



Chuuk Advisory Group on Education Reform

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First Quarterly Meetings of the Chuuk Advisory Group on Education Reform

Weno, Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia—February 1, 2013—The Chuuk Advisory Group on Education held its first set of meetings in Weno, Chuuk this week (January 28th through February 1st). The meetings mark a new phase in the effort by Chuuk leaders to reform education in Chuuk State with the assistance of its National Government and United States partners. The creation of the Advisory Group was established at the recent High Level meetings held during the first week of November 2012 with representatives and staff from the FSM National Government, the U.S. Government and the Chuuk State Government.

Members of the advisory Group include three very eminent friends of Chuuk State, including Thomas Bussanich, the Director of the Division of Budget and Grants Management in the Office of Insular Affairs within the United States Department of Interior; Patrick Tellei, the President of the Palau Community College; and Francis X. Hezel, a Jesuit Priest and the founder of the Micronesian Seminar.

The purpose of the Advisory Group is to serve these three primary partners in enhancing and accelerating the implementation of the education reform in Chuuk. Within this broad scope, the Advisory Group is intended to serve as an adjunct to the Chuuk Board of Education, to provide progress monitoring and guidance on the Chuuk Reform, to recommend modifications and additions to the reform program and to report to all relevant parties on the progress of the reform.

During their stay in Weno, the Advisory Group met with the Governor, the Chuuk Legislature, the Board of Education and the Director of Education and staff on multiple occasions. During those meetings, Tom Bussanich repeatedly indicated that “their primary and overriding goals for education in Chuuk are that students have safe and sanitary living environments, that classrooms must have qualified teachers, that classrooms have the necessary school supplies that principals, teachers and students be present for class, and that learning must take place.”

In their meetings, the Advisory Group confirmed their support for the Ten High Level Commitments established at the High Level Event in November and stressed that, within the scope of these commitments, they would like to see reform efforts focus on: the development of a personnel contract system for teachers, principals, and others as deemed appropriate to ensure the attendance and performance of education personnel and students; the support of the Chuuk High School Pilot Project aimed at establishing a model for other High School reform in the future; the immediate implementation of the Chuuk State School Facility Repair and Construction Master Plan in order to begin a stepped improvement of school facilities in Chuuk; the immediate implantation of the primary and secondary school consolidation plans; and the

development of a new procurement policy/process/distribution system that will improve the distribution of supplies to all schools.

Father Fran Hezel indicated that “overriding all of these specific plans and proposals is a desire for Chuuk communities to take ownership of both the reform and the schools in their communities.” Advisory Group member Patrick added that “for this entire process to work, all parties to the reform must be willing to look outside the box and to find examples of past and current successes and to multiply upon them where possible.”

The Advisory Group will meet again in early May to continue to assist the Board of Education and the Department of Education in its efforts to successfully reform Chuuk’s education system.

The Group is scheduled to meet every quarter to move this effort forward. According to Tom Bussanich, “what we want to see are not quick fixes, but strong foundational improvements in Chuuk’s Educational system that will continue long after the Advisory Group disappears.”

For additional information on background documents, meeting proceedings, correspondence and Advisory Group reports, visit <http://www.pitiviti.org/chuuk>.

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