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**Statement by the Micronesian delegation  
Item 3 – General Discussion**

**New York, 30 April 2024**

**Check against delivery**

Chairperson,

Micronesia joins other speakers in congratulating you Madame Chair and commends our Secretary-General for the preparation of three respective reports that highlight the global status of implementation of the ICPD Program of Action. We appreciate the reports highlighting the challenges of developing countries in realizing the promises of the ICPD Program of Action. We also align our statement with the one delivered by Vanuatu on behalf of the Pacific SIDS.

Chair,

Micronesia is a lower middle income island nation of 104,832 in 2021, an eight percent population decline from 2019.

Human resource and health workforce are capacity issues that plague most Pacific Island countries and continue to be major challenges. In Micronesia, we continue to lose skilled health staff to international migration on permanent and temporary basis impacting health services to the wide population. Those living in the most remote and furthest islets are further marginalized and impacted due to limited human resource capacity, loss of skilled workers, transportation and financial resources.

The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated our fragile health system and services as we were forced to redirect resources to successfully protect our borders from the virus. We had to be proactive in this regard implementing measures to prevent the virus from entering our shores and maintain sustainable communities.

Chair,

Our Constitution affirms our commitment to live in peace and harmony and to protect the future of our people. In alignment with our Constitution, Micronesia renews its commitment to the ICPD Program of Action and the SDG's. In implementing our commitment we are implementing our own

homegrown Strategic Development Plan (SDP) that seeks to achieve sustainable economic growth and self-reliance. It prioritizes sustainable development through the sectors of Health, Education, Agriculture, Fisheries, Private Sector Development, Transportation, Communication and the cross-cutting sector of Energy.

In our commitment to gender equality and women empowerment, Micronesia adopted in 2015 our National Action Plan to Eliminate Violence Against Women. The plan aims to address gender-based violence, including domestic violence and sexual assault, and promote gender equality in the country.

We have taken significant steps towards gender equality and non-discrimination by enacting laws like the National Gender Policy and the Family Protection Act. And we have ratified international treaties like CEDAW and the Beijing Declaration, furthering our commitment to gender equality. Despite these legal advancements, challenges persist. Women in Micronesia encounter obstacles in accessing education, employment, and healthcare, often due to entrenched stereotypes and cultural norms that reinforce traditional gender roles. While women lag behind in representation in the political and decision-making spheres, I am pleased to say that this is changing. I am one of three women in our 14 member Congress that have been fortunate to have recently been elected. While our national Constitution and legal framework provide equal protection and prohibit discrimination based on sex, concerted efforts are required to tackle gender disparities and ensure the effective implementation of gender equality measures.

Our people are a fundamental resource to advance the ICPD Program of Action and the 2030 Agenda. We will therefore continue to pursue gender equality, universal access to health, including rights to reproductive and sexual health of all citizens, and ensuring safe and dignified lives, particularly women, girls and adolescents.

With an estimated 40% of the total population under 15 years, the increasing workforce has not been matched with availability of employment opportunities, increasing young people's propensity to migrate to other countries in search of better opportunities. The national youth unemployment rate stands at 25.3% according to the 2017 State of Pacific Youth Report. The same report also mentions that 28.9% of youth aged 15-24 years are not engaged in either education, employment or training (NEET). Many factors contribute to high unemployment, such as low education attainment, limited qualifications, and low skills level, combined with often very low wage rates. While the benefits of investment in young people are universal, they are especially urgent for Micronesia's large numbers of adolescents and youth and their out-migration. Sex-disaggregated data and analysis is essential to guide policies that meet the varying needs and realities of young men and women in FSM.

Chair,

Micronesia's numerous low-lying atolls are increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. We face rising coastal inundation, erosion, extreme weather events, and the compounding effects of rising sea level on freshwater resources and ecosystem services. Projections indicate that heavy rainfall events will become more frequent and intense, heightening the risk of flooding. We must recognize that these extreme weather events can cause illness, damage infrastructure, and disrupt access to healthcare.

We have implemented a Climate Change and Health Action Plan (NCCCHAP) to integrate climate change considerations into health sector activities and vice versa, aiming to address the intersection of climate change and public health.

The UN Secretary-General has correctly highlighted in his report the importance of accessing timely, and high-quality disaggregated demographic data to track progress and combating inequalities. Micronesia has prioritized the production and use of data to monitor implementation and inform national policies and programming.

Though there has been some progress in most of the areas under the ICPD Program of Action, like other Pacific SIDS, Micronesia is faced with a host of social, economic and environment challenges. These challenges contribute to the barrier preventing Micronesia to realize the promises of ICPD Program of Action including the SDG's. As a SIDS our vulnerability is unique due to various reasons and among others a major contributing challenge is having adequate financial support and funding towards key sectors including infrastructure and socio-economic prerogatives. We are aware that our national efforts in this field will have limited success without cooperation and assistance from the international community. We appreciate the support of UNFPA and other UN organizations and our development partners for the support they have provided so far.

Our livelihood is threatened by the existential threat posed by climate change to our islands, our population and our culture; by migration, high unemployment and a young unskilled workforce; and by our vulnerability to stronger and more frequent natural disasters and sudden shocks like COVID-19. Micronesia calls for stronger support for developing social protection and preparedness and recovery will be needed, particularly in the areas of health, education, gender, social protection, water and food security. We agree with the Secretary-General that Governments and the international community should strengthen and integrate, as a matter of priority, human rights principles within climate adaptation, mitigation and resilience, with particular attention to those most affected but least able to adapt to climate impacts. Countries are called upon to restructure unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, phase out fossil fuels, promote green energy and also promote restorative agriculture and food systems, as well as the future health of people and the planet.

Thank you.