Welcome Remarks by
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for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and
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at Islands Voices

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3pm, Room S-32Mm2
New York
Good afternoon and a very warm welcome to the United Nations.

You have arrived during one of the most important times in the UN calendar. World leaders and stakeholders such as civil society, youth, the private sector and the UN system itself are all here to address some of the most important issues of our time.

As you would have seen from the climate demonstrations which dominated the headlines over the last couple of days, young people all around the world are making their voices heard. And they are being heard loud and clear. The urgency that they feel was not just out on the streets, but here in the UN. The Youth Climate Summit over the weekend demanded solutions and bold action from world leaders.

In many ways, young people have set the stage for a week of high-level summits.

Today, the Climate Action Summit kicked off and you may have seen in the news that Secretary-General Antonio Guterres made it clear that he did not want leaders to bring speeches, but rather, bold actionable solutions. We also have the High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage starting today to galvanize global commitments to ensure health for all.

Tomorrow, the Sustainable Development Goals Summit will take place into Wednesday and is seeking solutions from world leaders on how they intend to accelerate action on achieving the goals with just over a decade left until 2030.

While we talk about the big bold solutions that are needed, we know full well that there will be costs involved. This is why we also have the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development taking place on Thursday. The meeting is bringing together leaders from Government, business and the financial sector to help unlock the resources and partnerships needed to finance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals.

Finally, on Friday, leaders will focus their attention on small island developing States at the Midterm Review of the SAMOA Pathway. As islanders, you know firsthand that island nations are among the most vulnerable countries in the world. But the story is not just about vulnerability, it is also about resilience. Island nations may be small, but that doesn’t mean they can’t be heard.
The SAMOA Pathway represents the voices of small island developing States, saying these are the challenges we face, and this is how we need to go about solving them.

The Island Voices journalism campaign has been about raising awareness among island journalists of the SAMOA Pathway in particular, but also the Sustainable Development Goals. It is about giving island journalists the opportunity to tell these important stories from an island perspective.

The campaign has culminated in inviting you to the UN to witness and to report on how the international community intends to solve global challenges and partner with island nations to achieve the SAMOA Pathway.

Most importantly, the discussions that are taking place here at the global level has direct impacts on the lives of islanders back home. This is why your presence is critical. Because it is through you that these stories can be told to audiences back home.

I personally hope that the story we all come away with this week is that while small island developing States are on the frontline of global challenges, including the climate emergency, there is hope that our collective efforts around the world will win the day.

I encourage you to use this occasion to bring these important stories home and I hope that you will find the opportunity personally enriching as well.

Thank you and I wish you all the best for the busy week ahead.