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Statement by the Micronesian delegation Item 3 – General Discussion

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Chairperson,

My country aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Tonga on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum. I would also like to make a statement in our national capacity.

The Commission's sixty-eighth session has the theme of "accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective." This theme holds significance to Micronesia, as we are committed to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

Micronesia's President H. E. Wesley W. Simina has made it a priority to strengthen gender equality within his administration. In achieving his priority, he nominated young women to occupy prominent positions as Micronesia's diplomats overseas, and he continues the trend of nominating women as members of Cabinet. As a nation, Micronesia has finally broken through the proverbial glass ceiling by electing women as members of our national Congress. More women are taking up roles as justices of our nation's highest Supreme Court and the State Courts, as well as other key leadership roles in governments, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. Our women and girls are now going further in their education and achieving their doctorates and other advanced degrees in science, law, medicine, and education – many through the provision of national and state scholarships available to our citizens. We see our young women entering competitive sports like boxing and swimming and competing in the Olympics.

Women deserve the encouragement and support of all of society. So in President Simina's address to a Women's Conference in late 2023, he said (and I quote) "Gentlemen, this is our fight too. We must stand together in unity, not as spectators, but as active participants in this transformative journey towards gender equality." (end quote)

So everyone, let us together be united in our work to achieve our goals.

Micronesia continues its efforts towards achieving gender equality and promoting women's empowerment, keeping in mind various key international documents such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

Micronesia pledged to bring gender parity to its population through our accession to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 2004, the adoption of the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration in 2012, and by endorsing the FSM National Gender Policy in 2018.

Being from a small island developing state, Micronesia's women and children live in fear from the encroaching rising seas on our small islands caused by a changing climate, affecting our food and water security and destroying arable lands for our subsistence farming. Climate change often disproportionately affects women. Why? Women are the mothers caring for the family, knowing what plants to grow to feed the family and what plants used to heal them.

With climate change, the land and Ocean are not providing the way they used to. Nevertheless, women have proved to be important agents of change for climate change adaptation and food security. They are the experts on the ground. Women are important leaders and contributors in reversing climate change. It's important to ensure gender inclusivity in planning, responses, and capacity building. By including women in decision-making processes for agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors, we can promote partnerships between all genders.

Chairperson,

About half of our country's population is made up of women and girls, and their contributions are crucial to our commitment to building back better. To ensure that women and girls play a larger role in leading and shaping the narrative on the SDGs, climate change, and gender equality, my government has developed an SDG task force. The leadership and contributions of women and girls will be evident in our upcoming Voluntary National Review, as the task force drives these goals forward.

Chairperson,

In closing, and as we continue this year's deliberations on our agenda, let us not lose sight of the collective strength of all members of our societies which we must harness for the common good of all people.

I thank you