



# Diaspora engagement mapping

## FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

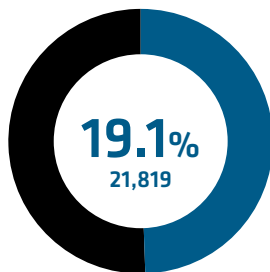
### Facts & figures

#### Emigration

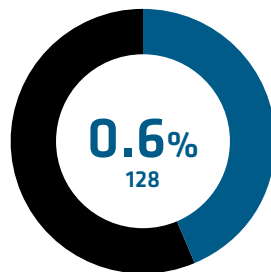
% of emigrants in total population



% of which in the EU



♂ 49.6%  
♀ 50.3%



♂ 43.75%  
♀ 56.25%



Remittances as a share of GDP: **5.7%**  
Remittances inflow (USD million): **23**



#### Top countries of destination



|                          |        |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Guam (US)                | 11,164 |
| United States            | 8,708  |
| Northern Mariana Islands | 1,123  |
| Palau                    | 410    |
| Marshall Islands         | 245    |

#### Political rights



Dual citizenship<sup>1</sup>



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad<sup>2</sup>



Voting from abroad<sup>3</sup>:

By post



Terminology: The terms 'Micronesian emigrants' and 'Micronesians abroad' have generally been used in government policies and official communications.

**The Federated States of Micronesia does not have a diaspora engagement policy.**

<sup>1</sup> Micronesian citizens should renounce citizenship of other nations. If they fail to do so, they become 'nationals' of the Federated States of Micronesia, rather than citizens. Code of the Federated States of Micronesia, [http://fsmLaw.org/fsm/code/title07/T07\\_Ch02.htm](http://fsmLaw.org/fsm/code/title07/T07_Ch02.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Embassy of the Federated States of Micronesia in Washington, D.C., 'Absentee Voting' <http://www.fsmembassydc.org/page/fsm-citizen-information#17>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

## Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2004** ● **Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2004-2023<sup>4</sup>** aims at achieving growth and self-reliance in the country by 2023. In the SDP, the government acknowledges the important emigration of Micronesians abroad, and it recognizes the potential for remittances to grow and sustain income levels in the country. The plan includes objectives to reduce the factors leading to emigration of productive workers, and to introduce programmes to encourage remittances and return of skilled Micronesian workers and entrepreneurs to the country. The SDP also aims at improving the likelihood of success of Micronesian emigrants through targeted training and regulation of external recruitment programmes.
- 2006** ● **Public Law 14-86<sup>5</sup>** created a new provision within the social security law to allow citizens working abroad to voluntarily contribute to the country's Social Security Administration.<sup>6</sup>
- 2010** ● The **Millennium Development Goals and Federated States of Micronesia Status Report 2010** acknowledges that remittances tend to encourage greater inter-household equality in the Federated States of Micronesia.

### » Trends & achievements

Since signing a Compact of Free Association (COFA) between the Federated States of Micronesia and the United States in 1986 - under which citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia are free to travel, relocate and work in the United States - nearly all the Micronesian diaspora resides in the United States. Although the government maintains very few institutional relations with the diaspora, the Office of the President has nevertheless actively cultivated international relations over the past few years in order to promote and defend the interests of the Micronesian diaspora in countries of residence. In June 2019, the President met with the governor of Hawaii to advocate for the simplification of driver licensing for Micronesian citizens working there. In August 2020, the Office of the President issued an official statement to express its concern over press articles published by various media outlets in Guam alleging that the increase in Covid-19 cases in Guam was linked to the failure of Micronesian diasporans to comply with Covid-19 guidelines.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the fact that nearly one in five Micronesians live abroad and about 40% of households in the country receive remittances from the diaspora,<sup>8</sup> the amounts received are relatively low. This has been acknowledged by the government in the SDP 2004-2023, which includes the objective to encourage remittances to the country. In spite of this, no specific programme or policy aimed at channelling diaspora remittances has been implemented since the publication of the SDP in 2004.

The government is committed to strengthening data collection on migration, in particular regarding remittances.<sup>9</sup> The Census of Population and Housing conducted in 2010 by the Department of Resources and Development, included data on remittances received in each of the four states.<sup>10</sup> However, no further data has been collected during the last decade.

4 Federated States of Micronesia Strategic Development Plan 2004-2023, <https://fsm-data.sprep.org/dataset/fsm-strategic-development-plan-2004-2023>

5 Federated States of Micronesia's Social Security Administration, Public Law 14-86, [fsmssa.fm/files/laws/PublicLaw14-86.pdf](https://fsmssa.fm/files/laws/PublicLaw14-86.pdf)

6 Federated States of Micronesia's Social Security Administration, 'Forms', <http://www.fsmssa.fm/forms-2/>

7 Office of the President, Federated States of Micronesia, 'Guam Media Categorizing Specific Micronesian Ethnicities in their Reporting Deeply Concerning to the FSM National Government' [https://www.facebook.com/piofsm/posts/3280876955327913?\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=K-R](https://www.facebook.com/piofsm/posts/3280876955327913?__tn__=K-R)

