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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Visit to the Federated States of Micronesia

**Report of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights,
Alexandra Xanthaki*, ****

Summary

The Secretariat has the honour to transmit to the Human Rights Council the report of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, Alexandra Xanthaki, on her mission to the Federated States of Micronesia from 2 to 13 June 2025.

The purpose of the visit was to understand, in a spirit of cooperation and constructive dialogue, how the Government endeavours to implement cultural rights and identify good practices in, and possible obstacles to, the promotion and protection of cultural rights in the Federated States of Micronesia. The Special Rapporteur addressed several key issues related to the right of all, on an equal footing, to access and take part in heritage and in cultural life, and to meaningfully take part in the decision-making processes that have an impact on their cultural rights, including conservation policies and sustainable and cultural development policies.

* The present report was submitted to the conference services for processing after the deadline so as to include the most recent information.

** The summary of the report is being circulated in all official languages. The report itself, which is annexed to the summary, is being circulated in the language of submission only.



Annex

Report of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, Alexandra Xanthaki, on her visit to the Federated States of Micronesia

I. Introduction

1. The Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights conducted a mission to the Federated States of Micronesia at the invitation of the Government from 2 to 13 June 2025. She thanks the Government for its invitation and was honoured to be the first special procedure mandate holder to conduct such a visit. She appreciated the openness of the Government in organizing the visit, which allowed her to hold discussions on various aspects of her mandate. She commends the Government for its commitment to the human rights system and for supporting her efforts to see various areas of the country and meet with as many people and communities as she did.

2. During her visit, the Special Rapporteur met officials from four national departments and the National Fisheries Corporation, as well as the speaker of Congress and the heads of the Office of National Archives, Culture and Historic Preservation and the College of Micronesia. The Special Rapporteur visited three states, Pohnpei, Chuuk and Kosrae. In each of them, she held meetings with state and local government officials, as well as with traditional authorities and representatives of the Historic Preservation Offices. She also had the opportunity to visit an outer island, the Tonoas digital hub in Chuuk, Second World War sites and various heritage sites, including Nan Madol, the Lelu ruins and one of the many sunken ships of the Chuuk Lagoon. She regrets that Yap could not be included in the visit.

3. The Special Rapporteur spoke with representatives of 20 civil society organizations, working with seniors, youth, women and persons with disabilities, on such issues as participation in cultural life, heritage protection, the preservation of nature, education and sports. She also spoke with various academics, individual youth and wider communities to gather their views about cultural rights in the State. The Special Rapporteur thanks all of them for their time, commitment and the wealth of information that they shared with her. She also extends her gratitude to the colleagues from the United Nations country team and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for their assistance and support in the preparation and conduct of the visit.

II. General context

4. The Federated States of Micronesia encompass 607 islands (65 inhabited), distributed over 2,900 kilometres in the North Pacific Ocean and comprising four States: Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae. The topography varies from high volcanic islands to low-lying coral atolls, which has contributed to the relationship of the inhabitants with their environment and their ways of life. The distance between the islands contributed to the diversity of Micronesians' expressions, practices and languages. Chuukese, Pohnpeian, Yapese and Kosraean are all widely used and such minority languages as Pingelapese and Mortlockese are also spoken by some. English is the main language of education, commerce and the government at the federal level; the state authorities also operate in the local languages.

5. The Federated States of Micronesia is a constitutional federation with many layers. The Federation is responsible for external affairs, security and the resolution of national problems and assumes a coordination, oversight and facilitating role. The national capital is Palikir (Pohnpei), which is also the seat of the Federal Government and most federal institutions, including the Parliament and the Supreme Court. The states are responsible for most government affairs, including education, health, cultural and social services. Each state has its executive (governor), legislature and judicial system. The local governance level is further subdivided into districts and municipalities, but they have limited powers. In parallel, traditional leaders continue to hold significant influence, particularly at the state level.

6. The Federated States of Micronesia became independent from the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, administered by the United States of America, in 1979. Since then, it has remained in free association with the United States, a relationship which is governed by the Compact of Free Association. Under this agreement, last renewed in 2023 for a period of 20 years, the United States provides grant assistance and trust fund contributions totalling approximately \$3.3 billion, which are channelled towards critical sectors of public policies. The United States has kept control of the defence of the Federated States of Micronesia. The Compact also grants citizens visa-free access to live, work, and study in the United States, and Micronesians are well represented in the United States military. The Compact-induced rise in migration has led to a negative net migration rate that the population growth rate does not compensate. Hence, the Federated States of Micronesia's 2023 census estimated that there had been a 31% population decline since 2010.

7. The economy of the Federated States of Micronesia is characterized by a heavy reliance on subsistence activities, such as farming and fishing. Commercial activities within the federation, and even more so exports, are limited. Local commercial fishing is only done on a small scale and the sale of fishing rights, often to foreign companies, is regulated. The major source of income is the service sector, including government employment, employing two thirds of the workforce. Public projects and government employment rely heavily on foreign grants from Australia, China and the United States. Foreign grant income is estimated at 43% of the gross domestic product.¹ Land ownership is protected from foreign acquisition, making the country less attractive to foreign companies.

8. Outside the main cities, many areas in the Federated States of Micronesia suffer from a lack of infrastructure and poor health and education systems. There are no organized transportation options between most of the islands, which impacts particularly young people, elders and persons with disabilities. As the economy depends to a great extent on external flows, it is vulnerable to the shortage of commercial flights, the costs of fuel, imported goods, including food, and business services. Climate change, particularly sea-level rise, further threatens food security and economic stability, necessitating urgent adaptation measures supported by donor funding.

9. The Special Rapporteur was happy to meet a lot of inhabitants who emphasized to her how content they are with their life in the Federated States of Micronesia and the special relationship they have with their communities and the environment. They repeatedly expressed their wish to protect their ways of life despite the possible challenges this entails.

A. International human rights framework

10. The Federated States of Micronesia joined the United Nations in 1991 and is in favour of multilateralism. The country has ratified three of the nine main United Nations human rights instruments: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (in 2004); Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (in 2016); and Convention on the Rights of the Child (in 1993), including the two protocols thereto (in 2012 and 2015). The country has also endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and, although most Micronesians no longer fall under its protection, it continues to apply to the non-dominant and marginalized communities.

