



**SIDS National Focal Points (NFPs) Meeting  
at the margins of the Interregional preparatory meeting  
for the Mid-Term Review of the SAMOA Pathway,  
Monday, 29 October 2018, Apia, Samoa**

1. Government designated National focal points and representatives of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) met in Apia, Samoa, on 29 October 2018, in the margins of the Interregional preparatory meeting for the review of the SAMOA Pathway, which took place on 30 October to 1 November. The SIDS national focal points inaugural meeting launched the network of SIDS national points network which responds to the SAMOA Pathway, paragraph 120, which mandates the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) to ensure the mainstreaming of SAMOA Pathway and issues related to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the work of the United Nations (UN) system and enhance the coherence of SIDS issues in UN processes, including at the national, regional and global levels.
2. The Inaugural meeting was attended by participants from Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica, Kiribati, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, St. Vincent, Sao Tome and Principe, Solomon Islands, Suriname, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. United Nations agencies including UN-OHRLLS (organizer) UNDP and DESA, regional commissions including ESCAP and ECLAC, CARICOM, SPC, Development partners as well as the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS 21) and the UN statistics division also participated, some remotely.
3. The structure of the inaugural meeting included an opening segment and 3 main sessions: (1) Interactive discussion on strengthening the role of NFPs to enhance implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and 2030 Agenda, and preliminary workplan; (2) Implementation of the SAMOA Pathway within the context of the 2030 Agenda – lessons learnt and best practices; and (3) Monitoring the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and SDGs: A focus on data challenges in SIDS.
4. The opening segment was chaired by Ms. Peseta Noumea Simi, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Samoa, and commenced with remarks from Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director, Office of the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS (UN-OHRLLS), H.E. Ali Naseer Mohamed, Permanent Representative of Maldives and Chair of AOSIS, Francesco La Camera, Director-General, Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, Liu, Zhenmin, Under-Secretary- General for Economic and Social Affairs and Hon.

Faimalotoa Kika Iemaima Stowers, Minister of Women, Community and Social Development of Samoa.

5. Remarks from the opening segment acknowledged the SIDS NFPs inaugural meeting, whose genesis is the SAMOA Pathway, as an important milestone. The segment emphasized: the SIDS NFP network's importance to strengthen the capacity and implementation of the main UN intergovernmental processes, such as the SAMOA Pathway, Agenda 2030, and the Paris Agreement; SIDS NFPs involvement in the localization of the SAMOA Pathway and the SDGs, as well as their implementation, monitoring and review, in their respective countries; and the networks' role to enhance coherence of SIDS issues across all levels—global, regional and national.

**Session 1: Interactive discussion on strengthening the role of NFPs to enhance implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and 2030 Agenda, and preliminary workplan**

6. This session was chaired by Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director, OHRLLS. The session provided background on the establishment of the network of SIDS national focal to enhance coherence of SIDS issues in UN processes, including at the national, regional and global levels; highlighted challenges and opportunities in enhancing coherence of SIDS issues in UN processes, including at the national, regional and global levels, and discussed how best to strengthen the role of NFPs to enhance implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and 2030 Agenda, including developing a preliminary workplan. Ms Tishka Francis (OHRLLS) made a presentation on the establishment of the network, its operationalization and a draft workplan for the network of SIDS NFPs.
7. The establishment of the NFP network is in response to paragraph 120 of the SAMOA Pathway, which mandated OHRLLS to ensure the mainstreaming of the SAMOA Pathway in the work of the UN system, and to enhance the coherence of SIDS issues in UN processes, including at the national, regional and global levels.
8. The SIDS NFP network will play a critical role in the delivery of this mandate of coherence, as they are the closest to implementation of the SAMOA Pathway “on the ground” and can speak directly to the effectiveness of the support provided by the development partners, including the UN system, and how it can be strengthened.
9. The meeting affirmed the important role that NFPs can play in the localization of the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development and SDGs, which was identified as a critical accelerator for the implementation of these international agreements.
10. The meeting pointed out a range of roles that could be undertaken by NFPs including catalyzing the south-south cooperation, and the validation of the partnerships at the national level. NFPs are also to have an active role in supporting the preparation of voluntary national reviews (VNRs), including to ensure the necessary inter-agency coordination and that the SAMOA Pathway is duly highlighted in the process.

