



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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**UN-ESCAP
69th Session of the Commission
Republic of the Marshall Islands Country Statement**

Thursday 25 April 2013
2-5pm
Committee of the Whole 1
Room 1
Item 3: Review of Substantive Issues
(i) subregional activities for development

H.E. Ms. Amatlain E. Kabua,
Marshall Islands Ambassador & Permanent Representative to the United Nations

check against delivery

Executive Secretary, Excellencies and Colleagues,

Too often, the very unique needs of Pacific SIDS are lost in a larger pool of wider Asia-Pacific member states – and while some progress has been achieved in UN activities, it is at best sporadic and not consistent from agency to agency

It is also a very long road from the decisions made by the General Assembly and UN system in New York, to the larger super-regional level at ESCAP, to our sub-regional presence in Suva and the Pacific Islands area, and down to our very small UN national presence office – staffed by only one person who may have little opportunity to feed back into the wider system.

While this may be an issue of funding and resource availability, it is also more primarily an issue of oversight and effective management decisions. Small Islands have small scales – and often a “little” when more effectively targeted – can go a very long way. There is not nearly enough visible partnership and presence from the UN system in our local communities. As a former UN Trust Territory – a nation born of the UN itself – this is unacceptable.

Further, as a small island, we find that UN system activities are too often either never tailored to unique small island structures, or, when they are, fail to be integrated with more comprehensive and system-wide approaches. In other words, as small islands, we fall through the cracks. This is an issue not only important for discussion at ESCAP, but also more widely in reviews and discussions throughout the UN

system. As recipients, we should work more closely with donors to find and forge common solutions for effective delivery. And we must all ask the difficult questions along the way.

The action and interaction of the UN system will be under close examination next year at the global SIDS sustainable development meeting in Samoa. I would urge the Commission and Executive Secretary to look very closely at last year's joint communique between the UN Secretary-General and the Pacific Islands Forum leaders – which outlines and mandates specific areas of cooperation in our sub-region. A simple management tool – a checklist of what has been followed up – by which UN entities in specific offices with specific activities – should be prepared and circulated to ESCAP SIDS member states directly in capitals as well as to Ambassadors in New York. A particular focus should be provided on the potential steps needed to translate “one-off” regional workshops into national action, and the role of our national UN presence offices in this process. Our evolving partnership and progress with the UN system should be comprehensive, not “hit or miss.”

Further, it has come to my attention that there is an informal “SIDS Inter-agency working group” facilitated by UN DESA in New York. This is a very valuable opportunity for UN agencies and entities which have chosen to specifically program for small island structures – I urge this group to interact more closely with UN member states and if it has not done so already to interact with ESCAP-level planning. Here, again, the Commission and the Executive Secretary can report on interaction with this working group.

At Rio, leaders urged the identification and mainstreaming of strategies by 2014 that further assist developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, in developing their national capacity to conserve, sustainably manage and realize the benefits of sustainable fisheries. This is absolutely fundamental for the core development indicators in the Pacific. It would be important to know the role of ESCAP-level planning in this process – and I would again urge the Commission and Executive Agencies to directly address this issue.

Thank you and kummol tata.