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**16th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development**

**Statement by the Delegation of the  
Federated States of Micronesia**

**SIDS Day – Agriculture, Rural Development**

**New York, 12 May 2008**

**Check against delivery**

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation, first and foremost, wishes to put on record its disappointment about the scheduling of SIDS day. It is unacceptable that our small delegations have to choose between the day which is mandated to be exclusively on our important issues and a parallel event of high interest which we are now unable to attend. It is clear to us that such an overlap must never happen again.

It is not enough to merely state that no precedence has been set. Rather, the CSD bureau and the member states have to ensure that this overlap will never happen again. A first step has to be the appropriate reference in the CSD outcome document. Other measures will be required and the collective SIDS will be scrutinizing every action taken.

Mr. Chairman,

Given the short time left, I will confine myself to one issue of particular interest in this session, namely rural development in SIDS.

It is widely known that poverty in developing countries is highly concentrated in rural areas. Even though poverty reduction is one of the Millennium Development Goals, a large number of rural people still lack access to basic services, including health, water, energy, sanitation, and education. Micronesia is no exception.

As we all know, climate change is starting to have its impact on rural populations and thus, on our rural development. Combined with the multi-island character of Micronesia, my country has to find new ways of addressing both threats to our society.

In the session dedicated to Agriculture, I already mentioned the negative consequences on agricultural productivity due to climate change and the rise in food prices worldwide. However, rural development must go further. The first practical step for the outer islands of Micronesia is to ensure access to clean drinking water and sustainable sources of energy. We are currently working with several international partners and I commend them for their contribution.

Mr. Chairman,

It is clear that despite our best efforts, Small Island Developing States such as Micronesia cannot succeed in this endeavor alone. We need support from our development partners and the United Nations system and we encourage new partners to step forward.

However, rural development must not destroy the beauty and identity of our islands and Micronesia, together with the Marshall Islands and Palau, has created the Micronesia Challenge, through which we are working to conserve 30 percent of near shore coastal waters and 20 percent of forest land by 2020. Thus we hope to make development truly sustainable on our islands.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.