary internet connection to the island. The repairs lasted two weeks longer than projected but the backup solution provided by FSM Telecommunications allowed for continuity of operation while the cable was being repaired. With the exception of the repairs to the fiber cable, Telecommunications and internet services on Pohnpei have been stable over the last year. Currently, the Secretariat is in the process of upgrading the link between FSM Telecommunication and the WCPFC HQ building to a fiber connection to increased reliability and speed.

Utility Services

4. While there have been a number of blackouts and electrical power surges since the last annual meeting, the frequency and duration of blackouts have been significantly reduced over the last 12 months.

Headquarters Building

5. The headquarters building remains in good condition due to regular maintenance. At last year's meeting, FAC was informed that the foundation under the

flooring may need to be replaced in the near future. In working with our local maintenance team, the problems with the foundation were identified and repaired. As mentioned previously, the network and electrical cabling in the office will need to be updated in the next 3-6 years. The existing cable is starting to show signs of deterioration. The Secretariat will continue to look at options and related costs to these repairs to present to the Commission at a future date.

Security

6. The headquarters' compound maintains 24 hour security through directly hiring guards. There was one instance of theft on the Commission property this year and two laptops were stolen. The laptops were not recovered and no suspects were identified. At professional staff housing, there have been no instances of theft over the last year.

Staff Travel

7. Flights to and from Pohnpei have been relatively stable in 2017. The addition of Nauru Airlines weekly flight and the flights offered by Air Niugini have improved the ability to travel from the North Pacific to the South Pacific. In addition the flights by Air Niugini and Nauru Airlines, United Airlines has announced that it will add two additional flights a week to Pohnpei in 2018.

Meeting Travel

8. Under Financial Regulation 3.5, “[t]he draft budget shall include an item specifying the costs required to finance the travel and subsistence for one representative from each developing State Party to the Convention and, where appropriate, territories and possessions, to each meeting of the Commission and to meetings of relevant subsidiary bodies of the Commission.”

9. Continued delays in receiving timely nominations for Commission funded participants to meetings is an ongoing concern for the Secretariat. In addition to the higher direct cost of purchasing tickets late due to delayed nominations and notification of attendance, additional per diem is required in some cases when participants had to arrive earlier or stay later as a result of limited flight availability. The delays in receiving nominations also increase the uncertainty in transferring DSAs to the meeting venues as even days prior to meeting there is a large degree of uncertainty to the amount that will be needed at the meeting. This necessitates the transfer of excess funds to account for delayed nominations. Those funds are often unused and must be transferred back to the Secretariats Headquarters at a cost. The Secretariat is proposing, in Proposed Revisions to Regulations (WCPFC14-2017-FAC11-08), that a deadline for finalizing travel to a meeting be set at two weeks prior to commencing travel to alleviate the issues raised above.

Environmental Responsibility

10. With the operations of the WCPFC HQ building the Secretariat continues to look at ways to reduce its impact on the environment and save cost. Currently the office receives a majority of its electricity from solar power for its HQ building. In addition to the use of solar power, the office is investigating ways to reduce its waste that it sent to the island's landfill. As a first step, the Secretariat has worked with the College of Micronesia (COM) to reuse IT equipment that would normally be sent to the landfill. An agreement has been reached where the WCPFC Secretariat will

provide used and broken IT equipment for COM IT students to repair. Once the IT equipment is repaired it will be provided to primary and secondary schools on the island. The state government will then provide the COM students with a stipend to maintain the computers. A number of other organization on island have committed to joining the project initiated by the Secretariat.

11. The office has also committed to ending the use of single use water bottles to reduce the amount of plastic used in the office and meetings held in Pohnpei. The office is also working with the College of Micronesia to look at ways to upcycling cardboard and paper waste.

Recommendation

12. The Committee is invited to note and discuss the paper.