



UN-OHRLS

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE
LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING
COUNTRIES AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

Remarks

Ms. Fekitamoelea Katoa ‘Utoikamanu

High-Representative

and

Under-Secretary-General

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

Press Conference for the Pacific regional preparatory meeting for the
midterm review of the
SAMOA Pathway

19 June 2018

Nuku’alofa, Tonga

Mr Mahe Tupouniua, Secretary of Foreign Affairs

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Press,

We are here for the Pacific regional review meeting to assess progress in implementing the SAMOA Pathway.

Before sharing my few remarks with you, allow me to extend thanks on behalf of the United Nations to the Government of the Kingdom of Tonga for its generous support in hosting this important meeting. I would also like to thank the Government of New Zealand for its generous financial support to ensure strong participation from the region.

The SAMOA Pathway was adopted in 2014 by the international community - so the 193 member states of the United Nations - during the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States. The meeting was then held in Samoa.

This is a 10-year programme of action for Small Island Developing States.

We are approaching soon 5 years of implementing this programme. Therefore, it is a must to review where we stand and what progress was really made.

So, we brought together officials from the Pacific SIDS, inter-governmental organizations and the United Nations system. Together as partners, over the next three days, we will look at what works, did not work, share best practices, exchange experiences and lessons learnt.

What I hope for is that in a spirit of partners we can take a candid look at gaps in implementation, at the areas where countries are lagging behind.

And then we must look at regional priorities and future actions.

We all know how fast our globe has changed over the past five years, we all here know what climate change means for the peoples of the Pacific in extreme weather events, we know how we must urgently address the health of our oceans and indeed the agenda is packed !

The clock is ticking and we must accelerate the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway.

The substantive discussions will cover a range of topics and address:

social inclusion,
environment,
equitable economic growth

And as I said address gaps in implementation.

To us, a key action to address gaps concerns what we can do to build strong partnerships.

Allow me to say, all of us, citizens, governments, civil society organizations, inter-governmental organization, private sector - this is literally and figuratively a boat in which we are TOGETHER - and I hope we find ways to act as a team, as true partners together for present and future generations!

Since the SAMOA Pathway was adopted, the international community also signed off on the pathbreaking Agenda 2030 and the Paris Climate Agreement. These all are interlinked, complementary agreements. So we will look at linkages, and also at streamlining reporting arrangements.

As I said, partnerships are key. A dedicated session on partnership dialogue will also take place.

The partnership dialogue brings together relevant stakeholders including civil society and non-governmental organisations from the region to assess the status of partnerships which were launched at the SIDS Conference in Samoa.

I hope we can come up with solid, action-oriented but also pragmatic ways to further build capacity to put in place genuine and durable partnerships for SIDS.

It is an ambitious agenda for the three days in from of us.

Let em also share some additional context.

Our meeting here in Tonga is the second such meeting in a series of regional preparatory meetings we conduct this year.

We conduct these meetings at the request of the United Nations General Assembly.

In May, the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea regional meeting took place in Mauritius.

The Caribbean region is due to meet in Belize from 7-9 August 2018.

Then we have covered the regions and an inter-regional meeting - so a meeting of all regions together - will then be held in Samoa at the end of October 2018.

These regional meetings are very critical. They really lay the ground and give the input for the Midterm Review of the SAMOA Pathway which is scheduled to take place in September 2019 at United Nations headquarters in New York.

That meeting is the moment totally dedicated to the issues of the SIDS and the global community will then have the chance to review all major commitments of the last five years through a SIDS lens – from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Climate Change Agreement, the New Urban Agenda, and the outcomes of the 2017 Ocean Conference.

I cannot stress enough how important it is for SIDS to really seize the 2019 moment.

It is all about moving commitments from words to action for the benefit of sustainable, inclusive lives for women, men, boys and girls.

Once more, I wish to thank Tonga. Tonga has played a critical role in this process.

Thank you Honourable Prime Minister and thank you all members of the Government of the Kingdom of Tonga!

I also must thank my colleagues for great partnership - thank you to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific and the United Nations Development Programme.

You may wonder if this is just yet another meeting - no, it is not and my great hope is that the outcomes of this meeting in Tonga adds great practical value to our collective efforts in supporting the sustainable development aspirations of the peoples of the Small Island Developing States in the Pacific and beyond. It is all about people, their livelihoods, and the lives of present and future generations.

I thank you.