

FEDERATED STATES
OF
MICRONESIA

ADDRESS

BY

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OF THE

FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

BEFORE THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

AT ITS

SIXTY-FIFTH SESSION

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Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to the Presidency of the 65th session of the General Assembly. You have taken on this formidable task at a crucial period for our United Nations. I assure you of Micronesia's full support. I would also like to pay tribute to your esteemed predecessor for his distinguished leadership.

Sadly, Mr. President, let me begin my statement, first and foremost, to express the sincere sympathy of the People and the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia for the many victims of recent natural disasters everywhere. Having been victims of natural disasters ourselves, our hearts go out to the victims of the recent hurricanes, earthquakes, mudslides, and floods that are now occurring at an unprecedented scale with increasing frequency and devastating intensity all over our planet. Overwhelming evidence points to one common denominator in all these, and this is global climate change.

I am deeply honored to address this session of the General Assembly for the first time on behalf of the Federated States of Micronesia. This Assembly accords Micronesia and the small island developing states (SIDS) an extraordinary privilege to bring to the whole world the most pressing issues affecting us that demand our collective response.

Mr. President,

Despite the many years of negotiations to curb its devastating effects, the climate change crisis continues to haunt us. The negotiating process has moved along very slowly, while in stark contrast, the rapid increases in the incidence and severity of environmental hazards continue to take their toll with devastating results. I cannot help but think of the needless human suffering everywhere, and what the future holds for my country and the small island developing states if business continues as usual.

As a small island developing state, Micronesia's future is intrinsically linked to the global climate. That is why we are gravely concerned by the acute environmental problems related to the extreme vulnerability of our islands to sea-level rise and climate change. These threats are indisputable. Delays in adopting a comprehensive and legally binding agreement to avert this global disaster are without excuse. In Micronesia, we are deeply disappointed in the glacial progress at the negotiating sessions and climate change meetings of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). At the same time, we are growing increasingly alarmed by the prospect of lowering ambitions for the meeting in Cancun, Mexico later this year.

This is not an acceptable response to a crisis of enormous proportion. Certainly not for Micronesia, and not for any one of the small island developing states who need fast action. This is an issue of survival for us.

We must find a better response - a genuine response that supports mitigation and adaptation measures that will achieve significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions that preserve the integrity of our Earth's environment, and also the livelihood of its inhabitants.

Mr. President,

My island nation and the small island developing states for that matter are not major contributors towards the causes of climate change. You all know that. But we are just as well determined in our efforts to contribute to finding solutions.

For its part, Micronesia continues to take the lead to combat climate change by utilizing the opportunities under the Montreal Protocol ozone treaty.

Through the Montreal Protocol we can solve a big part of the climate change problem. That is why Micronesia has developed a proposal with the support of Mauritius, the Marshall Islands, Seychelles and the Philippines that calls for the phasing down of the production and use of Hydrofluorocarbon (HFCs). Under our proposal we will be able to eliminate one of the six greenhouse gases listed under the Kyoto Protocol. And we are encouraged that other countries, such as Canada, the United States and Mexico, already have come forward with similar proposals.

Frankly, we have been delighted by the interest received in our proposal so far. I commend to your attention the proposal we have put forward. Today, I encourage all delegations to consider supporting it. Our collective action is imperative if we are to effectively curb and reverse global warming. This is the kind of collaboration that I encourage here.

Just as we are delighted by our Montreal Protocol proposal, we are equally proud of an initiative within our own Pacific region launched in August by the Governments of the Republics of the Marshall Islands, Palau and my own Government at the margins of the 41st Pacific Islands Forum meeting in Vanuatu.

This is the Green Energy Micronesia (GEM) Initiative which calls for 20 percent improvement in energy efficiency by suppliers in areas such as transportation and electric power generation; 30 per cent improvement in energy use by end users, and 20 per cent electricity generation through renewable energy by 2020.

As island countries with total dependence on fossil fuel for our energy generation, it is no longer economically, financially, and environmentally sustainable to continue down this path. We must look towards developing, utilizing and embracing our renewable sources of energy.

Our prospect for success will remain grim with our limited capacity and available financial resources. We encourage and call upon our development partners and the international community to support our efforts, including through increased financial support, transfer of technology and capacity building.

Mr. President,

In our seemingly idyllic setting as island nations, it may seem to many around the world that we live an easy life and only demand actions from others. But the reality is that our island nations are actively playing our part in maintaining and promoting the protection of our planet Earth.

