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**Topic One: The Impact of Climate Change On Human Health**

**Section I: History of the Topic in Palau**

The nation of Palau has experienced the detrimental effects of climate change on human health in their recent history. While the Palau is not in the typhoon belt[[1]](#footnote-0), the effects of El Nino and La Nina storms are still felt. The 1997/98 El Nino storm was extremely impactful, not only did Palau suffer a nine-month drought but, “one third of Palau’s population was also affected by the 100 percent loss of their taro crops due to saltwater intrusion and sea level rise.”[[2]](#footnote-1) The loss of the taro crop is hurtful because “cultivation of taro is critical to Palau's socio-economic development and cultural as well as religious obligations”[[3]](#footnote-2) Other issues of food insecurity that stem from climate change include loss of marine based foods such as fish and clams due to rise in temperature. In the 1997/98 El Nino event the temperature of the ocean rose by 1 degrees Celsius[[4]](#footnote-3), leading to coral bleaching and destruction of the marine ecosystem in the ocean waters surrounding Palau. Increasing sea temperature and sea level rise will also result in “lagoon flushing, coastal erosion, and possibly ocean acidity and coral bleaching,” as well as “increased incidence of coral bleaching and ciguatera fish poisoning.”[[5]](#footnote-4) Food insecurity is not the only concern, as drought also impacts the availability of fresh water supplies for drinking and sewage. Palau’s sewage system is outdated and in a state of disrepair, as of 2001 “less than 1% of Palau’s sewage is treated...which creates two significant hazards; 1) potentially serious health risks may arise from the human consumption of contaminated marine species; and 2) the marine organisms may become sick and die.”[[6]](#footnote-5) In 2014, Palau received a $28.8 million loan from the Asian Development Bank to improve water and sanitation in Koror State and Airai State.[[7]](#footnote-6) However, in a drought in July of 2016 there was “raw sewage flowing out of the system after it broke down at a number of locations.”[[8]](#footnote-7) Finally, public health concerns over disease occur because “Climate change induced phenomena are seen as a contributing factor to the noted rise in vector borne diseases within the Republic.”[[9]](#footnote-8)

**Section Two:Solutions for the Republic of Palau**

In order to mitigate climate change, the Republic of Palau has pledged to “half Palau's emission by half in 2025.”[[10]](#footnote-9) Also, the Republic of Palau has “declared 80 per cent of its Exclusive Economic Zone a no-take zone, meaning no commercial fishing will be allowed in 500, 000 square kilometres of ocean.”[[11]](#footnote-10) The significance of this policy is that it will allow the biodiverse marine life of Palau to repopulate. Marine biodiversity is essential for Palau’s ecological and economical strength because of the nation’s economic dependence on tourism. Palau has also implemented several policies to adapt to the effects of climate change on human health. Due to the history of drought in Palau with El Nino storm events, “Palau is in the process of developing a drought management infrastructure to effectively manage Palau’s water resources during prolonged dry conditions.”[[12]](#footnote-11) The Republic of Palau recognizes the necessity of access to fresh water during drought conditions, as well as the need for reserve food supplies. In order to adapt to the effects of salinization of taro crops, a direct result of sea level rise, the Republic of Palau has “identified crop species that are resistant to drought conditions.”[[13]](#footnote-12) Also, the Palau Community College-Cooperative Research and Extension has developed a technique that “is capable of taking one root or plant and, through graphing techniques, produce more than a dozen baby plant specimens.”[[14]](#footnote-13) An additional problem facing the taro farmers of Palau is that they cannot move upland to avoid sea level rise because that would be an unsustainable, short-term solution. Therefore, the Republic of Palau believes it necessary to research and implement ways to protect taro crops and use varieties that are more tolerant of saltwater. To repair the sewage system, Palau is implementing a ponding system in Koror State, which holds the majority of the population, that will “use fresh water to naturally filter waste prior to its final release into the ocean.”[[15]](#footnote-14) However, the ponding system requires freshwater, and therefore the Republic of Palau will require additional resources to manage freshwater in times of drought. Continued investment from the “strong partnership we have enjoyed with the United States, Japan, Australia, the EU, Italy, India and Taiwan”[[16]](#footnote-15) would be necessary. Finally, to raise awareness about water-related public health concerns “Environmental Quality Protection Board and the Ministry of Health are conducting aggressive public awareness campaigns that focus on freshwater sanitation concerns and potential diseases that may arise due to unsafe water supplies.”[[17]](#footnote-16)

