



PALAU



PALAU MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

BY

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VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF PALAU

TO THE 62nd REGULAR SESSION

OF THE

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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

On behalf of President Tommy E. Remengesau Jr., and the people of Palau, let me begin by offering my congratulations, Mr. President, on your election and by assuring you of our cooperation in the coming year. We express our appreciation to Asia Group and the General Assembly for the confidence it has demonstrated by electing Palau as a Vice-President. Palau is the smallest country in the history of the United Nations to have this honor and we take it very seriously.

Mr. President,

Palau congratulates the Secretary General for his leadership on stopping the genocide in Darfur. We were moved by the calls for immediate action we heard from President Bush and others here at the United Nations. In that respect, I wish to announce that Palau will send Peacekeepers to Darfur and will play our part in this critical demonstration of international concern.

Mr. President,

Despite our capacity issues, this will not be Palau's first peacekeeping deployment. But while we are a responsible and proud member of the United Nations, we note the continuing lack of permanent UN presence in Palau. Last June, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF announced that eight new joint offices would open in Pacific Island countries, including Palau. We welcomed this historic accomplishment, but are concerned that the offices have yet to open. Existing mechanisms appear to have blocked progress on the ground. But, we believe that the original goals and intentions of the project can be salvaged if there is the will to respond to the needs of small island

nations like Palau. We would welcome the intervention and assistance of our partners, as well as the recommitment of the Secretariat to our original shared goals.

Mr. President,

We note your call to ensure that the UN as an organization and we, as Member States, are properly prepared to confront terrorism. Palau has worked to improve its anti-terrorism capacity. We have also 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 hope is that during this 62nd session of the General Assembly, the United Nations will be able to help smaller countries in addressing this threat and meeting our Security Council obligations.

Mr. President,

The Pacific is home to some of the world's largest and most important biodiversity hotspots. Our ocean ecosystems provide the backbone for Palau's existence. We are committed to their preservation. Last year, our nations 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. As a result, the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization adopted interim measures which took a substantial step towards eliminating this unsustainable practice. We encourage all other RFMOs and flag states to follow this example and remind them of the deadlines to take action.

Mr. President,

Palau has been vocal in its crusade to end bottom trawling because of its effects on ocean ecosystems. The North Pacific is home to some of the world's best fisheries.

Their diversity is a key reason for the Micronesia Challenge, an initiative launched by President Remengesau, 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; will help protect 10 percent of the world's coral reefs, including more than 60 threatened species.

While eliminating bottom trawling and establishing protected areas are certainly important, these actions will be fruitless if rapid progress on climate change cannot be made at the international level. We are no longer in total control of our own destinies. When temperatures increase, our corals bleach, the seas rise, and the oceans acidify, threatening to demolish our marine biodiversity, jeopardizing our livelihood, and eventually destroying our identity.

In light of the high vulnerability of Small Island Developing States to the impacts of climate change, we stress the absolute need to reach an agreement on a set of quantified emission reduction targets for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. These emission reduction targets must be ambitious, must reflect the urgency of our collective circumstances, and must be consistent with a mitigation framework that protects the most vulnerable Parties to the Convention, both in the short and in the long term. The IPCC AR4 has indicated that to keep temperatures within the 2C to 2.4C range, it will be necessary to reduce Greenhouse Gases by 25 – 40% below 1990 levels by 2020. These are the kinds of levels that the new mitigation framework should try to achieve. It is imperative that the effectiveness of the post 2012 regime address mitigating the impacts of climate change on Small Island Developing States as the key benchmark of its adequacy and effectiveness.

Mr. President,

We note too the ongoing debate on General Assembly reform and join our voices to yours and others who note the need for concrete results on Security Council reform. Without Security Council reform, there can be no genuine UN reform. The early conclusion of the discussion is essential. Japan has demonstrated its concern for and commitment to Palau and all its Pacific neighbors. It 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 G-4 resolution and hope that the Assembly will address the resolution this year.

We also note our disappointment that Taiwan continues to be excluded from these halls. The world would benefit from Taiwan's membership in the United Nations and other international institutions. We were disappointed that the Secretary General failed to follow the Charter and the rules of the Security Council by refusing to transmit and circulate Taiwan's membership application to the Security Council and the General Assembly. Ultimately, legitimate democracies must be recognized and supported across the breadth of our planet no matter how large or small the country.

Mr. President, Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen: on behalf of Palau, a small and peaceful island nation in the wide Pacific Ocean, let me thank all of you in my country's native language: *Kom Kmal Mesulang*.
