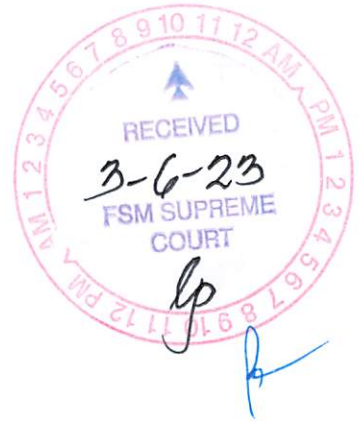




The President
Palikir, Pohnpei
Federated States of Micronesia



PROCLAMATION FOR MARCH 08, 2023
AS INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

WHEREAS, March 8 has been declared International Women's Day; and

WHEREAS, women make up almost half of the FSM population (49%); and have a vital role in the social, economic, cultural, and political development of our nation; and

WHEREAS, women and men have equal value and dignity and should therefore have equal opportunities, freedom and choice; and

WHEREAS, a day where the world celebrates the achievements of women in every sector. It is also a day which provides us with an opportunity to unite, network and mobilise for transformational change in our society to narrow the gender gap.

WHEREAS, the FSM ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 2004 and pledge to continue working toward the eradication of all forms of discrimination against women and promote gender equality; and

WHEREAS, the FSM in its ongoing efforts to promote women's full participation in the workplace, has taken concrete steps by expanding maternity leave provisions for the national government employees from 6 weeks to 12 weeks with pay. Additionally, we have also demonstrated our commitment by endorsing the National Policy to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls.

WHEREAS, acknowledging the 2023 theme of International Women's Day: "DigitALL: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality", FSM will continue to work toward recognizing the importance of the instrumental role that bold and transformative ideas, inclusive technologies, and accessible education can play in the fight against global discrimination and marginalization of women.

WHEREAS, FSM celebrates the decision of the Micronesian Islands Forum leadership in February this year to develop a Gender Equality Framework that will outline our collective priorities for promoting gender equality and empowering women in the country. This framework will serve as a guiding document for our collaborative endeavour in this area and, as the first sub-region in the Pacific to undertake this initiative, we will set a precedent for others to follow.

WHEREAS, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, women and their families are facing heightened economic insecurity and an increased risk of violence, resulting in a disproportionate impact on them. Therefore, we acknowledge the significance of gender-inclusive crisis response and women's leadership. The FSM Government is fully committed to supporting them through this health crisis.



WHEREAS, gender-based violence remains a critical developmental concern in our society, with an estimated two out of three Micronesian women experiencing some form of violence in their lifetime. Although preventable, violence against women requires a collective effort to address the underlying societal factors that contribute to it. As a community, we must reflect on our shared values and work together to eliminate violence from our midst.

WHEREAS, enhancing women's economic empowerment is a critical priority for our nation in the years ahead. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have implemented increased social protection measures, including targeted provisions aimed at addressing gender inequality. These measures encompass energy subsidies for vulnerable households led by women and other initiatives that support women's economic empowerment. The FSM Government firmly believe that when Micronesian women are empowered, our families, communities, and governments will prosper.

WHEREAS, the nation's commitment to its faith and culture continues to serve as a significant asset in our progress towards achieving gender equality and putting an end to violence against women and girls.; and

WHEREAS, instances of violence against women and girls are often shrouded in secrecy and it is within our collective power to eliminate this culture. By condemning the actions of perpetrators and amplifying the voices of survivors, we can strive towards a more open and supportive society. The Nation is and will continue to work towards changing this culture; and

WHEREAS, FSM remains steadfast in its efforts to combat violence against women and girls, and the National Government is committed to directing resources, services, and programs specifically towards the goal of promoting gender equality and ending such violence; and

WHEREAS, in honor of the invaluable and precious contributions made by women to the social, economic, home, cultural, and political landscape of our nation, the FSM National Government has authorized paid administrative leave for all women employees of the national government on March 8th, 2023 to celebrate their accomplishments and support the Women's movement in FSM; and

NOW THEREFORE, I, David W. Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, by virtue of the Constitution and laws of our Nation, I hereby declare March 8, 2023, as 'International Women's Day' of this Nation. I urge all our citizens, residents, government bodies, private agencies, and organizations to observe this day by actively promoting gender equality and recognizing women's fundamental right to safety, dignity, and respect. Let us come together on this day to honor and celebrate the invaluable contributions of women in our society, community, and home. Let our country commit to creating a more equitable and inclusive future for all. Thank you all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David W. Panuelo", written over a series of horizontal lines.

David W. Panuelo
President