

**Statement at the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4).**

**Item 4 (General Discussion).  
Monday, 22 January, Conference Room 4.**

Excellencies,

Let me start by **thanking the organizers of this session** for inviting UNDP.

There is a disconcerting trend worldwide where **economic growth, while causing environmental damages, has not translated into social gains and inclusive prosperity.**

Many SIDS face high energy and food import-dependence and are exposed to climate-related disasters that are causing large liquidity issue and restrictive fiscal space. SIDS' current debt levels cut them for capital markets and contributes to higher funding costs, thus crowding out development spending, which is critical for climate adaptation and other social development priorities.

To reduce SIDS' debt vulnerability, countries must access concessional funds from the official development sector and liquidity support following shocks.

During the past decade, UNDP, with our partners, have invested **about 400 million USD/per year** in SIDS, to support implementation of the Samoa Pathway.

Our integrated offer *Rising Up for SIDS* has 3 focus areas: **digital transformation, including having 16 governments using our digital readiness assessment to set comprehensive policy for the future; blue economy; and climate action**, supporting SIDS to lead Climate Change negotiations.

Let me share a few examples of our work:

1. **In Samoa, PNG, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu**, the “Pacific Green Transformation project” funded by Japan, is helping over 190,000 direct beneficiaries adapt to climate risks.
2. **In Timor-Leste**, we provide off-grid solar-powered lighting and cooking stoves to 1,000 households, significantly reducing firewood consumption.
3. **In Cuba**, UNDP “MI COSTA” project is protecting 1,300 km of coastline and supporting 1.3m people building resilience from coastal flooding and saline intrusion.

Currently, we are reflecting on our contribution to the implementation of the Samoa Pathway, in collaboration with governments and partners, to extract valuable lessons and inform successful strategies for the next pathway.

UNDP remains committed to continuing supporting the SIDS, with our partners, towards sustainable development.

I would like to extend our best wishes for a successful outcome of the negotiations to the Co-Chairs of the Prep Committee – the Governments of Maldives and New Zealand – and to all involved.

Thank you.