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**79<sup>th</sup> United Nations General Assembly  
Item 8: General Debate**

**Address by H.E. Wesley W. Simina  
President of the Federated States of Micronesia**

**New York, 26 September 2024**

**Check against delivery**

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary- General,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the people and the government of Micronesia, I extend a warm Kamorale.

Kamorale back home was coined as a national greeting that combines the diverse languages of all our islands. Kamorale represents the spirit of unity and solidarity that lies at the heart of my country and people. And that same spirit is equally important in the context of multilateralism here at the United Nations. In a world where global challenges require collective action, Kamorale reminds us that our strength and solutions come from our ability to come together. Just as the four states of Micronesia come together under one banner, our international community must come together in order to progress the peace, prosperity and sustainable development we all wish to see as envisioned in the Pact for the Future.

After traveling thousands of miles from Micronesia with my delegation, I am honored to participate in this 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election as President of the General Assembly, and assure you of my Delegation's support for your leadership. I also acknowledge our out-going President of the 78th Session for the impactful work he had carried out during his term. I must also pay tribute to our Secretary-General, who recently joined us in the Pacific for the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting. We deeply appreciate your tireless efforts to strengthen our United Nations as a vital instrument for achieving our shared goals.

Mr. President,

Since the time Micronesia became a member of the United Nations in September 1991, we have been grappling with the severe impacts of climate change. I cannot emphasize enough how it is the single greatest threat to our home. Even as I speak today, we are currently in a state of emergency due to an extended drought facing my nation. For us, every degree, every inch of sea-level rise, and every delay matters. We continue to call on our global community to step up with stronger and urgent action.

Mr. President,

I raise an important topic that relates to our island's ability to adapt to and survive the increasing impacts of climate change. Time is running out to prevent average global temperature from surpassing 1.5 degrees. We are already at 1.2, according to the latest science. The 1.5 degrees goal is the safety limit for our small islands. Beyond that lies a danger zone with deadly heat that will cost lives, impact our food and water systems, and will drown many of our low-lying islands.

Carbon Dioxide stays in the atmosphere for hundreds of years. So while it is critical for the world to cut those emissions, the benefit of those cuts will not be felt until later this century. We need to control temperatures now. We call upon the larger emitters to prioritize reduction of the non-CO2 pollutants – especially, methane, fluorinated gasses, and black carbon. The IPCC and more recent scientific reports explain that this is the only way. I urge all of us to take greater action now. I call on all parties to the Paris Agreement to include ambitious non-CO2 goals and measures in their 2025 round of NDCs.

As we take action on non-CO2 pollutants, we also need all countries to come together and agree on a global plan to transition away from fossil fuels in a fair, just and equitable manner. In this connection, I am announcing that Micronesia endorses the Fossil Fuel Nonproliferation Treaty Initiative. We must accelerate all of our efforts to tackle the climate crisis.

Mr. President,

The health of our ocean is deteriorating, due to effects of climate change and green-house gas emissions. One of the most hard-hitting issues we are confronted with is sea-level rise. I am very pleased that the General Assembly is hosting for the first time a high-level meeting on sea-level rise this week.

Sea-level rise poses a significant threat to the livelihoods, well-being, and security of our small island nation's communities and ecosystems. However, this climate crisis does not jeopardize our statehood or sovereignty, nor does it diminish our rights under international law. Leaders from the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) have affirmed that our maritime zones, as recognized by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, will remain valid despite physical changes due to climate change. We emphasize that the statehood and sovereignty of PIF and AOSIS members will endure, along

with the associated rights and responsibilities, including the protection of our citizens, regardless of the impacts of sea-level rise.

Mr. President,

The International Seabed Authority (ISA) is currently negotiating its draft exploitation regulations, and Micronesia is adopting a careful approach on seabed mining. We will consider all relevant factors regarding this matter, and will join in the Talanoa being organized this year by the Pacific Islands Forum.

