



# Implementing FCTC Article 18 Republic of Palau

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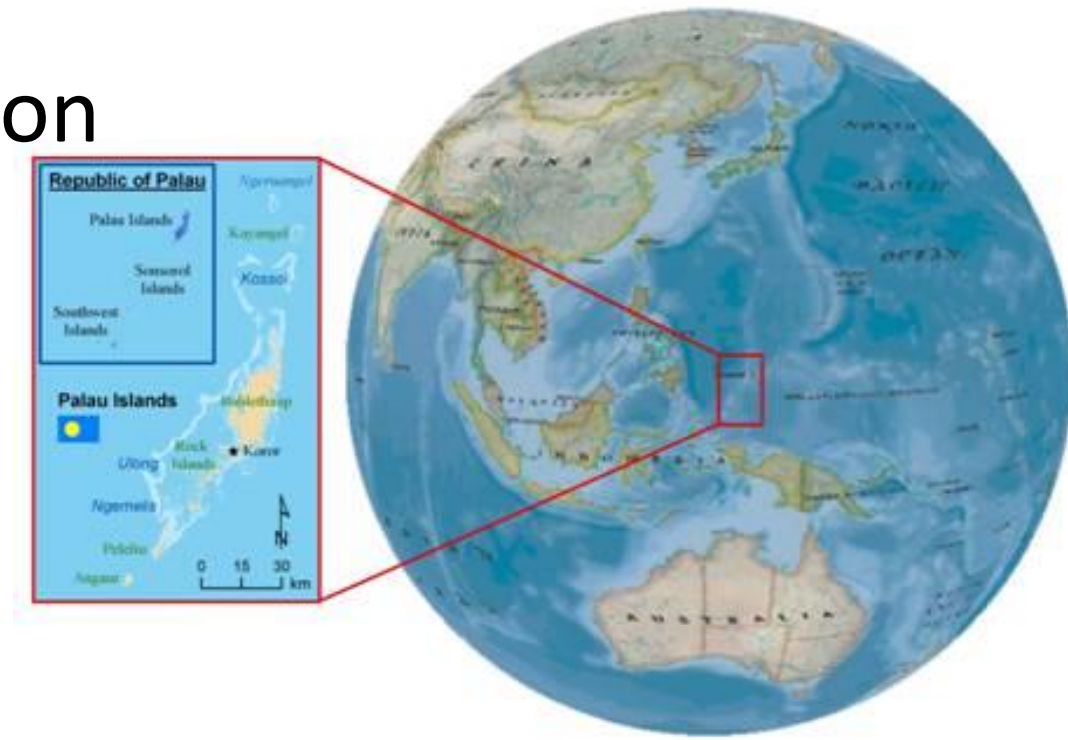
FCTC COP10, Panama

February 7, 2024



# Context for Article 18 implementation

- Population: 18,000 (approx.)
- 340 islands, islets, and atolls
- one of the Seven Underwater Wonders of the World
- Palau depends on tourism and fishing as main industries and is among the world's top diving destinations.
- In 2009, Palau established the world's first Shark Sanctuary
- 1<sup>st</sup> country to ratify the High Seas Treaty – to protect the ocean outside national jurisdictions (January 22, 2024).
- **Tobacco is not grown commercially in Palau**
- Adult tobacco consumption based on 2016 Palau Hybrid (Adult) Survey (18 yrs +);
  - tobacco smoking - 20.6%
  - smokeless tobacco users - 46.2%
- Youth tobacco consumption based on 2022 Palau Youth Tobacco Survey (6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades)
  - current tobacco smokers – 18.9%
  - current smokeless tobacco users – 10.5%
  - E-cigarette use – 42.0 %





# Efforts to implement Article 18

Raise awareness that;

- cigarette butts are made of plastic
- cigarette butts are toxic to the marine environment



World No Tobacco Day 2022



"Protect our Ocean and Marine Life  
-BUTTS OUT!"

World No Tobacco Day 2020

**EVERY YEAR IN PALAU**  
**5,697 lbs** of cigarette butts are thrown away.  
Much of this toxic plastic ends up in our OCEANS



This is equivalent to the weight of:

**20 GREEN SEA TURTLES**  
Weight of a mature green sea turtle= 287lbs \*

OR

**43 PACIFIC BLUE FIN TUNA**  
Weight of a Pacific Bluefin Tuna at reproductive maturity= 132lbs \*\*

OR

**184 BLACK TIP REEF SHARKS**  
Maximum weight of a Pacific Blacktip Reef Shark = 31lbs \*\*\*

Note: Calculations based on consumption by daily tobacco chewers and smokers (2016 Palau Hybrid Survey)  
\* Wildlife Conservation Society (2017). Wildlife turtles. Retrieved from <https://tj.wcs.org/Wildlife/Turtles.aspx>  
\*\* World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). (2017). Pacific Bluefin tuna: key facts. Retrieved from [http://www.panda.org/knowledge\\_hub/endangered\\_species/tuna/pacific\\_bluefin\\_tuna/](http://www.panda.org/knowledge_hub/endangered_species/tuna/pacific_bluefin_tuna/)  
\*\*\* SeaWorld Parks and Entertainment. (2018). Pacific Blacktip Reef Shark. Retrieved from <https://seaworld.org/Animal-Info/Animal-Bytes/Cartilaginous-Fish/Pacific%20Blacktip%20Reef-Shark>

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# 7<sup>th</sup> Our Ocean Conference 2022

- Attended by more than 500 representatives from foreign governments, intergovernmental organizations, academic and research institutions, the private sector, and civil society organizations.
- Set up booth to raise awareness
  - Butts are made of plastic (& their environmental impact)
  - TI “greenwashing” tactics





