

# Sustainable Development Critical in FSM to Prevent Migration

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# Ayuda Foundation

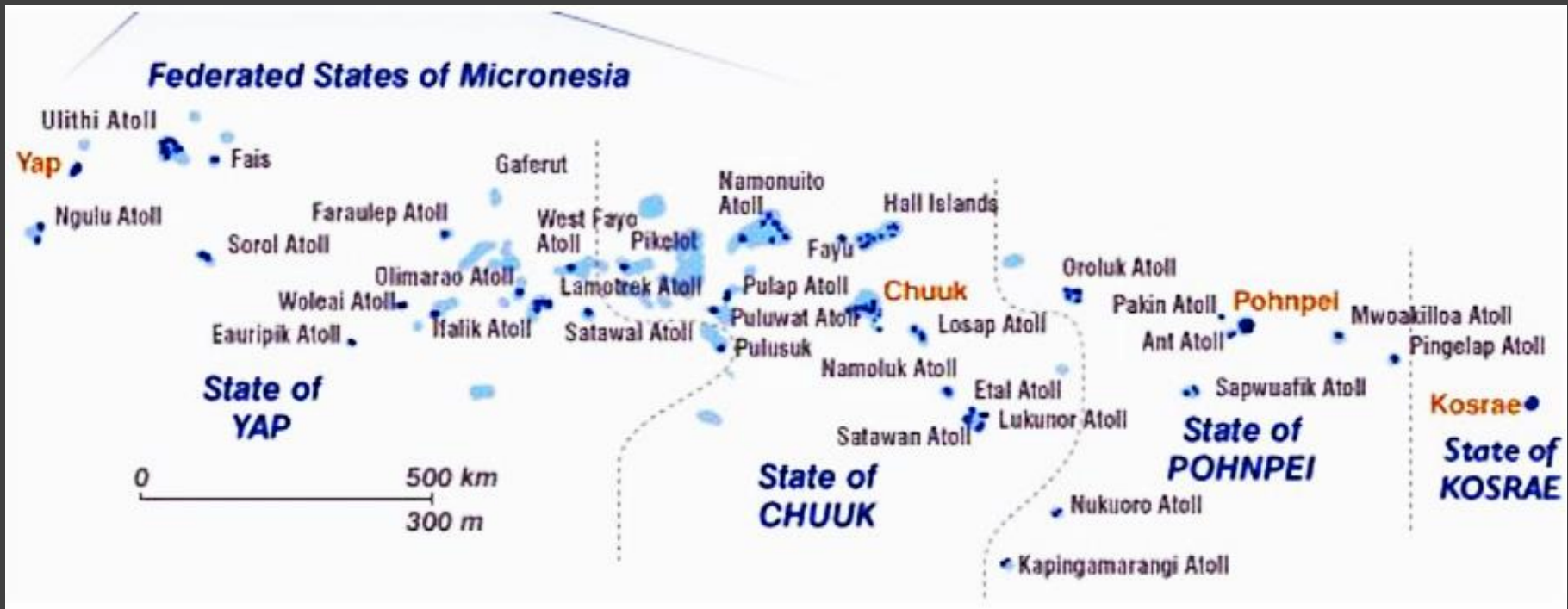
## How Did We Begin?

- Formed in 1995 to respond to growing needs of Association Pacific Island Legislatures (APIL) member governments as migration of peoples increases.
- APIL composed of lawmakers of 12 Pacific governments. Chuuk, Kosrae, Yap, Pohnpei, Palau, Guam, Commonwealth Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI), the Republic of the Marshall Islands, American Samoa, Hawaii, Nauru and Kiribati
- Then Guam Senator Carlotta Leon Guerrero was a co-founder and current Executive Director of Ayuda Foundation.



Ayuda delivers water to Yap after Typhoon Maysak 2015.

The Federated States of Micronesia is a sovereign country comprised of 607 small islands spread over more than one million square miles of ocean in the Western Pacific. Sixty-seven of the islands are inhabited and most outer islands are atolls. Total land mass area is small, amounting to 270.8 square miles, with only 6 percent of the land arable.



# Island Nations Must Face Scientific Reality

1. El Niño and La Niña events will continue to occur in the future (very high confidence),;
2. Extremely high daily temperatures will continue to rise (very high confidence)
3. More extreme rain events (high confidence)
4. Drought frequency is projected to decrease (medium confidence)
5. Ocean acidification is expected to continue (very high confidence)
6. Coral bleaching will increase in the future (very high confidence)
7. Sea level will continue to rise (very high confidence)

- Source: Climate Variability, Extremes and Change in the Western Tropical Pacific: New Science and Updated Country Reports, Pacific-Australia Climate Change Science and Adaptation Planning Program. Australian Bureau of Meteorology and Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation

There are five 'hotspots' in the Pacific that are likely to become source areas for climate change-related migrants:

1) urban areas 2) urban atolls 3) non-urban atolls 4) coastal, delta and riverine communities 5) communities prone to drought.

