



**REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS**  
**CLIMATE CHANGE DIRECTORATE**  
**MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT**

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To the attention of the Members of the Bureau of the COP, CMP, and CMA  
Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change  
United Nations Regional Information Centre  
UN Campus  
Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1  
D-53113 Bonn, Germany

Excellencies,

We present our compliments to the members of the Bureau of the COP, CMP, and CMA. The Republic of the Marshall Islands respects and greatly appreciates your efforts to ensure climate negotiations continue to move forward during the extremely difficult circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Marshall Islands appreciates that there is a need to substantively advance our discussions in order to ensure that the substantial work required for a successful conclusion of COP26 can be completed in a timely manner. We are keenly aware that the window of opportunity for meaningful climate action is closing and that we do not have time to waste in moving toward full implementation of the Paris Agreement. For these reasons, we support, in principle, the way forward proposed by the COP25 and COP26 Presidencies to continue or work throughout this year, including remotely.

We are aware that the Bureau will soon be deciding on arrangements on the format and structure of preparatory sessions this year. On this point, while we agree that a meeting of the Subsidiary Bodies should proceed in June 2021, if necessary, in virtual format, we wish to draw the Bureau's attention to the critical need for inclusivity and equitable participation for all Parties to be the basis for remote work going forward. To this end, we share below our own experience of virtual negotiations over the last year, as well as suggestions for how equitable participation can be ensured.

During the course of the pandemic, it has become evident to the Marshall Islands, and we believe to others in the Pacific, that our region is at significant risk of structural disadvantage in settings where global virtual participation is expected in a single session. The Pacific is located to the west of the Americas, meaning that in circumstances in which events begin at 9am Eastern Standard Time, for example, allowing for the participation of those in the Greenwich Mean Time and Central European

Time zones during normal business hours (2pm and 3pm respectively), attendance of those based in RMI requires their participation at 2am local time. This is impractical, to say the least.

In order to resolve this issue, RMI suggests that the Secretariat develop concrete proposals for the holding of virtual discussions across a range of time zones, together with a mechanism for reporting outcomes

from one session to the next. This should be supplemented by the organization of additional sessions. We therefore welcome the suggestion that there should be an additional preparatory session of the SBs in Autumn 2021 ahead of the COP, and would suggest that the possibility of holding additional sessions also be considered. This will ensure that all parties can be confident that their views will be fully reflected in any agreement or outcome. If a single session is considered essential in order to, for example, agree to adopt an outcome document, such sessions should be held at different times on a rotating basis to ensure that no region is systematically disadvantaged by a requirement to attend negotiations outside of normal business hours.

We would like to thank the SBSTA and SBI Co-Chairs for their hard work over the past months, to keep discussions going informally on priority issues. We expect that they will further convene informal consultations for all delegations over the coming months.

We reiterate our full dedication to an ambitious outcome at COP26, and we stand ready to support you as members of the Bureau in the preparations of this successful conference.

Sincerely,

  
Clarence Samuel  
CCD Director  
RMI-UNFCCC OFP