



Summit of the Future
Statement delivered by President Surangel S. Whipps, Jr.
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[Check Against Delivery]

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Alii from Palau.

Our tradition of *bul*, a sustainable resource management practice rooted in conservation and social order, has guided us toward sustainability for centuries, protecting our natural resources for future generations.

As the least contributors to climate change, we face its harshest effects. Rising sea levels and extreme weather threaten our hospitals, schools, and food security, putting our children's future at risk.

Our tradition of stewardship through *bul* contrasts sharply with the global crisis we now confront, one we had little hand in creating.

Fossil fuel addiction has worsened inequality and poverty. By returning to our traditions of the *bul* (sustainable resource management) coupled with science and technology, we can lift people out of poverty, restore balance to our ecosystems, and effectively combat climate change.

We appreciate international funding for climate resilience. However, burdensome requirements make it inaccessible. Financing tailored to *special circumstances of SIDS* is critical for effective climate action.

The SDGs represent our vision for a world free from poverty and conflict. However, global progress is falling short, with only 15% of targets on track and 37% regressing.

This reality is particularly challenging for small islands with limited resources. World leaders need to take decisive action, and corporate leaders need to integrate sustainability into their business practices.

Despite our challenges, we have made significant strides in accelerating sustainable development. Education has always been a top priority, and we have successfully improved

access to education and vocational training by implementing online learning options for students in rural areas and expanding vocational programs.

To address food security and combat NCDs, we launched the *Keled a Ngercheled* (Our Food is Our Responsibility) initiative, which aims to boost domestic food production and reduce food imports from 80 to 60 percent by 2030. Additionally, we are building a national fishing port to support our domestic fisheries, maximize the value of our tuna fisheries, and foster a thriving, sustainable blue economy.

Building on our Protected Areas Network and the Palau National Marine Sanctuary, we are implementing a multisectoral Marine Spatial Planning approach to achieve 100% effective ocean management, prioritizing conservation, domestic fishing zones, and tourism sites based on science, data, and traditional knowledge.

Aligning with the global goal of 30 by 30, we are collaborating with other Pacific Islands and partners to discuss regional ocean protection and production measures. Recognizing the power of collective action, the Unlocking Blue Pacific Prosperity was launched at COP 28, which aims to create a regional movement that promotes 100% effective ocean management, resilient food systems, and sustainable financing for development. Investments are underway, but we call for even greater investments to ensure its full potential is realized.

As a Big Ocean State, we are deeply connected to the ocean. A healthy ocean means a healthy planet. And now more than ever, we must resist the temptation to rush into deep seabed mining, which threatens irreparable harm to our ocean. The technologies heralded as part of the green transition must not turn our largest carbon sink—the ocean—into a casualty of shortsighted greed. If we can send people to space, surely we can innovate to meet our energy needs without exploiting the seabed or engaging in other destructive practices.

We acknowledge Taiwan's valuable contributions to global sustainable development and technical cooperation. The irony of this year's UN General Assembly theme, "Leaving no one behind," is starkly evident in Taiwan's continued exclusion from the United Nations and its specialized agencies due to a misinterpretation of UNGA resolution 2758. Taiwan's leadership in technology, particularly semiconductors, is undeniable. As technology plays a crucial role in our pursuit of a sustainable future, it is essential that Taiwan's expertise is not overlooked.

In Palau, we have a saying, *Teluo chural*—"one tongue"—symbolizing honesty, integrity, and the unwavering commitment to one's word. It represents those who remain true to their words, unlike the *teluidel a chural*—a "split tongue," like a snake—who says one thing and does another. In these critical times, we must speak with one voice and act in unison.

Thank you. Kom kmal mesulang.