Statement of Ambassador Sobashima Hidenobu at the Exchange of Notes for the Grant Aid for the Economic and Social Development Programme for the Project for Enhancing the Capacities of Fisheries and Maritime Institute on April 8, 2021

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

The Hon. Wayne Mendiola, Acting Secretary of Education, Federated States of Micronesia,

The Hon. Karen Simion, Interim President, College of Micronesia - FSM,

Other Senior Officials Present,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour and pleasure to represent the Government of Japan at this Exchange of Notes for the Grant Aid for the Economic and Social Development Programme, for the Project for Enhancing the Capacities of Fisheries and Maritime Institute, amounting to 400 million Japanese Yen or about US$ 3.7 million.

On the occasion of the visit of H. E. David W. Panuelo, President of the FSM to Japan in November 2019, H.E. Abe Shinzo, then Prime Minister of Japan stated that Japan would strengthen its support for the FSM’s sustainable economic and social development.

Earlier in 2018, at the 8th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting in Fukushima, Japan, upholding the importance of promoting the Free and Open Indo-Pacific, the Government of Japan expressed its intention to provide cooperation to the Pacific island countries for building their foundations for resilient and sustainable development, among other cooperation.

Fisheries and Maritime Institute is the only institution for the education of maritime matters in the FSM, with its reputation and expectation widely felt not only throughout the FSM, but also in Palau and Martial Islands, in the Micronesian region.

However, as the Institute has the difficulty of conducting field training due to the lack of the necessary equipment, it is not able to train its students to become the highly skilled ship crew members certified in accordance with the relevant international treaties.

Under the circumstances, the Government of the FSM requested the Government of Japan to extend its cooperation to Fisheries and Maritime Institute for the construction of its additional classrooms and dormitory rooms, and providing it with the equipment for higher maritime education such as a training ship and rigid-hull inflatable boats (RHIB).

We considered and decided to respond positively.

After the construction of the facilities and the provision of the equipment are completed, the number of the students of the Institute is expected to increase by 30 to 90, and the Institute will be able to conduct the field training using the provided training ship and boats, which will pave the way for strengthening the FSM’s maritime transportation and security capabilities, deterring illegal fishing and human trafficking, among other possible problems.

Thus it will develop the FSM’s foundations for resilient and sustainable development, contributing to the promotion of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific.

In conclusion, I hope that this project will proceed smoothly to enhance the capacities of Fisheries and Maritime Institute, and thus will contribute to the sustainable development of the Federated States of Micronesia.

Thank you.