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**Keynote address
by**

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**High Representative
And
Under-Secretary-General
for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries
and Small Island Developing States**

**Remarks at High-Level Roundtable:
“SIDS Lighthouses Initiative 2.0: Increasing Ambition to accelerate Energy
Transition in Small Island Developing States**

Venue: ECOSOC Chamber

**UNHQ, New York
28 September 2018
1:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

Your Excellencies,
Heads of States,
Heads of Government,
Hon Ministers,
Excellencies, Distinguished delegates and colleagues,

I have the distinct honor to represent the United Nations at the request of H.E. Secretary-General António Guterres.

I thank you, Mr. Adnan Amin, Director-General of IRENA, for convening this important meeting.

I congratulate IRENA, the 36 participating SIDS and development partners for achieving the 2020 SIDS Lighthouse Initiative targets in advance, three years ahead of schedule!

Thank you for giving us HOPE that it can be done!

This indeed is a clear sign that SIDS have the potential to be forerunners in switching to renewable energy.

Harnessing benefits of renewable energy is an imperative for small island developing states as they face unique geographic barriers to economic as well as sustainable energy development.

SIDS rely heavily on imported fossil fuels for both transport and electricity generation, while their remoteness poses logistical and financial challenges to trade. This reliance makes them highly vulnerable to fluctuations in global oil prices and increases their cost of doing business. Most SIDS rely on the very widespread use of oil-based generators for electricity, but with small, dispersed populations, the grid does not reach the majority of inhabitants in many of what we call the outer islands.

At the same time, SIDS have the potential to access several renewable energy sources, such as solar, onshore wind, geothermal and tidal power.

For that, it is critical that we step up our capacity building efforts, that efforts in adopting and implementing national renewable energy strategies accelerate, that we scale up existing initiatives, establish new partnerships, facilitate adopting new technologies including gaining better access to financing. All this will be critical when moving to the next phase of the Lighthouse Initiative.

The political commitment from SIDS for rapid energy transition remains unwavering.

In going forward, the ambition level of Lighthouse 2.0 must match that. New targets must be set in a way that will challenge all the partners to enhance cooperation toward building on the previous successes. We must analyze carefully what have been the most successful approaches and build on that. We need to ensure that renewable energy transition reaches also the poorest and most vulnerable island communities.

Excellencies,

SIDS have always found strength in being a community across vast expanses of ocean. For many SIDS, regional cooperation is essential. This is also relevant in the energy sector, and it already exists to some extent; IRENA has carried out several regional activities, and *Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Centres* have been created in the Pacific and Caribbean. But more can be done in this regard. Strengthening regional collaboration can further accelerate renewable energy uptake in SIDS.

A concern dear to me is that we must strengthen capacity building support for preparing bankable projects and accessing funds. Targeted project preparation and implementation support is key for fast-tracking progress.

Let us be honest, if you cannot design and above all deliver a bankable project, money alone will not help.

SIDS will need the continued, strong support from all development partners.

We also must notch up our efforts to strengthen private sector engagement in the renewable energy sector. The private sector is a key partner in the efforts towards realizing SIDS sustainable development aspirations and mobilizing required funds.

My Office is actively engaged in ensuring that we move ahead with the implementation of the SAMOA pathway, the 2030 Agenda and thus achievement of the sustainable development goals.

We are rapidly approaching the Midterm review of the SAMOA Pathway taking place a mere 12 months from now!

We have already facilitated a very successful round of 3 regional preparatory meetings – in the AIMS, the Pacific and Caribbean regions – which have identified the priorities of the SIDS in the further implementation of the SAMOA Pathway.

Energy has received considerable focus in all preparatory meetings, including the need to scale up investment and enhance the enabling environment for expanding renewable energy in SIDS. It is my hope that the Midterm Review will provide a new momentum for strengthened partnerships in the sustainable energy sector in SIDS.

Excellencies,

Agenda 2030 is about our collective desire and decision to leave no one behind.

The Lighthouse Initiative has proven to be instrumental in making progress towards achieving the targets set in SDG7 and the SAMOA Pathway and the achievements not only give hope but are also highly inspiring.

Our shared duty is to work together and forge even stronger partnerships, so that everyone can benefit from access to renewable energy and the tremendous opportunity it affords in our shared hope for inclusive, equitable and sustainable life paths.

Thank you.