

Statement by Mr. Thomas Gass to ECOSOC
on
The Implementation of the Samoa Pathway
for distribution

Introduction

On behalf of the Secretary-General and in accordance with the mandate given by the Samoa Pathway adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 69/15, I have the pleasure of reporting on the progress achieved in implementing the priorities, commitments, partnerships and other activities of small island developing States. A longer version of my statement will be provided on the SIDS page of the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform.

Overview

International Year of SIDS

Let me begin by providing a brief report on the International Year of Small Island Developing States, which successfully concluded in February 2015, with a ceremony held under the auspices of the General Assembly.

The International Year of Small Island Developing States was the first of its kind, in that a group of member States was the focus. This aimed to raise global awareness of the sustainable development challenges faced by SIDS but also to celebrate their rich cultural and natural heritage. The SIDS should be commended for their leadership role in the multiple activities throughout the year. They appointed three Champions for the International Year, mobilizing stakeholders and partners at the national, regional and international levels to initiate numerous art, music, dance and other cultural activities as well as photo, art and literature exhibits and videos and other media to feature both the everyday life on SIDS and how various external shocks impacted on them.

The world community also focused on SIDS issues in the International Days of Biodiversity, Oceans and in the World Environment Days. Most of all, the International Year of SIDS certainly contributed in building momentum for the Third Conference on Small Island Developing States. The closing ceremony included a panel on “SIDS Issues as Global Issues:

Situating SIDS in the Post 2015 Development Agenda”, thus making the link to the on-going negotiations.

Updates from the UN system and Partner Agencies

The implementation of the Samoa Pathway has become an important element in the strategic plans and work programmes and investment of the organizations of the UN system and of regional and global IGOs. This is helping to align their planned and ongoing activities to the implementation of the Samoa Pathway and various partnerships launched at the Samoa Conference.

The Implementation Matrix available on the DESA SIDS Action Platform reflects the commitment of the agencies within the UN system and the sharing of tasks among them. Many international and regional IGOs have held follow-up consultations with their constituencies at national, regional and global levels, to determine how best to follow up on the priorities expressed in the Samoa Pathway.

The Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs (ECESA Plus) has been tasked to monitor the implementation within the UN system while also ensuring integrated follow-up to the Samoa Conference, the Sendai Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. Linkages are also being made with the preparations for the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Ffd) to be held in Addis Ababa this July, as well as the post-2015 Development Agenda negotiations. The Inter-Agency Consultative Group on SIDS (IACG), composed of both UN and non-UN system agencies active on SIDS issues, has also been revitalized to play a role in monitoring and fostering partnerships where members are involved. It brainstorms on issues of common interest, in addition to mobilizing inputs and exchanging information.

Many UN and non-UN entities and development partners are thus undertaking Samoa follow-up action-oriented initiatives within their areas of competence in support of SIDS. Serious efforts are also being made by each entity to implement the specific part of the Samoa Pathway within their areas of competency and to follow up on the partnerships they have committed to. It would not do justice to this work for me to try to report orally on these initiatives today. Instead, some highlights of these activities will be reflected in a written version

of my statement to be posted on the SIDS page of the Sustainable Development Knowledge Management Platform.

Cross-cutting activities

Since the SIDS Conference, UNDP has undertaken a series of actions to consider how the SAMOA Pathway can be mainstreamed in its work and how governments can be supported to integrate and implement the Pathway at the national level. UNDP's work is country-driven. This is primarily achieved at the national level through consultation by UN Country Teams with partner countries to align activities through the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

As an example, the UNDP Multi-Country Office based in **Samoa** has integrated the SAMOA Pathway into its programmatic framework (UNDP sub-regional programme). Follow-up on the Pathway is one of its three priorities for 2015: "Expanded communication, and partnerships, as a response to the SAMOA Pathway". Examples of such activities include: development of communications and joint outreach initiatives/events focused on the SAMOA Pathway, the MDGs/SDGs and/or the vulnerability/exclusion indicators; implementation and analysis of a partnership survey; as well as establishment of innovative alliances.

UNICEF is also working on a wide range of issues in SIDS, including on disaster risk reduction, nutrition water and sanitation, health and non-communicable diseases. However strong emphasis is placed on child mortality, maternal mortality, adolescent pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and the implementation of social protection systems, gender equality and women's empowerment with emphasis on violence against girls, adolescent pregnancy, girl's education and social development. UNICEF also contributes to the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway in the areas of climate change; water sanitation and hygiene (WASH); education; and youth.

UNESCO is in the process of developing a UNESCO Action Plan for SIDS. This forward-looking document responds to the UNESCO General Conference resolution on Reinforcing UNESCO's strategy on small island developing States (Part V – paragraph 1.e), approved at its 37th session. The resolution invites the Organization: to develop an action plan for implementing the outcome of the Third International Conference on SIDS in the areas relevant to UNESCO's mandate.