Micronesia joins other nations in emphasizing the necessity of comprehensive knowledge, data, and scientific understanding of the marine environment and the impacts of deep seabed mining before any exploitation takes place. We urge the ISA to finalize all relevant regulations, standards, and guidelines for its Mining Code prior to exploitation. Additionally, it is crucial that all stakeholders, including adjacent coastal states, Indigenous peoples, and local communities in the Pacific, are consulted and their perspectives considered before any exploitation occurs.

Mr. President,

Micronesia is pleased with the adoption of the United Nations BBNJ Agreement. I was the first leader to sign the BBNJ Agreement here in New York a year ago and among the first to deposit our instrument of ratification. Currently, over 90 countries have signed.

I urge others to sign and ratify so that we can operationalize the BBNJ agreement. We look forward to the Preparatory Commission to begin its important work soon.

Mr. President,

The international community is set to adopt a legally binding treaty to end plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, in Busan, Republic of Korea, later this year. This treaty must address plastic pollution at its source—plastic production, particularly primary plastic polymers derived from fossil fuels. Micronesia's Bridge to Busan Declaration, launched earlier this year, calls for international support to regulate plastics production in the treaty. As negotiations near completion, we urge global backing for the Declaration to ensure the treaty includes strong measures to curb plastic production and tackle both pollution and climate change. If we do not address the unsustainable production of primary plastic polymers, then the global goal of ending plastic pollution by 2040 and limiting the average temperature rise to less than 1.5 degrees celsius cannot be achieved.

Mr. President,

Micronesia plays a vital role in the Pacific Islands Forum 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. As part of the large oceanic countries and territories, we are custodians of nearly 20 percent of the Earth's surface, placing immense cultural and spiritual value on our ocean and land as a shared heritage. Our Leaders' Commitments to 2050 focus on preserving and

protecting our oceans, ensuring a sustainable future for our children. Micronesia is dedicated to reducing and preventing the causes and impacts of climate change and sea level rise. With the support of our partners, we are committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. We pledge to safeguard the future of our people by protecting our sovereignty, maritime zones, and resources, especially in the face of climate-induced sea level rise.

Mr. President,

The health of our people is crucial to Micronesia's nation building. Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) significantly undermine our nation's well-being. NCDs hinder workforce productivity and contribute to poverty. Unfortunately, the Pacific has some of the highest rates of these diseases, with Micronesia ranking among the top countries. In 2016, NCDs accounted for 75% of all deaths in Micronesia. Recognizing this national health emergency, Micronesia has taken decisive action. Since 1995, we have participated in WHO's "Healthy Islands" initiative, focusing on health protection, risk reduction, and promoting healthy lifestyles. We developed a national NCD action plan in 2006, and the Pacific NCD Roadmap has guided our efforts since 2014. In 2022, we reaffirmed our commitment to securing the well-being of our people through the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. Our fight against NCDs is key to building a healthier, stronger future for Micronesia.

However, despite decades of effort under the Healthy Islands Initiative, NCDs continue to pose a serious challenge in Micronesia. The persistence of these diseases warrants the need for renewed support and stronger partnerships. There is an opportunity here to re-evaluate both the Healthy Islands Initiative and the Pacific NCD Roadmap, exploring ways to enhance their effectiveness. By working together, we can confront this crisis more robustly and ensure that we move toward a healthier and more resilient future.

Mr. President,

As we gather today, we are reminded of the importance of global peace and security, particularly in light of the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and between Israel and Palestine. Micronesia reaffirms its unwavering commitment to peace and dialogue. We condemn the invasion of Ukraine and the killing of innocent civilians.

We also condemn the attack by Hamas on Israeli citizens on October 7th, and we believe that every nation has the right to defend its people and territory.

We urge for the immediate and safe release of hostages and cessation of hostilities, and urge all parties to work towards a peaceful resolution. It is our profound hope that both Israel and Palestine can resume meaningful negotiations, with the goal of establishing two states living side by side in peace and security, with clear and recognized borders. We commend the constructive efforts of the United States, Egypt, and Qatar in supporting the peace process, and we remain hopeful that through diplomacy and cooperation, lasting peace can be achieved. Micronesia remains committed that the protection of innocent civilians everywhere, is of paramount importance, as peace can only be sustained when the lives and dignity of all people are respected.

