



Pacific Islands Forum Group
with Missions to the United Nations

*Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji,
Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau,
Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands,
Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu*

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**Statement delivered by H.E Mr. Ali'ioaiga Feturi Elisaia Permanent Representative
of the Permanent Mission of the Independent State of Samoa to the United
Nations on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum Group.**

**ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment, Session VI: MCO
Review General Debate**

ECOSOC Chamber, Wednesday 22 May 2019 4:45-6pm

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Madam President, Deputy Secretary-General, Excellencies, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my honour to speak on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum members represented at the United Nations: Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country, Samoa.

At the outset, we would like to offer our thanks to the Madam President for the organization of this meeting, as well as to the Deputy Secretary General for her opening remarks. We would also like to extend our thanks to the panelists for sharing their perspectives.

We are pleased that the MCO Review recognises and reinforces that the UN must do more and better to support SIDS, especially those covered by the multi-country offices towards achieving the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda.

In our region while we face common challenges, each country also face specific and unique challenges, there is no one size fits all. To meet current development challenges, the UN Development System needs to operate in the context of the unique development dynamics in each country.

In this vein we are pleased that the MCO review recognizes the need for the UN Development System to maintain country focus and the strengthen or develop country specific in line with national priorities. In this regard we emphasize country ownership,

enhanced engagement and consultation with Member states. In addition the UN Country Teams must be relevant in the context of the priorities set forth by the program country.

In connection to this, the recommendations underscore the need for more resources to support MCO coordination activities especially in countries beyond the MCO hub. To enable the effective engagement and implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SAMOA Pathway , we must strengthen the linkages to the national level. Moreover, we support the need to identify concrete solution towards unlocking development finance to address the challenges of SIDS, and in particular ensuring a dedicated SIDS specific funding rounds under the Joint Fund for the 2030 Agenda.

We have continued to reiterate that in the Pacific region the geographical distances between our islands poses a unique operating challenge for all. For instance, the existing MCO in Fiji with one RC covers 10 countries, is located over two thousand miles from the Federates States of Micronesia, and over three thousand miles from Palau, countries which it serves. These distances underline the challenges we face because direct travel is difficult and costly in our region. For us, we can no longer accept the modus operandi and we need to change on how we do things to improve how the UN delivers on the ground. This includes the need to limit the coverage of MCOs and one RC where necessary. For those small island developing States (SIDS) in the North Pacific their development challenges are further compounded by the adverse impacts of climate change posing for some a real existential threat. The UN needs to step-up.

We have expressed that the review should focus on how structural changes to MCO's can improve effectiveness, impact and efficiencies of the UN development system in our context. In

this regard we welcome the Secretary General's decision to establish, a dedicated MCO in the North Pacific for Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru and Palau. We stress the importance of UNCT support to the Multi-Country Office, without tailored resources and capacity, multi-country office cannot operate effectively. We also need a clear roadmap to guide the implementation of this regional approach.

We also look forward to the reassessment of the Joint Presence Offices and how they may strengthened to complement the MCO's. This is an important component of this overall review to further improve the effectiveness of UN Coordination and implementation on the ground, which can only be truly measured by how far the livelihood and wellbeing of people in these islands has been enriched.

Once again, we thank you, Madam President for this opportunity to engage with each other. The Pacific Island Forum Members will continue to support the changes required to improve how the UN operates and delivers on the ground and in country and we look forward to further discussions under the General Assembly and look forward to the support of all delegations.

I thank you.