



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

**Hon. Mr. Tony DeBrum
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Republic of the Marshall Islands
70th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations
United Nations Post-2015 Development Agenda – High Level Plenary
26 September 2015 New York**

check against delivery

Co-Chairs, Excellencies, Mr. Secretary-General, Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honor to bring the warm greetings of Yokwe on behalf of His Excellency, Christopher Loek, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Marshallese people.

The Marshall Islands is proud to join in adopting the UN's post-2015 agenda and Sustainable Development Goals.

We have set our collective sights high - to continue to move the world out of poverty and towards a sustainable planet. We have set our collective sights deep - across the full range of development challenges, and out to 2030. We have pushed ourselves beyond the superficial strain of usual rhetoric, and set specific benchmarks to measure progress and address gaps.

Our celebration, however, should be brief - it is now time to implement.

Mr. President,

In the Republic of the Marshall Islands, as with many of our Pacific neighbors, oceans define our identity and future. Achievement of the oceans SDG will depend closely on not only partnership, but renewed political will - in particular by distant fishing nations - to put aside immediate economic self-interest, and make tough choices to ensure the world has a sustainable food source, and that small island nations realize a much stronger benefit and participation in our own resource. The Parties to the Nauru Agreement have committed to advancing the world's largest certified-sustainable tuna fishery - and our success will depend closely on other nations and the private sector working as true partners - with us, and not against us.

The SDGs have also rightfully incorporated gender as an important benchmark - and although women have a powerful role in our traditional culture, too often the "gender gap" has persisted despite specific policies and good intentions.

It is also critical that the achievement of SDGs not rest only with national governments at the UN, but includes the full range of actors, including the private sector and our regional partners. In this regard, and following the Pacific partnership framework, it is also important that we fully recognize the participation of Taiwan in the implementation of SDGs.

Mr. President,

For a small island nation – and also a large ocean nation, it is imperative that our statistics capacity receives targeted and immediate support, and that we devise a tailored national SDG strategy in which we move forward first with our strongest and most deserving priorities.

At no point were our previous strategies closely aligned – our nation policies, bilateral foreign assistance, the regional Pacific plan, the UN's strategy for small island nations, and the MDGs - these were never mapped out together. It is little wonder that limited progress was achieved.

Today, we all have the opportunity to design differently. We must create closer connections between the SDGs and regional platforms as well as our improved national strategic plan, which itself aspires to indicators and performance budgeting. It is imperative that we better utilize the recent boost in national fisheries income as a targeted opportunity to invest in the SDGs and invest in our future. We need the full commitment of our close and traditional partners - as well as the genuine leadership of non-traditional sources - to match our own strong national commitment.

Mr. President,

Today is only the first step of many needed to forge a closer link between local communities and global aspirations.

Thank you and kommol tata.