Statement
by
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High Representative
and
Under-Secretary-General
for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries
and Small Island Developing States

Ministerial Roundtable
Risk-informed public and private investments
Thursday 16 May from 11 am to 1pm
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished delegates,
dear colleagues
Ladies and gentlemen,

I can not overstate how relevant and how strategic the theme of this roundtable – risk informed public and private investments is for the three groups of countries OHRLLS advocates for. These three groups of countries, as you all know, are highly vulnerable to the accelerating impacts of climate change and to external shocks in the international system.

Therefore, disaster losses put these countries, their people on a more than unequal footing.

Already scarce resources get even further depleted and prevent from critical investments in areas such as quality education, health and infrastructure. Yet, these investments are vital to eradicating extreme poverty, and ensuring more resilient, productive and peaceful societies. They are vital to ensuring that these countries are not left behind in achieving the goals Agenda 2030 sets.

The high vulnerability and risk levels of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS exceed the capacity of these countries to respond to and recover from disaster. The 2018 edition of the OHRLLS’ flagship publication on LDCs has as its special theme” Reducing vulnerabilities and strengthening resilience in LDCs.

The Report presents an in-depth analysis of climate-related and other risks facing LDCs. It discusses measures and recommendations for reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience.

As Secretary- General Guterrez keeps reminding the global community, we have only begun to see the devastating impacts of climate change.

We do not have the luxury of time. Urgent global action and strengthened international cooperation must happen now to support vulnerable countries onto a path of greater resilience so as to include them in achieving the goals set out in Agenda 2030.

OHRLLS has repeatedly called - and will continue to call for the full implementation of the Sendai Framework. It must be done in a coherent manner and in integration with other global agreements including the Istanbul Programme of Action for the LDCs, the Vienna Programme of Action for the LLDCs and the SAMOA Pathway for the SIDS.

For our part, OHRLLS will invest in actions to contribute to risk-informed public and private investment to build resilience of the most vulnerable countries.

Allow me to highlight a few specifics. OHRLLS works with our partners to enhance research and data collection to provide further insight into the implications of climate change and migration including in the landlocked developing countries.
I can not stress enough how important it is that we have access to verifiable, timely and relevant data.

I have also stressed the need to strengthen early warning systems and invest in informational/institutional capacity on climate and weather information systems. It is really key to have performing risk management capacity in place.

Risk information must systematically be mainstreamed in planning, zoning and investments. This is key to operational and financial efficiency, it helps avoiding unnecessary extra costs. We must better understand the risk-reward trade-offs. We must unveil the cost of inaction.

At the same time, OHRLLS intensifies our efforts to notch up international support for vulnerable countries and this includes broadening their access to financial facilities.

Access is a very important dimension here. I have stated this over and over and will say it again: we must invest in accelerating, simplifying and enhancing access to already existing financing mechanisms such as the adaptation fund, the global environmental facility, the Green Climate Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund.

We all know about stretched, limited capacities vulnerability brings with it. It can not be that we overtax critical capacity with burdensome procedures - of course, transparency and accountability are a must but let us look into simplifications!

2019 is a very crucial year and especially so for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Five years after the Third SIDS Conference, the United Nations General Assembly will hold a one-day high-level review of the SAMOA Pathway on 27 September 2019 in New York.

The SAMOA Pathway recognizes that genuine and durable partnerships play an important role in advancing the sustainable development of SIDS.

As a side remark, PARTNERSHIP is and will increasingly be a MUST for us to translate the Agenda 2030 ambitions and those of the Paris Climate Agreement into reality on the ground. Already over the past year, OHRLLS intensified efforts to strengthen partnerships with the private sector to promote sustainable development in SIDS.

The SIDS Global Business Network was established. Its aim is to better link the business communities of the three SIDS regions, exchange lessons learned and best practices. Disaster risk reduction is one of the seven key thematic areas of the SIDS-Global Business Network. The network will address the issue of risk-informed investments.

It is not you that I need to tell at how critical a juncture we all are and how it is working together is our way forward. As you know, the United Nations is seeking to engage with ALL - with governments (at all levels), businesses, civil society, academia and a wide range of other stakeholders to just do that - build partnerships. These are partnerships we need to support sustainable development in SIDS.
In recognition of this critical dynamic, OHRLLS together with DESA organizes a Global Multi-stakeholder SIDS Partnership Dialogue. The dialogue is scheduled on the margins of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development on 10 July in New York.

Partnerships on disaster risk reduction and resilience building are a key pillar of this dialogue. The lessons from the Global Platform will feed into this process.

So, let us ALL stay engaged and stay especially engaged in the process for the mid-term review of the SAMOA Pathway.

I am confident that it is by joining forces and investing in existing and new partnerships that we lend the best support possible to SIDS in the realization of their sustainable development aspirations.

I thank you.