11. In the context of strengthening the role of NFPs, the meeting clearly underscored the importance of capacity building and empowerment as a prerequisite for the SIDS national focal points to effectively carry out these important roles. The important role of the UN system, including OHRLLS, DESA, UNDP, as well as regional and other organizations, was acknowledged in helping build this capacity and providing regional and international platforms for coordination and implementation.
12. The meeting underscored that strengthening the SIDS NFPs will require drawing from lessons learnt from other earlier similar mechanisms, as well leveraging existing mechanisms, including regional coordinating bodies. The architecture of the network should aim to include existing regional coordination mechanisms that have already integrated National Focal Point mechanisms as much as possible.
13. The idea of an active online platform and other ICT tools for the exchange of information was highlighted as important mechanisms that the SIDS national focal points could utilize.
14. The Inaugural meeting noted that future annual meetings could be held in the margins of the High Level Political Forum on sustainable development, with the purpose of facilitating the sharing of experiences and best practices, as well as exposing NFPs to key global processes of relevance to SIDS. It was highlighted that NFPs could also be active in regional or other global meetings on key accelerators of sustainable development, including climate change and resilience building, sustainable energy and oceans.
15. OHRLLS, in collaboration with focal points and relevant partners, will also further elaborate on the Work Plan for 2019, with a particular focus on the Mid-term Review of the SAMOA Pathway that is to take place in September. In this connection, OHRLLS will develop Terms of Reference for the NFPs, building on the discussions at the meeting. The Focal Points and relevant partners are expected to continue to play an important role in this process.
16. Resource mobilization will also be key going forward. It was noted that the NFP network needs a reliable and predictable funding mechanism. The meeting also learnt of the process currently underway in the 2nd Committee of the UN General Assembly, informed by the report of the Secretary-General on the assessment resulting from the evolving mandates of the two SIDS Units of the Secretariat.
17. The 2nd Committee of the UN General Assembly process would provide the opportunity for SIDS to get much needed resources that would allow the entire UN system to better deliver the support that these countries need. These resources, inter alia, would provide for the convening of focal point meetings, for the necessary capacity building of focal points, and for the proper functioning of the network. The support of all of our partners was encouraged.

## **Session 2: Implementation of the SAMOA Pathway within the context of the 2030 Agenda – lessons learnt and best practices**

18. This session was chaired by Charles Channel, UNDP. Member States' presentations on the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway were received from Rakesh Bhuckory (Mauritius), Ms. Mau Leha (Tonga) and Ms. Ndibi Ceres (Guyana). In the context of the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway within the context of the 2030 Agenda, the meeting emphasized national ownership and the need to prioritize the SAMOA Pathway and other international agreements, in order to be able to mainstream these agreements into national development plans and budgeting processes.
19. Regional and inter-regional cooperation is a priority and an opportunity for SIDS to face challenges, share responsibilities and opportunities together towards the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and address their development needs.
20. The meeting noted that mainstreaming the SAMOA Pathway into national development plans and budgets is a way to take ownership of the SAMOA Pathway. National Action Plans should be at the center of the implementation and resource mobilization.
21. The meeting noted that the localization of Agenda 2030 is a vital catalyst for the acceleration and implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, and integrating the SAMOA Pathway into the VNRs is an important mechanism for monitoring and evaluating all of the global agendas.
22. The meeting noted that reporting on all 230 indicators is a challenging task for many SIDS. Reducing the burden and providing capacity building is needed in order to effectively monitor, evaluate, and report on all indicators.
23. The meeting called on UNDESA to provide further support in strategizing with SIDS on how to integrate the SAMOA Pathway in their VNRs.
24. The SAMOA Pathway can be a transformative process for SIDS. For the mid-term review, it is essential to identify the mechanisms that need to be adopted in order to accelerate the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway.
25. UN agencies must jointly cooperate to improve the efficiency of the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway.
26. The meeting noted that NFPs can provide an opportunity for SIDS-SIDS cooperation and allow SIDS to directly link and communicate with each other by sharing knowledge and building solidarity and providing a bottom-up network. The NFPs is an opportunity to link and communicate on how to respond to the vulnerabilities and challenges that SIDS are facing in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway.

27. The meeting noted that the SIDS NFPs Action Plan addresses the issues related to the establishment of the network, and provides the basis for the work of the focal points and a NFP terms of reference.
28. The meeting noted that NFP terms of reference will be important; and can also include validating partnerships, participating in VNR processes.
29. The meeting noted that commitment, prioritization and sensitization at the highest levels of government including political figures and national assembly is key to implement the SAMOA Pathway and for countries to take ownership of the process. A UN session with Parliamentarians and speakers could be useful.

