Closing Statement to the NPT Review Conference 2015

Delivered by H.E. Dr. Caleb Otto
Permanent Representative of Palau to the United Nations

22 May 2015, New York

Thank you, Madam President. Palau associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished Ambassador of Austria.

We join all members in thanking your and members of the bureau for your professional and tireless efforts to achieve the outcome we so desired from this Review conference.

As a party to this treaty, with an equal stake in achieving its full implementation, Palau is deeply disappointed at the slow pace of nuclear disarmament and the lack of consensus here on a pathway forward. Four and a half decades have passed since the treaty entered into force, yet the world remains on the brink of nuclear catastrophe threatening all that we love and cherish.

For many of us in the Pacific, this is also a deeply personal mission, as we have experienced first-hand the utter devastation wrought by these monstrous instruments of war. Without our consultation or consent, over the course of half a century, our region suffered from more than three hundred nuclear test explosions. Even today we are within striking distance from nuclear warheads in unfriendly nations. We believe that the voices of survivors in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the survivors of the nuclear test in the Pacific and those of us at risk of annihilation from nuclear weapons today, must never be ignored, marginalized, put aside or forgotten.

Madam President,

Palau is pleased to join the more than one hundred nations that have pledged their full and active support for a diplomatic process to negotiate a treaty to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.

It is time to end the diversion of vast resources into the machinery of nuclear war, when such resources are so desperately needed to ensure the success of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda; and, for us in the Pacific, so desperately needed for addressing climate change impacts and challenges. We are not content to remain the unwitting victims of others’ disregard.

The Humanitarian Pledge presented at this Review Conference provides a strong foundation from which to launch negotiations on a treaty banning nuclear weapons. It is, in essence, the
outcome document of this conference. If we are to succeed in averting a nuclear catastrophe, we must work urgently together to fill the legal gap. Let the end of this conference mark the beginning of the end of the nuclear age.

Thank you.