11. The Government indicated to the Special Rapporteur its willingness to become a party to the two International Covenants on Human Rights, but admitted that current institutional weaknesses would affect its ability to implement the associated obligations. Shortly before the visit, a four-day capacity-building workshop on economic, social and cultural rights had been organized in the country with the support of the United Nations multi-country office, an opportunity the Government was interested in repeating. The Special Rapporteur highlighted that steps towards the ratification of both Covenants should be prioritized.

12. Ratification of international law instruments is submitted to Congress. Following ratification, States are required to amend any relevant laws that would result inconsistent with the newly adopted international obligations or to adopt the additional legal instruments and

¹ Department of Education, education sector strategic plan (2025–2029), May 2025.

measures necessary. The Special Rapporteur was informed that the ratified instruments were being implemented, but that progress was slow. Measures have been taken for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, especially family violence laws protecting women in three States; and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which can be cited directly in courts. More resources need to be dedicated to the implementation of these treaties as a matter of urgency.

13. At the time of the visit, the Federated States of Micronesia was submitting their national report for the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review in October 2025, for review in January 2026. At the national level, an interministerial task force on human rights was created to prepare this review. The Special Rapporteur hopes that her visit will foster a wider consideration of cultural rights in this context.

B. Constitutional and legislative framework

14. The Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia guarantees fundamental human rights and establishes a separation of powers. The right to education is recognized in article IV of the Constitution and title 40 of the Code of the Federated States of Micronesia Code (National Code). The freedom of expression and association, union rights and personal autonomy are also protected by the Constitution and generally respected. These are important rights for the exercise of cultural rights.

15. Protection against discrimination based on race, sex, sexual orientation, language or religion is inscribed in chapter 1, section 107, of the National Code, and applies to all areas of public life. The prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex, race, ancestry, national origins, language or social status is reinforced under article IV, section 4. However, no laws address discrimination based on age, citizenship, political opinion or health status. The Special Rapporteur encourages the Government to broaden the scope of anti-discrimination protection, to be consistent with international standards and to strengthen the mechanisms and penalties for violations.

16. According to the Constitution, “the traditions of the people of the Federated States of Micronesia may be protected by statute. If challenged as violative of Article IV, protection of Micronesian tradition shall be considered a compelling social purpose warranting such governmental action” (art. V, sect. 2). Under title 26 of the National Code, the Institute for Micronesian History and Culture is established and its powers (chap. 2, sects. 201–203), historic preservation procedures (chap. 3, sects. 301–305) and the obligations to protect artefacts against unauthorized transportation, defacement and destruction (chap. 4, sects. 401 and 402) are defined. In each state, the statute may provide further precisions about the roles and obligations regarding cultural and historic preservation.

17. The Government recognizes the diverse ethnic groups as a cornerstone of national identity, reflecting the cultural and linguistic mosaic of the Micronesian heritage (preamble of the Constitution). This approach has facilitated the cultural autonomy of each state, centring the main ethnic groups while fostering national cohesion. The Constitution provides a legal basis for state-level efforts to implement cultural rights, but it does not mandate specific programmes. State autonomy over cultural and linguistic matters leads to more locally suited approaches, but also more disparities in operationalizing cultural rights.

18. State laws concerning heritage protection are generic, covering the identification, protection and preservation of Indigenous and non-Indigenous sites and traditions on land and under water. Only Chuuk State has a specific law for the protection of underwater heritage, which applies only to the submerged Japanese Second World War sites and is administered by the Department of Marine Resources not the Heritage Protection Office.

19. At the time of the visit, the country’s new strategic development plan 2024–2043 was still under discussion. In the previous strategic development plan 2004–2024, culture was a cross-cutting area of priority and the purpose of education was defined as preserving the heritage of the past and respecting the diversity of cultures. The Special Rapporteur hopes that her visit may contribute to clarifying how the obligations towards cultural rights can be

leveraged in multiple ways in the strategic development plan to achieve various objectives, especially the right of everyone to take part in cultural life and in decision-making processes, the enhancement of youth and women participation in society, the recognition of everyone's heritage and the improvement of local knowledge of heritage, access to adequate education and the use of local knowledge in climate change mitigation.

C. System of cultural governance

20. The executive branch of the Federal Government does not have a department of culture, as cultural concerns are considered to lie outside its responsibilities. However, the head of the Office of National Archives, Culture and Historic Preservation is included in discussions within the Cabinet. That body is represented in each of the States, where most cultural responsibilities lie. The Office of National Archives, Culture and Historic Preservation is tasked with ensuring coordination, providing financial support to the states' Historic Preservation Offices for bigger projects, including through the development of partnerships for technical assistance, such as with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The Office of National Archives, Culture and Historic Preservation receives funding from the United States Ministry of Interior's National Park Service, which is distributed between the Historic Preservation Offices. It is required to report on how the funding is used. Historic Preservation Offices are responsible for local heritage inventory and preservation measures. Each office defines its priorities with the governor and the traditional authorities, in full respect of the diversity of the peoples on the territory.

21. Sports and cultural facilities, such as cinemas, theatres, cultural centres, libraries and archives, are very limited across the territory. Existing infrastructure is concentrated in the national and state capital cities. At the time of the visit, only Kosrae had a state museum and there was no national museum or archive. The authorities need to dedicated public money to cultural infrastructures so that country's inhabitants can continue to learn about their past and practise their cultures.

22. Responsibilities in the field of education are divided between the National Department of Education, which sets national teacher trainings, student assessments and curriculum standards, coordinates funding and oversees tertiary education by the College of Micronesia, and the states' Departments of Education, which provide primary and secondary education, implement at a minimum the national standards and adapt the curriculum to local needs.

23. Nan Madol is the sole UNESCO World Heritage Site in the Federated States of Micronesia. The significant conservation challenges it faces, as detailed in UNESCO decision 46 COM 7A.39 (2024), have led to its retention on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Ongoing threats to its outstanding universal value include inadequate legal and management frameworks, uncontrolled vegetation growth, stonework collapse, storm surges, erosion, siltation and unregulated tourism development within the buffer zone, particularly the Para Nuii Resort. In 2004, Yap stone money sites in Palau and Yap were placed on the tentative list for submission to the World Heritage List. In 2021, traditional navigation knowledge (wayfinding) and canoe-building was inscribed on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.

24. Three important UNESCO heritage conventions complete the legal and normative framework of the Federated States of Micronesia. The Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (ratified in 2002), the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (in 2013) and the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (in 2018). By ensuring the protection of heritage assets, these instruments enable access to and participation in cultural resources that are necessary for the development and expression of peoples' identity.