8 Ibid.

9 Federated States of Micronesia Strategic Development Plan 2004-2023

10 Federated States of Micronesia, Department of Resources and Development, 2010 Census of Population and Housing

## Obstacles



- **Lack of policy and institutional framework:** There is no strategy or policy for diaspora engagement in the Federated States of Micronesia, and none of the government departments have been mandated to deal with diaspora issues in the country.
- **Lack of concrete initiatives to implement the SDP 2004-2023:** Although several objectives relevant to diaspora engagement in Micronesia are included in the SDP, few concrete initiatives have been put in place to achieve these objectives. For example, the SDP targeted external recruitment programmes to improve the chances of success of Micronesian emigrants. However, the Federated States of Micronesia are currently not a signatory to any of the major seasonal work schemes that exist in Australia and New Zealand, unlike most of its Pacific neighbours.
- **Lack of diaspora rights and services:** The Micronesian diaspora has few rights and services. In addition, due to the prohibition of dual citizenship in the Federated States of Micronesia, nearly one-third of Micronesian diasporans in the United States in 2012 had renounced their Micronesian citizenship in order to become US citizens.<sup>11</sup>
- **Lack of data:** With the most recent figures collected by the government on migration dating from 2004 and those on remittances from 2010, data collection remains a challenge in the Federated States of Micronesia.<sup>12</sup> This is an obstacle to further diaspora engagement, as it impedes the formulation of appropriate and evidence-based policies in this area.
- **Unemployment and lack of economic and educational opportunities:** The country's high unemployment and underemployment rates and the lack of economic and educational opportunities in the Federated States of Micronesia are obstacles to further diaspora engagement, in particular regarding the return of skilled Micronesian diasporans to the country.<sup>13</sup>

## SPOTLIGHT: effective practices



### Government information and advice to the diaspora in the United States

The Micronesian Embassy in Washington D.C. has published key information and advice for the Micronesian diaspora in the United States on a single web page. It includes information on issues such as absentee voting and driving licences, as well as details on the legal status and obligations of Micronesian citizens in the country under the Compact of Free Association.

### Independence Day celebrations

The government supports some of the celebrations organised by the Micronesian diaspora for Micronesia's Independence Day in countries and territories of destination. In Guam in 2017, the President of the Federated States of Micronesia took part in some of the celebrations that are organised every year by the Micronesian diaspora.<sup>14,15</sup>

MIGRANTS  
RIGHTS

NETWORKING AND  
PARTNERSHIPS

11 IOM, Migration in the Federated States of Micronesia, Country Profile 2015

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 The Guam Daily Post, 'FSM community celebrates independence', 6 November 2017. See also <https://eu.guampdn.com/picture-gallery/news/local/2019/11/02/guam-celebrates-fsm-independence-day/4135700002/>

15 Office of the President, Federated States of Micronesia, Opening of the FSM Independence Day celebration in Guam, <https://www.facebook.com/piofsm/videos/740979695984331/>

## Annex:

# List of Actors

### Diaspora related institutions



- **At regional level**

#### **Pacific Community (SPC)**

The Federated States of Micronesia is a member of the Pacific Community, an international development organisation which focuses on scientific and technical expertise. SPC's Social Development Programme is involved in managing the Festival of Pacific Arts (FESTPAC), which was created in 1972 as a tool for preserving Pacific culture.

#### **Pacific Islands Forum**

The Federated States of Micronesia is a member of the Pacific Islands Forum, an inter-governmental organisation that seeks to foster cooperation between countries and territories of the Pacific Ocean. Its work covers migration issues, as the forum has organised regional meetings on climate change and migration, as well as workshops between immigration officials from the region.

#### **Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC)**

The Federated States of Micronesia is a member of the PIDC (known as the Pacific Immigration Director's Conference until 2018). PIDC is a regional consultative process that gathers official immigration agencies of the Pacific region to enable the heads of the participating states' immigration agencies to discuss issues of mutual interest and foster cooperation. Other objectives of PIDC include modernising national immigration legal frameworks in the region.

#### **International Organisation for Migration**

IOM is present in the Federated States of Micronesia, where it is currently implementing a Disaster Mitigation, Relief and Reconstruction Programme with funding from the US Agency for International Development (USAID). IOM opened a Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) in the country in 2013,<sup>16</sup> and it published a 2015 Country Profile on Migration in the Federated States of Micronesia.<sup>17</sup>

- **National institutions**

#### **Department of Foreign Affairs, Overseas Embassies, Consulates, and Missions**

The Department of Foreign Affairs is responsible for conducting relations with foreign governments, regional and international organisations, and overseeing the country's embassies, consulates and missions abroad. The department communicates with Micronesian citizens overseas through the websites of its embassies.

<sup>16</sup> IOM, 'Pacific's first Migrant Resource Centre opens'

<sup>17</sup> IOM, Migration in the Federated States of Micronesia, Country Profile 2015

## Office of the President

Through its Public Information Office, the Office of the President informs Micronesian citizens at home and abroad of official government news and notices. Some of the communications published by the Office aim to defend the interests of the diaspora, such as the declaration adopted in August 2020 to express the Office's concerns over press articles published by various media outlets in Guam about the Micronesian diaspora.

## Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia

The Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia has the ability to regulate emigration in the country. However, no related regulation or legislation has thus far been passed by the Congress.<sup>18</sup>

## Department of Resources and Development

The department is responsible for supporting and managing the development of the country's economy and the utilisation of its natural resources in line with the Strategic Development Plan (SDP). It conducted the Census of Population and Housing in 2010, which included data on remittances received in the Federated States of Micronesia.

## Diaspora organisations in Europe



Since nearly all the Micronesian diaspora resides in the United States, at the time of writing, there were no Micronesian diaspora organisations identified in Europe.

<sup>18</sup> Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia, <http://www.fsmlaw.org/fsm/constitution/>

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