

Japanese private foundation supports Kapingamarangi drought recovery

Embassy of Japan

In the wake of the severe drought which hit Kapingamarangi Atoll, the Association for Promotion of International Cooperation, or APIC, decided to donate 20,000 US Dollars for the purpose of purchasing 8 units of 1,000 gallon water tank in Pohnpei Island and shipping them to Kapingamarangi Atoll.

APIC is a private foundation based in Tokyo, whose aim is to strengthen relations between Japan and nations in the Pacific and the Caribbean.

For the Federated States of Micronesia, APIC has implemented various development projects in the FSM as well as invitation and scholarship programs in Japan for both the leaders and the youth of the FSM. The assistance by APIC to Kapingamarangi was decided upon the request from the Micronesian Conservation Trust (MCT) for the cooperation. Earlier this year APIC already donated through MCT also 20,000 US Dollars to Weno, Chuuk State, which had been severely affected by a drought, for the installation of 10 units of water tanks.

The handover ceremony for

Kapingamarangi was held on Tuesday 17 November 2020. The Hanover Ceremony for Kapingamarangi Drought Recovery and Support for Conservation Equipment held at the Pohnpei State Government building from 4 pm for about 30 minutes, was attended by Pohnpei State Governor Reed Oliver, Lt. Governor Feliciano Perman, State Senator Casinda Ludwig from Kapingamarangi, MCT Executive Director William Kostka, and Japanese Ambassador Sobashima Hidenobu, among about 40 participants.

Mr. Kostka explained how this assistance had become possible, and about APIC.

Ambassador Sobashima, having referred to the cooperation to the FSM both from the Government and private organizations of Japan, including APIC, introduced the message from Ambassador Peter Sato, President of APIC as follows: "We are pleased to work with the Micronesia Conservation Trust to help alleviate suffering caused by the droughts on Kapingamarangi and on Weno. The 18 water tanks purchased and installed at the strategic locations will reduce the likelihood that the next drought will cause so much suffering."

Ambassador Sobashima concluded that

to the diabetes community while keeping diabetes firmly in the spotlight. The theme for World Diabetes Day 2020, The Nurse and Diabetes, was selected to further raise awareness on the crucial role that nurses play in supporting people living with diabetes or those at risk of developing the condition.

In the FSM, though the estimated number of diabetic patients based on prevalence (25 years old and above) is about 14,762, only 3,918 people representing nearly 27% are currently registered and receiving regular care. The National NCD Program is concerned about this phenomenon and therefore actively sensitizing the public to undergo voluntary periodic screening so they can manage their own health conditions including receiving the right available care.

The organizers of the event, while acknowledging the immense contributions of all volunteers and supporters, have undertaken to make free health screening a part of all future World Diabetes Day celebrations in the FSM.

Please visit the UN Country Team in the FSM Facebook page for details of the next community screening and other events in the UN75 Focus Dialogue – FSM National Awareness Series.

he hoped that the water tank placement would proceed smoothly, and the water tanks donated by APIC would develop to become another symbol of friendship

between Japan and the FSM.

Governor Oliver appreciated and thanked the cooperation from Japan.

Digital Atlas of Micronesia advances FSM data beyond Guam, Hawaii

University of Guam

With the culmination of a five-year effort to gather a breadth of geospatial data and display it on an interactive digital atlas, the four main islands of the Federated States of Micronesia are now more easily researched than any other island in the Pacific, including Hawaii, Guam, and Fiji.

The Digital Atlas of Micronesia launched on Nov. 1 and is a free and available resource for anyone to use at <https://islandatlas.org>. It currently covers Yap proper, Chuuk Lagoon, Pohnpei, and Kosrae.

The atlas is a collaborative project among Island Research & Education Initiative, or iREi, a nonprofit organization located in Pohnpei; the FSM Department of Environment, Climate Change, and Emergency Management; and the Water and Environmental Research Institute at the University of Guam and was funded by the U.S. Geological Survey and the FSM National Government.

"We have gone way above and beyond the initial vision, and we now have, by far, the most comprehensive and versatile 'national' geospatial data repository anywhere in the Pacific Islands," said Danko Taboroši, chief editor of the atlas and director of Island Research & Education Initiative. "iREi and WERI created our first digital atlas for Guam in 2009. What we did for the FSM benefited from that experience and loads of new data and improved technologies over the past 10 years."

Fishermen wanting to know the boundaries of marine preserves, tourists interested in seeing historical and cultural sites, a contractor needing to bury new utility lines, a student needing demographics for a particular set of villages for a project, a diver looking for shipwreck sites, or a biologist wanting to find areas with specific vegetation — it's all searchable on the digital atlas. Users can customize a map for their purposes and then export or print it.

"There's a lot of information contained in this atlas that — if you just have it in text or table form, it's really hard to comprehend, but if you look at these maps and graphics, they really tell a story," said Maria Kottermair, a UOG WERI alumna and geographic information specialist who

is co-editor of the atlas. "We discovered and digitized old, hard-to-find maps, information from the population census ... we even located and digitized maps from a number of historical documents and master's and Ph.D. theses and produced a range of layers representing cultural and historical heritage of the FSM."

The digital atlas features nearly 500 pre-designed static maps, which can be found in the "Gallery," as well as interactive maps for each island with 400 layers that can be toggled on and off. The optional map layers include:

- cultural sites
- conservation areas
- infrastructure, including quarries, wells and water lines, and building footprints
- population demographics
- vegetation cover
- rainfall and waterflow
- reef information
- land characteristics, including elevation, slope degree, soil types, and geology.

"To document this much vetted information in one place — especially for a remote area like Micronesia — is a major feat," said John W. Jenson, director of the Water and Environmental Research Institute at UOG, which helped secure the core funding and provided oversight of the project. "This atlas is an efficient and accessible source of scientifically informed data, and that's the kind of project WERI is always proud to support."

The atlas can be used for a variety of purposes, including sustainable development, effective management of natural resources and infrastructure, emergency response, research, as an education and teaching tool, for general public awareness, and for business as well. It is designed to be user-friendly and intuitive.

"It's a living project, and we intend to keep updating it as new data become available," Kottermair said. "I encourage everyone to just go to the atlas and explore."

The team will work next on including the outer islands of the FSM in the atlas and to rebuild Guam's digital atlas at hydroguam.net, which Kottermair said has been a popular resource but has become outdated.

...World Diabetes Day

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Elizabeth, one of the beneficiaries of the free screening said, "I've been wanting to see an eye doctor for over 6 months and when I heard that this screening would happen, I prioritized coming here today."

In his brief remarks, the NCD Program Manager for FSM Mr. X-ner Luther underscored the need for routine health screening by people as it is an important entry point for case management and care. "There is an ongoing effort to bring the concept of 'public' back into 'public health'. It is not just about services but rather ensuring that we as a community are aware of what we can collectively do to deter the increasing trend of diabetes and other non-communicable diseases," said Mr. Luther.

World Diabetes Day (WDD) was founded in 1991 by the International Diabetes Federation and the World Health Organization in response to growing concerns about the increasing health threat posed by diabetes. It is also the world's biggest diabetes awareness campaign that requires countries, particularly those with high disease burdens, to draw attention to issues of critical importance