2 July 2019

Excellency,

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 2 July 2019 from H.E. Mr. Satyendra Prasad, Permanent Representative of Fiji, and H.E. Ms. Geraldine Byrne Nason, Permanent Representative of the Ireland, co-facilitators of the intergovernmental consultations for the political declaration of the high-level mid-term review of the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/307.

The letter attached herewith transmit a revised version of the draft Political Declaration ahead of the consultations at expert level on Friday, 5 July 2019, in Conference Room 5 at 3:00 p.m.

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

Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garcés

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York
2 July 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.

In discharging our mandates as co-facilitators, we will convene consultations at the expert-level on Friday, 5 July in Conference Room 5 at 3 p.m. The attached Rev 3 of the draft declaration will be the basis of discussions.

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

Sincerely,

Satyendra Prasad
Permanent Representative

Geraldine Byrne Nason
Permanent Representative
Mid-Term Review of the SAMOA Pathway
High Level Political Declaration
(Rev. 3)

PREAMBLE

1. We, the Heads of State and Government, Ministers and High Representatives, 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, reaffirm our commitment to strengthening cooperation and support towards small island developing States in the context of sustainable development, in line with their national development strategies and priorities.

2. We reaffirm that the SAMOA Pathway is a standalone, overarching framework setting out the sustainable priorities of small island developing states that builds on the Barbados Programme of Action (BPoA) and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI). The SAMOA Pathway is consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and is in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, New Urban Agenda and Paris Agreement.

3. We recognize and welcome the ownership, leadership and considerable efforts that have been demonstrated by small island developing states, with the support of the international community, in advancing the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, and welcome the successes and progress made to date.

4. We reaffirm that small island developing States remain a special case for sustainable development and we renew our solidarity with them, as they continue to face the combined challenges arising, in particular from their geographical remoteness, the small scale of their economies, high costs and the adverse effects caused by climate change. We are particularly concerned that many small island developing States have not achieved sustained high levels of economic growth, owing in part to their vulnerabilities to the ongoing negative impacts of environmental challenges and external economic and financial shocks.

5. We acknowledge that for all countries the principle of national ownership is central to our common pursuit of sustainable development. We recall and encourage progress on all seven action areas of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda as necessary to achieve sustainable development in all its dimensions.

6. We remain especially concerned about the continued devastation faced by small island developing States due to the adverse impacts of climate change such as extreme weather events, slow onset events, and the increasing frequency, scale and intensity of disasters.
7. We reaffirm that international development cooperation plays a critical role in supporting small island developing States to address their vulnerabilities and achieve the sustainable development goals. We are concerned about the general downward trend of Official Development Assistance to small island developing States and encourage the international community to mobilize additional development finance from all sources at national, regional and international levels, while also improving the quality of ODA and increasing its development impact.

8. We acknowledge the value of partnerships as a means of supporting the sustainable development of small island developing States and note the establishment of the small island developing States Partnership Framework. We renew our commitment to working in meaningful partnerships with small island developing States.

9. We note the importance of oceans to small island developing States and acknowledge their efforts to develop and implement strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of ocean resources. We encourage the fulfillment of voluntary commitments pledged during the 2017 UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14, and recall the decision to convene the second conference in 2020.

10. We underscore the importance of eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty. Eradicating poverty is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, as well as an overarching objective of the 2030 Agenda for small island developing States and other developing countries.

PROGRESS, GAPS AND CHALLENGES

11. We recognize that gender equality, 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. We recognize that women are powerful agents of change and that greater efforts are required to achieve gender equality and women’s economic and political empowerment, as well as to address all forms of violence against women and girls.

12. We note the advances in social inclusion by many small island developing States, but are concerned that poverty, unemployment, inequality and exclusion continue to disproportionately affect people in vulnerable situations and marginalized groups.

13. We recognize the efforts of small island developing States in promoting peace and security and to build peaceful and prosperous societies on their paths toward sustainable development.
14. We recognize the need for the prevention, detection and treatment of communicable and non-communicable diseases and for quality essential health-care services while also reducing the health-related impacts resulting from natural and man-made disasters in small island developing States.

15. We are concerned that communicable and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are overwhelming health-care services in small island developing States, challenging their sustainability and impeding progress toward the delivery of quality and accessible health-care services. NCDs are responsible for significant losses of lives and productivity, increased economic burdens and social costs to small island developing States.

16. We recognize that middle-income small island developing States still face significant challenges in accessing concessional financing, including inherent challenges in accessing financing for development as outlined in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which recognizes the need to devise methodologies to better account for the complex and diverse realities of middle-income countries.