### **Session 3: Monitoring the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and SDGs: A focus on data challenges in SIDS**

#### ***Challenges***

30. The session was chaired Ms. Aliimuamua Malaefono Taua-T. Faasalaina, Samoa Bureau of Statistics, with key note presentations from El Iza Mohamedou (Paris 21) and Yongyi Min (UN-statistics division). Other presentations were received from Ms. Philomena Harrison (CARICOM Secretariat) and Ms. Alison Culpin (Pacific Community). Member states presentations were received from Chrisda Kaeti (Kiribati), Aishath Saadh (Maldives) and Nicola Barker-Murphy (Jamaica). The presentations highlighted the importance of data, SIDS statistical challenges, best practices and opportunities. In the context of the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and SDGs, the meeting noted there is weak statistical system in many SIDS countries. In many states, the statistical system is decentralized where the National Statistics Office (NSO) and many government ministries are all involved in data collection and dissemination. Hence, the absence of a coordination body to identify where and when data is available and whether the data is statistically sound for reporting is a critical barrier in the monitoring of the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda.
31. The meeting noted the lack of political support for a well-coordinated statistical system and the lack of recognition of the role of NSOs in producing official statistics in countries as one of the challenges.
32. The meeting noted with great concern that the 230 indicators in the 2030 Agenda is too much for SIDS countries and sub-regional organizations to monitor the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda. Some simpler mechanisms and tools must be made available to help SIDS in their monitoring efforts.
33. The meeting stressed the need for a harmonized approach for monitoring and reporting on the SAMOA Pathway across SIDS, focusing on what is relevant, feasible and possible.

34. The meeting noted there is a lack of demand for data by policymakers and likewise lack of interest by NSOs to produce data for policymaking. When there is no demand for data, then there is lack of motivation to seek funds by both sides to produce evidence-based policies. This reflects the great disconnect between data and policies in SIDS. It also reflects the lack of engagement and dialogue between data producers and users of data in which the latter included government agencies, civil societies and the private sector which all play key roles in the monitoring of SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda.
35. The meeting underscored that limited supply of Statisticians and relevant expertise in the statistical system also contributes significantly to the limited or lack of data in SIDS, especially in small island states.
36. NSOs are still using traditional tools of data collection and compilation relative to the new innovative technologies such as tablets, CAPI, spatial data, drone, big data and many digital tools for data collection and compilation which can help to speed up data collection today. As a result, there will be continuous delays in the availability of data on time for reporting and monitoring purposes.
37. The meeting noted that acknowledging the true sources of data is of paramount importance to reporting of SIDS progress to different platforms. However, data provided by global organizations including UNSD are not the same with data released by Member States hence created the feeling of distrust amongst users in the work of NSOs and other local sources in the production of official statistics. It also noted that NSOs and other producing organizations are not recognized as sources of data by UNSD and other global agencies to help users verify the validity of information.
38. The meeting highlighted a concern by NSOs that the majority of data for monitoring purposes are hosted and housed by other government line ministries and agencies. Therefore, there is reluctance to share data especially data pertaining to personal details which of course created barriers in reporting efforts. In addition, administrative data and survey data collected by government agencies, civil societies and the private sector do not conform to the Principles of Official Statistics which guide the work of NSOs hence data are not comparable. This is a critical issue in the monitoring of the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda.

### ***Opportunities and way forward***

39. The meeting underscored the need for SIDS to improve their statistical systems to implement and monitor progress. SIDS should prioritize putting in place a strong and well-coordinated legal statistical system before even focusing on collecting data. The NSO is the ideal legal agency that should play the key role in managing and coordinating this national statistical system for monitoring and reporting purposes. Political support is also critical to ensure that the national statistical system is viable and robust. Recognizing a national coordinating body

like the NSO to be fully responsible for coordinating of national statistics will greatly help to solve a lot challenges in collating and compiling data from different agencies in monitoring of SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda.

