

Palau Statement

For the

2nd Meeting of the State Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions

September 12 – 16, 2011

Beirut, Lebanon

By: Ms. Eunice Akiwo

Alii e ungil lita sils,

H.E. Dr. Adnan Mansour,

Excellencies,

Representative of State Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions,

Heads of associated UN Organizations, Bodies and Programs,

Survivors of Cluster and Mine bombs,

Representative of international NGOs, Activists and Personalities,

Representative of Media Organizations and Journalists,

Honorable audience:

Palau wishes to congratulate the People's Democratic Republic of Loa for executing a successful first year of the Convention on Cluster Munitions; and for the Republic of Lebanon for a productive beginning of the 2nd Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Palau continues to express and convey its utmost appreciation for Canada, Germany, New Zealand, United Kingdom and United States of America for their continued support toward Palau's Mine Action Clearance; it's a task Palau can't handle alone. The support has helped Palau to begin to understand the degree of its infestation and for establishing a mechanism to train and enhance local capacity to tackle this ongoing issue. The clearance mechanism is a team of twelve (12) Palauans trained by the Cleared Ground Demining, a British nonprofit demining organization. This local team's work with the Clear Ground Demining has increase the level of humanitarian services and slowly decreasing the negative environmental impact of these remnants of World War II that are leaking into Palau's agricultural lands, watershed and marine habitats, which are the very foundation of Palau's sustainable living and economy.

Additionally, Palau wishes to convey its gratitude to Ms. Sara Sekkenes and the UNDP team for successful execution of programs and the tremendous amount of support given for Small Island States. The support Ms. Sakkenes and her team provides gives Palau a voice and mean to express our needs and meet our obligations to the Convention. Excellency, because of these collective support from the Convention, State Parties, donors and UNDP, Palau's Mine Action Clearance is slowly but progressing forward.

At this time, I would like to share with the Convention the progress of work Palau undertook for the past year. Palau has established an active Working Group compose of the sectors affect by the unexploded ordnance such as the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Natural Resource, Environment & Tourism, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, Ministry of State and the Cleared Ground Demining. With the assistance of the Cleared Ground Demining, Palau's Working Group convenes on a regular basis tasked to address Palau's clearance needs and strategies into a National UXO Strategy of Actions. This includes Palau's working progress towards ratification of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and long term clearance goals for Palau, because with the limited amount of resources and the level of infestation on land and in ocean, Palau's clearance is foreseen to take well over five to six years.

From 2009 to date, Palau's clearance team has collected and removed 9,180 explosive remnants that weigh 11.5tonnes from World War II, which includes three (3) live Cluster Munitions and clear signs of additional Cluster Munitions. The Ministry of Health has developed an accident database system; fortunately Palau hasn't had any victim. The Working Group has initiated an ongoing sustainable local capacity building program to address risk

awareness and a non technical survey team to prioritize high impact areas in Peleliu, Angaur and Koror States.

In addition to clearance, the Working Group is also addressing Palau's needs and obligations to universalize both the Convention on Cluster Munitions and Convention on Anti-Personnel Land Mine within the Pacific Region. With these goals and obligations, Palau has continuously work with the Pacific Island Forum to address the infestation of unexploded remnants of war and its negative impact to our natural environment, which is the foundation source of food, water and sustainable economy for Palau and the rest of the Pacific Island Nations.

The continuous work to universalize the Conventions in the Pacific has garnered positive results. For the past year, Palau has worked with the Pacific Island Forum to make certain that the succession of meetings leading to the 2011 Pacific Leaders Meeting addresses unexploded ordnance, its effect to the natural environment and the Conventions. The 2011 Pacific Island Forum Leaders Meeting recently took place early this September in Auckland, New Zealand and one of the Pacific Leaders discussion and agenda item was Unexploded Ordnance from World War II. The yearlong work included many gathering and exchange of information and several scoping mission to the effected States in the Pacific.

Excellency,

With this said, Palau wishes to resubmit its 2010 CCM Annual Reporting, as we had technical difficulty with electronic submission of the Report. In addition to our Annual Report, Palau wishes to share with the Convention and donors two (2) additional reports published by the Pacific Island Forum as results of the 2011 Pacific UXO Scoping Mission your information and appropriate actions.

Again, Palau congratulates His Excellency and Ms. Sakkenes for a productive and successful
Second Meeting of the State Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

His Excellency, again thank you and Palau returns the floor to you.