



**2018 Global Multi-Stakeholder Small Island Developing States
Partnership Dialogue**

*Partnerships for sustainable and resilient societies in Small Island Developing
States*

12 July 2018, 10.00 AM – 01.00 PM, ECOSOC Chamber

Keynote address by Mr. Peter Thomson, Special Envoy for the Ocean

Your Excellency Ambassador Young, Permanent
Representative of Belize to the UN, Co-chair of the
Steering Committee on Partnerships for SIDS,

Your Excellency Ambassador Nason, Permanent
Representative of Ireland to the United Nations, Co-
chair of the Steering Committee on Partnerships for
SIDS,

High Representative ‘Utoikamanu of OHRLLS,
Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very happy to be with you today for this year's Global Multi-Stakeholder Small Island Developing States Partnership Dialogue.

I take this opportunity to commend the SIDS Partnership Steering Committee through its Co-Chairs, Ireland and Belize, for the excellent work done in following up on existing and advocating for the launch of new SIDS partnerships.

The SAMOA Pathway was unique in the way it established an intergovernmental SIDS Partnership Framework that monitors progress of existing, and stimulates the launch of new, genuine and durable partnerships for the sustainable development of SIDS.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In line with the theme of the 2018 high-level political forum, this year's Dialogue places focus on building partnerships for sustainable and resilient societies and communities in SIDS.

Since the concept was first introduced during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, Partnerships have come a long way in contributing to SIDS' efforts to meet their sustainable development goals.

The 2014 Samoa Conference served to further focus partnerships as a key means of supporting SIDS to address their inherent vulnerabilities and the need to build resilience.

Excellencies,

In any debate surrounding partnerships and their effectiveness, it is important to examine the extent to

which they have truly been able to support SIDS in building resilient societies and communities.

A recent review by the Secretariat of the over 300 partnerships that were announced during the 2014 Samoa Conference, shows that knowledge transfer appears to be the dominant priority partnership. Over 25% of registered partnerships focused on this thematic area.

This was closely followed by partnerships related to energy, and to disaster resilience.

This makes sense, for SIDS have amongst the highest energy consumption rates in the world. While their greenhouse gas emission indicators are comparatively negligible, the strong commitment of SIDS to renewable energy is driven largely by the need to lower energy costs, not forgetting the exigencies of energy security.

We all know that SIDS are extremely vulnerable to climate change. Global warming is causing sea-level-rise that threatens our security, and the ever-increasing frequency of violent storms make some of us just one storm away from total economic collapse.

Heavy dependence on coastal tourism also exposes SIDS to sea-level-rise risk. Thus, the urgent need for appropriate technologies to deal with disaster mitigation and resilience explains why cross-cutting knowledge transfer projects predominate the SIDS partnerships, particularly at the global and inter-regional level.

Co-chairs,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Turning to my own sphere of responsibility, the implementation of SDG14, the Ocean goal, I will not dwell on the Ocean's troubles. I will instead recognize the great potential of Ocean-related

partnerships to yield economic diversification and stimulate growth and development in SIDS, much of which remains untapped.

As you know, one year ago, we gathered in New York for the first UN Ocean Conference in support of the implementation of SDG14. The Conference was a historic event, with thousands of high-level participants from Member States, the UN system and other intergovernmental organizations, as well as the full participation of civil society, the scientific community, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders.

The Conference resulted in ambitious outcomes, including an intergovernmentally agreed political declaration “Our ocean, our future: call for action” and over 1,400 Voluntary Commitments from Governments, the UN system, intergovernmental organizations, the Major Groups and other stakeholders to advance the implementation of SDG 14 and related targets. A large part of these

commitments directly impact SIDS, and many of those announced were from SIDS themselves.

Excellencies,

The Ocean will help us build resilient societies in our countries in the form of food, employment, foreign exchange, culture and recreation. There is no doubt that through Sustainable Blue Economy developments, sound and sustained Ocean-focused partnership interventions will help us drive the economic growth, welfare and prosperity of SIDS.

More partnerships to support SIDS to pursue innovations and investments in restoring and expanding the productive potential of fisheries and aquaculture are required. We must develop new opportunities for trade in marine products and improve resilience of coastal communities, to support food security, job creation, poverty alleviation and sustainable management of living marine resources.

Within the context of coherent national policy frameworks, such partnerships can also provide SIDS with a basis for pursuing low-carbon and resource-efficient pathways to economic growth and development. They can boost national policy coherence, offer scope for re-investment in human development, and help alleviate crippling national debt burdens.

A positive step forward in this regard are the efforts that have been made in all SIDS regions to develop institutional frameworks to support economic growth and development from the marine environment.

Distinguished delegates,

A persistent challenge that needs to be overcome when developing more partnerships, including those related to the Ocean, is the lack of appropriate data for monitoring and evaluation, including for baselines against which to measure progress. The absence of

data negates our ability to truly measure the actual impacts of partnerships. Thus, increased efforts are needed to support and build the capacity of all stakeholders, in particular SIDS, to generate such data and forge partnerships that are specific, measurable, achievable, resource-based and have time-bound deliverables; the now well-known SIDS SMART criteria.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My hope is that you leave today's third Global Multi-stakeholder SIDS Partnership Dialogue invigorated by the progress being made on SIDS partnerships and determined to pursue the many possibilities that new partnerships offer.

SIDS have long presented a uniquely compelling case for sustainable development, and growing global challenges have made the needs, strengths, and vulnerabilities of SIDS even more evident.

In these challenging times, multilateralism is more vital than ever. We have one planet and we are all connected for better or worse. There is no doubt that genuine and durable partnerships present us with the best way forward; so let us step up our solidarity to meet these challenges and make sustainable development a reality for all SIDS.

I thank you.