**Section Three: Solutions for Other Nations**

The Republic of Palau believes that solutions that are being implemented domestically are applicable to other nations. Most relevant are other Small Island Developing States (SIDS) because they are affected by similar issues. The nation of Palau also urges every nation to reduce emissions, and to ratify COP21, as well as to continue to create their own ambitious goals to mitigate climate change by reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions. The nation of Palau has urged others to act, “President Remengesau urged world leaders to take dramatic action to fight climate change and the global rise in sea levels.”[[18]](#footnote-17) The nation of Palau also urges other SIDS to implement policies of freshwater management, crop protection, public health awareness, and research and development of sustainable, saltwater resistant, crops.

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**Topic Two:Climate Refugees**

**Section One:History of the Topic in Palau**

The effects of climate change have been felt increasingly in recent years in the nation of Palau. In Palau, the El Nino weather event results in drought conditions, falling sea level, and cooling ocean temperature.[[19]](#footnote-18) El Nino events have been getting worse in recent years, exemplified by this year’s El Nino. This year El Nino resulted in “the last four months of rainfall was the lowest since 1951. One of two of the islands’ fresh water reservoirs is bone dry. The [Palau government has stated](http://palaugov.pw/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/EO-389-Declare-State-of-Emergency-Drought.pdf) that it soon may be unable to fill firetrucks and the electrical grid could shut down if there is insufficient water to cool the generators. The functioning of the hospital, schools and prison are all at serious risk due to the shortage of potable water.”[[20]](#footnote-19) Weather events will continue to worsen if climate change is not mitigated. The nation of Palau recognizes that the future natural disasters it could face could require citizens to move to other nations. The dangers of climate related weather events are ominous, ““For the first time in history, you could actually lose countries off the face of the globe,” said Stuart Beck, the permanent representative for Palau at the United Nations. “It is a security threat to them and their populations, which will have to be relocated, which is the security threat to the places where they go, among other consequences.””[[21]](#footnote-20)

**Section Two:Solutions for the Republic of Palau**

The Republic of Palau, like many other island nations, believes that relocation should be the last resort. This is because our nation has a unique culture that we wish to preserve. This could not be done if the population of Palau was relocated to other nations.[[22]](#footnote-21) To ensure that the culture of Palau is preserved, the Republic of Palau believes that measures must be taken at once to reduce emissions and to adapt to the weather events that are a result of climate change. In 2011, Palau outlined measures to adapt to weather events through the Hyogo Framework for Action including goals such as “The National Disaster Risk Management Framework is being effectively implemented through the development of supporting legislation, improved coordination and the integration of disaster risk reduction into sectoral, agency and state master plans.”[[23]](#footnote-22) As of March 2016, the nation of Palau has outlined a comprehensive adaptation strategy to help fight the effects of severe weather.[[24]](#footnote-23) To help prevent climate change the nation of Palau has, in its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution, declared that it will reduce energy sector emissions by 22% below 2005 levels, have 45% renewable energy, and increase energy efficiency to 35% by 2025.[[25]](#footnote-24)

**Section Three: Solutions for Other Nations**

The nation of Palau recognizes the threat that weather events can bring, particularly to developing coastal nations. Palau also recognizes that every nation has a unique culture, and that this culture could be threatened by assimilation into another nation. It is for that reason that the Republic of Palau urges nations to mitigate climate change by reducing emissions. The nation of Palau also encourages those nations facing the largest danger to implement an adaptation plan that protects critical infrastructure and the health and safety of its citizens.

