



Media Release  
24 November 2016

***“Promoting better governance, accountability and transparency for Pohnpei State”***

The Pohnpei State Office of the Public Auditor (OPA) in partnership with the Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions (PASAI) hosted a five day workshop in Pohnpei from 21 – 25 November 2016 for Members of the Legislature, Audit Entities, Public Auditors of Federated State of Micronesia, Chief Executives of Local Government, and other stakeholders including media and civil society organizations, in Pohnpei. The workshop is in line with one of PASAI’s strategic priorities, “to advocate on behalf of its members to strengthen governance, transparency and accountability.”

Legislative committees play an important role in the scrutiny of audit reports and providing oversight over the use and management of public resources. The workshop was opened by the Vice Speaker of the Pohnpei State, the Honorable Nixom Soram, “who extended a warm welcome to members of the legislature, the Pohnpei State Public Auditor, Iso Ihlen Joseph, his staff, and the PASAI delegation for holding such a valuable workshop for its members”. Vice Speaker, Hon Nixom Soram in his opening address commented, “as legislators our role is to ensure monies are expended correctly, once they are expended, we must ensure they are accurately accounted for, if not, we turn to the auditors. That is why we need the help of auditors”. Members of Legislative Committees who attended the first two days also commented, “the workshop was informative and extremely useful for their roles as oversight committees, and as members of the legislature”.

The first two days of the workshop was the programme for members of the Legislature and was attended by 17 members. The topics covered included an overview about the role of PASAI, the status of accountability and transparency in the Pacific, the value and benefits of Supreme Audit Institutions or Offices of Public Auditors, public accountability framework of the Pohnpei State, its budget process, fraud awareness and the audit findings of OPA.

The final three days were for the second group comprising of Cabinet Members, staff of audit entities including finance and administration staff, the Public Auditor of Kosrae State and his staff, which started their session on Wednesday and attended by 27 participants. The Governor of Pohnpei State, the Honorable Marcelo K Peterson, welcomed the second group, and in his opening remarks, extended his gratitude to the Chair of PASAI, also the Public Auditor of Pohnpei, for selecting Pohnpei to host this workshop. He ended his opening remarks with a wise old saying, “in order to establish trust, it is first important that you be trustworthy. This means you should be forthright with all your dealings”.

This workshop is the fourth Public Accounts Committee workshop PASAI has held in the Pacific, and it is the first time it has extended to a five day programme to include audit entities, government officers, local government and other stakeholders.

The workshop was facilitated from PASAI by Mr Eroni Vatuloka, PASAI Advocate, and Ms Aolele Su’a Aloese, Director of Advocacy, Engagement and Financing, and from the Pohnpei Office of the Public

Auditor, by Mrs Sophia H Pretrick, Investigative Advisor, Mrs Analin Co Estur, Audit Manager and Ms Christina Elnei, Budget Officer, Pohnpei State Governor's Office.

PASAI would like to acknowledge the support of the Pohnpei State Office of the Public Auditor, for making this workshop a great success. We would also like to acknowledge the financial support of the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT).

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Enclosure one: Image of Group 1, Members of the Legislature of Pohnpei State and staff of the Office of Public Auditor of Pohnpei State



Enclosure two: Image of Group 2, Cabinet Members, Chief Executives of Local Government, Directors of Government Departments, Finance and Administration staff, Public Auditors of FSM and staff.

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