

**Asia Pacific Democracy Partnership  
Election Observation of the March 3, 2009  
National Congressional and Chuuk State Elections  
Federated States of Micronesia**

Organized by:  
East-West Center  
Honolulu, Hawai‘i

*Statement*

Upon invitation by the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and Chuuk State Governments, the Asia Pacific Democracy Partnership (APDP) in cooperation with the East-West Center organized an 18-member delegation to observe the March 3, 2009 National Congressional and Chuuk State elections. The Election Observation Mission (EOM) included government officials, parliamentarians, academics and civil society representatives from ten countries including Aotearoa (New Zealand), Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Palau, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Thailand, and the United States. The delegation was headed by the Honorable Eni F. H. Faleomavaega, Congressman from American Samoa and Chairman of the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment.

The delegates participated in a range of familiarization activities. The College of Micronesia faculty assisted with lectures about local history and culture. The observers also learned about the structure of the FSM's democratic institutions. National and state election officials briefed the EOM delegates about the election law and electoral procedures.

On Election Day, observers traveled by land and sea to reach polling sites in three states: Chuuk, Pohnpei and Yap. In Chuuk, six teams were fielded, each composed of two observers and two College of Micronesia students who served as guides and translators. The polling places included schools, community centers, municipal offices and youth centers. The teams observed more than 50 polling stations and engaged in conversations with a diverse range of voters, officials and other community leaders. Additionally, the EOM observed the chain of transmission of the ballot boxes from a number of polling places to the centralized tabulation centers and witnessed the early tabulation process at various sites. No observers were present at off-island polling sites in Honolulu, Guam or Portland, Oregon.

The APDP delegation wishes to convey its congratulations to the people of the Federated States of Micronesia for an open and spirited electoral process, and for conducting an election that generated high voter interest and was free of violence within the FSM.

During the week prior to elections, it appears that political campaigning was peaceful, lively, and free of intimidation. The well attended College of Micronesia's 2009 "Solutions Forum" for the three Chuuk State Gubernatorial candidates broadcast live on the radio in Chuuk and streamed live over the Internet was a particularly impressive demonstration of issue-based exchange. Similarly, extensive coverage of the Solutions Forum published in the special edition of *Kaselehlie Press* suggests an open competitive campaign. The delegation would encourage the continuation of such exchanges in future elections and the development of means for ensuring broader dissemination of information related to the election.

Based on Election Day observations representing a sample of voting sites, the APDP delegation noted some irregularities and procedural inconsistencies which may merit further investigation by election officials. These will be further elaborated upon in the Election Observation Mission's final report which will be shared with appropriate officials in the FSM and Chuuk State governments. The ultimate legitimacy of the election can only be determined by the citizens of the FSM after all the votes are tabulated and any challenges adjudicated.

Head of Delegation, the Honorable Eni F. H. Faleomavaega, found the Mission both educational and informative and wishes to personally express his gratitude to the FSM and Chuuk State governments and the people of the FSM for their warm hospitality to all members of the delegation. The East-West Center and the Asia Pacific Democracy Partnership delegation also wish to convey deep appreciation to their hosts for their warm hospitality and gracious acceptance of the delegation. The delegation is grateful for the opportunity to renew old acquaintances and establish new friendships to build a stronger and more democratic Asia-Pacific community. It is the delegation's hope that citizens of the FSM will participate in future election observation missions to other areas of Oceania and Asia.