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STATEMENT BY THE HONORABLE JOAB SIGRAH, CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA,
SPECIAL ADVISER TO THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION TO THE
TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL, JUNE 8, 1973.

Mr. President and Distinguished Council Members:

Senator Amaraich and I appreciate this opportunity to appear before you today as Special Advisors to the United States Delegation. As our High Commissioner has already stated, the people and our Government in Micronesia were most privileged in February and March of this year to host the tour of the 1973 Visiting Mission whose candid and comprehensive report on the Administration of Micronesia is now before this Council. We commend the members of the 1973 Mission for the report and trust that the views expressed in the report together with our presentations and the deliberations of this Council and of the Administering Authority will bring about a consensus of what appears to be critical areas of concerns and issues in Micronesia. We also hope that with the assistance of this Council and of the Administering Authority, we can begin to resolve these problems, not the least of which is a satisfactory resolution of the Trusteeship itself.

One of the things that the report of the 1973 United Nations Visiting Mission to the Trust Territory makes clear is the fact that Micronesia is very much affected by public issues and international problems which transcend its political boundaries and go beyond the ken or competence of its powers and authority to control and influence. It is safe to say that some of the problems to be found in Micronesia are influenced to a great degree by the geo-political location of the Micronesian islands in the context of the greater Pacific region. Other problems arise because by history and political alignment our island nation is strongly linked to the administrative apparatus of the Administering Authority. Still other problems exist due to the socio-economic fabrics of the people and the island community that is Micronesia.

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The views, observations, and recommendations made by the Report of the 1973 Visiting Mission to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands make it unnecessary for me to reiterate several important and critical matters and concerns so well outlined and so fully treated in that report. I would like, therefore, if I may, to comment on some of the points made by the report, and to make my own observations as to the recommendations made by the Mission in terms of what development is desirable and how we should now go about achieving our objectives.

At the outset, we would like to add our support to the recommendation of the Visiting Mission that Micronesia needs and should now have a well-coordinated developmental plan - coordinated and balanced development program aimed toward specific goals. Such a program must take into account the political and economic realities of our part of the world. Without such a plan, Micronesia cannot hope to achieve the full utilization of its human and natural resources for its own satisfaction. There is a need for us in the words of the Missions' report, "to formulate general guidelines for development priorities," and "to propose a new, balanced and realistic developmental plan." The suggestion that we invite the United Nations Development Advisory Team through the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East and the experts from the United Nations Development Program and Asia Development Bank "to rethink the ways in which Micronesia's Economy should and could be developed," will be actively explored. We are hopeful in the meantime that the formation of the Trust Territory Planning Coordinating Committee will soon be able to address itself to some of the work in this area, particularly in coordinating physical planning at the local level in the various districts. In this connection, I am happy, however, to report that during the most recent session of our Congress, several legislative measures were introduced dealing with Micronesia-wide development programs. It is hoped that one of them will be enacted and signed into law so that we may report to you next year that a coordinated development scheme has been begun.

Aside from a need for overall planning, we agree with the other observations of the 1973 U.N. Visiting Mission as to the existence of other obstacles to our development. One of these results from Micronesia's being locked into the Administering Authority's budgetary system and administrative apparatus. As the Mission pointed out, it is virtually impossible to plan, initiate, and foster the kinds of planned development needed and desired, given our present budgetary system and financial constraints. We find ourselves at the small end of a rather large administrative apparatus which does not lend itself to independent planning and budgetary implementation to meet the long range needs and requirements of Micronesia. The uncertainty of budgetary level from year to year for Micronesia and the fluctuation in the level of expenditures available to us, at any given period have combined to impede and frustrate our efforts to carry forth effective programs and realistically assess our progress and past accomplishments.

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It is these factors which we believe have a great and sometimes necessarily adverse impact upon the education, economic, and social growth of our country. With each session of our Congress we have become more and more aware of these problems. It is our fervent hope that the limitations of our authority can soon be lifted so that we can begin to address ourselves to what we see as stumbling blocks in these areas and assume for ourselves a greater degree to self-government as a step towards the final resolution of the future status question.

Much information was contained in the report of the 1973 U.N. Visiting Mission to the Trust Territory. The many observations and recommendations made by the Mission will be studied and seriously considered for implementation and guidelines. I would like, however, merely to comment and highlight some of the points the Mission's report so carefully documented and commended to our attention in the area of economic development.

We agree with the 1973 U.N. Visiting Mission that, while tourism has its place in the development of Micronesia, a continued developmental effort should still be directed to development in agriculture and fisheries. Efforts to find ways and means to process copra within Micronesia should be pursued more vigorously to lessen the Micronesian dependency on world market and the vagaries of world prices on this important source of income capital for our people.

