



REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF SECRETARY

On the occasion of the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk
Reduction Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
3- 6 July 2018

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Republic of the Marshall Islands is honored to be participating in the 2018 Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. My delegation would like to thank the Government of Mongolia for the excellent hospitality that has been accorded to us since our arrival. I would also like to take this opportunity to convey our gratitude to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction for their support to this important regional platform.

Mr. Chairman,

As a low-lying atoll nation, the RMI faces even more acute challenges and is among the very most vulnerable among SIDs to the effects of climate change and extreme disasters. Because of its low elevation, limited geographic capacity for adaptation, and fragile ecosystems, the RMI will experience disproportionately higher impacts from sea level rise. Over the past few years, we have experienced an increase in the occurrence of king tides and severe droughts. The science is telling us

that climate change and disaster trends for my country will continue to increase and intensify. International support for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction should therefore take into consideration the exceptional hazards atoll nations face.

The RMI is at the front of the front line, and its front line is its last line of defense. This is why my country is moving forward on a path of developing a systematic and integrated approach to our sustainable development that combines both climate and disaster risk considerations to build resilience across the entire nation and economy. The government has started developing its first National Adaptation Plan that will set out the immediate, accelerated actions and investments over the next 5 years (2019-2023) and medium and long-term term measures out to 2030 and beyond.

In doing so, we will strive to align our NAP with and build on the recommendations of the recently completed review of the RMI Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management (2018), our National Strategic Plan, Agenda 2020, outcomes of the 2nd National Climate Change Dialogue that will take place later this month and other relevant national reports. The National Adaptation Plan will also align with regional and international frameworks and principles from the Samoa Pathway for Small Islands Developing States, the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific, the Paris Agreement, Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework. Our people's well-being, safety and resilience is of the utmost priority.

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to say that the National Disaster Committee has now included private sector representation as well as civil society members for women and is in the process of including, through legislation, a member for people with disabilities. The National Disaster Management Office has also developed a new information strategy which provides guidance for expanding and strengthening information management in the NDMO over time and models an innovative approach in Pacific countries. We have also just started a multi-million dollar project with support from the World Bank and the Green Climate Fund to strengthening multi-hazard early warning through the preparation of a systems and technology roadmap for our outer island communications, upgrading communications systems in remote locations and providing training to the local communities, coastal protection in vulnerable areas such as the island of Ebeye, modernizing the NDMO's facilities as well as institutional strengthening of the NDMO and its preparedness for response to disasters and impact forecasting.

We are currently reviewing our 2010 National Emergency Response Plan with the aim to update the roles and responsibilities of all key government agencies and their individual SOPs. With support from the World Bank, we are also engaged with communities in RMI through participatory hazard risk mapping to improve community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) capacity, especially in regard to early warning systems. This work also involves data collection with communities and government partners that will be incorporated into the design of a holistic community-

based disaster risk management strategy for the country, and collection of data and GIS information on key public assets and infrastructure which will be inputted into an easy-to-use open source mapping platform.

Mr. Chairman,

There is more to do, and the Marshall Islands' Government is fully committed to developing a better understanding of our disaster risks and focusing not only on mitigation but adaptation. We have much to learn from each other as we pledge to implementing the Sendai Framework and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We acknowledge that there are gaps in our current approaches that require urgent and sustained focus on in the coming years and will need the continued support of our development partners and UN agencies such as UNISDR.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.