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Statement

by

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The High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS

ECOSOC Informal Stocktaking Meeting on the Third International Conference on SIDS

United Nations Secretariat,

1st October, 2014

ECOSOC Chamber

New York, USA

Excellency Amb. Martin Sadjik, PR of Austria and President of ECOSOC

H. E. Ambassador Feturi Elisaia, PR of Samoa,

Secretary General of the Conference, Mr. Wu,

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

I would like to thank the President, for organizing this important informal stock taking meeting. Let me also begin by congratulating the government and people of Samoa for successfully hosting the event. It was a great success.

That we are meeting here in the ECOSOC to discuss a conference that was concluded only a month ago is a testament of the high importance and regard that this Council and you, Mr. President, have placed on the conference and the sustainable development challenges and opportunities for SIDS. The government and people of Samoa should feel proud about their achievement in very ably hosting what was the largest conference in the Pacific Islands Region. It was successful on four counts: first, high level, and large-scale participation of the key stakeholders, second, substantive and interactive discussions on all issues of importance to SIDS, third, concrete partnerships and fourth, spectacular organization of the conference, together with superb hospitality of the people.

The central theme of ‘partnerships’ is one that my Office is fully committed to. We are working with all partners on SIDS issues, because SIDS are the special case in terms of their environment and development challenges. Indeed, the advocacy mandate of my Office, as it relates to SIDS, allows OHRLLS to ‘undertake advocacy work in favour of the SIDS in partnership with the relevant parts of the United Nations as well as with regional organisations, the civil society, media, academia and foundations’.

Our advocacy work will be further strengthened in reaching out to the new partners that could support SIDS efforts in their sustainable development aspirations promote existing work and initiate new ones, based on SAMOA pathway.

More recently OHRLLS has stepped-up its work with and on the private sector in favour of SIDS. This flows directly from the Rio+20 outcome which called for better integration of the environment, social and economic dimension. The ‘Future We Want’ also underscored that sustainable development requires concrete and urgent action highlighting the need for a collaborative approach which includes a broad alliance of people, governments, civil society and private sector.

A Private Sector Partnerships Forum was convened on 30 and 31 August, 2014, in Apia, Samoa, jointly with the Government of Samoa and the Samoa Chamber of Commerce. The objectives of the Forum were: First, to provide a platform upon which effective, innovative and concrete partnerships could be developed, strengthened and announced by private sector actors, both from SIDS as well as those from their development partners, second, to support the implementation efforts of SIDS sustainable development priorities; third, to Facilitate the sharing of information and best practices in the pursuit of sustainable development; and fourth, to allow a platform for dialogue between private sector and political leaders, on policy related matters.

It was important that a dedicated private sector forum was organised on the margins of a SIDS conference and has contributed to further strengthening collaboration with the private sector and fostering partnerships – at national, regional and international levels – to support SIDS efforts in achieving their sustainable development aspirations.

The Forum focused on seven thematic areas: Oceans and Marine Resources, Connectivity (through ICTs and Transport), Sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable Tourism, Disaster Risk Reduction, Renewable Energy and Financing & Support Measures for SIDS Private Sector. While these areas are

not new nor are they emerging issues for SIDS, they do however remain high on the development discourse for SIDS. The Forum took a holistic approach in recognizing the cross-cutting nature of these thematic areas including issues concerning: women in business, informal sector integration, capacity development, ease of doing business and access to inclusive finance.

The Forum culminated in a High Level Dialogue Co-Chaired by Prime Minister of the Independent State of Samoa and Mr. Denis O'Brien, Chairman of the Digicel Group, which was also addressed by Secretary General and President of the UNGA. Many political leaders, the private sector leaders from micro-level to the global private sector, IFIs and intergovernmental organisations, attended the Forum. A SIDS Global Business Network was established at the Forum. My office is currently working with SIDS and their private sector organisations, their partners, including global private sector players, Global Compact and other stakeholders to articulate how this SIDS Global Business Network will operate and deliver on commitments.

Some 20 concrete partnerships, initiatives and recommendations were made over the two days of the Forum.

Some of these included: **On Oceans and Marine Resources** –Google is willing to use technology and their expertise to expand their Sea Vision programme in cooperation with other island countries; Similarly, the National Geographic and Wait foundation announced enhancement of their collaboration in the Pacific, **On Connectivity** – Mobile telecommunications company, Digicel, will increase investment in SIDS to promote connectivity and support private sector and economic growth; **On Sustainable Agriculture** – The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) in partnership with the Pacific Island Private Sector Organisation (PIPSO), announced that they will be hosting an annual agribusiness forum that will bring together farmers and entrepreneurs; **On Sustainable Tourism** – Sustainable Travel International announced the Sustainable Destination Alliance of the Americas and the South Pacific Destination Alliance with the South Pacific Tourism Organisation, Royal Caribbean Cruise Ltd; **On Disaster Risk Reduction** – Digicel offered to have disaster risk management equipment installed on its towers in SIDS; **Renewable Energy** – Italy's Enel Group offered to work with interested SIDS in the field of renewable energy. **On Financing** – The World Bank, Asian Development Bank, The International Finance Corporation (IFC), among others, expressed their commitment to promoting upstream business reforms, PPP guidelines and technical assistance to promote commercial investment in SIDS. Australia also announced an investment hub for the Pacific SIDS. There were many other similar initiatives announced there.

Also, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), in partnership with UN-OHRLLS launched the South-South Technology Transfer Facility for the SIDS on 30 August 2014. Three service agreements were signed which will help connect participating companies to the wider SS-GATE network currently spanning over 39 countries and 49 operational centers.

About 400 people participated with some 50 enterprises over two days, representing a range of sectors including tourism, agriculture, clean and renewable energies, shipping, telecommunications and financial services. Implementation is now the focus. On the private sector commitments, we see a role for the SIDS Global Business Network to play both for follow-up as well as for widening the scale of concrete partnerships across the board in the days ahead.

ECOSOC, together with the General Assembly, will play a significant role in the follow-up of the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, particularly as it relates to the work of the HLPF. OHRLLS will stand ready to play its part as well.

Furthermore, as provided for in the SAMOA Pathway, OHRLLS is consulting on the specified role of its advocacy mandate to ensure its mainstreaming and SIDS related issues in the work of the UN system and enhance the coherence of SIDS issues in the UN processes, including at the national, regional and global levels. It will continue to mobilize international support and resources to support the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. It will be guided by the suggestions received from member states as well as other stakeholders.

OHRLLS commits itself to actively supporting the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. And more importantly, integrating it into the global processes, including in climate change negotiations, SDGs, financing for development and other sustainable development related works will be critical to attain our common aspirations. I thank you.