



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

Concluding Remarks

by

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Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing
Countries and Small Island Developing States**

Pacific SIDS Regional Preparatory Meeting,

Nuku’alofa, the Kingdom of Tonga,

21 June 2018

Her Excellency, Marianne Hagen, State Secretary of Norway,
Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Tonga, Mr Mahe Tupouniua, CEO of the Ministry of
Foreign Affairs And Senior Government Officials,
Your Excellencies, Permanent Representatives to the UN and members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Distinguished delegates,
Representatives of Regional and International Organisation,
Colleagues from the UN system,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to extend a warm welcome to our shores HE Ms Marine Hagen, State Secretary of Norway, and especially after your long journey to Tonga, arriving only this afternoon. Norway is not only an important development partner to the SIDS group but also for the Least Developed Countries and the Landlocked Developing countries and we had the occasion to meeting in Turkey a few weeks back during the inauguration of the technology bank for the LDCs. I would like to again take this opportunity to thank the Government of the Kingdom of Tonga and its people for the warm hospitality extended to us during our stay.

I also wish to commend our host Mr Mahe Tupouniua, Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs for so capably chairing the sessions, and Ambassador Young and Mr Tierney for chairing our Partnership Dialogue Sessions. I would like to thank our moderators, presenters and the participants for your substantive inputs and full engagement to the discussions over the last three days. The meeting has provided an invaluable opportunity to dialogue with wide range of stakeholders from both the national, regional and international levels, and to reflect on the progress in implementing the SAMOA Pathway in the Pacific SIDS. It is your continued efforts to work together, as a region that has contributed to the successful conclusion of the PSIDS regional preparatory meeting.

The meeting has also emphasised the importance of prioritising the implementation of SAMOA Pathway in the region given that it serves as *the* international framework to address the specific vulnerabilities, needs and priorities of SIDS. You have strongly voiced that SIDS as a “special case” for sustainable development must remain at the forefront global discussions. You have noted the efforts underway for the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development to implement the 2030 Agenda and the importance of alignment of various frameworks for sustainable development with the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway.

The meeting’s focus on priority areas for actions for implementation has allowed you to effectively address the challenges of the Pacific SIDS across the three broad pillars of social inclusion, environmental integrity, equitable economic growth as well as further recommendations regarding the means of implementation including partnerships. In doing so, you have identified common priority areas for actions which will be your guide throughout the preparatory process and towards the high-level Mid-Term Review next year.

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to say a few words on the key messages emerging from the thematic sessions,

On social inclusion, the Pacific SIDS have made notable progress in promoting inclusive societies. Responding to the crisis of non-communicable diseases remain a priority for the Pacific islands. So is access to education that is of high quality and affordable to all members of society. You have emphasised greater efforts are needed to address gender equality and end gender-based violence.

On environmental integrity, a strong call was made for the urgent need to address the impacts of climate change. You have also stressed the need to simply access to climate finance for disaster risk

management and resilient building. The session reiterated the fundamental reality, that for the PSIDS the ocean and the sustainable development agenda are inter-linked. A healthy ocean is critical from job creation to poverty eradication to food security and nutrition. The ocean is the lifeline for Pacific islands and we must do better to safeguard the ocean for present and future generations.

On the discussion on equitable growth, you have highlighted a range of priorities for the Pacific SIDS from improved transport and connectivity to access to renewable and affordable energy. You have identified the potential of tourism, as a main driver of sustainable economic development and explored opportunities to promote growth in the tourism sector. You have underscored the importance of remittances to Pacific economies and opportunities to enhance the productive use of remittances.

On means of implementation, you further underscored the need for strengthened international advocacy for the ‘special case’ of SIDS — and a strategic approach to enhance trade including supply side constraints, and productivity capacity in the region. On data and statistics, you have noted that significant investments are needed to meet the data requirements for Pacific SIDS toward sustainable development priorities. We will also further explore how best the UN system can support SIDS to build national capacity for monitoring and reporting.

With respect to partnerships, you have stressed the need to undertake a full review of partnerships and improve the understanding of what works and what does not. Emphasis was laid on meaningful partnerships, which involve local communities, with governance mechanisms, strong leadership, and long-term finance necessary to ensure the sustainability of partnerships announced. Here, efforts must be strengthened to engage academic and research institutions, civil society and the private sector, in leveraging capital and expertise of business networks in the region.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I have just given a very broad overview of the issues and key messages emerging from our meeting. I would like to reiterate that the outcomes from the meeting, will provide a comprehensive summary of the discussions. This includes the Pacific regional report, to be finalized, following inputs from Member States by end of July. The Secretariat will also issue a Report of the Meeting summarising the sessions. Both these documents will be made available to Member States in time for the inter-regional meeting in Samoa in late October.

The meeting has provided clear directions on the way forward to accelerate and further implementation of the SAMOA Pathway over the next five years.

Before closing, let me once again recognize with much appreciation the continued engagement and support of our development partners towards the implementation of the Samoa Pathway. Specifically for the preparatory process leading to the and including the Mid Term Review of the Samoa Pathway in 2019, I want to acknowledge the generous support of the Government of New Zealand, Norway and Canada to enable all three regional consultations and the interdigital consultations to take place.

Let me also assure you that the United Nations system is committed to continue supporting you and look forward to continuing this journey with you as you carry on the process of accelerating progress toward the sustainable development of SIDS.

I thank you for your attention.