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**76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly  
Agenda item 78: Oceans and the Law of the Sea**

**Statement by the Micronesian Delegation**

**New York, 7 December 2021**

**Check against delivery**

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,

Their Excellencies from Antigua and Barbuda, Fiji and Samoa speaking respectively on behalf of the Alliance of Small Islands States (AOSIS), Pacific Islands Forum and the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) have eloquently expressed the positions of our small island groups on the two resolutions before us. My delegation wholeheartedly subscribes to these statements and I would like to add a few points in my national capacity. We also like to thank the delegations of Singapore and Norway for so ably steering the informal consultations on the two resolutions before us today.

As a nation covering over a million square miles of Ocean, and with centuries of reliance on our Ocean for survival, the Federated States of Micronesia accepts the responsibility to continue to speak out on the sustainable use and management of marine resources within and adjacent to our Exclusive Economic Zone. Our people have lived in harmony with the Ocean and their natural environment since our ancestors began to navigate these vast seas. We have relied on the traditional knowledge in conserving our land and seas and will continue to look to it for best practices in preserving the resources that come from the Ocean and also utilize it to fight climate change.

Mr. President,

The landmark Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones in the Face of Climate Change-related Sea-Level Rise endorsed by the Pacific Island Countries and which is reflected in one of the resolutions before us, is a formal statement of the collective views of our island countries. In the Declaration, the Pacific recognizes that sea-level rise is a "defining issue that imperils the livelihoods and wellbeing of our peoples and undermines the realization of a peaceful, secure and sustainable future for our region" of the Pacific. And in acknowledgement of the potential legal implications of sea-level rise on maritime zones such as those of Micronesia, the

Declaration proclaims, among other things, that our islands' "maritime zones, once established in accordance with [UNCLOS] and notified to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in accordance with [UNCLOS], and the rights and entitlements that flow from them, shall continue to apply, notwithstanding any physical changes connected to climate change-related sea-level rise." Despite being among the least responsible for the phenomenon of climate change related sea-level rise, it will be deeply unjust and inequitable if my country has to surrender any of its maritime rights and entitlements because of such sea-level rise, including its rights and entitlements to rich fishery resources in our Exclusive Economic Zone. The Declaration is the expressed collective views of our Blue Pacific continent and is supported by both UNCLOS and the legal principles underpinning it. Micronesia encourages the international community to consider the Declaration and its overarching objectives favorably.

Mr. President,

We are deeply alarmed by recent reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change which underscore that global mean sea-level rise associated with climate change is likely to be as high as one meter by the end of this century. The Western Pacific, where my country, Micronesia, is located has already experienced three times higher sea-level rise than the current global mean. While the report and others point to a time in the future, just over the last few days live videos and pictures posted on social media from the atolls and the coastal plains of the higher volcanic islands in Micronesia capture the perilous challenges sea-level rise has on our islands. Unprecedented king tides have raised to an alarmingly high level. Salt water inundates our taro patches – the main source of our food crops, and our ground water wells, the source of our drinking water, have gone bad. The rising sea has created havoc that even our dead are no longer safe in their burial grounds. Frightened children, in some islands have to wade through water just to get to their schools. The sea-level rise predictions that point to a time in the future are here already for Micronesia. The same is true for the rest of the islands in the Pacific and for atolls elsewhere. The world can no longer turn a blind eye to the result of non-action on climate change, and the pleas from island countries for more ambitious climate actions.

I thank you Mr. President.