18 May 2020

Republic of Palau Statement
by Honorable Emais Roberts, MD, FACS.
Minister of Health

Before the 73rd World Health Assembly

Excellencies, Honored Guests, And Members of the Assembly, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let me begin by expressing our heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Tedros and the World Health Organization and its staff for the important work they have and continue to do to protect our health and the health of all peoples of the world. I cannot even begin to imagine the burden that the WHO carries each day especially during this global pandemic.

Earlier this year when the WHO declared a public health emergency of international concern for this COVID19, my country felt a grave apprehension as we were not at all prepared to face the devastation of this virus. We did not have the capacity or the infrastructure to respond in the likelihood of the COVID19 reaching our borders.

Similarly to the WHO's call for solidarity amongst all Nations, the Republic of Palau and its People value genuine friendships and critical bonds forged out of mutual respect and an adoration for life, peace and unity.

Tawain was the first country to lend Palau a helping hand, followed by many other countries who are present in this assembly. Taiwan and many of our allies knew that our country was vulnerable and so they made tremendous sacrifices to give Palau all the equipment, supplies and training that it needed in its effort to prepare and to protect its people.

I am happy to report that my country now has sufficient testing capabilities for the COVID19 and all the necessary supplies and infrastructure to manage the spread of the virus in the event of our first infection. All this was made possible through the simple act of kindness and solidarity from Taiwan and many other member states in this meeting today. Taiwan has not been invited as an observer in the WHA for a while now but they believe in the WHO’s call for solidarity as do all of us. Despite them being denied participation, they have and continue to help protect the health of many around them.

In closing, to all fellow member states, our vision and the mission of the WHO is “Health for ALL”. Solidarity can only be achieved if and when every single human soul are united. I ask you to consider allowing Taiwan to finally join us as an observer that we may work together to realize the vision we have all fought for since the formation of the WHO.

Thank you.