Palau Statement on the Preamble and Declaration
By
H.E. Dr. Caleb Otto – Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Palau to the UN
July 27, 2015

Thank you, Mr. Co-Facilitator for give us the floor.

I would like to join the others in thanking you for the hard work you did over the weekend to get the revised draft ready for us last night. Congratulations.

We associate our statement with the statement by Tonga on behalf of the PSIDS and the statement by Maldives on behalf of AOSIS., and make this statement in our national capacity.

I realize that by taking the floor I take the risk of adding pressure to your mental health, but if I did not speak I would add pressure to my mental health and I am older and more fragile.

Thank you for listening to us and taking our suggestions and proposals for chance into consideration. We see that many of them were taken and integrated into the revised text so we thank you. We will heed your instructions and speak and be brief. We will speak only on one issue as to make our statement focused.

We are disappointed to see that the reference to 'human rights to water' has been take out and what is left only refers to "access to safe and affordable drinking water…." We are afraid that by removing water as matter of human rights would not allow us to achieve our goal for the the millions of very poor who need water and we may, in 2030, regret that we had not done the right thing. We will not go into the argument we made for 'human rights to water' such as the most basic needs of human beings and that political leaders had advocated for human rights to water (President of Italy at the 39th Conference of FAO, SG Ban Ki-Moon at the Conference for Water in Kazakhstan and Pope Francis in the Laudato Si). It's been said that , 'But for lack of a nail a war was lost… and a kingdom fell" Mark Twain put it more plainly when he said, "The difference between the right word and almost right word is the difference between lightning and lightning bug". So, as the distinguished Ambassador of the US said, we need to be "careful and specific about our language", we ask that you reconsider putting the 'human rights to water'., back. This is not a new language as it was in the Preamble of the first draft and para. 7 of the second draft.

Thank you for you kind attention.