**Hon. Mr. Bruce Billimon**
**Minister of Health & Human Services**
**Republic of the Marshall Islands**
**74th World Health Assembly - High Level Segment**
**Geneva**
**24th May 2021**

Mr. President, Director-General, Excellencies,

This global pandemic has revealed profound weaknesses in health care systems around the world. While covid 19 has spread worldwide, the impacts on poor and vulnerable individuals and communities have been disproportionate and will require deeper consideration and targeted solutions to address each unique circumstance.

The Marshall Islands continues to take measures in strengthening our health infrastructure through the help and support of our partners. We join the WHO in the effort to eliminate multiple diseases within our borders, in battling NDCs, and to ensure the safety of generations to come, we encourage the WHO and the international system to continue to strengthen SIDS specific approaches on public health responses.

As the Marshall Islands extends its border closure this month, we continue to implement our repatriation program for essential travel. However, there is still much more work to be done at the national, regional and international level. The Marshall Islands reiterates its call for urgent and robust international and bilateral cooperation to ensure equitable distribution of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines to all, including to the most remote populations in the Pacific and all regions of the world.

Mr. President,

Viruses know no borders. The Marshall Islands also joins other nations calling for Taiwan's participation at the WHA and in WHO activities. Therefore and inclusively every nation including Taiwan has an opportunity to voice and support our fight against current and future pandemics that may threaten our global health and security.

Mr. President,

In the wake of this global pandemic, let us Build Back Better. All states should give serious consideration to the WHO's Manifesto for a healthy and green recovery from COVID-19.

As an atoll nation, the Marshall Islands is on the frontline of another global crisis in climate change. We therefore strongly encourage the further strengthening of the WHO's critical work on climate change, and for all countries' prioritization of bold climate action as an opportunity to improve public health.

Let us continue to live up to WHO's creed in which all world citizens can live healthy, productive lives by putting people first and engaging all countries. Thank you and kommol tata.