



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

August 2, 2012

His Excellency Emanuel Mori
President of the Federated States of Micronesia
Palikir, Pohnpei FSM 96941

Dear Mr. President:

As Chairman of the United States-Federated States of Micronesia Joint Economic Management Committee (JEMCO), I write respectfully to solicit your assistance in the matter of Chuuk State education, an issue of importance not only to the two of us and which we have discussed in the past but also to the parents and especially the children of Chuuk. I recall at the 2009 Post Pacific Island Forum Meetings in Cairns, Australia, your kind remarks to the U.S. Delegation, then led by Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell, about the work that my department was doing in Chuuk to address the critical financial management of Chuuk State Government. You noted that you wanted similar efforts for the Chuuk State School System.

In the past few years I have paid particular attention to the quality of education in Chuuk. You may also recall our meeting earlier this year with Ambassador Peter Prahar prior to the mid-year JEMCO meeting in Pohnpei. On that occasion I specifically raised the issue of the Chuuk State School System and asked for your guidance and assistance regarding this particular matter. I remember us all agreeing that this was a monumental challenge.

We both recognize that effectively addressing the challenge of reforming the Chuuk State School System requires the complete involvement and buy-in of both the Chuuk leadership and the Chuuk community as a whole. While in Pohnpei, I took the opportunity to have informal discussions on this important issue with several Chuuk State officials, including Lieutenant Governor Ritis Heldart, Attorney General Joses Gallen, Budget Director Perez Graham and Education Director Gardenia Aisek. I shared with them the idea of having serious discussions between, on the one hand, the pertinent stakeholders/leaders of the Chuuk State and FSM National Governments and, on the other, some of us from the U.S. Government who can lend support toward renewed efforts to address the Chuuk State education challenge.

Yesterday we received from your government an assessment of progress on the implementation of Chuuk's Educational Reform Plan (CERP), undertaken by two outside evaluators, Father Arthur Leger, S.J., Ph.D. and Vidalino Raatior. The CERP is the third version since 2005 of continuing strategic plans for Chuuk education. The results of this review confirm JEMCO members' grave concerns that there has been virtually no progress towards improved education in Chuuk State. U.S. investments through the Amended Compact and Chuuk State's use of its own education sector grant resources are not being utilized effectively. The report is only the most recent confirmation following years of poor performance resulting in much disappointment and frustration.

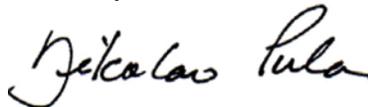
As such, the U.S. members of JEMCO have concluded that special attention needs to be paid to education reform in Chuuk State. In line with JEMCO Resolution 2012 MT-4¹, U.S. members intend to vote to delay allocating FY 2013 education sector grant funds for Chuuk until we are assured that there is mutual expressed consensus and commitment by Chuuk, FSM and U.S. officials for a way forward to sensible education reforms. We have the Compact financial resources to achieve success. What we seem to be missing is the combined commitment to overcome obstacles and remove impediments to reform.

At this point in time, I believe it is necessary to create a process through which all of the responsible parties make sufficient resources available and commit, in a binding way, to sensible reforms. To this end, I am proposing that you and I, along with the collective leadership of Chuuk State and the relevant officials of the National Government, meet at a time to be determined in September so that we can develop, and commit to, a mutually agreeable process. At a minimum, we need to have commitment on several specific reform measures, and we need to create an oversight mechanism which will ensure credible and timely implementation of reforms.

I believe we have a track record of mutual success to build upon. The combined attention and efforts of responsible parties within Chuuk, the FSM and the U.S. have already successfully addressed critical financial management, fiscal reform, and utility problems in Chuuk State, and the results of those efforts have led to an improved outlook in those areas. In several instances, we have benefited from having a third-party institution to facilitate desired outcomes, and the U.S. supports the engagement of third-party assistance if you, Mr. President, and Chuuk State's leaders, so desire. In any case, a combined effort must be mobilized in an effective manner with respect to Chuuk State education reform.

I hope that you agree that a meeting is necessary. Your presence, of course, would undoubtedly raise the profile, importance and urgency of this issue. If you are agreeable to a September meeting I will have my staff coordinate the specific timing with your staff.

Sincerely,



Nikolao Pula
Chairman, JEMCO

cc: T.H. Lorin Robert, JEMCO Vice Chairman
T.H. Evelyn Adolph, JEMCO
T.H. Peter A. Prahar, United States Ambassador

¹ BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, allocation by JEMCO of Fiscal Year 2013 Compact sector and SEG funds to Chuuk State will be contingent upon verifying the validity of elements of the reform strategy, and achievement of progress in implementing the Chuuk Education Reform Strategy.