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## President Heine Joins World Leaders for 71<sup>st</sup> Session of UN General Assembly



President Dr. Hilda C. Heine is currently in New York this week to attend the 71<sup>st</sup> Regular Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The UN General Debate will begin on 20 September under the theme “The Sustainable Development Goals: A Universal Push to transform our World.” Three high-level meetings on refugees and migrants, antimicrobial resistance, and the Paris Climate Agreement, will also take place.

President Heine is scheduled to deliver the Marshall Islands National Address to the General Debate Session on Thursday, 22 September, at approximately 3:30–4:30 pm (NY date and time). For live streaming, check out the [UN Web TV](#). The address will be broadcasted on the local radio station V7AB.

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Accompanying President Heine to the 71<sup>st</sup> UNGA are Minister-in-Assistance Mattlan Zackhras, Foreign Minister John M. Silk, Marshall Islands Permanent Representative Amatlain E. Kabua to the UN, and other Government officials. At the margins of the 71<sup>st</sup> UNGA, President Heine is expected take part in the High Level Dialogue on Sustainable Oceans and Blue Economy; attend the launching of the UN Women “Making Every Woman and Girl Count” program; attend a Japan–Pacific Allies meeting; interviewed by CNN and Samantha Bee Full Frontal; and meet with a number of Leaders and leading figures from international organizations.

On the evening of the UN Secretary General’s Ratification Ceremony for the Paris Agreement on 21 September, Minister-in-Assistance Zackhras will address a high-level working dinner for the High Ambition Coalition (HAC) Ministers. Foreign Minister Silk, along with Permanent Representative Kabua, will attend a number of bilateral meetings and will represent President Heine at the Clinton Global Initiative as a panelist in the special session “COP21: The Time for Action is Now.” The annual meeting of the UNGA brings together world Leaders from more than 190 UN member states to engage in multilateral discussions and negotiations on important issues of common concern.

## Ambassador Zackios Presents Credentials to U.S. President Obama

Photo: Ambassador Zackios (R) & President Obama (L) following presentation of credential ceremony held at the Oval Office. (Official White House Photo by Lawrence Jackson)



On 16 September 2016, Ambassador of the Republic of the Marshall Islands to the United States, His Excellency Gerald M. Zackios, presented his credentials to the President of the United States of America, His Excellency Barack H. Obama in the Oval Office at the White House.

In his remarks Ambassador Zackios conveyed warm greetings and best wishes from Her Excellency President Hilda C. Heine and the People of the Republic of the Marshall Islands to President Obama and the American People. Ambassador Zackios assured President Obama that the RMI Government will continue to work closely with the U.S. Government in addressing issues of mutual concern, including the ongoing implementation of the Compact of Free Association, consequences of the U.S. nuclear testing program, implementation of the Military Use and Operating Rights Agreement, and ongoing efforts to address the devastating and negative impact of climate change.

In closing, Ambassador Zackios reiterated his desire to continue to further strengthening the special and unique relationship between the two countries. President Obama accepted the Letter of Credence and warmly welcomed Ambassador Zackios back to

Washington this time in his capacity as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and said he looked forward to working with Ambassador Zackios to advance their common agenda and to deepen the strong and abiding friendship between the two countries.

President Obama, in his remarks, said that the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the United States share a long history of friendship and close cooperation under the Compact of Free Association and their mutual commitment to democracy and freedom. The President recognized the commitment of Marshallese citizens in the US Armed Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, and remembered their sacrifices such as SGT Solomon Sam to preserve security around the world. The President also expressed appreciation to the Republic of Marshall Islands for its continued support at the United Nations, and its leadership that greatly contributed to a robust climate change agreement in Paris, adding that the Republic of the Marshall Islands is one of the first countries to join the Paris Agreement. Ambassador Zackios was accompanied by his wife, Mrs. Viola Milne-Zackios.



Photo- Front Row L-R: Deputy Chief Secretary Kino Kabua, International Aid Coordination Specialist Peter Samuel Tierney, Chief Secretary Justina Langidrik, T&C Secretary Phil Philippo. Back Row L-R: Compact Implementation Office Director Isabella Silk, Health Assistant Secretary Mailyynn Konelios-Lang, OEPPC Deputy Director Warwick Harris, Division of International Development Assistance Director Jennifer Tseng, EPPSO Dahlia Kaneko, Finance Secretary Maybelline Andon Bing, PSS Gee-Leong Bing.

