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74th UNGA

Agenda item 74: Oceans and the law of the sea Explanation of vote on draft resolution A/74/L.22 by Jane Chigiya Permanent Representative

New York, 10 December 2019

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Mr. President,

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered today on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, the Pacific Islands Forum, and the Pacific Small Island Developing States. I wish to speak now in my national capacity in explanation of vote after the adoption of draft resolution A/74/L.22 on *Oceans and the law of the sea*.

For many years, Micronesia sponsored the annual resolution on oceans and the law of the sea. Our sponsorship of the resolution reflected our recognition that the resolution is a valuable method for the General Assembly to canvas key developments regarding the Ocean and the law of the sea in each calendar year and address those developments in appropriate ways. Our sponsorship also reflected our long-standing conviction that international law--particularly the law of the sea--is a valuable tool for small island developing States like Micronesia to engage with the broader international community on the conservation and management of the Ocean and its resources, which form the foundation of our economies, livelihoods, and cultural identities.

This year, however, Micronesia, having voted in favor, finds itself unable to sponsor the resolution. It is deeply unfortunate that delegations were unable to achieve consensus to include robust references to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's *Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate*, which is indisputably one of the major developments in Ocean matters during the calendar year under review. Specifically, it is deeply unfortunate that consensus was not reached to include references to key findings from the Special Report pertaining to the extensive adverse impacts of rampant anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions on the Ocean, its resources, and the coastal communities that rely on and are intimately connected to the Ocean. It is also deeply unfortunate that consensus was not reached to include references to concrete actions that the international community must take to address these adverse impacts, including ambitious mitigation efforts undertaken on an urgent basis. Such references are clearly within the remit of the resolution and stem directly from the Special Report, whose Summary for Policymakers was adopted by consensus by the governments of the Members of this General Assembly this past September. The General Assembly should have welcomed the adoption of the Special Report and its Summary for

Policymakers, identified key relevant findings from the Special Report, and called on the international community to act in accordance with those findings. The failure of the General Assembly to do so is a disservice to the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and a betrayal of this body's commitment to keep under review all activities of relevance to the Ocean and the law of the sea each calendar year.

As the Ocean is increasingly beset by the adverse impacts of the climate crisis, Micronesia strongly calls on the international community to take all necessary measures to address the root causes of such impacts and adapt to such impacts, with full acknowledgement of the scientific work to determine and study those impacts as well as of the legal, policy, and political measures necessary to address those impacts. We hope that future iterations of the annual resolution on oceans and the law of the sea will heed and carry forward this call.

I thank you, Mr. President.