



Nauru Bulletin

Issue 20-2020/224

18 December 2020

President addresses special UNGA session

Leaders respond to COVID-19 and calls for robust and coordinated support

Through pre-recorded presentations from their respective countries, world leaders addressed the 31st special session of the UN General Assembly in response to COVID-19 with Nauru's President calling for a more concerted effort, improved coordination and engagement with smaller countries like Nauru.

Nauru remains one of a handful of countries in the world to never have recorded a single case of coronavirus but President Lionel Aingimea says despite the geographical isolation, "we are not immune to outbreaks."

The Nauru government remains vigilant in its capture and contain strategy implemented at the start of the pandemic which included the declaration of a state of disaster for the management and minimisation of COVID-19 to protect Nauru and looks to the United Nations to do its work effectively.

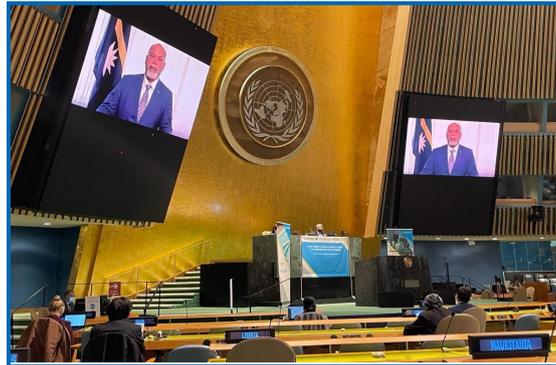
"We need a United Nations that is fit-for-purpose, responsive and works with the big and the small," President Aingimea said.

Nauru's historical experience of near-population decimation in the 1920s as a result of the Spanish flu and later during World War II is the key to its surviving this pandemic but calls on the global community to come together.

The President says if there is a key message from Nauru's experience it is the "need for a strong, collective and multilateral response to help pave the way forward to finding solutions towards mitigating the pandemic and its knock-on effects on the economy, the safety and well-being of our people and our environment."

His Excellency expressed Nauru's concern in the World Health Organisation's (WHO) slowness in declaring the global pandemic "thus delaying needed action."

"The work of the UN is important to Nauru and we see the relevance of the UN's



President Aingimea's pre-recorded statement is televised at the UN highlighting weaknesses of SIDS during COVID-19 and calls for better working approaches

assistance in complementing our work on the ground. At the same time, we also see the need to improve coordination and engagement with smaller countries like Nauru."

As the pandemic further exposes the weaknesses of the region especially of the multi-country offices, underscoring the disconnect of a coordinated regional response and the reality of meeting the needs of smaller and more vulnerable states in the region, President Aingimea said the region looks forward to the establishment of a new multi-country office in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) as a positive step towards a robust coordinated response with targeted support for small island developing states (SIDS) in the North Pacific.

"We emphasise that in times of crisis access to resources for support in a timely manner is critical to ensure the effectiveness of a response mechanism."

President Aingimea stated that Nauru's success in keeping COVID out is the result of decisive and proactive government decisions coupled with stakeholder and community coordination.

A national COVID-19 Taskforce was set up mandated to manage the national quarantine facilities for incoming passengers; international flights reduced to once fortnightly and pre- and post-arrival COVID

testing done.

"We have also seen improvement and have benefited from the WHO's advisory role on the nature of the virus. As a SIDS we have little to no means nor the capacity to participate in the research of the virus, but we have remained vigilant to keep up with the WHO's latest information.

"This has helped shed some understanding on the nature of the virus and has proven useful to the national COVID Taskforce. Science-based policy is critical to ensuring that our capture and contain policy remains effective," the President said.

In the ongoing global race to secure a vaccine to combat the virus, Nauru commends the countries working towards this and wishes them success in making it a reality for the global community.

"We look to our partners to make this vaccine available to all SIDS."

President Aingimea also shared the government's Desperate Imagination vision and plans during a pre-COVID world in January that is one of innovative thinking for a financially sustainable and resilient Nauru.

