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Republic of Palau
THURSDAY; 6 December 2012
12 MSP for the Anti-Personnel Land Mine Convention

AGENDA ITEM 10D: UNIVERSALIZATION

Mr. President Ladies and Gentleman,

As this is first for Palau to address the Convention, Palau wishes to congratulate Cambodia for a successful 11th MSP. Palau also congratulates Slovenia for the Presidency of the 12th MSP.

In the context of both Palau's commitment to be a leader on universalization and its desire to promote implementation of the Convention in the Pacific, Palau was honoured to host the Regional Meeting on the Implementation of the Pacific Islands Forum Regional UXO Strategy.

This meeting took place in Koror on 25th and 26th October 2012 and was preceded by a field visit, on 24th October, to Peleliu Island.

The meeting was supported by the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), with financial support provided by Australia and New Zealand and technical support by the Cleared Ground Demining.

The meeting was attended by 11 of the 16 Member States of the Pacific Islands Forum, including the three Member States which are not yet party to the Convention, namely, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Kingdom of Tonga.

We were grateful as well to have had the participation from Canada, the ICBL, the ICRC, the GICHD, the UNODA and leading demining organizations, including Cleared Ground Demining, Golden West and Norwegian People's Aid.

Universalization was a central feature of this meeting, both directly and indirectly.

Directly, we benefited from detailed presentations on the Convention by the ISU and by the Convention's Special Envoy, His Royal Highness Prince Mired Raad Al Hussein.

Indirectly, we highlighted throughout the meeting how engagement in the work of this Convention on anti-personnel mines has drawn great attention to the problems caused by the related issue of UXO in the Pacific.

We considered the meeting to have been a great success for many reasons. In addition to having promoted good practice in mine action in the region, we warmly expressed to our sisters and brothers from Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshal Island and the Kingdom of Tonga that this movement would welcome a decision by each to accede to the Convention.

We are pleased that the Kingdom of Tonga has accepted the invitation to participate in this meeting and we hope that this is a sign that it may soon join the Convention.

Palau is committed to continue its efforts to promote the universal acceptance of the Convention. We are convinced that every State Party, no matter how big or how small, has a role to play when it comes to universalization.

Thank you Mr. President