

Human Rights Council  
16th Session  
Item 6: UPR Micronesia

17 March 2011

Speaker: Joshua Cooper EIP OceaniaHR

Mr. President,

EIP welcomes the participation of the Micronesia in the UPR process. We echo the encouragement by many states for Micronesia to ratify the core human rights conventions and to immediately implement the articles to guarantee human rights in Oceania. The ratification of the twin covenants is an important step to address the main human rights issues in Micronesia. We look forward to hearing about the timetable for ratification and implementation. We look forward to a more detailed outline and prioritization of the treaties. Understanding capacity restraints, we are willing to assist with training in drafting the required documents and presenting reports to the UN human rights treaty bodies.

The role of civil society is very important to realize rights. Please share with us any developments in the recommendation of Hungary on the initiation of a structured public debate to accelerate accession to all core international treaties.

We also believe the Micronesia should immediately issue an open invitation for the UN special rapporteurs to be able to assist in important human rights issues raised during the UPR. We look forward to assist in future visits of UN special rapporteurs as partners in the Pacific.

Micronesia hopefully realizes the positive impact of the human rights framework through preparation for the UPR. A mechanism to implement followup would be important initiative. We are interested in any measures taken or being planned to create a National Human Rights Commission in conformity with the Paris Principles. We are organizing with fellow Pacific Island States including State of Hawaii and believe it could be a valuable instrument to express the voices of the people. We support the statement of Indonesia to establish such a commission in cooperation and assistance of the international community.

EIP is dedicated to education, specifically human rights education. We note the literacy rate in excess of 90 percent with girl children rate slightly higher than male. We believe human rights education must become part of the curriculum. We hope Micronesia partners with regional and international NGOs and institutions of higher education with its national programs of education. We can work together through the University of Hawaii and East-West Center to develop positive curriculum models in formal classes and popular community education.

The Pacific is one of the only regions without a human rights mechanism. We know many NGOs in the region are interested in creating a regional human rights body for the Pacific and hope the Micronesia would participate in it in the future.

We note the historical significance of women's rights in Micronesia as a matrilineal society. We hope the rights continue to be respected and reflected in national laws rooted in human rights.

The right of self-determination is significant in relation to growing threat of climate change. The fragile ecosystem is threatened and the rights to life, water and food are threatened. The threat of climate change is diverting funds from social services to address adaptation and mitigation campaigns. We agree with the statement of the government that climate change constitute violations of the right to life and liberty and the right to be free from fear and want.

We also note the issue of housing and health care arising for Micronesians in Hawaii.

We support the recommendation from the UK to provide technical assistance in the follow-up to the universal periodic review in addressing the concerns highlighted through this interactive process.

Mahalo.

Joshua Cooper  
Director, Hawaii Center for Human Rights Research & Action  
joshuacooperhawaii@gmail.com