



MEETING SUMMARY
**Virtual Meeting of National Focal Points (NFPs) of Small Island
Developing States (SIDS)**
Pacific Region
Tuesday, 21 July 2020 5:00pm – 7:00pm (New York Time)
(MS Teams)

“Enhancing coherence - A focus on the COVID-19 response”

1. Government designated National focal points and representatives of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) from the Pacific Region met virtually on 21 July 2020 to discuss the impact of COVID-19 and share experiences and best practices on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the national, regional and global levels. The meetings also sought to share experiences and best practices on mainstreaming the SAMOA Pathway and SDGs into national development processes as well their implementation and follow up, in the context of COVID-19, in line with the principle to “build back better”.
2. The meeting was attended by participants from Fiji, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Tonga. UN agencies including the UN-OHRLLS (organizer), UNDP, UNDRR, UNEP, UNFPA, UNOPS, regional commissions including ESCAP, regional agencies including PIFS and SPREP, Resident Coordinators, development partners as well as the ISA, IRENA, and WMO participated
3. The structure of the meeting included an opening segment and 2 main sessions: (1) Response to COVID-19 (Global and Regional); (2) Country Experiences in Response to COVID-19 with Responses from SIDS NFPs and Interventions from (other) UN System and other organizations during the interactive discussion.
4. The opening segment was chaired by Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director, Office of the High Representative of LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS (UN-OHRLLS), and commenced with remarks from H.E. Ms. Fekita ‘Utoikamanu, High Representative, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS (UN-OHRLLS) and H.E. Ms. Lois Young, Permanent Representative of Belize to the United Nations, Chair of Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).
5. Remarks from the opening segment acknowledged the impact that COVID-19 has had on the already vulnerable SIDS. The segment highlighted:

- the importance of annual NFP meetings that allow NFPs to share information, lessons learned, and best practices in responding to the pandemic and other development challenges;
- the effects of COVID-19 have exacerbated the existing vulnerabilities present in SIDS; the need for global economic restructuring that would allow SIDS to emerge cleaner, greener, and more resilient from the crisis; and
- policies that not only help with the recovery from COVID-19 but also allow for the continued achievement of the SDGs, 2030 Agenda, and the SAMOA Pathway.

Session 1: Global and Regional Response to COVID-19

6. This session was chaired by Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director, OHRLLS. This session provided background on:

- the initiatives in response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the global and regional level; the successes and challenges of these initiatives and how they could be integrated into SDGs and SAMOA Pathway implementation;
- the emerging priorities of the SIDS in the Pacific region and how they are being addressed; and
- how international and regional platforms can support these priorities along with the implications of the MCO and Regional reviews.

Ms. Rosemary Kalapurakal, Director of Policy and Programming Branch, Development Coordination Office (DCO) gave a presentation, supported by Ms Azeema Adam (DCO) on the emerging priorities in response to COVID-19 and how they can be supported by international platforms. Mr. Sanaka Samrasinha, UN Resident Coordinator (Fiji MCO), also gave a presentation on regional efforts that can address the emerging priority areas. After the presentations, an intervention was made by Mr. Alifeleti Soaki from the PIFS.

7. The meeting highlighted that the established UN response framework has proven successful in its response to the socio-economic challenges of the region. It was noted that there are five pillars for the UN Development system that complement the health and humanitarian response. The socio-economic response has aided in addressing the issue of health – now the boosted health systems need to be supported and maintained throughout the duration of the crisis. Social protection measures have ensured that people’s needs for basic services are met, especially the most vulnerable groups in society such as women, children, the elderly, and those with disabilities. Economic interventions have supported the informal sector, workers, small and medium-sized businesses, so that they may have a future to look forward to post-crisis. Macroeconomic responses have been based on multilateral collaboration that provides macroeconomic stability and support for financing decisions. Efforts have also been made to improve resilience and capacity building so that society may emerge greener, digital, and more resilient to future shocks.
8. The meeting pointed out that the COVID-19 plans in place are mostly focused on the immediate and short-term response. It was noted that recovery must be integrated into the

response plans from the outset and cannot be put in place once the crisis has passed. It was suggested that these efforts could be assisted through the 2030 Agenda and the SAMOA Pathway to guide policy decisions. It was noted that partnership cooperation frameworks would also be helpful in this context.

