Statement by the Honorable Isabella Dageago M.P.,
Minister for Women’s and Social Development Affairs,
Health, Internal Affairs and Disabilities
At the 66th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women
United Nations, New York, 14th to 25th of March 2022

Madam Chair
Colleagues
Distinguished Delegates,

Nauru welcomes the theme, “Achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate, environmental and disaster risk policies and programmes.” As a leader and a mother from a small island nation on the frontlines of the climate crisis, I echo those voices calling on more ambitious climate action to keeping our temperatures below 1.5 degrees C. The slogan 1.5 to stay alive are more than just words.

We have said it countless times before, climate change is the single greatest threat to humanity and for countries like Nauru is an existential one. Adverse impacts from climate change affects almost every facet of our lives. Acute water shortages, tidal inundation, seawater intrusion, frequent and intense storm events are all increasingly common. With these challenges it is very clear the women and girls are affected. For instance, more often than not the management of the household falls to the woman, including the burden of water management, posing a greater hardship on the women to manage family life.

It is because of the importance of gender that Nauru established a department of Women’s and Social Development Affairs who will work in close collaboration with the Department of Climate Change to ensure gender mainstreaming of our national climate change, environmental and disaster-risk policies are in place. We recognize the important role our women and girls’ play in society and therefore their participation in the climate, environmental and disaster risk discussions and processes is crucial. We aim to be inclusive and consider gender parity as an essential part of our
processes to ensure that women and our youth are being heard. Those most affected are best placed to enrich our discussions to help finding innovative solutions.

The key activity for Nauru this year will be understanding the different nuances of climate and gender issues, which we intend to use this gender-responsive approach in our Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

**Madam Chair,**

We are still in grip of a global pandemic which has left many countries like mine -isolated from the world because of the imperative to keeping our people safe. Nauru remains free from covid through God’s Grace. We have put in place a COVID Taskforce to protect our borders from the virus and this will continue until we can fully vaccine our whole population. Nauru has pledged its support to the President of the General Assembly's call for vaccine equity, and I renew that pledge now and want to highlight its importance, especially for our youth who have to date, not had access to vaccination for the COVID-19 virus. At the same time, we are also developing a gender responsive pandemic policy which will be critical as we move towards reopening, recovery and building back better.

**Madam Chair**

Education, capacity building and development for our young women and youths in the environment and sciences on climate change, oceans, biodiversity, and plastic pollution are critical to my country’s sustainable development. We have actively participated in an annual regional intensive climate negotiation workshop that promotes Pacific women’s climate change leadership. This initiative also includes a fully funded participation to UNFCCC Conference of Parties. We welcome such initiatives. We need more opportunities for meaningful participation and engagement in the environmental policies and sciences for our young women and girls.

A final point -- Financing plays a crucial role in enabling gender-responsive policies and program in climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction. To that end we call on partners to keep their promise of 100 billion for climate finance. Access to finance is an impediment because of outdated measures such as GNI. We support the development of the new multidimensional vulnerability index (MVI) for SIDS.
Chair,
We have come here today to pledge our commitment to nurture, protect and safeguard the lives of our women and girls. Climate change is a lived reality. Let’s make pledges for our women and girls by taking bold steps and decisive climate action and that is to transition away from fossil fuels towards renewable and clean energy future. This is our pledge and solution.

*Tubwa Kor (Thank you)*