Statement of Mr. Sobashima Hidenobu, Ambassador of Japan to the Federated States of Micronesia at the Exchange of Notes on the Economic and Social Development Programme on June 12, 2020

The Hon. Kandhi Elieisar, Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Federated States of Micronesia,

The Hon. Ricky Cantero, Deputy Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs,

Mr. Moses Pretrick, Assistant Secretary, Department of Health and Social Affairs,

Other Government Officials Present,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor and pleasure to represent the Government of Japan at this ceremony of the Exchange of Notes on the Economic and Social Development Programme.

On the occasion of the visit of H.E. David Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia to Japan in November last year, H.E. Abe Shinzo, Prime Minister of Japan stated that Japan would strengthen its support to the FSM’s sustainable economic and social development.

The infectious disease of COVID-19 that has been rapidly spreading in various places of the world is now threatening not only the lives of human beings but also their economic and social activities and their dignity.

Thus its negative effects in the economy and society are much more serious compared to the cases of other previous infectious diseases.

The current situation should be described as a human security crisis.

At present, a number of developing countries are making efforts to cope with the situation, exercising their ownership, taking account of past lessons and examples of other countries, demonstrating their creativity and originality.

However, the provisions of medical services there may turn insufficient, and the activities of the people there and their economies are impacted, due to the restrictions posed in the economic and social activities.

Japan believes that it is necessary to strengthen the health systems for emergency countermeasures to protect the lives and minimize the social and economic negative effects, as well as for countermeasures against infectious diseases from a mid- to long-term perspective.

In particular, an inclusive approach should be established based on the concept of human security, paying attention to the protection and empowerment of each individual, not leaving most vulnerable people behind in this context.

Japan has been promoting the universal health coverage.

Under the current crisis where the countries with vulnerable health systems are facing particularly large impacts, we would like to emphasize the importance of strengthening health systems in addition to specific countermeasures for the patients.

With these considerations and in view of the needs of the Federated States of Micronesia, Japan will offer this time the cooperation of the grant assistance amounting to 382 million Japanese Yen or about 3.5 million US Dollars for the procurement of medical equipment made in Japan.

In the present world where the visits of people and the transportation of goods are developing globally, the fight against COVID-19 is the fight that the whole international community should cooperate to engage.

Japan intends to play a leading and active role in overcoming this crisis in cooperation with the international community, including through this cooperation it is offering now.

In conclusion, I hope that this cooperation, along with the cooperation from other partners, will help the FSM win the fight against COVID-19.

Thank you.