

SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 22-07

RE: COMMITTEE TO WAIT ON THE PRESIDENT

MARCH 22, 2022

The Honorable Wesley W. Simina  
Speaker, Twenty-Second Congress  
Federated States of Micronesia  
Fourth Special Session, 2022

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Your Committee to Wait on the President was duly appointed on March 21, 2022, consisting of members Esmond B. Moses, Isaac V. Figir, Aren B. Palik, and Florencio S. Harper. Vice Speaker Esmond Moses was designated as the Chairman.

The Committee met with the President on March 21, 2022, at approximately 12:30 p.m., virtually via Zoom, with Vice Speaker Esmond Moses present in person in Pohnpei and the other members and the President present via Zoom. The President welcomed those members of Congress present and thanked them for attending. Vice Speaker Moses greeted the President and key members of the Executive Branch on behalf of Congress, and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to meet. Vice Speaker Moses reported that Congress was in session and was ready to transact business.

The President explained the agenda items that the Executive Branch would like to see prioritized during this session include:

- Nominations;
- Time-Sensitive Proposed Legislations;
- COVID-19 Update;
- Our Oceans Conference and More Travels;
- Low Income Assistance;

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- Other Pending Legislations; and
- Grants Pending and other resolutions;

Vice Speaker Moses continued by informing the President and his cabinet members that Congress is in session, starting today for five days. The President welcomed the members and shared with them some issues in his agenda items.

Nominations

The President explained that he would be sending a nomination of Dennis Belcourt to be the Chief Justice of the FSM Supreme Court. With this nomination, he had canvassed potential FSM candidates for the position. Lacking any viable individuals, and with his confident of Mr. Belcourt, he decided to nominate Dennis Belcourt to the position.

The other nomination is for Mr. Nakama Sana to represent Chuuk State on the FSM Trust Fund Board.

Time-Sensitive Proposed Legislation

On this specific agenda item, the President stated that this would be moot because FSM Congress had extensive discussion during its first day of session of this Fourth Special Session. Nevertheless, the President had indicated that when he was in Chuuk State, several of the members of the FSM Constitutional Convention had approached him regarding the proposed legislation to have members meet in person during the nineteen days they are mandated to meet.

With the differing views of both the Legislative and the Executive branches regarding this time-sensitive proposed legislation, the President recommended that Congress deal with this proposed legislation according to what they see best. President had indicated that he is not sure if those members of the FSM Constitutional Convention that are off island will be able to come to FSM to be present if the Constitutional Convention will be meeting. The Committee also shared the legal opinion issued by the Department of Justice regarding the legislation.

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### COVID-19 Update

The President began the discussion on the COVID-19 update by informing the Committee that the indefinite closure of the borders will be opening up next month (April 2022). The President explained that based on advise given to him, there are plans to lessen the quarantine days. They are looking at three days quarantine in Guam or five days quarantine at the most. This approach would be another means to lessen quarantine related costs in Guam. There was discussion on the reconciliation of quarantine plans against the financial resources being allocated to quarantine activities. The Committee recommended that both the states and the national taskforces should enhance their coordination, especially on the lists of individuals from each state that are eligible or listed to be quarantined.

### Our Oceans Conference and More Travels

The President informed the Committee that he has several trips. One is the Ocean Conference that will be held in Palau. He plans to attend this Ocean Conference, and continue to Washington D.C. Also, he plans to attend the opening ceremony of the Consulate Office in Portland, which is scheduled on April 23, 2022. There will be JCM meeting in Honolulu or Guam so he might be returning around mid May 2022.

The President also shared some meetings. One is the National Leadership Conference, which is proposed on July 24-29, 2022 in Yap State. Another is the FSM Domestic Tourism meeting in Pohnpei, which is proposed on June 27 to July 1, 2022. Another meeting is the Micronesian Island Forum, which is scheduled on October 17-21, 2022. So he may not be able to join the May session of Congress.

### Low Income Assistance Program

The President had discussed this program with the Committee, and explained that the funding for the program is

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decreasing, but there are many inquiries from individuals. So he will be tasking the Secretary of Finance and Administration to provide an update of the program to FSM Congress.

Green Climate Fund

The Committee requested that with the GCF, the President establish offices in the states to act as conduit for this GCF. Secretary Elina explained that the National Designated Authority (NDA) is the focal point of the GCF, and this authority is located at the Department of Finance and Administration. The President assured the Committee that an update on the GCF will be shared with Congress.

Eastern Micronesian Cable (EMC) Project

The President had explained that there is a document that the six parties to this project is being drafted and reviewed so the six parties can sign. He also stated that he will be a meeting with the U.S. counterparts, the members of the JCRP, and members of the JEMCO tomorrow. After this meeting, there will be an update information that he will share with Congress.

Pending Legislation

The President provided a list of important pending legislation that included bills addressing the following:

Cybercrimes; non-communicable diseases, passport extension, bunkering and provisioning, penalties for violating prohibited plastic materials, enhance the Secretary of Finance and Administration's tax enforcement capacity, Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, safe release of sharks, maritime surveillance revolving fund, fisheries policy, and non-government organization.

Grants Pending and Others:

These are the pending grants/resolutions that are in the President's agenda lists:

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- a. \$1,500,000 Grant from WHO for FSM Health priority activities;
- b. \$2,343,536 Grant from US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Program (OSEP);
- c. \$250,000 Grant from US Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families;
- d. \$1,542,201 Grant from the United States Department of Education to fund and support the FSM Special Education Program;
- e. \$2,494,075 Grant from UNICEF
- f. Seven hundred million Japanese Yen to promote economic and social development efforts in FSM.
- g. \$535,073 Grant from the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to fund and support the FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs to accelerate the prevention and control of HIV, Viral hepatitis, STD and Tuberculosis in FSM;
- h. National DOE UNESCO-FUNDING extension project;
- i. Ratifying and acceding to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;
- j. Ratifying the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Conclusion

On behalf of the Committee, Chairman Moses thanked the President. The Committee stated that it would share the President's agenda with members of Congress. The meeting concluded with mutual agreement to move forward on the above issues in a timely and cooperative manner.

The Committee kindly requests that members of Congress address any further questions regarding this report to the members of the Committee during discussion of this report at session.

Respectfully submitted,

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/s/ Esmond B. Moses  
Esmond B. Moses, chairman

/s/ Isaac F. Figir  
Isaac V. Figir, member

/s/ Aren B. Palik  
Aren B. Palik, member

/s/ Florencio S. Moses  
Florensio S. Harper, member