



## The Federated States of Micronesia National Commitment Statement

In August 2022, a group of youth delegates convened to envision the future for education in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). As the youth presented their aspirations for the future, they delivered a striking sentiment: *"The voice of the youngest citizens holds the power of change."*

As the FSM approaches the 2022 Transforming Education Summit, it takes this opportunity to reflect on the priorities and progress made toward transforming education, to advance a more prosperous and economically secure future for all. In preparation for the Summit, a series of national public consultations were held with youth, educators, and community members to inform the pathway forward for education system transformation.

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is a unique island nation. With a population of ~116,000 spanning more than 3 million km<sup>2</sup> of the North Pacific, the strengths and challenges of the country are distinct. Given the expansive spread of communities across four island states, differences between educational systems and outcomes among states can be significant, reflecting varied languages, values, socio-cultural attitudes, and economic conditions. As the country advances high-quality education outcomes for all, it aims to ensure economic security and financial stability for generations to come.

Our nation's transformative education vision is grounded in regional, national, and international commitments, including our Education Sector Strategic Development Plan, the Pacific Regional Education Framework, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Our vision for the future of education is guided by a central goal: **to improve the quality of learning at all levels in safe, climate-resistant learning environments for the children of the FSM**, and includes the following sub-goals:

- 1| Provide high quality relevant programs for learners at all levels of education
- 2| Improve the quality of teachers and teaching at all levels
- 3| Maintain consistent performance monitoring and data-based decision-making systems
- 4| Strengthen the participation of communities in the management of schools
- 5| Ensure that education is relevant to the life and aspirations of the people of FSM

The Government of the FSM through its National Department of Education here presents a national statement capturing the country's updated commitments to deliver on its outlined goals.

### **I. COVID-19 learning recovery: Post-Pandemic System Renewal and Resilience**

While the geographic location of the FSM can present challenges, including vulnerability to climate change and difficulties in interstate coordination, the positioning of the nation has also served as a strategic asset in the face of COVID-19. During the global pandemic, the FSM remained one of the world's few countries free from COVID-19 for over two-and-a-half years.

Intentional learning from other countries allowed the FSM to optimize its COVID-19 response, limiting impacts on education. Since the arrival of COVID-19 in mid-July 2022, the nation has been swift to implement strategic school action plans, introducing policies to safely open schools in the face of the spread.

## **II. Transforming education: Delivering on the promise of the ESSDP**

During public consultations, youth identified the need for increased commitment to high-quality education, including calls for increased attention to:

- education infrastructure and facilities
- skilled, knowledgeable and better-compensated teachers
- provision of resources such as textbooks, supplies and access to technology
- investment in broader public services to support inclusivity needs, including enhanced public transportation and strengthened medical care, particularly in the area of mental health

To address the identified needs, we commit to prioritized delivery on sub-goals of the ESSDP, specifically sub-goals 1, 2, 3, and 5 through projects currently underway:

- An \$8.3 million ADB and Australian Government funded project targets Improving the Quality of Basic Education (IQBE) in the FSM. The project includes plans to renew curricula, pedagogies, and teacher professional development, as well as increase resources and materials provided to schools, and plans for improved performance monitoring systems for primary grades.

- A \$17.7 million World Bank-funded TVET project was recently approved, aimed at offering youth expanded access and opportunities to technical and vocational learning.

- A \$2.5 million Global Partnership for Education-funded project is currently underway to advance national standards and universal provision of early childhood education. This project will extend formal educational opportunities to the ~20% of the nation's 5-year-olds who do not attend school, particularly in rural and remote communities.

-\$750k in funding from the Global Partnership for Education to support the provision of ICT in remote schools that currently lack internet connection. In addition, this grant contributes to WASH infrastructure.

## **III. Financing education as a common good: Prioritized Shifts in Engagement**

The FSM is committed to transformative investments to strengthen educational opportunities for the future of our nation. In addition to financed projects currently underway, we are building a vision for transformations necessary to address lingering gaps in reaching our education goals.

We commit to:

- Prioritize funding allocations to support improved infrastructure, resources and teacher preparation.
- Advance our goals under the Education Sector Strategic Development Plan.
- Introduce mechanisms to consistently engage youth and communities to ensure that the education system remains relevant to the needs of our future.

## **IV. Next steps**

### **Top Action Items**

1. Move forward on ESSDP plans to deliver on sub-goals 1, 2, 3, and 5 in order to ensure high quality education opportunities for all.
2. Delegate explicit roles and responsibilities to specific state and national agencies to advance subgoal 4, effectively increasing engagement with communities in shaping education.
3. Consider how dedicated education system financing can be prioritized to support improved facilities, resources, and teacher preparation. Explore potential for broader public sector investments.
4. Introduce mechanisms to consistently engage youth/community input into education design to ensure delivery of education that is relevant to the needs of the future.