However, in a COVID world, the financial resources to actually implement the vision and plans cannot be accessed, thus calling on the need for a global financial system that is responsive to the needs of developing countries to partner with through this pandemic.

"The impact of COVID-19 has further amplified our vulnerabilities and climate change continues to be an existential threat for some and remains the single greatest threat to humanity."

Faced with uncertainties of what the future holds for countries like Nauru, President Aingimea says it is clear that a multilateral response is needed to take urgent and bold actions today.

"Sustainability of our nations and our people must be front of mind now and always." •

December parliament passes four amendment bills

The bells rang calling for the sitting of Parliament and the opening prayer rendered by Speaker of Parliament Marcus Stephen, 3 December.

Speaker Stephen welcomed opening remarks by President Lionel Aingimea who called for reduced drink driving and safety over the Christmas season ahead.

President Aingimea called for a “death-free” Christmas and urged the public to maintain safety and respect of people, neighbours and property.

While reiterating the Nauru Police Force’s mantra of ‘safety, safety, safety’, the President says the police abide by the law and are not above the law, however should the public have any complaints against the police, should write a letter directly to the Office of the President.

Questions without notice time ensued followed by ministerial statements and Bills.

The first of four bills presented was the Public Service (Amendment) No.2 Bill by President Aingimea which seeks to clarify the eligibility of public servants for long service leave and furlough leave.

The furlough leave is designed for public servants that have worked continuous service for 10 years after which are eligible for 60 days leave and nine days after completion of each additional year of service thereafter.

However, those serving continuous service between five and less than eight years are entitled to 10 working days long service leave. Where the period of service between eight years and less than 10 years, are entitled to 40 working days long service leave.

Long service leave is only available for those who retire or resign from the public service less than 10 years of continuous service.

President Aingimea says “it is my government’s commitment to recognise the work and devotion of those individuals who choose their career in the public service.”

The Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime (Amendment) Bill was then tabled by Justice Minister Maverick Eoe stating that the Bill is part of the Republic’s contribution to the control of terrorism as it amends the critical definitions of terrorist, terrorist group, terrorist act and property used for terrorism related activities.

“This Bill amends the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime Act 2004, in compliance with the recent additional international obligations relating to the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism,” Minister Eoe said.

It is noted that the critical element of terrorism is the financing of terrorist activities, terrorist organisation or a terrorist.

The amendments also give effect to the recent recommendations by the Financial Action Taskforce in relation to the anti-money laundering commitments of the Republic, and therefore prepare Nauru for its mutual evaluation scheduled for 2022.

Minister for Health Isabella Dageago then tabled an amendment to the Mentally-Disordered Persons Act 1963 noting it is a house keeping matter for the department to change the title of the Act to Mental Health Act.

The Minister points out that “persons with mental health issues are not mentally disordered... and reflects negatively on person’s with mental health issues.”

“Calling or describing people with mental health issues as ‘mentally disordered persons’ is inappropriate and considered discriminatory under the Convention [on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities].”

Minister Dageago says the title change thus gives “greater recognition for members of our community who need mental health care of medical attention and not specific to their physical incapacity or disability.”

The change to the name of the Act ensures the Republic keeps up with the evolving landscape of mental health care and the terminology used.

The general amendment clause removes the words ‘mental disorder’, ‘mentally-disordered’ and ‘mentally disordered’, from being used, and replaced with terms such as ‘mentally impaired’ or ‘mental impairment’ in place of ‘mental disorder’, ‘mentally-disordered’ and ‘mentally disordered’.

President Aingimea tabled the final Bill amending schedule two of the Naoero National Anthem Emblem and Flag Protection Act 2018 citing errors relating to the depiction of the national emblem.



The national anthem and emblem bill makes necessary corrections in relation to the depiction of the national emblem

Section 27 of the Act is amended to provide for the regulation making power of the Cabinet.

