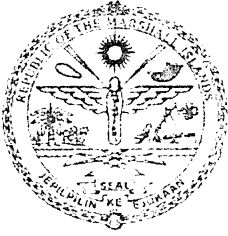


COMMUNICATION # 96



REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE
PO BOX 1349
MAJURO, MARSHALL ISLANDS 96960

MEMORANDUM

Date : 25 September 2017

To : Mrs. Moran Watak
Nitijela Clerk

From : Office of the Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Subject : Micronesia Women's Conference – Navigating Change
“Jined Kiped Declaration”

Iakwe Clerk Mrs. Watak.

As you are aware, the Republic of the Marshall Islands hosted its first Micronesia Women's Conference in Majuro, from August 8-10, 2017. To that end, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade wishes to provide you with the attached Jined Kiped Declaration. The Ministry further requests your kind assistance in disseminating the attached declaration to all Members of the Nitijela.

Komol tata and should you need further information/clarification, please do not hesitate to contact the Ministry of Culture & Internal Affairs or MOFAT.

Sincerely,


Bruce Kijiner
Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Cc : Mr. Wallace Peter, Secretary of Culture and Internal Affairs



Micronesian Women's Conference – Navigating Change

USP Conference Room

Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands

August 10th, 2017

JINED KIPED¹ DECLARATION

Preamble

1. The Micronesian Women's Conference (the Conference) was held in Majuro in the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) between 8-10 August 2017. Delegates attended from the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of Nauru, the Republic of Palau, and Guam. Delegates from FSM represented the states of Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei and Yap. The Conference acknowledged the generous financial support of the European Union, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia and the Republic of China (Taiwan) and support from United Nations and the Pacific Community. The conference also acknowledged the support from the traditional leaders of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.
2. The Conference congratulated Her Excellency Dr. Hilda Heine as the first woman to be elected as Leader of an independent Pacific island nation; thanked President Heine and the people of the Marshall Islands for convening the Conference and commended the work of the organizing committee. As host country, RMI was unanimously supported to chair the Conference and the Republic of Nauru was elected as vice-chair.
3. The Conference celebrated progress in gender equality in Micronesia, invigorated alliances amongst the Micronesian countries and Micronesian women leaders in government, non-government, business and civil society organizations and provided the opportunity to discuss effective ways to accelerate progress towards gender equality in the region. The Conference reaffirmed the Commission on the Status of Women's statement that *"equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and women's full and equal participation and leadership in the economy are vital for achieving sustainable development, promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies, enhancing sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and productivity, ending poverty in all its forms everywhere and ensuring the well-being of all."*²
4. In this context, the Conference presentations, panels, discussions and recommendations made reference to international commitments made by Leaders including the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPA), Agenda 2030 and the associated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Small Island States Accelerated Modalities for Action

¹ *Jined Kiped* In Marshallese custom, women are referred to as *jined kiped*. Translated, this attribute of culture means that a mother (*jined*) is the rudder (*kiped*) of a family.

² *Commission on the Status of Women Sixty-first session, 13-24 March 2017, Agreed Conclusions, paragraph 6. Economic and Social Council document reference E/CN.6/2017/L.5,*

(the S.A.M.O.A Pathway), the Sendai Framework for Action, the Paris Agreement of Climate Change, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); all of which provide an international legal framework and comprehensive sets of measures for realizing gender equality, women's human rights and the empowerment of women and girls. Key gender equality commitments in the Pacific region referenced included the Revised Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and the Advancement of Women (2005-2015), the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED) and the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.

Proceedings

5. The Conference noted programs being implemented to address high rates of violence against women, young women and girls, and called for maximum available resourcing, human and financial, by Micronesian Governments to make sure that all women and girls, including those with disabilities and marginalized groups, have access to services and support. The Conference recognized the relationship between drug and substance abuse on violence prevalence and on sexual and reproductive health and rights; calling for urgent and increased investment in policies, programs, research and legislative reforms that provide services and support, including access to rights and justice for all women wherever they live. The Conference noted the range of services provided by non-government organizations working in partnership with Micronesian Governments nationally and regionally, in the areas of education, skills development and training for young women, survivors (women and children) of gender based violence, and micro-enterprises. The Conference urged Micronesian Governments and development partners support and bolster these organizations in their work as implementing partners to governments empowering all women and girls and women's full and equal participation in all dimensions of their life and throughout their lifecycle.

