



# 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-NINTH SESSION**

**NEW YORK, 26 SEPTEMBER 2014**

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Mr. President, I congratulate you on your election to lead the General Assembly. I thank you and the outgoing President, Mr. John Ashe for your leadership. I must also commend our distinguished Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon. He has more than measured up to the tremendous tasks associated with his high office.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Mr. President,

Allow me to extend my sympathies to the families of the victims of the tragic and appalling events that recently unfolded around the world. From the passengers on Malaysian Airlines Flight 17, to the recent beheadings by ISIS, to the victims of the Ebola epidemic and natural disasters, we will never forget these tragedies and loss of lives.

I am humbled to address this hallowed chamber for the last time as the President of my island nation - the Federated States of Micronesia. Like my predecessors, I come with great respect for this honorable institution. This global organization is best suited to address and solve the pressing issues of our global family.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE**

Mr. President,

I have come to the United Nations -- compelled by the Dictates of Conscience. We are all stewards of God's Creation here on Earth. The bounties of Mother Nature are priceless. We all bear the obligation to sustainably manage them.

Over thirty years ago, the small island countries brought the issue of climate change to the attention of the United Nations. Some members have criticized us for focusing too much on climate change and sea-level rise, but these issues influence our every decision and affect every aspect of life on our islands.

Across the globe, the deadly impacts of climate change on the environment are stark realities. Others can afford to speak of these as future threats; for us in the small island countries, we are already facing the impacts, which are worse than science had predicted.

Micronesia means "little islands," with atolls standing only a few feet above sea level. According to the Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC, manmade climate change is leading to sea-level rise, more frequent and intense typhoons, and severe droughts. A small increase of the sea level would be a catastrophe for the atolls in Micronesia.

Our islands contribute almost nothing toward the causes of climate change, and yet we face the brunt of the adverse impacts. Climate change threatens our food and water security, the health of our population, the health of our ocean and coral reefs, our biodiversity, and the very existence of our island nations.

And what are we doing about it?

Collectively, in order for small islands to survive, AOSIS advocates for limiting global warming well below a 1.5 degree Celsius increase above the pre-industrial temperature. This requires immediate

action from all stakeholders. The SIDS must not be asked to fight climate change by themselves. On this note, we support the recently launched World Bank initiative on carbon pricing.

Next year, COP 21 in Paris will establish a new climate change treaty, which will go into effect in 2020. However, UNEP has identified a pre-2020 emissions gap. Therefore, AOSIS has also made an important proposal to the Workplan on Enhancing Mitigation Ambition in order to close this gap.

Micronesia has made an equally important proposal to amend the Montreal Protocol to phase down the production and consumption of HFCs, which are powerful greenhouse gases. This action can prevent global average temperature increase up to 0.5 degrees Celsius by the end of this century. Reducing HFCs and other short-lived climate pollutants can reduce the rate of sea-level rise by 25%. This near-term climate mitigation will give all atolls around the globe a chance to survive.

The Montreal Protocol's success and enormous potential to protect the climate is recognized in *The Economist* magazine this week. The magazine also has a separate editorial entitled "Paris via Montreal: The Quickest Way to Cut Greenhouse Gases is to Expand the Montreal Protocol." Indeed, success with the Montreal Protocol in the next six months is our ticket to a successful outcome in Paris at COP 21.

I commend the U.S. and China for continuing to work to fulfill their agreement to use the Montreal Protocol to phase down HFCs. I call on other world leaders to join Micronesia and adopt this proposed HFC amendment.

#### **NATIONAL ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

In the face of already-occurring climate change impacts, the best small island nations can do on the ground is to try to anticipate and adapt to climate change, and to instill the best possible disaster risk reduction and response policies. Adaptation is therefore a priority of Micronesia's Climate Change Act, which was recognized at a recent GLOBE World Summit of Legislators.

The Micronesia Climate Change Act implements our Nation Wide Integrated Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Policy. The goal of this policy is two-fold:

- first, to achieve economic growth and self-reliance within a framework of sustainable development,
- and, second, to minimize the risks associated with all natural and human-induced hazards, including those associated with climate change.

Micronesia has also developed an Agriculture Policy to address food and water security and enhance economic development.

#### **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

In this International Year of Small Island Developing States, the UN has convened a number of important conferences whose outcomes must be incorporated into the post-2015 development agenda. In this regard, I stress the critical importance of the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, the purpose of which is to stimulate sustainable development in SIDS through durable and genuine partnerships.

