



Office of Environmental Response and Coordination
Republic of Palau

April 30, 2001

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United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
 Mr. Hamdallah Zedan
 Executive Secretary
 World Trade Centre
 393 Saint-Jacques Street, Suite 300
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 Canada, H2Y 1N9

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Office of
 Climate Change
 Bio-Diversity
 Desertification
 (land degradation)

and

Other Environmental
 Initiatives

Subject: Endorsement of the Establishment of a Global Strategy for Plant Conservation

Dear Mr. Zedan:

The Republic of Palau fully supports the establishment of a global strategy for plant conservation. It is essential that all nations develop effective strategies to halt the current and on-going loss of plant biodiversity.

Palau has the most diverse flora of all the islands in Micronesia. The flora contains approximately 1,258 taxa of plants and about 839 of these taxa are natives. Palau also has at least 65 endemic species and 10 endemic varieties of plants (Canfield, 1981). Approximately 75% of Palau's land area is occupied by forested habitats - upland forests on volcanic substrata, limestone forests on coral islands, coastal mangrove forests, lowland swamp forests, and atoll forests. The health and responsible use of these plant species are a significant factor in determining the integrity of the terrestrial ecosystems.

The issues of much concern to the Republic are: 1) in the past several years, Palau has experienced an annual population growth of 2% which in-turn increases the demand for infrastructure development and food supplies; and 2) the currently under construction 52-mile road which will unite Babeldaob, the largest island in the Palauan chain with Koror Island, the Capital of Palau is causing massive terrestrial habitat damage.

The road along with the massive infrastructure development that will ensue upon the completion of the project will have environmental impacts in Babeldaob that are unprecedented. In order to create a sustainable balance between Palau's terrestrial biodiversity and its need for economic development, a national framework for plant conservation and protection is urgently needed. The establishment of a global strategy for plant conservation will assist us in addressing Palau's concerns.

Kind regards,

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 Environmental Coordinator

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