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**United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least  
Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small  
Island Developing States**

**Opening Statement by**

**Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu, Under-Secretary-General  
and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries,  
Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing  
States**

for

AIMS Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Mid-Term Review of the  
SAMOA Pathway

Wednesday, 23 May 2018

Mauritius

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade,  
Honourable Seetanah Lutchmeenaraidoo,  
HE Ms Dwarka Canabady, Secretary for Foreign Affairs,  
Excellency, Jagdish Koojul, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Mauritius to the  
United Nations,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very honored to be with you all here today.

It gives me great pleasure to address this important AIMS Regional Preparatory Meeting.

A lot is at stake for the Mid-Term Review of the SAMOA Pathway.

My deep and sincerest appreciation goes to the Government of Mauritius for hosting our meeting. Thank you for the gracious hospitality you extend to us.

I am also very grateful to my UN colleagues and UN-DESA for your partnership and collaboration. Collaboration is what the issues deserves and what it takes to prepare such important meeting. Thank you also to our UNDP colleagues for your substantive and logistical support.

Above all, I am very happy to see this impressive turnout. Your participation to me is a clear indicator that we ALL - and in partnership - are determined to tackle the sustainable development challenges the SIDS are confronted with.

This AIMS regional meeting is the first meeting in the preparatory process for the Mid-Term Review of the SAMOA Pathway.

The Mid-Term Review is YOUR opportunity to bring the SAMOA Pathway to the forefront of the international agenda.

It is YOUR opportunity to assess progress, to look at what worked and what did not work, and what is we now must do to honor our commitments to the sustainable development of SIDS. It truly is asking: what has been achieved, what has not been achieved, and why that is so and what now must be done.

**THE TIME IS NOW.**

The review is THE opportunity to set priorities for concrete actions over the next five years.

The review is THE opportunity to take stock of all the major commitments of the last few years through a SIDS lens.

That is from the 2030 Agenda, to the Sendai Framework, the Paris Climate Change Agreement, the New Urban Agenda, and the outcomes of the Oceans Conference.

We must ask ourselves how achieving these commitments will help to accelerate the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway.

Our meeting an important milestone.

The meeting allows us to come together for the first time since Samoa. The meeting is our platform to share national priorities, successes and also what has not worked, we can discuss priorities, and we must develop a regional agenda.

This agenda then ought to guide your work throughout the preparatory process leading to the inter-regional meeting in Samoa and to a hopefully very successful Mid-Term Review next September.

So, we have our work carved out for the next few days!

The AIMS region is made up of a group of diverse countries and thus also diverse challenges. There will not and cannot be a one size fits all.

Add to that, we presently do not have a formal coordination mechanism. Also, the development of regional platforms for the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway in AIMS has proven to be a complex undertaking.

But obviously action by times does not await platforms!

So, the AIMS region has also shown us innovation, creativity and great resilience coupled with determination to travel a successful path to sustainable development.

We have many examples how the AIMS SIDS are putting sustainable development into practice. And it all is about DOING rather than talking, I may add. Many of you have embraced the concept of the Blue Economy as a key driver to realize sustainable development.

You have inspirational thought leaders, you have taken key actions in many areas, including sustainable energy and tourism, innovative financing, climate change and resilience-building. You have also been leaders in the implementation of partnerships, both in the region and beyond.

It is a comprehensive vision, leadership turned into action that allowed many of you to graduate or make great strides toward graduation from LDC status.

The UN system stood by you and will continue to stand with and for you. We are your port of call to give support for the SIDS Agenda.

OHRLLS and DESA are working closely together to support the preparations for the Mid-Term Review, to enhance inter-agency coordination and UN-system wide support to SIDS.

We are also improving our support to the LDCs of the region and to those of you in transition.

Time does not stand still, challenges do not stand still nor does climate change stand still -

we have to accelerate our work and we must address with a sense of urgency the challenges SIDS face.

To do so we must deepen our understanding of what is needed, get the facts and focus more on what it will take to deliver on promises. We must look at means of implementation, including capacity-building, trade, technology and financial means.

It is now in your hands to ensure that this meeting comes up with a set of priorities and concrete steps toward for the accelerated implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the SDGs. The people of the SIDS deserve no less.

Thank you.