

OceaniaHR

A Grassroots NGO Movement

For the Promotion & Protection of

Global Human Rights in the Pacific

OceaniaHR is pleased to participate in the UN Human Rights Council Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review. It is in this historic session that the human rights situation in Oceania – the liquid continent – is being part of the global dialogue in this first round. We believe this 11th session is genuinely a Pacific round of the Universal Periodic Review.

We are pleased to participate and look forward to further creative collaboration to ensure the effective promotion and protection of human rights in the Pacific. We believe this session will be a very important step toward social justice in Oceania.

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Palau: The Struggle for Self-Determination in an Age of Climate Change along with the Challenges of Globalization on Small Island State Emerging from Violence in the Pursuit of a Nuclear Free Peace Constitution

1.

Issue: The ratification of the core international human rights instruments illustrates a lack of commitment to the principle of human rights law as well as the priority for promotion and protection of fundamental freedoms. Palau has only ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Question: Will Palau work with the OHCHR and also institutions of higher education and civil society associations to explore a plan to prioritize and set a schedule for adoption of the UN international human rights instruments.

Recommendation: Palau ratify international instruments beginning with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW) along with the twin covenants of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights along with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Palau agree to ratify more international instruments. It would also be important for Palau to translate the various international human rights instruments into the indigenous language.

2.

Issue: The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified. However, the children of Palau are not being taught their basic rights enshrined in the CRC. Palau should create a national plan of action regarding human rights education of its citizens beginning with its children through elementary and high school curriculum. It is imperative for Palau to adopt a national plan of action for human rights education.

Question: Will Palau report more regularly to the Committee on the Rights of the Child? Will Palau seek assistance from regional human rights civil society representatives such as OceaniaHR to plan together for creating national curricula to educate about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child?

Recommendation: Palau should translate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into the indigenous language and distribute widely to the general public through popular and creative means of education. Palau should also create cultural based child rights material rooted in the articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

3.

Issue: A culture of human rights law should be promoted in Palau. There is a need for a national rights institution that can focus on promotion and also protection of fundamental freedoms. A national human rights institution

Question: Will Palau consider creation of a national human rights institution? Will Palau make sure that civil society is accurately represented in this independent institution to encourage engagement in human rights law in Palau?

Recommendation: Palau should work with regional and international institutions focusing on national human rights bodies based on the Paris Principles. Palau should aspire toward achieving “A” ranking and participate fully in the region through bodies such as the Asia Pacific Forum.

4.

Issue: The Pacific region is one of the final areas where there is no regional mechanism to focus on promotion and protection of human rights. Palau can be a leader in the calling, crafting and creating of a regional human rights mechanism.

Question: Will Palau host a meeting for civil society and government to meet together to host a Working Group Meeting for a Pacific regional human rights charter and commission?

Recommendation: Palau should be a catalyst for a new regional charter and commission in Oceania. Palau has significant emerging tourism to provide infrastructure to host such a regional meeting to agree on specific rights and a regional instrument to ensure the rights of the citizens of Palau.

5.

Issue: The role of climate change is having impacts on indigenous communities around the world. Palau is experiencing rising sea levels and increasing global temperatures signifying an imminent issue for the 20,000 citizens.

Question: Will Palau share the most important impacts of climate change already visible in the daily lives of the citizens of Palau? Please share what models of adaptation are already being

attempted in the many islands? What are the visible impacts of climate change in Palau today? How does Palau plan to protect its coral reefs in the face of climate change?

Recommendation: Palau immediately adopt adaptation and mitigation efforts to protect the natural resources of Palau and the people. Palau raised the question of climate change in the UN Security Council. Palau should share the impetus for such a resolution in the UN Security Council.

6.

Issue: The issue of foreign and migrant workers should be evaluated and also explored to ensure respect for human rights. Almost a third of the country's population comprises of foreign workers. The most recent nationwide statistic shows that 35% of the Palau population is foreign workers and there is little protection to ensure the basic rights.

Question: Will Palau consider adopting the UN International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CRMW)? Can Palau

Recommendation: Palau immediately adopt the UN CRMW and produce its first report in a timely manner to ensure a government review of the foreign workers and to create national policies that incorporate the rights enshrined in the CRMW.