



# MALDIVES

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## Global Multi-Stakeholder SIDS Partnership Dialogue

Opening Statement by:

His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Asim, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Maldives

22 September 2016

You Excellency Mr Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs

Your Excellency Mr Gyan Chandra Acharya, High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

It was almost 25 years ago, in Brazil, that the international community recognised small island developing states as a “special case for sustainable development”. Since then, we have come together, in Barbados, in Mauritius, and most recently two years ago, in Samoa, to specify, in greater detail, the specific actions and steps necessary to realise the sustainable development of small island developing States (SIDS).

SIDS, being some of the smallest countries of the world, have always realised that we cannot achieve our priorities and development on our own – we had always recognised that we needed to work with others, that we needed to listen to and learn from others. The challenges we face – climate change, ocean degradation, maritime crime, distance from markets, to name a few – are truly global challenges that we cannot solve on our own. In fact, we are often the ones that contribute the least!

It was in the SAMOA Pathway, however, that we truly gave meaning to the potential of partnerships. The theme of the conference was “the sustainable development of SIDS through genuine, and durable partnerships”. The Conference held six successful multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues, which resulted in the announcement of over 300 partnerships for SIDS.

We did not want these partnerships to be forgotten after the Conference. We wanted to see how they were supporting the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway – whether they were making measurable, timely, and realistic impacts on the ground. We wanted those partnerships to share their experiences – challenges and successes alike – with SIDS, with non-SIDS, with other stakeholders - in the hope that those experiences would spur new partnerships.

These are the motivations behind the Partnership Framework established one year ago. When we set up the reporting template, the SIDS Action Platform, the Steering Committee, we did not anticipate that our framework would be leading the way in establishing similar frameworks for the 2030 Agenda. When we held the first meeting of the Steering Committee, the first Partnership Dialogue in July this year, we did not expect the high level of attendance, the true interest in seeing our framework succeed. We are humbled by the support.

Setting up the framework is but one step – a big one, no doubt – but just a beginning. We need to continue to be invested, interested, and involved. We need to continue to work, generating discussion and dialogue, reflecting on the experiences of various partnerships. It is only through this sharing of information, that we can generate renewed interest in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. We, the Small Island Developing States, should endeavour to share our own experiences, our own views on the partnerships taking effect in our countries. You, our partners, should tell us honestly, openly about what your challenges are, so we can address them. It is only then, that the purpose of this dialogue today would be realised.

For the Maldives, it has been a true honour to be the first co-Chair of the Steering Committee on Partnerships for SIDS. It has also been a pleasure to work with Italy, our long-standing bilateral partner, and a true champion of SIDS, in this endeavour. And I want to thank my counterpart Minister, His Excellency Mr. Vincenzo Amendola, Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Italy for his collaboration with me on this venture. I would also like to express our deep gratitude to his entire team in New York, especially Permanent Representative His Excellency Sebastiano Cardi, for their dedication and contribution.

I want to finish my remarks here today, by thanking all of you, who took the time to come and support the SIDS today, and throughout these decades. I want to thank all those who are announcing new partnerships today. It is truly encouraging and exciting to see this enthusiasm. SIDS stand ready to work with you to realise the sustainable development priorities as outlined in the SAMOA Pathway, and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

Let me now invite Under-Secretary of State Mr Amendola from Italy, to deliver some opening remarks.