



PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

United Nations Member States

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Statement by

H.E. Mr Robert G. Aisi
Permanent Representative
of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations and
Chair of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS)
to the United Nations

at the

First Session of the
Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

14 March 2013, New York

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS), represented at the United Nations; namely, Fiji, the Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and my own country Papua New Guinea. I am also speaking for the Pacific Troika on the Open Working Group on SDGs, namely Nauru, Palau and Papua New Guinea.

We welcome the successful conclusion two-days ago, of the procedural issues, including especially the Methods of Work of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. We commend and thank the Co-Facilitators and UN Member States for the constructive dialogue and cooperative spirit shown in finalizing the procedural matters.

Mr. President,

We are pleased with the commencement, today, of the Open Working Group's substantive work to help chart the international community's Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda.

We also recognize the challenging task before us in framing a report that reflects Member States development aspirations, which will be presented to the 68th Session of the General Assembly.

To be successful, it is imperative that our deliberations be underpinned by the guidelines that we have set, including the tenets of openness, transparency, inclusiveness and consensus as well as with the rules of procedure, relevant rules and practices of the Committees of the General Assembly, as stipulated under the Methods of Work we have established.

It is also fundamental that we set a clear thematic Work Plan guide our efforts, and we look forward to its early adoption. We also hope that the OWG Co-Chairs that will be chosen soon will provide a balanced, fair and robust leadership.

Mr. President,

Whilst we recognize that the final shape and form of the Post-2015 development agenda will become clearer in the months ahead, it is the PSIDS view that:

- The SDGs should be universal in nature, unlike the MDGs which focused primarily on developing countries.
- As we are now in the MDGs final phase, we must remain focused on consolidating the MDGs implementation with concerted cooperation from all stakeholders, for improved outcomes, since we have all invested heavily in this development process.

- We should use the important lessons that can be drawn from the MDGs. These include setting targets and indicators that are resonant, universally beneficial, strategic, quantifiable, and anchored in past sustainable development frameworks that can serve as the building blocks for consensus-building.

At the outset, we would like to flag, to the international community, that the PSIDS remain steadfastly committed to ensure that Oceans, which remains our lifeblood, like many coastal and island States and other members of the international community, becomes an integral part of the Post-2015 sustainable development goals. Without accounting for two-thirds of our planet, which is covered by Oceans, we cannot achieve sustainable development.

Additionally, it is critical to the PSIDS that the SDGs address climate change and energy, given that climate change undermines all efforts to achieve sustainable development, and for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in particular, threatens our very survival.

We are keenly interested to work closely and in partnership with likeminded countries and other stakeholders to build a coalition in furtherance of the solid foundation laid by the Rio+20 final outcome document – “The Future We Want” - underlining the critical importance of ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and its resources, which serves as a practical guide on the way forward..

In conclusion, Mr. President, we offer our support and pledge to work constructively with the soon to be elected Co-Chairs, the members of the SDG Working Group, and all other UN Member States, Observer States of the United Nations and stakeholders.

I thank you.