



FIFTH REGULAR SESSION
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
Second Session
Busan, Republic of Korea
7-12 December 2008

HEADQUARTERS MATTERS

WCPFC5-2008-FAC2/09
03 November 2008

Introduction

1. The Secretariat occupied the Commission's Pohnpei headquarters building in May 2008 after more than two and a half years in an interim suite of offices provided by the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia. The works that were needed prior to occupancy were satisfactorily completed and notwithstanding that some substantial issues remain to be addressed the headquarters property now represents a facility that Members, Participating Territories and Cooperating Non-members, as well as the Pohnpei community and staff, can be justly proud of.

2. The utility and aesthetics of the headquarters building was greatly enhanced by a substantial gift of furniture, artworks and drapes donated by the Government of Papua New Guinea and officially handed over by the Honourable Ben Semri MP, Minister for Fisheries, at a ceremony immediately before the Fourth Regular Session of the Technical and Compliance Committee in October.

Lease and Grant Arrangement

3. The lease and grant arrangements necessary for the Commission to be able to occupy the headquarters property operated satisfactorily in 2008. It may be recalled that the lease provides for the Commission to assume land currently used as a temporary access road (to the Early Childhood Education Programme office, the State of Pohnpei Treasury and Administration offices and the Peace Corps) as well as a portion of land occupied by the State of Pohnpei Treasury and Administration offices. This may occur once the new Pohnpei State Executive Office Building is available and after demolition and removal of old structures. The construction of the Pohnpei State Executive Office Building in the centre of Kolonia through an assistance project provided by the Government of the Peoples Republic of China appears to be proceeding at good pace so hopefully the two year time limit provided in the lease for the relocation of offices and staff, demolition works and construction of an alternate access road that will be up in July 2009 will be achievable.

4. The lease agreement requires that the Commission maintain the property "in good, sanitary and neat order, conditions and repair" and to restore and rehabilitate all buildings. Unfortunately the long period between the completion of the headquarters building and occupancy was not kind to the property's structures and operating

systems. As foreshadowed last year significant remedial, security related and functional improvements works were necessary to bring the building to a standard suitable for occupancy as well as to protect and maintain the Commission's assets.

5. Major works carried out through the General Account Fund in late 2007 and 2008 include: the provision of security bars to the ground floor windows; stage one fencing of the property; extensive electrical works to repair damage done by the faulty installation of the standby power and consequential power surges over time; works to make the toilet facilities and wet areas sanitary, modest and fully functional; sealing of window leaks, installation of a secure reception area and foyer; removal of walls in selected rooms to improve space utilisation; the erection of a carport; replacement of the main breaker and associated work on failed or failing secondary breakers; works to assist install items provided by the Government of Papua New Guinea; replacement of sensor operated faucets with manual faucets to increase reliability and reduce maintenance costs over time; and selective window tinting in an effort to improve building insulation.

6. In addition funds from the Headquarters Building Fund have been committed to provide a permanent weather proof security guard shelter for the headquarters property and to rehabilitate and secure an older building and its associated toilet facilities located on the Commission's property in close proximity to the main building but currently physically separated by the temporary access road.

7. The proposed 2009 budget includes funding for ongoing maintenance, remedial work to the air-conditioning, fire alarm and standby generator power systems as well as for additional fencing and landscaping.

Satellite Communications

8. Action is in train to provide the headquarters with satellite communications capability with the aims of providing cost effective, secure communication links as well as a good level of redundancy vis-à-vis the FSM Telecommunications Corporation facilities. The hardware for this is in place and negotiations are ongoing with the Pohnpei regulatory authorities and relevant government agencies to obtain the required approvals.

Recommendation

9. The Committee is invited to note the status of the Commission's headquarters facility, progress made in 2008 in establishing it as a fully functional office and on-going work scheduled for 2009 to maintain the building and associated land area.