

Statement by His Excellency Surangel S. Whipps, Jr.
President of the Republic of Palau
World Leaders Summit, COP27
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President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Alii and greetings from the Republic of Palau.

Mr. President, thank you for hosting this summit. Palau hopes that coming together in this 27th Conference of Parties we commit to true change.

We have a saying in Palau — **ou kelulau ra metemellang** — which refers to spending too much time talking about an impending disaster and only acting when it's too late.

From extreme droughts in parts of the U.S., Europe, and China, and the floods in Pakistan and Australia — to the destructive storms in the Philippines and Florida ... lives have been lost and homes destroyed.

There's no doubt we're facing catastrophic impacts of climate change.

When we last met, I said based on Palau's experiences you might as well bomb us. That might have been an easier fate.

In Palau, we are being drawn and quartered. COVID decimated our economy... Even as we're working to rebuild, the climate crisis is tearing us apart, limb by limb.

Extreme storms and floods continue to destroy crops, homes, and infrastructure. Just last Monday we were hit with a storm ripping off roofs and damaging infrastructure.

Sea levels are rising, eating away at our coastlines and inundating our taro patches and farms — impacting food security.

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Droughts have caused water shortages.

The extreme heat this summer killed over 30 million beautiful, non-stinging jellyfish in our world renowned Jellyfish Lake. This is the 3rd known event. It also occurred in 1997 and 2017. Each time they disappeared for 2 years. As one of our star attractions, we are at risk of losing a critical component of our tourism industry, further decimating our economy.

This reality underscores our urgent call today, for all States to do what's needed to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees. We should no longer be held hostage to fossil fuels. Let's not let the war in Ukraine serve as an excuse for us to backslide on our commitment to transitioning to renewable energy.

Today, we're calling for:

- Those who are the largest emitters of pollution to take responsibility for the damage they cause;
- Loss and Damage to be fully operationalized; and
- Easier and faster access to climate financing for adaptation and mitigation in the form of grants and not loans.

We urge developed nations to deliver on the \$100 billion climate finance commitment, and to at least double their collective provision to climate finance for adaptation by 2025.

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There's a Palauan legend — which for me offers a sense of hope. It's about two men who lived in adjoining caves in the village of Oikull, in Airai. Beriber was good at making coconut syrup and Chemaredong at catching fish. Because they thought they were alone, they threw away their surplus. When they realized they weren't alone, they shared their excess and lived abundant lives.

With everyone working together we can address climate change.

This must include the 23 million Taiwanese excluded from participating in UN conventions. Taiwan, like all of us, has contributed to the problem. However, they are committed to also being part of the solution. They actively support other countries' climate aspirations while moving toward net-zero emissions by 2050.

We share one ocean and one atmosphere. We must all share the responsibility to find innovative solutions and commit to change our behaviors.

I am not giving up. I know keeping below 1.5 seems unachievable, however, together nothing is impossible.

This week, here at COP27, let us act to save the world and provide hope to our children and theirs.

Mesulang. Thank you.