This regulation making power is necessary to ensure that the procedural and administrative parts of the Act may be prescribed by the Cabinet if it is necessary. The regulations allow for the Schedules to be amended to ensure that the descriptions and depictions of the flag and the emblem are correctly recorded and contained in the written laws. It also allows the national anthem to be appropriately changed if necessary.

The December sitting of parliament concluded with the adjournment debate and members conveying well wishes to their constituencies for a safe festive period •

Copies of the Acts can be found at http://ronlaw.gov.nr/nauru_lpms/

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CJ Khan closes legal year

At the closing of the 2020 legal year, 11 December, Acting Chief Justice Mohammed Shafullah Khan acknowledged that despite 2020 being “a very difficult year”, Nauru embarked on making significant changes to make way for a virtual courtroom.

Unlike other countries adversely affected by COVID-19 Justice Khan said the pandemic did not affect the operations of Nauru’s court and with the government’s decisive, strong and timely action to stop the spread of coronavirus to Nauru, “thank God that Nauru is COVID-free.”

However, while normal proceedings were had, the Nauru Court of Appeal was not able to sit in May and October as judges were not able to travel to Nauru due to travel restrictions.

“As a result of COVID-19 changes have been made to our law to allow for the entire Court of Appeal or single Justice of Appeal or a Supreme Court judge to sit outside the Republic for urgent matters through audio visual link.

“These changes also allow for witnesses to give evidence from outside the Republic by audio visual link and this would be huge savings in financial terms instead of getting the witnesses to Nauru,” Justice Khan said.

Justice Khan also notes the changes made to the Bail Act 2018 that bail cannot be granted for all sexual offences contained in the Crimes Act 2016, and there is no amendment which provides that any pre-trial detention is not to be taken into account for sentencing purposes.

Further, bail based on exceptional circumstance cannot be granted for certain offences or for trials that have not commenced within three months.

Justice Khan noted that under the Constitution the courts were already obliged to afford trials to the accused persons within a reasonable time and now we have a greater responsibility to ensure that trials are finalised in accordance with the time lines set in the new legislation;

Stakeholders are alerted to be ready for parallel trials that may be held in courts one and three in the new year.

Acting CJ Khan acknowledged the work of former CJ Filimoni Jitoko and Justice Rapi Va’ai whose contracts ended in July and having reached retirement age.

CJ Jitoko is now appointed as the Justice of the Nauru Court of Appeal and CJ-designate Daniel Fatiaki will take up his appointment when he is able to travel to Nauru in January 2021.

Over the holidays Irene Waidabu will be acting registrar as well as lay magistrate along with Raelytta Daog and Rocquos Aingimea.

Legislative drafter and acting Secretary for Justice Kerryn Kwan congratulated the judicial officers and staff “for their perseverance and determination to continue to serve the people during difficult times which is indeed not yet over.”

“The Government fully supports the development for the betterment of the Republic and ensuring that the people of Nauru receive independent, intelligent and authoritative decisions of the court reflecting the wishes of the Legislature, the customs and traditions of the Nauruan people and respecting our international commitments to various conventions, treaties and so forth,” Ms Kwan said.

As a legislative drafter, Ms Kwan says the legislative foundation is all laid out. It is for the court now to make the rules for such sitting, pointing out the three arms of government form foundation for the



The legal fraternity acknowledge the difficulties of 2020 posed by COVID-19 and commend the perseverance and positive work of the court staff

people of Nauru and the Constitution provides for their functions. Ms Kwan emphasises that the will of the people which is shown at the ballot box in general elections, makes laws with the mandate of the people.

“The concerns of the Government are clearly reflected in the legislation passed by the Parliament. Constitutional responsibilities require giving effect to such intent. It is not for the court to legislate or make a second guess on the intention of Parliament when the law is clear.

“The canons of rules of interpretation of statutes require the words to be given their natural and ordinary meaning. The minimum sentence is a minimum sentence. For that matter, if hardship is not exceptional circumstance, it fails to constitute exceptional circumstance under the legislative provisions,” Ms Kwan said.

