Opening Statement

H.E. Mr. Jürg Lauber

President of the United Nations Human Rights Council of the 19th cycle

LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund Regional Workshop for the Pacific Region

Palikir, Federated States of Micronesia – 17 November 2025

10:00AM-12:00PM

Mr. President,

Honourable representatives,

Excellencies,

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and gentlemen,

KAMORALE — good morning.

It is a profound honour and great joy to be here in Palikir, at the heart of Micronesia, for this regional workshop for Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States, organized by the Secretariat of the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in cooperation with the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia.

Let me begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to the Government and people of Micronesia for their warm welcome and generous hospitality. I also wish to **thank H.E. Mr. Mr. Wesley W. Simina**, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, for his leadership and gracious support, and **H.E. Mr. Akillino Harris Susaia**, Permanent Representative of Micronesia in Geneva, for his active engagement in the work of the Human Rights Council.

Allow me as well to recognize the Republic of the Marshall Islands, currently serving as the Pacific member of the Human Rights Council, and to acknowledge the invaluable work of the OHCHR Regional Office for the Pacific in supporting national efforts across the region.

[A Year of Milestones for the Pacific]

The year 2025 has been particularly important for the Pacific region. The Universal Periodic Review considered Fiji during its 48th session in January, Kiribati during the 49th session in April/May, and the Marshall Islands during the 50th session in November.

Reports were also due this year for the upcoming reviews of the Federated States of Micronesia and Nauru, which will take place in early 2026. Palau and the Solomon Islands will be reviewed later next year.

These reviews reflect the region's growing engagement with the international human rights system and its commitment to accountability and dialogue. I commend all Pacific countries for their active participation.

The Council also adopted an important resolution of special relevance to the region: **Resolution 58/16 on "***The human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment**: the ocean and human rights**."* This landmark text underscores how ocean health is integral to human dignity and survival.

I am also pleased to note that the region welcomed several Special Procedures mandate holders this year, including the first-ever visit to the Federated States of Micronesia by **the Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights in June**. These visits deepen cooperation and ensure that local experiences shape global understanding.

[The Human Rights Council in a Challenging Time]

I assumed the Presidency of the Human Rights Council at a time of increasing polarization and political realignment, shrinking civic space, and financial strain. Yet, despite these pressures, the Council continues to deliver.

This year alone, it convened two special sessions; In February on the human rights situation in eastern DRC and last Friday on the human rights situation in and around El Fasher, Sudan. The Council also held an urgent debate during its September session to discussion the recent military aggression led by the State of Israel against the State of Qatar on 9 September 2025. These actions reaffirm our collective commitment to respond swiftly to crises and to uphold human dignity everywhere.

My Presidency has been guided by three principles: **dialogue, inclusivity, and efficiency.** I have worked to safeguard the Council's mandate, promote gender parity and digital

accessibility, regain diplomatic space and — above all; to strengthen the participation of LDCs and SIDS.

The Council is stronger when it is more inclusive. Your voices: especially on climate change, sustainable development, and cultural rights, ground our deliberations in the realities people face every day.

Switzerland is proud to stand with the Pacific. Though geographically distant, our partnership is anchored in shared values, dialogue, and respect. Like Switzerland, Pacific nations show that small states can lead through moral clarity and bridge-building.

[Geopolitical Context and the Call for Peace]

Dear Friends,

As we meet here, we are mindful of the shifting geopolitical currents in the Pacific, where growing competition among major powers echoes moments in history when rivalry prevailed over cooperation. Yet, the Pacific has always stood for balance, dialogue, and shared humanity.

In these vast waters lies not only beauty but also wisdom; the wisdom to choose understanding over division. As President of the Human Rights Council (I already do as representative of Switzerland), I believe that neutrality, dialogue, and respect remain the most powerful instruments for peace. Small island and least developed states, though modest in size, carry immense moral authority to remind the world that true leadership is found in building bridges, not barriers.

[Looking Ahead]

The Human Rights Council remains a forum where dialogue must prevail over division. As we approach the 2026 General Assembly review, we must reflect on how to make the Council more credible, effective, and truly universal; while preserving what makes it unique: its openness, its flexibility, and its inclusiveness.

The **LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund** embodies this spirit. Since becoming operational in 2014, the Fund has enabled 307 delegates from 72 of the 73 eligible LDCs and SIDS (53 from the Pacific) to take part in Human Rights Council sessions in Geneva.. Their contributions have enriched our debates and strengthened the Council's legitimacy.

Your discussions here in Palikir; on achievements, challenges, and next steps; will help shape the Fund's future.

[Closing]

Excellencies,

distinguished participants,

Standing here in this beautiful corner of the world, so far from Geneva yet so close to the heart of our shared humanity, I am reminded that human rights are not about geography; they are about people.

From Palikir to the Palais des Nations, from the Pacific to the Alps, we are united by the same dignity, the same aspirations, and the same responsibility to make the Human Rights Council a home for all voices.

***Kalahngan* — thank you very much.**