6. The Conference acknowledged that the forthcoming sixth Pacific Women's Ministerial meeting (October 2017) will assert the vital contribution of women's economic empowerment to the sustainable development of the Pacific Region. The Conference, concerned that women are over represented in informal sector employment and other vulnerable forms of employment, recognized the need for programs to protect the right to decent work for women in the informal sector and focus on the economic empowerment of women in rural and remote communities. The conference noted that labor mobility is increasing access to labor markets for women and contributing to their economic empowerment. The Conference acknowledged that the government is the largest formal sector employer in most Micronesian countries, and as such has duties and responsibilities to protect and promote the rights of women employees.

7. The Conference noted that climate change is a national security issue. The Conference recognized women's cultural knowledge and skills as custodians of the environment, along with responsibility for safe water and food security and reliance on primary products for livelihoods, and reflected on women's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, by radiation across the north Pacific from nuclear weapons testing and noted that efforts to mainstream gender equality into climate change and disaster risk, management, adaptation and mitigation need to be strengthened. The Conference recognized the need for women to be engaged as stakeholders in climate change policy and planning.

8. The Conference acknowledged the importance of appropriate strategies, including temporary special measures (TSMs), to increase political and public participation and representation for women – including young women and those with disabilities – at all levels of government. The Conference acknowledged the relationship between political representation and traditional leadership regarding the endorsement of candidates by traditional leaders. The Conference discussed complementary initiatives including civic education; women advocating for other women; training, mentoring and supporting potential leaders; mobilizing funding support for candidates; the need for both men and women to encourage, nurture and support women candidates and elected representatives; promoting women's political participation in power structures; and discussed how elected women are changing perceptions and stereotypes to

normalize women's participation in politics and leadership. The Conference noted the need for a united and effective women's movement to support and promote women's political participation.

9. The Conference discussed a range of women's health concerns regarding sexual and reproductive health and rights, the need for medical practitioners to understand gender specific symptoms and screening, teenage pregnancies and non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Access to quality, evidence based health care remains a challenge because of social, economic and cultural issues, the health care system itself, the set-up, maintenance and resourcing of sexual and reproductive health services, and access issues specific to certain groups, such as survivors of violence (women and children), women in urban poor and remote island communities and women with disabilities among others. The Conference noted the need for research, data and gender statistics related to women's health issues, holistic gender training and support for clinician's and health providers to provide quality health care for women. The Conference recognized the importance of collaboration with faith-based organizations, NGOs, professional organization for early detection, reporting and support for programs.

10. The Conference welcomed the presentation by the Micronesian Youth Services Network (MYSN) to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and noted effective approaches to engaging with young people include storytelling and the incorporation of cultural practices and traditional arts.

11. The Conference supported the strategic objectives of the Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights presented by the Pacific Community.

12. The Conference learned how the Permanent Representatives to the United Nations for FSM, Nauru and RMI engage with the other member states, committees, meetings and processes at the United Nations in New York and noted the wide breadth and scope of their roles and responsibilities in PSIDS, SIDS and processes including the submission for climate and security resolution to the Security Council and negotiations for a legally binding instrument for marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdictions. The Permanent Representative to the United Nations for Nauru offered to coordinate a side event for Micronesian countries during the Commission on the Status of Women.

13. The Conference welcomed the statement from civil society, noted the importance of their engagement with women in communities and their role supporting, and in some cases, implementing government programs and policies. Civil society affirmed their mission of gender equality and women's empowerment, human rights, principles of justice, equality and equity, accountability, transparency and leadership. The civil society statement is attached as Annex 1.

Resolutions

14. Together, delegates reaffirmed their commitment to accelerate progress towards gender equality, identified issues of mutual interest, and made the following recommendations to increase progress towards women's empowerment and gender equality.

15. Nauru agreed to host the Conference meeting in 2020 and delegations resolved to mobilize resources and plan to reconvene the conference in 2020. Conference delegates will continue to discuss and share information on the implementation of the Conference resolutions under the platform of the Micronesian Women's Network. The Conference agreed to continue to promote equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in Leaders meetings, including lobbying for a standing agenda item on gender equality at the Micronesian Leaders Conference through national processes and procedures as appropriate.

