Agenda Item 2: Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: The effective delivery of sustainable, resilient, and innovative solutions in Asia and the Pacific
Tuesday, February 20, 2024, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm, UNCC, Bangkok, Thailand
Statement delivered by HE Ilana Seid, PR of Palau, to the UN

Deputy Secretary General, Executive Secretary, Excellencies, distinguished guests, and partners,

"Alii." I extend warm greetings from Palau and express gratitude to the Kingdom of Thailand and UNESCAP, alongside all organizing partners, for convening us today.

As we reflect on our theme, "Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Eradicating Poverty in Times of Multiple Crises," Palau reaffirms our commitment to fostering sustainable, resilient, and innovative solutions for the advancement of our people and making our contributions toward the betterment of our region and global community at large.

In our pursuit of SDG 1: NO POVERTY, Palau has made significant strides at policies aimed at safeguarding the rights of vulnerable groups. Through comprehensive policies addressing aging, youth, disabilities, and gender equality, we are laying the groundwork for a more equitable society. Our initiatives include a robust meal program for the elderly and a dynamic dashboard system in collaboration with the United Nations to enhance services and data collection for our youth. Furthermore, our recently implemented tax system is not merely a fiscal measure but a vehicle for providing vital support to low-income families, through tax refunds and child-raising subsidies. While challenges persist in accessing comprehensive data for poverty-related indicators, we are committed to solving these challenges, and are looking to track these indicators by 2025, following our VNR this year.

Under SDG 2: ZERO HUNGER, we encounter challenges such as high rates of overnutrition, particularly among children, necessitating health and food policy reforms alongside community engagement. Moreover, our heavy dependence on imported food poses significant health, economic, and security concerns, compelling us to prioritize achieving higher levels of food security by reducing imports from 80 to 60% by 2030. In line with this goal, we have embarked on a very ambitious initiative, "A Keled A Ngercheled" ("Our Food is Our Responsibility"), which champions local food production and the creation of high-value goods like taro flour. Moreover, our visionary Blue Pacific Prosperity Plan, unveiled alongside fellow Pacific SIDS and esteemed partners, charts a
bold path towards enhanced food security and conservation efforts, including a transformative blue food initiative aimed at cultivating seafood for domestic sustenance and global exportation.

Palau's vulnerability to climate change highlights the urgency of SDG 13: CLIMATE ACTION. We have made strides in renewable energy, reaching a 20% threshold last year and aiming for 45% by 2025 and 100% by 2032. While progress has been made, concerted efforts are needed to strengthen adaptation measures and fulfill UNFCCC commitments. We call for increased accessibility to climate financing tailored to the unique circumstances of SIDS to help us both reach our goals, and keep our north star of 1.5 degrees alive.

In advancing SDG 16: PEACE, JUSTICE, AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS, Palau celebrates commendable strides in information accessibility through our new Open Government App, as well as increased women’s representation in parliament. Yet, we acknowledge persistent challenges, including the need to address sexual assault, domestic violence, and human trafficking by strengthening our Family Protection Act as well as changing social norms through education and advocacy. Our recent membership with Interpol underscores our unwavering commitment to combating these transgressions and safeguarding human dignity.

Goal 17 underscores the importance of partnerships in sustainable development. Palau envisions thriving, sustainable communities and recognizes the crucial role of international and domestic partnerships. As Co-Chair for the SIDS Partnership Framework, we aim to enhance partnerships to accelerate progress for SIDS worldwide.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to the 2030 agenda, mindful of the challenging journey ahead. Through unwavering dedication and collaborative partnerships, we aim to create a future where sustainable development is not merely an aspiration but a tangible reality for all.

Khopkhun. Mesulang. Thank you.