HIGH REPRESENTATIVE
and
UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL
FEKITA ‘UTOIKAMANU

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REMARKS AT THE HIGH-LEVEL MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES ACCELERATED MODALITIES OF ACTION (SAMOA PATHWAY)

CLOSING SESSION

New York, 27 September 2019
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I have the honour to represent the Secretary-General, H.E. Antonio Guterres at the closing segment the high-level midterm review of the SAMOA Pathway.

The Declaration that you will endorse today represents more than just the necessary renewed political commitment to SIDS.

It is a roadmap for all of us to work harder so that we afford the islanders their basic human right to sustainable development.

This is all the more urgent given the ever accelerating impacts of climate change SIDS experience for already too long and do so at the frontline.

The journey that got us here ensured at every step of the way that we heard the voice of SIDS loud and clear.

SIDS remain a special case for sustainable development and continue to face extreme vulnerabilities.

Action is urgent, action cannot be postponed, action is now.

The adverse impacts of climate change and extreme weather events - so painfully brought home again by the devastation brought about by Hurricane Dorian. These effects will only become more so, as we approach the 1.5-degree warming that the IPCC has advised as being the upper limit for adaptation.

The manifold and complex challenges SIDS manage every day together with their high vulnerability to external economic and financial shocks, have left many SIDS in vicious cycles of disaster and debt.

This of course has severely impacted their efforts to achieve sustainable development in all of its dimensions.

Indeed, small islands continue to carry a big load for themselves and for the world. SIDS are at the vanguard of efforts to promote healthy oceans and seas, global ecosystems and biodiversity.
As they have shown again this week, they lead the way in increasing the share of renewables in the energy mix.

They strengthen disaster-risk-reduction efforts in the face of increasingly frequent and damaging extreme weather events.

SIDS by their very history are community-based societies and they make great strides toward social inclusion.

They have moved to enhance the quality of education of girls and boys, they improve public health and reduce the high prevalence of communicable and non-communicable diseases.

SIDS build resilience, mobilize domestic resources where possible and explore innovative mechanisms toward debt sustainability.

They do so while facing ever decreasing access to concessionary financing and significant capacity challenges.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

SIDS cannot go this alone again.

No amount of efforts by SIDS alone will be enough to enable them to transition to a path of sustainable development.

They need the support of the entire international community to implement the SAMOA Pathway, along with the Sendai Framework, the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs.

These are frameworks of broad scope and depth.

To ensure full inclusion of the SIDS we need NOW

stretched,
coherent and
coordinated ACTIONS by all stakeholders at all levels.

A principal partner is the UN development system.

Nowhere is our sustainable development-related work higher than in the most vulnerable countries, which include the SIDS.
I have been requested by the Secretary-General to share a clear and detailed roadmap to increase the capacities and reach of my Office in support of SIDS.

We will provide the clear and detailed roadmap in writing to the Secretary-General.

Here is a brief description of the OHRLLS roadmap for you today.

: SIDS MUST BE HEARD

SIDS need a stronger and more targeted advocacy support.

Where small countries lack the capacity or opportunity to participate, we need to help increase access and amplify voices on their issues of critical importance to their sustainable development – and by times to their very survival.

With this in mind, my Office will strengthen its advocacy efforts for SIDS at national, regional and global levels.

We will spare no effort to ensure that all partners and stakeholders from international organizations to international financial institutions, hear and are fully aware of the needs and priorities of SIDS. They must take necessary steps to address them and do so with urgency.

We will continue to help bring SIDS to the decision-making table, especially when the decisions being taken directly affect their ability to achieve sustainable development.

I will use the convening power of my Office to bring greater visibility to the concerns and needs of SIDS on the global and regional stage, and ensure as far as possible that they are adequately reflected in all global agreements and frameworks.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

SIDS NEED ADEQUATE AND TIMELY RESOURCES

Through active engagement with a number of development partners and major stakeholders, we will contribute to scaling up efforts to mobilize adequate and timely resources both for the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda.
WE EXPECT THAT, PROVIDED ADEQUATE RESOURCES, these efforts will lead to wide-ranging, tangible impacts for SIDS across the priority areas outlined during this Review and contained in the Political Declaration.

For example, OHRLLS with the UN development system, will work to push the resource mobilization necessary to deliver on SDG needs on the ground. This will be done in full alignment with national development plans and the priorities outlined in the SAMOA Pathway.

There is no time to waste and we must ensure both: that resource availability as such is guaranteed and that they can be accessed in timely, efficient and effective ways. TIME is indeed of the essence.

This brings me to the issue of COORDINATION

SIDS need a support system that works for them, that works for their peoples.

SIDS need a UN system that works together with other international, regional, and national stakeholders to bring coherent and coordinated support in the most efficient and effective ways possible.

We will continue our efforts to ensure that all UN entities integrate the priorities of SIDS in their strategic plans and work programmes. As a lead office for the SIDS within the UN system, my Office, together with UN-DESA, will continue to revitalize the inter-agency consultative Group on SIDS toward this end.

OHRLLS will make every effort to fully operationalize the SIDS National Focal Points mechanism which we launched in 2018.

I remain convinced that this mechanism will contribute to achieving coherence in SIDS issues at the national, regional and global levels, through leveraging existing coordinating frameworks, and providing stronger linkages with UNDCO and UNCTs, as well as with strategic regional and global actors.

These mechanisms hold enormous potential for enhancing our support to SIDS and for creating tools, lessons and examples in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Last but by no means least! SIDS need PARTNERSHIPS.
SIDS require effective partnerships to adequately respond to their development needs. This is why my Office will provide structured, continuous and substantive support to SIDS in the creation and strengthening of meaningful and durable partnerships toward the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway including through the activities of the SIDS Partnerships Framework and the SIDS Global Business Network.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

SIDS truly are our litmus test on whether or not we can fulfill our promise for a sustainable development for all.

All week, SIDS leaders have inspired us on what to do and to do it fast as we all run now against a ticking clock.

In closing, I wish to reemphasize the commitment of the UN System—including through the review of the multicounty office (MCO)—to better harness its policy advice, normative support and technical capacity in support of the sustainable development of SIDS.

We, the entire international community, owe it to the SIDS and their peoples to provide our long-term attention and investment.

This Review allowed us to once more hear your concerns and recognize your priorities and to have a solid roadmap.

Now is time for ACTION.

Now we must work together for a sustainable future for the peoples of the SIDS and through that, a sustainable future for all of humanity.

Work starts now.

Thank you.