We are pleased that the Visiting Mission was happy with the report on Marine Resources Development submitted during the past session. Rightly, the Congress has considered this resource of primary importance for some time and has acted accordingly. In 1972 Public Law 4C-38 appropriated \$500,000 to be used for this purpose within the Economic Development Loan Fund. During the First Regular Session of the Fifth Congress, four major laws were enacted in this area. It is hoped that Public Laws 5-21, 5-22, 5-23 and 5-24 will allow further development of this resource. Like Marine resources development, agricultural development has constantly received a parsimonious budget. This area deserves greater attention by the Congress, and we welcome the conclusions of the Mission's report regarding it. We also endorse the conclusion and recommendation made by the Visiting Mission relative to the elimination of tariff barriers for products of Micronesia and a more favorable interpretation of Article 8 of the Trusteeship Agreement as prerequisites to further development of Micronesia's economy. We are thus in complete agreement with the report of the Visiting Mission. It is my own opinion shared with my other colleagues in the Congress of Micronesia that without the liberalization on the interpretation of Article 8 of the Trusteeship Agreement, it is useless to talk about economic development with maximum involvement of the people and their effective involvement and participation in economic development and programs. Here I should add that it is not an uncommon feeling among my colleagues, that strict interpretation of Article 8 reflects not only an over-all policy designed to limit our future options in the area of political development, but

also a way to serve a national interest other than that of Micronesia.

A continuing source of concern by the Congress is land, which many people see as the key to development in Micronesia. Land use and tenure has traditionally been a source of dispute in the Trust Territory. Of course, before the domination of foreign powers, there were always traditional systems to handle these disputes. The Administering Authority continues to be the biggest landholder in the Trust Territory, controlling from one percent of the land in one district up to 50 and 60 percent in other districts. Some of the continuing land problems are insufficient payment for indefinite use by the government, slowness in land registration, and the need for the return of land which has been retained for over 25 years.

In addition, there are some land cases bogged down in the court system--some of which are over 10 years old. There is no doubt that such public lands could be used more productively. When such land could or would be open for private use and ownership is not known. Now the issue is strongly linked to that of political status. It is enough, however, to note that if the Administering Authority was sincerely interested in economic development related to land, more should have been done to show for it.

Like the 1973 U.N. Visiting Mission, our Congress is in favor of finding more ways to channel more capital and credit to the private sector of our economy. While we are grateful that through Economic Development Loan Fund program, some capital money has been made available to selected individuals despite the unwieldy procedures of the program; much more should be done in this area. And here, I should like to note that the Annual Report of the Administering Authority to this Council credits the United States Congressional support to this fund of \$600,000 marine resources development fund. This money was actually appropriated by the Congress of Micronesia in 1971. The report also neglects to give the Congress of Micronesia credit for the \$500,000 marine resources development fund. The Bank of Micronesia, created by the Congress of Micronesia in 1972, now being projected to operate as a development bank should provide further impetus to getting capital seed money into the private sector of the Micronesian economy.

Development of Micronesia's air and sea transportation remain a matter of serious concern as noted by this year's Visiting Mission. The Trust Territory is extremely dependent upon such transportation because of its geography. At present field trip schedules are unreliable because of an ancient fleet of ships which need replacement. We also have grave doubts about the fate of the shipping line, Transpac, which serves the islands from Japan and from the West Coast. The operation of this line has great impact on our economy. This fact of life was pointed out in the Congress of Micronesia's report on shipping in 1970, which recommended greater government participation in shipping operations. This has been done in the past. Unfortunately, there still remains great doubt as to whether TransPacific Lines can maintain adequate service and its solvency. The situation deteriorated recently with the loss of two charter ships. The company still faces debts which it took over from the former organization.

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Just as its past actions and recommendations regarding sea transportation have gone unheeded, the same situation exists with respect to air transportation. During the last session the Congress adopted Senate Joint resolution No. 58 which requests the Administering Authority to grant Air Micronesia the Saipan-Japan route. Adoption of the measure was not done to frustrate the desires of the Mariana Islands District. It was done because the Congress felt support of this airline would produce the most good for the most people. However a recent ruling by a Civil Aeronautics Board examiner was in favor of another airline. One of the reasons for his ruling, was because granting of this route would financially help the other airline, which has been losing money in the past. Thus it would appear here, as in many other cases, it is not Micronesia's interests which are considered first, but rather those of the Administering Authority.

This predicament of whose interests are to be served is also illustrated in the veto directed by the Administering Authority regarding Admiralty and Maritime Law. The manner in which this measure was vetoed raises serious questions about the manner of the veto, and also the intent of the Administering Authority. Furthermore, the killing of this enacted bill must ^{be} viewed as a setback for those who saw it as a vehicle for economic development in a nation surrounded by the ocean.