President of the Nauru Law Society Vinci Clodumar highlighted concerns with the “barrage of laws passed by the parliament” recently, which while private practitioners’ views were invited during the drafting stage, it was “highly unacceptable” that they were kept “in the dark on the significant changes” to the Bail Act and Crimes Act.

“The equation of the penalty of offences against a police officer to that of murder is highly controversial and could have an unwanted result to the victim,” Mr Clodumar underscored among other concerns including the removal of the discretion of the trial judge.

“I guess time will tell if these amendments have achieved the objectives of reducing sexual offences and offence against a police officer.”

Mr Clodumar said land matters are “getting messy” with disputes, coupled with concerns on the 20-year time limit placed on land claims noting that land research could exceed 20 years.

As such the NLS plans to establish a subcommittee to review existing legislation on land and court decisions with the intention of recommending reforms “that will evolve the land tenure system to the modern era in order to be relevant to the situation on the ground so to speak.”

Justice Khan noted that matters pending before the court include 19 refugee and 25 local matters in the Court of Appeal; while in the Supreme Court there are 22 refugee appeals and 92 criminal and civil cases.

The passing of long time public defender Know Tolenoa and pleader Francis Amram were remembered, acknowledging their contributions and assistance to the legal fraternity and community at large.

The formal opening of the legal year 2021 is scheduled for 1 February •

Paris Agreement: Pacific leaders repeat urgent global action on climate change

Five years after the Paris Agreement, which sets a goal for limiting global warming to 1.5 degree Celsius, and on the eve of a global Climate Ambition Summit on December 12, Pacific Islands Forum Leaders have hosted a high-level roundtable with their international Forum Dialogue Partners to reaffirm their call for urgent, ambitious climate change action, now.

In the virtual ‘Kainaki II to COP 26’ high-level roundtable convened on 11 December, and including the United Kingdom’s COP26 President-designate, Right Honourable Alok Sharma, Forum Leaders stressed the urgency of the climate change crisis facing Pacific Islands nations.

Opening the meeting, Forum Chair Tuvalu Prime Minister Kausea Natano said: “the Paris Agreement was a milestone moment for protecting all people and the planet. But we are not meeting our commitments, we are not on track. We are already at 1.2 degree Celsius. We must raise our ambition and act now. The future of our Blue Pacific depends on it.

“In 2019, Pacific Leaders issued the Kainaki II Declaration – the most comprehensive and ambitious climate change declaration issued by all 18 Forum Leaders. Today, as we look towards COP26 in Glasgow, we reaffirm our calls and invite our international Dialogue Partners to join us in urgent action.”

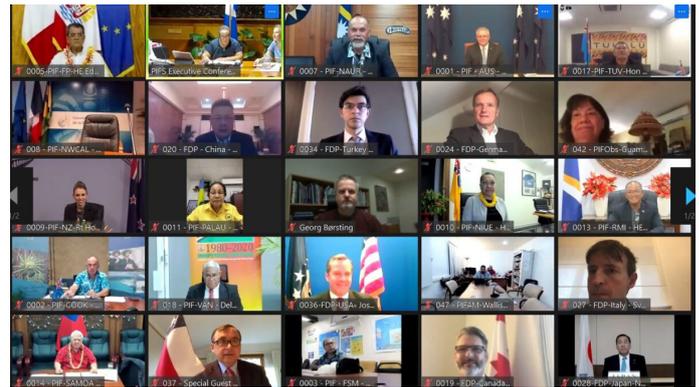
PIFS Secretary General Dame Meg Taylor said COVID-19 must not be a reason to delay climate change action.

“Rather, it should serve as motivation to the global community to better prepare for shocks, underpin our policies with science, and bolster multilateral efforts to tackle common threats. We must ensure that financing for COVID-19 recovery advances the goals of the Paris Agreement and puts us on a course for climate smart, sustainable development,” Dame Meg said.