Mr. President,

Micronesia joins Pacific Island nations in advocating for the establishment of a Special Representative for Climate, Peace, and Security, emphasizing that climate change is a significant global security threat. The UN system, particularly the Security Council, must adapt to address the challenges posed by the climate crisis in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. Currently, the Council struggles to effectively tackle major peace and security issues, highlighting the need for comprehensive reform. This reform should make the Council more effective, inclusive, transparent, and accountable. It must reflect the realities of today rather than those of 1945. It is time for permanent membership of the Security Council to be expanded to include Japan, India, Germany, Brazil and representation from the African continent.

Additionally, it is crucial to amplify the voices of under-represented regions, such as Small Island Developing States, in a reformed Council.

Mr. President,

In today's complex global landscape, strengthening the multilateral system for an inclusive, interdisciplinary UN is essential. Support for multi-country offices that represent the UN on the ground must be reinforced to assist vulnerable nations in fully implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Additionally, the coordination role of Resident Coordinators should be supported and strengthened.

For Small Island Developing States, our reliance on stable international assistance for development cannot be overstated. We need sustainable financing from donor partners and international financial institutions (IFIs). It is no surprise that SIDS have led the charge for a more inclusive global financial architecture. The recently adopted Multi-Vulnerability Index (MVI) is a crucial tool, providing a comprehensive understanding of the unique challenges faced by SIDS. The next step is to implement the MVI in a way that addresses our specific needs.

Mr. President,

The special case of SIDS in the context of climate change and sustainable development and our particular vulnerability to natural disasters and external shocks must be supported by an increase in climate finance and investment, including new and additional climate finance. We call on developed countries to fulfill their commitments in this regard.

Mr. President,

Gender equality is vital for nation building and effective governance. By acceding to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Micronesia has committed to achieving gender parity. We have also endorsed the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration and established a national gender policy. Strengthening gender equality is a priority within my administration, and I have nominated more women to

key roles, including my Cabinet, to address the imbalance in government. In a historic achievement, three women were recently elected to Congress, marking a significant milestone for representation. With these steps, Micronesia is moving towards a stronger and more inclusive future.

Mr. President,

Today, we stand at a critical crossroads, where the future of our planet rests in the hands of our youth. It is not enough to speak of change; we must empower the next generation to lead it. Our young people are the innovators, the visionaries, and the problem-solvers who will carry the torch of climate action and global justice. But they cannot do it alone. We must invest in their education and well-being, nurture their leadership and character. We must give them the tools to build a resilient, sustainable world. As leaders we must ensure that our youth are not the inheritors of a a dying planet, but are the co-architects of its transformation.

In closing, Mr. President –

The challenges we face—from climate change to conflict, from the health of our oceans to the well-being of our people—demand urgent and unified action. Let us not be discouraged by the magnitude of the tasks before us, but instead be inspired by the opportunity we have to reshape our world for the better. The spirit of Kamorale teaches us that strength lies in unity, and in that spirit, I call on every nation represented here to act decisively, with courage and compassion. Let us work together with resolve, and prioritize the protection of our planet, our people, and our future.

The time for action is now. Let this Assembly be remembered not for words spoken but for deeds done, for promises kept, and for the lasting legacy we leave for generations to come. As we were so rightly reminded of at the opening of the Summit of the Future by the youth representative from South Sudan – the future is for the youth to forge - not for us to cling on to.

Micronesia is ready to play its part, and I urge all of you to join us in this collective effort so that together we can build a world where peace, prosperity, and sustainability are not just aspirations, but realities for all.

As enshrined in the preamble of our FSM Constitution:

“Our ancestors, who made their homes on these islands, displaced no other people. We, who remain, wish no other home than this. Having known war, we hope for peace. Having been divided, we wish unity. Having been ruled, we seek freedom...We extend to all nations what we seek from each: peace, friendship, cooperation, and love in our common humanity.”

I thank you and I leave with you KAMORALE.