

OEWG 1: GENERAL STATEMENT OF THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

Distinguished Co-Chairs, Excellencies, colleagues,

Good afternoon.

At the outset, my delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier today by the distinguished representative of Ethiopia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We also thank the Government of Kenya, UNEP, and UNON for hosting our session. Having meetings in a room where you can see the natural environment is a definite plus, even if it raises the possibility of day-dreaming. It is good to consistently see what we are tasked with addressing.

Co-Chairs,

My delegation has a number of specific comments and reflections regarding the substance of the Secretary-General's report, and we will endeavor to share them with this Working Group during this week. As a preview, my delegation wishes to have a robust discussion about how international environmental law and environment-related instruments take into account the special circumstances and particular vulnerabilities of small island developing States like Micronesia, which depend heavily on and have close historical and cultural connections to the natural environment, and which are on the front lines of many of the harms inflicted by humankind on the natural environment. Having said that, and on a more general note, my delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's report and looks forward to examining the report and using its findings to address gaps in international environmental law and environment-related instruments, both during the life of this Working Group and beyond.

Co-Chairs,

The natural environment is a singular entity, a unitary whole. Our planet has one natural environment. That natural environment has various components--call them ecosystems, biomes, or some other term--but those components are interlinked and very much depend on each other for their integrity and viability. What happens in the atmosphere impacts the Ocean, as we see with each report about how our Ocean is warming and acidifying; what happens in the Ocean impacts the land, as we see with each report about how a warming, expanding, and acidifying Ocean leads to more devastating storms, sea-level rise, and coastal erosion; what happens on land impacts the atmosphere, the Ocean, and so forth, as we see with each report about how rampant anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, industrial discharges, and other pollutive activities impact the ozone layer, raise the global temperature, and litter our Ocean with plastics and other marine debris. Humankind has upset the careful balance inherent in the natural environment and threatened the integrity of the planet.

My delegation acknowledges--as noted in the Secretary-General's report--that the international community has developed a large number of instruments, institutions, and processes to address the many challenges confronting the natural environment. Unfortunately, these instruments, institutions, and processes as well as the principles that undergird them are ultimately of little use unless they all take each other into consideration and work toward a coherent, coordinated, and comprehensive approach to protecting, preserving, managing, and conserving the natural environment, without weakening or otherwise undermining current approaches. This is particularly important for small island developing States like Micronesia, which struggle with tracking all those various instruments, institutions, and processes, given our financial and

logistical challenges. To the extent that the Secretary-General's report highlights this need, my delegation welcomes it and looks forward to examining the report's treatment of the matter.

Co-Chairs,

The people of my country have long taken a unified approach to managing our part of the planet's natural environment, with careful attention to the delicate balance between the land, the Ocean, and the sky above. Our national constitution acknowledges the solemn responsibility entrusted by our ancestors to us over millennia to safeguard the natural environment as a whole for the sake of present and future generations. It is in this spirit that my delegation intends to participate in this Working Group process and all subsequent efforts by the international community to address the gaps identified in the Secretary-General's report. You can count on the full support of my delegation.

Thank you, Co-Chairs.