



## ***Republic of Palau***

### *Country Statement to the ESCAP 80<sup>th</sup> Commission Session*

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Honorable Chair,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

I am honored to represent Palau and share our commitment to digital innovation for sustainable development. Palau recognizes the transformative impact of technology and actively participates in initiatives aimed at improving our economic and social landscapes. Despite our limited resources compared to more technologically advanced countries, we are committed to adopting practical and sustainable technological solutions.

Significant progress has been made toward improving digital connectivity, which is critical for modernizing our economy and connecting our people globally. Since the installation of our first submarine cable in 2017, and with the upcoming launch of a second cable, we have laid the foundation for robust internet access. This is complemented by the deployment of 5G technology, improving the speed and reliability of mobile network services across Palau.

The advancements in digital connectivity support our efforts in the digital government sector, where we are transforming the delivery of public services. Initiatives such as electronic health management systems, educational platforms for tracking academic progress, and financial platforms for facilitating online transactions like tax filings and customs forms are making public services more accessible and efficient.

Parallel to these efforts, we are dedicated to cultivating a strong digital economy that broadens market access for local businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises. We support entrepreneurs with training and mentorship and are developing a multi-service digital platform that expands digital services. A notable initiative within this framework is the creation of a stable coin, which is set to reduce transaction costs and improve the security of payments.

Access to digital tools and the ability to use them effectively are fundamental to fostering an innovative digital society in Palau. Our educational strategies are geared towards improving digital literacy by equipping schools across Koror and Babeldaob with the necessary technology and ensuring that all students have digital devices. The integration of online learning tools and the expansion of remote learning programs serve as pillars for making education accessible and inclusive for all. Additionally, we are investing in teacher training programs and improving programming skills among students to ensure they are prepared to contribute to and benefit from our digital society.

The increase in digital services heightens the need to protect the rights of users and secure our online environments. We are actively developing a legislative framework and a cybersecurity strategy that not only meet international standards but also cater to our unique needs. These strategic frameworks safeguard personal and business data, supports secure transactions, and fosters confidence in the use of digital services.

Finally, at the international level, engaging with global partners to strengthen our technological capabilities is crucial. We are thankful to ESCAP for providing a platform that allows us to share our experiences and learn from the advancements of others. This engagement is key to refining our strategies and adopting innovative practices that are applicable within our context.

I thank you all.