

## 2019 annual Global Multi-stakeholder SIDS Partnership Dialogue

10 July 2019

3-6 p.m.

### Conference Room 1

## “Fostering effective partnerships for addressing gaps and priority areas of the SAMOA Pathway”

### Summary

#### Opening Remarks

- **Ms. Lois Michele Young, Permanent Representative of Belize to the United Nations (Co-Chair of the Steering Committee on Small Island Developing States Partnerships)**, noted that the regional meetings and the inter-regional meeting, which took place in 2018 in preparation of the 2019 Mid-Term Review of the SAMOA Pathway, identified persistent gaps in implementation of the Pathway. The discussions also identified emerging and evolving challenges. Ambassador Young emphasized that it is important to ensure that new partnerships being launched, as well as new commitments emerging from existing partnerships, cater to these specific issues and priorities. Ambassador Young stressed that since the launch of the SIDS Partnership Framework in 2016, there has been a steady increase in the number of SIDS specific partnerships. At the global level, more than half of the partnerships are led by UN organizations, with limited initiatives emanating from the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and academia. Since development aspirations of SIDS can only be realized through a broad alliance from all of these sectors, there is a need to expand outreach. Furthermore, Ambassador Young urged for future dialogue, mutually beneficial partnerships, and mechanisms such as the SIDS Partnership Toolbox, to tap into new potential, including investments in niche markets, small and medium size enterprises and sourcing development finance for SIDS.
  - **Ms. Geraldine Byrne Nason, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations (Co-Chair of the Steering Committee on Small Island Developing States Partnerships)**, stressed that greater involvement by the private sector is necessary, especially to expand partnerships in the area of transport, youth and community development, public health and sustainable tourism. She proposed a more vigorous approach in seeking to fill the gaps in areas covered by current partnerships, including through a more strategic effort by regional organisations, governments, the United Nations Secretariat and member states. On behalf of Ireland, the Ambassador highlighted several individual partnerships, such as the establishment of a new partnership for the Caribbean on the blue economy, linking sustainable coastal and marine management, investment pipelines livelihoods for the poor and renewable energy development. She mentioned that at the Asian Development Bank, an agreement to establish a new Single Donor Trust Fund was signed, the Ireland Trust Fund for Building Climate Change and Disaster Resilience in SIDS, to which €12m over the next six years are committed, to support SIDS. The Ambassador also noted Ireland’s intent to provide additional support to the SIDS Global Business Network and the Caribbean Catastrophic Risk Insurance Facility. It was announced that Ireland intends to develop a partnership in education through the establishment of a bursary programme for SIDS’ professionals, at least 50 per cent of whom are women, for postgraduate study in relevant courses on climate change, marine science or similar disciplines in Irish higher education institutions.
- Mr. Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs**, noted that an intense preparatory process for the September Mid-Term Review of the SAMOA Pathway had taken place since the last Multi-stakeholder Partnership

Dialogue. It had included three regional meetings of SIDS in their respective regions, as well as one inter-regional meeting for all SIDS. Parallel to the Mid-Term Review preparations, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs had undertaken a capacity development project to support the work of the SIDS Partnership Framework. This project included a broad consultative process with relevant stakeholders in SIDS and resulted in the development of the SIDS Partnership Toolbox and an in-depth analysis of SIDS Partnerships.

Under-Secretary-General stressed that partnerships can help bring together complementary resources and sharing of ideas and risks. Partnerships can help create collective legitimacy and knowledge as well as establish mechanisms for collective learning and complex problem solving. However, experience has also shown that partnering is a skill that needs to be learned and nurtured. There is a need to collectively make an effort to ensure that civil servants, institutions, private companies, civil society organizations – all relevant stakeholders – are fit for partnering. DESA hopes that its capacity building work and the SIDS Partnership Toolbox can help in this endeavour.

- **Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu, Under-Secretary-General and United Nations High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States**, noted that while progress has been made in some areas of the SAMOA Pathway, major gaps remain in building the resilience of SIDS. She underscored that SIDS face challenges in all three dimensions of sustainable development. She noted that that an important common denominator across the social, environmental and economic dimensions is partnerships and further noted that transformative progress in SIDS will require even stronger multi-stakeholder partnerships to mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources.

OHRLLS has invested in action to increase the engagement of the private sector in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. The SIDS Global Business Network was launched in 2015 to raise awareness on the SAMOA Pathway and to connect businesses to SIDS communities, focusing on thematic areas where the engagement of the private sector is critical to make progress. She noted the need to strengthen the linkages between the network and the overall SIDS partnership framework.

