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**Intergovernmental conference and its preparatory process to adopt a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration
Informal Consultations**

**Statement by Mr. Jeem Lippwe
Deputy Permanent Representative**

New York, 14 March 2018

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Mr. Co-facilitator,

As this is the first time that Micronesia has taken the floor in these negotiations, please allow me to thank you, your fellow co-facilitator, and your teams for your hard and excellent work so far in this process, including in the production of the zero draft and the zero draft plus for the Migration Compact. Micronesia stands ready to be of support to you and your teams in this process.

On the issue of differences between refugees and migrants, Micronesia notes that international law does not define migrants, at least not in any definitive and comprehensive manner; and that the most widely-accepted current definition of refugees in international law in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees is not comprehensive, especially in light of modern-day challenges. It is understandable, then, that there appear to be some language in the Migration Compact that might be applicable to both migrants and refugees or perhaps just exclusively to refugees. This overlap is especially pronounced because the Migration Compact is not a legally-binding instrument, and so there is less of an incentive to define terms at all, let alone in a precise manner.

Nevertheless, for the sake of consistency and clarity, it is Micronesia's view that the Migration Compact should cover all peoples who depart their homes for new lives abroad but who are not currently covered by the 1951 Refugees Convention. This necessarily means, among other things, that the Migration Compact should explicitly recognize the needs, rights, interests, and impacts of peoples who leave their homes and seek new lives in other countries because of climate change. It is no secret that sea-level rise, storms of greater intensities, record droughts and heat waves, and other adverse effects of climate change have driven and will drive people from their homes around the world. This is our new reality, now and into the foreseeable future, even though we plan to remain in our homes for as long as we can.

Micronesia welcomes language in the zero draft plus in connection with climate change, including language on slow-onset environmental degradation. However, that language can be strengthened. For one, adverse effects of climate change include sudden-onset events such as particularly intense storms, and such events drive people out of their countries of origin, as we have seen in the aftermath of several destructive storms in the Pacific in recent years. Toward that end, in paragraph 17(f) of the zero draft plus, the phrase “including the adverse effects of climate change” should apply to both sudden-onset natural hazards as well as slow-onset environmental degradation. Similarly, in paragraph 17(j), the use of migration as an adaptation strategy should also be recognized in cases of sudden-onset natural hazards. And, in paragraph 20(f), the language should be clarified to state that the sudden-onset natural disasters and slow-onset environmental degradation that give rise to protection and reception schemes for migrants are due, at least in part, to the adverse effects of climate change. These revisions will make clear that climate change-induced migration is a major issue for which there is a gap in current international processes, especially compared to processes for addressing refugees.

Mr. Co-facilitator,

On the issue of capacity-building, it is Micronesia’s view that the Migration Compact must have a robust and comprehensive capacity-building mechanism that will aid countries in implementing the provisions of the Migration Compact. The mechanism must be inclusive of financial, technical, technological, and programmatic assistance, including providing training opportunities as well as appropriate human resources to aid in implementing the Migration Compact.

It is also Micronesia’s view that such a capacity-building mechanism must be particularly tailored toward the needs of small island developing States like Micronesia. As a small island developing State with a sizable Ocean entitlement and over 600 habitable islands, Micronesia needs significant assistance in order to monitor its maritime zones and islands in as comprehensive and response a manner as possible, including with respect to the entry of migrants by sea; as well as assistance with processing those migrants and taking proper care of them while assessing their statuses. Paragraph 40 of the zero draft plus can be amended to reflect some of these interests and needs that are common to many small island developing States.

Thank you, Mr. Co-facilitator.