Forum Leaders from Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Nauru, New Zealand, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Vanuatu, Samoa and Tuvalu, and Ministers from the Federated States of Micronesia, New Caledonia, Niue, Palau, and Solomon Islands addressed the high-level roundtable, setting out their national ambitions and Blue Pacific calls for urgent climate change action, and calling for ambitious action from international Dialogue Partners.

The Forum Chair welcomed recent announcements from Forum Dialogue Partners to achieve net zero by 2050, enhance their NDCs and double climate finance commitments. There are currently 18 Dialogue Partners to the Forum – Canada, People’s Republic of China, Cuba, European Union, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Spain, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom, and the United States. The Dialogue Partners collectively emit 67 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions – their choices are key to the Pacific’s very survival.

Pacific Island Forum members have strived to set a global example, even though the Pacific region’s collective share of the global emissions footprint is only around 1.5 per cent. Forum members are progressing regional solutions including a 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and the Pacific Resilience Facility, which is heading towards a 2021 pledging conference with a goal of US\$1.5 billion.



Pacific leaders met virtually on 11 December calling for urgent global action on climate change at the 5th anniversary of the Paris Agreement

Featuring in the opening formalities of the High-Level roundtable, UN Secretary General Guterres recalled that: “I will never forget my visit to the Pacific last year, seeing first-hand the heart-breaking impacts of climate change. Next year must be the year that we decide, through our actions, to bend the emissions curve to stay within the 1.5 degrees limit. You can count on me to push this agenda. I hope the rest of the world will stand with us with true ambition and vision.”

United Kingdom’s COP 26 President-designate, Right Honourable Alok Sharma welcomed the opportunity to keep the momentum building towards COP26 and affirmed the partnerships approach which Forum Leaders continue to highlight as a critical part of climate action.

“Over the next twelve months I want to increase our understanding of all the issues that matter to you. And how they can be addressed. Including hearing your views on how best the Kainaki recommendations can be reflected in the outcome of COP26.”

“I am determined to amplify the voices of climate vulnerable countries. And put them at the heart of COP26. So that together, we unleash the full potential of the Paris Agreement and build a brighter and more sustainable future for us all,” Mr Sharma said.

In closing, His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea urged leaders to strive for urgent climate change immediately.

“As we reach the five-year anniversary of the Paris Agreement, our Blue Pacific has one critical message for the world: we need ambitious climate change action, now – not five, 10 or 50 years into the future but immediately, if we are to secure our children’s future”.

The Australian High Commission in Nauru further provided information to the Office of the President of its efforts on climate change including Australia’s new global climate finance pledge of at least \$1.5 billion over the period 2020 to 2025, which includes a \$500 million investment in the Pacific to support renewable energy deployment and climate and disaster resilience •

Nauru-US sign investment incentive agreement

Nauru's High Commissioner to Fiji Michael Aroi and US Ambassador to Nauru Joseph Cella signed the Nauru-United States Investment Incentive Agreement at the US Embassy in Fiji, 3 December.

This new agreement is anticipated to provide access to the full range of investment support offered by the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), formerly known as the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC).



US Ambassador Joseph Cella and Nauru High Commissioner Michael Aroi at the IAA Signing, Suva, Fiji

Ambassador Cella said it was his honour to sign the agreement to build an economic bridge between the two nations.

"In Nauru, there is significant infrastructure activity with the help of the multilateral development banks and donor community in climate change resilience, port upgrades, ICT connectivity, renewable energy, and health care.

"Trade between Nauru and the United States grew to US\$5M in 2019 and hit US\$3.5M at the end of the third quarter this year. In 2015 two-way trade totalled just \$2.2M. Momentum will continue grow for trade and investment between our countries, especially with this agreement in place," Mr Cella said.

In a press release by the US Embassy, the agreement establishes a framework through which the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), America's development bank, can mobilise private investment to support development of the country's economic resources and advance its economic goals.

