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(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)

Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction 2017  
Cancun, Mexico

**Statement by the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands**

Excellencies, I bring you warm Iakwe from the Republic of the Marshall Islands. On behalf of the President of the Marshall Islands, H.E. Hilda Heine and the people of the Marshall Islands, it is my honor to bring you this statement.

Excellencies, during the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai Japan, the Marshall Islands stated publicly that the Hyogo Framework for Action was never well internalized. This year I am very pleased to inform the global community that the Marshall Islands is making considerable progress on the ground to ensure that people's lives and properties are protected.

Excellencies, Like other small island nations – and coastal areas worldwide – there are already high levels of vulnerability to natural hazards in the Marshall Islands. As an atoll nation, we face a particular challenge as there are geographic limitations in relocating away from hazard-prone areas. In population centers like Majuro and Ebeye, hazard vulnerability is worsened by local building patterns which may hasten erosion. With increasing scientific certainty, climate-driven impacts are adding an extra layer on top of coastal vulnerability, as well as food and water security. These impacts have a direct implication to the general health of the people.

Despite all of these challenges,

Excellencies, the Marshall Islands has fully embraced the Sendai Outcome and has taken the necessary policy measures to ensure disaster risk reduction and climate change adaption are being integrated into our national planning processes. The Marshall Islands is demonstrating its pledge to the Sendai through the various national plans, starting with the Joint National Action Plan for Climate and

Disaster Resilience and the President's Vision 2020 Agenda which outline our government's commitment to reduce risks and build the resilience of our economy, our people and our land and marine based resources. Now is truly the time to address implementation of key political outcomes, including the Sendai, the Paris Agreement and the Samoa Pathway. We expect continued leadership and participation from all countries and international partners, and a clear focus on turning words into actions.

Excellencies, the implementation of these important national policy objectives are not only meeting the global targets under the Sendai Framework for Action, but have been important guiding tools to catalyze transformative domestic actions and better movement by our national, regional, and global partners. To demonstrate a few of the actions taken on the ground, I am pleased to inform you that despite the many local challenges,

- Through our partnership with the International Federation of Red Cross Society and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Program, the RMI has in place an enhanced Early Warning System to strengthen disaster preparedness. This system is still in its infancy. It would need strengthening through capacity building and transferring of tools and technologies needed to make the system efficient and effective.
- The Marshall Islands is in the process of developing the 1<sup>st</sup> ever National Building Code taking into account climate change and variability's, and disaster risk reduction. Furthermore, the Government of the has taken necessary steps to build and establish a one-stop resources center for information, data and knowledge including GIS information to assist us in our short, medium and long term decision making processes. The Marshall Islands takes this opportunity to thank the people and Government of Italy for the funding support.
- We are improving rain harvesting systems beginning with remote island schools with higher student population to protect against droughts. We take this opportunity to thank the people and Government of Germany for their support.
- Through our partnership with the World Bank Group, Ebeye Island, will soon implement a coastal protection project that will reduce vulnerability to climate-driven and natural disasters.

Excellencies, these national actions are just to name a few of our DRR efforts to meet the outcomes of the Sendai Framework for action; however the international community and the UN System should take into account the unique need for island-tailored approaches. The extreme vulnerability, remote geography, and comparatively small scale of SIDS demands dedicated attention, including through improved access to financial and technical assistance. It is not enough that our policies are aligned, but this is also actively reflected in our bi-lateral and multilateral partnerships.

Excellencies, the Marshall Islands like many small island atoll nations are in the frontline to the impacts of climate driven natural hazards. Our survivability not only depends on our CCA and DRR actions, it also depends on the actions of global community too, to take on ambitious targets to reduce green house gas emissions. As a small developing low-lying nation, there are inherent limits on where adaptation is possible.

Komol tata