

**Ms. Kabua** (Marshall Islands):

The Republic of the Marshall Islands aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Federated States of Micronesia on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States.

I wish to thank the delegation of Sweden for convening this debate and to congratulate it warmly on assuming the Security Council presidency for this month. I also wish to extend congratulations on behalf of my Government to the new members of the Security Council. I wish them every success during their tenure. Moreover, through you, Mr. President, I would also like to convey my personal gratitude to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Ms. Margot Wallström. It is wonderful to have met her in person and to have witnessed her exemplary leadership. Furthermore, I would also like to congratulate the Secretary-General and to thank him for taking on such a tremendous challenge at this time.

As we begin this new calendar year, it is of paramount importance that the Security Council be better able to demonstrate credible and responsive leadership. If indeed the world is at a moment where a large question mark hangs over multilateralism, then confidence must be strengthened.

The Marshall Islands is a small nation but it is very much a full and equal Member of the United Nations — one whose deeper history is also marked by the imprint of global conflict and threat. Our firm view is that more proactive approaches are needed to address to conflict prevention, and stronger political will is necessary to drive it forward. That will further build global confidence and avoid or minimize security disasters before they occur.

We fully support the Council's increased attention and appropriate engagement on the role of women and young women in conflict prevention and resolution. The Marshall Islands affirms the Pacific Islands Forum's Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, adopted in 2012, and we call for renewed efforts to take it forward. I do not see the treatment of gender and security as something rooted in an ideological high ground or any particular political agenda. Rather, I urge the Council to look at it through a very practical lens, and consider the impacts upon, and the active role of, half of the world's population in addressing peace and security.

I would call the Council's attention to the July 2015 open debate on peace and security challenges facing small island developing States (SIDS), which was convened by the presidency of New Zealand (see S/PV.7499). The debate revealed new dimensions of security analysis across SIDS regions and it should not be an isolated event. It is imperative that the Council establish a regular agenda item or regularized treatment of

this topic. Small islands States make up nearly 20 per cent of the membership of the United Nations. Our populations are small, our water is vast, and our location often sits between the edges of major and often conflicting global Powers. Yet based on the Council's agenda, one would think that we barely exist. However, basic math reveals that the Council is overlooking concerning emerging trends across our region. Long-term risks of instability are growing and are coupled with growing youth populations and overwhelming unemployment.

The treatment of our security cannot be considered apart from that of much larger geostrategic interaction. For many, including those in the Pacific, our baseline is State fragility and we are uniquely vulnerable to external shocks. Others might see our sovereignty and marine resources as just a string of pearls to be collected in a contest between the growing rivalries of major world Powers that is fought across the Pacific Ocean.

Our Pacific regional statement made a compelling case for increased attention to the relationship between climate change and security, where there are important linkages within and across all regions. As a low-lying nation, it is important that we understand such linkages in the wider security and political context. We recall the Council's 2011 presidential statement on climate and security (S/PRST/2011/15), which states that there are security implications on the loss of territory for low-lying nations and the risk of aggravating certain threats to international peace and security. Those are not words to be ignored. They must be understood in regions like ours where fragility is a worsening baseline.

I urge the Council in its future work not only to strengthen engagement on conflict prevention resolution, but also to assure that there is an agenda item and regularized treatment of small island States. It is unlikely that we will be at the immediate front of conflicts, but the longer-term trend points in very dangerous directions. If the Council is serious about conflict prevention, then it should take to heart our voice and that of other small island nations.