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**Topic 3: Steps to Enforce the Paris Agreement and Further Reduce Green House Gas Emissions**

**Section One: History of the Topic in Palau**

In 2014 the nation of Palau signed the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol, which signaled its commitment to the second period, January 1,2013-December 31, 2020, of the Kyoto Protocol.[[26]](#footnote-25) The Kyoto Protocol “obliges developed nations to reduce their collective greenhouse gas emissions by 5.2% (compared to 1990 levels) by the end of the first commitment period (2008–12).” The Doha Amendment “establishes a second commitment period (2013–20), adds nitrogen trifluoride to the list of greenhouse gases covered, and facilitates the unilateral strengthening of commitments by individual parties.”[[27]](#footnote-26) Palau was successful with the Millennium Development Goals, as of 2013 “The Republic of Palau has met or nearly accomplished most of the 2015 Millennium Development Goals.”[[28]](#footnote-27) To address Goal 14 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which has the goal of reducing ocean pollution and preserving ocean ecosystems, Palau has created a National Marine Sanctuary, an area that is 80% of Palau’s EEZ. This Marine Sanctuary will be a “no-take zone,” which will allow the ocean ecosystem of Palau to replenish itself. This will increase tourism, revenue which can be used to further other Sustainable Development Goals and allow Palau to be more prepared for natural disasters.[[29]](#footnote-28)Palau recognizes the need to reduce emissions, and in COP21 declared, in its INDC, that it plans to cut emission by half in 2025[[30]](#footnote-29). The nation of Palau has had a history of commitment to fighting climate change, and will continue to do so in COP22.

**Section Two:COP22**

For COP22, the nation of Palau will continue to advocate for reducing emissions, marine sanctuaries,and transparency. In COP21 President Tommy Remengesau Junior said “We need a Paris agreement that is strong, has long term goals, robust, transparent and contains a permanent loss and damage mechanism...We need to scale up our efforts to pre-2020 climate action. We need bold climate action now. As a member of AOSIS, the Alliance of Small Island States, we continue to emphasise the need for a more ambitious, pre-2020 action to give the world the best chance to avoid dangerous warming.”[[31]](#footnote-30) The nation of Palau continues to stand by this statement and believes that “bold action” is necessary for COP22. This means reducing emissions by larger amounts, transparency and accountability, continued and expanded financial assistance for developing states, and the expansion of marine sanctuaries to aid the repopulation of marine ecosystems. Financial aid to developing states could be similar to that which Palau receives from the Global Environmental Fund (GEF), “Chairperson and chief executive officer of GEF, Dr. Naoko Ishii suggested that countries use innovative way of using marine resources and packaging it as blue bond and selling it to the international market.GEF has set aside US$1.3 billion for adaptation funding.”[[32]](#footnote-31) The nation of Palau also recognizes the need for developed countries to aid developing countries directly.[[33]](#footnote-32) Transparency systems similar to the Kyoto Protocol could be successful. These systems were “[Registry systems](http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/registry_systems/items/2723.php) track and record transactions by Parties under the mechanisms. The UN Climate Change Secretariat, based in Bonn, Germany, keeps an [international transaction log](http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/registry_systems/itl/items/4065.php) to verify that transactions are consistent with the rules of the Protocol. [Reporting](http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/reporting/items/3879.php) is done by Parties by submitting annual emission inventories and national reports under the Protocol at regular intervals. A [compliance](http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/compliance/items/2875.php) system ensures that Parties are meeting their commitments and helps them to meet their commitments if they have problems doing so.”[[34]](#footnote-33) The Kyoto Protocol was successful, “those countries who took on targets under the treaty have reduced their emissions by over 20 per cent—well in excess of the 5 per cent target they aimed to meet.”[[35]](#footnote-34) This indicates that if transparency measures in the Kyoto Protocol could be replicated, COP22 could have similar success. The nation of Palau believes that COP22 requires “bold climate action” in order to be a success.

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