

Hon. John M. Silk

Minister of Natural Resources and Commerce/Chairman of MIMRA Board

**Keynote Address to the 126th Annual Officials Forum Fisheries Committee
(FFC126) Meeting**

May 22, 2023

Check Against Delivery

Kommol tata, Chair for the kind introduction and acknowledgement.

Director General of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, Dr. Manu Tupou-Roosen, Deputy Director-General Pio Manoa and staff of the FFA, Distinguished Representatives of the FFA Member Countries and Territories, Observers, NGOs and IGOs, Fishing Industries from around the region, Ladies and Gentlemen, Iakwe to you all!

On behalf of His Excellency, President David Kabua, Government and People of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, I welcome you all to the 126th Annual Officials Forum Fisheries Committee (FFC126) Meeting. I hope you all have enjoyed your comfortable stay in Majuro and partaken in sight seeing around the island with your cameras and of course trying out our local cuisines in town or in other villages have to offer. In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing Chair for leading this august committee for the past twelve (12) months and we are very grateful to Kiribati for their dedication and stewardship in this Forum. Ko raba!

I am cognizant of the fact that the agenda items in this meeting are quite extensive and so I will be brief, with some issues, perhaps to welcome you all.

At the outset, the RMI wishes to raise certain points in which we would prioritize in this year's FFC. Firstly, the RMI is keen to discuss and hear views pertaining to Agenda Item 15 on the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission's (WCPFC) priorities. For instance, Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) 2021-01 paragraph 52 states that this CMM will expire in 15 February 2024 and the RMI would like to see certain elements to be further examine based on the following: the Longline Vessel Day Scheme (LL VDS); strengthening the value of the Purse Seine VDS; implementing the Skipjack Management Plan, as well as strengthening the monitoring of the Longline fishing in the High Seas and provisions relating to the FAD management. Furthermore, on Agenda Item 16, the RMI views the implementation of the Regional Longline Strategy is an important work plan to consider as we see tangible benefits it brings to the economy and adopt measures that would improve the monitoring of the Longline fishery with emerging technologies such as E-reporting and E-monitoring. Moreover, Climate Change is not a new issue, but it is a challenge we face as Small Island Developing State and it co-exists with our daily lives, one of which is our main source of revenue, fisheries. The RMI looks forward to reviewing Agenda Item 14 and garner your views in

developing a regional Climate Change Policy in the Fisheries realm. There are more pressing issues, but I'll leave it at that.

With these few words, I am confident that our Officials will drive these important agenda items and provide sound recommendations before the upcoming FFC Ministerial in which we look forward to having here in lovely Majuro. On that note, kommel tata and jeramon!