40. The meeting noted that not all the 230 indicators in the 2030 Agenda are relevant to SIDS. In order to choose the most relevant and realistic indicators for SIDS, the first step is to localize the 2030 Agenda according to own country situation. From that localization exercise, a mapping exercise must follow-suit to identify where and when those relevant indicators will be available and accessible within the statistical system. In cases where indicators in the 2030 Agenda are not available in a country, national regular data already available in countries can be used to report their own progress. What is key is to choose SDG data that are relevant to country situation and are feasible to collect. Countries should continue to use their own national indicators where there is no data to monitor and report progress and not wait until they are ready to compile the SDGs related data.
41. The meeting underscored that a partnership between data producers and users is very crucial for the monitoring of SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda. Close collaboration and open dialogue between these key entities will produce policies that will link directly to the relevant data. It is therefore important to provide mechanisms and tools and share best practices in SIDS which help strengthen user-producer engagement in SIDS. It is also important for data producers to communicate and disseminate data and messages as widely as possible to ensure that data is available, accessible and are user-friendly.
42. Small island developing states with constraints on their working environment and limited personnel can be supported through south-south cooperation and peer review arrangements. Noting that there is technical capacity available in bigger states in the AIMS and Caribbean and some Pacific States, it is highly recommended that funding partners support technical support available within SIDS to assist those with limited capacity in NSOs. This will encourage and promote SIDS partnerships and especially the sharing of expertise and best practices within the SIDS in their efforts to compile data.
43. Statistical institutions are not available in many SIDS and it is a difficult field to attract graduates due to low benefits compared to other fields of work. Therefore, support is important to continue statistical training and capacity building in SIDS by technical and donor partners to ensure that there is sufficient supply of statisticians in the workforce to sustain the monitoring of the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda in the future. Regional and sub-regional organizations and especially funding organizations must all contribute to support member states in constrained environments in their capacity building efforts.
44. The meeting acknowledged that many NSOs in SIDS are still using traditional tools of data collection and compilation, owing to the time it takes to adopt and adapt to new technologies

as it requires structural changes in the existing systems, changing of the working environment, changes in the mindset and capacity of employees and especially new technological costs to the NSOs. These changes will evolve overtime depending on the commitments by member states and support from partners to move the work of NSOs into the digital age. Monitoring of the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda will therefore also bring many opportunities to strengthen the work of statistical communities.

45. In adherence to transparency and accountability as principles of official statistics it is critical for all users of data to identify true and original sources of information and also clarify methodologies used to develop data that deviate from original data such as estimates and projections. This will avoid confusion and misuse of data by the users.
46. Good collaboration amongst NSOs and other data producers in the sharing of information and especially the security of personal information is highly recommended for all parties involved so that effective monitoring of the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda is feasible. It is also important that data producers outside of the NSO must be well-informed about the Principles of Official Statistics and how these should be applied in their data collection efforts in order to have the most reliable and quality data for monitoring purposes. The UN Inter-Agency Experts Group on SDGs require the application of the Principles of Official Statistics in the compilation of the 230 SDG indicators. Therefore, it is also important that all technical and especially donor partners follow the Principles of Official Statistics 30/10/2018 so that all players in data production follow the same internationally accepted principles.

### ***Conclusion***

47. Concluding remarks were received from Simona Marinescu (UN resident Coordinator and UNDP resident Representative), Ms. Aliimuamua Malaefono Taua-T. Faasalaina (Samoa Bureau of Statistics) and Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director, OHRLLS. The meeting underscored the importance of the establishment of the focal point mechanism and recognized that a lot more work will need to be done going forward to ensure the effective operation of the SIDS National focal point network.
48. OHRLLS, in collaboration with focal points and relevant partners, will further elaborate on the Work Plan for 2019, with a particular focus on the Mid-term Review of the SAMOA Pathway that is to take place in September. In this connection, OHRLLS will develop Terms of Reference for the NFPs, building on the discussions at the meeting. The Focal Points and relevant partners are expected to continue to play an important role in this process.
49. Resource mobilization will also be key going forward. The NFP network needs a reliable and predictable funding mechanism. The 2nd Committee of the UN General Assembly process provides the opportunity for SIDS to get much needed resources that would allow the entire UN system to better deliver the support that these countries need. These resources, inter alia,

will provide for the convening of focal point meetings, for the necessary capacity building of focal points, and for the proper functioning of the network.

50. Noting the key challenges and capacity constraints in measuring the implementation and collecting and analyzing data, the meeting highlighted some opportunities including integrating the SAMOA Pathway and SDGs in national planning and the work of statistical offices, as well as strengthening the capacities of national statistical offices, including through mobilizing the necessary resources, leveraging partnerships at all levels, utilizing non-government and retired experts. The meeting noted the importance of providing qualitative data for policy makers, using new technologies and innovation where possible and stressed the need for a harmonized approach for monitoring and reporting on the SAMOA Pathway across SIDS, focusing on what is relevant, feasible and possible.

