

Information and Communication technology expert team conducts public consultation in FSM for National ICT Plan

FSM Information Services

January 6, 2011

Palikir, Pohnpei - The Department of Transportation, Communication and Infrastructure in partnerships with the ITU ICB4PAC Project and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), under its ICT Out Reach Program for the Pacific Region, conducted visits to all FSM states from December 14-21, 2010, to consult with relevant stakeholders on the country's proposed National Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policy Plan. The primary purpose of this consultation with the states is to solicit public views to ensure these views are taken into account in the development and finalization of this proposed National ICT Policy Plan.

Technologies through ICT and its applications have changed the way people all over the world live, work, learn, deliver health-care and conduct business. Technologies not only provide valuable tools, but also bring access that could have negative impacts on our daily lives. It is for these and many other reasons that the government must ensure the use of appropriate technologies providing benefits to the people under sound and practical ICT policies.

President Manny Mori defined very clearly the ICT Policy Vision as reflected in the policy plan. FSM requires not only safe, reliable and affordable telecommunications, but also equitable access for all the people in the FSM regardless whether one lives on a remote outer island or in the urban state centers of Pohnpei, Yap, Chuuk or Kosrae. ICT is declared by the United Nations as a basic human right.

It is in this connection that the Ministers, including Secretary Francis Itimai, attending the Pacific Regional ICT Ministerial Meeting held in Tonga in June 2010, through the Tonga Declaration, unanimously supported the initiative to seek assistance from regional and international organizations (like ITU, SPC, etc...) to assist all the countries in the region to develop their National ICT Policy Plan.

Jolden Johnnyboy, Assistant Secretary for Communication, FSM Department of Transportation, Communication and Infrastructure, is undertaking the project. He joined the ITU ICT Expert Team for the states' public consultations, which comprised of Mrs. Gisa Fuatai Purcell, the Pacific Regional Coordinator for the ITU ICB4PAC Project that funded the project, and Mrs. Christina Higa from the University of Hawaii, Manoa Campus.

New CNMI Rules 'Scary' For Foreign Investors Federal permit good only until 2014

Marianas Variety

SAIPAN, CNMI Islands - In the Northern Mariana Islands, Commonwealth Development Authority (CDA) Executive Director Manuel Sablan says this is a "scary time" for many foreign investors who hold a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) long-term permit because it is uncertain if they can still continue to do business in the commonwealth after 2014.

"The [federal] regulation that came out [for the E-2 CNMI investor visa] is up to 2014 only. After that, they have to obtain a federal status. So after that what happens then? Sablan asked. There is a big difference between US\$50,000 and half a million dollars," he added, referring to the Commonwealth and federal investment requirements.

Sablan said the CNMI's sluggish tourism-based economy will suffer more if small businesses are not allowed to stay beyond 2014.

"Do you think they would invest more when they know that they may lose their status after 2014?" he asked.

A significant number of these investors have leasehold interest on lands in the Commonwealth, with structures like buildings, he added.

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services already issued the final rule that creates the nonimmigrant investor visa classification in the commonwealth known as the E-2 CNMI Investor Visa.

This visa allows foreign long-term investors to remain in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands through December 2014. If they want to stay beyond that period, they must transition to the appropriate federal visa program.

CNMI long-term permit holders must petition for the E-2 Visa starting on January 18, 2011.

The E-2 visa is valid for two years, is renewable, and is valid only in the Commonwealth.

Chinese technicians will visit Yap next week

Yap Department of Youth and Civic Affairs

Palau President Referendum Bill Toribiong want the

*By Jose Señase
Marianas Variety*

Dec. 31, 2010

SAIPAN, CNMI Islands - Palau's President, Johnson Toribiong signed into law last Wednesday the amended casino referendum bill.

"In a democratic society, the people are supreme and now they are called upon to render the final decision on this controversial issue," Toribiong said. Let the people decide."

According to the new law, the referendum will be held from 120 to 180 days after the effective date of the Act.

The election commission will announce the date of the referendum not later than 90 days prior to the date on which it will be conducted.

Those who are qualified to vote but are not registered may submit their application to vote in accordance with applicable laws. Any person who is currently registered in

Chuukese Swimmer Excels at 2010 Hawaii State Champs

By Jean and Bill Sakovich

Fifteen year old Victor Alumbaugh, who attends Kaiser High School on Oahu, competed for the Kamehameha Swim Club on Oahu and finished in six individual events in his age group, in addition to first and second places on four relays, at the recently completed Hawaii State Age Group Swimming Championships held Dec. 17-20, 2011.

Victor won the 200m Breaststroke 2:30.71sc and 200m Backstroke 2:15.92sc for his first State Titles, and was 5th in the 100m Back 1:02.51sc.

He also placed in the 100 Breast 1:08.85sc, 200m Individual Medley 2:16.88sc, and 400m

A team of five Chinese technicians from the Wuhan Nanhua High Speed Ship Engineering company is to arrive Yap on 9 January 2011 for purpose of conducting a survey of the MV Hapilmohol 1.

According to a communication received from the FSM Department of Foreign Affairs, the team