



**EIGHTH REGULAR SESSION
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
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Koror, Palau
04 - 09 December 2011**

HEADQUARTERS MATTERS

**WCPFC8-2011 –FAC5/09
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Introduction

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

Current Issues

New Financial System

2. The Secretariat has installed and implemented a new financial system for all accounts. The new financial system, QuickBooks Professional, replaces the old system of excel-based spreadsheets. The new system provides additional accountability and transparency in the areas of finance, leave records and asset management.

Telecommunications/internet

3. Fibre optic cable has been installed in Pohnpei and has improved telecommunications and internet services in terms of bandwidth and more robust infrastructure. There are no backup alternatives for a cut in the fiber-optic line. If the fiber-optic line were to be cut, replacement could take several months. For this reason, the satellite communications link has been retained as a redundancy measure.

Utility services

4. The Commission and professional staff houses have experienced numerous power cuts throughout the year. The residences were experiencing rolling blackouts for up to four hours a day for over a month. The power cuts are a result of Pohnpei Utility Corporation's (PUC) aging generators which require frequent repair. In the last few months the power has stabilized as one of the generators has been repaired. The Commission's generator has worked well but is only able to handle around half of the main building's power needs.

Travel

5. Travel to Pohnpei has become more difficult as Continental Airlines has ceased the Fiji to Guam route. Now travellers need to go through Australia, Japan, Korea or Hawaii to travel to or from Pohnpei. In addition, the number of flights between Cairns, Australia and Guam have decreased. These changes mean that travel must be coordinated further in advance. There may also be an increase in the cost of

hosting meetings in Pohnpei. Indicative numbers from TCC show that the costs for tickets will be similar. The cost for DSA will increase as travellers will need to travel for a longer period of time and stay in Pohnpei longer to make onward and outbound flights.

Security

6. There have been a number of security incidents over the last year. There have been five attempted break-ins and two successful robberies. Four of those attempted breaks were at residences and one was at the headquarters building. The state and national police have noted a dramatic increase in break-ins in Pohnpei over the last year. The Secretariat has taken the precaution of installing security bars on residences that are vulnerable to robbery. The frequent blackouts at some residences have added to the need for the Secretariat to look for ways to provide additional security for residences. The Secretariat is keeping a close eye on crime and may need to implement a 24 hour security presence at the office.

Meeting Travel

7. 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.” For the SC meeting, nine developing States, Territories or possessions made their nominations in time. For the TCC meeting only two developing States, Territories and possessions had made their nominations in by the deadline. The delay in receiving nominations for attending meetings in a timely manner along with last minute cancelations has cost the Commission as estimated USD29,400 this year for the SC and TCC meetings. Besides the direct cost of late ticket purchases, additional per diem was needed in some cases when participants had to arrive earlier or stay later as a result of limited flight availability due to making last minute flight arrangements.

Annual Reports

8. In the annual budget, USD22,500 is set aside to print and distribute the annual meeting documents. Due to the cost and time needed to print and distribute the annual meeting documents, an alternative is to distribute the reports electronically. Electronic distribution would drastically reduce the cost of printing and distributing the annual meeting documents.

Recommendation

8. The Committee is invited to:
 - i. Note and discuss the report;