9. The meeting noted that countries have developed national response plans that reflect the unique scenarios unfolding in their respective countries and how they are grappling with them.
10. The meeting highlighted that are six work streams developed by the UNSG that are meant to find and craft solutions for financing for development in the era of COVID-19 and beyond. These include: (1) the role of external financing and remittances; (2) recovering better for sustainability; (3) access to global liquidity and financial stability; (4) debt sustainability; (5) private creditor engagement; and (6) illicit financial flows. It was noted that it was important for SIDS to be a part of this process.
11. The meeting noted that the region was well prepared to handle the crisis caused by COVID-19 due to the measles outbreak that occurred in Samoa in 2019. The joint incident management team was repurposed so that the pandemic did not have as great an impact on the region as it could have.
12. The meeting stressed that the Pacific Humanitarian Team has played a major role in the response to COVID-19. The team began work in early 2020 and developed a response plan that was multisectoral and covered the areas of health, logistics, food security, social protection, livelihoods, shelter, security, and education. Impact Assessments were conducted across the region to determine the immediate impacts of the virus on society and a report was sent out that compiled information collected in the assessments. These assessments were then used to develop regional response plans that aligned with government needs.
13. The meeting noted that the 2020 Joint Country Action Plans were put in place in response to the MCO review recommendations. This initiative repurposed and reprogrammed many of the existing country action plans, and by July of 2020 25-30% of the country action plans had been refocused.
14. The meeting emphasized that SIDS in the Pacific still face challenges despite their early responses to the pandemic. The collection of data and statistics remains an issue because of the lack of capacity and much of the data collection that is done in the region is conducted by external entities. It was noted that there is very little funding set aside for early recovery measures and socioeconomic responses, and that much of the existing funding has been used towards the health response and logistics support. Access to PPE and potential vaccines is viewed as a priority, as stakeholders in the region feel that they might be overlooked because of their initial successes. It was also noted that national response plans have a limited focus on building back better and do not outline measures for inclusive growth post-crisis. SIDS in the Pacific also lack access to development financing and need greater engagement with IFIs, regional development banks, and

private investors. Trust between governments and their constituents is also an issue as many do not have faith in the national governments' socioeconomic response plans.

15. The meeting noted that the PIFS has worked closely with the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway on developing a regional response to COVID-19. Their efforts have provided political leadership for the region and aided in the efficient movement of supplies, technical experts, and humanitarian efforts. These efforts have provided for an environment that is conducive for coordinated cooperation and efforts that complement existing humanitarian relationships and channels. Members of the PIF have also developed five regional protocols on the distribution of health and humanitarian supplies. These protocols are based around the deployment of technical personnel, customs, immigration, repatriation, and clearances.
16. The meeting noted that the 2020 Pacific Biennial Report, building on the first report issued in 2018, shows just how much of an impact COVID-19 can have on the region. The report highlights areas in need of improvement in the region such as the tourism sector; remittances; intensified social protection schemes; greater economic participation for women; providing support for people with disabilities; more efficient waste management; more resources for data collection; treatment of NDCs; and the need for accelerated reform for national economic and labor policies for key sectors.

Session 2: Country Experiences in Response to COVID-19 and Responses from SIDS NFPs and Interventions from (other) UN System - Interactive Discussion

17. This session was chaired by Ms. Simona Marinescu, UN Resident Coordinator (Samoa MCO). This session allowed countries to:
 - share some of their country experiences, best practices, and lessons learned in response to COVID-19, including from the national, regional, and international perspectives;
 - speak to the challenges and opportunities related to enhanced coordination in the region;
 - highlight the challenges and opportunities going forward, including in the context of the Multi-Country Office and Regional Reviews; and
 - anticipate the implications for the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the SDGs, along with the lessons learned from Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).National experience presentations were given by Ms. Peseta Noumea Simi (Samoa), Ms. Edna Akullq (Micronesia), and Mr. Fred Sarufa (Papua New Guinea).

Country Experiences

18. Presentations underscored the importance of national safety as countries closed the borders of their countries. This limited the spread of COVID-19 within their borders but came at high economic costs.

