



**Press Release**

## **Small island developing States, on the front lines of climate and economic shocks, need greater international assistance**

*More durable partnerships between island nations and wealthier countries can help achieve the SAMOA Pathway*

**New York, 27 September**—Progress toward sustainable development in small island developing States will require a major increase in urgent investment, according to world leaders who gathered at the United Nations today for the High-level Midterm Review of the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action, also known as the SAMOA Pathway.

Already on the frontlines of climate change, sustainable development in many small island developing States is threatened by difficulties in achieving sustained high levels of economic growth, owing in part to their vulnerabilities to the ongoing negative impacts of environmental challenges and external economic and financial shocks.

Meeting in New York, Heads of State and Government are expected to adopt a political declaration that reaffirms their solidarity with these countries which remain a special case for sustainable development.

“Today’s climate crisis threatens food security and livelihoods. Small island developing States are often the hardest hit by climate events. Yet, these islands produce less than one per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions,” said the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande.

He added, “It is only through global efforts such as the SAMOA Pathway that we can address challenges including economic marginalisation encountered by Small Island Developing States in their pursuit of a safe, prosperous and sustainable future which we are all striving towards.”

The SAMOA Pathway, adopted at the Third International Conference on small island developing States held in Apia, Samoa, in 2014, is a dedicated 10-year programme of action to promote international assistance to address the unique set of challenges these islands face. Five years after the ambitious framework was adopted, the High-Level Midterm Review provides leaders with the opportunity to discuss progress on combating the devastating impact of climate change, building economic and environmental resilience, and other challenges facing small island developing States.

Leaders called on the international community to mobilize additional development finance from all sources and at all levels to support small island developing States and welcomed the ownership, leadership and efforts demonstrated by these States in advancing the Implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. They expressed their concern about the devastating impacts of climate change, the increasing frequency, scale and intensity of disasters and called for urgent and ambitious global action in line with the Paris Agreement to address these threats and their impacts.

The High-level Review of the SAMOA Pathway comes one month after Hurricane Dorian devastated parts of the Bahamas, causing significant loss of life and property damage. Countries noted that the increasing frequency, scale and intensity of natural disasters will continue to claim lives, decimate infrastructure and remain a threat to food security.

While some progress has been made in addressing social inclusion, poverty, and unemployment, inequality continues to disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, including women and girls, persons with disabilities, children and youth. More support is needed to strengthen public health systems in small island developing States and especially reduce the risk factors for non-communicable diseases, and healthcare after disasters. Other areas identified as needing more effort include demographic data collection, trade opportunities, and economic growth and diversification.

After five years of the SAMOA Pathway implementation, world leaders acknowledged that small islands face significant challenges in accessing sufficient, affordable development financing, including concessional financing. Countries committed to exploring innovative and sustainable sources of financing, including private sources such as blue, green and diaspora bonds tailored to the specific circumstances of small island developing States. Leaders also expressed willingness to explore innovative financial instruments and mechanisms, such as debt for development and debt for climate adaptation swaps.

“The small islands have brought energy and commitment to their own economic and social development, and to the global debate around climate change,” said Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations and co-facilitator for

the political declaration. “The summit provides an opportunity for the international community to respond in kind. The declaration sets out clearly areas we need to focus on, including financing, disaster relief, new partnerships and the fight against climate change.”

“The High-level Review of the SAMOA Pathway, in particular the endorsement by world leaders of its outcome document is a testament that multilateralism is alive and well,” said Ambassador Satyendra Prasad, Permanent Representative of Fiji, co- facilitator for the political declaration.

Ambassador Prasad emphasized the need for further enhanced effort to explore and adopt innovative financial instruments and mechanisms to ease debt burdens in small islands.

“Going forward, we also need to pay due consideration to the unique and particular vulnerabilities of small island developing States, especially those in the middle-income status,” Prasad added. “We cannot think of the political declaration as the ultimate outcome of our work, the SAMOA Pathway has five remaining years to deliver tangible results for small island developing States.”

### **New partnerships for small islands**

New partnerships were announced this week and registered on the [SIDS Partnership database](#) and as [SDG Acceleration Actions](#). Notably, the Government of the Maldives will partner with Parley for the Oceans, American Express, AB InBev and Adidas to create a scalable, nationwide framework for solutions toward the achievement of many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly on clean energy, industry, cities, consumption and production, climate action, the ocean and biodiversity.

Other new partnerships to help small islands include CONCAUSA, a programme to empower, connect and mobilize adolescents from the Americas, including the Caribbean islands, by América Solidaria, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and UNICEF. Jamaica is leading efforts to garner philanthropic and private sector support to achieve the SDGs in the Caribbean through the Caribbean Philanthropic Alliance. And small island developing States themselves announced at the Climate Action Summit on Monday that they will make a collective commitment to raise the ambition of their Nationally Determined Contributions by 2020 and move to net zero emissions by 2050, contingent on assistance from the international community. They intend to move to 100 percent renewable energy by 2030 and provide support for initiatives that aim to address immediate adaptation needs and the transition to climate resilience.

“By engaging all stakeholders, at the local, national and global level, small island developing States continue to show us that the only way that we can achieve our collective ambition is

through genuine and durable partnerships. This was the cornerstone of the SAMOA Pathway,” said Mr. Liu Zhenmin, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

“The SAMOA Pathway stands for the voices, priorities and hopes of small island developing States to build inclusive and sustainable societies,” said Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu, High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

She added, “It is a roadmap for action. This Midterm Review represents a strategic moment. It affords us the opportunity to review and to renew the international community’s commitments to small island developing states.”

**Further information:**

- SAMOA Pathway Midterm Review website: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sids/samoareview>
- Background information about SIDS: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sids>
- Database of SIDS partnerships: <https://sidspartnerships.un.org/partnerships/>
- SDG Acceleration Actions database: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgactions>

**On social media:**

- Twitter: [@SustDev](https://twitter.com/SustDev), [@UNDESA](https://twitter.com/UNDESA), [@UN\\_PGA](https://twitter.com/UN_PGA), [@UNOHRLLS](https://twitter.com/UNOHRLLS)
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SustDev/> <https://www.facebook.com/joinundesa/>
- Hashtag: #SamoaPathway

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