We accept our responsibility for conserving the bio-diversity of our islands and waters, and for using resources in a sustainable manner. That is why Micronesia, and our Micronesian sister nations, the Republics of the Marshall Islands and of Palau as well as the Territory of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, continue to promote the Micronesia Challenge to conserve at least 30 per cent of the near shore marine resources, and 20 per cent of terrestrial resources across our Micronesian region by 2020.

Given our limitations individually, we can only confront these challenges through regional collective actions.

I want to express our utmost gratitude to those countries and international organizations that continue to support the Micronesia Challenge, and help us achieve our goals. Being small island countries with limited resources, we see realistic success in collaborative partnership with the international community.

Micronesia will continue to address the protection of the ocean and its resources. As a Pacific island country with one of the largest Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO), we ascribe particular importance to the ocean and its resources.

The ocean has a fundamental and critical bearing on our food security and economic future; however, human activities on the planet are significantly affecting our ocean and can bring about disastrous consequences on our food security and sustainable development.

The incidence of illegal unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in our zone remains of great concern as this abhorring practice continues with its sophistication and multinational criminal operations. We do maintain high expectations that through the support of the international community we can combat this illegal activity that threatens the sustainability of our fish stocks and deprives our people of the potential economic benefits.

To reverse already notable trends towards the disappearance of key tuna species that were once thought inexhaustible, Leaders of the Pacific countries that are Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) signed early this year the Koror Declaration agreeing to introduce further conservation measures to protect key tuna stocks. One of the measures agreed to is to close off additional high seas areas to purse seine fishing by vessels licensed to fish our PNA waters.

Micronesia is fully committed and will work with its PNA members and the wider international community to ensure the sustainability of our tuna resources. We will hold those accountable through internationally agreed mechanisms to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing in our waters and the WCPO region.

Our oceans and our EEZ are getting a great deal of international attention because of the potential for economic exploitation and we assign the highest priority to having greater economic participation in all its aspects. Increased economic participation is a major goal for all countries in the Pacific with considerable marine resources – not just Micronesia. But our participation in the exploitation of our own marine resources for economic development is held back by a lack of experience and because much of our basic infrastructure still needs to be supported and developed.

On the overall scoreboard, the Pacific small island developing states have not claimed their rightful share of their own fisheries resources. International support has to be given to help us build our capacities not only in negotiating agreements and develop our fisheries industries, but in realizing a greater share of the benefits from the catch of fishstocks from our own EEZ.

Mr. President,

In this review year of both the Millennium Development Goals and the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation, we must take full advantage of both occasions and rise to the challenge to meet our world's new and emerging needs.

For the small island developing states, it means increased access to existing as well as new and additional sources of financing. It means targeted and additional measures that must effectively address our unique and particular vulnerabilities. It means assistance with the gathering and analysis of data, and many more. In that regard, I commend to you the MSI Political Declaration that will be adopted by this august body.

The Declaration may not be perfect, but we, the small island developing states, hope that it will help spur decades of pronouncements finally into action. I believe the Political Declaration deserves your kind consideration and support.

But in commending to you the Declaration, Micronesia also urges the international community and the international financial institutions to take into consideration the creation of a special SIDS category. The international community must not be content on focusing only on raising awareness on the unique set of problems and vulnerabilities the small island developing states face. The small island developing states can ill afford the waning interest of the international community in supporting specific measures and bold ideas that can truly address our special needs and vulnerabilities.

Mr. President,

One of the major pre-occupations of the General Assembly over the last 15 years has been the reform of this United Nations. I do not need to belabor the issue, as you are all aware of Micronesia's long standing position, especially in regards to the reform of the Security Council. For permanent membership, we reiterate our support for Japan and India from our Asia and Pacific region. And from other regions, Germany and Brazil also deserve equal consideration. And we call for accelerated efforts to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion.

Mr. President,

Peace in the Middle East remains elusive but we have high hopes that the resumption of direct talks held recently in Washington, D.C. and elsewhere between the Israelis and the Palestinians will pave the way to a lasting peace and a final settlement with a two-state solution.

The whole world has a stake in the Middle East peace process. Micronesia fully supports the peace process and urges all members of this Assembly to play a constructive role and work towards an outcome that brings permanent peace and security to the Middle East.

In this respect, I want to express my profound gratitude to the United States, Egypt, Jordan and the Quartet for their critical roles and leaderships in finding a solution to this insurmountable challenge. For this challenge to be met, we must respond by our collective action and support.

Mr. President,

Once again, I have been most privileged to have this opportunity to address this august Assembly on behalf of my small island country. And so Mr. President, as I close my statement, I want to reassure you that Micronesia will continue to do its part as a responsible member of this organization.

I thank you, Mr. President.