Madame Chair,

Excellencies,

We convene this sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) against the backdrop of the ongoing crisis in Ukraine. The flagrant disregard by the Russian Federation of international laws and the principles of our United Nations Charter and the indiscriminate attacks of innocent Ukrainians, many of them women, girls, children, and the elderly and civilian infrastructure are truly disturbing. It must end. Micronesia stands in solidarity with the Ukrainian people, and other countries that have fallen victims to manmade and natural disasters.

The distinguished representative of Fiji delivered earlier a statement on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) with which Micronesia is aligned. Please allow me to compliment that statement in my national capacity.

Madame Chair,

My country recognized women and girls for their important contributions to our nation. When we last met here, Micronesia was one of a handful of states without women representation in Parliament.

I am pleased to report that since late last year, for the first time, a woman was elected to our national Congress. At the state level, women are also making headways as we have seen more women elected into the state legislatures. Women have also been represented as cabinet members in the states and the national government, as well as taking up leadership roles as justices in both the states and national courts.

My country continues to make strides and encourages aspiring women and girls to achieve the highest goals that they want to achieve. Many of our young women have been able to achieve their goals through scholarship made available through our states, national and from development partners that are available to our citizens. Our national government recognizes the important role mothers play in the family and the upbringing of children, and has expanded a
family friendly policy that extends the applicability of maternity to all national employees and fixed it at 8 consecutive weeks of paid leave.

Madame Chair,

The second part of the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is clear - climatic impacts are occurring faster than the international community’s current ability to adapt to them. It is not a false alarm; rather it is a clarion call for action. Unless the international community urgently takes bold and concerted action, at all levels to abate, if not to avert a catastrophe, limiting warming to within the Paris Agreement goal of 1.5C will be beyond reach. For the women and girls and for that matter all of us living on small islands rising barely a few feet above sea level, any progress without addressing the climate crisis would be all for naught.

We are increasingly concerned by the frequent occurrences of unusually high king-tides caused by climate change. This weighs heavily on the minds and hearts of mothers who must worry about the safety and security of their school-aged children and the girl child living on islands where these king tides have destroyed little farming plots and inundated our taro patches and coastal areas, contributing to the loss of freshwater supplies, flooding, drought, damaged crops, and increased diseases. On many levels, climate change and sea-level rise continue to threaten our progress on the achievement of the Agenda 2030, and exact the highest price from women and girls.

On our own, our President issued in recent weeks an Emergency Declaration to begin providing needed supplies and relief goods to the affected - a declaration is only a temporary measure and is not a sustainable solution to a problem that needs global action. In the absence of cooperation and assistance from the international community to meet their mitigation, adaptation and climate financing commitments, our success in this regard will remain elusive.

Equally concerning is the COVID-19 pandemic, which has exasperated and set us back in the accomplishments and progress we have made. Micronesia is fortunate that it remains one of the few unaffected countries. We have mandated vaccination against the virus for all our children ages 5 to 17 years and have kept up with our locked-down policy. Micronesia is grateful to the assistance extended to us by the United States and many of our development partners. Inevitably, the border closure has impacted our economy and set back our children’s education progress as schools were closed at the early stages of the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the global digital divide and exposed how this pandemic greatly disadvantage the women and children from small island countries, dispersed over thousands of miles with no access to the internet. These are challenges we cannot overcome by ourselves, and welcome the UNSG digital cooperation roadmap.

As men and women use resources differently, there are disparities in the vulnerability of a specific gender that requires gender inclusivity in planning, responses, and capacity building. Often, women faced the brunt of this devastation through the impacts on the make-up of households and direct implications on women’s workload and thus have proved to be important agents of change for climate change adaptation and food security. This inclusion of women in decision-making for agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors promotes partnerships between all genders; women have a lot to say about what is happening around them, and they also have
solutions to share. We stand at an important juncture, where women's contribution and leadership are crucial to effect change.

I thank you, Chair