Madam Chair

On behalf of the people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Her Excellency, President Doctor Hilda C. Heine, I bring you warm greetings of Iakwe and congratulate you on your roll as Chair.

Madam Chair,

Twenty-five years ago, the world witnessed an historic moment for gender equality: the signing of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; a global commitment to ensure the full recognition and realization of human rights for women and girls. The Marshall Islands recognizes this achievement, and notes that this agreement would not be possible today.

The declaration was a milestone for women in the Pacific, and in particular in the Marshall Islands:- representing a new beginning for us, as a young country, to echo the global agenda for gender equality; pushing beyond the traditional high regard that women and girls have in our society. We have used the 12 critical areas to address gaps in legal and policy frameworks. Civil society was; and is; very vocal in holding government to account. I thank Women United Together in the Marshall Islands for over 30 years commitment to gender equality.

The Marshall Islands recognizes the vital role of civil society as implementing partners and to ensure that gender equality and women’s human rights remain at the forefront of all discussions, in all forums.

The Marshall Islands is resolute in its determination to realize gender equality, women’s political and economic empowerment, women’s
leadership and eliminating violence against women as essential for transformative change, sustainable development and to ‘leave no one behind’.

We have carried out a comprehensive review of our legislation and parliament passed the 2019 Gender Equality Act – our program for CEDAW-compliant legislative reform: we were the first Pacific nation to do this. In this administration, there is no shortage of political will to ensure the full recognition and realization of human rights for women and girls.

During our term at the UN Human Rights Council, RMI will be a strong and consistent advocate for action for women’s human rights. I reiterate that the climate crisis is a violation of core human rights, security and basic dignity of all people. It demands the international community’s response.

We are steadfast in our resolve to achieve nuclear justice. Radiation from 67 nuclear tests conducted between 1946 and 1958, and the dumping of toxic waste, has resulted in fatalities and in acute and long-term health complications for women, not to mention the care economy.

Madam Chair,
We have reduced the gender gap in the workforce, and evidence shows a narrowing in the gender pay gap. Investment in education and training for girls and young women is paying off. Investment in educating and informing boys and men about gender based violence has yet to show results, but we are optimistic.

Marshall Islands reaffirms the central importance of the Women, Peace and Security agenda and supports the involvement of all women in all aspects of peace and security decision making. In Marshallese society, women are integrally involved peace keeping as part of our culture.
However, Madam Chair,
It is an outrage that on this 25th anniversary; we in the Blue Pacific
continent are defending our very existence in the face of the climate crisis,
and the raft of gendered impacts we are faced with. It is time not only to
deliver on the promises made 25 years ago: to ensure that half the world’s
population are able to reach their full potential; as well as the United
Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change because without one
we cannot have the other. Its that simple.

In closing Madam Chair,

We have raised a generation of amazing women – our daughters, nieces,
and granddaughters understand our vision. They will amplify our voices
and demand their right justice, in our honor. I hope to see this in my life
time. But I wonder, what world will they inherit and will they have climate
justice? It is an exciting time: in 2020 our leaders will pay great attention to
gender equality. In my country, we are working hard towards achieving the
Beijing framework; but we don’t know what this will look like in the climate
crisis.

Kommol tata/ I thank you.