

REMARKS BY H.E. JANE J. CHIGIYAL
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS
OF THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

Before the
Eighteenth Conference of the Parties
To the
Framework Convention on Climate Change
Doha, Qatar, December 6, 2012

Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentleman,

On behalf of the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia, I wish to express our gratitude to the Government and people of Qatar for welcoming us to their capital and for hosting this conference. I also wish to express our sincere condolences for the loss of lives and devastation in the Philippines and the widespread damage in Palau caused by Typhoon Bopha.

Since the first Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, modest strides in climate change mitigation have been made. However, the recent trend at these conferences of the parties has been one of decreasing ambition, enthusiasm and urgency. Instead of countries putting forth ambitious emissions reduction commitments and inspiring their counterparts to do likewise, major emitters have retreated to entrenched positions. Now, an air of timidity pervades these talks and seems to dictate that no party can offer more than what it is already planning.

At the same time, the impacts of climate change are intensifying, and the scientific community is telling us we must make deep and immediate cuts in emissions to avoid a future that is 4 degrees warmer than preindustrial average temperatures. Everyone here is familiar with the science and knows that small island developing states stand to suffer the brunt of climate change impacts. These include

accelerating sea-level rise, increasing ocean warming and acidification, and record-breaking extreme weather events, among others. We desperately need these climate talks to regain their once characteristic spirit of cooperation, collaboration and burden-sharing. These will be required to fully address the climate challenge ahead.

On that note, I would like to share a few ideas on how ambition could be reignited in the context of pre-2020 mitigation. The Alliance of Small Island States, of which we are a member, agreed to a new protocol under the Durban Platform only if a work plan to close the emissions gap was developed for the pre-2020 period. AOSIS has called for an “intensive and focused set of activities in 2013 and 2014 to identify the most cost-effective ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as possible.”

Micronesia has already identified one such cost-effective solution: using the Montreal Protocol to prevent the expanded production and use of hydrofluorocarbons, or HFCs. Use of HFCs is already ramping up quickly but there is still time to preempt the dangerous increase of HFCs projected to occur over the next several decades. HFCs now comprise about 2% of the climate change problem, but they are projected to constitute up to 19% of climate forcing by 2050.

In 2009, Micronesia put forth a comprehensive proposal to address HFCs under the Montreal Protocol. This year we made a breakthrough. World leaders at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro agreed to begin cooperation on a global phase down of the production and consumption of HFCs. Today, my country calls upon colleagues here in Doha to welcome these efforts to address HFCs under the Montreal Protocol. A phase down of the production of HFCs, as agreed in Rio, and undertaken by the Montreal Protocol would complement our efforts under this regime to reduce emissions of HFCs. In short, if we don't manufacture as many HFCs in the first place, we'll have fewer emissions to reduce later.

In the same way that the Montreal Protocol has the most expertise in regulating fluorinated greenhouse gases, experts in other areas, such as energy, transport, buildings, forestry, agriculture, and waste, can assist the COP to find other cost-effective climate mitigation opportunities. Accordingly, work in these thematic

areas is another component of the pre-2020 work plan called for by the Alliance of Small Island States.

Mr. President, it is only by taking direct aim at the sources of our climate problem, and it is only by doing so cooperatively, that we can achieve our shared goals. You can still count Micronesia in. In fact, my country has today offered a place to start now. We look forward to our fellow nations joining us in our effort to phase down HFCs and in building momentum for the greater challenges ahead.