

**Ms. Rina Keju,**  
**Foreign Service Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs**  
**Presentation of the Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of the Marshall Islands**  
**25 September 2015, Geneva**

Mr. President, Excellences, Member States and Observer States of the Human Rights Council, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would first like to convey the warm greetings of His Excellency Christopher J. Loeak, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Marshallese people to this august body. I would also like to reiterate Minister of Foreign Affairs Tony deBrum's gratitude to the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, the Human Rights Council, the Working Group, the Regional Rights Resource Team of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and our bilateral partners for allowing and preparing the RMI to partake in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process.

The RMI is pleased to submit its responses to recommendations made through the Universal Periodic Review process as follows and request your attention to the Addendum A/HRC/30//13. Given our limited resources to carry this out and ensure proper implementation, the RMI Government once again calls upon the international community in providing assistance in this regard.

With regards to the Ratification of Human Rights treaties, RMI accepts the recommendations to ratifying or acceding to the Core Human Rights Instruments and respective Optional Protocols and to analyze and develop strategies to do so as endorsed by our Cabinet in May 2015.

RMI accepts the recommendations to strengthen the promotion of human rights activities and the Government will continue to work with various non-governmental organizations in the promotion of human rights. RMI also accepts the recommendations to developing socio-economic strategies and plans.

In addition, RMI accepts the recommendations to further review our laws to be in conformity with the international human right standards and RMI's Constitution. While some gaps may exist, they will naturally be addressed over an extended period of time as part of the implementation process.

As to the recommendations to addressing women's rights and domestic violence and to deal with other issues affecting women, RMI accepts. We recognize that adequate progress towards basic national development – as well as wider regional and global goals – will not happen without addressing the social and economic contribution of women.

RMI accepts the recommendations to implementing children's rights to improve the situation of children in the country and the recommendations to continue to take steps to addressing other needs of persons with disability.

RMI accepts the recommendations and recognize the need to strengthen progress in education and health. Although we have progressed gender equality in education, this has not resulted in economic outcomes for women and girls; and while we were able to strengthen prenatal and postnatal program, and increase our emphasis on preventative care to ensure that woman can continue to have safe pregnancies and births, we continue to have the highest teenage pregnancy rate and second-youngest population in the Pacific.

As a Nation being affected by climate change, RMI accepts the recommendations to addressing climate change and will continue to advocate to strengthening impacts relating to human rights issue and recognize the need to implement measures to build resilience, reduce disaster risk, support renewable energy and energy efficiency, and other adaptation measures. On September 24 2015, the President signed a Proclamation on a State of Disaster whereas the communities in the affected atolls of the RMI by Typhoon Nangka have been overwhelmed with the challenges and effects resulting from these persisting strong winds, storm surges and inundation and are presently facing infrastructure, both private and public, coastal damage and economic hardship. As the saying goes in the Pacific, "We are not drowning, we are fighting."

RMI accepts the recommendations and emphasized the Special Rapporteur's report on the implications for human rights of environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous wastes when he visited the RMI in March 2012, and the U.S. in April 2012, "to assess the impact of human rights of the Nuclear Testing Program conducted in the RMI by the U.S. from 1946 to 1958".

Last but not the lease Mr. Chairman, RMI notes the importance of establishing a national human rights institution. However, at this time we are not considering such establishment due to limited resources. Overall, as with the promotion of human rights, the Government continues to work with various non-governmental

organizations in the promotion of human rights, particularly Women United Together Marshall Islands.

Thank you.

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## CONCLUSION

Thank you Mr. President and thank you to the delegations and NGO's who provided comments and made remarks on the RMI's UPR. RMI will continue to find opportunities and avenues to improve human rights situation in the Country, but wish to say that strengthened capacity required to implement plans and commitments to promote and protect human rights. Moreover, support from the international community is necessary. Again, I thank the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, Human Rights Council and its Working Group, the Regional Rights Resource Team of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and our bilateral partners for all your support which ensured our meaningful participation in our 2<sup>nd</sup> UPR.