

Micronesia President Emanuel Mori Urges Immediate Action on Climate Change



New York (FSM Permanent Mission to the United Nations): September 25, 2009 - In his address to the United Nations General Assembly today, Federated States of Micronesia President Emanuel Mori emphasized the critical danger Micronesia is facing on climate change, most notably with sea-level rise, changing weather patterns and increased storms and disasters, and called for urgent and immediate action by the international community.

"There is simply no more time to waste," he said. "Talk is cheap, action speaks louder. Let's go to Copenhagen to 'seal the deal.'"

In a deeply personal appeal, Mori called climate change "a matter of survival, as a people, culture and as nations" for Micronesians and "our fellow Pacific islanders, including islanders in other parts of the World.

"For centuries, the people of Micronesia have lived on their small islands, many less than a meter above sea level. They have enjoyed a life dependent on the bounties of the sea and the harvest from the land. They have developed a culture of respect for nature and lived in harmony with their natural surroundings. They built outrigger canoes and rigged them with sails from pandanus leaves."

But that same ocean that has nurtured Micronesia for centuries has now become "the very instrument of our destruction," Mori said.

Mori also pointed out to the General Assembly that climate change is undermining Micronesia's development efforts, including its abilities to meet the Millennium Development Goals. Micronesia's overall fragility is compounded by climate change impacts such as increased droughts, excessive rainfall and saltwater intrusion into taro patches and other staple crops, he said. Yet he added that advances in development are being made, including Micronesia's continued work with its fellow Pacific governments on the Micronesia Challenge to conserve the area's biodiversity. Micronesia is also seeking to acquire a fiber-optic cable network that reaches the entire country, as the improved communications will improve its efforts on health, education and private sector development.

In addition to the speech's strong focus on climate change, Mori also stressed his concern over illegal and unsustainable fishing practices in the waters of coastal island nations, and he stated support for United Nations Security Council reform in the form of expansion in both permanent and non-permanent membership, with support for permanent seats for Japan, Germany and India.