17. We remain committed to assist small island developing States to further explore innovative financial instruments and mechanisms, such as debt for development swaps, debt for climate adaptation swaps, blue or green bonds among others, while mindful of the need to ease debt burdens with a view to improving small island developing States access to finance.

18. We reaffirm that successful engagement in international trade is a key driver for sustainable economic growth and sustainable development. We are concerned that small island developing States continue to face challenges in engaging in the multilateral trading system.

19. We acknowledge that remittances represent a major source of external financing in many small island developing States. We are concerned that they still face significant obstacles to the flow of and access to remittances, including correspondent banking relationships and services, associated costs, and policies. We remain committed to fostering the appropriate enabling environment to address these concerns, and to working with countries to ensure the application of Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism laws, in accordance with international standards.

20. We recognize and are concerned by the transition challenges encountered by small island developing States that have or are about to graduate from Least Developed Country status. We remain mindful that graduation must not disrupt a country's
development progress. We stress the importance of the need for each small island developing State nearing graduation to develop a viable multiannual transition strategy with the technical and, where necessary, financial support of the international community to mitigate against the possible loss of concessionary financing, reduce the risks of falling heavily into debt and ensure macro-financial stability.

21. We note that many small island developing States continue to lack the capacity to fully exploit their renewable energy potential, and as such, remain highly dependent on fossil fuel imports, placing a significant strain on their economies. In this regard, we welcome all initiatives and the strong momentum made towards the promotion of renewable and sustainable energy in small island developing States and call for further work and enhanced support.

22. We commend the ongoing efforts made by small island developing States to make improvements to their transportation connectivity. We recognize the important role of sustainable transport in promoting policy synergies, trade facilitation, infrastructure connectivity, financial cooperation and people-to-people exchange, which are key areas in achieving sustainable development.

23. We recognize that disaster risk reduction is key to advancing sustainable development and resilient societies and note that many small island developing States still experience severe negative economic, social, environmental consequences, including inter alia massive loss of life and infrastructure, involuntary movement of people and other consequences, such as threats to food security and nutrition.

24. We also recognize the contribution of ecosystem-based 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 small island developing States, in the face of the adverse effects of climate change.

25. We reiterate that improved data collection and statistical analysis enable small island developing States to better plan, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework.

26. We recognize that science, technology and innovation are essential enablers and drivers for sustainable development and in this regard, we reaffirm our commitment to support the efforts of small island developing States to gain access, on mutually agreed terms, to appropriate reliable, affordable, modern and environmentally sound technologies.
CALL FOR ACTION

27. Having noted the progress made and challenges encountered by small island developing states in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, we urge the following actions to further advance the sustainable development priorities of small island developing States:

a. targeted measures to eradicate poverty, including extreme poverty, and to implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures to achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable and strengthen national statistical capacity and monitoring systems;

b. the fostering, creation and expansion of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in small island developing States, while taking into account national development priorities, circumstances and legislation;

c. to further promotion of investments in science and technology in small island developing States, based on mutually agreed terms, as a means of incentivizing innovation and entrepreneurship;

d. the scaling-up of investments for economic growth and diversification, including through the marine sector and creative and cultural industries, to serve as a means of reducing vulnerability and building resilience;

e. the development of new measures of sustainable development, building on existing experiences with eligibility exceptions for concessional finance and multidimensional assessments to address limitations of an income only assessment of development and graduation readiness, taking into account the specific vulnerability of middle-income small island developing States;

f. the overcoming of obstacles to and enhancement of the flow of remittances by addressing correspondent banking relationships and services, including *inter alia* the removal of 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, including through the use of ICT; and promotion of the application of international Anti-Money Laundering Legislations and Combating the Financing of Terrorism standards and increasing coordination among national regulatory authorities;

g. the improvement of national institutional capacities to access sustainable development finance including grant, concessional, climate and disaster relief finance to ensure effective and tailored finance solutions. We remain committed to
exploring innovative and sustainable private sources of financing, such as blue, green and diaspora bonds tailored to the specific circumstances to small island developing States;

h. the strengthening of small island developing States’ capacity to effectively participate in the multilateral trading system;

i. the scaling-up and development of genuine and durable partnerships with all stakeholders at national, regional and international levels that follow the small island developing States Partnership SMART criteria and modalities;

j. the strengthening of national and regional statistical systems to effectively monitor and evaluate the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and other sustainable development agendas;