The Federated States of Micronesia has atoll islands, an increasingly urban capital, and 2 of its 4 states prone to drought, marking it a 'hotspot' and one of the most vulnerable nations.



Ant Atoll



Satawan Atoll

Source: *Climate Change Migration Issues in the Pacific*. UNESCAP.  
Photo credit: Nick Hall - Nature.org and Chip Fletcher, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

# Food security growing concern in FSM,



States such as Chuuk are particularly vulnerable, because it contains 50 percent of FSM's population yet only 12 percent of its arable soil.

# High Tide 2007 Lekinioch Atoll salts water wells and destroys taro crops



Giant swamp taro is a staple crop in Micronesia that requires a two- to three-year growing period.

After a saltwater inundation, it may take two years of normal rainfall to flush brackish water from a taro patch, resulting in a five-year gap before the next harvest if no further saltwater intrusion takes place.

Islanders digging a trench to drain taro field.

# Super-Typhoon Maysak in 2015 damages FSM outer islands in Chuuk and Yap

Islanders constantly living on the edge of recovering from high tides, typhoons, and drought that causes loss of water and food. Tyranny of distance gives weight to out of sight, out of mind.



**Water security** is being severely threatened, especially for the outer islands.

Atolls depend fully on rainwater and shallow wells. Rising sea levels, and droughts are threatening the availability and quality of fresh water in atoll's water lens.



**El Nino drought of 2015-2016 was one of the worst droughts recorded in history.<sup>2</sup> Every State Governor in the FSM declared an emergency.**

# Suva Declaration on Climate Change- PIDF Sept 2015

“..declare that we..

- 1) Are gravely distressed that climate change poses irreversible loss and damage to our people, societies, livelihoods and natural environment; creating existential threats to our very survival and other violations of human rights to entire Pacific Island Developing States;
- 7) Highlight that irreversible loss and damage caused by climate change goes beyond adaptation and is already a reality for Pacific Island Developing States (PIDS) if there is no mitigation action and that climate change is already resulting in forced displacement of island populations and the loss of land and territorial integrity and further highlight that such loss and damage results in breaches of social and economic rights;
- 17) Recognize the importance of engaging, as equal partners, civil society, women, youth and persons with disabilities, in all efforts towards building climate change resilience;

# Suva Declaration 2015 “therefore calls for:

19h) increased support for adaptation measures that address all vulnerable sectors including health, water and sanitation, energy, agriculture, forestry and fisheries;

19i) adaptation measures for Pacific Small Island Developing States to be 100% grant financed;

19n) support to enable the greater involvement of community, civil society and the private sector in our climate change responses and initiatives”



# FSM Climate Change Policy of 2009

Vision – FSM is committed to address the adverse impacts of climate change on communities to ensure sustainable livelihood and preserve natural heritage, diverse customs, traditions, and natural resources in all the islands.

## Goals – Adaption

- To encourage and strengthen the application of traditional knowledge on conservation practices and other relevant areas.
- To develop and implement appropriate strategies to improve food production and other relevant sectors.
- To identify technologies that are locally appropriate.
- To increase local financial support from governments, private sector and NGOs to enhance capacities to respond to climate change challenges.



The FSM's SDP clearly makes "**long-term environmental sustainability**" a **priority**. Section 7.2 titled the *Environment Sector Strategic Plan* states that the **degrading environment is due to human activities and "natural hazards such as those associated with extreme weather events, climate change, high tides and sea-level rise..."**. According to the plan, "current indicators suggest that the current government environmental agencies, partnerships, and policies are failing to adequately address these environmental challenges.

Honorable FSM President Christian with the release of the FSM Infrastructure Development Plan, period 2016 to 2025, President Christian states,..

**“I particularly welcome the inclusion of projects directly linked to climate change adaptation –to close the funding gap...”**

The plan takes into account the end of funding in 2023 from the Compact of Free Association Act.



