



## **REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS**

**H.E. Ambassador Doreen de Brum**  
**Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office in Geneva**  
**UNFCCC COP25 High-Level Statement**  
**Madrid, 11 December 2019**

*Check against delivery*

Let me begin by wishing our Chilean Presidency and our Spanish hosts a warm *Iakwe* and greetings from the Marshall Islands.

*Your Excellencies,*

As a low-lying coral atoll nation, the Marshall Islands stands before you as one of the most vulnerable countries on Planet Earth.

My father, Tony deBrum once said: “The Ocean is made out of drops. Each one of us is responsible for one drop of Ocean. If she takes care of her drop, and he takes care of his drop, and I take care of mine, then we will be able to take care of the world.”

Four years ago in Paris, my father was a key architect in creating hope that we would be given a pathway to survival. We continue to lead by example. That is why the Marshall Islands enhanced its own NDC last year and set a concrete plan to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

And while we welcome those that have said they will live up to their promises and enhance their ambition, the big message out of the UN Secretary-General’s Climate Action Summit was that more countries must now follow in our footsteps – especially the big emitters.

In that context, we welcome the formation of the Climate Ambition Alliance, and have also led the Madrid Ambition Drive for Survival as part of our Presidency of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, and continue to encourage countries – including beyond our friends in the High Ambition Coalition – to join the Uniting Behind the Science to Step Up Ambition by 2020 statement that our President launched in September.

We are carrying out an unprecedented effort to develop a National Adaptation Plan that could require the elevation of entire island communities. We and the world need to



consider transformative adaptation solutions that will support our natural right to remain in our islands.

*Your Excellencies,*

As a large ocean nation, we believe that there needs to be better integration of ocean issues into the UNFCCC - and climate issues into ocean processes beyond the UNFCCC.

We are not only an ocean nation, but we are also a nation dedicated to our youth. That is why Marshallese youth have created a solutions coalition. That is why we also encourage more countries to join the *Kwon-Gesh Youth Pledge*.

And this October, we became the smallest country ever to secure a seat on the UN Human Rights Council. We will also use that platform to fight for climate and nuclear justice.

*Your Excellencies,*

We also know that not every drop of the ocean is being looked after. We continue to promote stewardship by the international community, and welcome support for the meaningful participation of ROC Taiwan in the UNFCCC. If we were truly serious that “no is left behind”, we would recognize and afford Taiwan the opportunity to participate in global mechanisms, negotiations, and activities that promote the implementation of the Paris Agreement in just the same way as any other country.

*Your Excellencies,*

Here in Madrid we also have other opportunities to demonstrate we are one step closer to providing the pathway that my country was promised.

This means walking away with outcomes on Article 6 and common timeframes that promote environmental integrity and ambition, and boost efforts under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss & Damage to address the worst and irreversible impacts.



*Your Excellencies,*

If there has been one clear message from Mother Nature this past year, it has been that we are on the edge of the precipice. In our country we experienced 16-foot swells that displaced our community members on top of a months-long dengue outbreak that has pushed our health system to its limits. We must do more than simply offer our thoughts and prayers. That is why we must now follow through with concrete action to increase ambition.

*Your Excellencies*

If I may, I want to take a moment to turn to a topic of special interest to the Marshall Islands and the UNFCCC. In July of this year, Steve Sawyer, former Director of Greenpeace International, passed away. Steve is especially dear to the people of the Marshall Islands

because he led the evacuation of the people of Rongelap who suffered from severe radiation sickness due to the fallout of Bikini Atoll nuclear testing. In recent years, he played perhaps the most instrumental role of any individual in the development of wind energy globally. Steve was one of the world's most dedicated champions in the fight to address the climate crisis. To him, it represented: a "struggle to the death for the future of the planet." So to galvanize our ongoing efforts, I would like to pause for a moment of silence in his memory.