



Opening Statement

Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu

High Representative

and

Under-Secretary-General

**Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries
and Small Island Developing States**

Global Multi-Stakeholder SIDS Partnerships Dialogue

Conference Room 1, UNHQ

10 July 2019, 3.00 to 6.00 PM

Distinguished co-chairs,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I warmly welcome all of you ! It is good to be with you this afternoon.

I congratulate Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason of the Republic of Ireland and Ambassador Lois Young of Belize for being at the helm of the Steering Committee on Partnerships for SIDS.

Thank you for the progress made on the work of this Committee and your able co-chairmanship.

Excellencies,

We stand at the five-year juncture of a key agreement - The SAMOA Pathway.

This key agreement foresaw how critical partnerships would be to make sustainable development a reality for the citizens of small island development states.

Five years later the reality is that major and by times growing gaps persist in building the resilience of SIDS.

We all are aware of the complex, quite specific challenges the SIDS face in all three dimensions of sustainable development.

Yes, there is progress in access to and affordability of clean sources of energy. But, SIDS continue to remain highly dependent on fossil fuel imports and this places significant strain on the economies.

Yes, the rapid expansion of information communication technologies (ICTs) have allowed millions of people to join the information society. But, several SIDS lag behind in being part of the digital economy.

This cannot continue - connectivity and access to ICT as we know are critical to all economies and societies to further economic and social well-being for present and future generations.

Yes, climate change affects everyone. But the frontline, and this already for too long, concerns the SIDS. It is not just time for action any longer - it now is time for urgent action!

SIDS contribute very little to global warming but they suffer disproportionately from the devastating and by now often life- threatening climate change impacts on livelihoods.

Climate -induced migration is their devastating new reality.

We have known this ever since the first Barbados Conference , we now have to act.

SIDS cannot do this alone - this will require stronger and faster multi-stakeholder partnerships.

It requires partnerships capable of mobilizing knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources.

The SIDS Partnership Framework, which includes the annual Global multi-stakeholder dialogue on SIDS Partnership, is a key action instrument through which we can and must all work together. It is our responsibility to turn words into practical steps and tangible results on the ground.

Excellencies,

Within the UN system, a key objective of the Secretary General's UN Reform process is RESULT. This demands that we coordinate better, act with greater coherence and deliver in more effective and accountable ways.

This also is the goal of the review of the Multi country Offices.

How can we improve the way we deliver ? How can we ensure that the United Nations is a valuable, knowledgeable and trusted partner for all stakeholders to work with in promoting the shared vision of an inclusive sustainable development?

As I said at the outset, all partners are needed !

OHRLSS has invested in action to increase the engagement of the private sector in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway.

We launched the SIDS Global Business Network in 2015 to raise awareness and connect businesses to SIDS communities.

The network focuses on action areas where the engagement of the private sector is critical to make progress.

We now must strengthen the links between the SIDS-GBN and the overall SIDS partnership framework. This is all about leveraging synergies and advancing business engagement in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway.

2019 is a milestone year for small island developing states.

We engage in our first stock-taking meeting since the adoption of the SAMOA Pathway. At the high-level Meeting in September, we aim for a strong action-oriented document on the way forward.

Too much time has already elapsed and no time remains to be wasted.

We, the peoples of the SIDS simply cannot wait another five years for the commitments pledged to SIDS to become reality.

It is high time to step up action.

Thank you.