

# FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

**ADDRESS**

**BY**

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**PRESIDENT**

**OF THE**

**FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA**

**BEFORE THE**

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

**AT ITS**

**SIXTY-SEVENTH SESSION**

**NEW YORK, 27 SEPTEMBER 2012**



Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to join the previous speakers in congratulating the new President of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and commending the President of the 66th session for his excellent leadership. Allow me also to extend my deep respect for the tireless efforts His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has made as leader of the United Nations Secretariat and world statesman.

Mr. President,

Today our world continues to face numerous arduous challenges that require an urgent, collective response. Many of the gravest threats to the Member States of this assembly, including countries like mine, the Federated States of Micronesia, are simply beyond the abilities of our individual countries to single-handedly address, even with our most aggressive and concentrated efforts. To speak before this august body today is an honor and an opportunity I must take to encourage international cooperation to help address these challenges.

The biggest challenge we face today in Micronesia is climate change, not just the projections of future loss and damage, but the dangerous impacts that my people are experiencing now as well. Sadly to date no significant progress has been made on climate change mitigation. Time and again, I have asked, "How do I tell my people that their plight and their future lie in the hands of those most responsible for greenhouse gases?"

From our viewpoint we must step up our collective effort to confront global climate change more urgently and more creatively. What is needed now is to close the ambition gap. I therefore call on major emitters to step up their level of commitment under the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. Our very existence depends on it. Without international cooperation and assistance, we are helpless against the adverse impacts of climate change.

Mr. President,

Micronesia has barely contributed insignificantly to the problem of climate change; it has in fact contributed to the solution. While actively participating in the UNFCCC negotiations, we continue to advocate for significant cuts in greenhouse gas emissions.

We were therefore pleased with the agreement this summer in Rio to begin cooperation on a global phase down of the production and consumption of HFCs. Under my administration Micronesia first proposed amending the Montreal Protocol accordingly in 2009. Today the Montreal Protocol remains the ideal venue to phase down the production and consumption of HFCs, just as it has managed for similar gases that HFCs were invented to replace.

Mr. President,

To the rest of the world, the map may look pretty empty on our side of the globe, but to all of us it is as much a homeland as any continental landmass. We must treat it accordingly, and we must

defend it just as strongly. And therein lies our second, closely related challenge: the change to our ocean environment. This not only includes rising tides and temperatures and ocean acidification, but also the damages from harmful as well as destructive fishing practices, from pollutants such as mercury and oil, and from other waste from unsustainable human activity. The abhorrent practice of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing continues unabated, and urgent actions to reduce by-catch, fish discards, and post-harvest losses must be taken.

As a Pacific Small Island Developing State (PSIDS), our livelihood, our economy, our culture, and our way of living are tied to a Blue Economy. We have recognized that the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources are key elements in achieving sustainable development. We must fulfill our commitments from Rio.

My country welcomes the decision in Rio to hold a global conference on SIDS in 2014. Micronesia fully supports this decision and reiterates its call to hold this conference in one of the Pacific SIDS countries.

Mr. President,

The rising cost of global energy continues to pose a serious challenge to our socio-economic development and sustainability. SIDS like Micronesia continue to rely heavily on imported fossil fuel despite the abundance of renewable energy sources. Our unique and particular vulnerabilities often translate into significantly higher costs for energy infrastructure and fossil fuels. As a consequence, our governments spend a high percentage of our limited budgets on fossil fuel procurement alone, often at the expense of the other sectors of the economy.

To mitigate the situation, SIDS adopted the Barbados Declaration under the theme “Achieving Sustainable Energy for All in SIDS”, which has become an annex to the Rio+20 outcome adopted last June. This is a concrete expression of the small islands’ own determination and ambition to promote renewable energy, energy efficiency, energy access, and low carbon development.

Our transition, however, to renewable energy requires financing and new, appropriate, and affordable technology. To this end, I must recognize and commend the bilateral assistance already provided in this area by the European Union, Japan, China, United States, France, Italy, Turkey, as well as others who are also assisting through other multilateral arrangements. We urge other partners to join us to ensure sustainability. We also urge the support of the Secretary-General’s initiative on Sustainable Energy For All.

Mr. President,

Our health care system is increasingly under stress and constant challenge from the growing burden of Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) that has reached an epidemic proportion in the Pacific. We accept that primary responsibility for health rests with our government. However, we seek assistance from the international community in capacity building, institutional strengthening, and policy formulation.

We recognize the roles of nutrition and lifestyle in this epidemic. While we fully accept this linkage, we are also mindful that climate change has magnified this challenge by its threat to food security and the traditional lifestyle of Micronesians.

Mr. President,

The FSM supports greater participation of women in social, political, and economic development. We look to development partners to enhance our investment in ensuring that their potentials are nurtured and realized through quality education, healthcare services, and security measures against domestic violence and gender-based violence. It is only appropriate that measures to empower women to be true participants in nation-building should be locally driven.

We have embarked on mainstreaming their views, interests, and contributions into national development policies. We recognize and appreciate the assistance extended by the UN system and our development partners to support our national policies to enhance gender equality.

Mr. President,

Turning toward our Organization, the single-most and urgent need is the reform of the Security Council. Naturally, such an important step must not be taken in haste, but, after more than a decade of talking, we should be closer to finding an acceptable formulation. It is time to walk the talk. Success on this issue will strengthen our Organization and stimulate and renew confidence in the Charter. Success breeds success.

Mr. President,

My country subscribes to the principles of peace, security, and prosperity, as enshrined in the United Nations Charter. We are horrified by the senseless killing of thousands of innocent civilians in Syria. For the last two weeks, we have witnessed surges in violence. We join the international community in condemning violence, in particular the attacks on diplomatic missions, diplomats, and personnel in Libya and Egypt. We must be bold in our actions to prevent them. I call upon Member States to continue their efforts to find peaceful resolutions to these conflicts, especially the most challenging ones.

The United Nations has the unique opportunity to address and solve the many challenges facing its weakest and most vulnerable Member States. The challenge lies in how this Organization and the most able members of this Body can turn their many ambitious statements into mobilizing the required resources to successfully protect our peoples.

In conclusion, we in the Federated States of Micronesia continue to place our faith in the United Nations in looking to the future in the face of our troubled world. Our isolation, surrounded by the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean no longer shields us from the threat of international terrorism. Globalization has long had a foothold on our island state. Facebook links us to the world.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to end with a quote from my constitution: "The seas bring together, they do not separate us. We extend to all nations what we seek from each: peace, friendship, cooperation, and love in our common humanity."

I thank you.

