

Statement by Climate Envoy Kristina Stege, Republic of the Marshall Islands, at the Virtual Ministerial on Climate Action

7 July, 2020

lakwe, ministers. We in the Marshall Islands see that this period of recovery has the potential to significantly alter the course of the climate crisis and create a healthier, more just future if it is done correctly.

Our approach to designing COVID recovery plans must drastically reset our economies to **mitigate the risks of climate change**. Every country here today, as a signatory to the Paris Agreement, agreed under Article 2.1.C to make finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate resilient development. In the current context that means: attaching meaningful conditions to bailouts, including requiring companies to reduce emissions; removing fossil fuel subsidies to redirect our economies towards zero-carbon alternatives; and immediately phasing out coal. **To build back better, we have to take decisions now that are consistent with a 1.5C pathway**. Sadly, the decision made by the ICAO Council last week catered to the short-term needs of the airline industry rather than the survival of our species on this planet. RMI hopes that this decision can be reversed at the ICAO Assembly, and calls on all countries participating in the pilot phase of CORSIA to hold their airlines to the original baseline pending the 2022 review.

Given the mounting impacts of climate change, adaptation must be prioritised in our recovery solutions, and this is an urgent matter for those most vulnerable. **Investing in adaptation measures** that protect our countries' futures and build resilience for the long-term are essential.

Adequate resources are necessary to support these efforts. To ensure that those most vulnerable are not harmed as we build back from COVID-19, developing countries need funding and support. This will require debt relief and concessional financing, and urgent action by multilateral development banks and other international financial institutions, to ensure that all countries have the liquidity they need to rebuild.

We must also **live up to the commitments we've already made**. RMI was the first country to submit an enhanced NDC, and it commends Rwanda and Jamaica for their recent delivery of enhanced NDCs. 2020 was intended as a year of ambition taking into account the need for urgent action to address climate change. The ongoing COVID 19 pandemic has not lessened this urgency. In fact, it has exposed vulnerabilities and inequities that will surely worsen in a warming planet.

Eleven NDCs by July 2020 is simply not enough, and delaying NDC delivery to 2021 ought not to be a serious consideration at this stage. By all indications, small Island, and other highly vulnerable developing states, are once again having to assume leadership to address a crisis that we did not cause. We must ask: where are the enhanced NDCs from industrialised nations? Where are their long-term greenhouse gas emission reduction strategies? Where are their new climate finance commitments?

Perhaps the most crucial enabling condition is therefore solidarity, and the commitment of all states to take action, urgently and in the face of pressure to do otherwise, on behalf of our shared future.

Kommol tata.