We note with appreciation the report by the Co-Chairs of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and fully endorse the proposed Goals. We rely on our development partners to assist us to undertake the actions identified in the SAMOA Pathway and to fulfill the SDGs in ways that are appropriate for our people and our culture.

## **RENEWABLE ENERGY**

Mr. President,

Clean energy and energy efficiency are two of the key engines to advance our sustainable and low-carbon development. Therefore, our National Energy Policy prioritizes energy efficiency and renewable energy. By 2020 the share of renewable energy sources will be at least 30% of total energy production, while electricity efficiency will increase by 50%.

This will require harnessing sunshine, which we have in abundance, as well as wind and marine renewable energy resources. I call on our development partners to assist us in the implementation of our National Energy Policy, including through the SIDS-DOCK initiative.

## **OCEANS AND FISHERIES**

Our Ocean and its resources are of paramount importance, but these are threatened by climate change and ocean acidification, which damage coral reefs and could alter migration patterns of tuna, our most commercially valuable resource. Foreign vessels, who enjoy unprecedented returns from harvesting our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), need to help us maintain the health, productivity, and resilience of our Ocean. Micronesia must also receive fair compensation for the value of its resources.

As part of a program of sustainable use, we must reduce the amount of bycatch being discarded, bring it to shore, and put it to good use.

Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing (or IUU fishing) continues to threaten our Ocean resources and undermines our economic sustainability. We all must abide by the rules. IUU FISHING MUST BE STOPPED.

## **NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASE EPIDEMIC**

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) have become the leading cause of death in the Pacific. Pacific Leaders have declared NCDs an epidemic. These are lifestyle diseases, but they are compounded by climate change, which destroys food crops and contaminates water supplies. Tackling this multi-sectoral issue requires widespread cooperation and support.

## **HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

Mr. President,

Human trafficking is one of the most serious social diseases of modern society that robs individuals of their dignity, particularly women and children. Profiting from human misery is despicable. Micronesia supports the eradication of trafficking in all forms. Objective and transparent ratings of countries will help achieve this goal.

## **ONE-UN APPROACH IN THE NORTH PACIFIC**

We urge the establishment of the "ONE-UN APPROACH" for the North Pacific. We are now benefitting from the UN Joint Presence in the region, but we need to increase its efficiency at the country level. The "ONE-UN APPROACH" is timely as we position ourselves to implement the SAMOA Pathway and the post-2015 development agenda, and it will help us address our national priorities.

## **MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION**

Mr. President,

Despite the United Nations' target of 0.7% of gross national product for official development assistance, most developed nations fall far short of this goal.

Small island developing States face unique challenges due to our extreme vulnerabilities, including to climate change. The need for financial and technical assistance from development partners is greater than ever, especially for human resources development and capacity building of domestic institutions. Internationally agreed financial mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund must be fully capitalized and scaled up sufficiently to support the post-2015 development agenda. We applaud Germany, France and six other nations for pledging specific sums and we urgently call for delivery of real money by these countries, as well as from other major economic powers who are also the major polluters.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

My Government has liberalized its telecommunications system, and the World Bank is providing grant assistance to install a state-of-the-art fiber optic system in my country. This much-needed infrastructure will spur economic and social development. We continue to look to the World Bank, ITU, the Asian Development Bank, and our other development partners to accelerate implementation of this new system and provide for cyber security.

## **UN SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM**

Mr. President,

The reform of the Security Council is long overdue. A reformed Council should reflect the political realities of today. It would be inconceivable to have a reformed Council without permanent seats for Japan, Germany, Brazil, and India, as well as representation from Africa.

## **THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION**

Micronesia is confident that the UN can maintain international peace and security. The UN shines brightly as a beacon of hope for those suffering from the ravages of war.

Micronesia condemns senseless killings no matter where they occur. The Middle East is a specific trouble spot that deserves the attention of this Body. Peace is achievable with mutual respect and economic stability, not by the employment of civilian lives as shields.

Micronesia also looks to the UN to effectively address the global security threats posed by climate change. Micronesia has taken an active role in the international sustainable development and climate change negotiation processes. We will continue seeking resolution of these challenges out of the conviction that it is our moral obligation to protect Mother Nature and her bounties.

All countries must work together to protect our children's future.

I thank you Mr. President.