



Government of the Cook Islands

Remarks for Prime Minister of the Cook Islands and Pacific Islands Forum Chair

Interactive Dialogue 1:

Revitalising SIDS Economies for Accelerated and Sustainable Growth

Tuesday 29 May
11:00 am to 1:00pm

Distinguished delegates, esteemed colleagues, and friends,

It is a great honor to address you at the first of our Interactive Dialogues for SIDS4 to share some of our region's views on revitalizing economies for accelerated and sustainable growth.

The vision for the Pacific region is encapsulated in the 2050 Strategy for the Pacific Blue Continent, which envisions “a resilient Pacific region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion, and prosperity”.

Central to our economic aspirations is the improved socioeconomic wellbeing of all Pacific peoples. We aim to achieve this through inclusive, resilient and sustainable economic growth and development. To preserve the richness of our Pacific way of life, it is imperative that our economies grow at a sustainable rate amidst the existential threats and impacts posed by climate change and global economic shocks occurring with increased frequency.

To realise this vision, we must focus on several key areas.

First, countries on the front lines of climate change should have their debt forgiven. Debt restructuring options must be made available for countries devastated by climate disasters so they can prioritise reconstruction over debt repayment.



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Second, we need to strengthen macroeconomic stability, diversify our economic growth models. Enhancing intra-regional trade by enhancing air and shipping links is essential to enduring economic shocks and building more resilient economies.

Second, we must bolster our climate and disaster resilience. This involves increasing our share of global climate finance as small island developing states.

Third, improving access to essential services is critical. By enhancing public and private sector supply chains, we can create more jobs and opportunities for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises

Fourth, we must address labor mobility and productivity by balancing labour demand and supply dynamics.

Fifth, developing new economic frontiers is vital. We need to optimize sustainable regional blue economy opportunities to maximize economic benefits, including from seabed mineral research and exploration.

Lastly, strengthening regional integration and coordination between SIDS members, development partners, and international organisations is critical to mobilise more resources and enhance the effectiveness of development investments into our region

[Pacific regional priority actions]

Let me now highlight some key regional priority actions which speak to these areas.

The Pacific Resilience Facility is a transformative initiative, and we call on all partners to help us with its capitalization. The PRF is the Pacific's answer to the slow and insufficient access to global climate finance and will serve as a catalyst to accelerate our access to these vital funds.



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Sustainable tourism growth is another key action area. Tourism is the mainstay of many Pacific countries and holds significant potential for growth in others.

Sustainable fisheries growth is also essential. Fisheries are a major source of exports, income, investment, and employment in several Pacific countries. We need to increase the value of fisheries and eliminate illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Employment in the fisheries sector can also be increased by investing in tuna processing through regional initiatives like the East New Britain Initiative (ENBi) – which promotes a regional “hubs and spokes” to support fisheries development and growth, as well as the establishment of a regional development fund.

Sustainable agriculture growth is the backbone of many Pacific SIDS and has the potential to significantly contribute to sustainable growth. We are applying best practices to increase agriculture output and diversify into new products through technology and connectivity.

In conclusion Excellencies, the Pacific region is committed to strategic actions to revitalize our economies and ensure a prosperous future for our Pacific communities. Together, we can build a resilient, sustainable, and inclusive region across all SIDS.

I thank you.



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Interactive Dialogue 21:

Enhancing critical forms of financing and aid effectiveness through collaborative partnerships: a conversation.

Tuesday 29 May
04:00 pm to 06:00pm

Note for the Co-Chairs

[Co-Chair 1: His Excellency Nuno Sampaio, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Portugal]

[Co-Chair 2: His Excellency Mark Brown, Prime Minister, the Cook Islands]

[Co-Chair 1 (Portugal)]

Distinguished Heads of State and Government,
Distinguished Ministers,
Distinguished representatives,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I call to order the second Interactive Dialogue of the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States on the theme “Enhancing Critical Forms of Financing and Aid Effectiveness through collaborative Partnerships: A Conversation”.

Let me take this opportunity to cordially welcome all of you to this interactive dialogue. I am honoured to serve as your Co-Chair,



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together with His Excellency Mark Brown, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands.

A warm welcome is also extended to the distinguished leaders joining us as part of the Fireside Chat and as panellists:

- His Excellency Orlando Habet, Minister of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management of Belize;
- Ms. María del Pilar Garrido Gonzalo, Director for Development Co-operation Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development;
- Ms. Dima Al-Khatib, Director of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation;
- Mr. Jorge Moreira da Silva, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the United Nations Office for Project Services; and
- Mr. Ambroise Fayolle, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank.

Before proceeding further, I would like to make introductory remarks on the theme of our discussions today.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

[Opening remarks by Co-Chair 1 (Portugal) [2 min.]]

I now give the floor to my fellow Co-Chair, His Excellency Mark Brown, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, for opening remarks and to introduce the Fireside Chat.



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[Co-Chair 2 (Cook Islands)]

Opening Remarks by PM Brown

Distinguished Heads of State and Government,
Distinguished Ministers,
Distinguished panellists
Distinguished representatives,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is my pleasure to co-chair this interactive dialogue on an issue of critical importance, particularly if we are committed to ensure the Antigua and Barbuda agenda for SIDS (ABAS), is implemented in a manner that is most beneficial for us, small island developing states.
2. For aid to be effective and efficient, it has to go hand in hand with genuine and durable partnerships. It should enhance strong ownership of the investments generated through these partnerships without the legacy of dependency and welfare characterizing previous forms of partnerships.
3. It should also signal commitment and accountability from both sides as that can translate to longer-term beneficial impacts. It should promote positive outcomes for all through measurable, sustainable and equitable results. It is not just about the quantity, but equally important it should be about the quality of the aid.
4. As Chair to the Pacific Islands Forum comprising of most of our Pacific Small Island Developing States, I introduced the Pacific Partnership for Prosperity initiative (PPfP) at our Leaders' meeting hosted by my government last year. It elevates regional initiatives - with the success of the PPfP hinging on securing essential political and financial commitment, providing early impactful wins, and effectively channelling international partners' efforts through collaboration and consultation.