Indeed, as I mentioned earlier, Micronesia is suffering from being locked into the larger systems of the Administering Authority. The budgetary cycles contain certain variables that, like sunspots create havoc and disruption at great distances. It appears clear to us it is time to consider trying to modify the system as it applies to Micronesia or divorce ourselves from it.

Consequently, our Joint Committee on Programs and Budget Planning has proposed certain changes to the U.S. Congress. These changes are threefold. One, the Congress of Micronesia would receive a direct appropriation from the U.S. Congress. This appropriation would be on a matching basis: 90 percent from the U.S. and 10 percent from the Congress. Such a scheme if adopted, would give Micronesians full control over development priorities. A second aspect is better management of funds and projects at the district level. The District Administrator would have the authority to handle contracts up to \$75,000. The third aspect is to

begin asking the people of Micronesia to give greater support to such supposedly "free" services such as health services and education. By support, we mean money, material contribution, effort and participation.

Should the Administering Authority support such a three-point program and should it become a reality we feel it will move Micronesia closer to self-reliance. It will do so no matter what political status is chosen in the future.

It is of course, possible that the amount of grant funds in the future will be inadequate. The Congress of Micronesia is only too much aware of the danger of a one-crop economy. Likewise, it has considered that depending on a single source for financial assistance could be risky. Consequently, we have looked to see what other sources of funding and assistance for our programs, policies, and goals might be available. It is thus with great interest and high hopes that we view closer contact with the United Nations Development Programme, although there has yet to be established a formal agreement between it and the Trust Territory. We are also hopeful in view of provisional acceptance of Micronesia as an associate member of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East. This organization can provide a conduit to assistance from the Asian Development Bank. We look forward to formal approval soon of our application to ECAFE by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations as opening up a new and vast avenue for development. We shall, of course, continue our interest and participation in the South Pacific Commission. This body and its Conference has obvious technical benefits which can accrue to Micronesia.

In the area of education, one might take heart in the increase of classrooms, allowing for most students with notable exceptions like Truk District--"to attend school through the 12th grade." We also see the slight increase of Micronesian teachers and the addition of new Micronesian-oriented textbooks in a most favorable light. The growing number of graduates of vocational schools would seem to indicate a Micronesia educational system which is becoming more and more attuned to the needs of the country and its people.

However, despite these encouraging indicators, there appears to be an overall lack of planning and strategy which still hinders educational progress for our children.

We in the Congress now are of the opinion that it is time to look beyond the mere physical accomplishments. It is time to imbue in our educational system both a philosophy and a practical course of action which will make the Department a vital force in shaping the balanced development of the Trust Territory. One of the facts which has halted progress in education has been the absence of a replacement for the Director of the Department of Education who left nearly a year ago. The recent nomination of a Micronesia to this post by the High Commission and his confirmation by the Congress of Micronesia, we hope, will signal the opportunity for new directions to be taken in education.

It is hoped that one of the new directions taken will be to bridge, through education, our present dual economy. We must begin to train not only school age persons, but also older people and dropouts. This will allow us to move from subsistence to a monetary economy; so young and old alike will be able to make the transition.

Similarly, it is foolish and extravagant to continue allocating huge appropriations for education in order to mass produce students who cannot find jobs and yet are unable to return to traditional ways of life. Furthermore, another aspect of this problem is the fact of more than 1,300 imported laborers in the Trust Territory who might not have been necessary had vocational education been stressed several years ago. In like fashion, had there been more efforts to train our young people in ways of fishing and farming during early years of school, we might today import less canned fish, dairy products and vegetables from other countries.

Higher education and development of a high level manpower resource is essential to Micronesia if it is ever to be self-sufficient. The Congress of Micronesia, in recognition of its importance, has annually appropriated hundreds of thousands of dollars for scholarships to Micronesia students. The last such appropriation of \$410,000 in two measures is an indication of such recognition. Despite this effort, and that of the Administering Authority, two disturbing facts remain. The first is that as the Visiting Mission reported, 50 percent of the scholarship grantees fail to graduate. If this figure is accurate, then immediate steps must be taken in selection of grantees, preparation for higher schooling and also in counseling and guidance during the course of education. The Administering

Authority and especially the Congress cannot afford to waste precious revenues in this area. A second disturbing fact related to this apparent "drop out" of students is the fact that some of the Micronesia students who do graduate are either unable to find jobs, or leave Micronesia because the wages and benefits found elsewhere are more attractive. While there are no statistics to document this--outward flow of Micronesian manpower is a fact of life which members of Congress are aware of in each of the districts.

Thus we see the goals of the next few years for Micronesia's education system providing training of our labor force at all levels, keeping this work force with an aim at self-sufficiency, and upgrading at all levels to maintain quality of this resource in the future.

Education in all aspects we consider a prime importance. We thus were gratified to see the Administering Authority indicate some interest and concern in this area by the formation of a special Joint Task Force of the Departments of Health, Education, and Welfare and the Interior. Unfortunately, we have yet to see the final draft of the Task Force's report. We do not know how proposed cuts in funds for the Office of Economic Opportunity and HEW budgets will affect its recommendations.