III. Challenges of subsidiarity

25. The Special Rapporteur identified a series of challenges emanating from the coordination between the various levels of public authorities. In a country that has limited resources, priority should be given to achieving as much complementarity as possible.

26. The first challenges come from the country's formal governance apparatus. The governmental structure and the Constitution established a union of autonomous states, which should facilitate democratic and participatory decision-making. However, efficient subsidiarity needs clear communication about the international obligations undertaken by the country and accountability for the decisions taken. The federal government level cannot deliver on its national coordination responsibilities and international law obligations to respect, protect and implement human rights without consistent two-way communication on these matters. The Special Rapporteur was sometimes under the impression that respect for each level's role was justifying a resistance to engage with one another constructively, while both the federal and state levels pointed to the other levels' responsibilities when requested to adopt positive measures. When accountability for human rights is not clear, there is a risk of a protection gap for vulnerable and marginalized people. The federal authorities cannot ignore or remain uninformed about the implementation of international obligations in each state. The Federal Government must strengthen its understanding of the principle of subsidiarity and establish clear information and reporting lines, so that each governance level can assume its share of the responsibility in delivering real results to Micronesians. Adopting a federal action plan for cultural rights would greatly facilitate the coordinated realization of the obligations of the Federated States of Micronesia.

27. The second challenge come from the interaction with the traditional systems, which the governmental apparatus has not completely superseded. Chiefs and traditional leaders, including religious ones, still play an important role and command respect. Even if their powers have changed, governmental authorities do not feel entitled to tell them what to do. In some places, such as Pohnpei, traditional chiefs and elected governmental officials are considered as equal levels of authority, with no obligations towards one another. When matters of human rights and abuse of power arise, human rights obligations are clear and supersede any tradition.

28. Challenges arise where the traditional and institutional systems of governance have overlapping authorities. In article V, section 1, of the Federal Constitution, it is affirmed that traditional leaders retain their recognized roles and functions and can – but do not have to – be assigned formal and functional roles at any government level, leaving their role unresolved. State constitutions may assign active roles to traditional leaders (sect. 3 of the Federal Constitution). Considering once more the diversity of traditional structures and their importance across Micronesian islands and states, their role will necessarily be different in each state. In the Yapese State Constitution, the councils of chiefs hold veto power over legislation affecting traditional activities or customs (a legislative role) and will often be called to mediate customary disputes informally (a judicial role). In theory, the court should maintain the final authority, however, in practice, custom and tradition sometimes overrides judicial processes. No role for traditional leadership is outlined as part of the Chuuk, Kosrae and Pohnpei State structures.

29. The Special Rapporteur recommends that much greater efforts be dedicated to recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of both governance systems and to articulating their complementarity. For example, the judicial system of state and federal courts is sometimes perceived as institutionalizing revenge, rather than establishing compensation and reconciliation for offences. Accordingly, when police are not involved, some would prefer that the traditional mediation processes and customary apology seeking forgiveness be applied first, with the court system coming as complement when these processes fail to restore justice and harmony. Such a solution is already used in the application of the states' Family Protection Acts, where customary apologies can be factored in, while legal cases continue and provide further guarantees of non-recurrence. In most cases, traditional settlement processes do not prevent the use of the law. Conversely, when traditional leaders erode their legitimacy by failing to defend all members of their communities or to redistribute the donations and money that they receive to their people, governmental measures must restore fairness and protection.

30. A third set of challenges arise from the country's transition from a Trust Territory to a full independent State. With independence, the Indigenous Peoples in the Federated States of Micronesia have become the formal governmental decision makers, in charge of establishing the governance structure, of guaranteeing the implementation of human rights

for all and of setting out plans for the future. They are no longer non-dominant elements of the population that fall under the international legal protections for Indigenous Peoples. As such, they must take measures to ensure the protection of their identity, heritage, values and practices as peoples. The Special Rapporteur was of the view that this new role, and the corresponding obligations to drive the human rights discussions and deliver results, had not fully been asserted by the traditional and elected authorities.

31. In order to meet its international obligations, the national Government and its public bodies must learn from the state, local and traditional authorities about the obstacles in materializing cultural rights, identify with them avenues to address such obstacles and work together towards campaigns, legislation and measures to eradicate them. They must also find ways to orient, guide and support the implementation of cultural rights across all states. In their facilitating and coordination function, the federal authorities must furthermore ensure the states have the knowledge, tools and means necessary to implement cultural rights. For example, while respecting the states' responsibilities towards the right to education, the federal authorities could produce guidance on international standards, request targeted progress reports from each State or support the dissemination of examples of successful measures, initiatives and practices and their impacts across the states.

IV. Strengths in and obstacles to realizing cultural rights

32. The territory of the Federated States of Micronesia has been under the control of various foreign powers throughout its history, each of them impacting the cultural ecosystems of the islands. Although its structure was imposed by the Trust Administration, the Federated States of Micronesia was established as a conscious alliance between the various groups. This history explains in part its current struggle to define a common identity and national trajectory, while respecting the aspiration to maintain the diversity within.

33. Throughout her visit, the Special Rapporteur had the impression that human rights were sometimes perceived as a tool of colonialism. This could not be further from truth. Human rights, she insisted, support individuals and groups to develop and express themselves in dignity, empower them and protect them from arbitrary power, in the same way that cultural structures and communities should. In this context, she commended the decision of the Government to focus on cultural rights. Cultural rights protect the development and expression of cultural identities. At their core, they empower individuals and groups to express their humanity, world views and the meanings that they attribute to their existence and development through various forms of human expressions.² This can include the arts, cultural heritage or languages, as well as sciences, knowledge, convictions, religions and beliefs, sports and games, rites and ceremonies, production methods, technology, institutions and livelihoods, connections with nature and the environment, food and dress. They also encompass the rights to access and participate in heritage and resources that facilitate these processes of identification and development.

34. A strategic focus on cultural rights could hence help the Government leverage the unique cultural assets of its peoples to guide the country in its development process.

