Remarks
by
H.E. Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu
High Representative
and
Under-Secretary-General
for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries
and Small Island Developing States
at
“High Level Ministerial Breakfast Meeting on Migration and Climate Change – A Focus on SIDS”
8:00am-9.30am, 26th September 2019
West Terrace, UN Headquarters
Honorable Ministers,
Excellencies,
colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for including OHRLLS in your high-level breakfast meeting.

What a critical week this is for our shared planet and all peoples!

Your house, the house of the peoples, brings together the global community for urgent action on sustainable development and climate change.

It is an intense week of 5 summits including the very critical mid-term review of the SAMOA Pathway taking place tomorrow.

But it MUST be. We no longer face a climate challenge, we now face a climate emergency. An emergency impacting the SIDS disproportionately since long and likely to impact them ever more violently.

Just as there is no plan B for our planet, there can only be one plan for this week: galvanize global efforts and above all ACTION towards the 2030 agenda and the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Do we want more Hurricane-ravaged Bahamas, lost lives and desperate survivors trying to leave the island to seek shelter?

SIDS experience complex and special situations for sustainable development per se. Add now that they bear the brunt of climate change impacts on their scarce lands and their oceans.

Extreme temperatures, rising sea levels and slow onset events all threaten lives, livelihoods of islanders, cause significant loss of life and bio-diversity, destroy basic infrastructure, threaten food security. In short they threaten survival, security and any hope for the future. This ultimately triggers forced migration and displacement.

I called it previously "our perfect storm".

Ever since the Barbados Conference SIDS have called for action, never waivered in making a case for their peoples and it is good that we now have much heightened awareness on the vulnerability of SIDS and how SIDS are in the focus of the global debate on climate change-induced migration.

We have no time left and must now invest fast in building resilience to mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change on SIDS and their people if indeed we have the resolve to reduce instances of forced migration.
We must support SIDS to devise planned and managed migration for populations facing daily the grave climate impacts as part of SIDS' adaptation strategies.

SIDS have the least resources and capacity to cope with climate change and involuntary relocation. Just as we now have a climate emergency, we have an emergency to increase now and simplify now access to climate finance and capacity building.

So why care if you do not live in an island setting? Well, the past few years have shown more than clearly that climate change and migration concern ALL of us - they are global challenges.

This is why we urgently need global partnerships, stronger and sustained support of the international community and generally bolder and faster actions. This is our responsibility, task and this is what young people tell us: enough words, ACTION NOW.

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is a good step in that direction. Concerted efforts and action at the national, regional, sub-regional and global levels are needed to address the complex dynamics of climate-induced migration in SIDS.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

OHRLLS has spared no effort in advocating and rallying support and resources for the SIDS and we must even redouble those efforts.

In partnership with IOM, we analyzed climate migration in vulnerable groups of countries. I hope the brief recommendations that we provide will be of value and assistance to you.

We truly risk running out of time and we all must redouble our efforts to enhance effective partnerships, increase awareness and action on the climate-migration nexus.

We must support implementation of concrete solutions for the benefits of the peoples of the SIDS. We must lead by example and we must give hope through action.

Thank you.