



Republic of the Marshall Islands

National Statement

2024 IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology Application and Technical Cooperation

November 26th, 2024 | IAAE HQ | Vienna, Austria

Check Against Delivery

Honorable Co-Chairs and Ministers, DG of IAEA, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I bring warm greetings of *Iakwe*, on behalf of Her Excellency, President Hilda C. Heine, the people and Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. We are present today and are committed to our shared responsibilities and the mission to promote safety, security, and sustainability of the environment for our future.

As a Small Island Developing State from the Pacific, the Marshall Islands have continued to face unique challenges stemming from the testing of nuclear weapons and the consequences of global warming that require innovative solutions and international cooperation immediately. We recognize the critical role of nuclear science and technology in achieving sustainable development goals. The technical cooperation programme with the IAEA has enriched us with our capabilities in various sectors, particularly in understanding radiation safety, health care impacts of nuclear, food and water security, and environmental protection.

In our partnership with the IAEA, we are now able to monitor and assess environmental radiation; however, beyond monitoring and assessing, more needs to be done to ensure the safety and well-being of our people, and planet. Current activities include the establishment of our first ever Radiation Lab and procurement of equipment necessary to do the job successfully. We need the IAEA and the top 30 or 50 state members and the international communities to further our capabilities and capacities to do more to protect and preserve our low lying

coral atolls, therefore protecting the rest of the world from the consequences of nuclear arms and climate destruction. For example, the Runit Dome, a containment structure for radioactive wastes was never intended to protect us, nor the Pacific ocean, from the radionuclide wastes dumped and left behind. Instead, it was only made to conceal and hide its contents and secrets without regard for our best interests, and is now at risk, due to the climate crisis and rising sea levels.

This situation underscores the urgent need for a comprehensive solution by the IAEA and all member states. We call upon the IAEA to conduct this assessment, evaluating the compromised structural integrity of the dome, its unfitness for purpose and its potential environmental impact. We further call upon IAEA to devise practical solutions to the problems presented by the nuclear waste dumped on us by the United States of America while we were under their administration, in addition to the 67 nuclear weapons tests that they conducted on us and their use of our people, as guinea pigs to study the effects of exposure to nuclear fallout and a contaminated environment.

This request aligns with the recent nuclear legacy resolution passed without objection at the Human Rights Council, which advocates for a One UN approach to the Marshall Islands' nuclear legacy. By leveraging the expertise and resources of various UN specialized agencies, we can gain a holistic understanding of the challenges we face and develop clear and precise work plans to address them, including IAEA, with a transitional justice approach to promote safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear science and technology.

In conclusion, the Marshall Islands remains dedicated to fostering international collaboration and the advancement of the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology for the sustainable future. We look forward to continued partnership with the IAEA, and all Member States, in achieving our shared responsibilities for a safer, healthier, and more sustainable home.

Thank you, Kammolol im Jerammon!