

Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-
Personnel Mines on Their Destruction
Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Convention
9-12 February 2004
Geneva, Switzerland

Palau Intervention

Madame Co-Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen
Let me at the out-set, express Palau's delegation sincere appreciation to the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining and Donors Group of the Sponsorship Programme for sponsoring my participation in today's meeting in behalf of the Republic of Palau. My island Country is a small nation with very limited resources and without their support it would have been very difficult for me to travel this far to take part in this very important meeting.

My island country although very small with only 20,000 people and with the land mass of less than 300 square miles does not have the ability to produce Anti personnel mines, my country however, attaches great importance to the Convention on the Prohibition of Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (The Ottawa Convention, Mine Ban Treaty).

This is so because as small as small as we are the Republic of Palau was the site of one of the fiercest battle during the World War II in the Pacific and the issue of unexploded ordnances and abandoned explosives are of great concern to Palau. Palau has had its share of victims of abandoned explosives and unexploded ordnance after WWII. Palau believes that there are many unexploded ordnance out in remote terrains of Palau, but does not have the capability to find and safely remove them.

With three-quarters of the world's nations as a State Parties and Signatories make the Ottawa Convention an exceptional international law and Palau takes notice on this. This is a clear indication of the widespread international rejection of any use of possession of anti personnel mines. Palau is taking every step to make sure that it will soon, too, join this Convention.

Palau is interested in supporting an international humanitarian law addressing the problem of unexploded ordnance and legal obligation for the users of explosive munitions to ensure that civilians come to no harm from the remnants of war.

I thank you Madame Co-Chair