The release continues to explain that under the agreement, DFC can make available all its investment tools--including debt and equity financing, insurance, and technical support--to advance efficient and effective development. The agreement outlines regulatory, tax, and legal details that typically cover agreements between multilateral development banks and foreign governments.

The DFC invests across sectors including energy, healthcare, critical infrastructure, and technology. DFC also provides financing for small businesses and women entrepreneurs to create jobs in emerging markets. DFC investments adhere to high standards and respect the environment, human rights, and worker rights •

DPP opens new office

Clients requiring the services of the Director of Public Prosecutions and Public Legal Defender can now conveniently access the offices at their new location on the ground floor next to the remand centre (old prison) behind the government building in Yaren.

The new office space was officially opened on 8 December by Minister for Justice Maverick Eoe who says the relocation is part of the government's commitment to ensure justice is made more convenient and accessible to the people.

"This development for me is not an infrastructure development only, but it is fundamental to the rule of law and access to justice for people.

"The public legal defender's office provides a range of legal services and I would like to see more people being served. The issue of people of Nauru being denied access to justice should really be consigned to history.

"Our government is committed to ensuring that every sector of the justice system is developed to make justice more accessible to people," Minister Eoe said.



Minister Eoe cuts the ribbon officially opening the new office premises of the public prosecutor and public defender

A number of statutes have been amended to allow for technology to intervene such as virtual courtrooms in this landscape of coronavirus and restrictions.

"The judiciary has a fundamental duty to interpret and apply the laws which are made by the Parliament. Whilst every case may not appear to fit in the provisions of a particular law, the canons of interpretation of law require the court to give any legislation its natural and ordinary meaning," Minister Eoe said.

The larger floor space, as compared to the previous office, has private offices and cubicle spaces for the DPP, public legal defender, pleaders and lawyers and a door separating the two offices of DPP and public defender.

Director of Public Prosecutions Ronald Talasasa says the new location was chosen for two strategic reasons and expects an improved service from both offices.

"Firstly, it's proximity to the court. Secondly, and most importantly, for the reason that people must walk into the office and not climb up the stairs. Justice must be a walking distance. Access to justice is a fundamental right," DDP Talasasa said.

The new offices are conveniently accessible to the court houses.

The previous offices located on the second floor of the government building made it difficult for older clients and those with disabilities to conveniently access the office •

Campaign to end violence in all forms Women’s office release safety video

The Department for Women’s and Social Development Affairs is taking an ever strong stance on ending gender-based violence and violence against women and girls.

The department published statements promoting the ‘16 Days of Activism on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls’ and ‘White Ribbon’ campaigns.

Gender-based violence (GBV) or violence against women and girls (VAWG), is a global pandemic that affects 1 in 3 women in their lifetime.

In Nauru the statistics show there are at least 3 protection order applications granted every week by the District Court.

The sobering statistics clearly show the need for awareness, activism and creation of conversations not only to combat behaviour that perpetuate stereotypes but most importantly to end violence in all its forms against women and girls.

As part of its mandate the department calls on all stakeholders and the community and nation to never lose right of the important role that women and girls play in our society.

Running parallel to this campaign is the White Ribbon campaign the department, again, calls on the community to rise and have conversations on #ChallengingtheOutdated so as to turn stereotypes into healthy masculinity.

Challenging the outdated refers to talking about stereotypes that boys and men are handed down from their role models which can create negative impacts and unhealthy behaviours and attitudes.

At their worst, these attitudes and behaviours can lead to violence toward women. This violence affects our families, our communities, and our whole country.

So how do we change it? In all of our relationships – family, friends, colleagues, and teammates – We can challenge the #outdated stereotypes of what it means to be a man. We can role model healthy relationships and focus on strengths that comes from our values of respect and Togetherness. We can call each other out and encourage more conversations about gender equality.

