

**Statement by His Excellency Surangel S. Whipps, Jr.
President of the Republic of Palau
World Leaders Summit, COP 26
November 1, 2021**

Alii and greetings Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen. Prime Minister, thank you for holding this high-level platform, and allowing us to set the stage for COP26.

The latest IPCC report indicates that our collective action to date is not closing the “emissions gap,” and we are veering off the path of 1.5 degree warming limit.

The Palauan legend of Uab illustrates our state of emergency. Uab was a boy who grew into a giant that wouldn’t stop growing. Due to his unruly appetite, the whole island community was forced to feed him. Uab’s feeding depleted their natural resources, and finally, he threatened to eat the people. To save themselves, the villagers took bold action and set fire to him. This is eerily reminiscent of today’s world, as the large emitters with their insatiable appetite for advancement are continuing to abuse our environment threatening our very survival. COP 26 must light the fire.

Excellencies, we must hold each other accountable. It is incumbent on the Parties to this Convention to concentrate on **Radical Action, Consistent Mobilization, and Intentional Outcomes!**

As such, Palau expects the **set of rules guiding the implementation of the Paris Agreement be finalized as a priority outcome of COP26.**

For Pacific SIDS, the ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus demands **accountability for NDC commitments, realistic timeframes, and to begin bold action by cutting in half our emissions by 2030 to achieve net zero carbon by 2050.**

As protectorates of the world's largest ocean and carbon sink with the establishment of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary in 2015, we urge for the **formal integration of the ocean into the UNFCCC process, through the Global Stock Take as a fundamental priority outcome of COP26.**

Prime Minister, the **Convention must establish equitable access to climate financing and viable technological transfer for BOTH mitigation and adaptation.** We, the islands that are devastated most,

demand that your commitments of \$100 billion annually be increased to meet the \$4 Trillion dollars the World Bank reports is needed, with substantial shares of climate financing to support costly adaptation needs.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Palau has a long and varied colonial past – our contacts with westerners began with our chief Ibedul discovering the Antelope commandeered by Captain Henry Wilson of England in 1783. We were then colonized by Spain, Germany, Japan, and last by the US. Finally, in 1994 we regained our independence and sovereignty over our lands and seas. However today, we are once again being invaded by the most powerful nations on earth by the results of their unbridled emissions, exploiting us for their benefit and our detriment. How long must we suffer under colonization?

The scorching sun is giving us intolerable heat. The warming sea is invading us. The strong winds are blowing us every which way. Our resources are disappearing before our eyes, our future is being robbed from us. Frankly speaking, there is no dignity to a slow and painful

death. You might as well bomb our islands instead of making us suffer only to witness our slow and fateful demise.

Leaders of the G20, we are drowning and our only hope is the life ring you are holding. You must act now! We **MUST** act together as we say in our Palauan Chant “*E ma demalaso iang, Al eru bekelled eng mekngit, ea de tal bekall e, eng ungil diak de kollii iang.*” It says when traveling in one canoe, discord among the sailors will capsize the boat. This chant reminds us that we need to deliver on our commitments and move in unison toward 1.5 to stay alive. We owe this to each other and we owe it to our children!

Thank you and Kom kmal mesulang.