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Statement by the Delegation of the Federated States of Micronesia

Agriculture

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Mr. Chairman,

Agriculture is an important contributor to economic sustainability and rural development in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) such as Micronesia. Especially subsistence agriculture plays a vital role on our islands.

As we all know, climate change puts a great threat on the agricultural sector in developing countries. This is especially true for SIDS, which feature small agricultural areas and include many remote outer islands with a tiny population not qualifying for large-scale agricultural production.

Analysis shows that global agricultural production will decline by 16% by 2020 due to climate change, with more severe effects facing developing countries. Changes in rainfall and more intense climate and weather conditions are responsible.¹ Land degradation, sea-level rise, salinization of arable land and the destruction of coral reefs will only be the most prominent threats to my country and subsistence farming may no longer guarantee food security.

Mr. Chairman,

It is important to act now! Waiting any longer would increase the pressure not only on Micronesia, but on all the states most vulnerable to climate change. Potential climate-change risks have to be incorporated into the agricultural strategies to make agriculture sustainable for the future.

¹ Stern, Nicholas, Stern Review: Economics of Climate Change, London, UK Treasury, 2006.

The Stern Report notes that climate change adaptation and mitigation policies need to be implemented timely and efficiently in order to generate co-benefits, for example the reduction of greenhouse gases and other pollution, enhanced energy efficiency, as well as environmental protection. It is also important to institute effective land and coastal conservation strategies, in our case outlined in the Micronesia Challenge, to assist sustainable agricultural practices, as well as sustainable aquaculture.

Mr. Chairman,

With the current rise of food prices, strategies to promote local products have to be established to stabilize food security and decrease the strong dependency on high world market prices. Therefore, public awareness for the value of locally produced food needs to be increased.

Finally, the international community also has to do its part in assisting SIDS to enhance efficient and sustainable agricultural production, especially in regards to diversification of agriculture, alternative uses of crops and irrigation and water management.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.