In addition to the broad mandates of the above mentioned agencies other institutions focused on specific themes of the Samoa Pathway. For example;

Economic Growth

UNIDO is engaged in partnership initiatives with the Private Sector. One example relates to expansion of the value chain development ISID partnership through twinning of technical cooperation, south-south and triangular, multilateral cooperation modality; experience sharing planned for Atlantic and Indian Ocean SIDS on industry driven development of agro

industries and agribusiness value chain development. Together with SIDS DOCK and the regional organizations, UNIDO is following-up on the establishment of the network of regional sustainable energy centres for SIDS in Africa, Caribbean, Pacific and the Indian Ocean.

UNCDF, through the Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme (PFIP), aims to add one million Pacific Islanders to the formal financial sector by 2019 by spearheading policy and regulatory initiatives, facilitating access to appropriate financial services and delivery channels and by strengthening financial competencies and consumer empowerment.

The **World Bank** has become more agile and flexible in responding to small states' evolving needs and has contributed to the considerable success achieved by small states in several areas. Those include: in **Cabo Verde**, under the Road Sector Support Project the asset value of the national road network has been increased by around 15% to more than ECV 600 billion; and the **Kiribati** Adaptation Program is supporting the country to adapt to the effects of climate change, improving water security and improving coastal resilience.

The South-South Technology Transfer Facility for SIDS was co-launched by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (**UNOSSC**) and the United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (**UN-OHRLLS**) during the 3rd International Conference on Small Island Developing States. An onsite business matching space was hosted where 48 enterprises from 15 countries were mobilized; a South-South Global Assets and Technology Exchange (SS-GATE) regional center in the Asia-Pacific region was established with the signing of an MoU with the Pacific Island Private Sector Organization (PIPSO); and an additional SS-GATE country centre was established through an agreement signed with the Samoa Chamber of Commerce.

Trade

The International Trade Centre (ITC) has fully incorporated the priorities of SIDS into its programme of work by mainstreaming the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. ITC's Strategic Plan 2015-2017, which has been developed in close collaboration with stakeholders from SIDS, sets out the approach and priorities in providing trade integrated solutions which correspond closely to the SAMOA Pathway priority areas.

The ITC Strategic Plan sets out six key focus areas including: trade and market intelligence for SME competitiveness; supporting regional economic integration and South-South links; connecting to value chains: SME competitiveness, diversification and links to export markets; strengthening trade and investment support institutions; promoting and mainstreaming inclusive and green trade; and building a conducive business environment. ITC contributes to the implementation of actions in the SIDS in the areas of sustained and sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth; tourism sector; gender equality and women's empowerment; and trade.

Data and Statistics

DESA is addressing data and statistics needs of SIDS, particularly for the post-2015 development agenda, and began initiating vulnerability-resilience country profiling in additional pilot countries. It is also facilitating the research collaboration among the University Consortium on SIDS (UCSIS).

UNDP Country Offices supported 50% of SIDS to enhance data and analysis, monitoring and evaluation, and use of evidence capacities.

Oceans

The Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) of the UN Office of Legal Affairs established funds for the purpose of facilitating the preparation of submissions to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf,¹ as well as to assist States Parties in the implementation of the United Nations 1995 Fish Stocks Agreement in accordance with Part VII of the Agreement. DOALOS also carries out a variety of technical assistance activities targeting SIDS through, for example, the United Nations and the Nippon-Foundation of Japan Fellowship Programme, which provides for human resources development and advancement of the legal order of the world's oceans.²

On 21 April 2015, DOALOS co-sponsored with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, a side event in New York entitled "Building ocean knowledge, technology and capacity towards achieving sustainable development of the oceans and seas".

The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) is focusing on promoting the Pacific Oceans Alliance Partnership which was launched in Samoa through policy and technical consultations.

The Pacific Ocean Alliance, facilitated by the Pacific Ocean Commissioner, is a new partnership that was launched at the Third International Conference on SIDS. The Pacific Ocean Alliance is an open-ended and voluntary information-sharing and coordination partnership, between stakeholders with an interest in the sustainable development, management and conservation of the Pacific Ocean and its resources.

Climate Change

As part of its contribution to the International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS), **WMO**, on behalf of all its partners, launched a new partnership for strengthening weather and climate services in SIDS in the Caribbean, South Pacific, Indian Ocean and other regions. WMO focuses on investing in specific activities to maintain and restore existing weather and climate observing stations, train local staff in maintenance, calibration and repair of such equipment, and build the capacity of NMS's to archive, analyze and report on current weather and climate data better planning decisions will be forthcoming at the national and regional level.