k. effective North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, including through enhanced knowledge sharing platforms, and to enable the dissemination of best practices, strengthened peer review and peer-to-peer learning processes;

l. the continued promotion, development and implementation of gender equality, furthering of women’s economic and political empowerment, and the prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls;

m. the creation of the enabling environment and capacity to attract foreign direct investment and financing;

n. consideration of the need for the development of a disaster fund or financial instrument to assist small island developing States to build back better after disasters;

o. strengthening of national health systems to prevent, detect, and respond to communicable and non-communicable diseases as well as enhancement of the resilience of health systems including by integrating disaster risk reduction and management in all health-related activities;

p. further promotion of sustainable food systems and the combating all forms of malnutrition, including undernourishment and obesity, with a view to ensuring food security, improving nutrition and fostering healthy diets and lifestyle;

q. strengthening of regional and international cooperation, exchanges and investments in informal and formal education, including technical and vocational training and skills, to enable and support sustainable development;
r. urgent global action to address the threat of climate change, by taking ambitious actions in line with Paris Agreement, and encourage adequate and predictable means of implementation including the successful replenishment of the Green Climate Fund;

s. shifting of financial flows towards pathways consistent with limiting warming below 1.5°C, and in line with the IPCC Special Report, including through increased global investment in initiatives and technologies;

t. support and active participation to address loss and damage, including through the provision of adequate support to initiatives under the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) for loss and damage and encourage environmental funds/the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to discuss ways to enable small island developing States to submit proposals to address loss and damage;

u. 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 small island developing States and to their efforts to achieve sustainable development and, for many small island developing States represents the gravest of threats to their survival and viability, including, in some cases, through loss of territory, as well as through threats to water availability and food security and nutrition;

v. support to small island developing States to mitigate and adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change including through ecosystem-based approaches and nature-based solutions to climate change at the same time without risking debt sustainability by exploring and employing mechanisms such as debt swaps initiatives similar to the Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC) debt for Climate Adaptation Swap proposal;

w. advancement of negotiations for an Implementing Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction;

x. management through innovative approaches of different types of waste, including *inter alia* chemical waste, marine litter, plastics and microplastics;

y. development, adaptation and transfer of technology and policies for sustainable forest management, on mutually agreed terms, to prevent and combat desertification, land degradation and drought in to small island developing States,
and to boost knowledge exchange, including of traditional knowledge, capacity-
building and sharing of technologies;

28. We call upon:

a) all entities of the UN system to address and integrate to small island developing
States related priorities into their respective strategic and work plans, in
accordance with their mandates;

b) the World Health Organization to urgently 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 specialized agencies, funds and
programmes to coordinate and advance initiatives to address the persistent and
emerging health issues of small island developing States;

c) UNCTAD to continue to support small island developing States to enhance
institutional and technical capacity for trade expansion and competitiveness,
while taking into account national development priorities, circumstances and
legislation;

d) the relevant organizations of the United Nations Development System,
international and regional development banks to continue to support small island
developing States to address the water and sanitation challenges outlined in the
SAMOA Pathway by strengthening existing technical assistance initiatives in line
with their mandates;

e) the reconsideration of the uniqueness and vulnerabilities of small island
developing States by the Committee for Development Policy as it continues to
monitor regularly, together with their Governments, the progress of small island
developing States that have graduated from least developed country status while
looking forward to the outcomes of the ongoing comprehensive review of the least
developed country criteria;

f) the relevant entities of the UN system to address transnational and domestic crime
and violence, including drug trafficking, illicit trade in small and light weapons,
upon request and taking into account the varied national circumstances of small
island developing States;

g) the FAO and other relevant entities of the UN system to support the full and
effective implementation of the Global Action Programme on Food Security and
Nutrition in small island developing States and to provide small island developing States with support to enhance their institutional and technical capacity to promote sustainable and resilient domestic food production;

h) the relevant institutions, funds and facilities to examine the accessibility of financing instruments in order to maximize effectiveness, transparency, quality and impact, in the context of a complex funding environment which presents accessibility challenges for small island developing States;

i) UNEP to further strengthen support to small island developing States through dedicated programs;

j) The Secretary-General, within existing resources, to develop targets and indicators for those SAMOA Pathway priority areas not covered by the SDG or Sendai Framework;

k) the Secretary-General to mobilize the appropriate required resources, from all sources, and to continue to address the needs resulting from the expanding mandates given to the small island developing States 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 small island developing States (SIDS) Partnership Framework, the small island developing States (SIDS) Focal Point Network, and the small island developing States (SIDS) Global Business Network;