



Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Mid Term Review of the SAMOA Pathway

7-9 August 2018, San Pedro, Belize

Remarks

Your Excellency, Rt. Hon. Dean O Barrow, Prime Minister of Belize

Your Excellency, Honourable Omar Figueroa, Minister of State, Ministry of Environment, Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development

Your excellency, Ambassador Lois Young, Permanent Representative of Belize to the UN, co-chair of the Steering Committee on Partnerships for SIDS

Your excellency, Ambassador. Irwin LaRoque, Secretary General of the Caribbean Community

Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu – High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United Nations Department of Economic Social Affairs brings you its greetings and takes this opportunity to applaud and congratulate the Government of Belize for its leadership to date and for the work done thus far in preparing the Caribbean region for this week's important discussions. Indeed, the mid-term review of the SAMOA Pathway presents a key opportunity for Caribbean SIDS to re-examine progress with implementation of the Pathway and determine how this key document and the actions contained within, may be used to harness the support of the international Community for addressing the challenges of this region and for SIDS in general.

Within DESA, we are all aware of the many challenges faced by the Caribbean region, a few of which will now be highlighted.

Caribbean SIDS have recorded some of the lowest economic growth rates on average since the Great Recession of 2007 (less than 2%). When compared to other SIDS regions, the Caribbean lags behind. Debt in the region is at unsustainable levels, ranging from 6% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to 157% of GDP at the end of 2017.

Unemployment rates are high in many Caribbean SIDS. In countries where unemployment data is available, it is as high as 25% and as low as 4.3%; and youth unemployment is even higher, as much as 40% in some countries.

The 2017 hurricane season once again demonstrated how vulnerable SIDS are to natural disasters, with losses of 225% of GDP caused by Hurricane Maria

These factors are the elements which contribute to the economic social and environmental vulnerabilities of SIDS.

The SAMOA Pathway, clearly acknowledges SIDS vulnerabilities and includes clearly identified actions to address some of these. Built on the platforms of the prior Barbados Programme of Action (1994) and the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation (2005), The Pathway reinforces unequivocally the status of SIDS as a special case for sustainable development in view of their unique and particular vulnerabilities.

In addition, we now have the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals which rises to the challenge of today's interconnected world, and is firmly rooted in the three dimensions of sustainable development. Importantly, it is undergirded by a people-centred and planet-sensitive ethos with People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership at its core.

Ladies and Gentlemen, given the ever-changing global dynamics, it is imperative that SIDS undertake a thorough assessment of where they are with implementation, and whether they are appropriately positioned to take advantage of these and other related global agreements, such as the Paris Agreement. This mid-term review process offers the opportunity to do so.

It also offers the opportunity for reviewing the extent to which Partnerships, a key component of the SAMOA Pathway can or have been contributing to sustainable development and even for forging strong, fruitful partnerships with bilateral and multilateral partners, particularly those that can support SIDS' efforts in resilience building.

Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, there is no doubt that SIDS will have to contend with challenges, uncertainties and setbacks in pursuit of their sustainable development objectives. However, to keep progressing, SIDS will have to keep evolving. The purpose for being here this week is to do just that, review, move forward and evolve. The region must leave Belize with a laser focus on implementation.

We unreservedly believe that it is worth recommitting to implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and to collectively harnessing its potential to drive development and prosperity in the region and SIDS in general. Certainly, the UN system remains committed to investing in and

supporting its implementation. Indeed, we have a collective responsibility to drive real and measurable progress. Let us not fail at this task, our collective future depends on our commitment to building stronger, resilient and secure partnerships for prosperity.

Thank you. UNDESA extends its best wishes for a productive and rewarding Meeting.

Statement ends