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5. A key regional priority under the PPfP is the Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF). A first of its kind funding mechanism that has been envisioned and designed as well as managed and owned by the Pacific. The PRF is targeted at strengthening the capacity of Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and build their resilience to disasters at the community level with support for specific initiatives that have high impact and fill a niche in the climate and disaster risk financing landscape. We are looking at mobilising US\$500 million initially by 2026 to capitalise the PRF to support Pacific SIDS climate and disaster risk financing needs.

6. As SIDS regions and nations, *Enhancing Critical Forms of Financing and Aid Effectiveness through collaborative Partnerships* is already a critical element of our development aspirations and I look forward to hear from our experts and fellow Leaders on how we can all work together towards greater prosperity for our regions and nations.

[End of remarks – move into next section]

As indicated in the programme, this high-level interactive dialogue also consists of a fireside chat, and it is my pleasure to hand over the proceedings to Ms. Dima Al-Khatib, Director of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, who will facilitate the Chat, along with the distinguished speakers.

[Fireside Chat]

[For information:

The Facilitator will hand back to the Co-Chairs once the Fireside Chat is concluded, approx. after 30 minutes.]

At approximately 4:36 p.m.



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[Co-Chair 2 (Cook Islands)]

I thank Ms. Al-Khatib for expertly moderating the Fireside Chat which is now concluded.

[For information: The Fireside chat participants will be escorted to reserved seats in the audience.]

Presentations by Panellists [each 5 minutes]

We shall hear now presentations by our distinguished panellists.

[For information: The Secretary will use a bell to signal to the panellists that 1 minute remains for the presentation and the statement should be concluded.]

I first give the floor to Mr. Jorge Moreira da Silva, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director for the United Nations Office for Project Services.

I thank Mr. Moreira da Silva.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ambroise Fayolle, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank.

I thank Mr. Fayolle.



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I understand that our panellists have to leave at this time for another engagement. We thank them again for their participation today.

At approximately 4:46 p.m.

National and other Statements

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

We will now listen to interventions from the floor, based on a pre-established list of speakers for the interactive dialogue. All participants are invited to speak from their seats.

In order to maximize the time available to us and allow as many participants as possible to take the floor, I would urge all speakers to kindly observe the time limit of three minutes for interventions. We will enforce a strict time management and the microphone will automatically be cut-off when the time limit has been reached.

[To assist speakers in this regard, a timer has been installed on the screens. When the clock signifies that the three minutes have been exhausted, speakers are kindly requested to conclude their statements.]

In adhering to the time limit of three minutes, I would like to appeal to speakers to deliver their statements at a normal speed so that interpretation may be provided properly.



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Interactive Dialogue

I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of _____.

I thank the distinguished representative of _____.

[Co-Chair (Cook Islands) will announce the first 12 speaking slots, and then pass to Co-Chair (Portugal), who will then announce the remaining 11 speaking slots.]

[Please follow the pre-determined (live) list of speakers.]

Before we listen to the next speaker on the list, I would like to remind representatives to kindly observe the stipulated time limit of three minutes so that we may listen to as many speakers as possible in the time available.

[At approximately 5:54 p.m.]

We have just heard the last speaker in this dialogue.

[Co-Chair 2 (Cook Islands)]



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Closing Remarks

At this point, I would like to make some closing remarks concerning our deliberations.

My fellow co-chair
Distinguished Heads of State and Government,
Distinguished Ministers,
Distinguished panellists
Distinguished representatives,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen

It has indeed been my great pleasure to co-chair this interactive dialogue and take this opportunity to acknowledge the able leadership of my co-chair that has ensured a successful dialogue. This is what cooperative partnership is all about – supporting each other to ensure we both reap maximum benefits from our engagement.

I also thank our panel of experts and my colleagues – Leaders from the small island developing states of the Caribbean, Pacific and African, Asia, and the Indian ocean.

[PM Brown may wish to summate key discussion points here]

We all are in agreement that there is significant room for improvement. The complexities of the challenges that we face are significant but not insurmountable. We also recognize that we have unique challenges that require innovate approaches that are contextualized to our circumstances.



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As mentioned earlier, the Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF) is one such innovative approach that will meet international benchmarks on due diligence in terms of project financing but tailor its approach cognisant of the special circumstances of Pacific SIDS. The PRF recognises the need for quick access to funding opportunities at the community level. The vast majority of pledged funds will be capitalised with returns used to distribute to Member States for community level projects. We are currently in the final stages of setting up the PRF and have US\$116 million in pledges from Australia, Saudi Arabia, US and China. We call on friends of the Pacific to contribute significant pledges to the PRF and support us on this journey to claim the narrative on mobilising resourcing for our financing needs.

Underpinning all of these issues is the need for ‘Enhanced Critical Forms of Financing and Aid Effectiveness through collaborative Partnerships’. I join my colleagues in their call to all our partners to work with us, we are not alone in our shared vision of a future that is secure and safe for our future generations.

With these words I bring to a close this Interactive Dialogue.

[Remarks End]

I now give the floor to my fellow Co-Chair for concluding remarks.