

Mr. Wu Hongbo Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

**Opening Remarks
Ministerial Meeting on Food Security and Climate Adaptation in SIDS**

14 October 2015, Milan, Italy

Your Excellency Minister Gentiloni,
Excellency Minister Fakahau,
Excellency Ambassador Young,
Ms. Deputy-Director-General Semedo,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank the Italian government for hosting us here today and to thank the many eminent representatives of Small Island Developing States who flew in from great distances to join us.

There is no doubt that this is an important meeting, at an important moment in the history of development and of *sustainable* development for the world at large and SIDS in particular.

A little over one year ago, the international community gathered in Apia, Samoa, for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States. The great success of that Conference was a testament to the extraordinary efforts of the host country, the Independent State of Samoa, and I am happy that Minister Aveau and Ambassador Feturi are here with us today.

The SIDS Conference was a great show of support by the international community to SIDS. It gave us the legacy of the SAMOA Pathway, a hard hitting and comprehensive document that lays a course for all aspects of SIDS sustainable development for the next ten years and beyond.

Just over one year later, the Sustainable Development Summit brought together more than 150 Heads of State and Government to adopt the historic 2030 Agenda.

The Agenda is universal, ambitious and potentially transformative. It was born out of a multi-stakeholder process unprecedented in its inclusive and transparent nature, building on the legacy of the MDGs and taking the next step forward to sustainable development.

The SAMOA Pathway was an important and explicit input into the 2030 Agenda, so it is no accident that the priorities and vision in the Pathway are reflected well in the Agenda. As we have said many times before, SIDS issues are global issues.

We are now entering the implementation phase of the 2030 Agenda. Implementation of the SAMOA Pathway started as soon as the Pathway was agreed. The world at large has much to learn from the SIDS experience. Before the ink was dry on the SAMOA Pathway, the SIDS were

making it clear that they did not want that document to be an end in itself but rather, to become a tool to bring about needed change.

The SIDS built robust follow-up and review mechanisms into the Pathway. They are particularly novel in the area of partnerships. The document calls for a “partnership framework” to be administered by my team in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Developing proposals for that framework has been an inclusive and transparent process. We are hoping that this framework can ultimately serve as a model for following up the partnerships arising from the 2030 Agenda as well.

Key to partnership follow up, and to the follow up and review of the commitments in the Pathway in general, will be the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The HLPF is mandated to address SIDS issues in standalone sessions and by mainstreaming SIDS concerns in the other thematic panels as well. This year, in addition, DESA supported the AOSIS Chair in convening a partnerships forum to take stock of progress to date. Future sessions of the HLPF will feature national presentations as well as thematic reviews of implementation in specific areas of Agenda 2030.

It is important that as we move forward we ensure that the 2030 Agenda and the SAMOA pathway are followed-up and reviewed in an integrated fashion. The HLPF provides a platform for doing this.

If we do it right, the HLPF can be a vehicle not only for tracking progress but for spurring it forward. I see the HLPF as the space where Member States and other stakeholders can discuss the tough and serious issues of the day, to identify solutions and debate their merits. Dialogue in itself can create fertile ground for innovation and creativity.

Innovative and creative ideas are worth most when they are rooted in evidence, science and data. Member States were thus very farsighted when they mandated that the Global Sustainable Development Report be a central input to the HLPF. The report is an assessment of assessments meant to strengthen the science-policy interface. This year’s Report included a chapter on strengthening the science-policy interface in SIDS. A meeting that contributed to the chapter brought SIDS-based scientists, academics, and technical experts together with policy makers. One of the key takeaways was that there is impressive scientific capacity in SIDS that needs to be better utilized. This is something that we in the UN system must support.

Another implementation tool for the 2030 Agenda that emerged this year is the Technology Facilitation Mechanism. Born in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Mechanism signifies the importance of technology development and transfer as a means of implementing the ambitious 2030 agenda. SIDS will be critical partners in its success.

The Financing for Development Conference yielded a number of other important deliverables as well. An infrastructure forum will allow the relevant actors to share experiences and take stock of infrastructure needs. The Addis Agenda notes that it is particularly important to address infrastructure and capacity gaps in countries in special situations including SIDS. The means of implementation clearly go beyond financing alone.

Still, finance is critical, and for SIDS, one important type of development financing will come in the context of climate change adaptation and the Green Climate Fund.

This brings me to the next and final stage of this critical long year. A year that began in September 2014 in Apia, passed through Sendai, Addis, New York, and will end this December in Paris.

For many gathered here, climate change threatens your homes, livelihoods and very existence. The international community simply must rally behind a strong and ambitious agreement at COP 21.

The need for bold climate action is at the heart of all discussions of SIDS sustainable development.

However, the beauty of the SAMOA Pathway and the SDGs is that indeed, many issues can be credibly placed at the heart of the discussion. Food security is such an issue. I will speak about this more later on in the day, but suffice it to say that no progress can be made in economic growth, education, gender equality, or the protection of the oceans without honest and thoughtful attention to food security. A hungry child cannot learn. An ocean fished out cannot provide sustenance and solace to future generations.

I am honoured to be here at this important meeting, and I look forward to the rich discussions to come. I wish you all the best.