



Permanent Mission of the Federated States of Micronesia to the UN

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Preparatory Committee established by General Assembly resolution 69/292: Development of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction - First session

**General Statement by H.E. Jane Chigiyaal
Permanent Representative**

New York, 28 March 2016

Check against delivery

Mr. Chair,

Micronesia congratulates you and your Bureau on your elections to your posts. We are confident that you will lead our work with integrity, clarity, and fairness.

Micronesia aligns itself with the general statements delivered by the Kingdom of Thailand on behalf of G77 and China, by Papua New Guinea on behalf of the Pacific Island Forum, and by Nauru on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States, and now wishes to present additional comments from its national perspective.

Mr. Chair,

Micronesia plays a pivotal role in the stewardship of one of the greatest natural resources in the world—the Ocean. It was the Ocean that guided our Micronesian ancestors to our islands and atolls millennia ago, with its currents and creatures providing direction and sustenance for their Oceanic voyages, and it is the Ocean that provides natural resources that are so crucial for the sustenance and economic livelihoods of Micronesians today. Unfortunately, the Ocean is beset by a host of serious threats, most of which are due to human impacts, whether direct or indirect. Threats include, but are certainly not limited to, the over-harvesting of fish; illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing; maritime pollution; the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes; the introduction of invasive species; ocean warming; and ocean acidification. The Ocean is in great peril.

As a small island developing State with a sizable Exclusive Economic Zone abutting several expansive areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJs) in the Ocean, Micronesia has a profound obligation to ensure the proper conservation and sustainable use of the rich marine biological diversity of ABNJs for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind. This is not just a legal obligation. It is a deep-rooted cultural obligation for my people, one imposed on us by our ancestors to ensure that we bequeath the Ocean as whole as possible to future Micronesians for their enjoyment and stewardship. A robust, far-reaching, legally binding BBNJ instrument will be a central component for honoring that fundamental obligation.

With this mission in mind, Micronesia stands ready to participate constructively in the work of this Preparatory Committee. Over the next several days, Micronesia will propose elements for inclusion in a new legally binding BBNJ instrument. For a fuller discussion of those elements, please consult the position paper submitted by Micronesia to you earlier this month, Mr. Chair, and currently posted on the DOALOS website.

The international community has spent more than a decade discussing the possible content of a new BBNJ instrument. It is time to put that talk into action. It is time to get to work.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.