



Opening Remarks

by

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**Under Secretary-General and High Representative
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**Side Event
Loss and Damage, SAMOA Pathway & 2030 Agenda
United Nations Climate Change Conference**

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15:00-16:30

UNDESA/GEIDCO Pavilion,
The International Conference Centre (MCK)
Katowice, Poland

Your Excellency, Chair of AOSIS, Hussein Rasheed Hassan, Minister of Environment of Maldives
Distinguished Panel Members
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I most warmly welcome you all to this high-level side event on Loss and Damage, the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda.

OHRLLS attaches great importance to convening these important events on the margins of the United Nations Climate Change Conferences on the issue of Loss and Damage.

A big thanks to all of the partners who have helped in the organisation of this gathering.

Loss and Damage is dare I say not the most attention grabbing topic in the news – yet, it is a very critical, a vital issue we must discuss and find solutions for.

This is an integral component if we are to progress our work within the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). And this is particularly important in the light of the key findings of the Special Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on Global Warming of 1.5°C.

Human induced climate change is worse than previously projected. Add to this the ever-growing world population.!

The risks have increased immensely for our ecosystems, economies and ultimately human wellbeing.

The IPCC report says that even a warming of 1.5°C is not considered ‘safe’,

Losses are projected at **70-90% of tropical coral reefs** by mid-century. Warming at 1.5°C also amplifies the risks associated with **sea level rise**, including increased saltwater intrusion, flooding and damage to infrastructure. Similarly, **large-scale changes in oceanic systems** (temperature, acidification) are expected, and we know what this can mean for tropical storms and hurricanes.

Picturing the potential Loss and Damage to livelihoods, income, cultural identity and health for coastal-dependent communities does indeed keep me awake at night.

For SIDS, the report confirms that small islands face disproportionately higher risks from climate change warming of 1.5°C, and for many SIDS, these risks threaten their very survival.

We have only begun to see the devastating impacts of climate change.

We cannot bury our heads in the proverbial sand.

There is no denying the urgency with which we must all respond and raise our collective ambition to effectively address this truly global challenge. Limiting global warming to 1.5°C, can be done and must be done.

Necessary climate action must happen now, including in the areas of finance, technology transfer and capacity building.

which hit the island on 18 September 2017, resulted in total damages of US\$930.9 million or 226 percent of 2016 gross domestic product (GDP).

There is no denying the urgency with which we must all respond, raising our collective ambition to effectively address this global challenge.

Loss and Damage must also be an integral and distinct part. It must be included in a meaningful way, in the context of the Paris Agreement rule book, and the three negotiation themes: The Enhanced Transparency Framework, the Global Stocktake, and Finance, and we must support initiatives under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The global response to climate change in the context of sustainable development must be accelerated. We must increase the linkages between our work in the UNFCCC, and our efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda and the SAMOA Pathway in SIDS.

For SIDS, the Mid-Term Review of the SAMOA Pathway, which is to take place in New York in September 2019, provides a great opportunity to advance the integrated implementation of the SIDS Programme of Action, the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

During the Inter-regional Preparatory Meeting for the Mid-Term Review, which took place in Apia, Samoa this fall, the SIDS adopted the *Samoa Declaration on Climate Change in the Context of Sustainable Development for SIDS*.

The Declaration recognizes the critical linkage between climate change actions and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It underscores that limiting warming to 1.5°C is likely to have considerable sustainable development benefits for SIDS.

OHRLLS stands ready to work with all of you to enhance the synergies between efforts for more ambitious climate action with wider sustainable development objectives.

We are your partner here at 24th COP, within the Talanoa Dialogue, in 2019 by the Secretary-General's Climate Summit, the SDG Summit, and the Mid-term Review of the SAMOA Pathway.

My Office will work to ensure that the focus remains squarely on SIDS. OHRLLS within its mandate will enhance its global advocacy efforts to encourage attendance at the highest-level during next year's United Nations General Assembly. This includes participation of Heads of State or Government at the one-day high level Mid Term Review which will take place on 27 September 2019 during the High-level week of the 74th session of the General Assembly at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

All of us stand ready to support SIDs. The peoples of the SIDs experience unique vulnerabilities, and are extremely exposed to the many social, economic and even peace and security adverse effects of climate change.

Thank you
