



## **Permanent Mission of the Federated States of Micronesia to the UN**

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### **FSM Deposits its Ocean Baselines and Maritime Boundary with the United Nations**

October 27, 2019 (New York, FSMPIO) – On October 25th, 2019, the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) deposited with the United Nations in New York the FSM Maritime Baselines, pursuant to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). A delegation from Palikir presented to the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS), which is the UN Office in charge of maritime boundaries, the relevant maps of the FSM together with the list of geographical coordinates depicting the country's baselines and maritime zones. Baselines serve as reference lines from which the territorial sea, the contiguous and the exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and even the continental shelf beyond the EEZ, are measured.

Also on October 25th, the FSM deposited with the United Nations Treaty Section its Maritime Boundary Delimitation Treaty with the United States. Whereas the Charter of the United Nations requires official deposit of this treaty, the FSM is keen on ensuring that treaties it concluded with other countries are officially registered and recognized through the UN process.

The boundary with the United States is the median line between FSM and the U.S. Territory of Guam. The FSM and the U.S. signed the boundary treaty in 2014, during the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Leaders' Meeting in the Republic of Palau. The negotiation on the treaty took place earlier in that year in Honolulu, with legal experts and technical advisers from both sides giving consideration to the international practice of utilizing the equidistance (i.e. equally distant) principle in delimiting their overlapping EEZ. The resulting boundary between FSM and the US is a median (i.e. middle) line between their outermost islands. FSM also used the equidistance principle for its boundaries with Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Marshall Islands and the Republic of Palau, respectively.

The official deposit consists of large-scale charts and hundreds of pages of listings of geographical coordinates defining the baselines, the EEZ, the territorial sea, and the contiguous zone generated in reference to the FSM's baselines.

The coordinates deposited with the United Nations will constitute the FSM's official boundary, and will be used as legal reference lines in enforcing national fisheries laws and regulations that aim to preserve the Nation's sovereign rights with respect to valuable marine resources, especially tuna stocks, within the FSM's waters.

The FSM informed His Excellency António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, that the act of depositing the national baselines is without prejudice to the future establishment of archipelagic baselines, and any future delineation of the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from national baselines.

The FSM has previously filed several claims of extended continental shelf areas beyond the 200 nautical miles of EEZ. The most recent claim, favorably recommended by the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (the “Commission”), was a 600,000-mile joint claim together with Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. Two other areas are awaiting future consideration by the Commission. Additional extended continental shelf area bounded by Palau will be lodged with the Commission in the near future.

The FSM National Government is committed to securing its maritime boundaries and legal entitlements both within and beyond the normal EEZ, as recognized by international law, for the benefit of future generations of Micronesians. To secure these complex and highly technical claims, the Nation has conducted dialogues and negotiations with its neighboring countries in order to minimize the possibility of disputes especially on vast areas of overlapping maritime zones that are often of mutual interest among the FSM’s neighbors.



Pictured Above: Acting Secretary of Justice Leonito Bacalando, Jr. (4th from left) officially presented to Mr. Vladimir Jares, Deputy Director, Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs, United Nations, the Maritime Baselines and Boundary of the Federated States of Micronesia consisting of large charts and four volumes of geographical coordinates defining the baselines and maritime zones of FSM. Joining the occasion were FSM Deputy Permanent Representative Jeem S. Lippwe (far right) and Mr. Alik Jackson, Staff Attorney of the FSM Congress.