



# REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

H.E. Ms. Amatlain E. Kabua  
Ambassador & Permanent Representative of the  
Republic of the Marshall Islands to the United Nations  
General Assembly, 3<sup>rd</sup> Committee  
Advancement of Women  
New York 16 October 2012

*check against delivery*

Chair,

As we meet at this 67<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly, I take this opportunity to affirm the Republic Marshall Island's support for, and commitment to, the advancement of women, and especially the human rights dimensions of this issue.

The Marshallese society is has a matrilineal system of traditional land tenure as land – perhaps our most important resource – passes from mother to daughter. In our contemporary – and rapidly globalizing – world, women in the Marshall Islands, and around the globe, have been afforded new opportunities, but also face many challenges. For women in rural areas, and our outer islands, these challenges tend to be even greater – yet all women face severe challenges, including high rates of domestic violence, limited access to education, and lack of professional and business opportunities.

These issues were at the forefront at the Forty-third Pacific Islands Forum this past August, where Forum leaders endorsed the *Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration*, and committed to supporting women's political representation, eliminating all barriers preventing women from participating fully in the economic sphere, and acting to end violence against women. The Joint Statement by the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum and the UN Secretary-General released in September 2012 again highlighted measures to address the economic and political empowerment of women, and gender-based violence, as strong national and regional priorities. The focused and dedicated efforts, taken together by both the UN system and our regional agencies, will do much in further implementing these commitments.

The Marshall Islands is challenged by limited capacity and resources. Despite this, we are taking steps that support the advancement of women in our society. Here I must note the successful passage in September 2011 of a national domestic violence law, as well as strong national efforts to improve full access to quality education as a Millennium Development Goal. Ongoing initiatives and aspirations related to improving the situation of women include addressing:

- Violence against Women – through boosting law enforcement and legal protection, networking and community awareness, and women/children protective services

- Economic and Political Participation – through leadership training, boosting targeted jobs and educational opportunities
- Gender & Climate Change – through mainstreaming awareness and consultation into national and local adaptation and energy strategies and sustainable land development

Critical gaps remain, but our political will to overcome them is strong. The Marshall Islands is only one member of the General Assembly, and the Pacific is only one region – but the shared experiences and positive progress of other nations and regions towards the advancement of women will go far in transforming the written words of declarations or resolutions into visible realities in our parliament halls, in our workplaces and in our homes.

Thank you and kormol tata