¹ See http://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/trust_fund_article76.htm.

² See: <http://www.un.org/Depts/los/nippon/index>.

The **Global Environment Facility (GEF)** continues to support numerous projects that align with the objectives of the SAMOA Pathway. The GEF model catalyzes funding from other institutions and has and will continue to foster the types of genuine and durable partnerships called for in Samoa. From 2014-2018, the GEF has allocated over 256 million dollars for projects in the SIDS that protect the global environment while promoting sustainable development. These resources are available to SIDS countries in accordance to GEF procedures and in line with the principles of the SAMOA Pathway. GEF has worked closely with UNDP.

The Commonwealth Secretariat is in the process of developing a full proposal for a ‘Commonwealth Climate Finance Skills Hub and Response Mechanism’ (the ‘Hub’). Building upon the successful Hub and Spokes for Trade model, the Hub will feature a network of regional and national technical advisers. These advisers will have access to a technical support mechanism: a list of support services and a fund to finance these. There will be a highly networked research management function, based in Mauritius, which will facilitate south-south exchange and support the advisers.

The Climate Finance Skills Hub will be closely aligned with the Green Climate Fund, and consultations are ongoing between the Green Climate Fund and the Commonwealth Secretariat at a technical level. Furthermore, the Hub will work closely with regional organisations, national governments and organisations working in climate finance readiness.

The Caribbean Sub-regional Office of **ECLAC** is complementing the work of the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) in strengthening resilience at the national and sub-regional level to, and mitigating against, the impacts of climate change.

Disaster Risk Reduction

UNISDR notes that SIDS priorities were featured in the UN Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. Building on the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: “Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters,” States adopted the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 on 18 March 2015 at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Sendai, Japan. The Framework, the first of the post-2015 instruments to be agreed, sets a renewed global agenda on disaster risk reduction in the context of sustainable development. It recognises the specific challenges SIDS face and the need for special attention and particular support through the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway in the area of disaster risk reduction.

UNFPA supported and co-facilitated a workshop for further training of personnel conducted by the CARICOM Disaster Relief Unit Training on the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for Guyana and Barbados and six Eastern Caribbean countries. The objective of the workshop was to encourage the trainers to expand the MISP, as well as, advocate and support the inclusion of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and gender-based violence (GBV) in the national disaster planning and response plans. Regional partners also included the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA). Additionally, advisory guidance was provided to five countries (Belize, Jamaica, Barbados, Guyana and St. Maarten)

for the development of their Humanitarian Response plan and the Contingency and Business Continuity plan during emergencies.

Energy

IRENA has developed the SIDS Lighthouses Initiative to support the strategic deployment of renewable energy in SIDS, to bring clarity to policy makers regarding the required steps, and to enable targeted action. As a joint effort of SIDS and development partners, this framework for action will assist in transforming SIDS energy systems through the establishment of the enabling conditions for a renewable energy-based future, by moving away from developing projects in isolation to a holistic approach that considers all relevant elements spanning from policy and market frameworks, through technology options to capacity building.

The Partnership Framework/SIDS Action Platform

The General Assembly reaffirmed paragraph 101 of the Samoa Pathway which requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with Member States, to present recommendations for a Partnership Framework to monitor and ensure the full implementation of pledges and commitments through partnerships for SIDS. As part of this process, DESA sought views by all member States through a survey that was sent to the permanent missions. Views from 40 member States were received to this survey, including from the EU and the three SIDS regions. As a result of these consultations, an informal “*Note by the Secretariat for a SIDS Partnership Framework*” was prepared and posted on the SIDS Action Platform, DESA’s website pertaining to follow-up to the Samoa Pathway.

The SIDS Action Platform also hosts the dynamic SIDS Partnership Platform that provides updates of 300+ partnerships announced in Samoa while encouraging new ones, as well as the Implementation Matrix to help monitor the implementation of the Samoa Pathway.

Comprehensive Review of UN system support to SIDS

As mandated by GA resolution 69/217, the initial findings of the Joint Inspection Unit concerning the comprehensive review of UN system support to SIDS will be provided as an annex to a more comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the MSI and Samoa Pathway to be submitted in time for the 70th session of the General Assembly.

Conclusion

There have been much more activities undertaken by UN agencies and other organizations. More detail will be provided in the Report of the Secretary General to the 70th United Nations General Assembly.

As indicated, this Report does not address all the recommendations for action of the SAMOA Pathway or GA Resolution A/RES/69/217. The Secretary-General’s Report to the 70th GA will address areas related to the role of the High Level Political Forum, the priorities of SIDS

in the post 2015 development agenda, and the activities of the broader international community in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, as called for in resolution A/RES/69/217.