



PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

United Nations Member States

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Statement

on behalf of Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) and Timor-Leste

**to the
Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
9th Session**

by

**H.E. Mr Robert G. Aisi
Permanent Representative/Ambassador
of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations
and Chair of Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS)**

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Co-Chairs,

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Pacific Troika of Nauru, Palau and my own country, Papua New Guinea, as well as on behalf of the 9 other Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS), represented at the United Nations; namely, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. We are pleased to be joined by our neighbour Timor-Leste in this Statement.

We associate with the Statement to be delivered by AOSIS Chair and our fellow Pacific Island member, Nauru. With the exception of those PSIDS members who are not G-77 members, we also align ourselves with the remarks made by the distinguished Chair of G77 and China, the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

Co-Chairs,

We are pleased to note the successful conclusion of the narrative first phase of an inclusive, broad-based, transparent, balanced and fair process. This is due in large part to your commendable leadership and stewardship of our work and supported constructively by UN Members States and other important stakeholders.

Today, as we embark on the next most critical stage, which could shape the potential SDGs of the Post-2015 Development Agenda., the international community awaits expectantly and is looking to our work to facilitate the world's sustainable development aspirations and interests.

It therefore demands that we must continue to remain transparent, fair, accountable and balanced in this inter-governmental process so that no-one is left-behind. We therefore pledge our constructive support and engagement in this process.

Co-Chairs,

We appreciate and welcome the Co-Chairs satisfactory "Stocktaking Report" and the "Focus Areas" summary of our past 12 months work. In our view, generally, it is fair and balanced, having captured the critical priority areas such as poverty eradication, water, health, energy, economic growth, oceans, forests peaceful societies and capable institutions and many others, as well as accounts reasonably well the social, economic and environment dimensions for building the SDGs.

The "focus areas" document has a particular significance to our work as it provides a complementary narrative to the Rio-Plus+20 "The Future We Want" foundation, for building consensus on the contents of our final report to the UN General Assembly in September.

While it is clear from these documents that we still have a long way to go yet to find consensus on a comprehensive yet concise set of SDGs, we are encouraged by the solid start we have made together.

Co-Chairs,

On the "Focus Areas" document, we are indeed pleased to note the inclusion of "Marine Resources, Oceans and Seas" and applaud the Co-Chairs and the OWG members for recognising the pivotal role this critical issue has for our sustainable future.

We are however, also cognizant that this is still early days yet. During this intensive phase of our work, where clustering of potential focus areas under

possible SDGs and Targets is likely, we will continue to advocate, partner and reach out to all stakeholders to justify and ensure that the proposal PSIDS has made on a dedicated Oceans and Seas SDG, which is supported by an increasing number of UN Member States, inter-governmental organisations, NGOs and civil society and the private sector, remain a key focus area and to build on this initiative.

Whilst we welcome the “Marine Resources, Oceans and Seas” Focus Area, we however, note the summary tends to lean more towards the environmental dimensions of sustainable development and would therefore urge that equal attention need to be accorded to the social and economic dimensions, which are also critical.

We take the Co-Chairs instructive advice that work at this session should identify SDGs and accompanying targets we would like to state the following we believe that an oceans and seas SDG should have three (3) main targets, with each target link to international action to be taken:

(i) Achieving a healthy marine environment

actionable measures include – establishing marine protected areas; enhancing technical and scientific collaboration; effective implementation of conventions; addressing pollution from sea and land-based sources; and action on ocean acidification

(ii) Achieving healthy fish stocks

Actionable measures include: environmental impact assessments (EIAs), including of cumulative impacts; implementation of measures on illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing, deterring the use of destructive fishing measures, prohibition of subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing; and strong international cooperation and technical support for implementation, particularly for SIDS;

(iii) Realizing the economic benefits of sustainable development of marine resources

Action includes: improved access to fisheries and markets for subsistence, small scale and artisanal fisheries, women fish workers and indigenous people, particularly in SIDS, and support for sustainable tourism activities.

Co-Chairs,

We also note that the “focus areas” document also affirms that “climate change poses a grave threat to sustainable development and poverty eradication.” While there is little consensus amongst countries on how to integrate the issue of climate change into the SDGs, we welcome the focus areas document highlighting the inter linkages between climate change and nearly every other issue, only highlighting the criticality of addressing the cross-cutting issue of climate change in this agenda. As the Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel report reminds us, “Above all, there is one trend – climate change – which will determine whether or not we can deliver on our ambitions.”

We are pleased with the inclusion of “Focus Area 19 “ on peaceful societies and capable institutions, and note that without inclusive and capable institutions there can be no durable peace, without peace there can be no development, and without development we cannot eradicate poverty.

Co-Chairs,

We are equally pleased that the “Focus Areas” narrative captures many of the sustainable development priorities that are consistent with those that have been identified by Small Island Developing States (SIDS) such as on poverty eradication, economic growth, water, health, in particular, non communicable diseases which is especially an urgent concern for us, education, energy, infrastructure, oceans, climate change, gender equality and empowerment.

We pledge to work in partnership with all stakeholders in these important areas. We also encourage the OWG to continue to bear in mind the special development needs of SIDS and other groups, particularly in the framing of the SDGs.

Co-Chairs,

In closing, we note the critical role that the Means of Implementation architecture, including a “New Global Partnership” will play in the SDGs. The focus areas document rightly asserts that a “global partnership for development has been emphasized as key to unlocking the full potential of sustainable development initiatives.”

We would however suggest that to build consensus we need to also clearly outline or define the concept of a “New Global Partnership” as there appears to be concerns raised on this issue. We tend to agree with the view of the UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel which called for a “New Global Partnership” which harnesses the full potential of partnerships between governments at all levels, businesses, civil society, and a wide range of other stakeholders and moving beyond but complementing the traditional

approaches to action, such as Official Development Assistance (ODA) and foreign aid.

Whilst we are sensitive to the emphasis on the need for a system of regular monitoring and reporting for these initiatives and partnerships, which at present is insufficient, we would also encourage further discussions on this key issue.

Thank you.