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Third Committee**

Agenda item 70(a): Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Statement by the Micronesian delegation

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Chair,

Micronesia thanks the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for his report, as well as his presentation of the report and his overall work.

On the issue of tourism and its interactions with Indigenous Peoples and their rights, Micronesia underscores the need for tourism projects to be fully respectful of all relevant rights of such Indigenous Peoples, particularly those pertaining to their traditional use of territories and similar spaces for cultural, religious, and other Indigenous practices. We emphasize in this regard the rights enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as well as in other relevant international and regional human rights instruments that reflect such rights, including the right of Indigenous Peoples to exercise free, prior and informed consent with respect to any tourism activities that potentially affect their traditional territories and practices.

In Micronesia, the tourism sector is a key component of our economy and overall sustainable development aspirations. As we strive to attract foreign investment in the sector as well as tourists, we have laws and regulations in place that protect traditional land and maritime tenure rights and systems for the native peoples of Micronesia, who are typically the final determinants of whether certain tourism projects proceed. We also strive to involve such native peoples as fully as possible in whatever tourism projects proceed, with an emphasis on eco-friendly cultural tours and similar activities that highlight the rich cultural practices of such peoples, with the full consent and involvement of such peoples.

Looking beyond tourism, Micronesia notes with appreciation that the international community is steadily advancing in its acknowledgement of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, including in international legally binding instruments and other major multilateral instruments, processes, and bodies. As examples, we point to the clear and crucial language on the rights of Indigenous Peoples in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity last December; as well as in the final text of the recently-

adopted Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (also known as the BBNJ Agreement). We also highlight proposals with respect to the rights of Indigenous Peoples in current intergovernmental negotiations for an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment; as well as for exploitation regulations for the Mining Code of the International Seabed Authority. Micronesia has strongly supported all such language across multiple spheres under international law and practice, and we will continue to do so.

References to rights of Indigenous Peoples in these and other instruments and processes are ineffective if they are not paired with the full and meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples in the development and implementation of such instruments and processes. Indigenous Peoples are entitled under international law to speak for themselves. In this respect, it is particularly important for the General Assembly to put in place a robust and transparent mechanism for the direct participation of Indigenous Peoples under their own authority in the deliberations of the General Assembly. The General Assembly needs to set the global standard – indeed, the General Assembly is lagging behind efforts in this regard in other intergovernmental bodies and processes.

We look forward to furthering this work, in partnership with representatives of Indigenous Peoples in the Pacific and across the globe.

I thank you.