



**PALAU**



*PALAU MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS*

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**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**THE HONORABLE ELIAS CAMSEK CHIN**

**VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF PALAU**

**TO THE 63RD REGULAR SESSION**

**OF THE**

**UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**25 September 2008**

**New York**

Mr. President,  
Mr. Secretary General,  
Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of President Tommy E. Remengesau Jr. and the people of Palau, I offer my congratulations, Mr. President, on your election. I assure you and all of the member states, that the United Nations will have my government's full cooperation and support in the coming year.

Mr. President,

Our existential challenge is climate change. As you stated at the opening of this session, we "cannot accept, under any circumstances, proposals for mandatory emissions targets that take for granted sacrificing the homelands of entire peoples." We must reach an agreement on a set of quantified emission reduction targets for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol.

These targets must reflect the urgency of the circumstances. The post 2012 regime must address mitigating the impacts of climate change on Small Island Developing States.

As you said, Mr. President, member states "must be guided by a single consideration: saving those small island states that today live in danger of disappearing entirely as nations." Never before in all history has the disappearance of whole nations been such a real possibility. As we noted in Niue, Palau and the members of the Pacific Islands Forum are deeply concerned about the growing threat which climate change poses not only to our sustainable development, but in fact, to our future survival. This is a security matter which has gone unaddressed.

It is for this reason that the Pacific Small Island Developing States submitted a draft resolution to the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the General Assembly requesting that the Security Council honor the UN Charter and actively continue its consideration of the security implications of climate change. We were gratified by the positive response from the international community and thank our many co-sponsors for their support. We will re-introduce our resolution in the 63<sup>rd</sup> Session and look forward to General Assembly action this fall.

In the meantime, we cannot wait. While Palau contributes little to greenhouse gas emissions, we are taking significant steps to reduce reliance on fossil fuel, despite the detrimental economic consequences. Energy efficiency and renewable energy projects have been increased. We thank our donor partners for their support. We appreciate the support of Italy and Austria in supporting Development Cooperation on Energy for Sustainable Development.

We also thank the European Union for their ongoing assistance in the area of Energy.

Mr. President,

We sincerely hope that Taiwan will be able to participate in the specialized agencies of the United Nations. The Republic of China's meaningful participation in these agencies, such as the World Health Organization and the International Civil Aviation Organization, would help promote peace and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, enhance important dialogue, and help all peoples.

Mr. President,

The oceans which surround Palau are the backbone of our nation's existence and are integral to our continued viability as an independent nation. In the 61<sup>st</sup> Session, we banded together to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems from deep sea bottom trawling, a destructive fishing practice responsible for 95% of the world wide damage to seamounts. We congratulate the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization for adopting interim measures which are a substantial step towards eliminating bottom trawling. We urge all other Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and flag states to follow this example and remind all that the deadline to take action, 31 December 2008, is fast approaching.

Mr. President,

Palau has been active on the issue of bottom trawling because of its effects on ocean ecosystems. The North Pacific is home to some of the world's best remaining fisheries. Their diversity is a key reason for the Micronesia Challenge, whereby the countries and territories of Micronesia joined together to conserve 30 percent of near-shore marine and 20 percent of land resources by 2020. This project is the first of its kind in the world. It covers 6.7 million square miles of ocean; helps protect 10 percent of the world's coral reefs, including more than 60 threatened species. We thank the General Assembly for its recognition of this program in the Oceans and Law of the Sea resolution of the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session and thank our development partners, including Turkey, the Global Environmental Fund, the Nature Conservancy and Conservation International for their support.

Mr. President,

Since Palau joined the United Nations in 1994, we have highlighted our concern that the United Nations has no presence in our country. We were pleased, therefore when UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF announced that eight new joint offices would open in Pacific Island countries, including Palau. We welcome this historic accomplishment, and await the opening ceremony.

Mr. President,

Palau is an active participant in the efforts of the international community to combat terrorism and has made every effort to improve its anti-terrorism capacity. We have met with the Counter Terrorism Executive Directorate to advance our requests for assistance, particularly in the area of combating money laundering and terrorism financing. Unfortunately, the efforts of the Directorate have been insufficient. Our experience has been that the capacity building efforts of the United Nations have focused on helping countries draft and adopt legislation. That is an excellent first step, but an insufficient one as the best-designed legislation is meaningless without enforcement. We hope that during the 63<sup>rd</sup> session of the General Assembly, the United Nations will take the next step and help smaller countries, which have the drive but not the means, to operationalize the laws and regulations these countries have in place to fight terrorism. We urge the establishment of a voluntary trust fund that would allow small states to develop effective counter-terrorism initiatives.

We thank the United States and Australia, for the counter terrorism assistance they have given us.

Mr. President,

Urgent attention should be paid to Security Council reform. Without it there can be no genuine UN reform. Japan has demonstrated its concern for, and commitment to, Palau and all its Pacific neighbors and should be a permanent member of the Council. Likewise, India, the world's largest democracy is a developing nation with a deep sense of involvement in Palau and the rest of the Pacific. We have supported, and continue to support, the principals of the G-4 resolution.

Mr. President,

We have worked hard to change the submission dates for the Extended Continental Shelf. The new submission regime will allow for developing countries to preserve our claims to the resources contained in our extended continental shelf. Though this extension of time for submission is welcome, it is only half the battle. We will still need the resources and the technical expertise necessary to make a full submission, and we request the assistance of the international community in helping us to achieve this goal.

Mr. President,

Palau was the last country to emerge from the UN Trusteeship System. The UN helped to return our sovereignty after four colonial administrations. We are thus particularly proud to advance the objectives of this unique institution and look forward to working together to achieve them during this General Assembly.

In closing, let me thank all of you in my country's native language: Kom Kmal Mesulang.