19. Presentations highlighted the early health response measures by Member States, some of which were already in place from the measles epidemic that occurred in Samoa in 2019. These measures included not only border closures, but targeted funding directed at the health sector for preparedness and prevention, quarantine facilities, essential treatment infrastructure, testing, contact tracing, and reporting. It was noted that work on the acquisition of medical supplies has been supported by bilateral and multilateral partners, the WHO, and other UN system agencies.
20. Presentations highlighted the tremendous impact that the pandemic will have on their economies. Across the region, economies will expect economic contractions due to the reduction in activity in key industries such as tourism and travel and the overall reduction in internal economic activity as countries have put public safety measures in place.
21. Presentations noted that Governments in the region have also been forced to borrow from IFIs and other external financing sources to cover the budget gaps needed to respond to COVID-19. The role that stimulus packages have played in response to the virus was also highlighted. It was noted that the main goal of these packages is to smooth out the economic impacts of the pandemic and reduce the overall level of economic contraction. These packages include measures that provide funds to small and medium-sized businesses, so that they can weather this period of depressed economic activity. They also emphasize social protection measures that provide transfer payments to those who have lost their jobs or had their hours reduced. Additionally, governments have allowed for loan payment deferments and lowered interest rates to provide liquidity.
22. Presentations stressed that the issue of food security has become critical, as a result of measures taken to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 throughout the region. It was noted that as national borders close and international trade is reduced, food supply chains have been disrupted making it difficult for countries to have enough food for their domestic populations. This, in turn, has led national governments to focus on research and development of their domestic agricultural sectors so that they can cover present and future food supply gaps.
23. Presentations also highlighted the need for partnerships and greater stakeholder engagement. It was noted that the pandemic has shown that its effects are broad and impact large swaths of society, and have already pushed the limits of national governments' response capacities.
24. Presentations also noted that one of the focuses of national response plans is on the development of human capital. This was primarily done through the creation of online platforms that were designed to help children and adolescents maintain access to education while formal schooling was closed.
25. Presentations emphasized the impact that external shocks can have on SIDS, not only in the present but on the implementation of sustainable development plans and hard-fought development progress as well.

Interactive Discussion

26. After the presentations, an intervention was made by Ms. Ma'u Alipate that highlighted the best practices and lessons learned from the pandemic thus far in Tonga. The intervention highlighted the 60-million-Pa'anga (25.2-million-U.S. dollar) stimulus package passed by the national government that provided, government support capacity development in the fishery, agriculture, and livestock sectors, the importance of data and statistics in national planning frameworks, development of digital capacities, and the need for broad stakeholder collaboration.

Closing

27. Ms. Simona Marinescu, UN Resident Coordinator (Samoa MCO) provided a brief summary of the second segment. Concluding remarks were received from H.E. Ms. Lois Young, Permanent Representative of Belize to the United Nations, Chair of Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), and H.E. Ms. Fekita 'Utoikamanu, High Representative, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS (UN-OHRLLS).
28. The meeting underscored the best practices and lessons learned by national focal points as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic at the national, regional and global levels. The meeting also stressed the importance of continuing to share experiences and best practices on mainstreaming the SAMOA Pathway and SDGs into national development processes as well their implementation and follow up, in the context of COVID-19, in line with the principle to “build back better”.
29. The meeting noted that discussions would continue at the in-person meetings of the focal points, which are still scheduled to be held in Antigua and Barbuda, when circumstances allow.

Participants List

1. National Focal Points

Name	Member State
Ms. Peseta Noumea Simi	Samoa
Ms. Ma'u Alipate	Tonga
Ms. Edna Akullq	Micronesia
Mr. John Limen	Nauru

2. Permanent Missions to the UN representation

Name	Last name	Mission	Title
Amatlain	Kabua	Marshall Islands	Permanent Representative
Va'inga	Tone	Tonga	Permanent Representative
Satyendra	Prasad	Fiji	Permanent Representative
Agnes	Harm	Fiji	Deputy Permanent Representative
Ray	Singeo	Palau	Counsellor
Kane	Amandus	Nauru	First Secretary
Jeem	Lippwe	Micronesia	DPR
Kenneth	Welles	Micronesia	First Secretary
Ray	Singeo	Palau	Counsellor
Marlene	Moses	Nauru	Permanent Representative / Ambassador
Darlene	Vaea	Tonga	Second Secretary
Miriama	Betham- Malielegaoi	Samoa	Charge d' Affaires a.i.
Darlene	Vaea	Tonga	Second Secretary
Fred	Sarufa	Papua New Guinea	Counsellor

3. AOSIS Bureau

Name
H.E. Ms. Lois Young, Permanent Representative of Belize to the United Nations, Chair of AOSIS
H.E. Mr. Satyendra Prasad, Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations, AOSIS Bureau Member for PSIDS

