



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

18 June 2019

Excellency,

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 18 June 2019 from H.E. Mr. Satyendra Prasad, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Fiji and H.E. Ms. Geraldine Byrne Nason, Permanent Representative of Ireland, the co-facilitators of the intergovernmental consultations for political declaration of the High-level mid-term review of SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, pursuant to resolution 72/307.

The letter attached herewith transmits a revised version of the draft Political Declaration ahead of the consultations at expert level on Friday, 21 June 2019 at 3 p.m., in Conference Room 12.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Fernanda Espinosa', written over a light blue horizontal line.

María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York



18 June 2019

Excellency,

We write to you in our capacities as Co-Chairs appointed by the President of the General Assembly to facilitate intergovernmental consultations for a concise, action-oriented and inter-governmentally agreed political declaration of the high-level mid-term review of the SAMOA Pathway.

Please find attached a revised version of the draft Political Declaration.

In discharging our mandates as co-facilitators, we will convene consultations at expert level on Friday 21 June at 3pm in Conference Room 12.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurance of our highest consideration.

Sincerely,

Satyendra Prasad

Permanent Representative

Geraldine Byrne Nason

Permanent Representative

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

Mid-Term Review of the SAMOA Pathway
High Level Political Declaration
(Rev.2)

PREAMBLE

1. We, the Heads of State and Government, Ministers and High Representatives, are gathered at the United Nations on 27 September 2019, to review the implementation of the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway. We reaffirm our commitment to strengthening cooperation and support towards SIDS in the context of sustainable development, in line with SIDS national development strategies and priorities.
2. We reaffirm that SIDS remain a special case for sustainable development. Building on the Barbados Programme of Action (BPoA) and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI), the SAMOA Pathway, is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which underscores the special challenges facing the most vulnerable countries and is a standalone, overarching framework for guiding global, regional and national efforts to achieve the sustainable development aspirations of SIDS.
3. We renew our solidarity with SIDS, as they continue to face the combined challenges arising in particular from their geographical remoteness, the small scale of their economies and the adverse effects caused by climate change.
4. We reaffirm our commitment to moving the sustainable development agenda forward, and in this regard, we urge all parties to take concrete measures to expeditiously advance the sustainable development of SIDS in line with the *Samoa Pathway*, the *2030 Agenda Addis Ababa Action Agenda*, the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*, the *New Urban Agenda* and the *Paris Agreement*.
5. We acknowledge that for all countries, public policies and the mobilization and effective use of domestic resources, underscored by the

principle of national ownership, are central to our common pursuit of sustainable development. Sound social, environmental and economic policies, including countercyclical fiscal policies, adequate fiscal space, good governance at all levels, and democratic and transparent institutions responsive to the needs of people are necessary to achieve our goals.

6. We remain especially concerned about the continued devastation faced by SIDS due to extreme weather events, adverse impacts of climate change, slow onset events, and the increasing frequency, scale and intensity of disasters.
7. We are concerned that despite advances in social inclusion by many SIDS through national and regional efforts, poverty, unemployment, inequality and exclusion continue to disproportionately affect women and girls, children, youth, older persons, people with disabilities and other marginalized groups.
8. We are particularly concerned that SIDS have not achieved sustained high levels of economic growth, owing in part to the ongoing negative impacts of external financial and economic shocks and environmental challenges.
9. We also acknowledge the critical importance of Official Development Assistance in supporting SIDS to address their vulnerabilities and for sustainable development. We are concerned about the recent downward trend of this Assistance to SIDS and call on the international community to reverse this trend by increasing resources from all sources at national, regional and global levels, improving the quality of ODA and increasing its development impact.
10. We acknowledge the value of Partnerships as a means of supporting the sustainable development of SIDS and call for the strengthening of existing partnerships and the development of new partnerships that comply with the SMART Criteria for SIDS partnerships and that have the potential to further progress implementation of the sustainable development agendas of SIDS.

11. We reaffirm our commitment to and underscore the urgency of finding innovative solutions to the major challenges facing SIDS in a concerted manner, so as to support them in sustaining the momentum realized in implementing the Samoa Pathway. With renewed political will and strong leadership, we dedicate ourselves to working in a meaningful partnership with all stakeholders at all levels.

