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Statement

by

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High Representative

and

Under-Secretary-General

for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked

Developing Countries

and Small Island Developing States

at Consultative Meeting of SIDS and their

Development Partners

on

**Accelerating the implementation of the SAMOA
Pathway at the national, regional and global levels**

Glen Cove Mansion, Glen Cove, NY

Monday, 9 April 2018

Madame Deputy Secretary General, Amina Mohammed,

Your Excellency Ambassador Ali Naseer Mohammed, Permanent Representative of the Maldives to the United Nations and Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States;

Your Excellency Ambassador Petersen, Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations;

Excellencies,
colleagues and friends,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very warm welcome to you all.

A big thank you to the Government of Denmark for your generous support in bringing us together- thank you Ambassador Petersen!

Thank you also to our friends in DESA for co-organizing this critical retreat.

We are particularly honoured to have the Deputy Secretary-General with us at this dinner tonight- thank you DSG!

It never is easy to talk before a dinner and so I will accelerate my remarks in line with the theme of our retreat - **ACCELERATING** - and that is where the emphasis is - the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway.

It is my sincere hope that our retreat allows for a rich exchange of ideas for action so that we all as **PARTNERS** can work together to make the SAMOA Pathway a reality of tangible results in the lives of people.

Tangible results in the lives of people - this is what binds the SAMOA Pathway, the groundbreaking Agenda 2030, the Paris Climate Agreement and the Secretary-General's push to reform the UN to be fit for the 21st Century.

The high-level mid-term review of the SAMOA Pathway takes place next year. Regional and inter-regional preparatory meetings start very soon.

Our working sessions tomorrow are designed to provide us with a real opportunity to set the stage for these preparatory meetings. Together, we must as partners establish a strong foundation for our work this year.

Let me just emphasise a couple critical points.

SIDS are truly at the frontline of the inextricable connection that exists between sustainable development and climate change. They also are at the forefront of non traditional security threats. As the saying goes “small island states but large ocean nations “ - and after all more than 70 per cent of our shared earth’s surface is oceans!

AOSIS has pointed out over and over how the SAMOA pathway, truly the SIDS blueprint for sustainable development, calls attention to the cross-cutting nature of climate change and sustainable development be it for infrastructure development, agriculture, marine conservation and the cross-cutting areas are many!

So, the Mid-Term Review of the SAMOA Pathway is our major opportunity to assess progress in meeting the commitment to the sustainable development of SIDS.

It is **THE** opportunity to ask what has been achieved, what has not been achieved, and why that is so.

It is **THE** opportunity to identify challenges, lessons learned and best practices.

It is **THE** opportunity to set priorities for concrete action over the next five years.

It also is **THE** opportunity to look at all the major commitments of the last few years through a SIDS lens. From the 2030 Agenda to the Sendai Framework, the Paris Climate Change Agreement, the New Urban Agenda, and the outcome of the Oceans Conference.

For people in the SIDS there is no time to waste. Too many by now experience existential threats.

We owe it to people to have a solid, action focused, concise review outcome.

To achieve this, I am convinced, a much stronger - and may be also streamlined - coordination between national, regional and global levels of implementation is a must.

To support acceleration of implementation by enhancing precisely that coordination, OHRLLS initiated a SIDS Focal Point mechanism. This mechanism has been in operation for the LDC group for four years now.

Let me appeal to the countries that have not yet sent their nominations for a focal point to us to do so as soon as possible!

Let me now turn to the need to strengthen inter-agency coordination in our UN family to effectively support SIDS in accelerating implementation.

OHRLLS and DESA enjoy a close working relationship to support the preparations for the Mid-Term Review. But we must enhance inter-agency coordination and UN-system wide support to SIDS. That will have to include the strengthening of the work of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group on SIDS.

I count on you, colleagues, to ensure that the meeting of the IACG this quarter on preparations for the Mid-Term Review comes up with concrete action steps. We must come up with concrete recommendations how we all together can better assist SIDS in this process. Let me also add, we must make this a continuous and continued partnership effort. We all must stay engaged over the long-haul.

Excellencies,

Yes, we are confronted with complex challenges. But challenges are there to be resolved.

The issue of graduation from the category of LDCs is also very relevant for SIDS, in the context of efforts to implement the SAMOA Pathway. Sao Tome and Principe, Kiribati and Solomon Islands have recently fulfilled the graduation criterion for the second time in the review of the Committee for Development Policy, and have been recommended for graduation. The SIDS group represent 50% of the twelve countries at different stages of graduation mentioned, emphasizing the importance of full engagement in the discussion on smooth transition and sustainable graduation.

The policy problems we face are ever more inter-connected and much more technical in nature.

The people of the SIDS are faced with the permanent and dual challenge of climate change and sustainable development. To address that challenge we must deepen our analysis and subsequent delivery of means of implementation, including capacity-building and financial means.

This is where I see a very there close link to the efforts of the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary General to make the UN a UN of the 21st century - a tool that is coordinated, focused on people and more accountable.

Such a reformed UN development system must adequately respond to the special needs of SIDS and must be able to deliver on complexity and the often highly technical nature of issues SIDS are confronted with.

We will and we must make every effort to support Member States and ensure that SIDS issues receive the attention, support and the mainstreaming across the UN system they are so in need of - **LIVES OF PEOPLE DEPEND ON US LIVING UP TO THIS CHALLENGE.**

Thank you very much.