A. Strength of cultural ties

35. The Special Rapporteur was impressed with the strength of peoples' cultural ecosystems. In a world where solidarity has failed and many States have weakened common values and understandings, Micronesians, despite their vast diversity, have maintained solidarity and the notion of the common good at the heart of their interactions. There is a remarkable and profound respect for and understanding of cultural diversity. On many occasions, the Special Rapporteur was reminded that Micronesians generally have the strongest sense of identity with their island, then with their state and, only after, with the nation. The richness of multiple identities, different and overlapping, are celebrated in the Federated States of Micronesia. Many responses to her questions highlighted that practices

² See www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-cultural-rights.

were different depending on the island and that there could be no generalization or affirmation of the precise perimeter and group of people for which the response applied. This awareness is equally present with authorities, who avoid imposing a single, unified voice or identity on Micronesians. The freedom to adopt various cultural references is commendable. In this context, the Special Rapporteur was surprised that the country had not yet ratified the UNESCO instruments protecting cultural diversity.

36. Some strong shared values shape society. The need to protect Indigenous knowledge and practices is increasingly recognized. The importance of the family and of sharing power at all levels greatly affect the way people interact. It was long the practice that traditional leaders would call on all people to contribute to achieving a task for the good of the community. Information and storytelling rely on sharing power, as one person will usually not tell all. These practices demonstrate Micronesians' strong understanding of shared responsibilities, the necessary flip side of shared rights. When articulated with equality, they can greatly contribute to establishing strong democratic institutions and participatory processes.

37. There is an intense feeling of belonging and communal life, a deep-rooted value for caring and respecting one another, which is maintained by cultural practices, religious beliefs and social norms, not the laws. Taking responsibilities in family affairs, participating in celebrations and dedicating time and means to the community are taken seriously. These duties may overlap with full-time employment, creating tensions that need to be negotiated. For many Micronesians, paid work is to obtain access money but is not the main element defining who they are in society nor their daily schedule. Nevertheless, the introduction of money is gradually impacting these systems, as Micronesians who have paid employment are increasingly expected to contribute towards their social duties in the form of money and imported goods.

38. Throughout the country, the value of caring serves as a protection against domestic abuse, child abuse and poverty, as no member of the family or community should be left to face difficulties alone. Women's groups, churches and family networks form the first line of protection and mediation. The Special Rapporteur was informed that incidences of domestic abuse rose where nuclear families distanced themselves from the community and traditional systems. Reporting abuses to law officers comes only as last resort and is perceived as a failure of the community in taking care of its people, which could represent a risk for some individuals. For better and for worse, the island context and close-tied communities make privacy about individual and family matters impossible.

B. Impact of migration

39. The Compact of Free Association has triggered a shift in the migration patterns of Micronesians. It is estimated that at least 20% of Micronesians have migrated abroad (approximately 20,000 persons), a majority to the United States, and about 40% of households receive remittances from the diaspora.

40. While migration offers important opportunities for economic remittances and skills transfer, it also exposes vulnerabilities related to "brain drain", shortages of skilled workers and community depopulation, particularly affecting rural areas. Young persons are missing the opportunity to contribute to substantial farming and fishing and to the health services, and emerging areas of priority for policies and development, such as resilience to climate change and environmental protection, suffer from the absence of educated local talents to take the lead. Easy access to migration for cash opportunities has also discouraged entrepreneurship and the creation of services and initiatives in the country and fed into the dependency on import products.

41. Young persons who the Special Rapporteur met wish to take advantage of the opportunity to go abroad and explore other things, but then want to come back – a sentiment shared with other generations. She was told that many who had spent time outside of the country appreciated the economic and academic opportunities abroad but had also become more appreciative of various aspects of life in the Federated States of Micronesia, such as the slower rhythm and simplicity, the sense of community, the interrelatedness between people

and the ability to resist consumerism. Their desire to return often conflicts with the struggle they experience to find economic and work opportunities and therefore to contribute to the social dynamics. An undue impact of migration has been to monetarize exchanges that used to be contracted in kind or in time. The need to contribute economically to family events and social responsibilities has become one of the main drivers of migration.

42. Despite the strong cultural ties, migration in such high numbers remains a risk factor for the erosion of traditional ways of life, as it interrupts the transmission of practices that convey important values. This is reportedly particularly true in Kosrae, where empty houses show the weakening of the fabric of the community. It can also lead to a generational disconnect, between those who did not experience migration at all and are anchored in the social fabric, and those who have spent many years outside the country and do not find a function upon their return. Government officials shared with the Special Rapporteur their concerns about adequate replacement for governmental positions when those currently in function retire.

43. In this context, the Government should closely consider the demand for the creation of an office tasked with developing and maintaining the relationship with Micronesian migrants. Enhancing migration governance, investing in diaspora engagement strategies and integrating migration considerations into national development and climate adaptation plans could ensure that mobility contributes positively to the country's sustainable development.

C. Access to and knowledge of heritage

44. The preservation of local histories and of the sense of identity relies both on oral accounts and on physical assets, which strengthen each other. In the Federated States of Micronesia, both forms of heritage recording need much more attention. The country does not have any museums recounting its own history nor a space where the various groups could record their own perspectives on their past. The main archive about the country is situated in neighbouring Guam and most of the documents it contains tell the story of the Federated States of Micronesia from an outsider's perspective. Furthermore, those in charge of the archives in Guam are reportedly aware of their weaknesses in ensuring local participation and the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and practices. The Special Rapporteur understands that certain stories cannot be written down or made available to everyone. It is for Micronesians to find adequate support for the conservation of their heritage and to decide which stories and resources are fit for museums, exhibitions or history curricula. However, they need to find a way to record their histories, songs and heroic events and people, so that all Micronesians, including newer and future generations can learn and benefit from them.

45. A consequence of the absence of museum spaces and archives where people can see and learn about their heritage resources is that knowledge fails to protect artefacts from illicit trafficking. That knowledge is critical for the training of custom officers to enable them to perform their protection duties. At the time of the visit, the few artefacts that had been previously displayed in a museum area in the Micronesian capital had been stored away. The Special Rapporteur was given a presentation on the project of creating a museum exhibition space to be established in a new conference centre in Paliki, which should also house the Office of National Archives, Culture and Historic Preservation. The creation of this space would be an important step forward in improving access to cultural heritage. Other steps to consider would be to record or digitalize heritage resources and make them accessible online through the websites of the Office of National Archives, Culture and Historic Preservation and the state Historic Preservation Offices or to arrange touring exhibitions across the country.