END

**SIDS NATIONAL FOCAL POINT INAUGURAL MEETING  
29 OCTOBER 2018  
Apia, Samoa**

**Participant List**

NFP Participants and representatives	Country
1. *Simone Sandra Dias	Antigua Barbuda
2. Travis Antonio Sinckler	Barbados
3. Luz Patria Bonilla	Dominican Republic
4. Ndibi Nwamaya Ceres	Guyana
5. Chrisda Kaeti	Kiribati
6. Aishath Saadh	Maldives
7. Molly Myra Helkena	Marshall Islands
8. Rakesh Bhye Bhuckory	Mauritius
9. *Lomalida Jibemai	Micronesia
10. Brendoski John Limen	Nauru
11. Darren Fritz	Palau
12. *Alex Lilo Ginet	Papua New Guinea
13. Janelle Melissa Hannaway-Horne	St. Vincent
14. Armindo Gonzaga Fernandes	Sao Tome and Principe
15. Samuel Wara	Solomon Islands
16. Samuel Soares	Timor-Leste
17. Mau Leha	Tonga
18. *Samuelu Lalonui	Tuvalu
19. *Sylvain Kalsakau	Vanuatu
20. Jeanel Smona Volney	Saint Lucia
21. *Francella Strickland-Simonet	Samoa
Other member states representatives	Country/organization
22. Charmaine Williams	Bahamas, Permanent Mission to the UN
23. Amatlaina E. Kabua	Marshall Islands, Permanent Mission to the UN
24. Edon Daniels	Department of Environment, Guyana
25. Ndibi Schwiars	Department of Environment, Guyana
26. Jane Chigiyal	Micronesia Permanent Mission to the UN
27. Kereeta Whyte	Barbados Permanent Mission to the UN
28. Ray Singeo	Palau Permanent Mission to the UN
29. Mohamed Aseel Hassan	Maldives
30. Kitty Sweeb	Suriname Government
31. Joanna Ross	Trinidad and Tobago
32. Robert Sisilo	Solomon Islands Permanent Mission to the UN
33. Keith Philippe	The Commonwealth of the Bahamas
34. Nicola Barker-Murphy	Jamaica Permanent Mission to the UN
35. Ahmed Abdallah	Comoros Permanent Mission to the UN
36. Lois Young	Belize Permanent Mission to the UN

<b>Associate Members</b>	
37. Ghislaine Nicolaas	Aruba
38. Patrice Gumbs Jr.	Department of Foreign Affairs, Sint Maarten

*\*In lieu of NFP*

<b>Senior Officials</b>	<b>Organization/Country</b>
39. Hon. Faimalotoa Kika Iemaima Stowers	Minister of Women, Community and Social Development of Samoa
40. Peseta Noumea Simi	CEO, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade, Government of Samoa, Master of Ceremony
41. H.E. Ali Naseer Mohamed	Permanent Representative of Maldives and Chair of AOSIS
42. Francesco La Camera	Director-General, Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea

<b>Moderators and Resource Persons</b>	<b>Organization/Country</b>
43. Ms. Simona Marinescu	UN Resident Coordinator & UNDP Resident Representative, United Nations: Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa & Tokelau
44. Ms. Artie Dubrie	Sustainable Development officer ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
45. Mr. Riad Meddeb	Policy Advisor, Sustainable Development and Economic Recovery, UNDP
46. Mr. Iosefa Maiava	Head of Office, UNESCAP Pacific Office
47. Sanjesh Naidu	Statistician, UNESCAP
48. Ms. Aliimuamua Malaefono Taua-T. Faasalaina	Government Statistician/CEO, Samoa Bureau of Statistics
49. Ms. El Iza Mohamed**	Deputy Manager, PARIS21 Secretariat
50. Ms. Yongyi Min**	Chief, Sustainable Development Goal Monitoring Section, Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs
51. Alison Culpin	Demographer and Social Statistician, Statistics for Development Division, Pacific Community
52. Ms. Philomena Harrison,	Project Director, Regional Statistics CARICOM Secretariat

\*\* Provided Pre-recorded video presentations

<b>Organizers</b>	<b>UN-System</b>
53. Heidi Schroderus-Fox	Director, Office of the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS (UN-OHRLLS)
54. Tishka Francis	UN-OHRLLS
55. Shifaana Thowfeequ	UN-OHRLLS
56. Themba Phakathi	UN-OHRLLS
57. Damien Sass	UN-OHRLLS
<b>Additional Participants</b>	<b>UN- System and Other organizations</b>
58. Liu, Zhenmin	USG, DESA
59. Sai Navoti	UN-DESA
60. Anya Thomas	UN-DESA
61. Eun Hee Lee	UN-DESA
62. Charles Channel	UNDP
63. Candida Rodriguez	UNDP
64. Thangavel Palanivel	UNDP
65. Bruce Campbell	UNFPA
66. Nisha	UNESCO
67. Tom Goreau	Global Coral Reef Alliance
68. Chalapan Kaluwin	University of Papua New Guinea