

**Statement by Honorable Donald F. Capelle  
Speaker of the Nitijela (National Parliament) of the Republic of the  
Marshall Islands  
Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament  
United Nations Headquarters, New York  
August 31 – September 2, 2015**

**Fellow Speakers and Presidents of National Congresses and  
Parliaments, Distinguished delegates and Representatives, Ladies  
and Gentlemen.**

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the National Parliament of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. A special gratitude to the Inter-Parliamentary Union for gathering us together here especially to deliberate on the Post-2015 Sustainable Development agenda of which I am delighted to be part of this global discussion.

The agenda on Sustainable Development is of greater significance especially in the view of the transition from the MDGs. Noting that the

Republic of the Marshall Islands is one of the small countries in the Pacific with mixed results. It is indeed a “lesson learned” considering our common features of remoteness, smallness in size and capacities, limited resources, aid dependency and vulnerability to climate change and global economic shocks that the country is facing, and moreover, our inability to define and integrated the MDGs within the national development goals.

Recognizing these challenges however, the burden is on us the parliamentarians to foster advancement, take concerted efforts and prioritized actions to fully realize sustainable development goals in the next decade or so. Parliamentarians played a pivotal role in the success of the proposed Sustainable Development Goals – and we must take extraordinary efforts to build a better world not only for us, but for our children and children’s children. We have no time to waste but must act now!

In fact, back in my country we have made successive engagements in building national momentum in the global process of finalizing the sustainable development agenda. We have organized both national and regional forums focusing on the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals and other sustainable issues. We have taken strides to ensure that our National Strategic Plans are better aligned with the proposed Global Sustainable Development Goals. And today, I am proud to say that we are getting along together in the process of adopting the SDGs as part of our national agenda. Close consideration should be given to exploring synergies between the SDGs and existing foreign assistance avenues, which drive much of our national development.

While welcoming these international agendas, I am also looking forward to integrated and better structured goals that would not only reflect the global agenda but also efficiently advance existing regional and national priorities. In this context, I am referring to the Republic of the Marshall Islands as a Small Island Developing State in the Pacific, our major emphasises are on the sustainable development of our resources

especially the marine resources, the disaster risk reduction and climate change issues as well as non-communicable diseases. In the Samoa Pathway, the Small Island Developing States have highlighted our special circumstances for sustainable development, noting our uniqueness and particular vulnerabilities which may constrain us in achieving our development goals in all three dimensions of sustainable development. For instance, the adverse effects of climate change in the Small Island Developing countries pose complex security risks and planning challenges, cutting across every major sector. The Small Island Developing States have reaffirmed their commitments to mobilise and efforts to cooperate internationally in ensuring that these international goals are met. We welcome the inclusion of the climate change and other related issues to the SDGs. Stronger and prioritized linkages are needed between the SDGs, the Samoa Pathway, regional policy tools and national planning.

The Marshall Islands will be going to the polls in November of this year, and in January 2016, would be next national agenda for the parliament

of the Marshall Islands to conduct Induction Programs for the newly elected Members of the Parliament on a number of issues including the Sustainable Development Goals. Induction programs for new parliamentarians are very successful in our region with the central focus on understanding the roles of Members of Parliament and how parliamentarians can fully engage in the SDGs particularly in the national review and progress of the SDGs for the next 15 years.

May I conclude, by expressing our support towards the declaration of this world conference – an outcome that we all looking forward to see as an expression of success outcome of this auspicious conference.

Ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you so much