46. All inhabitants must be able to enjoy cultural sites and their preservation must be safeguarded. The extraordinary site of Nan Madol, and the historical knowledge drawn therefrom, is not easily accessible, including to school groups and researchers. First, there are various administrative and economic obstacles: permission to access is controlled by the chief, who can ask for a fee. Those who own the land may also ask for a fee for passage. None of those fees contribute to the maintenance of the sites themselves. Second, there are physical challenges to reaching and exploring the site, which depend on the tides, if coming by boat, the maintenance of the access road, if coming by car, and the maintenance of the ruins and the sites' paths themselves. Finally, there are challenges relating to access to the

history and understanding of the site, as the knowledge about it is not systematized nor made available or publicized to visitors. The house that was built for that purpose cannot be opened for lack of funding to pay for staff. Everyone has the right to know, understand, enter, visit, make use of, maintain, exchange and develop cultural heritage, so the authorities have an obligation to ensure the site is adequately accessible to all financially, physically and intellectually. It is particularly critical that the historical, architectural, natural and cultural knowledge relating to Nan Madol be harvested, systematized and made available to all Micronesians.

47. Maintenance, study and mediation of the site have been rendered difficult by the lack of clarity about the responsibilities attributed to the traditional, state and federal authorities towards the site. Although by law the land is State property, there is still ambiguity relating to the respect due to the king. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee identified concrete avenues to improve the situation in 2024,³ which the Pohnpei Historic Preservation Office is slowly addressing. However, their efforts are limited by the fees and permission that also apply to them. The Special Rapporteur commends the dedication and passion of those who take care of the site and recommends that their practical knowledge about Nan Maol be integrated into the mediation efforts, as an exercise of their right to participate in the identification, interpretation and development of cultural heritage.

48. In contrast, the ancient ceremonial and political site of the Lelu ruins in Kosrae is freely accessible to all. It is traversed by a pathway that some local children use daily to attend their school and benefited from the War on Weeds and the Resilient Ecosystems – Resilient Communities programmes, targeting invasive species in Yap and Kosrae, providing further protection. The state museum in Kosrae is also easily accessible to all and active in recording and documenting the evolution of heritage practices. These efforts must be further supported.

49. In Chuuk, the presence of more than 50 sunken Second World War ships in the lagoon raises important heritage and environmental challenges. Many of the shipwrecks retain considerable integrity, making the area well known among diving enthusiasts. This represents a major economic resource to many Chuukese and has given rise not only to diving tourism activities, but also to dynamite fishing and artefact souveniring. Chapter 8 of the Chuuk Lagoon Monument Law prohibits the removal of artefacts and allows for funds to be collected through a mandatory dive guide and the payment of a \$30 annual fee per diver. However, currently, the fees go to the visitors' bureau, not to the protection of the site. The Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage contains clear indications about how underwater sites should be managed.⁴ Public authorities must ensure that resources are made available to the Historic Preservation Offices to keep the site safe and accessible for all. In compliance with the right to a healthy environment recently integrated into the Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia, in addition to the international obligations pertaining to the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, the authorities urgently need to remove the approximately 3 million gallons of oil still in the tanks of the sunken ships in the lagoon, which represent a threat to both the site and the environment as a whole.

³ See the relevant 2024 decisions of UNESCO: decision 46 COM 7A.39, identifying six high-priority measures: (a) vegetation management to prevent root damage to stone structures; (b) the appointment of a permanent Property Manager; (c) the finalization and adoption of legislation LB392 establishing a managing authority; (d) adoption of the master plan for the sustainable conservation of Nan Madol, the site management plan and the sustainable tourism plan; (e) the establishment of processes for the Heritage Impact Assessment ensuring compliance with the 2022 Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context; (f) the preparation of a Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger, in consultation with the Advisory Bodies; and decisions 41 COM 7B.56 (2017) and 43 COM 7A.43 (2019), addressing the problematic construction of the Para Nui resort inside the buffer area.

⁴ To preserve sites in situ, as a first option; to stop commercial exploitation of sites and artefacts; to facilitate international collaboration; to encourage public access; to maintain sovereign rights; and to ensure that – where excavation is permitted – it is carried out in accordance with international best practice, i.e. the rules concerning activities directed at underwater cultural heritage, annexed to the Convention.

50. The Special Rapporteur was also made aware of the challenges of transmitting seafaring navigation and canoe-building knowledge. Inscribed in 2021 on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, the preservation of those living knowledge and skills remains fragile. The inscription process gave the practices more visibility and provided opportunities for exchanges and collaborations between the Micronesian states, as well as with neighbouring island countries. Navigation schools exist in Chuuk and Yap, and there is a more institutionalized training programme at the Micronesian Area Research Centre in Guam. The two-day celebration of building and sailing traditional canoes, held annually by the Yap Traditional Navigation Society, and the island festival celebrating the role of the canoe in linking the various island peoples, held every four years, are commendable efforts to keep the tradition accessible and part of the present.

51. Many of the actions that could strengthen the right to enjoy heritage in the Federated States of Micronesia do not require much funding. By adopting a participatory, bottom-up approach and encouraging people to contribute to the inventory, mapping and documenting of cultural resources (through stories, songs and practices and their meanings), the authorities could greatly facilitate the exercise of cultural rights related to heritage and develop valuable knowledge networks.

52. It is inevitable that practices evolve over time. The use of Sakau, for example, is said to have evolved from being part of ceremonies for special occasions to a commercial practice, readily available for all to consume regularly. On the coast, initiatives increasingly combine traditional approaches to fishing with modern aquaculture technologies. Cultural rights protect the right of each person to be part of the decisions about how cultural practices evolve, so that they may continue to carry identity, values and meanings even if they change. Culture is dynamic, not static. To take part meaningfully in such evolution, people need to access knowledge about the practices and their significance, but also about the potential negative effects of those practices. Where new information and understanding show that traditional practices are harmful to health, nature or the rights of certain persons, they need to be re-evaluated by the group itself, adapted or discontinued.

D. Education system

53. The education system still has a strong colonial legacy. Its structure, pedagogical approaches and content have long concentrated on United States history and culture, to the detriment of the diversity of local and regional knowledge.⁵ That system succeeded in achieving a high youth literacy rate (approximately 98.8%), but it has also separated children from their cultural environment. Education can play a big role in decolonizing habits and help centre the Federated States of Micronesia in education.

