

THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA
STATEMENT BY THE HEAD OF DELEGATION OF
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6th ASIA AND PACIFIC POPULATION CONFERENCE
BANGKOK, THAILAND, 16-20 SEPTEMBER 2013

Your Excellency Mr President, Excellencies, Honorable Ministers and Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Federated States of Micronesia, I am honored to deliver the country statement. At the onset I would like to express my appreciation to the Government of Thailand for hosting this event and to the organisers of this meeting, the Joint Secretariat of the ESCAP and UNFPA.

The Federated States of Micronesia committed to the ICPD Programme of Action in 1994 and is committed to a progressive agenda for the ICPD Beyond 2014. In August this year, we endorsed the 18 elements of the Moana Declaration. The ICPD Programme of Action and the MDGs were considered relevant to the nation's population and development plans and are already part of the health and social development plans and programs of our country.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are an island nation consisting of approximately 607 islands, the FSM consists of four geographically, ethnically and politically separate states: Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap.

While declining fertility (the total fertility rate (TFR) has declined from 5 in 1990 to 3.1 children in 2010) has contributed to the drop in the population growth rate over the past three decades, out-migration to the United States and other parts of Micronesia is the primary cause of the negative population growth. The determinants of the differential rates of out-migration at the state level are complex; economic performance is a contributing factor, which is changing the distribution of population across the four states.

FSM has a young population with more than 37% of persons aged 19 years or younger. FSM is committed to youth empowerment, education and vocational training programmes as well as ensuring employment of youth.

While the overall adolescent fertility rates have steadily declined from a high of 90 per 1000 women 15-19 years in 1973 to 43 in 2010, the high rate of unintended pregnancies among teenage girls and the disparity between states remains a cause of concern. Special school clinics, comprehensive sexuality education and community based programs through youth centres are being implemented. Having access to contraceptive services for sexually active teenagers is recognized as an important health issue by the national and state governments.

Since the inception of the rights based Family Planning Programme in the mid-1970s, contraceptive prevalence rates have slowly increased. Approximately 45 percent of women of child bearing age use modern contraception with approximately 49% using all methods. The FSM's network of state-based family planning clinics and Community Health Centers, serving publicly-funded family planning clients, along with a few private providers, are the foundation for providing high quality reproductive health services to the nation's population, particularly women of child-bearing age. The US-supported FSM Title X Family Planning Program is embarking on an innovative approach by taking the family planning and related preventive health services directly to the hard to reach communities and vulnerable populations, including teenagers.

Since 2008 no maternal death has been reported. It is possible that a maternal death may have occurred in the outer islands and not be recorded as a maternal death. Given the vulnerabilities women face during pregnancy, especially in the outer islands, more effort is being made to strengthen prenatal and basic obstetrics care, and access to comprehensive obstetric care through timely referral systems, especially in these remote islands.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

While FSM has made significant progress in achieving the MDGs, particularly in health and education, gender equality and women's empowerment are priority

areas of the current government. Few women have been elected as part of state legislature and no women has currently been elected to National Congress.

National Congress recently introduced a bill (FSM Bill No. 16–10) to reserve four seats out of the 14 for women. FSM has a moderate legal and policy framework to support the mainstreaming of gender and women’s human rights across the whole of government. Two key human rights treaties are in force and the national development plan includes gender mainstreaming as a goal.

FSM has ratified CEDAW and compliance concerns include deficiencies in the law relating to sexual assault and rape, domestic violence and human trafficking. Domestic and sexual violence is a common cause of injury to women and children and a major contributor to social problems. A draft national domestic violence policy has been introduced into Congress. In Pohnpei, through an administrative order, the Justice Department has adopted a ‘no drop’ policy, even if the victim requests that the case be dropped. Pohnpei has established a Division of Domestic Violence Prevention.

In conclusion, FSM reaffirms its commitments to a forward looking agenda for the ICPD Beyond 2014.