Rector Francis de Lanoy,
Dean Marvis Koeiman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
I send you warm greetings!
I regret that I cannot be with you in person to share my message to your important FIDNESS 2019 conference.
The themes of your discussions mirror in so many ways the work the United Nations to support small island developing States or as we say in shorthand: SIDS.
This is particularly the case for your discussions on the economic and financial dimensions of sustainable development.
The themes of access to technology, pensions and growth of small business not only are key issues but they all are linked issues!
In our fast moving world, SIDS must be full participants, must stay ahead of new technological applications as they apply to finance including emerging areas such as blockchain and cryptocurrencies. Financial inclusion is a must. And this includes finding the best and most cost-effective ways to deliver financial services for businesses and citizens.
Inclusive access and robustness of pension systems to achieve sustainable development paths are equally important.
Robust pension systems are critical to improving livelihoods of older people, reducing poverty and intergenerational inequality. They are all about social integration and inclusion and this is at the core of sustainable development.
And there is more to it! We have the evidence that pension funds through their investments can generate impact across the three dimensions of sustainable development and across asset classes from building resilient infrastructure, investing in renewable energy, and issuing green and blue bonds.
As a third point of strategy, it is important to encourage the development and growth of small and family businesses. Small and family businesses form the backbone of all economies. They are grounded in communities and foremost they employ! Through their community links they are socially and increasingly environmentally conscious
and this is even the case in large economies such as the U.S. where they account for 65% of new job creation.

So, we are in front of three intertwined themes.

Three themes that are very much a part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This universal Agenda agreed by all Member States of the United Nations is ambitious. It wishes to ensure that ALL human beings can enjoy prosperous, productive and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occur in harmony with nature. Yes, it is ambitious but ambition is our only way forward!

Also agreed by all Member States is the SAMOA Pathway.

This agenda preceeded Agenda 2030 and is all about a sustainable development agenda responding to the specific situation of SIDS.

The SAMOA Pathway reaffirms that SIDS face specific, complex and often unique challenges to achieve sustainable development. They experience particular vulnerabilities and face great challenges in meeting their goals in all three dimensions of sustainable development.

The United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS ), which I lead, is inter alia responsible for supporting SIDS in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway together with the 2030 Agenda.

Advocacy, being a voice, is key to our activities and this includes numerous activities advocating for SIDS by helping to amplify their voices on issues of critical importance to their sustainable development.

OHRLLS partners of course with relevant parts of the United Nations system but also with civil society, media, academia and foundations to advance the cause of SIDS. As I often say, nobody can go it alone, we all must pull together, we must work together.

We also work closely with international financial institutions.

This ranges from alerting them to the particular issues of SIDS to how new technologies can assist in advancing their sustainable development goals.
Financing is a key issue. So, we do engage with numerous development partners and major stakeholders to mobilize resources for the implementation of the goals of the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda.

For many SIDS, not like Curacao, with limited financial and other resources, the support of the international community is critical. It is critical to advance in key areas like climate change, renewable energy, the strengthening of the financial sector, and achievement of financial inclusion.

Now, in all this OHRLS is also asked to ensure that the UN system works together with other international, regional, and national stakeholders. The goal is to deliver coherent and coordinated support in the most efficient and effective ways possible.

For this purpose, the Office launched the SIDS National Focal Points Network in November 2018.

We see this as a key tool to facilitate implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda at national levels through sharing tools and best practices.

We place great hope in the National Focal Points and their work to help with significantly accelerating progress on the ground across all dimensions of sustainable development.

As I said before, SIDS require effective partnerships to adequately respond to their development needs.

This is why we make every effort to facilitate structured, continuous and substantive support to SIDS in the creation and strengthening of meaningful and durable partnerships. This includes action areas like the SIDS Partnerships Framework and the SIDS Global Business Network.

It is in this context, that we would be keen to explore how we can partner with academic institutions such as the University of Curacao to support SIDS.

I applaud your efforts to establish programs that will create future leaders for SIDS in business, engineering and the humanities.

The hosting of such international conferences as you do is important to expose students to the latest global developments. More than ever current and future generations and especially in the SIDS need to be conversant in local and global realities.
I look forward to learning about the outcomes of your meeting. I especially look forward to exploring ways in which we can possibly work together in the future for the benefit of the peoples of the SIDS.

I send my warmest wishes and thank you.