



Permanent Mission of the Federated States of Micronesia to the UN

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Organizational session of the Intergovernmental Conference on 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

General Statement by the Micronesian delegation

New York, 16 April 2018

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Madame President,

At the outset, Micronesia associates itself with the statement by the distinguished representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the statement by the distinguished representative of Maldives on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, and the statement by the distinguished representative of Nauru on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States. Echoing those statements, Micronesia is pleased that you have been elected to preside over the Intergovernmental Conference to negotiate and adopt the BBNJ instrument. Your efforts during the Preparatory Committee process are a testament to your ability to capture all the nuances of our discussions, address the many divergent interests and concerns involved, and seek to achieve a final outcome that meets core objectives and is supported by the largest number of delegations possible. For Micronesia, where customs and traditions dictate that close cooperation and respectful dialogue are crucial in managing community affairs for the betterment of all, your efforts have a particular resonance, and they will certainly serve you well as our presiding officer. Additionally, your background as hailing from a small island State reliant on the Ocean and the law of the sea to benefit your people will be of particular relevance in our discussions during the Intergovernmental Conference. Indeed, Micronesia has long been a strong champion of the Ocean and the law of the sea, having participated extensively not just in the BBNJ negotiations but also in other fora and processes aimed at the conservation and sustainable use of the marine environment in a manner that accords with the rule of law. The ancestors of the Micronesian people entrusted to the current generation the solemn duty to safeguard our natural resources for the sake of future generations, and we see the BBNJ process as a crucial aspect of that mission. This is why Micronesia has, for example, championed the need to acknowledge and operationalize the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities in the BBNJ instrument; insisted that adjacent coastal States have key roles to play in a BBNJ instrument; and advocated for a BBNJ instrument that respects existing measures, processes, and instruments that are success stories in terms of the conservation and sustainable use of the marine environment, including a number in the Pacific region. We have done our part for millennia, and we look forward to working with the international community in the Intergovernmental Conference to advance the same cause.

Madame President, as we finalize the technical details for the Intergovernmental Conference in order to ensure that it will be as constructive, cooperative, and consequential as possible, please be assured of Micronesia's full confidence in and strong support for your leadership and decision-making. You are our navigator now. Lead our voyage well.

Thank you, Madame President.