

Closing Remarks

SIDS Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting

6th August 2018

Hon. Wilfred Elrington

H.E. Irwin Laroque, Secretary General of the Caribbean Community Secretariat

Ms. Fekitamoeloa 'Utoikamanu, United Nations Under Secretary General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

It is my pleasure to join you, at the closing of the Caribbean Small Island Developing States Regional Preparatory Meeting for the SAMOA Mid-term Review.

I understand that your meeting has been interactive and generated meaningful discussion involving all Caribbean SIDS and regional and UN institutions working in our region.

Your task was to reflect on the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and in so doing to identify the progress, gaps, constraints, and opportunities.

Importantly you have affirmed the SIDS agenda and you have reaffirmed that SIDS remain a special case for sustainable development, in view of their unique vulnerabilities and that they remain constrained in meeting their goals in all three dimensions of sustainable development.

The Declaration of San Pedro, which you have just adopted, highlights accurately and clearly, the Caribbean region's priorities in the further implementation of the S.A.M.O.A. Pathway.

Our countries have made some progress in achieving our sustainable development priorities and we should celebrate these.

Nevertheless our capacity to grapple with the existing challenges of poverty eradication, non communicable diseases, youth unemployment, and crime and violence is further exacerbated by persistent low economic growth, a volatile or hostile international financial and economic environment, the impact of climate change and decline in development assistance dedicated to SIDS.

The inherent constraints we face as SIDS limit our Governments' policy space and capacity to effectively confront the multiplying challenges we face.

You have captured these well in the Declaration.

Your preparatory meeting was preceded by the first Caribbean Regional Partnership Dialogue. The Dialogue is one of the concrete outcomes of the SAMOA Conference in 2014. We welcome the platform it has created for the development of meaningful and transparent partnerships to support SIDS in their sustainable development and we are sure that further enhancing the Partnership Framework will lead to more effective partnerships – which we all want.

Our representatives will be armed with this San Pedro Declaration for the inter-regional Meeting in October and the High Level Review in September 2019.

We are our best advocates. We must continue to coordinate, to raise the visibility of SIDS agenda both at home and globally and work strategically intra regionally and inter regionally levels.

To reach the substantive outcome we have today, has required the hard work and close collaboration of many colleagues. I want to acknowledge the United Nations, especially the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean through its sub-regional headquarters, and the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee.

I must also recognize the efforts of our own team here on the ground coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and supported by the Ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry of the Environment as well as our Permanent Mission in New York.

I must also acknowledge and thank the Governments of Germany and of Mexico for their contributions towards the organisation of this Meeting.

I hope that you have had sometime during the course of this week to enjoy a bit of San Pedro, if not, there is still time.

Thank you for all your hard work.