PROGRESS, GAPS AND CHALLENGES

12. Despite their challenges and vulnerabilities, SIDS have made progress, and continue to demonstrate their commitment to promoting sustainable development by mainstreaming sustainable development objectives into national development strategies; enhancing political commitments and public awareness of the importance of sustainable development issues and mobilizing domestic and regional resources to meet their sustainable development goals.
13. We commend the progress made by SIDS in the economic, social and environmental dimensions including *inter alia* of gender equality, empowerment of women, health, education, sustainable energy and data and statistics. We are nonetheless concerned that based on the analysis of the implementation of the priority areas of the SAMOA Pathway, overall progress in the social dimensions lags behind the environment and economic dimensions.
 1. We recognize that gender equality and women's empowerment and the full realization of human rights for women and girls have a transformative and multiplier effect and is a driver of economic growth in small island developing states. Women can be powerful agents of change.
 - 2.
 3. We recognize that gender inequality remains a key challenge for SIDS and that further efforts to promote gender equality and women's economic and political empowerment, as well as to address all forms of violence against women and girls are required.

4. We are concerned that SIDS efforts to promote/ensure peace and security are affected by transnational and domestic crime and violence, including drug trafficking, illicit trade in small and light weapons, all of which hinders sustainable development and the building of peaceful and prosperous societies.
5. We are concerned that communicable and non-communicable diseases are overwhelming health services in SIDS, challenging their sustainability and impeding progress toward the delivery of quality and accessible health-care services. NCDs are responsible for significant losses in productivity, increased economic burdens and social costs to SIDS.
6. We are concerned with the high rates of youth unemployment in SIDS, the social and economic costs of which may include alienation, deprivation and increased incidences of youth crime and violence, thereby posing a threat to long-term development.

ECONOMIC

7. We recognize that SIDS have not achieved sustained high levels of economic growth. Building resilience to external economic shocks, natural disasters and climate change depends on success in effecting the necessary investments which would reduce vulnerability. Continued efforts must be made to pursue development strategies that promote sustainable economic growth and diversification and serve as a means to foster innovation and promote entrepreneurship.
8. We recognize that middle-income SIDS still face significant challenges in accessing concessional financing [**from the international community**], including inherent challenges in accessing financing for development as outlined in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. We are especially concerned about the exclusionary effect of using per capita national income as the

primary eligibility criterion for access to concessional and non-concessional development assistance.

9. We remain committed to further exploring innovative financial instruments, such as blue or green bonds and financing mechanisms, such as the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)'s Debt for Climate Adaptation Swaps Initiative to assist SIDS with financing, adaptation and mitigation projects and strengthening sustainable economic growth, while easing debt burdens with a view to improving SIDS access to finance.
10. We reaffirm that successful engagement in international trade is a key driver for sustainable economic growth and sustainable development. We are concerned that SIDS continue to face challenges in engaging in the multilateral trading system.
11. Remittances represent are a major source of external financing for SIDS. We are concerned that SIDS still face significant obstacles to the flow of and access to remittances, including as a result of correspondent banking relationships and services, associated costs, and policies. We remain committed to fostering the appropriate enabling environment to address these concerns.
12. We are concerned with the transition strategy employed for SIDS that have or are about to graduate from LDC status, as this affects their access to bilateral and multi-lateral grants and other concessional funding. We stress the importance of the need for development partners and the international community to implement concrete measures in support of a smooth transition strategy for SIDS to sustain progress.
13. We note that SIDS continue to remain highly dependent on fossil fuel imports, and therefore are vulnerable to the volatility of fossil fuels prices placing a significant strain on their economies. In this regard, we welcome all initiatives and the strong momentum made by SIDS toward the promotion of renewable and sustainable energy as well as energy efficiency in SIDS.

Environment

14. We recognize that disaster risk reduction is key to advancing sustainable development and resilient societies. While SIDS have made progress in collecting disaster-related data through the Sendai Framework Monitor, and promoting synergies between national climate change adaptation strategies and national disaster risk reduction strategies, SIDS still experience some of the most severe consequences of escalating natural disasters including *inter alia* massive loss of life, biodiversity and infrastructure, involuntary movement of people and other severe negative economic, social and environmental consequences, such as [threats/challenges] to food security and nutrition which have and continue to undermine sustainable development in SIDS.
15. We also recognize the contribution of ecosystem-related approaches as part of an overall adaptation and disaster reduction strategy for maintaining and increasing resilience and reducing the vulnerability of ecosystems and people in the face of the adverse effects of climate change.
16. We commend the ongoing efforts of the international community in strengthening the disaster risk reduction capabilities and disaster resilience of SIDS, such as the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility, the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative as well as the InsuResilience Global Partnership.
17. We remain especially concerned about the potential adverse impacts of climate change, which have and will continue to undermine sustainable development in SIDS, causing massive loss of life, biodiversity and infrastructure, involuntary movement of people/contributing to human mobility and other severe negative economic, social and environmental consequences such as threats/challenges to food security and nutrition.

