

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of Palau, a Small Island Developing State nestled amidst the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean, I would like to underscore the importance of inclusive and sustainable industrial development, particularly in the context of our nation's unique biodiversity and resource limitations.

Palau is home to an extraordinary array of ecosystems. We are small, yet we boast of rich marine life, lush forests, and diverse terrestrial habitats. This biodiversity is not merely a source of natural beauty. It is the foundation of our culture and traditions and therefore our way of life, as well as the basis for our economy. As a Small Island Developing State, our resources are finite, and we must ensure that our manufacturing practices are in harmony with our environment.

In Palau, industrialization, like in other nations, has not followed the path of large-scale, resource-intensive factories. Instead, we have embraced a model of home-grown manufacturing, one that is rooted in our traditional knowledge and skills and that respects the delicate balance of our ecosystem.

This approach has allowed us to develop small-scale industries that are both economically viable and environmentally sustainable. We produce handcrafted products from local materials, such as coconut oil, shells, and wood. We also cultivate organic produce, in fisheries processing, and raise livestock using traditional methods.

The Palauan home-grown manufacturing approach has several advantages. It creates employment opportunities for local communities, promotes the preservation of our cultural heritage, and minimizes our environmental impact. However, it also presents challenges, particularly in terms of scaling up production and meeting national market demands.

This is where UNIDO's expertise can come into play. UNIDO can provide us with the technical assistance and support we need to enhance our home-grown manufacturing capabilities in the areas of fisheries, aquaculture, renewable energy, transportation systems and economic digitalization while ensuring that our practices remain sustainable. With UNIDO's help, we can expand our production, improve product quality, and access new markets, all while safeguarding our precious biodiversity.

Excellencies, as we move forward, Palau remains committed to pursuing inclusive and sustainable industrial development. We believe that this approach is essential for our economic prosperity, our environmental sustainability, and our cultural preservation.

We stand ready to collaborate with UNIDO and other partners to share our experiences and lessons learned. We are a committed Small Island Developing State seeking to balance economic growth with environmental protection.

Kom Kmal Mesulang, Thank you for your attention.