



**THIRTEENTH REGULAR SESSION
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
Tenth Session
Denarau, Fiji
4 - 9 December 2016**

HEADQUARTERS MATTERS

**WCPFC13-2016-FAC10-09
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Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to table to the FAC the issues affecting the operations at the Commission Headquarters in Pohnpei.

Introduction

1. This paper discusses a number of issues related to Secretariat's operations in Pohnpei including headquarters' property, security, telecommunications, travel and utility services.

Current Issues

Telecommunications and Internet

2. Telecommunications and internet services on Pohnpei have been stable over the last year. That said, the Secretariat has been notified that there is damage to the fibre cable that will require some repairs. The repairs are estimated to take one week. Initially these repairs were planned for late October but the date has been moved back until late in 2016 or early 2017. We have been notified by FSM Telecom that during this period, a backup solution will be provided for the office and we will inform members of the impact to services once the dates have been finalized. The Secretariat does maintain a satellite communications link as an emergency backup but this system is only capable of limited tasks like web based email and web browsing.

Utility Services

3. Since the last Commission meeting, the frequency and duration of blackouts have continued to be more severe. The large number of brownouts and electrical power surges in the electrical system have been problematic at the Headquarters' building and at staff residences that not connected to the main power line which supplies the state hospital. Many areas of town not connected to the main power line now experience 4-6 hours a day without electricity up to 5-6 days a week. The Secretariat is looking into backup systems for professional staff residences.

Headquarters Building

4. The headquarters building remains in good condition due to regular maintenance. There are several long term capital projects that will need to be considered for future years. First, the substrate under the tiling on the ground floor of the building has deteriorated in some areas. This has caused the tiles to elevate and break in some rooms and become loose in other areas. While short term solutions can be found to patch some specific areas, the fundamental problem will require the tiles to be torn out, the foundation under the tiles to be removed, new cement to be poured and new tiles install. Second, the internet and electrical cabling in the office will need to be updated in the next 4-7 years. The existing cable is starting to show signs of deterioration. The Secretariat will continue to look at options and related costs to these repairs to present to the Commission at a future date.

Security

6. The headquarters' compound maintains 24 hour security through directly hiring guards. There has been no instance of theft on the Commissions headquarters' compound since the last annual meeting. At professional staff housing, there have been no instances of theft.

Staff Travel

7. Flights to and from Pohnpei have been relatively stable in 2016. The additional of Naruru Airlines weekly flight has improved the ability to travel from the North Pacific to the South Pacific. In addition to the weekly flight on Naruru Airlines, Air Niugini will start to operate flight twice a week starting in December 2016. The flight will go between Pohnpei and Port Moresby.

Meeting Travel

8. Under Financial Regulation 3.5, “[t]he draft budget shall include an item specifying the costs required to finance the travel and subsistence for one representative from each developing State Party to the Convention and, where appropriate, territories and possessions, to each meeting of the Commission and to meetings of relevant subsidiary bodies of the Commission.” Continued delays in receiving timely nominations for meetings is problematic. In addition to the higher direct cost of late ticket purchases necessitated by delayed nominations and notification of attendance, additional per diem was required in some cases when participants had to arrive earlier or stay later as a result of limited flight availability.

Recommendation

9. The Committee is invited to note and discuss the paper.