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Agenda item 67: Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children**

Statement by: H.E. Jeem S. Lippwe, Permanent Representative

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I thank you, Chairperson, for the opportunity to speak on the promotion and protection of the rights of children. The rights of children and the key principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child are fundamental priorities for Micronesia.

Chairperson,

There have been several issues that have impacted the enjoyment and realization of the rights of children in Micronesia. My Government is committed to prioritizing the promotion and protection of the rights of children with relevant policy, administrative, and institutional responses.

I want to acknowledge the ongoing assistance that the United Nations (UN) agencies and other development partners have provided to my Government.

UNICEF has been particularly helpful in helping in creating a National Child Protection Policy and developing a draft of an Early Childhood Development (ECD) Policy. My government is currently reviewing it to ensure its relevance to the local context. And through UNICEF, we implemented WASH programs in all FSM schools that played a critical role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic by providing immunization programs and support.

The **UNFPA** supports health service providers by launching the EVAWG Policy and Clinical Rape Guideline, and also launched Youth-friendly clinics in the State of Pohnpei.

The **UN ESCAP** supported the Government in the Development of an Action Plan for Operationalizing the Incheon Strategy Indicators in Support of Disability-Inclusive Development, especially for disabled children.

And the **WHO** provided needed technical expertise during the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to assist in health disaster and policy-related activities.

The **US Government** provides financial aid to support maternal and child health and family services through Title X and Title V Block Grants. These grants offer early screening and intervention services for women, children, and adolescents under national family planning programs.

On our own, we have re-established the President's National Advisory Council on Children, a multi-department and multi-sectoral council from national, state, and NGO organizations working together to protect the rights of a child. The Council is working towards joining the UN family in observing and celebrating the upcoming World's Children's Day on November 20, 2023.

We have established the National Human Rights, UPR, and SDG Task Force. We are committed to developing referral pathways to help protect children. Integration into National Development Plans and sectoral strategies is a priority.

Micronesia continues to face challenges in recruiting specialists in health care, education, and other allied sectors services specific to children especially children with disabilities. We also face the challenges of early teen pregnancy and the stigma that comes with early pregnancy among young girls. And we are experiencing an emerging challenge of providing early intervention services and needed support to families with children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and other neurological and learning disabilities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the rights and well-being of FSM children who rely on adults. Limitations on rights have caused difficulties with accessing education, healthcare, and social activities. The government is working with partners to protect children's rights and health during global crises.

We can talk about education, we can talk about opportunity, but all these are for naught if we fail to address the climate crises we are facing. Our marine resources are threatened by environmental degradation. Climate change increases health risks, including vector-, water-, and food-borne diseases, malnutrition, and mental health issues. The well-being of future generations depends on our response. We continue to urge the international community to provide assistance and address these challenges to protect our children's health.

Chairperson,

My country values the rights of all individuals, especially women, children, and persons with disabilities. We will continue to work with our development partners and the UN system for the betterment of all.

I thank you.