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Statement

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High Representative
and
Under-Secretary-General

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

Opening of the meeting of the SIDS National Focal Points

Thursday, 25 July 2019
Praia, Cabo Verde
Mr. Paulo Veiga, State Secretary for Maritime Economy,  
Your Excellency, Ms. Lois Young, Permanent Representative of Belize and Chair of AOSIS,  
Mr. Jorge Moreira da Silva, Director, OECD Development Co-operation Directorate  
HE Mr Roche, Permanent Representative of Cabo Verde to the United Nations,  
HE Mr Pao Luteru, Ambassador of Samoa to the EU,  

Dear National Focal Points of small island developing States (SIDS),  
Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  

I warmly welcome you all to our second meeting of the National Focal Points of SIDS.  

First, I must thank the Government of Cabo Verde for so graciously hosting us. Thank you.  

I also express our gratitude to the Government of Italy for their continued support to the SIDS and for funding this important meeting.  

I thank the colleagues from the UN and other international and regional organisations for your active participation and your spirit of partnership in this endeavour.  

It is good to see how we all are in this truly TOGETHER.  

This SIDS National Focal Points (NFPs) mechanism responds to paragraph 120 of the SAMOA Pathway, which mandates the Office of the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS (OHRLLS) to enhance the coherence of SIDS issues in UN processes, including at the national, regional and global levels.  

Yes, this is only our second meeting.  

But it is already clear that the NFPs are vitally important to our efforts!  

As we adopt the Terms of Reference for the SIDS National Focal Points today, we will complete a key building block in making this mechanism work for result.  

NFPs, through this mechanism, will be better able to effectively contribute to a coherent national, regional and global implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and related global frameworks.  

I hope we will also be able to identify the best ways to further strengthen the role of the NFPs and build your capacities to carry out your critical work.  

Our annual meetings are a key part of this process.  

The insights offered by you the NFPs on the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway during the inaugural meeting in Samoa last year, have greatly steered the focus and efforts of OHRLLS. But not just us. They also inform the UN system in general to deliver targeted support and policy advice at the regional and global levels.
In particular, the discussions on the data challenges in SIDS have led us to consider how best to support building the statistical capacities of your countries. This in turn has led us to coordinate the development of a toolkit for a harmonized approach for monitoring and reporting on the SAMOA Pathway for your consideration.

I am really pleased to see so many of our partner institutions here. I count on you to actively contribute to our discussions on the draft toolkit during this meeting. This will lay the foundation for a coordinated and coherent reporting process for SIDS.

We all are aware of the multiplicity of global sustainable development frameworks. I think it is a must for us all to work together to minimize the reporting burden, while maximizing results and solutions for the countries.

I also hope that our annual meeting provides you the NFPs with a unique and very valuable opportunity to meet face-to-face, share best practices, share what did not work, how to address challenges and identify ways forward in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the SDGs.

This is particularly important as a growing number of SIDS present their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) during the highlevel political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) each year.

For large developed countries, the VNR process can seem daunting. The challenge is so much greater for SIDS.

SIDS only have a fraction of the resources available to prepare for the Presentations. This year there were eight SIDS presenting VNRs. We will hear from many of them during this meeting, as well as from those SIDS, which have presented in previous years. Their experiences will undoubtedly serve as a foundation on which other SIDS can build future successes, particularly as it relates to ensuring alignment in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway with the SDGs.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We meet at a critical juncture. We meet just before the Midterm Review of the SAMOA Pathway, which is to be held this September.

Because of that, our discussions over the next two days are particularly relevant.

This meeting provides you the NFPs with an excellent platform to call greater attention to key issues as we set our priorities over the next five years.

Our discussions during this NFP meeting are meant for us to dig deeper into key issues. This in turn will better inform our political discussions at the Midterm Review, and set the stage for more targeted action at all levels – action that is relevant, practical and feasible for SIDS.

Advocacy for SIDS remains very critical. SIDS must be heard!
OHRLLS has increased the advocacy efforts. This has included building effective partnerships across the UN-system and with all relevant stakeholders.

This has included, and will continue to include, close engagement with high-level policymakers to promote action in support of the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway.

The Midterm Review will provide an excellent space for OHRLLS to further enhance our advocacy outreach and efforts.

It is my sincere hope that this effort coupled with your work as national focal points will greatly facilitate your efforts in national coordination. I look forward to your feedback and suggestions in this regard.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In Agenda 2030, the global community promised people to leave no one behind. We must ensure that the SIDS, which are among the most vulnerable, will indeed not be left behind!

The full implementation of the SAMOA Pathway is crucial in this regard.

The international community, including the UN system, must provide SIDS with the necessary support. We must look more closely into how we can support countries in strengthening their human and institutional capacities in support of achieving inclusive and sustainable development paths.

So, I urge you to have open, frank and action-oriented discussions and I look forward to listening to you.

Thank you.