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SIDS4 – Item 8: General Debate

**Statement by H.E. Jeem S. Lippwe
Permanent Representative of the
Federated States of Micronesia to the UN
St. John’s, 28 May 2024**

Mr. President,

Micronesia stands in solidarity with the people of our sister nation, the Independent State of Papua New Guinea. We offer our condolences during this difficult time.

I am most honored to take part in this historic gathering today and to deliver this statement on behalf of the delegation of Micronesia. I am most pleased to be here at this 4th Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) in this beautiful city of St. John’s. To the people and Government of Antigua and Barbuda, we thank you for your gracious hospitality in hosting this important meeting, and for the excellent meeting arrangements.

Mr. President,

We arrived in St. John’s with high hopes that this SIDS4 Conference will provide the international community new impetus and propel us towards urgent actions to forward the progress made to address the sustainable development of SIDS.

Some 368 miles from St. John’s, in this same Caribbean region is the small island developing state of Barbados where the first UN global conference on Small Island Developing States was held thirty years ago. We rejoiced in the conference’s adoption of the Barbados Program of Action on the Sustainable Development of SIDS. It gave SIDS a strong hope that the world is paying attention to the development needs and aspirations of the most vulnerable. Three decades later, we are poised to adopt another SIDS dedicated document – the fourth of its kind.

Mr. President,

We appreciate the positive engagements and exchanges in the negotiations during the preparatory committee meetings. As SIDS, we have highlighted the insurmountable challenges we face and our clear sustainable development aspirations. Our unique and inherent characteristics make SIDS a special case for sustainable development. We are still the same but our vulnerabilities, in many instances have doubled and loom even larger than ever before.

But the promises of a newly minted framework entitled “Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS: Charting the Course Towards Resilient Prosperity”, has been overshadowed by world events from the Russian aggression against Ukraine to the events of October 7 in the Middle East. And while SIDS no longer endure occupation by colonial powers and wartime destructions, our lives, livelihoods, and security remain under threat from other destructive forces, I fear, and this is a global challenge we must deal with in an urgent sense. These threats, none of our own making, include sea-level rise and climate change, greenhouse gases and global warming. Today, these threaten to render all the apparent progress made in previous SIDS agreements and frameworks meaningless.

Mr. President,

The ongoing threats from the rising sea levels caused by the climate crisis are unprecedented. Our coral reefs that act as natural barriers to catastrophic storms wither from acidification and are vulnerable and destroyed by warming of the ocean caused by climate change. The outcome document rightfully references it as the “gravest of threats to the

survival and viability of [our] people, natural ecosystems, and overall sustainable development”. The impacts of climate change already have implications on SIDS, including humanitarian, economic, social, cultural, ecological and on our security.

We agree with the Secretary-General that Governments and the international community should strengthen and integrate, as a matter of priority, human rights principles within climate adaptation, mitigation and resilience, with particular attention to those most affected but least able to adapt to climate impacts. While the document calls for phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, we were dismayed that despite insistence from SIDS, language from the Global Stock take on transitioning away from fossil fuels was blocked by some.

Mr. President,

By necessity, Micronesia has spoken consistently and constantly at every occasion on the urgent necessity to cut greenhouse gas emissions, particularly by developed countries. And we call for a new methane agreement using the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer as a model for a new agreement. As part of this effort, countries should eliminate the emissions of methane, HFCs, and other short-lived climate pollutants from their industrial products and activities, which altogether could result in the avoidance of at least 0.5 degree Celsius of global warming. In this respect we are encouraged that the outcome document has a reference to methane emissions.

Mr. President,

We are pleased that the outcome calls for “Building SIDS’ capacity to ratify and implement the provisions of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement)”. The BBNJ Agreement was an important milestone. SIDS are prepared to do our part for our Ocean but we will not be able to do so by ourselves.

Partnerships will be an important tool to help SIDS in general to achieve our vision of sustainable development. The success or failure of the Conference will ultimately lie with how much support we get. We call on our partners to step up their efforts and to work with us in this regard.

I thank you!