

Meeting of the Steering Committee on Partnerships for Small Island Developing States

26 April 2017, 3.00 PM – 4.30 PM, Conference Room 5, UNHQ

Opening remarks by United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Ambassador Ahmed Sareer,
Ambassador Sebastiano Cardi,
Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, Chief of Policy Development, OHRLLS,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to join you today at the first 2017 Steering Committee meeting on partnerships for Small Island Developing States.

This Steering Committee has grown directly out of the Third International Conference for SIDS, held in September 2014 in Samoa.

The overarching theme of the Conference "The sustainable development of small island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships", has by now taken hold, and the "spirit of Samoa" is informing our approach to SIDS sustainable development, and indeed in the wider context of the 2030 Agenda.

The SAMOA Pathway broke new ground and made a number of specific calls to the United Nations system and to the international community. Paragraph 101 called for preparation of recommendations for a SIDS Partnership Framework to monitor and ensure the full implementation of pledges and commitments through partnerships for SIDS.

In response to the mandate, the Secretariat prepared a set of recommendations in close consultation with Member States. In December 2015, during the 70th session of the General Assembly, Member States formally established the SIDS Partnership Framework.

I want to take this opportunity to thank AOSIS for its leadership and congratulate Ambassador Ahmed Sareer and Ambassador Sebastiano Cardi for its re-appointment as co-chairs of this Steering Committee.

Excellencies,

As you recall, over 300 partnerships were announced at the SIDS Conference. Many are making encouraging progress, including those involving the private sector.

We are now in year two of the work of this Steering Committee. During 2016, its first year, the work that we - the co-chairs, member States, UN DESA, OHRLLS, and many other UN partners - did in true partnership, was impressive.

To quickly recap our 2016 efforts; the mandated partnership reporting process was established in May; two SIDS partnership dialogues were held - one during the High-level Political Forum in July, and one during the high level week of the General Assembly in

September – and lastly, a publication on SIDS Partnership was prepared, with inputs from many partnerships.

I strongly believe that the Steering Committee, under the leaderships of the co-chairs, provide a strong momentum for the full implementation of SIDS partnerships, and an excellent platform for spurring new initiatives that are advancing the sustainable development of SIDS.

Colleagues,

As you know, one of the main UN conferences this year is the high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development – The Ocean Conference. I would like to thank the Government of Fiji and Sweden for their leadership and for assuming co-hosting responsibilities of the Conference.

The Conference aims to be the game changer that will reverse the decline in the health of our ocean for people, planet and prosperity. It will be a solutions-focused Conference with engagement from all stakeholders, looking at ways and means to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, how we can build on existing successful partnerships, and stimulate innovative and concrete new partnerships to advance the implementation of Goal 14.

The Ocean Conference will be convened here in New York for a full week, between 5-9 June 2017. It will comprise of plenary meetings, 7 partnership dialogues, a special event commemorating World Oceans Day, and a range of side events and exhibitions from all stakeholders.

The outcome of the Conference is three-fold;

- 1) A concise, focused, intergovernmentally agreed declaration in the form of a "Call for Action" to support the implementation of Goal 14
- 2) A report containing the co-chairs' summaries of the partnership dialogues
- 3) A list of voluntary commitments for the implementation of Goal 14

As you know, member states are in full swing as we speak in negotiating the Call for Action declaration.

In support of the third outcome - the list of Voluntary Commitments - my Department, under the leadership of the Conference Secretary-General Mr. Wu Hongbo, in close collaboration with Sweden, Fiji, OPGA, DOALOS, and UNDP, has launched an online registry of collecting Voluntary Commitments for the implementation of SDG 14. As of this morning, the tally was over 80 commitments; many of which are from SIDS. I urge all governments, United Nations system entities, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and other actors - individually or in partnership - that aim to contribute to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, to register their commitments.

I would like to congratulate the co-chairs, and the Steering Committee, for the suggestion to organize the second annual Global Multi-stakeholder SIDS Partnership Dialogue in the margins of The Ocean Conference, with a particular focus on SIDS Ocean Partnerships. This will provide an opportunity to galvanize voluntary commitments for the implementation of

SDG 14 among the SIDS community - who are in the forefront of dealing with the decline of our oceans and seas - as a contribution to the outcome of the Ocean Conference.

SDG target 14.7 puts a particular emphasis on SIDS as follows: “By 2030, increase the economic benefits to small island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism” and thus underlines the importance of socio-economic benefits of the oceans and seas to SIDS and the importance of sustainable conservation and use of the oceans and seas and marine resources. This will also be an important aspect to consider regarding SIDS partnerships and potentially creating new ones.

DESA is committed to continue supporting the co-chairs and all Member States for the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda in a coherent and synergistic fashion, through strong, resilient, innovative, forward-looking and results-oriented partnerships.

Thank you.