

# NEWSLETTER

ISSUE

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## Enhancing Pacific Regional Collaboration

The Micronesian Center for Sustainable Transport (MCST) participated in the two-day National Transport Infrastructure Consultative Forum (NTICF) hosted by the Fiji Ministry of Public Works, Meteorological Services, and Transport, at the Grand Pacific Hotel in Suva, Fiji from 15 to 16 January 2026.

The forum brought together key stakeholders from across

Government, industry, and development partners to deliberate on strategic priorities for Fiji's transport sector.

Under the theme "State of Decarbonization and Maritime Sector National Priorities in Fiji's Maritime Sector," MCST Co-Director, Maria Sahib delivered a presentation sharing updates on the Pacific Blue Shipping Partnership,

highlighting progress made and opportunities for strengthened regional cooperation.

MCST's participation underscore the importance of sustainable and low-emission transport systems, enhanced regional collaboration, and innovative solutions to support climate resilience, economic development, and connectivity across Pacific

island nations. We value the meaningful discussions and partnerships formed during the forum and look forward to continued collaboration in advancing sustainable transport for a resilient Pacific.

**Photo Caption:** (From left) MCST Co - Director, Aileen Sefeti; Fiji Director Transport, Aseri Driu; Fiji Deputy Secretary, George Tavo; MCST Co- Director, Maria Sahib, and Kyrie Laulauvaki

INSIDE

Feature Story

"Culture & Climate Leadership through  
Storytelling"



## EDITOR'S NOTE



The adjournment of the Net Zero Framework 2nd Extraordinary Session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee, October 2025 is a sobering moment for the Pacific and Small Island Developing States.

For island nations that depend on maritime transport for connectivity, livelihoods, and resilience, delays in global climate action carry real and immediate consequences. Yet the Pacific has never waited on global timelines to lead.

At the Micronesian Center for Sustainable Transport (MCST), this

moment underscores the importance of our work amid rapid innovation in the maritime space.

Advances in vessel technologies, fuels, and port operations continue to emerge, and MCST's role is to ensure these solutions are practical, affordable, and aligned with Pacific realities.

Sustainable transport in our region must deliver not only emissions reductions, but also reliability, safety, and economic viability.

There is also growing demand for research on pressing maritime transport issues—from decarbonization pathways and financing, to regulatory readiness and workforce needs.

MCST is responding by strengthening evidence-based research to support informed decision-making across and collaboration with Pacific island nations and our partners.

As we look to 2026, the work ahead is clear.

MCST will deepen policy engagement, expand applied research, and support capacity-building to help the region navigate a changing maritime landscape.

Even as global frameworks pause, our commitment to advancing sustainable transport for the Pacific remains steadfast.

## Latest Research

### Is Nuclear Power Ship Propulsion an Option for Pacific Island Maritime Decarbonization?

The latest MCST Working Paper examines whether nuclear-powered ships could play a role in maritime decarbonization for Pacific Island States—and reaches a clear conclusion: there is no near- or short-term case for nuclear propulsion in Pacific domestic or regional shipping.

The paper responds to growing global interest in nuclear-powered commercial vessels, driven by pressure on the shipping sector to meet International Maritime Organization (IMO) net-zero targets.

While nuclear propulsion is increasingly discussed internationally, including proposals for micro modular reactors (MMRs) on ships, the research finds that Pacific contexts face fundamentally different challenges.



Although nuclear-powered vessels offer high energy density and zero operational emissions, the paper identifies significant barriers that are magnified in the Pacific.

These include the absence of regulatory frameworks, lack of insurance and liability arrangements, extremely high capital and lifecycle costs, limited emergency response capacity, workforce shortages, unresolved waste management issues, and deep

political and social sensitivities rooted in the region's nuclear history.

The study pays particular attention to recent proposals for a nuclear-powered emergency response vessel based in Fiji. It finds that while the concept is attracting international attention, there is little peer-reviewed research assessing its feasibility, risks, or long-term implications for Pacific Island States.

Crucially, the paper warns against using small, remote, and infrastructure-constrained island nations as early test beds for an unproven commercial technology.

The authors conclude that scarce Pacific research and investment resources would be better directed toward proven and emerging alternatives—such as renewable energy, wind-assisted propulsion, battery-electric systems, and green fuels—that are more appropriate to Pacific shipping needs and realities.

Overall, the paper calls for a more informed and cautious regional conversation.

Read more:

<https://mcstrmi.org/latest-science/mcst-working-paper-2025-007-is-nuclear-power-ship-propulsion-an-option-for-pacific-island-maritime-decarbonisation/>





Bridging culture and climate leadership through storytelling

# TAUKAVE

A 2025-2026 OBAMA FOUNDATION ASIA-PACIFIC LEADER

Storytelling is proving to be a powerful tool in global climate and maritime leadership, and Pacific voices are helping reshape the conversation.

Across the Pacific, leadership has always been grounded in story—passed through chants, navigation traditions, and shared histories that bind people to ocean and place.

John Taukave, a Rotuman cultural ambassador under the Micronesian Centre for Sustainable Transport and Obama Foundation Asia-Pacific Leader, is helping bridge Pacific culture and international climate leadership through storytelling.

From traditional chants heard on a stormy voyage home to sitting with elders listening to island stories, Taukave's journey reflects the deep connection between culture, identity, and leadership.

Drawing on ancestral knowledge and lived island experience, he brings Pacific perspectives into global policy discussions, including negotiations at the International Maritime Organization on shipping emissions.

His work emphasizes that Pacific communities—among the least responsible for global emissions—are often the most affected, and their voices must be present where decisions are made.

Through what he calls “story living,” Taukave blends performance, ceremony, and lived cultural practice to advocate for more inclusive and just climate solutions.

For the Pacific, where maritime transport underpins everyday life, climate leadership cannot be separated from culture. Taukave's work reminds global decision-makers that technical solutions alone are not enough.

Climate action must reflect the values, histories, and realities of ocean communities who are on the front lines of climate impacts.

At MCST, this approach resonates deeply. Sustainable transport in the Pacific is not only about fuels and vessels—it is about people, identity, and intergenerational responsibility.

Storytelling helps ensure Pacific voices are not just heard, but understood, shaping climate and maritime solutions that are just, inclusive, and grounded in Pacific ways of knowing.

As the Pacific continues to lead with integrity and resilience, stories remain one of our most powerful tools—connecting culture to policy, and the ocean to our shared future.



# 2025 HIGHLIGHTS



1

**MCST CONTINUES  
TO SUPPORT  
6PAC+**



2

**INTERNATIONAL  
COOPERATION**



3

**LAUNCH OF SV JUREN  
AE MODEL AT IMO A  
REGIONAL MILESTONE**



4

**ICJ ADVISORY OPINION  
ON CLIMATE CHANGE  
OBLIGATIONS**

1. MCST provides "on-the-job" training, legal drafting, and technical analysis for the 6PAC+ delegation to ensure they can compete with better-resourced nations during IMO meetings.

2. MCST is a research, education, and policy support entity that bridges the gap between high-level international climate negotiations and local, actionable transport solutions in the Pacific.

3. The presentation was noted as a significant event for the Republic of the Marshall Islands and its focus on sustainable maritime transport. The model is intended to remind delegates about the need for a just and equitable transition in the maritime sector.

4. On July 23, 2025, the ICJ issued a landmark advisory opinion confirming that states have binding legal obligations to act against climate change, specifically to limit global warming to 1.5°C.