MOI

18. Data collection and statistical analysis are essential for sound evidence-based decision making and enabling, follow-up monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Samoa Pathway, Sendai Framework and the Sustainable Development Goals. The absence of an appropriate and consistent means of monitoring and measuring progress of the Samoa Pathway inhibits meaningful and strategic analysis of trends and progress at national, regional and global levels.

19. Investment in Science, Technology and Innovation is critical to achieving the sustainable development objectives of SIDS and we recognize that the recently- established Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries is one means by which small island least developed countries can foster the utilization of scientific and technological solutions .

THE WAY FORWARD

20. We call on the international community to support SIDS to: -

(a) Develop and implement programs and policies that promote gender equality and women's economic and political empowerment, prevents and addresses of all forms of violence against women and girls, addresses inequalities , youth unemployment, and encourages youth engagement and participation (merger of 21j, v)

(b) Integrate disaster risk management into primary, secondary and tertiary health care systems and, including through partnerships, address and strengthen capacities for prevention, detection and treatment of communicable and non-communicable diseases and for quality essential health-care services

(c) Scale-up efforts to promote sustainable food systems and combat all forms of malnutrition, including undernourishment and obesity, with a view

to ensuring food security, improving nutrition and fostering healthy diets and lifestyle.

(d) Strengthen regional and international cooperation, exchanges and investments in informal and formal education and training to enable and support sustainable development (old 22g)

(e) foster the creation and expansion of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises while taking into account national development priorities, circumstances and legislation

(f) promote investments in science, technology and innovation across all SIDS, based on mutually agreed terms , that provide incentives for innovation and entrepreneurship and ensures the growth of knowledge-based economies

(g) scale up investments in the marine sector and in the creative and cultural industries to foster economic growth and diversification, and serve as a means to reduce vulnerability, build resilience, foster innovation and promote entrepreneurship

(h) enhance the productive use and flow of remittances, through addressing the obstacles to their continued flow including *inter alia* correspondent banking relationships and services, increasing coordination among national regulatory authorities, removing the obstacles to non-bank remittance service providers accessing payment system infrastructure, and promoting conditions for cheaper, faster and safer transfer of remittances in both source and recipient countries

(i) address and manage, through innovative approaches, the different types of waste, including chemical waste including plastic, marine litter, microplastics, and chemical waste, noting with concern the linkages between the chemical waste management regime, and its implications for human health and social well-being, and recognizing that waste management is a serious challenge for SIDS

(j) develop, adapt and scale up the application of technologies, policies, methods and tools, on mutually agreed terms, to prevent and combat desertification, land degradation and drought in SIDS, and to boost knowledge exchange, including of traditional knowledge, capacity-building and sharing of technologies.

(k) Scale up the development of genuine and durable partnerships that follow the SIDS Partnership SMART criteria and advance partnership modalities that enhance the engagement with all relevant stakeholders at the national, regional and interregional levels.

(l) strengthen national statistical systems to effectively monitor and evaluate of the implementation SAMOA Pathway, the 2030 Agenda including the SDGs; produce disaggregated data; strengthen other relevant information systems and analytical capabilities for decision-making, tracking progress and the development of vulnerability indices and resilience country profiles

(m) explore innovative sources of financing, such as blue or green bonds, as well as diaspora bonds, with a view to improving SIDS access to finance.

(n) improve the utilization of scientific and technological solutions and ICT connectivity to ensure the growth of knowledge-based economies and to address the challenges faced by all SIDS.

