



The Honorable Christopher J Loeak
Acting President & Minister of Environment
National Statement at 79th ESCAP Session of the Commission, Bangkok, Thailand
15 May 2023

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Iakwe and greetings from the people and Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands! It is an honor to virtually come before you to express the views and hopes of my people.

Friends, our world is at a crossroads facing the greatest crisis of our time: climate change. For us, it is a crisis that presents severe risks to our ability to sustainably develop and remain living on our islands and adapting to it is a matter of survival for our nation, our people, and our 3,000-year-old culture.

The recent IPCC Synthesis report underscored that the pace of sea level rise is escalating. We already feel these impacts acutely with floods that damage our homes, roads and runways; waves eat away at our shorelines; and as we lose land, we also lose shores connected to that land that have been passed down for generations.

Despite climate change being a calamity that knows no border, it also presents an opportunity for the global community to work together to change its course, and build a planet that is more just, equitable and secure.

Major emitters must deliver greenhouse gas reductions that keep us within the 1.5 degrees Celsius temperature limit. We must eliminate fossil fuels and shift our economies to renewables - and this transformation must happen in this decade. We must phase out fossil fuels. The threat is too profound for any country to delay this transition.

The Marshall Islands is charting a nationwide journey to survival through the development of our National Adaptation Plan (NAP). The NAP will include coastal protection solutions, but we know that given the scale of the threat, we will also require more transformational options like land raising and reclamation.

While we are exploring adaptation pathways which potentially include migration, I want to reiterate that this must be a choice. Those who wish to remain in our land, which is so

intrinsically connected to our culture, must be our choice. We will defend our right to self-determination.



Our adaptation efforts will require profound transformations. The scale and costs of these are astounding. And as emissions continue to rise, the more extreme adaptation measures are required, and the costs escalate. Small nations like mine and others in the Pacific cannot do this alone. We need everyone, everywhere, doing all that they can.

Climate finance is the key enabler for solutions in this global crisis. The news that developed countries expect to reach the \$100 billion commitment this year is welcome. I hope we'll see similar progress on the commitment to double adaptation finance.

Let us be innovative, and consider the ideas emerging from the parts of the world that are most affected by the impacts of climate change and continue to face developmental challenges.

For example, the Marshall Islands has worked with the Solomon Islands, to develop a proposal for a levy on greenhouse gasses in the shipping sector, rising from \$100 /tonne, of which a portion would go towards an equitable transition of the shipping industry, and a portion to vulnerable countries to help them respond to climate impacts. We call on all countries in the region and globally to join this call and help us get this done.

ESCAP has acknowledged that climate actions must be scaled up and integrated across sectors. We call on you to work further with us in the Pacific to deliver targeted research, technical assistance and capacity building.

I know you'll respond positively to continue to support our region as we confront these unprecedented challenges. And I want to assure you of our continued commitment to do so. We don't plan to give up. We will not accept a fate that others see as inevitable and hopeless. Our people have a proud history of navigation, and I have no doubt that we will chart a course to a more resilient and sustainable future.

In closing, the Government of the Marshall Islands remains committed to supporting ESCAP and all its many important endeavors. I believe that with all our combined efforts and support, this climate crisis we face can be averted.

Kommol tata (Thank you).