## International Aid Coordination Specialist to Assist Government

On Sep. 5, 2016, the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) commenced a project to address issues related to the fragmentation of aid coordination within the national government. This ongoing challenge of coordinating the significant amounts of international aid to the Marshall Islands was highlighted not only in the recent Cabinet Retreats, but also in documents produced by development partners. The Ministry of Finance has been able to secure funding assistance from the ADB to recruit an International Aid Coordination Specialist, Mr. Peter Samuel Tierney, to assist the Government in establishing a clear and dedicated aid coordination structure at the national level, along with the policy and strategy framework to support that revised structure.

Mr. Tierney has years of experiences in development planning and management, and building country systems and partnerships for development is one of

his areas of expertise. He was with the Government with the Government of Cook Islands for six years and successfully improved their official development assistance structure with long-term strategies which enabled the Government of Cook Islands to become the first Pacific country to be accredited by the Adaptation Fund. He will work with the key stakeholders, including the President's Office, the Chief Secretary's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Office of Environmental Policy Planning and Coordination (OEPPC), the Economic Planning, Policy & Statistics Office (EPPSO) and others through in-depth consultations to review current assignments, strengths, and weaknesses with the goal of designing an appropriate aid coordination structure for the GRMI based on current and anticipated resources. Mr. Tierney will be carrying out the Phase 1 assignments in Majuro until October 5, 2016.

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Chief Secretary Justina Langidrik noted that “Having a well-defined system within the Government for aid coordination is crucial to ensure that financial support that comes through are implemented effectively, well-coordinated and beneficial to RMI, based on prioritized areas identified by the Government. Whilst it is important for Government to be accountable, it is equally important that it is also able to evaluate the impacts and outcomes of development programs. The aim is to improve on effective delivery of development programs to the people. I am hopeful the outcome of this exercise will help tremendously towards achieving this aim.”

Finance Secretary Mavbelline Bina noted that

“Development Effectiveness is evidently needed. Both of the RMI National Strategic Plan and Agenda 2020 have outlined the prioritized development areas for the RMI. With this TA, it is our hope and goal to improve both internal and donor coordination to get expected development results.”

Director of the Division of International Development Assistance (DIDA), Jennifer Tseng, also noted that “Aid coordination is one of the critical elements to ensure the effectiveness and the efficiency of delivering development assistance, and strong aid coordination will allow our development partners to develop greater trust in our use of the resources they provide.”

## Ambassador Zackios Visits Marshallese Community in Sacramento and Addresses 37<sup>th</sup> Jemen-Ei and Manit Day Celebration Ceremony



On September 2–5, 2016, RMI Ambassador to the United States, Gerald M. Zackios, made his first visit to the Marshallese Community in Sacramento, California, and spoke to hundreds of Marshallese at an event hosted by the Marshallese Community of Sacramento to celebrate the 37<sup>th</sup> Jemen–Ei and Manit Day. Ambassador Zackios was accompanied by his Deputy Chief of Mission, Junior Aini.

In opening his remarks, Ambassador Zackios asked for a moment of silence in honor of Iroiĵlaplap Anjua Loek who passed recently. Ambassador Zackios took the opportunity to convey condolences to Leroij Nemaad Loek (who was present) and the family of Late Iroiĵlaplap Anjua Loek. “Iroiĵlaplap Anjua, one of our paramount chiefs, was also one of the framers of the Constitution who respected our manit, knew God and lived a humble life. He was a living testament to what we are celebrating today, our Constitution and Manit. Kommel tata Iroiĵlaplap Anjua”, said Ambassador Zackios.

Speaking to the event’s theme, “Kottar Liklal im Mwelik”, Ambassador Zackios encouraged the community to take advantage of opportunities available to them, to prepare

for a better future, whether it be here in the United States or back home in the RMI.

“As we live, work, and study here in the US, I humbly ask that we take today’s theme to heart, to prepare for the future. We especially need to prepare our children, in both formal education as well as to know and respect our Manit”, said Ambassador Zackios.