54. The national Government must ensure that education systems respect and celebrate the country's cultural resources. First, Indigenous languages should be integrated into all levels of education, alongside English.⁶ It is essential that children are taught in their mother tongues. The Special Rapporteur noted that local languages had been added across all states, but specific budget allocations for them are often limited and rely on external grants. By secondary school (grades 9–12), English still dominates because it is used for national exams and college preparation. Second, the contents of education are crucial. The Special Rapporteur was told repeatedly about the lack of teaching on the history, geography and political institutions of the country and the region and the absence of information on Micronesian figures in the curriculum, including those who fought for independence. More educators need to be trained in local history, technologies and methodologies and adapted materials need to be developed.

⁵ A 1945 directive from the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Ocean Area stated explicitly the intent to “inculcate respect for and loyalty to the United States by teaching the history, customs, and beliefs of the United States and its people.”

⁶ Until the independence in 1980, “Indigenous tongues” were considered inadequate to operate in the modern world; thus, English remained the primary language of instruction. The Government has since recognized the cultural significance of the country's Indigenous languages.

55. The legal and policy framework to integrate more local and culturally appropriate content in education already exists. Strengthening cultural education is one of the four pillars of the national education sector strategic plan, encompassing instruction in languages and local knowledge and practices. Each State Department of Education can adjust the national minimum curriculum standards to suit their own context.⁷

56. Some initiatives to include Micronesian elements in the curricula have started to emerge, many as projects supported by foreign funds, such as the Secretariat of the Pacific Community or the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Kosrae elders have been involved by the Department of Education in transmitting traditional knowledge and stories in schools. In Yap, a state policy could be established to recognize two elders from the community, one man and one woman, as cultural teachers. However, in Pohnpei, cultural educators, who are not certified teachers, cannot be included on the payroll of the Department without a change in the law. In Pohnpei, educational materials have recently been developed for grades 3–8 of elementary education in local languages and included in curricula 13 topics, such as local history, carving, canoe-making, weave baskets, husk coconuts, dances and traditional garments. These should serve as basis and be adapted for further use. The staff and resources necessary to effect the decolonization of education must be integrated into the annual state education budget, so all Micronesians students can benefit. Public authorities at all levels must bring important political will and consistency to the issue.

57. Knowledge about oneself must of course not isolate Micronesians from the rest of the world, so teachings about human rights, gender and ethnic equality, citizenship, the Constitution and the governmental apparatus should also be integrated into the curriculum, to provide openings and bridges for others. Education must also produce confident Micronesians with critical skills who will bravely shape the future of the country's societies. The Department of Education should also continue its participatory discussion on mainstreaming disability sensitivity and basic skills through the education system.

58. The areas of study in tertiary education should open up perspectives for Micronesian young persons to stay in the country or to return to it and equip them with sets of skills adapted to island life. The College of Micronesia already offers courses in Micronesian studies and business administration and trains future teachers who will be able to participate in the decolonization of education. In the context of climate change, some tertiary education courses could be aimed at sustainable marine management and resource administration, building on traditional methodologies and approaches. The Special Rapporteur agreed with the College's emphasis on developing cooperation and complementarity with neighbouring countries, exploring the possibility of offering digital courses and shared programmes with other island countries, such as the online college of the Marine Science Programme. These options can greatly increase the possibilities for students to complete their tertiary studies, fully or in part, from their island. In Tonoas, the newly opened digital hub would have the facilities to make this a reality, which would represent an important alternative to Micronesian students' high dependency on foreign money for scholarships to study abroad.

59. The Special Rapporteur also commends the role of Pohnpei Public Library in providing support to schools that do not have librarians, keeping resources for teaching Indigenous languages and contributing to cultural education by organizing the public reading of stories with local storytellers. With its 20,000 books and good Wi-Fi connection, the library plays an important role as a third space for informal and continuous learning, which inhabitants appreciate and use.

E. Participation in cultural life

60. Public authorities have the responsibility to provide the conditions and the space for every Micronesian to exercise their right to take part in cultural life fully. Ensuring this right

⁷ For example, under title 22 of the Pohnpei Historic and Cultural Act of 2002, a Historic and Cultural Preservation Review Board was established, which has a responsibility, among others, to "advise, review and comment upon educational programs that inform the public on the value and significance of historic properties and the importance of preserving the historical and cultural attributes of Pohnpei, including the use of historical materials for educational and scientific purposes".

may take the form of providing financial, material and in-kind support for organizations and groups that foster and encourage cultural practices, as well as support for events featuring cultural expressions. Ideally, initiatives should come from inhabitants, should be facilitated or supported by federal, state and local authorities and should encourage the development of collaborations and partnerships with civil society actors.

61. The Special Rapporteur was informed of various positive examples where the public authorities had supported local initiatives, such as funding oral history projects in Pohnpei, sponsoring cultural festivals featuring prominently Chuukese storytelling and performances; supporting community radio broadcasts in Yapese and elder-led language workshops; and funding cultural events emphasizing Kosraean songs and stories. In providing support, the authorities need to avoid any undue discrimination and ensure respect for diversity, so that opportunities exist for various voices to be represented, not only the dominant ones.

62. The authorities also have a responsibility to give value to the participation of all. The Special Rapporteur was glad to hear about the involvement of youth cultural groups in celebration days and to learn that young dancers, after practice, could use the codes of traditional dances to tell their own stories, becoming active contributors. She was also impressed with the recognition of the critical role of elders in teaching languages and oral traditions informally and how their community-led storytelling helped maintain fluency in the Ulithian and Woleaian languages. However, she was also informed that the youth felt excluded from discussions about the present and future of the country, that, to date, persons with disabilities did not have a guaranteed access to Pohnpei Public Library and that senior citizens had few public programmes and activities specifically for them.

63. Many of the 500 civil society organizations registered with the Government at the time of the visit were not active. Organizations seem to be created to respond to specific projects and dissolved when the grants run out. This is a pity, as sustainability over time is necessary to build trust and social capital and for new habits to form.⁸ The authorities should consider alternative systems to support the continuity of civil society engagement. There should be ways for organizations and communities to apply directly for public funding to conduct cultural activities.

64. The right to participate in sports is an integral part of the right to take part in cultural life. The Special Rapporteur commends the individual commitment of some of the men and women with whom she spoke to making sports activities part of everyday life. However, she regrets that the authorities are not taking a more active role in fulfilling this right for all. This could be done by encouraging more sports activities in public schools, including Indigenous sports and games disciplines, to ensure continuity and equality in opportunities to participate. Whereas trainers might partly be able to ensure their salaries through the costs of memberships, the public authorities, starting at the local and municipality level but with the support of the state and federal authorities, should take more responsibility in developing and maintaining sports facilities and infrastructures and ensuring that they are accessible to all who wish to practise.