By challenging each other in constructive ways we become stronger, and support change for those who need it the most. It’s time to shake off the old and reveal the new.

The department says, “it is our legacy and our right to be free from violence and we will work to ensure that all women and girls in Nauru live a quality life free from violence in all its forms.”

The department calls on each of us to ensure we do our part and stand together affirming our commitment to end violence against women and girls so as to ensure that their future is promised without fear and favour.

“We reaffirm our commitment that we will champion the cause of women and girls and fight to end violence against women and girls without fear or rancour.

“This is our mandate and our creed.

“Ekeow Imiow, NO FEAR” •

In a first for Nauru, a new video animation is released about the safety of women and children in their homes during this COVID-19 pandemic.



The animation was launched at the summit of the White Ribbon campaign and the beginning of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence at the Meneñ Hotel by Australian High Commissioner Ms Angela Tierney.

A collaborative work by the Department of Women’s and Social Development Affairs and the Government of Australia through its regional agencies, the ‘Staying Safe at Home’ video addresses domestic and family violence which typically increases during times of crisis such as COVID-19.

The video, produced by Australia’s Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (Pacific Women) in partnership with the Pacific Community (SPC) is launched during the 16 Days of Activism starting on 25 November, International Day for the Elimination of Gender-Based Violence, and ends 10 December, Human Rights Day.

The Pacific has some of the highest recorded rates of violence against women and girls globally, with almost two out of three women who have been subjected to physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, almost double the global average.

The video animation is available from the Department of Women’s and Social Development Affairs •

Know your history, know your origins, know your future...

Register your display now:
Naoero Treasures Expo
 celebrating the
75th Anniversary of the return from Chuuk.

Call 557 3999 to register.
 EXPO DATE: Tues, 2 Feb 2021

Community Leaders
 Set up your display of Nauru artefacts at your community designated venue.
 A round-the-island bus will bring Expo visitors to you.

Call Naoero Museum Director Horasio Cook on 557 3999 to register

Enquiries: E. horasio.cook2418@gmail.com M: 557 3999

Disability day celebrated with mass

Mass for the International Day of People with Disabilities (IDPWD) was held at the Arubo Catholic church, 4 December, led by Father Keleto.

The service was attended by His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea, Speaker of Parliament Marcus Stephen, Ministers Isabella Dageago, Reagan Aliklik, and Deputy Minister Asterio Appi.

IDPWD falls on 3 December but owing to parliament sitting that day, mass was held a day after.

Students of the Able-Disabled Centre (ADC) participated in the service, presenting alter gifts, read scripture and performed an action song.

The 2020 IDPWD theme, 'Not all disabilities are visible' also focuses on spreading awareness and understanding of disabilities that are not immediately apparent, such as mental illness, chronic pain or fatigue, sight or hearing impairments, diabetes, brain injuries, neurological disorders, learning differences and cognitive dysfunctions, among others.

NSS prize giving, graduation

The Department of Education congratulates the 2020 graduates and awardees of Nauru Secondary School at the annual prize giving held at the NSS gym, 10 December.

Over 100 awards were granted across years nine, 10, 11 and 12.

This year the dux award was changed up to grant two dux and two proxime accessit, or dux runners-up.

The dux awards went to My Queen Reagan and Alzehra Ali while the proxime accessits were awarded to Chanique Deiy and Taesha Aliklik.

Thirty year 12s graduated with the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE); while many more graduated with the school leavers' certificate.

It was a very emotional morning for students, parents and teachers, especially of the graduating students as they leave the safety, protection and guidance of school and embark on their new journey of independence and career paths.

To graduate with a QCE, students are required to take up subjects in years 11 and 12, recognised by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority. Students must achieve the set amount of learning, at the set standard, in a set pattern, while meeting

HODs swear the oath

Twenty four Heads of Department took the Oath of Appointment and Secrecy swearing to render true and faithful service as an officer of the public service; never unlawfully communicate official information and; not use official information unlawfully for personal or others' gain.

