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**Commission on the Status of Women
63rd Session
General Debate**

**H.E. Ambassador Jane J. Chigiyal
Permanent Representative**

New York, 15 March 2019

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Madame Chair, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, allow me to convey my delegation's sympathies and solidarity with the government and the people of New Zealand during this difficult period.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by Nauru on behalf of the Pacific Island Forum.

Madame Chair,

It is an honor and privilege for my delegation to be part of this dynamic and resilient group of women and human rights defenders gathered here at the 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women to assess where we are in terms of our progress to achieve gender equality across the globe. We owe tremendous appreciation and support, as this CSW looks to harness best practices to ensure that women and girls realize their full potential to contribute and benefit from their societies.

My country has made real strides in promoting gender equality, and in addressing gender-based violence. Our laws, in this regard, are being reviewed and passed across the country. As a result, public and social services and programs are being established. We are also engaging internally with stakeholders, and with our development partners to design projects that are gender-sensitive. In acknowledging these achievements, we are aware of the tremendous work ahead that we must undertake to train and sensitize our social workers, counselors and health workers, police officers, and judges to be better equipped to respond to victims of gender based violence.

Madame Chair,

We recognize that women in political leadership positions are key to improving the lives of women and girls because of their experience and understanding of issues affecting them. While we have made some progress in electing women at the municipal and state levels, we are one of only a handful of countries that have yet to put women in their national parliament. We are mindful of the possibilities that half of our population can be unleashed for our common good. And, we are focused on changing the mindsets of both men and women.

In our Micronesian society, women make great contributions to our food production, food security and nutrition. As a low lying small island developing state vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change and environmental degradation, women and girls bear the greatest burden when our livelihood is compromised.

Women continue to be stewards of our land and natural resources, and also engage in the formal labor force, while at the same time balancing their domestic roles in the family to provide care for the elderly and children. As our society transitions into a cash economy, their indispensable contributions are often not acknowledged and are undervalued. Women and girls are often disadvantaged and inadequately compensated for their contributions. We recognize the need for an encompassing policy that ensures that both our women and men are provided for, and that there is redistribution of shared responsibility between them.

In moving forward, we must begin with ensuring the conditions necessary for our women and girls to flourish, and fulfill their potential in our society, as we encourage social inclusion and protection of adolescents and youth to foster intergenerational change. We acknowledge their contributions to our development and society, and we have a Youth Policy that will ensure their active participation in matters affecting them.

Finally, we value the scaling up of UN's presence in the Northern Pacific region. Without a UN system that is far more coordinated, effective and responsive to our unique challenges, we will continue to be left behind.

I thank you.