## SIDS Partnership Showcase

- **Ms. Mona Juul, Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations** highlighted six important aspects that are key for partnerships; national ownership, long-term commitment, response to national needs, mutual respect and interest, a diverse portfolio of partnerships, and appropriate funding.

Ambassador Juul showcased several partnerships that Norway is a part of, including support to AOSIS countries in the area of negotiations on the international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). She highlighted the need for cooperation both at the political level and at the operational level. In this regard, the Ambassador noted the High-level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy. She also stressed that the blue economy offers many opportunities for new partnerships and stressed the importance of being real partners. Mere projects do not suffice, and the aim should be to encourage long-term and wholehearted cooperation. Finally, she urged for appropriate funding, calling for other countries to double their funding for the Green Climate Fund, and to improve access to concessional funding, especially for graduated countries in the case of climate disasters.

- **Mr. Aliioaiga Feturi Elisaia, Permanent Representative of Samoa, representing the Pacific Island Forum**, noted that forging partnerships at the national and regional level is not a choice

but a necessity. For the Pacific, challenges include isolated and geographically dispersed communities, fairly weak administrative capacity, climate change and natural disasters. For example, for a multi-sectoral approach for disaster risk mitigation, a multi-stakeholder approach is also required. From the Samoan perspective, the Ambassador noted that Samoa's current development progress is a reflection of the partnerships that it has been able to forge. Aspirational frameworks like the 2030 Agenda, SAMOA Pathway and the Paris Agreement do not provide dedicated funding, but partnerships can help deliver means of implementation. He stressed the need to localize and streamline international frameworks into national plans so that people are on the driver's seat of implementation, citing the 2030 Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development (PRSD) as an example.

- **Mr. Pene Baleinabuli, Permanent Secretary for Forest of Fiji** noted that Fiji is investing heavily in partnerships addressing climate change. As part of these efforts, there is the aim to increase primary forest cover by 55 per cent over the next twelve years, which will contribute to the attainment of several SDGs. Planting of the trees will provide work for 100 SMEs for nurseries, promote the documentation of traditional medicine, eco-tourism, forest education, and create a more engaging role for the private sector. Another example showcased included the activities under the REDD+ program aiming to reduce emissions from deforestation, protecting water resources and reducing soil erosion. As a coastal community, Fiji is increasing its mangrove cover as part of their initiative towards nature-based solutions for responding to natural disasters. Mr. Baleinabuli also noted Fiji's investment in green bonds and public-private partnerships such as the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation, which has helped raise 50 million USD.
- **Ms. Diane Quarless, Director, Caribbean Subregional Headquarters, UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean,** presented the Spotlight Initiative, an EU and UN global partnership which aims to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. The initiative is expected to be transformative for the Caribbean region. It focuses on all forms of violence against women and girls: domestic and family violence, sexual and gender-based violence, harmful practices, trafficking in human beings, and sexual and economic exploitation. The partnership aims to model a new kind of collaboration between donors, government, civil society, and across the UN system to deliver on the SDGs in a comprehensive manner, leveraging comparative expertise.  
The Spotlight Initiative Regional programme in the Caribbean provides a regional response to tackling family violence in the Caribbean focusing on institutional capacity building, prevention of violence, promotion of awareness and sensitization, and gender aggregated data. Significant attention has been directed to the development of women's movements along civil advocacy society organizations to focus on abuse, corporal punishment, early unions and adolescent births. ECLAC has also established the Caribbean Investment Plan which includes partnerships and a special focus for Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. Ms. Quarless noted that an early challenge is the need for a greater level of communication among partners, and efforts to ensure that the programme fits the needs of each country.
- **Mr. Charles Nouhan, Chairman, Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future,** presented the Partnership for Offshore Ocean Wave and wave-farms as a reef-like technology that has the potential to improve access to energy, ocean health, biodiversity and tourism. This smart technology can 'learn' over time, becoming a data source for severe weather early warning systems. According to Mr. Nouhan, it can provide access to energy, reduce cost for energy by 50 per cent and have positive spillover effects for SIDS.
- **Ms. Tiffany Stevens, President, CEO and General Counsel of the Jewelers Vigilance Committee,** shared an example from the private sector to empower people and to ensure

