



PAPUA NEW GUINEA STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE

**UNITED NATIONS FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS4)**

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SAINT JOHN'S, ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

"Check against delivery"

**Mr. President, His Excellency Gaston Brown, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda;
Excellencies and Distinguished participants;**

All protocols observed.

On my delegation's behalf, may I start by aligning our remarks with those made by the respective distinguished Chairs of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), Samoa; and the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS), Vanuatu.

Mr. President;

We extend our profound appreciation to the Government and people of Antigua and Barbuda for the warm welcome and commendable hospitality extended to my delegation. We also highly commend and thank Antigua and Barbuda for their valued efforts for the arrangements to host the SIDS Fourth International Conference.

Mr. President;

May I also take this opportunity to convey our heartfelt and sincere appreciation to the many delegations who expressed sympathies, condolences and solidarity with Papua New Guinea for last Friday's devastating and tragic landslide, triggered by an earthquake, in our highlands region, which has claimed many lives and disrupted the lives and livelihood of scores of others, the extent of which remains to be fully determined.

The relief and recovery efforts remain apace, led by our National Disaster Center, with support from our development partners, including Australia, New Zealand, the United Nations system and others, for which we are grateful.

Mr. President, this tragic natural disaster is a clear reminder, yet again, of the vulnerabilities and challenges facing SIDS and many others. It also underscores the importance of further strengthening the national capacities and for greater investment in resilience building measures to address such increasing and worsening calamities, in a timely and effective manner, to protect and save the lives of our people's and better safeguard our communities.

Indeed, one of the preliminary recommendations from our National Disaster Management Committee, arising from this tragic natural disaster, is the strong call to build capacity for disaster warnings and preparedness at all levels in the country.

In this spirit, we recognize and applaud The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) – a Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity – for rightly prioritizing the mainstreaming of Disaster Risk Reduction and underscoring the critical importance of strengthening disaster preparedness, including multi-hazard early warning systems and capacity to take action. Ensuring the effective operationalization of this ABAS provision is therefore critical.

Mr. President,

Since the recognition of the Special Case for SIDS, over three decades ago, the SIDS-family has come a long way, often in remarkable ways despite the constraints and heightened vulnerabilities faced.

As canaries in the coalmine, sounding out the alarm on the gravity of climate change not only to their wellbeing and survival but for humanity, as a whole, and as guardians of international law, which serves as an anchor for their rightful place in the international community.

The championing of landmark and groundbreaking global legacies, such as the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on climate change, led by Vanuatu, our fellow Pacific SIDS and on the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) Advisory Opinion on climate change and international law, submitted by the Commission of Small Island States (COSIS), are but a testament to what SIDS are capable of, to making our world a better place for all.

Mr. President, despite SIDS measured progress been made in various sectors such as in education, health, gender equality and empowerment, economic growth, oceans agenda, environmental protection and conservation and climate change, the work for SIDS is far from over. It requires our sustained commitment, individually and collectively.

The climate fight and the challenges of the rising sea-levels remain paramount priority issues for us, like many other SIDS, from whom we have heard loud and clear, yet again, in this Conference.

Also, for my delegation, like many other SIDS, the pressing and urgent need for access to adequate, predictable and sustainable financing, at speed and scale and at affordable rates, to meet our development needs, is critically important.

At our national level, we are embarking on growing our economy from the current twenty-eight billion dollars per year to around 57 billion dollars, per year by 2030, and to create additional one million jobs countrywide, to take us progressively into the future, including delivering on our 2030 Agenda commitment.

We are implementing strengthened domestic resource mobilization, including through:

- Tax reforms and enhanced internal revenue collection;

- Domestic laws and policies review and revision to ensure that our natural resources development in the extractive industry is on fair, just and equitable terms;
- Incentivizing public private-partnership;
- Strengthening governance laws and policies to tide illicit financial flows; and
- Addressing systemic issues on foreign exchange.

Mr. President, the financing we need for our sustainable development cannot be achieved through domestic resource mobilization, alone, but will require the necessary fiscal space and a reformed international financial architecture to deliver it.

it is merely not enough to demand SIDS to fix their domestic systems to support development financing, it is crucial to address the existing shortcomings of the international financial system that continue to be a bane to the financing for development needs of developing countries like my own.

We therefore strongly support the renewed call by the UN Secretary-General and other SIDS for urgent reforms of the international financial system to make it fair and just for SIDS development support.

We also join other SIDS and reiterate our call for international financial institutions and development partners to use the final report and recommendations of the High-Level Panel on the Multi-dimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI).

This should serve as a tool to adequately account for key factors of vulnerability such as the adverse impacts of climate change and natural disasters into IFIs decision-making for financing for development rather than relying solely on GDP/GNI per capita as measure of a country's development that determines their access to concessional financing.

We also strongly support the Secretary-General's call for a SDG Stimulus Package, which will further assist SIDS in addressing debt relief and ensure better long-term concessional financing for development.

Mr. President, we recognize that The ABAS is our new SIDS compass and a beacon of hope, for us to build on the foundations laid by its predecessors.

While it is regrettable that SIDS ambitious level for the ABAS outcome may have been watered down, this should, however, in no way dampen the spirit and resolve of SIDS in taking strong, decisive leadership, ownership and be the driving force for the future we want.

It is in this spirit, **Excellencies and ladies and gentlemen**, that we are reminded by the adage that "it is not the size of the dog in the fight, but it's the size of the fight in the dog." This should be the rallying call for SIDS to go further forward with ABAS.

For Papua New Guinea, our 2023 to 2027 Medium Term Development Plan IV, with its twelve Strategic Priority Areas (SPAs) and our Vision 2050 development roadmap, resonates well with the priorities for sustainable development as presented by The ABAS.

We are therefore supportive of ABAS and we will incorporate the next Ten-Year SIDS thematic development areas into our national plans and investments, to deliver on it, as we track this alongside our overall 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In closing, **Mr. President**, my delegation recalls the continuing relevance of the S.A.M.O.A Pathway call for genuine and durable partnership to further foster SIDS resilient prosperity. Such a development partnership should also be based on one that is on equal footing and not merely on a donor-recipient lens.

Thank you.