



FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

ADDRESS

BY

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PRESIDENT

OF THE

FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

BEFORE THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

AT ITS

SIXTY-SECOND SESSION

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Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to take part for the first time in this general debate of the General Assembly of the United Nations since I took the office of the Presidency of the Federated States of Micronesia in May. On this occasion, I am honored to express to you, Mr. President, my respect and congratulations on your election to the Presidency of this 62nd General Assembly. I have every confidence that you will live up to the high standards of your esteemed predecessor, Her Excellency Madame Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa.

I wish to also convey my congratulations to our distinguished Secretary-General, His Excellency Ban Ki-moon, as he takes over the helm of our Organization. I pledge to the Secretary-General my Government's strong support.

I wish to reaffirm the commitments and importance that my country, the Federated States of Micronesia, attaches to multilateralism and the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

Only a few days ago, we met in this very same Hall to take stock of a global threat which probably is the single most important challenge facing our planet today- Climate Change. Long before it became fashionable for climate change to be mainstreamed onto the global agenda, Micronesia was in the front ranks of those speaking out for action against what is now recognized as a global emergency. For years, we have argued that as a small island developing state, we are among the most vulnerable, and climate change threatens our very own existence.

We have come a long way in a short time. Consider where we were just 15 years ago when the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was signed: climate change was then considered by some as hypothetical and a threat that is more imagined than real. Now climate change is accepted as a reality and its adverse impacts seen as inevitable and life threatening, most especially to small island developing states like Micronesia. The current sense of urgency paid to climate change by the world community as evidenced by high level meetings around the world, is truly encouraging, but we are still far from reaching the objectives of the Framework Convention and the Kyoto Protocol.

We need, Mr. President, to take collective action now and act responsibly to save our planet, while taking into consideration the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. It is imperative that we pursue the climate change agenda with a sense of urgency and within the frameworks of the United Nations, if our actions are to be effective.

Importantly, acknowledgment of the threats of climate change must be accompanied by provision of adequate and additional financing by the developed countries to the most vulnerable to assist us in coping with our adaptation and mitigation requirements. We therefore support an appropriate institutional arrangement for the Adaptation Fund that is responsive to the needs of small island developing states.

Adaptation and mitigation have many faces, one of which is the pressing need for small island developing states to have increased access to renewable sources of energy, so we can move away from our long dependence on fossil fuels. In that regard I must acknowledge with gratitude the kind assistance extended by the Governments of Italy, India and others to the Pacific SIDS.

Mr. President,

In March, Micronesia presented its proposal for adjusting the Montreal Protocol to enhance its effectiveness. Although our proposed adjustment was aimed at improving the effectiveness of the Protocol's ozone mandate, Micronesia has a special interest in the significant climate benefits associated with the Montreal Protocol. We welcome the positive outcome of the historic 19th Meeting of the Parties and hope that other relevant multilateral environmental agreements will also make similar efforts to produce climate benefits.

Mr. President,

Two years ago at the 8th Conference of State Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Curitiba, Brazil the Federated States of Micronesia and Palau showcased the Micronesia Challenge. A collaborative effort among the island states and territories of the North Pacific, the Micronesia Challenge exemplifies the best of the Micronesian spirit of working together towards a common objective and shared concerns. In effect, the Micronesia Challenge sets aside for conservation at least 30% of our marine and 20% of terrestrial biodiversity across the Micronesian region by 2020.

We are grateful to the regional and international organizations and non-governmental organizations that have provided support to realize the objectives of our initiative. To overcome the many obstacles that inhibit our implementation of the Micronesia Challenge, we are seeking international partnership and assistance. My government urges the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to join with others such as the government of Turkey in providing assistance to this end.

Mr. President,

I cannot overemphasize the critical role that information and communication technologies (ICT) play in the socio-economic development of developing countries, particularly the small island developing states. With the FSM islands dispersed widely in the North-West Pacific Ocean, and with limited resources and high transportation costs, we face many monumental challenges. To confront these challenges, Micronesia believes that access to

affordable and reliable ICT offers us a solution that not only addresses our infrastructure deficiencies, but also enables us to meet the aims of the Millennium Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the ICT objectives that emanate from the World Summit on Information Society. It is a high priority of my government to bring broadband connectivity to the islands.

