



PALAU



PALAU MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

by

**H.E. Mr. Stuart Beck
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary/
Permanent Representative**

at

The Fourteenth Commission on Sustainable Development

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New York

(Please check against delivery)

Thank you Chairman:

Palau wishes to extend to you and the bureau its congratulations on your election. We look forward to your clear vision and guidance in the days to come as we embark on the serious issue of sustainable development and how this ideal can be achieved. We know that you have hard work in front of you and that you will not forget the special challenges which face Palau and other small island states in achieving sustainable development. And on that note, Palau would like to associate ourselves with the statement made by Ambassador Hunte of St. Lucia on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States.

Mr. Chairman:

The review of implementation in energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution, and climate change is tremendously important to Palau. And so we are prepared to work with the bureau and other delegations to ensure that this year's Commission on Sustainable Development is as productive as possible.

That said, Mr. Chairman, Palau cannot begin to discuss its specific obstacles, lessons-learned-and-best-practices, or future steps towards implementation for these important thematic clusters without first dealing with a fundamental cross-cutting constraint in our pursuit of sustainable development: the lack of UNDP presence on the ground in our nation.

Mr. Chairman:

The Preamble to the United Nations sets forth the ideals this institution is built upon. One of those ideals is to "employ international machinery for the economic and social advancement of all people." This is the true heart of what sustainable development is and should be ... this is the heart of what the United Nations Development Project was created to do. UNDP is the United Nations' global development network. UNDP was created to build local capacity to help people build a better life. For Palau this local capacity is what will make our development truly sustainable.

As we have mentioned before in other forums, no UN representative can be found in Palau to assist the country in moving forward. The UN flag simply does not fly there. Instead, Palau is subject to a complex arrangement where regional but remote centers make decisions that fail to address Palau's needs or improve its national capacity.

Palau recognizes that good intentions underlie the regionalized system currently linking geographically similar states with available international partnerships. But at the end of the day, this arrangement serves primarily to facilitate operations for donors and partners, while marginalizing the intended beneficiaries. Regionalism also disregards a truism ... not all nations in a region have the same needs. As a result, Palau faces serious obstacles accessing available international assistance and tackling its sustainable development issues.

Mr. Chairman,

We need look no further than the Global Environment Facility's success in the North-Pacific to see the tremendous difference individualized linkages to international assistance makes. The efforts Delphin Ganapin, the Global Manager of the GEF's Small grants Program, of Ambassador Capelle of the Marshall Islands, of Ambassador Nakayama of Micronesia, and of Palau to create on-island grant boards dealing directly with the GEF has resulted in a fast and effective mechanism breaking new ground in directing sustainable development projects in each country. Renewable energy, energy efficiency, climate change adaptation, and low GHG energy technology projects – to name a few – are now underway in the North Pacific. And these projects are more likely to work and work effectively because the people who designed the projects and are implementing the projects live in the communities the projects are serving.

Mr. Chairman

Palau is proud to be a responsible member of the international community. Palau is up to date on its Counterterrorism obligations. Despite its relative lack of resources, Palau has deployed the only all-female contingent of Peacekeepers and contributes officers to the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands. When natural disasters strike, despite its small size, Palau responds willingly, voluntarily making significant financial contributions to ease suffering caused by the Tsunami in Asia and by Hurricane Katrina. When the international community called upon countries to preserve biodiversity, Palau came forward with the Micronesian Challenge which will not just meet, but to exceed the 10% target set by the Convention on Biodiversity.

In his March 7th speech earlier this year, Secretary General Kofi Annan noted how the mandate of the United Nations is to provide people working on the ground to improve the lives of those who need help. The Secretary General noted how the UN staff on the ground is demoralized by the frustrations of dealing with a bureaucracy that can seem both elusive and remote. These same things can be said about the feelings we sometimes get in our small islands when attempting to access or understand the intricacies of United Nations programs ... which whether they are in Geneva, New York or a regional center, are still too far away. Combating these demons and making good on the aspirations set forth in the Charter preamble are but two of the reasons why assignment of a UNDP person on the ground, not only in Palau but in other small nations, is the surest way to help us achieve sustainable development.

What Palau is asking for, then, Mr. Chairman, is not simply a bigger basket of provisions to deal with energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution, and climate change. Rather Palau seeks a more basic and necessary first step -- the establishment of a UN presence on the ground to link itself more effectively and efficiently with international partners. Only by having its own UNDP office will Palau build sufficient national capacity to effectively implement strategies for truly sustainable development.