

Civil Society Organizations' Collective Statement on Palau's 2nd Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report

This statement was developed collaboratively by representatives of the civil society of Palau who unfortunately are not able to attend in person due to resource limitations. I am delivering their statement in their behalf as part of the VNR Task Group of the MGOS.

We commend the collaborative spirit in which Palau's 2nd VNR report was prepared and thank the Government of Palau for including civil society and a youth delegate in the delegation, setting a commendable example.

The partnership between Palau's civil society and Government, recognized at the HLPF, has laid a strong foundation. And This year's HLPF presents an opportunity to showcase how this partnership has improved lives while drawing strength from our cultural identity.

Effective partnerships are essential for achieving the SDGs. The inclusive nature of the VNR report and its alignment with SDG 17 highlight the importance of these collaborations, demonstrating that sustainable development is a collective effort rooted in our values.

Amid the global COVID pandemic, Palau's resilient spirit strengthened. Our innovative private sector has become powerful advocates for local entrepreneurs, startups, and MSMEs. They have addressed the pandemic's socioeconomic impacts, actively supporting our most vulnerable groups, including women, young entrepreneurs, and persons with disabilities. What are the plans of the government to strengthen partnership with social enterprises as contributors to the achievement of the SDGs?

As Palau presents its 2nd VNR, it reaffirms its commitment to an inclusive future for all Palauans, where every voice is heard, and our cultural heritage guides our path to sustainability. Moving forward, we must build on this foundation with principles of equity, inclusion, and resilience. Strengthening partnerships will ensure our sustainable development efforts are comprehensive and impactful. On this, what are the plans of the government to ensure that vulnerable groups are involved in development planning and implementation and their specific needs and priorities integrated in the development priorities of the government?

It's imperative to engage non-stakeholders, including civil society, in all stages of the VNR process. Meaningful engagement of stakeholders is crucial. Please highlight how

non-stakeholders have been actively engaged, ensuring their voices and contributions are reflected in the report. Were the contributions and considerations of vulnerable groups and diverse cultural voices valued and included?