



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
New York**

**Hon. Mr. John Silk
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Republic of the Marshall Islands**

**United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14:
Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
General Debate
6 June 2017**

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Co-Presidents, Secretary-General, Excellencies,

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

Speaking on behalf of a low-lying atoll nation, it is rightful that we are focusing this week on oceans and sustainable development. As a nation that is 99 percent ocean, we will not progress in addressing the Sustainable Development Goals without focusing on oceans and SDG 14. We face deep challenges – from the local - marine and coastal pollution - to the global – including ocean acidification and climate impacts. However, I have not traveled to New York only to demand stronger political will from others without providing our own commitment. The outcomes of our recent National Oceans Symposium, which we have brought to this conference, express our policy roadmap to achieve a sustainable future on all aspects of our fisheries, oceans and coasts.

We will – and must act – but we cannot do it all alone.

The legacy impacts of World War II and the Cold War, including shipwrecks, unexploded ordnances and nuclear contamination, pose a large challenge for the waters of Pacific islands region. The Marshall Islands also has the added burden of radioactive contamination remaining from the nuclear testing era – and those half-lives will persist for generations to come.

We did not cause these events, and our capacity to address them is limited. The longer we wait – the worse the threat – and clear international action is needed.

Co-Presidents,

I strongly affirm all that has been said before, including statements from the leaders and Ministers of the Pacific islands region. And I do not wish to repeat their powerful words.

I have something else to add.

Oceans are dynamic environments, and human-driven climate impacts to the oceans are seriously under-recognized at the United Nations. Without concerted and strong action on climate change – coming from each one of us in this hall – my nation – and indeed the entire world, and especially future generations, face a clear and present danger to development and security.

Co-Chairs,

The world is facing a grave crisis on climate change. We are proud that 194 States Parties, almost every nation in the world, still stand together as one.

There is a saying in Marshallese – “*Kajor Wot Wor*” – which means the multitude matters. I wish to thank the non-UNFCCC Party actors, including the private sector, local governments and civil society, for their role in curbing emissions, as expressed in the Paris Agreement and outcome.

On behalf of the Marshall Islands, I wish to thank the 194 States Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, who have signed the Paris Agreement, and who continue to affirm it. It is our cultural custom to express gratitude, and I will thank each State Party individually, and in alphabetical order:

AFGHANISTAN
ALBANIA
ALGERIA
ANDORRA
ANGOLA
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
ARGENTINA
ARMENIA
AUSTRALIA
AUSTRIA
AZERBAIJAN
BAHAMAS
BAHRAIN
BANGLADESH
BARBADOS
BELARUS
BELGIUM
BELIZE
BENIN
BHUTAN
PLURINATIONAL STATE OF BOLIVIA
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
BOTSWANA
BRAZIL
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM
BULGARIA
BURKINA FASO
BURUNDI
CABO VERDE

CAMBODIA
CAMEROON
CANADA
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
CHAD
CHILE
PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA
COLOMBIA
COMOROS
CONGO
COOK ISLANDS
COSTA RICA
COTE D'IVOIRE
CROATIA
CUBA
CYPRUS
CZECH REPUBLIC
DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO
DENMARK
DJIBOUTI
DOMINICA
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
ECUADOR
EGYPT
EL SALVADOR
EQUATORIAL GUINEA
ERITREA
ESTONIA
ETHIOPIA
EUROPEAN UNION
FIJI
FINLAND
FRANCE
GABON
GAMBIA
GEORGIA
GERMANY
GHANA
GREECE
GRENADA
GUATEMALA
GUINEA
GUINEA-BISSAU
GUYANA
HAITI
HONDURAS
HUNGARY
ICELAND

INDIA
INDONESIA
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN
IRAQ
IRELAND
ISRAEL
ITALY
JAMAICA
JAPAN
JORDAN
KAZAKHASTAN
KENYA
KIRIBATI
KUWAIT
KYRGYZSTAN
LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
LATVIA
LEBANON
LESOTHO
LIBERIA
LIBYA
LIECHTENSTEIN
LITHUANIA
LUXEMBOURG
MADAGASCAR
MALAWI
MALAYSIA
MALDIVES
MALI
MALTA
MARSHALL ISLANDS
MAURITANIA
MAURITIUS
MEXICO
FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA
MONACO
MONGOLIA
MONTENEGRO
MOROCCO
MOZAMBIQUE
MYANMAR
NAMIBIA
NAURU
NEPAL
NETHERLANDS
NEW ZEALAND
NIGER
NIGERIA
NIUE

NORWAY
OMAN
PAKISTAN
PALAU
PANAMA
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
PARAGUAY
PERU
PHILIPPINES
POLAND
PORTUGAL
QATAR
REPUBLIC OF KOREA
REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA
ROMANIA
RUSSIAN FEDERATION
RWANDA
SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS
SAINT LUCIA
SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES
SAMOA
SAN MARINO
SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE
SAUDI ARABIA
SENEGAL
SERBIA
SEYCHELLES
SIERRA LEONE
SINGAPORE
SLOVAKIA
SLOVENIA
SOLOMON ISLANDS
SOMALIA
SOUTH AFRICA
SOUTH SUDAN
SPAIN
SRI LANKA
STATE OF PALESTINE
SUDAN
SURINAME
SWAZILAND
SWEDEN
SWITZERLAND
TAJIKISTAN
THAILAND
THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
TIMOR-LESTE
TOGO
TONGA

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
TUNISIA
TURKEY
TURKMENISTAN
TUVALU
UGANDA
UKRAINE
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND
UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
URUGUAY
UZBEKISTAN
VANUATU
BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA
VIET NAM
YEMEN
ZAMBIA
ZIMBABWE

Co-Presidents,

The United Nations is not our only common umbrella, but it remains a primary pathway to forge stronger connections between nations- and this is needed to integrate oceans into the wider sustainable development framework. The world's oceans are a truly common resource with no borders, and individual nations cannot stand divided or alone. If a small island nation like the Marshall Islands speaks loudly, it is because we realize the closest impacts. But as a union of nations we all must prove our aspirations with real political will.

Our children and grand-children will judge us all on our actions, not our words.

Thank you and kम्मol tata.