

## FSM Information Services

### Press Release

#### **Making the Rights Real –The FSM National Disability Forum**

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—The Federated States of Micronesia reflected on its implementation status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in a National Disability Forum which was convened on November 20th-22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018 in Chuuk State. National and State Government and civil society groups, from all four states of the FSM, attended—as well as representatives of Disabled Persons Organizations. The theme for the National Disability Forum was *“Making the Rights Real”*, to emphasize the importance of ensuring that the articles in the CRPD are made a reality.

The CRPD explains in Articles 1 and 2 that “disability is an evolving concept....Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.” For example, a blind man cannot see—the CRPD asks of countries, then, to ensure that blind men and women can receive the same services and live the same life as those with sight enjoy, from gaining an education to accessing healthcare, or from running a business to starting a family. All citizens, regardless of impairment or lack thereof, should be able to enjoy a healthy, happy, and fulfilling life.

The National Disability Forum is an opportunity for the FSM States to deliberate, and contribute, to the status of the implementation of the CRPD. Ratified on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016, the FSM is due to submit an initial report roughly two years after the ratification date, which is this coming January 2019. Thus, the discussions in the National Disability Forum included reflection on our country’s progress in ensuring that the rights of persons with disabilities are promoted, protected, and fulfilled. The forum also served as an opportunity to recognize mutual challenges in this regard.

In the opening address Mr. Wincener David, the representative of the FSM Department of Health & Social Affairs stated *“as we progress during this meeting, we must not lose sight of what is needed and sought for our disabled population within the FSM. The accessibility issue for the disabled is fundamentally important—because it doesn’t just bridge the gaps in accessing services, but also informs the general public that the disabled population is recognized and supported in the FSM.”*

The process that the FSM National Government has undertaken towards the ratification, implementation and reporting on the CRPD has been done in collaboration with the FSM States to ensure that the realities for persons with disabilities are taken into account.

The FSM National Government is grateful for the ongoing support of the Pacific Community’s Regional Rights Resource Team throughout this process. The FSM also recognizes the support of other partners, which include the World Health Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for the Human Rights, and the Pacific Disability Forum, who have supported the National Disabilities Forum.

