

International Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration  
Marrakech, Morocco 10-11 December 2018

General Debate

H.E. Ms. Amatlain Kabua

Ambassador & Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Marshall Islands

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**Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen,**

I have the honor to bring you the warm greetings of Yokwe on behalf of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Nations from around the world have gathered in Morocco to adopt the Global Compact on Migration. This is a topic which deserves and demands international dialogue – and this comes at an hour when it seems there is a degree of reluctance by some to engage. Migration is a complex issue – one which can both impact and benefit sending – and receiving nations. In the Marshall Islands – we are both. We feel the pressure of the drain of our population who understandably seek new horizons, and appreciate their innovation as they grow abroad. We are also a host nation – and we are realizing all the challenges of new communities. While our primary migration pathways are unique in the world, we also find that we can identify with the key elements of the Compact. And for us, we do not see these provisions as infringements on our sovereignty, but rather as a basis for future dialogue under the umbrella of the United Nations.

As a small island developing state, we face inherent challenges in pursuing economic growth within very narrow sectors. While there are some emerging opportunities which can build a homegrown economic base in the future, nearly a quarter of our population has sought to define opportunities abroad. And as we are a low-lying nation – narrow atolls with no higher ground – future climate risks serve as a further to push our population to leave. We have a truly urgent need to boost resilience and adaptation to climate impacts. We view this an issue ripe for practical and result-driven approaches.

As much our unique migration pathways are a benefit to those who seek to work and live outside of our country, we also realize pressure from losing so many – preliminary data indicates that while we do

realize remittances coming back to our country, this may be outweighed by a greater economic drain from our migrants who need continued support once they have departed. This factor is under-recognized by the international community and deserves attention. In addition, even as migration has opened up educational and employment opportunities that would not have otherwise been possible, we also are realizing the risk of losing young talent pools who can help to build our economy and culture well into the future.

Further, we are also a host nation – even as migrant communities coming to our nation have supplied a labor pool, they have also placed challenges within our already-limited capacity for infrastructure, economic growth and social services. We affirm our best efforts to ensure the human rights of all and especially the most vulnerable groups. The Marshall Islands understands the complexity of international migration in all its aspects – there are no easy solutions. Continued dialogue can lead to progress and collaboration between nations, reaching across borders to further define strategies which protect the most vulnerable, and also lead to mutually-beneficial approaches which can advance common progress.

The United Nations should exist to ensure that the smallest and most fragile nations and peoples have a voice. The Republic of the Marshall Islands affirms the Global Compact on Migration as not only a strong phrasing of complex challenges, but also as a basis for further dialogue and understanding in the future.

Thank you and kommel tata.