

**Statement delivered by Ms. Norleen Oliver,
Federated States of Micronesia,
on behalf of the Eleven Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and
Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Beneficiaries of the United
Nations Human Rights Council Voluntary Technical Assistance
Trust Fund for participation in the Thirty-Fourth Human Rights
Council Session**

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Geneva, Palais des Nations, Room XXI, Switzerland

**Your Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen**

I'd like to start off from the exact words of one of our colleague from Papua New Guinea who so eloquently put it as follows because it paints a vivid picture of the diversity, widespread and richness of the countries we represent today.

"From the vastness of the Pacific ocean to the majestic mountains of the Himalayas and the deltas of the Southeast Asia and across the Caribbean Seas to the West African coast, may I extend on behalf of the 11 beneficiaries of the LDCs/ SIDS Trust Fund a very warm and cordial greetings to you all this afternoon".

It is an absolute honor and pleasure for me to speak on behalf of the delegations of Bhutan, Carbo Verde, Jamaica, The Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Myanmar, Senegal, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, and my own country, The Federated States of Micronesia, We are appreciative recipients of the Human rights Council's LDCs/SIDS voluntary Trust Fund at this current Council's session.

At the outset, let me express our utmost appreciation to The UN High Commissioner on human rights, President of the human rights council, President of the Human Rights Advisory Council, and the delegations of Maldives, Australia, Netherlands and the UN Trust Fund Secretariat, and many others who had extended a warm welcome to this group, since the opening of this 34th Session.

Excellencies,

I would be seriously remiss if I did not convey our gratitude to you for enabling our participation and giving us the opportunity to be actively engaged in the discussions, of the Trust Fund that supports each of our countries' participation in the Human rights council's work here in Geneva. By this connection, we want to thank all the countries that have generously donated to the Trust Fund. Moreover, this has secured our direct involvement in the discussions as well as the value added impact that our participation, and voices have brought to the Human Rights Council's work.

Excellencies,

If I may, I would like to pose a question; would the HRC's work be as inclusive had we been excluded? The fundamental principles of human rights work which is also the cornerstone of this Councils work, is to ensure that there is an open

and broad discussions of issues, and where all people are heard. I would also say that it is essential that people are able to participate and help to inform the decisions regarding the protection of their human rights otherwise our success on this cannot and would not be fully realized. In fact, some of us have already been given the opportunity to give statements expressing our concerns that we feel are important and I trust they will be considered by the HRC as you formulate new mandates and address these issues. The ideology, concepts, thoughts and passion that was collectively shared at this council wouldn't be as rich or have the same impact on the work that all of us do had we been excluded.

My fellow ten delegates and I are all new to Human Rights Council but not so much in the context of the carriage of human rights protection and promotion mandates in our personal capacities in our respective countries, but with respect to being, for the first-time ever, participating in the Human Rights Council formal session in Geneva. It is most pleasing to note the ratio of female to male continue to get even better and for this group, the women outnumber the men, 6 – 5, a clear testament to gender empowerment and equality. We appreciate and value the gender mainstreaming that the Council is now embarking on, which sets a solid benchmark to guide our respective national efforts in this important area.

It is also fair to say that the past two weeks here in the Human Rights Council has been a steep learning curve for many of us. It has also enabled us to better appreciate and comprehend, not only the complexities of the human rights architecture and system but also bringing our issues to the fore.

Excellencies,

As we commemorate the Fifth Anniversary of the Trust Fund, we would like to pay tribute to the foresight and vision it laid down and the value added it has been for the cause of human rights protection and promotion especially in LDCs and SIDS, thus universal participation. Our cultures, traditions, customs, and beliefs and unique issues, set us apart because they define who we are as people and as nations, however, the collective view that we all have for the value and preservation of human rights is what truly binds us together. We look forward to supporting the draft resolution on the Trust Fund during this Council session to ensure the voices of LDCs and SIDS continue to be heard in this Council.

I thank you for your kind attention.