inclusiveness in the area of sustainable pearl cultivation and harvesting in SIDS. Ms. Stevens noted that the jewelry industry is a luxury product industry where materials are often sourced from developing countries. The revenue these products generate is often essential for local economies. Ms. Stevens noted that unlike many other materials, pearls can be made sustainable. If the marine environment is pristine and the oyster is allowed enough time, the number of higher quality pearls harvested increase exponentially. In many cases, those producers who fully control the production line produce higher quality products. The World Jewellery Confederation (CIBJO) has worked together with countries and producers to make this industry more socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. She informed that SIDS are the most important producers for this industry and that growth in the industry could lead to gainful employment and economic growth. She gave the example of the Fiji Pearl Farmers Association that has expanded the pearl farm sector while ensuring environmental and social sustainability by working in community-based pearl farms. She asserted that this partnership could be a niche market for other SIDS alongside Fiji towards diversifying their narrow economic bases.

## Presentation of the SIDS Partnership Toolbox and the in-depth analysis of SIDS Partnerships

**Mr. Alexander Trepelkov, Officer-in-Charge, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs,** presented the in-depth SIDS Partnership Analysis, which looks at how partnerships have been accelerating the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and what direct impact they have on SIDS. In this context, a number of gaps, challenges, lessons learned and best practices around partnership implementation were identified.

He also introduced the SIDS Partnership Toolbox – a practical guide on how to participate in the SIDS Partnership Framework and how to effectively design, implement, and evaluate partnerships for SIDS.

The analysis builds on the 555 SIDS-related partnerships announced and registered with the UN Secretariat through various conferences and processes. Around 300 of these partnerships were announced during the 2014 SIDS Conference in Samoa. A total of 261 new partnerships and commitments have been registered ever since, including many that were made in connection with the UN Ocean Conference in 2017.

The Toolbox is meant to increase participation of different stakeholders in the activities of the SIDS Partnership Framework and to foster better understanding on how to design and set up a partnership. The Toolbox also shows how to evaluate an existing partnership's effectiveness, and how to utilize and maximize DESA's online SIDS Action Platform.

The Toolbox includes several chapters and tools such as:

1. Participate in, and contribute to, the SIDS Partnership Framework
2. Design a partnership for SIDS
3. Evaluate a SIDS partnership against the SIDS Partnership Criteria
4. Analyze and explore
5. Learn

Responding to a call from Member States, the Toolbox also introduces a way for regional organizations to report on their progress around partnerships to the Secretariat ahead of the annual Partnership Dialogue. This can assist in bridging the gap between the global processes and the work on the ground in the regions.

- **Mr. Lorenzo Morini, Head of the Office for Economic and Social Affairs, Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations,** showcased some of the partnerships Italy has forged with SIDS since 2007, including on renewable energy, water management and capacity building. Mr.

Morini noted that Italy's work has especially highlighted three lessons learned: there is a crucial need to better engage with the private sector; SIDS often battle imminent challenges with lack of capacity and expertise; and there is a need to expand financing sources beyond development aid and private sector support. He also noted that trust, ownership, accountability and shared goals must be the basis of all partnerships. The SIDS Toolbox can enforce this trust with its guidance and checklists that support communication and mutual understanding among partners.

## Fostering effective partnerships for addressing gaps and priority areas of the SAMOA Pathway

- **H.E. Ms. Yvonne Hyde, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Economic Development and Petroleum, Belize**, noted that Belize's Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy (GSDS) 2016-2019 promotes a holistic approach and has intrinsic links to the SAMOA Pathway. It recognizes that there is a need for a systemic approach, tackling issues such as those related to global markets, robust internal markets, and use of natural resources. The strategy was prepared in consultation with stakeholders and built bottom up. According to Ms. Hyde, the GSDS is an integral blue print for partnerships, especially in areas where public resources are inadequate. A key characteristic is a mutual alignment of the aims – deliverables must fit the needs of participating stakeholders.  
Ms. Hyde noted that monitoring and reviewing existing partnerships is one of the greatest challenges. This can be particularly challenging for partnerships that do not have the framework for monitoring and evaluation.
- **Mr. Rakesh Bhuckory, Minister Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius**, stressed that in order to achieve the SDGs, there is a need to ensure a whole-of-society approach for policy discussions at the local level together with a vibrant civil society and business community. Since Mauritius' graduation from the LDC category, grants and concessional loans have become increasingly difficult to acquire and hence there is a need to find alternative ways of financing. In order to do this, Mauritius has introduced a corporate social responsibility scheme, requiring companies to invest 2 per cent of their book profits to approved CSR projects. These can be implemented by the companies, corporate partners or approved CSOs. A National CSR Foundation has been established for provision of these funds, and so far 30 million USD have been allocated for poverty eradication. Mauritius is also exploring green bonds to finance projects with climate-related or environmental aims.  
Mr. Bhuckory noted that the United Nations system in Mauritius has committed to the new Strategic Partnership Framework 2019-23. It showcases how UN entities will contribute to the strategic initiatives. Six outcomes of the Framework are driven by the Strategic Plan of Mauritius and have been decided together with different stakeholders after consultations.
- **Mr. Chris Skinner, CEO, The Finanser**, stated that technology is changing the model of traditional financing. Mr. Skinner argued that there is a need to encourage companies to base themselves in SIDS and to ensure that additional finance and technology benefit the general population. Infrastructure is crucial for Fintech to be successful. Governments need to ensure adequate IT infrastructure, tax systems, talent fostering and a vibrant start-up ecosystem. In addressing access issues, Mr. Skinner stated that a coordinated smart government is needed for successful transition, through which national priorities and a strategic vision must be set. He cited the example of Bahrain which successfully became a unique Fintech nation separate from Abu Dhabi and Dubai by being an Islamic Fintech Centre. Furthermore, Mr. Skinner urged