22. We call on development partners, international and regional financial institutions to: -

(a) Collaborate with SIDS to improve capacity to unlock large-scale investment and financing, especially grant and concessional financing

(b) Commit to provide timely, predictable and sustainable financial resources, through simplified streamlined processes and, where appropriate, through grant-based public finance;

(c) introduce broader eligibility criterion, other than GNI per capita, for access to concessional and non-concessional development finance assistance including *inter alia*, development needs, sovereign financing capacity, debt profiles, vulnerability measures and post disaster assessments

(d) consider the establishment of a global disaster fund to assist SIDS to rebuild after natural disasters, develop resilient infrastructure, strengthen disaster risk governance mechanisms including innovative ex-ante risk-informed financing instruments and approaches that incentivizes, integrates disaster risk reduction and climate action into policies, programmes and budgets across all sectors and support data collection for development of evidence-based strategies

23. Considering the vulnerabilities of SIDS, we call for: -

(a) urgent global action to address the threat of climate change, by taking ambitious actions in line with Paris Agreement, including the replenishment of the green climate Fund;

(b) increased global investment in initiatives and technologies that results in limiting global temperatures to below 1.5°C

(c) enhanced support and active participation in the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) to meaningfully address issues related to loss and damage associated with the impact of climate change, including in SIDS

- (d)urgent action to address the adverse impacts of climate change, including those related to sea-level rise and extreme weather events, which continue to pose a significant risk to SIDS and to their efforts to achieve sustainable development and, for many SIDS represents the gravest of threats to their survival and viability, including, in some cases, through freshwater scarcity, the loss of territory, as well as through threats to food security. Focus should also be placed on the human dimensions of climate change which include increasing scarcity of natural resources and the need for communities to prepare for relocation. .
- (e)establishment of partnerships that support SIDS to mitigate and adapt to the consequences of climate change and at the same time reduce their debt burdens, such as the Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC) debt for Climate Adaptation Swap initiative.
- (f) Implementation of voluntary commitments pledged during the 2017 Ocean Conference and note the decision to convene the 2020 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
- (g)Advancement of the negotiations for a new Implementing Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction with the ambition to conclude by 2020
- (h)Development of an integrated trade related mechanism or framework for technical assistance for SIDS under the WTO, based on the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Assistance for the LDCs

- (i) Enhanced north-South, South-South and triangular cooperation in support of SIDS, including through enhanced knowledge sharing platforms, for the dissemination of best practices and strengthening peer review and peer-to-peer learning processes

24 We call upon: -

- (a) all entities of the UN system to address and integrate SIDS-related priorities into their respective strategic and work plans, in accordance with their mandates
- (b) the World Health Organization to support the implementation of relevant resolutions, in line with the implementation of the health objectives set out in the SAMOA Pathway, and call on other relevant agencies, funds and programmes to coordinate and advance initiatives to address the persistent and emerging health issues of SIDS
- (c) UNCTAD to support SIDS to enhance institutional and technical capacity for trade expansion and competitiveness, while taking into account national development priorities, circumstances and legislation
- (d) UN-Water, and international and regional development banks support SIDS to address the water and sanitation challenges outlined in the SAMOA Pathway by strengthening existing technical assistance initiatives within the framework of the United Nations Development System reform
- (e) the Committee of Development Policy to address the special case, circumstances and vulnerabilities of SIDS, including in determining the criteria and transition period for graduation from LDC status, as part of its ongoing review
- (f) relevant UN system organizations and agencies to address transnational and domestic crime and violence, including drug trafficking, illicit trade in small and light weapons

- (g) FAO and other relevant UN system organizations and agencies to support the full and effective implementation of the Global Action Programme on Food Security and Nutrition in SIDS and to enhance institutional and technical capacity to enhance sustainable and resilient domestic food production;
- (h) the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and other Environmental Funds' to expedite and simplify application processes for access to financing
- (i) the UN system organizations and agencies to continue work on the full and effective implementation of all the recommendations of the Comprehensive Review of UN System Support for SIDS prepared by the Joint Inspection Unit and reporting on the progress made in implementation.
- (j) The Secretary-General to develop indicators for those SAMOA Pathway priority areas not covered by the SDG targets and indicators, while avoiding duplication and overlaps and ensuring coordination and coherence with the High Level Political Forum and existing monitoring frameworks.
- (k) the Secretary-General to mobilize the appropriate resources, from all sources, and to continue to address the needs resulting from the expanding mandates given to the SIDS unit of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS), including inter alia, the SIDS Partnership Framework, the SIDS Focal Point Network, and the SIDS Global Business Network.