16. The Conference recommended that all Micronesian Governments maximize government budgets and improve their policies, programs and community-based services to ensure survivors' (women and children) access support, justice systems hold offenders to account, and communities take responsibility to end violence against women. For those jurisdictions that do not have legal frameworks in place for domestic violence, the Conference recommended that

such legislation be drafted and enacted as a priority. The Conference recommended that Micronesian Governments implement strategies to address the structural and underlying causes of gender-based violence, strengthen legislative and policy frameworks, and coordinate multi-sectoral services and programs engaging non-government organizations, faith based organizations, the private sector and communities. These strategies should include systemic institutional strengthening for all service providers. Prevention strategies should incorporate initiatives for children and young people and engage with the school system to educate them about healthy relationships and enforce anti-bullying regulations or legislation. These strategies, including those for rehabilitation, must promote non-violent masculinities oriented towards equality and respect. Micronesian Governments must resource and support the provision of safe places for survivors of violence (women and girls), and facilitate access to justice and support services for these people. The elimination of violence against women and girls pervades all aspects of society, and prevention and intervention measures must be implemented systematically in all sectors, including climate change mitigation and disaster risk reduction and disaster response and recovery strategies.

17. The Conference recommended that the forthcoming Sixth Pacific Women's Ministerial meeting (October, 2017) assert the vital contribution of women's economic empowerment to the sustainable development of the Pacific Region.

18. The Conference recommended that Micronesian Governments honor the 2012 Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED) commitments by:

- strengthening gender equality measures within the public sector, and introducing measures to have at least one woman on every board of all State owned enterprises ;
- addressing the gaps in social protection between those employed in the public and private sectors; and
- improving facilities and governance in local produce markets, and ensuring women and men entrepreneurs in both the formal and informal sectors can access financial services and other business support services.

19. The Conference recommended that Micronesian Governments recognize the importance of cultural industries to Pacific women, and support greater access to markets, both domestic and international. The Conference recommended that Micronesian Governments fund the development of cultural industries, and recognize the considerable significance of cultural industries to sustainable development and income security in small island states. For those jurisdictions that do not have legal frameworks in place for intellectual property, the Conference recommended Micronesian Governments enact and enforce legislation and regulations to protect and promote traditional knowledge and intellectual property of cultural industries, including obtaining appropriate trademarks, patents and copyrights.

20. The Conference recognized that education and life-long learning of all women, including young women and women with disabilities, is vital to their economic empowerment and recommended that education providers, including technical and vocational education and training, at all levels eliminate all gender stereotyping and ensure that young women as well as young men are encouraged and supported to develop skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and gain qualifications that enhance their employment prospects.

21. The Conference recommended Micronesian Governments monitor the representation of men, women and marginalized groups across the key decision-making arenas noted in the PLGED, establish targets for women's future representation, and consider adopting temporary special measures to maximize women's representation in legislatures.

22. Noting the gendered impacts of climate change, the Conference strongly reiterated the issue of climate change, disaster and ocean health for Micronesian countries and the Pacific and calls for recognition that women are especially vulnerable to climate change risk *"the need for a multi-dimensional approach to climate change adaptation as recommended by the Beijing +15 review report"* and *"confirmed the need for gender analysis to be incorporated in strategic planning, programming and results-based implementation of climate change programs and the production of*

sex-disaggregated data to monitor the impact of adaptation and climate change initiatives" (Fourth Pacific Women Ministers meeting, 2011). The Conference strongly reiterated the urgent issue of climate change, disasters and ocean health for Micronesia and the Pacific, and calls for recognition that women are disproportionately affected by climate change-related risks due to existing gender discrimination, inequality and inhibiting gender roles.

23. The conference recommended the development and implementation of gender responsive policies and programs where appropriate for the inter-generational effects of nuclear testing, including on women's health and other areas; the conference recognized and affirmed the recent adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (2017).

24. The Conference recommended that Micronesia Governments strengthen their actions to mainstream gender, across all government ministries and departments including in all climate change and disaster risk reduction initiatives including programs and policies; within state owned enterprises and other quasi-government bodies and committees.

25. The Conference recommended that access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) be available to all people, and increased support and protection for girls and young women, including enhancing access to education and appropriate resourcing, human and financial.

26. The Conference recommended Micronesia Governments provide high quality, culturally appropriate, evidence based SRHR education and awareness raising about gender-based violence and discrimination in schools and communities.

27. Noting the high rates of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in Micronesia countries, the Conference recommends that Micronesia Governments consider taxes on goods associated with NCD risk and tying this funding for health services; support the local production and consumption of nutritious fresh and organic food; and promote sport and exercise for women and men, girls and boys of all ages.

28. The Conference recommended that Micronesia Governments maximize resources to country missions to the United Nations. For the upcoming COP23 negotiations, it is essential that Micronesia Governments ensure that there is an institutional memory approach to strengthening capacity for climate change negotiations (and not a piece meal approach).

29. The Conference called on Micronesia Governments to continue to implement policies across all sectors to accelerate progress towards gender equality and gender mainstreaming; including the elimination of violence against women and girls; including knowledge and information management systems and technology to enable data-driven evaluation and reporting using timely gender statistics and indicators.

