

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 15-158

RE: C.R. NO. 15-152/EX. AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH AND
ACCESSION TO THE INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT

NOVEMBER 28, 2008

The Honorable Isaac V. Figir
Speaker, Fifteen Congress
Federated States of Micronesia
Fifth Special Session, 2008

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Your Committee on External Affairs to which was referred C.R. No. 15-152, entitled:

"A RESOLUTION TO JOIN THE WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH AND ACCEDE TO THE INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT FOR THE CREATION OF AN OFFICE INTERNATIONAL DES EPIZOOTIES DATED JANUARY 25, 1924 AND ITS ORGANIC STATUTES.",

begs leave to report as follows:

At the last regular session in September, the President identified this convention as a priority item. In response, your committee on September 22, 2008 sent a communication to the Department of Foreign Affairs requesting more information on the convention. Congress received a response on November 13, just prior to this special session. The response urged immediate action this session.

The treaty under consideration is the "International Agreement for the Creation of an Office International des Epizooties in Paris." This is a long-standing treaty dating from 1924. The main purpose of the treaty is for the parties to agree to maintain an international office regulating animal health in Paris. The parties also pledge to develop and maintain national veterinary services which are up to international standards.

The treaty concentrated initially on clams (epizooties) but has expanded to include different aspects of animal health regulations, including transparency, scientific information, international solidarity, sanitary safety, promotion of veterinary services, food safety and animal welfare. The French title of the office is now informally replaced by the English title World Organization for Animal Health even though it is still referred to as the OIE.

As far as the FSM is concerned, the main impetus for joining this organization is protecting the export of marine products to the European Union. Unless the FSM joins this organization by this November 2008, the EU will stop the import of clams and other marine products from the FSM, mainly Kosrae

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From written testimony from the Department of R&D, the benefits of joining the treaty include:

- information on animal health and international trade in animal and animal products
- expertise and technical assistance on animal diseases to enable countries to cope with epidemiological events
- access to the EU market

The obligations incurred by the FSM include:

- membership costs at the beginning of the year
- pledge to improve animal health, sanitary safety, and the sharing of information
- creation of a national veterinary service meeting international standards
- promotion of food safety and animal welfare
- reporting on animal health situation in the FSM
- international notification of animal diseases
- adoption of animal health legislation
- pledge to implement OIE resolutions

According to the Department of R&D the cost of compliance with this treaty is substantial. In addition to the annual membership fee of Euro 16,380 the FSM will be required to monitor animal welfare in the FSM and report to OIE. Not, to join, however, will jeopardize our clam's exports.

Currently the volume of export to the EU is small, but that may change if support - including joining OIE -- is given to the exporters.

Your Committee recommend also a few technical changes to the proposed resolution:

1. page 2 line 15, delete "clams exports" and insert "export of marine products" in lieu thereof to broaden the scope of the resolution beyond clams;
2. page 2 line 24, delete "before the end of the fiscal year" because it is no longer applicable.

Your Committee on External Affairs is in accord with the intent and purpose of C.R. No. 15-152, as amended herein, and recommends its adoption in the form attached hereto as C.R. No. 15-152, C.D.1.

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Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Paliknoa K. Welly
Paliknoa K. Welly, chairman

/s/ Tiwiter Aritos
Tiwiter Aritos, vice chairman

/s/ Isaac V. Figir
Isaac V. Figir, member

Tesime Kofot, member

Resio S. Moses, member

/s/ Setiro Paul
Setiro Paul, member

/s/ Dion G. Neth
Dion G. Neth, member