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), UNDP, and the UNOHRLLS are collaborating on developing a "Pacific Connectivity" project which will address the need for developing ICT infrastructures in the Pacific. This project, we hope, will poise our region to accessing effective partnership with the international community, and help creating the kind of benefits that will help support our sustainable development goals. We will not, however, be able to implement this project without the financial support of the international community.

Mr. President,

I commend the progress on the Pacific UN Presence Initiative, which in the case of my country is being represented by the UNFPA. For the past several years we have voiced our concern over the lack of adequate UN presence in Micronesia to assist us in addressing our development challenges. This much-anticipated Initiative will soon be translated into reality, for Micronesia, later in the year. It is an initiative that we will not fail to utilize to the fullest. It is therefore essential that in keeping with the objective of the Joint Office to be situated in our country, the original intent with regards to staffing must be adhered to if this initiative is going to make a difference, both in terms of effective implementation of UN programs on the ground and in enhancing my country's capacity in accessing its fair share of other sources of assistance and services provided through the UN system. As one of countries identified by UNDP that are more challenged to meet the Millennium Development Goals, my country places high value on an appropriate level of UN presence in the Joint Office located in my country to assist implement and help us effectively utilize external assistance toward achieving the MDGs.

My Government commends UNDP and UNFPA for developing a plan for the next five-year program cycle that would provide financial assistance to assist my country in addressing issues of poverty and institutional capacity. The Joint UN Office will be an important vehicle and certainly play a pivotal role towards the implementation and achievement of the specific objectives of the Program. We look forward to the implementation of the Program.

Mr. President,

As custodian of a vast ocean area, whose bounties we share with the international community, I will be remiss if I do not make a few comments on the issue of oceans and seas. First to express our gratitude to the Government of Norway and others that have contributed to the Trust Fund created to assist small island developing states in claiming their extended continental shelves in compliance with United Nations Convention on the

Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). We are however concerned about the obstacles that continue to inhibit access to this Fund. There are far too many institutional barriers that need to be immediately rectified to enable use of the Fund to allow island developing states to fulfill their obligations under UNCLOS.

As a people Micronesians are highly dependent on their marine resources for their livelihood. We take great interest in the conservation and sustainable use of our marine and fisheries resources. We cannot help but raise concern with regards to the issue of collateral catches or discards in the commercial fisheries. While these may be considered discards to others, it is a critical resource that our people depend upon for their subsistence living. The international community should vigorously seek ways to address this issue to minimize and eliminate the incidence of catching untargeted fish.

Another significant and troubling issue continues to be that of bottom trawl fishing. It would be tragic to our marine ecosystem and biodiversity if this destructive fishing practice continues unabated. We renew our call made from this podium years ago for a moratorium on bottom trawling.

Mr. President,

I wish to refer favorably to the long-standing effort by Italy and many others to encourage this body to take a consensus position against imposition of the death penalty. Last year, my country signed the declaration delivered by Finland on this important subject, and we steadfastly maintain our support for this cause.

Mr. President,

Turning to the drawn out discussion over the United Nations reforms, I should like to reiterate our concern that without a reformed Security Council, the reform of the United Nations would not be complete. We reiterate our support for Japan and India from the Asia Pacific region to be permanent members of the council while greater representation needs to be given to developing countries, including island and small States. While we continue to stand by our position on the Security Council reform, we will support any innovative ideas that may progress the issue further, such as the proposal for an intergovernmental negotiation process. This 62nd session of the General Assembly must continue the process already begun and exert all efforts towards achieving results.

I close, Mr. President, with a sense of optimism as to what the nations gathered here can achieve in advancing the admittedly ambitious agenda of the United Nations. Given the challenges we face, it is only with optimism and determination over time that they can be overcome. We in the Federated States of Micronesia will be here, to do our part.

Thank you Mr. President.