

**STATEMENT BY PALAU AT THE PLENARY OF THE TENTH SESSION OF THE
CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION
AGAINST CORRUPTION**

11 – 15 December 2023
Atlanta, Georgia United States

**Delivered by: Ms. Ernestine K. Rengiil, Attorney-General,
Focal Point UNCAC
Republic of Palau**

Thank you, Mr. President, for giving Palau the opportunity to speak and update the 10th Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC).

Palau thanks the Government of the United States for hosting this 10th Session. I would also like to thank the hard-working Secretariat for the excellent documentation in preparation for this Conference.

I would like to confirm that Palau has benefited immensely from the second cycle of the review of Chapters II and V of UNCAC.

In July 2022, we made public the complete Country Review Report of Palau for this second cycle, which was assisted by the UNODC Secretariat and the reviewing countries, Tuvalu and Cyprus. We also undertook extensive post-Review consultations focused on next step implementation with government stakeholders, civil society, the private sector, and media representatives.

As identified in the Review, Palau is consulting on establishing a National Anti-Corruption Strategy so as we can bring together all our initiatives on corruption prevention and assess challenges.

Through Palau's membership of the Pacific Islands Forum, we are actively supporting development and implementation of the Pacific's regional anti-corruption framework, the Teieniwa Vision, adopted by Palau's President and other Pacific leaders in 2021. We will participate in establishing the implementation taskforce by UNODC and PIF. Palau already takes part in initiatives and is a member of other organizations that assist in corruption

prevention, including the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering, the Pacific Islands Law Officers' Network, the Association of Pacific Island Financial Intelligence Units, the Pacific Community, the Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions, and the Pacific Transnational Crime Network.

Successes and good practices identified in the Review are as follows:

- First, a regular rotation policy in the Division of Customs (art. 7, para. 1).
- Second, Title 33, section 613, of the Palau National Code, on public records; every report and statement filed is a public record open for inspection (art. 7, para. 3).
- Third, an incentive awards programme for public officials (art. 8, para. 1).
- And finally, corruption can be reported in numerous ways and to different government departments. The Office of the Special Prosecutor was commended for developing a user-friendly, confidential process that allows anonymous reporting online.

Challenges in implementation identified the need to consider establishing a National Anti-Corruption Strategy; re-establishing the Office of the Ombudsman; review and strengthen the Code of Conduct to further the correct, honorable, and proper performance of public functions, taking into account international standards and initiatives; revise the procurement legislation to (1) address price-fixing and strengthen the competitive process, including at the State level; and (2) strengthen the legal recourse and remedies for addressing disputes over adherence to applicable rules and procedures; and consider taking measures to enhance transparency in its public administration by strengthening the Open Government Act and publishing information, which may include periodic reports on the risk of corruption in its public administration.

To properly address key findings of Palau's Implementation of UNCAC Chapters II. Preventive measures and V. Asset recovery, in 2022 and again in May 2023, the Office of the Attorney General and UNODC consulted integrity stakeholders in Palau to initiate the processes, research and consultations to discuss establishing the country's first National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS).

As part of a National Integrity Dialogue, the 2023 event gathered 19 stakeholders from Government, integrity agencies, enforcement officials, private sector, CSOs, and media focused on new pathways to promote integrity good practices through implementation of UNCAC, drafting the Teieniwa Vision Needs Analysis for Palau Focal Point, engagement with other Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and ensuring a strong Pacific presence at CoSP10.

Participants also completed an Integrity Needs Assessment Survey to assist the Attorney-General, in my role as UNCAC Focal Person identify integrity training needs to be assisted by the UNODC/Pacific Islands Forum Teieniwa Vision Project, which is supported by the New Zealand Government.

Delegates, I would like to reiterate that Palau will continue to work together with the rest of the State Parties to UNCAC in our fight against corruption. In that regard, Palau is looking forward for the next cycle of review and regional implementation through Teieniwa Vision.

Thank you.