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Excellencies, development partners, ladies and gentlemen.

Alii! I bring greetings from Palau.

We are a small island nation that lives with the impacts of climate change – our coastal communities are being inundated by sea-level-rise and we are losing our lands and our cultural treasures. Droughts and storms destroy our homes and livelihoods...

Our iconic jelly fish are disappearing, corals are bleaching and recent studies predict that 40% of our fish-stocks may disappear by 2050 due to the warming seas.

We commend the historic decisions taken by the global community at COP27 to address loss and damage and look forward to building on this momentum at COP28. We continue to suffer from the inaccessibility of financing either because of the red tape or in some cases we are considered high income. It's time that we implement a Multi Vulnerability Index. We urge the international community to catalyze climate financing and investment toward addressing our special circumstances and call for concrete investments and practical requirements to ensure efficient access to a loss and damage facility.

As ESCAP and part of the global community we must take action, we are far from achieving our goals of net-zero emissions and limiting warming to +1.5 degrees Celsius.

The fact is the Blue Pacific Continent is responsible for only 0.03% of the global greenhouse gas emissions. Yet, we face the most severe impacts of climate change. As combined members of ESCAP we are responsible for over 50% of Global emissions and growing. We cannot emphasize enough the need for parallel efforts at regional and global levels.

At a local level, we have partnered with the United States, Taiwan, Japan, Australia, Saudi Arabia, and many others, to support infrastructure development of renewable energy, relocation of homes, schools, hospitals, and building seawalls and shelters, all aimed at enhancing our climate resilience.

Palau has been held hostage by fossil fuels for too long. This past year the rising cost of fuel pushed more of our citizens into poverty. On June 2nd our renewable energy production we increase from 3% to 23% however we still have a long way to go to get to 100% by 2032. We continue to seek partnership to help us achieve this goal. Lower energy cost and reduced carbon emission resulting in A WIN for our People, A WIN for our Planet.

To adapt and protect the most vulnerable we are working with women to relocate our taro crops from low lying areas affected by sea level rise to dry land that will contribute to enhancing our food resilience.

Palau is committed 100% Ocean Management that supports a Blue Economy for the Blue Pacific Countries. We encourage all coastal and ocean states to follow in this commitment so that by 2030, all ocean areas under national jurisdiction are 100% sustainably managed with a minimum of 30% protected. Our aim is to balance protection with production, ensuring long-term durable benefits for our people and our ocean.

We are actively doing our part in reducing our carbon emissions at home and protecting our oceans, our largest carbon sink. We have made important policy decisions to establish protections of our oceans, banning deep sea mining, banning bottom trawling, and protecting whales, sharks, dugongs, turtles and rays. However, this cannot be done in silos. We must work together.

Let's not let greed lead. We are tempted to deep sea mine without proper studies when we know that scrapping the bottom of the ocean releases carbon and we are unaware of the long-term effects on ocean health. We must put a moratorium on deep sea mining!

Let me share a Legend about the Ebud brothers - one obedient and the other disobedient. As fishermen, their father always instructed them to take many baskets with them in the canoe when going fishing. This was because battles between villages were common, and they needed to be prepared in case a war canoe approached. The father warned them that if a war canoe did approach, they should scatter baskets across the sea, dive into the water, and hide under one of the baskets to avoid being killed. One day, while fishing, they saw a war canoe on the horizon. The obedient brother, threw the baskets overboard and dove into the water and hid under one of the them. However, the disobedient brother thought he could outrun the canoe and unfortunately met his demise. Today, we are faced with our own greatest battle - climate change. While some of us recognize the reality of this threat, others still believe we can outrun it. But if we ignore the warnings and fail to take action, we will all be doomed in the end.

Our survival is no longer up for debate. Let us work together in an equitable, ambitious, decisive and inclusive manner. WE cannot be divided; we need to all be like the obedient son. We must heed the warnings; WE must be prepared and We must take collective action. We are here today thanks to our collective global efforts against COVID-19, and We MUST use the same collective efforts to tackle climate change. WE MUST work together and take BOLD steps toward a low carbon, climate-resilient future that leaves no man, no woman, no nation behind.

Kom kmal mesulang. Kob-khun krup. Thank you.