Following the event, Ambassador Zackios held a town hall meeting with the Marshallese community and had the opportunity to hear their stories and needs. He noted that this community has grown from humble beginnings to become well organized, tight-knit group of constructive citizens, and contributing members of the Sacramento community.

Ambassador Zackios acknowledged and conveyed a warm jerammon and thank you to all the Marshallese in Sacramento and their community and church leaders for hosting the event.

## Japan Hands Over Disaster Risk Reduction Equipment to the Marshall Islands



On 14 September 2016, Japan Ambassador Hideyuki Mitsuoka officially handed over disaster risk reduction equipment to the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI). The handover ceremony, held at the Ministry of Public Works, was witnessed by Public Works Minister Tony Muller, Chief Secretary Justina Langidrik, Rev. Mack Aikuij, Government agencies, and officials from the Chief Secretary’s Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Public Works, and the Embassy of Japan.

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The Embassy of Japan press release states, “The implementation of this grant was announced by Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo ABE, to former RMI President Christopher Loeak at the bilateral meeting held during the 7th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM7) which took place in Iwaki City, Fukushima, Japan in May 2015.” The Exchange of Notes were signed on July 2015 in Majuro between Japan and the RMI, granting 300 million Japanese Yen (approximately US\$2.9 million at the current exchange rate). The Japan International Cooperation System (JICS) has been acting as a procurement agency on behalf of the Government of the RMI.

The items of disaster risk reduction equipment are part of Lot 1 and they include: 2 forklifts, 2 mini excavators, 4 plate compactors, 4 flood lights with diesel engine, 2 temporary male’s toilet tent sets, 2 temporary female’s toilet tent sets, and 10 shelter tents; some of them arrived in Ebeye and others arrived in Majuro. Three more items are coming to the RMI early next year. Furthermore, items for Lot 2 are currently in procurement process and will be sent to the RMI in the near future. *For more information please contact the Embassy of Japan at 247- 7463 or email [chizuru.seki@mofa.go.jp](mailto:chizuru.seki@mofa.go.jp)*

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## Excerpts from the 47<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Forum Communique

### **RADIOACTIVE CONTAMINANTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS**

39. *Leaders recalled that the Republic of the Marshall Islands was placed by the international community under the trusteeship of the United Nations administered by the United States of America, both of which therefore have ongoing obligations to encourage a final and just resolution for the Marshallese people. Leaders welcomed the recommendations in the Special Rapporteur’s report submitted to the UN Human Rights Council in September 2012.*

40. *Leaders supported bilateral, regional and multilateral action to assist the Republic of the Marshall Islands in its efforts to engage the United States towards a justified fair and just resolution to the U.S. Nuclear Testing Programme and agreed to submit letters to the U.S. Government urging the United States to take further action to meaningfully address the ongoing impacts resulting from the U.S. Nuclear Testing Programme, and to the United Nations Secretary-General seeking action in response to the recommendations contained in the 2012 report of the UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur for “the international community, including relevant United Nations departments, funds and agencies” to address the ongoing impacts of nuclear testing in the Pacific.*

[Click Here for the Communique](#)

41. *Leaders tasked the Forum Secretariat to coordinate assistance by CROP Agencies to the Republic of the Marshall Islands in addressing ongoing impacts of nuclear testing, including, inter alia, human rights, environmental contamination, and health impacts. Leaders also tasked the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General to report to the 48th Pacific Islands Forum on actions taken in this regard.*

### **CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT**

14. *Leaders reiterated the importance of the Pacific Islands Forum in maintaining a strong voice considering the region’s vulnerabilities to the impact of climate change. Leaders welcomed the Paris Agreement and reinforced that achieving the Agreement goal of limiting global temperature increases to 1.5 C above pre-industrialised levels is an existential matter for many Forum Members which must be addressed with urgency. Leaders congratulated the eight Forum countries that have ratified the Agreement and encouraged remaining Members and all other countries to sign and ratify the Agreement before the end of 2016 or as soon as possible. Leaders called for ambitious climate change action in and across all sectors and encouraged key stakeholders to prioritise their support for the implementation of key obligations under the Agreement.*