# USA Direct Financial Assistance (Compact of Free Association) to FSM Ends in 2023

Add this factor to water and food insecurity and easy to see that out migration likely to increase

- United States and leaders from the islands negotiated a political relationship treaty that benefits FSM and RMI signing parties on Sept 30, 1985. Palau in 1994.
- U.S. gains right to keep foreign governments from establishing military and diplomatic footprints and U.S. keeps access to islands for security reasons.
- Islanders gain access to U.S. government services, funding sources and passport free entry to US and ability to further access work, health and education opportunities.
- National building and establishment of stable democracies desired by all parties.

# FSM Needs Partners to Help Reverse Brain Drain & Develop Technical Experts



In a recent Federal Compact Report, the U.S. Department of Interior alludes to the unfortunate “brain drain” term, which refers to migration of the last generation of Micronesians that have already relocated for better wages, leaving local government with little technical capacity or expertise to carry out sustainable development; which is why the government consistently ask for development partnerships.

# FSM 2000-2010 census shows 4.1% population decrease

- Long-range population projections suggest a continuation of little or no population growth for the foreseeable future. Projections to 2030 suggest no population growth from 2010.0.
- Historically migration to this degree comes with loss of traditions, languages, identity, and community cohesion while the homeland communities are completely compromised for those who stay.



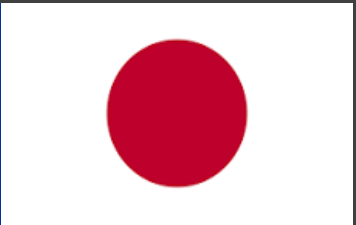
# Loss of food & water trigger FSM migration

- It is unrealistic to expect COFA migrants to not migrate when they have every right to and live in a place where food and water security is being threatened, possibly at a greater degree every year?

**“If a \$280 plane ticket is the only thing that would keep a migrant from leaving home — where workers get paid \$1.35 an hour or less, some of the pupils sit on the floor in classrooms, and water wells are drying up — leaving that place wouldn’t be such a bad idea.” PDN, April 2016**

- According to the Migration Policy Institute article, *The Push to Migrate*, “the infusion of funds by the United States and the development of a wage economy undermined the subsistence economy that predominated until the 1960s. This increased the importance of money, and by the late 1970s, fewer and fewer households produced their own food, which increased the need for wage employment to obtain basic subsistence needs.”

# Current Adaptation Aid



# SPREP/ADB Demonstration project: Climate proofing 7 KM section of Kosrae's main coast road

Following a:

socio-economic assessment, community consultations, analysis of climate and sea level projections, and input from expert coastal engineers, the road was redesigned to withstand the heavier rainfall and higher sea levels that are anticipated in the coming decades.



A new culvert, improving the road from heavy rain.

# Our Main Goal is to aid FSM Environment Sector on Climate Change Adaption by:

- 1) Strengthen existing water wells and catchment systems by consulting traditional leaders and groups and trained team of construction workers
- 2) Create opportunities for companies/industry with the expertise in soil and water control to interact with key island infrastructure operation managers
- 3) Work with legislative bodies on policy frameworks for climate change adaptation measures for the long term



A partnership between the 501©3 Ayuda Foundation, Ambassador Gerson Jackson, Environmental Consultant Cedric and the FSM national and state governments will lead to implementation of technologies suitable for long-term adaption. Only through a joint effort can we find solutions.

Former Honorable Ambassador **Gerson Jackson**, 15 years in a director role in either planning or resource development and over 15+ years in a FSM governmental role. Master's degree in Management from the United States International University in San Diego, CA.

**Cedric Toeolesulusulu Schuster** - Climate Change and Environmental Specialist, over 10 years environmental projects as a specialist, 5 years with the Legislative Assembly of Samoa, expert in natural resource & coastal zone management, biological surveying, vulnerability & adaption assessments, climate financing, environmental economics and more. Masters degree in sustainable development from Brandeis University, Washington.

**Carlotta Leon Guerrero**, Executive Director of Ayuda Foudation, 501c3 organization in existence for over 20 years that aids the 12 Association of Pacific Island Legislature governments (with each FSM state government included). LG has an extensive background in Micronesia, primarily in community development, relationships and partnerships within FSM and RMI government, strong, visionary leadership with project management knowledge and skills. Over 15 years experience in Guam legislative as a lawmaker and 10 years as a regional journalist.



Our team will connect the consultant to the technology to government. Our experience in program management, close connection with government, traditional leaders and women's groups will ensure sustainability.



Accepting migration as an adaptive response to climate change will threaten Micronesians' sovereignty and cultural identity, it cannot be an option.



Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Kulo and Fa'afetai!

Children of Tiningdow Family from Yap, photo credit: John De Mello