In like fashion, we are unsure at this point of what assistance the task force report will be to social development in the Trust Territory.

We have yet to see any initiation of the recommendations of the U.S. Social Advisor to the Pacific whose report was mentioned last year before this Council. The environment of the district center areas due to an influx of people from outlying areas is producing its share of juvenile delinquency, and health, and other social problems. It is clear that such problems require the foresight, manpower and funds to resolve the problems of delinquency. We need to improve our penal system to thwart recidivism and to insure rehabilitation. The future of Community Action Agencies are at present fatally linked to the fact of the Office of Economic Opportunity program which is now in limbo and beyond the competence or resources of the Congress.

As regards a particular area of social advancement we have noted that the 1973 Visiting Mission looked favorably upon the present Bikini Rehabilitation program. However,

we should also like to reiterate that it is unfortunate that funds for this project cut into the annual appropriations. The question of additional compensation for these people should also receive immediate attention. Rightly we believe that this funding should come directly from the Department of the Defense and the Atomic Energy Commission. Furthermore, as Representative Ekpap Silk has pointed out, the program does not rehabilitate all of the islands to their original condition. Also, it should be noted that, contrary to the Administering Authority's report to the United Nations, Bikini, which was the site of 23 nuclear detonations from 1946 to 1958 is by no means "radiation free" --despite a Presidential announcement. Some of the islands cannot be used in the future. We are in agreement that the Administering Authority's responsibilities should not cease with the physical return of the people.

I believe the Congress will also agree with the Mission that the United States, after announcing it would return Eniwetok to its former owners, should not have conducted further tests. These people, from an atoll which suffered 35 nuclear explosions from 1948 to 1958, have strongly protested the proposed program. We hope the Administering Authority will comply with this expression of local sentiment, whether or not the present injunction against the tests will be upheld. Additionally, as in the case of Bikini, rehabilitations costs for Eniwetok should not be allowed to cut into the future grant fund structure. It is also hoped that planning will include the full wishes of these displaced people. It would seem advisable that the Atomic Energy Commission would wish to avoid the kind of controversy which developed in Rongelap and Utirik by a successful public information program concerning radiation in Marshallese before those people are returned.

Relative to the health and social aspects of the people of Rongelap and Utirik Atolls who were exposed to radioactive fallout in 1954; I believe that there is little I can add to the report of the Special Joint Committee of the Congress which was given to the Visiting Mission. Representatives of the Committee will meet this month with representatives of the Atomic Energy Commission in Washington, to discuss certain recommendations which it has made.

In other, more general areas of social importance, we are happy to report that low cost housing legislation was passed by the Congress. This legislation recognizes

the fact that all Micronesians have the right to have safe, decent, and sanitary housing at a level which they can afford.

In the area of social advancement we are pleased to announce that the very successful Social Security Program initiated by the Congress several years ago continues to receive favorable support and funding through recent legislation. Due to this program's success, a reduction in employee contributions has been achieved by passage of Public Law No. 5-15.

Finally, we take cognizance of the recommendations made by the last Visiting Mission regarding the need to foster and initiate a more positive and aggressive program of political education throughout Micronesia. As this Council is aware, our Congress created a Political Education Commission whose task is aimed among other things at developing a general political education program in Micronesia, in developing general knowledge of different systems of government and events within and without the Trust Territory, and in promoting understanding of issues relating to future political status. In this regard, it is doubtful whether issues having territory-wide scope can serve as the common denominator in fostering the creation of territory-wide political party system in Micronesia, as suggested by the Visiting Mission, but we are confident our planned efforts to pursue this important matter with the cooperation and assistance of the Administration will enable us to report to this Council a more positive action and results by next year.

In summary, it is becoming increasingly clear that if the interests of Micronesia are to be promoted, it is going to be up to Micronesians through their Congress to blaze the trail. We can no longer afford to sit back and wait for the Administering Authority to act. We can no longer afford to have budgetary priorities set in Washington instead of Micronesia. We can no longer afford to let our development be described by expediency rather than relevancy to our long range goals. It is time Micronesia's development in all areas--social, educational, and economic be viewed as a whole. A program that is balanced, relevant, and realistic must be developed and carried out.

These steps must be taken immediately and fostered to their fulfillment. If not, the ultimate involvement and cooperation between Micronesia and the Asian-Pacific nations will be no more than wishful thinking. We all know wishful

thinking rarely results in accomplishments.

It has been said that a journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. The goals of self-reliance and self-sufficiency for Micronesia may be distant. Yet, the Congress with the assistance of the Administering Authority and the United Nations, is resolved to make that journey. It is our conviction that the Congress of Micronesia must and will take that first step.

Thank you.