

Palau Statement - High Level Debates  
November 21, 2013

Mr. President, Excellencies, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the people of Palau, congratulations to you, Mr. President, and all office bearers. Also, please accept my delegation's sincere appreciation and gratitude to you and the people and government of Poland for the generous support and gracious hospitality provided during our stay in this beautiful and historic city of Warsaw.

We align ourselves with the statement made by the President of Nauru on behalf of the Association of Small Islands States.

Mr. President, at the 68<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly, our President, His Excellency Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr., called upon the international community to take bold and resolute action to address the climate change crisis. May we ask you to join in his urgency and let Warsaw be where the COP moved from talks to action.

Mr. President, even though Small Island Developing States contribute a negligible amount to global emissions, we want to do our part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and are leading by example. Palau has committed to generating 20 percent of our energy through renewable sources and reducing 30 percent of our energy consumption using efficiency measures, by 2020. Many other Small Island Developing States have similarly ambitious goals, which were recently highlighted in the Majuro Declaration, as mentioned by the Honorable Minister from the Marshall Islands. What's more, the expert technical process proposed by AOSIS under ADP Workstream 2 would open the door for the entire international community to take advantage of the many opportunities that exist to lower emissions in the limited time we have to act.

Please allow me, at this juncture, Mr. President, to take the opportunity to express our gratitude to all our development partners, particularly, the United States, European Union, Japan, Italy and the Republic of China/Taiwan, who have helped us move closer to our capacity-building, technology transfer and finance goals in addressing our climate change challenges.

Mr. President,

Palau has also been actively participating in the negotiations on Loss and Damage as part of the AOSIS membership. We believe that Loss and Damage is separate from Adaptation and thus needs a separate international mechanism. Slow-onset events like sea level rise, ocean acidification, and degradation of coral reefs are permanent losses for which there is currently no recourse for us to manage.

Mr. President, the representative from the Philippines reminded us of what is at stake here during his emotional intervention last week. I empathize with his sense of fear and helplessness because Haiyan hit my country, Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia, on the way to the Philippines. Initial estimates of the cost of destruction is at least 6 million US dollars. Typhoon Bopha, which devastated us, just 11 months prior to Haiyan, cost at least 15 million US dollars in damages. These represent a large percentage of our national budget which have to be diverted from essential services in health, education and other sustainable development activities.

Thank you to all who have expressed sympathy for and solidarity with the people of Palau at this difficult times. And to our brothers and sisters in Micronesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, some States in the United States and Sardinia and all those who are currently experiencing hardships due to climate change, we say, you are in our thoughts and our prayers. We stand with you.

Mr. President, Palau is here, ready and willing, to do our part to achieve the kind of outcomes necessary to ensure that our children, the children of Poland, and all children from every corner of the world as well as their children live in a world that is secure, just and harmonious. We believe that all countries in the world should participate in addressing the climate change crisis so we can all deliver this world to the children. To this end, we are aware that although Republic of China/Taiwan is yet to be permitted to participate as an observer in the UNFCCC process, it has decided to reduce its greenhouse gas (GHG) emission by at least 30% by 2020 and is striving to bring its CO2 emissions from fuel combustion back to the 2000 level, by 2025. It is also ready and prepared to submit its Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) to the UNFCCC Registry. We, therefore, support the Republic of China/Taiwan's bid to participate in the UNFCCC mechanisms, meetings, and activities, as an observer. We believe that Republic of China/Taiwan's cooperation and sharing will make great contributions towards making UNFCCC's global campaign more complete and successful.

Mr. President,

In closing, Palau applauds and expresses gratitude to countries who have informed us of their enhanced ambition and increased contributions towards addressing the climate change crisis. Palau is deeply disappointed with Parties who are advocating for or have taken action to reduce their ambition targets, and those who are not willing to honor or increase their commitments. We implore upon them to allow for open discussions on alternatives and options for small island countries and developing states.

Mr. President,

Climate Change impacts and affects are taking their toll on our environment, our resources, our economy and, most importantly, our peoples and thus we continue to seek guidance and cooperation from our partners in this forum to alleviate the impacts we so deeply feel. We are praying that the legacy of Warsaw will be the translation of its motto "I Care" into concrete

actions that help assure our survival, particularly those most vulnerable among us, including the people of Kiribati, also known to this COP as ‘the other Poland’, in the Pacific.

Thank you for your kind attention.