

A 2020 MESSAGE FOR THE LAW DAY DEBATES

From Chief Justice Dennis K. Yamase

Supreme Court of the Federated States of Micronesia

September 1, 2020

This year has been a year like no other, one in which we had to postpone our FSM Law Day Debates due to the global pandemic of COVID-19, which resulted in disruptions to travel and closure of schools, among other things. However, the FSM Law Day debates remain a very important institution to the Court and the Nation.

On every Law Day we have held a debate contest among the four top debate teams of high school students participating in State Law Day Committees' sponsored debates. The debates, as usual, promise an impressive display of the students' intellectual, research, and rhetorical skills. Every year we learn so much from the perspective of our youth, from their intellectual curiosity, their in-depth research, and probing analysis.

In order to hold this year's debates, we are relying on the wonders of innovative technology to bring our debate teams and our islands together. This year the final debate teams will conduct virtual presentations on a proposition involving an issue of national importance. It is groundbreaking that we will bring the Law Day Debate teams together in this manner, and we are grateful that we have the technological resources to listen to and watch our best and brightest young minds address this issue remotely. The young people of this nation are our future, so we should and must listen to them. We are extremely proud of these future leaders and we value the opportunity to showcase them to the local and distant Micronesian communities with broadcasts over the radio and internet.

The topic for this year's Law Day Debate is:

"BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA FILE A CLAIM WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE AGAINST THE MORE DEVELOPED NATIONS, WHO ARE HOST TO LARGE MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS, WHICH HAVE CONTRIBUTED HEAVILY TO THE GLOBAL WARMING AND CLIMATE CHANGE, SEEKING REDRESS AND RELIEF INCLUDING MONETARY DAMAGES."

We hope that after this year's debates are done, these young students will continue to cultivate and refine their competence for clear and critical thinking, coherent and logical presentation of argument, persuasive articulation of complex ideas, and effective delivery. It is our hope that this talented group of young debaters will go on to further their education in college and then return home and join the legal community in some professional capacity.

Whatever they do in the coming years, they should excel as future leaders of the FSM because of the skills and qualities they already possess. A big thank you to them and their

coaches for their hard work. No matter what place in the debate contest the teams come in, they are all winners having worked so hard to become finalists in the debates.

Congratulations again and the best of everything in the future to all of you.

Thank you,

Hon. Dennis K. Yamase

Chief Justice, Supreme Court of the Federated States of Micronesia