Statement

by

Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu
High Representative
for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries
and Small Island Developing States

at the

THE REPUBLIC OF THE MALDIVES AND PARLEY FOR THE OCEANS
PRESENT
“FUTURE ISLAND NATION” PROGRAM

Wednesday, September 25th
7:00-10:00 PM
Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum
Your Excellency Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, President of the Republic of Maldives
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very honored to address your important gathering.

It is so encouraging to be amidst such a diverse group of partners, all working with a shared objective — bolster action around marine plastic pollution to ensure that we implement SDG 14 and the objectives of the SAMOA Pathway.

This evening’s unveiling of the “Future Island Nation” underpins strongly how important partnerships are so we get results.

This spirit also drives OHRLLS. Our SIDS Global Business Network, joined hands with Parley for the Oceans to promote their initiative to Avoid, Intercept, and Redesign (A.I.R) strategy to end plastic pollution in September in 2016.

Three years on, here we are to share tangible results.

I express our and certainly my own profound gratitude to President Ibrahim Solih for your leadership and for pioneering this innovative solution. The focus of this partnership is on a single, very focused aspect of ocean pollution, although its impact, I am confident will bring positive outcomes for the health of the ocean overall. You have provided an impetus for other nations to now follow suit.
I also congratulate, Mr. Cyrill Gutsch, CEO and Founder of Parley for the Oceans, for your initiative to partner with SIDS.

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

Small Island Developing States are the custodians to vast ocean spaces. 70 per cent of our shared planet is oceans! Oceans are the lifeline of our planet.

The sustainable and equitable management and use of the oceans is at the core of ensuring that the SIDS and their peoples fully benefit from what Agenda 2030 set out to achieve for ALL.

SIDS too often on their own have made remarkable efforts to preserve and conserve the ocean space within their exclusive economic zones but they continue to face major challenges and the challenges are increasing.

The pressures on the ocean’s finite resources are eroding the oceans’ assets base at a rate that undermines sustainability, value and access for future generations.

The most immediate challenges we must tackle with urgency are associated with losses of biodiversity, pollution; noting that what affects the ocean directly affects those on land as it impacts jobs, income, government revenue from tourism and other marine related sectors and triggers health issues, leads to food insecurity and malnutrition.

SIDS require and deserve strong partnerships.
We must give a hand of support to build their resilience and adapt to conditions that have already and seem to accelerate in fundamentally altering the life of the island communities across the globe.

Genuine and durable partnerships for SIDS was the overarching theme of the Third SIDS Conference.

The role of partnerships is reaffirmed in the political declaration expected from the high-level review of the SAMOA Pathway this Friday.

We must strengthen and accelerate our efforts with urgency. We must do so through action and not more words or platitudes.

I am pleased to announce that OHRLLS together with the Government of Palau, Parley for the Oceans and other partners will host a Dialogue on “Fostering partnerships with Small island developing states towards the 2020 Our Ocean Conference” in Oslo, Norway, on 23 October in the margins of the Our Ocean Conference.

I hope you will join hands with us!

People expect action. People will no longer wait.

Actions speak louder than words. It is time to move from bold statements to more ambitious actions to keep our oceans healthy.

The health and wellbeing of oceans concerns us all. The challenges of ocean management must be addressed collectively.
As the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, I want to reassure you that you can count on OHRLLS’ and my continued support.

Thank you.

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