IN CONCLUSION

30. We, the Ministers, elected representatives and Senior Government Officials of the National Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women of Micronesia, are positive that the Conference will galvanize decisive steps towards accelerating progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women through the implementation of the Conference recommendations. Despite the current serious problems and difficulties, given that, for the second time since 1993, we can present a joint position and proposals, as a region, to the regional and international community; with the confidence that this declaration will be upheld in national, regional and international forums. Likewise, we express our gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Marshall Islands, in particular to the Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Ministry of Finance; and to Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI) for the organization and realization of this Conference. Finally, this Conference would not have been possible without the financial assistance from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the European

Union and Republic of China (Taiwan); and the technical support provided by the United Nations and the Pacific Community.

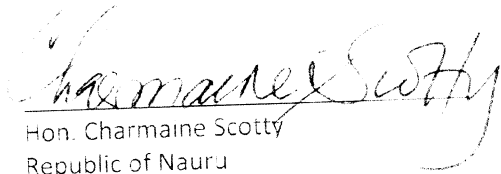
Adopted in Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands, August 10, 2017 by:



H.E. Kourabi Nenem
Republic of Kiribati



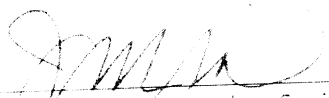
H.E. Jane J. Chigiya
Federated States of Micronesia




Hon. Charmaine Scotty
Republic of Nauru



Karen Taitano
Guam



Sen. Jerryn Uduch Sengebau Senior
Republic of Palau



Hon. Amenta Matthew
Republic of the Marshall Islands



**CIVIL SOCIETY STATEMENT OF THE
MICRONESIAN WOMEN'S CONFERENCE
MAJURO, 8-10 AUGUST 2017**

Micronesian civil society representatives from the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati and the Republic of the Marshall Islands came together as part of the Micronesian Women's Conference held from 8-10 August 2017 in Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands. Micronesian women came together to discuss the realities of ending violence against women, realizing women's economic empowerment, empowerment of women in politics and decision-making, addressing the effects of climate change on women and improving women's access to health services.

Civil society groups endorse the outcomes of the Micronesian Women's Conference, and call for the following actions to take forward the aims of this Conference:

As representatives of women's civil society organizations, we affirm our foundations of gender and women's empowerment, human rights, principles of justice, equality and equity, accountability, transparency and leadership.

We call for conference recognition of, and support for the skills, experience and ability of women led civil society organizations to connect with diverse Micronesian women and girls, throughout their lifecycle.

We affirm that women led civil society groups have abilities to respond to grassroots women's needs in distinct ways, along with Government and other development actors. We call for this development role to be reflected in all local, national and regional development design and implementation.

Local civil society organizations and other non-state actors have a critical role in advancement of gender and women's empowerment, climate justice and disaster risk reduction and sustainable development in Micronesia throughout the Pacific.

This requires good communication and information-sharing systems between grassroots led, national and regional civil society and social movements, and to mainstream gender through all these diverse movements, and in activities of our Government and all development actors.

We commit to work with other civil society organizations and non-state actors to ensure that together we provide a representative and effective mechanism that will truly meet the needs of women as well as men and the diversity of civil society.

We will work with our Governments to strongly uphold and recommit to national, regional and global commitments on gender equality, and for these commitments to be translated and shared with civil society organizations.

We urge development partners and donors to hold fast to their commitments to gender equality, and to support our work with women in communities as well as supporting governments in our region to strengthen commitments to working in partnership with civil society, emphasizing the need for consultation, accountability and transparency, to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment.

We urge our governments and all development stakeholders to commit to transparent and accountable practices and to ensure effective engagement with civil society and community groups in all policy making.

We urge our governments to act on the concerning health status of Micronesian women and young girls and the limited access to healthcare services including sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and to engage and support civil society organizations to amplify and accelerate quality, evidence-based and safe and timely access to health services particularly for women in rural and remote areas.

We urge our governments to closely work and partner with civil society organizations, particularly women-led groups, to ensure access to healthcare services and information for women and girls in the region, and to ensure a focus on women and girls, and economic empowerment.

We urge our governments and all development partners to ensure there is Micronesian led, gender responsive research and analysis that will provide evidence based information for accurate government and non-government policy and programming updated and gender-disaggregated data that is translated, analyzed and shared with civil society organizations.

We urge our governments to commit to transparent governance practices as the cornerstone of accountability, and also call for adequate and consistent resource allocations for engagement with civil society and community groups in all policy and programs.