



PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

United Nations Member States

Permanent Mission of the Independent State of
Papua New Guinea to the United Nations
201 East 42nd Street, Suite 2411, New York, N.Y. 10017

Phone: 212-557-5001
Fax: 212-557-5009
E-mail: pngmission@pngun.org

Statement

by

H.E. Mr Robert G. Aisi
Permanent Representative

**Papua New Guinea Permanent Mission to the United Nations
and Chair of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS)**

On behalf of the

**Pacific Troika Members of the Open Working Group on SDGs,
PSIDS and Timor-Leste**

**to the Sixth Session of the OWG on SDGs on the
'Needs of Countries in Special Situations –
The Case for Small Island Developing States (SIDS)'**

New York

11 December 2013

“Check against delivery”

Co-Chair,

On behalf of the Pacific Troika members of the OWG on SDGs; namely, Nauru, Palau and my own country – Papua New Guinea, I have the pleasure to present this Statement regarding the cluster on the “needs of countries in special situations...” but with specific focus on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and especially the Pacific SIDS Case.

We are also pleased to be joined in this Statement by the nine other Pacific Small Island Developing States represented at the UN, namely the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu as well as our Pacific neighbour, Timor-Leste.

Except for those of our members who are not G77 members; we align ourselves with the statement made by our Fiji colleague on behalf of G77 and China. All of us however, associate ourselves with the statement made by our other Pacific colleague, Nauru, as the AOSIS Chair.

We again acknowledge today’s panelist for their interesting presentations that have enriched our conversation and also thank the UN system for the useful TST guiding documents. We also commend the Co-Chairs for their balanced and fair manner and stewardship of our deliberations, thus far.

Co-Chair,

Like many Small Island Developing States, Pacific SIDS are characterized by geographic isolation with a vast expanse of 30 million square kilometres of the Pacific Ocean, small land area and population sizes and resource constraints.

We continue to suffer from diseconomies of scale in production and exchange of goods and services, remoteness from export markets, high vulnerability to external market shocks and increasing susceptibility to natural disasters and climate change.

Furthermore, not only does the vulnerability of Pacific nations remain, it is also increasing while resilience and capacity to cope—which has largely depended on traditional social systems in the past—is declining.

The severe impacts of climate change and natural and human-induced disasters illustrate these realities. Likewise, the impact of the global economic crises especially financial, food and fuel on the Pacific, have not only eroded earlier development gains, but they have exacerbated the vulnerability of the our communities and the natural environment and contribute to increasing poverty of opportunity and access. The recent Typhoon Haiyan that wrought devastation and human suffering in Palau’s northern areas and the Philippines and the severe drought in the Marshall Islands are cases in point.

These traits therefore present unique challenges for sustainable development and underscores that there is little doubt of the merits of the SIDS's "special case" as defined by the UN Conference on Environment and Development 21 years ago and further reinforced by the Rio-Plus 20 Conference last year.

This "special case", for us, will remain a key issue for the post-2015 development agenda. It therefore warrants the UN membership and wider international community's heightened and clear recognition and adequate attention.

Co-Chair,

The Pacific SIDS have however, made important progress toward the implementation of some of the actions called for internationally agreed development goals including notably the Barbados Plan of Action (BPoA), the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation (MSI), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) both at the national and regional level.

For most thematic areas, the conclusion we and others have drawn is that while the efforts are ongoing and results are at best "mixed", there is much unfinished business on implementation of the BPoA, MSI and the MDGs, and therefore accelerating progress is needed.

To accelerate progress requires addressing underlying constraints and strengthen meaningful partnerships including marshalling sufficient levels of the means of implementation to bring about pragmatic and real lasting positive change for improved and resilient lives and livelihoods of our peoples and communities.

That is why the Pacific SIDS in our July 2013 Pacific SIDS Regional preparatory outcome document for the Third SIDS International Conference in Samoa, was themed "Accelerating Integrated Sustainable Development", which clearly identifies and articulates our priority sustainable development issues, including new and emerging challenges.

Co-Chair,

Before I conclude, I wish to highlight four key sustainable development priorities for Pacific SIDS that justify why our special needs ought to be accorded priority in the consideration of the post-2015 development agenda.

Firstly, we recognize that poverty is increasing in our region. According to the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), PSIDS and Timor-Leste have a combined poverty rate of around twenty percent. The challenge of reducing poverty is even more difficult in fragile and conflict-affected SIDS, as the recent 2013 Dili Consensus theme recognised "Development for all: Stop conflict, build states and eradicate poverty."

The challenge for the Pacific region is to ensure that the post-2015 development agenda is adapted to national circumstances as a key pathway to combat poverty, build resilience and reduce vulnerabilities and inequalities including through institutional strengthening and capacity building, enhanced governance and peace building, address gender equality and economic empowerment, education, access to information and communication technology (ICT), economic growth and diversification and sustainable energy development.

Secondly, for the Pacific region, the largest shared resource is the 30 million square kilometres Pacific Ocean and its resources. For most Pacific countries, the ocean comprises more than 99 percent of our sovereign territory. It is our inherent identity, our food-basket and a driver of our economies which is intertwined with our future destiny. The post-2015 development agenda needs to ensure healthy productive and resilient oceans, for which we as the “canaries of the coalmine” are advocating a standalone SDG and seek the international community’s backing.

Thirdly, climate change is recognized by the PSIDS and Timor-Leste like many other SIDS and others as the single greatest threat to the lives and livelihoods, security, social development and wellbeing of the region. Countries in the region remain seriously concerned that emissions of greenhouse gases continue to rise, with ocean acidification threatening coral reefs and marine ecosystem, sea-level rise already engulfing our coastal communities and destroying our infrastructures. Transformational investment in climate change adaptation and mitigation, building infrastructure, institutions and capacity can help strengthen our resilience to existential threats and internal conflict and violence.

Fourthly, there has been some success in integrating sustainable development principles espoused under the BPoA, MSI and MDGs into national plans as reflected in the many national development plans, policies and frameworks. However, significant gaps still remain in coordination; partnerships, participation and inclusion; human and institutional capacity; and meaningful and measurable sustainable development indicators and targets to monitor and evaluate progress. There remains a notable lack of data, analysis, and information and knowledge management for supporting evidence-based decision making.

Co-Chair,

In conclusion, we are pleased that much of our regional sustainable development priorities have been included in the SIDS Inter-Regional Outcome that will form the basis for international negotiations in the upcoming Preparatory Commissions and the Samoa SIDS Conference-proper next September.

In this context, we call on the international community to better appreciate and understand our unique and special circumstances, vulnerabilities and challenges and accord the support and cooperation we need to enable us integrate and transform our communities and nations into a durable, resilient and a assured sustainable future we want.

I thank you.