member states to partner with start-up companies to increase financial availability and urged to train youth in subjects such as computer science.

- **Mr. Sanaka Samarasinha, United Nations Resident Coordinator for Fiji**, noted the challenges brought by climate change to Fiji, such as sea level rise, droughts and floods which have enormous impacts on food security and health. He raised the question of how the UN can foster effective partnerships to address these challenges. Regarding the UN development system reform, Mr. Samarasinha noted that he is cautiously optimistic about its impact on partnerships. The UN can show numerous examples of tangible results of projects, but there is a need for enhanced collaboration among entities. He hoped that the reform and the principle of Leaving no one behind can increase national ownership, enhance cohesive cutting-edge technological support, improve greater accountability and cost effectiveness, and increase cross-boundary collaboration. For this to happen, Mr. Samarasinha noted that the criticality of national plans and frameworks cannot be underestimated for providing the way for enhanced actions. He also stressed that the member states themselves should hold the UN entities accountable, through the boards that they sit in and through discussions with donors.

**Mr. Douglas Slater, Assistant Secretary-General, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat**, noted that partnerships must take into account the local culture and values, instead of a one-size-fit-all approach. Mr. Slater highlighted a number of successful examples of CARICOM's engagement with the private sector, including the Heads of Government of CARICOM decision to establish a new regional private sector body. He also mentioned cooperation with the Royal Bank of Canada, the Global Environmental Facility marine ecosystem project with IGO, and the Pan-Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS. Mr. Slater stressed CARICOM's wish to support the establishment of new partnerships, including by utilization of MOUs, legal support and small-scale funding.

- **Mr. Andrew Wilson, Permanent Observer for the International Chamber of Commerce**, highlighted the fundamental market failures related to the mismatch between the global financial sector and the needs of SIDS. Finance institutions often operate on three decision points: risk, transaction cost, and return. When looked merely through these lenses, there are clear reasons why private financing is not adequate for SIDS. Mr. Wilson particularly stressed the issue of the weakening global corresponding banking network – the network on which financial flows, credits and payments are contingent. According to Mr. Wilson, this network has been taken for granted for years, but since 2009, major banks have started to cut their relationships with smaller banks, mainly in developing countries. This has particularly affected the SIDS. The problem boils down to risk, since these transactions have high risks and costs but low returns. For individuals, this has meant that the choice of financial providers is limited, cost of remittances can go up, and availability of financial services can go down. There is a need to have a collective discussion on this to ensure that countries are not cut off from the international financial markets. Mr. Wilson also raised the question of small-scale infrastructure investments that are not lucrative for financial markets due to existing fixed costs. In this case, loan aggregation, use of asset managers for scoping potential projects and bundling them together, can make them more lucrative for international finance providers. According to Mr. Wilson, Chambers of Commerce could play a role in these processes.

## Q&A and interactive discussion

During the interactive discussions and Q&A sessions, several speakers showcased concrete partnerships their entities are engaged in. It was noted that there is a need for transformative partnerships that are not static but evolve alongside national needs and priorities. The role of

the private sector, philanthropy and civil societies was also highlighted in this regard. One speaker stressed the potential of the SIDS Partnership Toolbox and its practical guidance for increasing trust between parties of its partnerships. It was noted that representatives and partnership examples from the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea (AIMS) region should be included in next year's annual Dialogue.