Participation of women in cultural life

65. Traditional systems across the Federated States of Micronesia recognize the various roles of women that have an impact on their ability to take part fully in cultural life. Some women are reportedly very involved in making decisions, including because of their traditional ownership of the land, and may have a more dynamic type of power, but most are not expected to speak out on decisions. In each state that she visited, the Special Rapporteur met with women who took active roles in government and society and with women's organizations that supported each other and their larger communities in various manners. Opportunities for women exist, but gender inequality is still evident at multiple levels. Women and girls face barriers to empowerment owing to their expected role in taking care of the house and family, and their limited access to financial resources, entrepreneurial

⁸ An example is the Geo-literacy Education in Micronesia, a project that seems to have ceased after six years of work to create a network of local groups across the country with valuable local knowledge about nature and its protection and management.

opportunities and support for small businesses. In many parts of the country, despite legal equality, cultural norms pressure women to drop out of school if they are pregnant, discourage them from returning post-childbirth, and hinder them from taking office and public responsibilities.

66. Whereas many roles need to be fulfilled in society, from a human rights perspective, women should have the same rights as men to develop and fulfil their potential, including through access to education and work opportunities, and to choose freely in which capacity they wish to contribute. Discussions about the position of women in society must be brought to the forefront, to challenge the hesitation to change. Cultural norms cannot legitimize violations of their human rights or force them into taking on only certain functions, such as that of “silent chief”. The authorities should consider adopting temporary special measures to break gender stereotypes and strengthen conditions for real equality.

67. A lack of formal sexual education and the absence of informal spaces to discuss menstrual health maintain a general shame that impedes many girls and women from taking part in sports, in particular in swimming. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that many sports trainers are men. Experiences with World Aquatics in addressing menstrual health as part of training have produced good results and can inform the practice for other team sports, such as basketball, volleyball and baseball. It was reported that a United Nations Population Fund project had used theatre to inform the audience about consent, which is a commendable approach that should be duplicated.

68. In many islands of the country, the matrilineal transmission of land used to provide women with differentiated, but competing, powers to those of men, which contributed to their social protection and functions. Successive colonial administrations eroded those practices, both in law and in practice, until decisions about land were entrusted to the states. Where some families still operate according to the matrilineal systems, other families’ land has been divided between the male children, entrusted to collective ownership or transferred to only one son at some point. Accordingly, across the Federated States of Micronesia, women’s rights to land and their related powers differ greatly and some may need the protection of public institutions and the rule of law more than others.

69. Considering their importance in maintaining and transmitting cultural meanings and practices, it is up to the women to decide freely whether practices violate their rights. They should be represented equally in decisions about which cultural practices to uphold, adapt or abandon. The national Government must ensure that such dialogue continues in an informed way, taking the opportunity of reporting to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women as an incentive to set benchmarks in the implementation of women’s rights. It is also up to the Government to educate society, create properly functioning shelters or take other measures that the women themselves value.

F. Vision of development

70. In many ways, the peoples of the Federated States of Micronesia and political leaders do not aspire to follow the development paths taken by other islands of the region, such as Guam or Hawaii. Most people with whom the Special Rapporteur spoke defined development as better care for people and nature, increased education, food security, self-sufficiency, and a sustainable nature and water management. Micronesians seem to agree in wanting to avoid a detachment from their ways of life and cultural practices and a weakening of their distinct identities, proving that there is a different conception of richness. They affirmed that they cannot change the past, but they want to be the ones deciding how the country should go forward. The government has to facilitate the discussion about the vision of development Micronesians want and define with them a new, bold and different development pathway, one that will pursue democratic ideals and self-determination while being anchored in the values of their peoples.

71. The development paths favoured by the colonial powers and the Compact of Free Association have moved Micronesians away from a self-sufficient economy and towards a high dependency on foreign grants. For many, the introduction of the cash economy has justified harmful practice towards nature and led to the import of objects people do not need.

Modernization, Micronesians insist, does not mean westernization. The cultural rights-based approach requires a bottom-up process to decisions that have an impact on cultural life, the inclusion of all structures, a self-led process and resistance to the one-size-fits-all models of development that donors may encourage.

72. The cultural know-how of Micronesians must be at the centre of the discussions. During her visit, the Special Rapporteur heard of traditional knowledge systems that offer critical resources for climate adaptation and resilience, customary land and marine management practices that protect the ocean and the fish, Indigenous navigation, local approaches to agricultural production, traditional medicinal sciences and collective decision-making structures that provide models for sustainable adaptation strategies rooted in local context and cultural continuity. To the extent that free, prior and informed consent is respected, such methodologies and know-how must be identified, recorded and celebrated. The public authorities must inventory such methodologies and use them in developing the country.

73. Furthermore, if unique adaptation strategies integrating traditional knowledge are developed in full consultation with the populations and communities concerned, ensuring that cultural rights are respected, they could benefit not only the Federated States of Micronesia, but be upheld as virtuous models. The Micronesian expertise in the sustainable and culturally appropriate management of its natural resources might become a unique contribution to the progress of humanity.

74. Important stepping stones have already been laid. Micronesian peoples see themselves as stewards of the sea, sustainably taking resources from it without excess. The Micronesia Challenge 2030⁹ expands conservation goals to aim to manage 50% of marine resources and 30% of terrestrial resources, incorporating traditional fisheries management practices to sustain cultural livelihoods and mitigate climate threats. Micronesians need to steer this programme and have the opportunity to defend sustainability goals against rapid profits. Similarly, the 2024 national adaptation plan emphasizes community-driven adaptation, leveraging traditional knowledge for food security and resource management, with workshops engaging state-level stakeholders to ensure cultural relevance. In Tonoas, efforts have been deployed at the municipality level to increase food security by combining traditional crops with new types of vegetables and to develop solar energy to maintain the digital hub. More resources and broader involvement of traditional leaders are still needed.

