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Remarks

by

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and

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**Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small
Island Developing States**

Caribbean Regional Partnership Dialogue

Session 2: Identifying partnerships to fill the gaps in implementation of the
SAMOA Pathway

6 August 2018, San Perdo, Belize

Mr Chairman
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

A very good morning to you all.

It is my great pleasure to be with you for the Caribbean Regional Partnership dialogue.

First, allow me to express our heartfelt appreciation to the Government of Belize and its people for hosting our meeting and for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to us.

I must also thank our co-chairs, Ambassador Young of Belize and Mr. Thierney on behalf of Ambassador Nason of the Republic of Ireland, for your efforts and all the guidance in the critical work of the Steering Committee on Partnerships for SIDS.

Your continuous and ongoing efforts to support this important work are not just only very well recognised but are so important. Thank you.

General Assembly resolution 70/202 called on UN-OHRLLS to play a supporting role to the steering committee. This is a role of my officers which I give highest priority to and am honoured to collaborate on with UNDESA.

The ever more complex and also ever more rapidly arising challenges we face means that no single stakeholder group on its own can meet the goals we have set ourselves with regard to economic, social and environmental sustainability.

The 'Future We Want, the SAMOA Pathway, and Agenda 2030, all are clear in wanting to achieve a sustainable and inclusive development FOR ALL.

They also all state clearly that this can only be achieved through a broad coalition of stakeholders from governments, to civil society and the private sector.

Sustainable and inclusive development is the responsibility of ALL.

Indeed, this was already the message of the Third International Conference on SIDS in 2014 and before that it was evident in the Barbados Programme of Action as well as the Mauritius Strategy.

All agreements do recognise the important role of the private sector to achieve sustainable development and face the urgent, the existential challenges that climate change represents for the people of the SIDS.

Starting in Samoa in 2014, OHRLLS, in line with its mandate, has initiated a series of activities to strengthen the engagement and the role of the private sector to support the full implementation of the SAMOA Pathway in SIDS.

In Samoa, we convened, jointly with the government of Samoa, a private sector partnership Forum at which we established the SIDS Global Business Network. Global Business leaders including Digicel, Google and the Waitt Foundation came together and we saw the announcement of 20 initiatives and partnerships in the areas of ocean conservation, connectivity and transportation, sustainable agriculture, sustainable tourism, disaster risk reduction, and renewable energy.

This was a follow up to the P3a Conference on public-private partnerships held in Aruba for the Caribbean region in 2016.

In recognising the critical contribution of public private partnerships in the region, the P3a Conference focused on harnessing the potential of PPPs to achieve sustainable development in SIDS.

As you know, for SIDS, PPPs are essential in just so many ways and especially if infrastructure plans can be turned into projects and become realities. As I say so often, time for words has run out- we must show ACTION and for that we must strengthen partnerships.

ALL SIDS continue to face the high cost associated with the preparation stage to assess the bankability of PPPs projects. That already alone can be a serious barrier for moving ahead. In addition, and as you all know, we have the constraints regarding human and financial resources. These are barriers we must remove!

Beyond that, we must with urgency accelerate knowledge transfer. This was another stumbling block the P3a highlighted.

Last but most certainly not least, we need PPP to build resilience and mitigate climate and disaster risks. We need innovative financing arrangements, technical support, technology, and the building of climate-resilient infrastructure.

Most recently in May this year, we jointly convened together with the Government of Mauritius, the AIMS private sector partnership forum, where more partnerships were launched to support a sustainable tourism track in SIDS.

These forums have provided an important bridge to enable closer private sector ties between the three SIDS regions, but also with the international business community.

It shows- IT IS POSSIBLE !

Recognising the importance of ensuring an online presence to promote such a Network, we also officially launched the SIDS Global Business Network web platform with support from the Government of Denmark.

I see this as an important building block for knowledge management for the SIDS Global Business Network. The platform means easy access to all stakeholders including education institutes, media, civil society, private sector and citizens in general.

The platform includes news updates focusing on reporting and sharing success stories coming out of the regions, best practices and lessons learned and follow up of partnerships announced through guest posts from our private sector collaborators.

We have also made arrangements with regional private sector organisations – including with the Caribbean Export Development Agency to exchange content from their respective activities in the regions so that the Network can better reflect and promote the private sector activities that are taking place on the ground.

Following the completion of its first phase, OHRLLS recently conducted an independent evaluation of the SIDS-Global Business Network initiative.

The Evaluation report underscored that UN-OHRLLS contributed as an independent broker and facilitator to support SIDS to identify partnership opportunities and work through the mechanics of collaboration arrangements.

Findings also noted that the SIDS-GBN facilitated an emergent approach to create shared value through “cross-sector partnerships”.

Some 50 concrete partnerships which are featured on the SIDS-GBN website were developed. These span across six of the thematic areas of the SIDS-GBN, namely;

- 8 in the area of oceans and marine resources;
- 5 under connectivity;
- 5 under sustainable agriculture;
- 12 in the area of sustainable tourism;
- 8 under disaster risk reduction and
- 12 under renewable energy.

It is noted that no partnerships were launched in the area of financing for SIDS. This does concern me.

We are aware that several SIDS, in particular Caribbean SIDS face significant challenges in accessing finance for climate resilient-infrastructure and have limited capacities to raise their own revenues. This needs to change. The time to act is now.

In going forward, we want the Network to achieve much more and do so much faster. Time is against us.

This is why I wish to put forward some proposals for your consideration.

First, the Network has the potential to serve as a mechanism to form multi-country partnerships for strengthening in-country capacity for accessing global funds, especially in the climate and environment sector to address urgent priorities for resilience building in SIDS.

You know too well about the severe and too often life and livelihoods threatening impacts of climate change on the SIDS. There is an urgent need for SIDS focused in-depth climate research and knowledge, and we propose establishing a “climate action research partnership platform”. This is actually one of the recommendations of the evaluation I mentioned earlier.

We would like to hear your views on this, on the value-added it would give you and how such a platform can help in building national capacities for climate action on the ground.

Second, acknowledging the importance of public private partnerships, we would also like to hear from this meeting how the SIDS-GBN can further support Caribbean SIDS in providing information to better scope existing and emerging markets and investments and make available tools to further expand public private partnerships in the region.

The need for coherence in the private sector partnerships forged through the SIDS Global Business Network and the broader SIDS Partnerships Framework is self-evident. My office would welcome your guidance on how this could be better facilitated going forward.

Looking to the future, we all are too keenly aware that words will no longer do. Citizens demand ACTION.

Not just any action - responsible, trustworthy action that can address the challenges of today and tomorrow for people and creates shared value across the board. This needs cross-sector partnerships. I think this is now generally accepted by governments, donors and development practitioners. Action now has to be fast, focused, and creative.

The challenge and the opportunity at this time is to genuinely rally across the public, private, NGO and donor sectors for ACTION that is pragmatic, is innovative, is creative and leads by example in the countries themselves.

Thank you.