



Permanent Mission of the Federated States of Micronesia to the UN

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**79th United Nations General Assembly
Item 75: Oceans and the law of the sea**

**Statement by H.E. Jeem S. Lippwe
Permanent Representative of the Federated States of Micronesia**

New York, 12 December 2024

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Mr. President,

We align our statement with those delivered on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States and on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum. We also express our gratitude to the coordinators of the two resolutions before the General Assembly, namely Ms. Morris-Sharma of Singapore and Mr. Kravik of Norway.

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 and our way of life. 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,

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. We are very pleased that the General Assembly, for the first time, has hosted a high-level meeting on sea-level this past September.

Sea-level rise poses a significant threat to the livelihoods, well-being, and security of our small island nation's communities and ecosystems. However, the 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 adopted declarations that affirm that our maritime zones, as established and

notified to the UN Secretary-General in accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and the rights and entitlements that flow from them, shall continue to apply, without reduction, notwithstanding any physical changes connected to climate change-related sea-level rise. We also emphasize the most recent declarations by PIF and AOSIS which declare, among other things, that the statehood and sovereignty of PIF and AOSIS members will endure, along with the associated rights and duties, including the protection of our citizens, regardless of the impacts of climate change-related sea-level rise. We are pleased that the annual resolution on Oceans and the Law of the Sea reflects all of those declarations.

Mr. President,

On deep sea-bed mining, 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 any 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 fully taken into account before any exploitation occurs.

Mr. President,

Micronesia is pleased with the progress toward the entry into force of the BBNJ Agreement. Micronesia was the first country to sign the BBNJ Agreement here in New York over a year ago and among the first to deposit our instrument of ratification. Currently, 105 countries have signed and 15 have already ratified. I urge others to sign and ratify with a view of entry into force next year. The 2025 UN Ocean Conference, hosted by Costa Rica and France, will be an important event and *inter alia* provide an opportunity, in this respect. We also look forward to the BBNJ Preparatory Commission beginning its important work next year.

Mr. President,

The international community did not adopt a legally binding treaty to end plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, in Busan, Republic of Korea, last week. The treaty is still essential and 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, called for international support to regulate plastics production in the treaty. We must ensure the treaty includes strong measures to curb plastic production, which will in turn assist us in tackling 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 change-related sea level rise.

I thank you!