75. The authorities need to open up more avenues of support for entrepreneurship, so that those who have ideas may develop projects, document them and contribute directly to development efforts. The Special Rapporteur was informed, for example, of women-led projects designing unique Pohnpei skirts. Despite their success, the women involved struggled to find financial and legal support to protect their designs against copies mass produced abroad and flooding the inland and regional market that they had developed. She was also informed about a private initiative to restore, document and open to visitors the site of a Japanese lighthouse in Chuuk, an excellent example of grassroots heritage protection. The public authorities must recognize those entrepreneurial efforts and consider developing grants for which entrepreneurs can apply directly to support their sustainable development projects.

76. The country may also benefit from stronger ties with other peoples of the Pacific, for example through the Pacific Islands Forum, to exchange experiences on how to build development pathways that respond to the unique regional realities and to develop shared programmes and opportunities, such as in the area of higher education. The participation of Kosrae Public Library in the Pacific Island Association of Libraries, Archives and Museums is a positive example of the types of cooperation that can strengthen the country's aspiration to a self-determined approach to development.

77. The Micronesian vision for development should uphold the value of solidarity by guaranteeing the cultural and human rights of everyone. The authorities have already taken important measures to address clear violations of individual rights, such as prohibiting gender-based violence and early sex and marriage. Any practice that constitutes torture,

⁹ Reaffirmed at the Micronesia Challenge Regional Meeting in December 2024 in Guam.

slavery and harm for individuals' human rights must be prohibited. There can be no "cultural" justification of such practices. Conversely, cultural practices cannot be an excuse for the authorities not to take responsibility. While the authorities can partner with families and communities to take care of individuals with specific needs, such as older persons and persons with disabilities, they still need to provide support for them to do so, including by supporting the professionalization of certain services to better respond to needs.

78. Regional, social, gender and intersectional inequalities must be acknowledged and addressed in an inclusive manner, from a human rights perspective, in order to challenge the structural disadvantages and privileges resulting from traditional systems and colonial decisions. Where needed, LGBTIQ+ persons must have full protection of the law against exclusion and oppression.

79. Human rights require that everyone participates in the vision of the future. Policies and measures to achieve self-led development need to be developed in a bottom-up approach, with regular space given to discussions involving all sections of the population, so that no one is left behind. No one should feel trapped in inflexible cultural frameworks and roles that prevent them from developing and expressing fully their potential. Young persons must have a clearer voice in the discussion and not only be perceived as necessary to do the work; persons with disabilities must be truly included as equals. All community members, including women, must be involved in deciding which practices to maintain, adapt and erase, in a natural continuity of cultural evolution and dynamic self-regulation.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

80. The Federated States of Micronesia has a lot to teach to the world regarding solidarity and commitment to its unique origins and history. There are tangible proofs throughout the country indicating that strengthening the exercise of cultural rights and respecting cultural diversity can greatly help implement other human rights objectives and achieve Sustainable Development Goals. While continuing to respect the peoples' diversity and aspirations, the authorities need to embrace fully their political role, ensure accountability for human rights obligations and pave the way for the future.

81. Micronesians have a unique opportunity to define the best way to integrate the strengths of their traditional systems with those of the institutional apparatus. To achieve this, the articulation of the two systems needs to be consciously addressed, the implications debated and processes established and evaluated in a participatory manner.

82. To strengthen the legal protection of cultural rights, the Government should:

(a) Ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as soon as possible, as it had already agreed to do during the third cycle of the universal periodic review;

(b) Strengthen the recently created human rights task force to establish a full national human rights mechanism for the implementation of, reporting on and follow-up to human rights obligations;¹⁰ and ensure that cultural rights are systematically taken into consideration in its work, including in the preparation and follow-up to the universal periodic review;

(c) Ratify as soon as possible the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions;

(d) Develop general guidelines on international cultural rights standards and disseminate them widely to public bodies, to ensure that they are mainstreamed across all public policies;

¹⁰ See, for guidance and steps to take, <https://knowledgegateway.ohchr.org/nmirf/establish>.

(e) Include teaching on human rights and cultural rights in the general curricula of schools, as well as in the specific training of public servants and jurists, and, if such training does not exist, consider creating them and making them mandatory.

83. To improve the implementation of cultural rights, the Government should:

(a) Create a committee on culture at Congress, tasked with monitoring the exercise of cultural rights for all and discussing how responsibilities in the field of culture are shared between all levels of governance and all states;

(b) Determine a minimum threshold in the federal and state budgets for investment in cultural infrastructures and programmes and ensure that participatory processes are established for the use of budget allocated;

(c) Establish sustainable grants for small-scale, community-led cultural projects, activities and networks for exchange of practice, for which civil society and communities can directly apply;

(d) Request public bodies, especially at state levels, to monitor and report regularly about their efforts to implement cultural rights, and disseminate examples of successful measures, initiatives and practices and their impacts across all states;

(e) Foster the development of participatory processes to inventory, map and document the diversity of Micronesian cultural resources, and support their recording in the most suitable way, including through digitalization;

(f) Support the creation of a national history museum and heritage exhibition space as soon as possible, and ensure heritage resources are accessible to all Micronesians;

(g) Adopt and/or adapt state education legislation and policies to recognize all local languages, to integrate Micronesian cultural elements into the standard curricula and to include cultural educators and their teachings in the education system;

(h) Leverage the right to a healthy environment to strengthen the use of traditional knowledge and methodology for sustainable development and climate change mitigation.

84. To improve the participation of all in the vision of development, the Government should:

(a) Foster regular discussions about the roles of women, youth, persons with disabilities and LGBTIQ+ persons in society and take measures to ensure their full participation in cultural life, including by:

(i) Adopting temporary special measures to break gender stereotypes and strengthen conditions of real equality;

(ii) Creating safe houses and shelters for victims of domestic and intrafamily violence, where they are requested;

(iii) Normalizing discussions and awareness of violence and sexual health, addressed to both men and women, including in schools and community spaces;

(b) Support the creation of a body tasked with curating the relationship with Micronesian migrants and engaging them as relevant in national development plans;

(c) Establish support systems to develop entrepreneurship, with a specific focus on youth;

(d) Support the creation of dedicated spaces for youth leaders to develop their views, and institutionalize bridges for them to contribute to discussions about the future of the country;

(e) Ensure that all decision-making bodies in the federal, state and local governments reflect the diversity of the population and include women, youth, persons with disabilities and local populations and ensure that their voices are heard;

(f) **Ensure that any discussion takes into account the right to effective participation of minorities and non-dominant Indigenous groups, as well as local populations.**