## CIGARETTE BUTTS: **TOXIC** TO OUR OCEAN

**RECOGNIZING THAT:**

Cigarette filters are made from poorly degradable plastic called cellulose acetate and that although ultraviolet light will eventually break down the filter, the source becomes dispersed in water or soil as microplastics;

Cigarette filters whether smoked or not, contain chemicals that leach into lakes, rivers and oceans and are toxic to marine life;

Cigarette butts are by far the largest single type of litter by count;

The tobacco industry tries to trick the public into thinking they care about the environment by “greenwashing” their image through activities such as beach clean-up campaigns;

Worldwide tobacco manufacturing produces 2.26 billion kilograms of solid waste and 209 million kilograms of chemical waste annually;

Smoking releases about 2.6 billion kilograms of carbon dioxide and 5.2 billion kilograms of methane worldwide every year. These greenhouse gases contribute to climate change; and

An estimated 495 tons of tobacco waste including cigarette butts and packaging waste is discarded in the Pacific islands annually and much of this toxic plastic ends up in our oceans

**I PLEDGE THEREFORE THAT:**

I will refute “greenwashing” because tobacco industry money comes from damaging the environment and killing people; and

I will share facts about the detrimental impacts of tobacco on people and the environment; and

I won’t start using tobacco, or I will try to quit.

Signed by \_\_\_\_\_ in Koror, Palau on \_\_\_\_\_, 2022

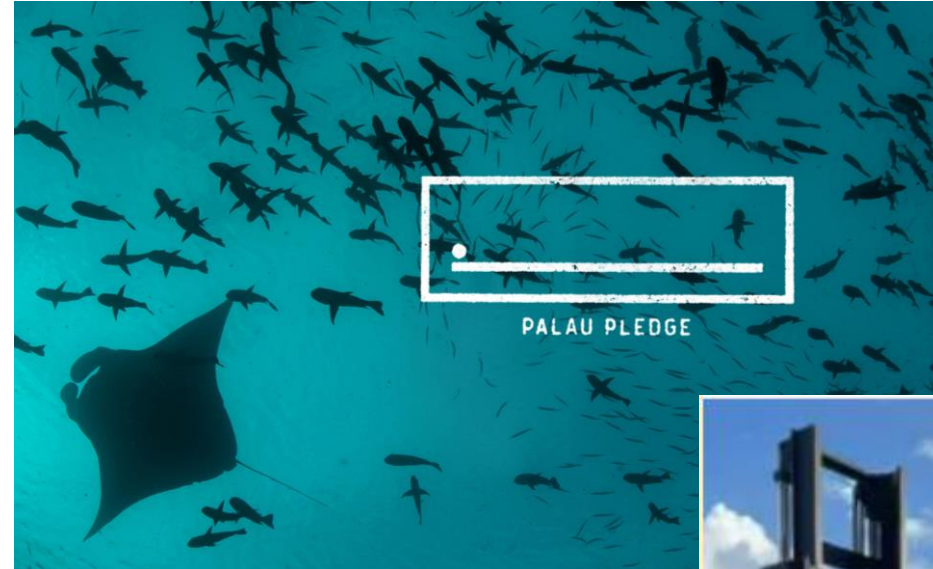
# The Palau Pledge

The Palau Pledge is a passport-like declaration that every visitor to Palau must sign upon arrival. By signing the pledge, tourists promise to respect Palau's ecological and cultural heritage during their stay. This includes not littering cigarettes.

<https://vimeo.com/251574951>

As one activity, the Palau Pledge Cigarette Butt Challenge invites students to collect cigarette butts for a period of time to see which class can collect the most. The Challenge aims to educate and bring awareness to the negative impacts of cigarette butts on the environment.

As of 2023, a total of 2,100 lbs of cigarette butts have been collected since the first Challenge in 2019.





# New legislation

Due to the fast-rising use of e-cigarettes by youth in Palau, in 2023 Palau President Surangel Whipps Jr. signed into law RPPL 11-27 that prohibits “the import, distribution, selling, possession and use of electronic cigarettes”

That may reduce the plastic waste from local e-cigarette use but we are left with hundreds of e-cigarettes confiscated at schools and from stores.

**There is no place in Palau to get rid of this plastic (and other toxic waste) from e-cigarettes or the hundreds of pounds of cigarette butts collected through school and community programs.**



CONGRATULATIONS TO PALAU FOR BANNING THE IMPORT,  
DISTRIBUTION, SALE AND POSSESSION OF E-CIGARETTES

Protect youth from the harms of e-cigarettes



# Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution INC-3

Some UN Members requested language on the means of treaty implementation to include a list of criteria or products “Problematic and avoidable plastic products, including short-lived and single-use plastic products and intentionally added microplastics”.

Such a list had been drafted, but at INC-3, **Palau called for** *“the inclusion of **cigarette filters** on the list as they are the most littered items in the world, harm land and marine eco-systems, are very difficult to collect, and disintegrate into toxic micro-plastics”.*

It will be important to also include e-cigarettes on the list.

<https://www.unep.org/inc-plastic-pollution/session-3>



This synergy between the FCTC and the Plastic Treaty INC will help make progress towards SDG Target 3.a and its indicator which is to reduce tobacco use prevalence. It is expected this synergy will be reflected in Palau’s Voluntary National Review (VNR) presented this year.

INC-4 will be held in April 2024 in Ottawa, Canada

**End toxic tobacco  
product waste in  
our ocean;**



**one more reason  
to quit.**



Mesulang😊

Thank you very much.