4. Resident Coordinator Offices

Name	RCO
Ms Simona Marinescu	UN Resident Coordinator (Samoa MCO Serves 4 countries/territories (4 SIDS) Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau)

Mr. Sanaka Samrasinha	UN Resident Coordinator (Fiji MCO) Serves 10 countries (10 SIDS) Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu)
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5. Other UN and international organizations

Name	Surname	Organization
Rosemary	Kalapurakal	DCO
Mara	Murillo	UNEP
Francois	Martel	UNDP Samoa Multi-country Office
Petal	Thomas	UNFPA
Andy	McElroy	UNDRR
Sanjesh	Naidu	ESCAP Pacific Office
AKIRA	MORETTO	UNOPS
Donna	Pierre	World Meteorological Organization
Sarah	O'Neill	UNOPS
David	Stevens	UNDRR
Marie	Bourrel-MCKinnon	International Seabed Authority
Arieta	Gonelevu Rakai	International Renewable Energy Agency
Alifeleti	Soaki	Pacific Island Forum
Espen	Ronneberg	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

6. Organizers

Name	UN-System
H.E. Ms. Fekita 'Utoikamanu,	High Representative, Under-Secretary-General, OHRLLS
Heidi Schroderus-Fox	Director, UN-OHRLLS
Sandagdorj Erdenebileg	Chief, UN-OHRLLS
Oumar Diallo	OHRLLS
Tishka Francis	OHRLLS
Themba Phakathi	OHRLLS
Per Magnus Andresen	OHRLLS
John Henry Gordon	OHRLLS



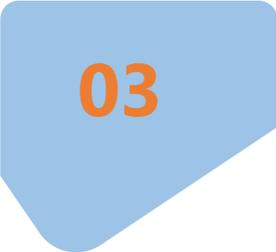
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AGENDA

<p>01</p>	<p>OPENING (5:00pm-5:10pm)</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director (UN-OHRLLS)</p> <p>Opening Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• H.E. Ms. Fekita 'Utoikamanu, High Representative, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS (UN-OHRLLS)• H.E. Ms. Lois Young, Permanent Representative of Belize to the United Nations, Chair of Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)
<p>02</p>	<p>RESPONSE TO COVID-19 (GLOBAL AND REGIONAL) 5:10pm – 5:40 pm</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director (UN-OHRLLS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation I: Response to COVID-19 (emerging priority areas and how international platforms can support or continue to support the response) – Ms. Rosemary Kalapurakal, Director of Policy and Programming Branch, Development Coordination Office (DCO)• Presentation II: COVID-19 response – Regional (emerging priority areas and how regional platforms can support or continue to support the response) - Mr. Sanaka Samrasinha, UN Resident Coordinator (Fiji) <p><i>Guiding Questions:</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What are the COVID-19 response initiatives at the global and regional level? What have been some of the successes and challenges? How has the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the SDGs factored into these initiatives?</i> • <i>What are the emerging priorities for small island developing States in the Pacific in the context of the COVID-19 response? How are these priorities being addressed?</i> • <i>How can international and regional platforms support these priorities? What are the implications for the Multi-Country Office and Regional Reviews?</i>
 <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; color: orange;">03</p>	<p style="background-color: #ADD8E6; padding: 2px;">COUNTRY EXPERIENCES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19</p> <p><i>(5:40 – 6:50pm)</i></p> <p>Moderator: Ms Simona Marinescu, UN Resident Coordinator (Samoa)</p> <p>Pacific SIDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation I: Samoa • Presentation II: Federated States of Micronesia • Presentation III: Papua New Guinea <p>Responses from SIDS NFPs and Interventions from (other) UN System –</p> <p>Interactive Discussion</p> <p><i>Guiding Questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What are some of the best practices, and lessons learnt in response to COVID-19, including from the national, regional and international perspectives?</i> • <i>What are the challenges and opportunities going forward, including in the context of the Multi-Country Office and Regional Reviews?</i> • <i>What are the implications for the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the SDGs? What are the lessons from Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)?</i>
 <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; color: orange;">04</p>	<p style="background-color: #ADD8E6; padding: 2px;">CLOSING</p> <p><i>(6:50 pm – 7:00 pm)</i></p> <p>Closing Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session 3 Moderator brief summary/takeaways • H.E. Ms. Fekita ‘Utoikamanu, High Representative, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS (UN-OHRLLS)