



**Remarks
by
H.E. Mr. Aliioaiga Feturi ELISIA,
Samoa's Permanent Representative to the United Nations
at
Informal Stock-taking meeting of ECOSOC
"Reflections on the outcomes of the Samoa Conference
and the way forward"
1 October 2014, ECOSOC Chamber, U.N. Headquarters, New York.**

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

A month ago today, the world's focus and attention was on the sustainable development of Small Island developing states, the UN recognized group with special needs and inherent vulnerabilities, not by their choice but by factors completely outside of their control.

By organizing today's "informal stock-taking meeting of ECOSOC", SIDS have been gifted yet again with another opportunity for the world to hear how SIDS priorities captured in the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action, or "The SAMOA Pathway" can be implemented.

But I'm not here to belabor what the SAMOA Pathway outcome document is. Rather let me say in one sentence that the "SAMOA Pathway", as a well crafted intergovernmental agreement that has the zeal and stamp of approval of the UN membership, is the blueprint for SIDS sustainable development for now and the immediate future.

Excellencies,

My country was honoured to host on behalf of the Pacific region the once in a decade International Conference on Small Island Developing States. Our primary goal in hosting the Conference was the opportunity for the spotlight of international attention to fall on SIDS on their challenges and realities.

Now that the spotlight has passed on, we hope the increased understanding and appreciation of SIDS issues and challenges gained at the conference will not be forgotten with the passing of time, or sidelined due to other competing priority issues of global significance.

The international community has a very full agenda. The follow up to the SIDS conference will be part of that agenda and our hope is that, amidst all the demands, political, economic and other, that the realities of SIDS, so clearly spelled out in the SAMOA Pathway are able to retain the attention of the wider international community. We took seriously the commitments given for SIDS at the conference and we will remain deeply mindful of how those commitments are turned into actions.

The conference had as its theme the sustainable development of SIDS through genuine and durable partnerships. We are ready to build on our existing partnerships. We may be small and sometimes invisible to many, but we are also able to demonstrate the impact of our people and our countries of successful, 21st century partnerships.

Maybe the High Level Political Forum could be the place to hear what is happening to carry truly transformational partnerships forward. Announcing a few partnerships at each annual session that showed what the whole vision of partnerships is, not as a once in a decade experience, can be part of a forward rolling process that keeps the spirit of Apia alive and relevant. And having the President of ECOSOC challenge members and the UN system to keep the partnership spirit alive and moving ahead would be one very tangible way to show this.

Building on what has been outlined in Samoa, the Partnership Framework to be developed and the Partnership Platform should be turned in to a living docking station of partnerships and effective "M" and "E" going forward. This may require a small but efficient inter-stakeholder monitoring arrangement not confined to the present set-up.

As President of ECOSOC, you are guardian of the High Level Political Forum, the successor of the Commission on Sustainable Development [CSD]. You have a responsibility to ensure that the access of SIDS to a platform for their issues during the annual SIDS Day of CSD is replaced by something more than just a showpiece. The HLPF must be the place where the spotlight falls on SIDS issues and concerns in a considered manner, and in an environment that shows that this is not just a perfunctory "business as usual" event.

Mr. President,

If there is a single message I want to leave with you, and members of the ECOSOC Council, it is the fact that as a group of UN member states, all SIDS matter irrespective

of their economic status, size, and political clout. This often requires tailored and localized approaches which sometimes are not typically deployed by development partners and UN agencies and entities elsewhere.

So as we approach the new Post-2015 Development agenda, we must ensure that while a one Framework approach is important - this does not equate to a "one-size-fits-all" for purposes of implementation and monitoring and evaluation. It is important that agreed SDGs and Post-2015 Development agenda takes into account groups like SIDS to ensure that indicators developed are applicable to their situations also. Building on the existing processes and experiences in these SIDS countries and their respective regions and sub-regions is critical in this regard.

The theme of the SIDS conference was on effective means of implementation through partnerships. We must ensure therefore that the means to implement the SAMOA Pathway is solidly laminated into the Post 2015 Development Framework. These arrangements should be entrenched in the High Level Political Forum and review arrangements of the ECOSOC. It is important that the intergovernmental architectures of our respective SIDS regions are included in this process and that means working together amongst SIDS and their partners and with intergovernmental organizations, and not against or in competition with each other.

We must break down what has been a traditional "them" and "us" perception between member states and the Secretariats established to serve our collective needs because it doesn't benefit anyone. I would encourage therefore that any coordination mechanisms established have representation of both, for transparency and balance of perspectives and interests. The Inter-Agency Consultative Group is one arrangement that could benefit from member state representation where open discussions can take place around effective implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and Post 2015 Development Agenda.

Small Island States need, more than ever, to work with a coordinated UN system because we need to move quickly to identify and implement programs which will help our nations deal immediately with the threats of sea-level rise and the intensification of tsunamis and other weather abnormalities.

We need a comprehensive review of the SIDS specific UN institutions responsive and supportive to SIDS in our collective efforts to address their sustainable development aspirations in the post 2015-development agenda and beyond.

We also call for the establishment of a robust global monitoring system that will strengthen the accountability at all levels and ensure adequate and timely analysis and update of the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway.

Mr. President,

Going forward, it falls on SIDS themselves to be prepared to lead and own the SAMOA Pathway if it is to be taken seriously by others. Together with the specific entities within the UN Secretariat entrusted to advocate and champion SIDS causes, they should be more proactive and assertive. Jointly, they must re-position themselves to engage better in a more effective and visible partnership.

Moreover, what we need to achieve is to have a "Human face of SIDS" to every issue that comes before the UN, be it security, human rights, climate change, development, gender, or indigenous issues. That way, SIDS issues are at the forefront of the UN agenda, they remain topical and relevant, and are considered, debated and actioned daily, weekly or monthly and not conveniently set aside to be discussed only when we have another SIDS conference ten years from now.

Let me conclude by echoing what my Prime Minister said at his closing remarks during the SIDS Conference in Apia, and I quote *"I hope the SAMOA Pathway will not be viewed as an end in itself to be used only as a reference point for convenience or until the next SIDS conference. Much investment in genuine goodwill by SIDS and their partners went into agreeing to the SAMOA Pathway as the blueprint for SIDS sustainable development for now and the immediate future"*.

I challenge all of you to help turn "**SIDS island voices**" into "**Global choices**" so that there is indeed hope for SIDS today, tomorrow and the future.

Thank you.

Brief closing remarks at conclusion of the ECOSOC Informal Stock-taking on the 3rd International Conference on SIDS.

Mr. President,

It's difficult not to be superfluous in one's "thank you" given the kind and warm sentiments expressed to my country by so many ambassadorial colleagues and other distinguished representatives including the very positive messages of support for SIDS going forward.

But we at that juncture and hour of the day when words are inadequate to express what the heart feels, for the heart feels the truth.

Thank you sincerely for your very generous and gracious remarks to my country.

For those who travelled to Samoa for the SIDS Conference, thank you for being our guests and for having the grace to accept what modest hospitality we were able to provide.

Samoa will never be the same again, because we invited 3000 delegates, and at the end we had to say good-bye to 3000 genuine friends and partners of Samoa.

In closing, if we had erred in the performance of our hosting responsibilities, I ask for your kind understanding and forbearance, after all, to err is human, to forgive, divine.

Thank you and God bless.