Acting Chief Secretary Sasikumar Paravanoor was first to take the oath conducted at the Meneñ Hotel restaurant preceding the HOD Christmas party, 7 December.

The ceremony was presided over by Mr Paravanoor and witnessed by Secretary for Corporate Services Peta Gadabu and Secretary for Justice Jay Udit; the latter 2 also taking their oaths`•

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Students of the Able-Disabled Centre perform an action song during mass

According to the WHO World Report on Disability, 15 per cent of the world's population, or more than one billion people, are living with disability •



Of the group of year 12 NSS students, 30 graduated with a Queensland Certificate of Education

literacy and numeracy requirements.

Students who opt not to participate in the QCE still graduate with the school leavers' certificate.

QCE students select from a wide range of subjects and courses to suit their interests, further study and career options.

The QCE is Queensland's senior secondary schooling qualification. It's internationally recognised and provides evidence of senior schooling achievements •



Acting chief Sasi Paravanoor (seated centre) and heads of department take the public service oath

Taiwan donates beds and ventilator for negative pressure ward

The Embassy of the Republic of China (Taiwan) donated beds and a high end ventilator for the hospital's negative pressure unit, 18 December.

In presenting the 18 hospital beds with mattresses and a ventilator, Taiwan Ambassador Dean Wang thanked God for keeping Nauru COVID-19-free. He also thanked the department of health and the national COVID-19 Taskforce and the government for the hard work to ensure Nauru remains COVID-free.

Minister Isabella Dageago explained the 18 beds are allocated to the 18 ICU units in the negative pressure ward specially redesigned for COVID-19.

In presenting the equipment to the Minister, Ambassador Wang said he is "so happy to see that in quick time, all countries are in lockdown but Nauru took this opportunity to upgrade its medical services and facilities.

"I can feel Nauru is changing and improving its medical services.

"I am pleased and honoured to be a part of Nauru's progress and be able to assist during the improvements and changes," Ambassador Wang said.

The donation is part of Taiwan's ongoing commitment to assist Nauru in any way it can and especially for COVID-19 needs and requests by the Nauru government.



The high range ventilator and 18 hospital beds with mattresses are earmarked for the COVID-ready negative pressure unit

Nauru and Taiwan have very close collaboration in the medical area with mobile medical teams visiting Nauru annually and medical cases also referred to Taiwan hospitals for further treatment.

Ambassador Wang states that post-COVID there are training initiatives for nurses which could be pursued for Nauru's nurses.

In response Minister Dageago thanked the Ambassador and the ROC Taiwan "for being with us [Nauru] and standing beside us all the time and being part of our family. It's where we help each other when we are in need." •

Police receive a throng of donations

The Nauru Police Force received two brand new vehicles with trailers outfitted for traffic control and road safety work, 17 December.

His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea who is also the Minister for Police, presented the keys to Commissioner of Police Iven Notte at the government office forecourt.

The Nauru government-funded Toyota Hilux vehicles are modified in Australia at a price tag of \$72,500 a set.

The addition to the police fleet will greatly assist the ongoing work of the NPF in ensuring the roads are free from drunk driving and reckless behaviour.

Each vehicle will be equipped with all necessary communications and testing equipment required by the traffic officers.

Earlier this week, 15 December, NPF also received 30 ceremonial rifles from the Embassy of the Republic of China (Taiwan). Ambassador Dean Wang said he did not hesitate when the request was made because "Nauru and Taiwan are family", and as a former Taiwan police agent he feels proud of the NPF's achievements.



Nauru Police will be able to better conduct traffic related testing and checks with the new beat vehicles and trailers

Later the same day, Digicel CEO Christopher Manaog presented eight canvas printed road safety signage that will be erected onto billboards this week just in time for the busy Christmas period. Mr Manaog expressed his enthusiasm when contacted a few weeks ago to support the initiative saying, "Digicel is all in especially when it comes to the safety of the public." •

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