



Association of Pacific Island Legislatures

American Samoa
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
FSM, State of Chuuk
FSM, State of Kosrae
FSM, State of Pohnpei
FSM, State of Yap
Island of Guam
Republic of Kiribati
Republic of the Marshall Islands
Republic of Nauru
Republic of Palau
State of Hawaii

Resolution No. 55-BOD-03

A RESOLUTION

“Thanking Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner for bringing the message of climate change up to a level that not only Pacific Islanders, but families around the world can understand and can take to heart.”

1 **WHEREAS**, on the 23rd day of September, 2014, the U.N. Climate Leaders Summit was called
2 to order by Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations; and

3 **WHEREAS**, the Secretary General was joined at the podium by leading celebrities in the fight
4 against the ravages of climate change where they appeared before a gathering of the world’s most
5 influential leaders; and

6 **WHEREAS**, the general commotion that surrounds the opening of large events in the vast
7 interior spaces of the U.N.’s renowned General Assembly Hall was hushed into silence as a lone
8 Micronesian woman of Marshallese descent slowly, but deliberately approached the podium; and

9 **WHEREAS**, as Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner approached the massive podium of the grand General
10 Assembly Hall with its impressive green marble backdrop, she must have been in awe of sanctity of that
11 place for it is at this very podium where the presidents and prime ministers of the greatest nations on
12 earth have stood forth for over a half a century to deliver speeches on the most severe and most trying
13 challenges ever to be encountered by mankind; and

14 **WHEREAS**, as Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner approached the massive podium of the grand General
15 Assembly Hall, she must have also recognized and understood that it was at this very podium where the
16 founding fathers of the Micronesian nations of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States
17 of Micronesia and the Republic of Palau first stood before the leaders of the world and proudly
18 announced the entries of their own, new born countries into the family of nations that compose the heart
19 and soul of the United Nations; and

1 **WHEREAS**, as Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner rose to the podium and turned to address the assembled
2 leaders of the world, she began her remarks with a simple phrase of greeting in her own language,
3 Marshallese; and

4 **WHEREAS**, with an air of confidence and a look of determination, Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner then
5 began to speak quietly, but with an engaging voice of sincerity of an ancient and beloved legend from the
6 Marshallese past about a canoe contest among ten brothers, of which only one, the youngest, invited his
7 mother to come along; and

8 **WHEREAS**, it was a fortuitous decision made by the youngest brother for his mother carried on
9 board the canoe a large bundle, which only the two of them knew to be a sail, the first sail ever to be
10 raised in the Marshall Islands; and

11 **WHEREAS**, while Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner told the audience that the mother and her youngest son
12 of course won the race, this teller of Marshallese tales went on to draw a moral from this ancient legend
13 of the canoes which she applied to the present day; and

14 **WHEREAS**, after calling the attention of the world leaders to the international dimensions of
15 the present day race against the devastating impacts of climate change, Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner concluded
16 her narrative with these words:

17 *I ask world leaders to take us all along on your ride. We won't slow you down. We'll*
18 *help you win the most important race of all. The race to save humanity.*

19 **WHEREAS**, Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner had the General Assembly Hall in rapt attention; it appears
20 they were grasping the message that she had to deliver; but, fellow Micronesians, there is even a more
21 important message for us here in the islands; we are that very sail that can win the race on climate
22 change; our place in the canoe is at the top of the mast; and

23 **WHEREAS**, after delivering these stunning remarks with both poise and grace, Kathy Jetnil-
24 Kijiner surprised the audience by stepping down from the massive podium to an open microphone on the
25 side of the stage where she was in full view of the multitude gathered in the Hall; and

26 **WHEREAS**, with an even greater air of sincerity and forthrightness, Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner began
27 to recite to the gathering of world leaders a poem of her own authorship; and

WHEREAS, in phraseology, the poem was addressed to her six month old daughter, but in spirit the message of the poem was directed to each and every one of the world's leaders gathered in the grand Hall of the United Nations; and

WHEREAS, first drawing her baby daughter's attention to the growing threat of climate change -- *some men say that one day that lagoon will devour you* --, the depressing mood of the poem soon turns to a defiant declaration of internal strength -- *don't cry, mommy promises you...no one's drowning, baby--no one's moving--no one's losing their homeland--no one's gonna become a climate change refugee;* and

WHEREAS, embracing all of the low islands and atolls of the Pacific and then of the Indian Ocean and then of the world, the poem now reaches out beyond the shores of the Marshall Islands -- *there are those who see us , hands reaching out, fists raising up, banners unfurling....;* and

WHEREAS, now the poem embraces an air of vibrant optimism --*we are spreading the word, and there are thousands out on the street. They're marching for us because we deserve to do more than just survive. We deserve to thrive;* and

WHEREAS, the poem concludes with words of comfort issuing out of the heart of an island mother for her baby girl -- *sleep in peace because we won't let you down. You'll see;* and

WHEREAS, upon the conclusion of her remarks and the recital of her poem, Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner gazed out upon an audience who as one rose up in a standing ovation; and

WHEREAS, as elected leaders of the Pacific Island Legislatures assembled together in the State of Yap for the APIL Board of Director's Meeting, while a storm of unknown force rages all around us, we cannot ignore the seas that surround us or the depth of the impact the ocean has on our very existence; and

WHEREAS, as we think back on the events of September 23 and as we reflect on the courage and commitment that Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner displayed on that day, we are humbled by her message and stirred by her words;

BECAUSE, the message that Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner delivered on opening day of the United Nations Climate Leaders Summit was not couched in the equations of carbon emissions or set out in the


1 graphs of temperature variances; the message that Jetnil-Kijiner delivered to the United Nations Climate
2 Leaders Summit on that day was about family and the impact that climate change could have on her baby
3 and her baby's babies; and

4 **MOREOVER**, the one most enduring and most valued treasures held closest to the heart of each
5 and every Pacific Islander is family; our loved ones are paramount in our expression and experiences of
6 life itself; now, therefore,

7 **THANK YOU** Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner for bringing the message of climate change up to a level that
8 not only Pacific Islanders, but families around the world can understand and can take to heart; climate
9 change is not just about facts or figures or temperature variants or sea gauges; climate change is about us;
10 and

11 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures, Fifty-Fifth Board of
12 Directors Meeting, State of Yap, December 3-5, 2014, that the APIL President shall certify, and the APIL
13 Secretary shall attest to the adoption hereof and that copies of the same shall thereafter be transmitted to
14 poet, spokeswoman, journalist, professor, and above all mother, Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner, and to the Chief
15 Executives and Presiding Legislative Officers of each member jurisdiction of the Association of Pacific
16 Island Legislatures..

DULY AND REGULARLY ADOPTED ON THE 5TH DAY OF DECEMBER, 2014


JUDITH T. WON PAT, ED. D.
ACTING PRESIDENT


CHANG B. WILLIAM
SECRETARY

