



Republic of the Marshall Islands
Delivered by H.E. Ambassador Doreen DEBRUM
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Opening Statement

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Thank you, Madam President

It is indeed an honour for the Marshall Islands to take its place as a member of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. We have our own experiences with cruel, inhumane and indiscriminate weapons, and we have a deep and personal understanding of the need for their complete elimination. The Marshall Islands was a battleground during World War II and the remnants of this war, including unexploded ordnance, continue to pose a risk. After World War II, while under a UN Trusteeship, our atolls and islands were used to test nuclear and chemical weapons. Between 1946 and 1958, 67 known nuclear weapons tests were carried out on our atolls. The most devastating of these was the catastrophic Castle Bravo Test of 1 March 1954, causing our people great harm and suffering that has transcended generations. Nuclear weapons, unexploded ordinances, chemical weapons, biological weapons, cluster

munitions, and anti-personnel mines, are all threads of the same web of cruelty.

It is our experiences with cruel, inhumane and indiscriminate weapons that informs our decision to ratify the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Last year, we also signed the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty. Our enduring commitment to the humanitarian principles that prohibit the use of cruel, inhumane and indiscriminate weapons compels us to join all states that stand against them. Anti-personnel mines continue to cause harm long after a conflict has ended, putting civilians at much higher risk and their cruelty is evident in their unpredictability and their debilitating effects. Their victims, unknowing, their lives coming to an end or forever changed after a single step.

Accordingly, the global ban on anti-personnel mines is more than a legal obligation. It is a moral imperative. It is the ultimate guarantee of non-recurrence. The global ban is the justice that is owed to their victims, the unknowing and innocent whose lives were lost and those made to endure disability, pain and trauma. We owe it to them and we must deliver.

Madam President,

Small Island Developing States face unique challenges from anti-personnel mines and other remnants of war. Limited land and fragile ecosystems mean that small areas of contamination can lead to serious humanitarian,

environmental, and economic problems. In our islands and atolls, traditional communities depend on the land and surrounding ecosystems for their livelihoods, cultural heritage, and social bonds. The presence of explosive remnants not only endangers human life but also threatens our cultural heritage and way of life. For the Marshall Islands, protecting people and nature go hand in hand, and global agreements like the Mine Ban Convention are crucial for safeguarding both.

As a Small Island Developing State, we recognise the vital importance of international cooperation and assistance in achieving the goals of the Convention. We welcome strong partnerships to improve risk education, to support survivors and to disarm and dispose of explosive remnants of war. We stand ready to work with fellow State parties, international organizations, and civil society to achieve these common goals. Effective cooperation ensures that the commitments made under this Convention realizes the progress that is direly needed in affected communities.

Madam President,

The Marshall Islands affirms that security should never come at the cost of civilian lives. Our membership reflects a commitment to global humanitarian standards, helping victims and fostering an international climate against weapons that by their very nature, disproportionately inflict the greatest harm on civilians. Our accession is a reaffirmation that retreat from these obligations would not only put communities at risk but also undermine

decades of collective progress. We invite all those that have left the Convention to reconsider and rejoin our efforts towards a World free of anti-personnel mines.

Finally, Madam President,

The Marshall Islands congratulates The Kingdom of Tonga, a fellow Pacific Island State, on becoming the newest member state. We invite other Pacific neighbours to join this treaty, strengthening regional solidarity on the global ban on anti-personnel mines. A mine free Pacific is a safer Pacific, which means a safer World for us all and a legacy that we can proudly leave for future generations.

Kommol tata and I thank you.