



Remarks
by
Aliioaiga Feturi Elisaia, Samoa's Ambassador to the United Nations
during the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
Moderated Panel Discussion titled
"The SAMOA Pathway: translating vision to action."

Mr. President of ECOSOC,
Mr. Moderator,
Esteemed panelists,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen

I am very appreciative to be part of this high-level moderated event titled "The SAMOA Pathway: translating vision to action".

But I have a confession to make.

I am your 11th hour substitute to my Samoan colleague and friend Mrs. Noumea Simi who was to be one of the panelists and was supposed to have arrived yesterday yet as of last night she was still very much in Samoa. Her airline ticket must have been lost in transmission between New York and Samoa.

But as a Pacific SIDS Ambassador to the UN, advocacy for the SAMOA Pathway and any SIDS issues is very much a part of one's DNA. So any available opportunity that presents itself, like today's event, will always be taken up enthusiastically and utilized optimally. But let me remind you that the perspectives and remarks I will be making are very much those of Mrs. Noumea Simi with one or two modest inputs from me.

Mr. Moderator,

Even before we answer the key question of whether we are moving in the right direction with regards the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, I think it is important to reflect briefly on the legacy of the 3rd International Conference on Small Island Developing States [SIDS].

Come to think of it, the timing of the conference was ideal in every conceivable way. For instance,

- It took place in September last year. Its outcome, the SAMOA Pathway, a finely balanced inter-governmental agreement that has the stamp of approval of the UN membership, was adopted by consensus by the General Assembly in November 2014.

- In other words, SIDS sustainable development needs were already agreed to, months while negotiations were still on-going on important inter-governmental processes like the (i) 3rd UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, the (ii) Sustainable Development Goals, the (iii) 3rd International Conference on Financing for Development, the (iv) U.N. Summit to adopt the post-2015 development agenda and the (v) 2015 Paris Climate Conference.
- The sequencing of these important events after the formal adoption of the SAMOA Pathway meant it was time for SIDS to assert their needs and priorities as captured in the SAMOA Pathway on the world stage, and to finally inspire new actions on long-term challenges.
- The Conference allowed SIDS to strongly re-affirmed their categorization as a special group in need of special attention, but also showcased new leadership in presenting island partnership opportunities as exciting and valuable opportunities for the global community.
- The voices of the SIDS rose up in Samoa, making it clear that they would not be underestimated by their “small” or “developing” status.
- SIDS and their partners made the conscious decision to focus the Conference on SIDS on building partnerships - the emphasis in Samoa was to incentivize governments and stakeholders to bring new initiatives to the table instead of “new negotiating text”.
- Diverse actors from SIDS, the developed and the developing world, civil society and the private sector came together, realizing that only in partnership could they hope to guide the world clear of threats and bring it closer to solutions and fulfilled commitments.
- SIDS felt they were connected to the world like never before, and they hoped to seize the momentum from Samoa to lead their people and partners in a new direction.
- This was an important development, especially as the world coalesced around multiple processes and negotiations in 2015 that will have dramatic consequences for small islands.

Integration of the SAMOA Pathway in multilateral processes.

1. The framework of the 3rd UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Japan was the first of the post 2015 instruments to be agreed. It set a renewed global agenda on disaster risk reduction in the context of sustainable development. It recognized the specific challenges SIDS face and the need for special attention and particular support through the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway in the area of disaster risk reduction.
2. SIDS and their partners have steadfastly advocated for the special needs, circumstances and vulnerabilities of SIDS to be recognized in the outcome document of the 3rd UN Conference on Financing for Development and for innovative solutions to SIDS’ particular financing challenges.
3. The negotiation of the post-2015 development agenda also offers a unique opportunity for SIDS to carry forward the weight of commitments made in Samoa to a larger scale and lay the groundwork for the means of implementation of new development goals, with innovative new partnerships driving forward progress.

4. SIDS and their partners advocated strongly for the special needs, circumstances and vulnerabilities of SIDS to be recognized in the post-2015 development agenda and have supported Pacific SIDS in their pursuit of an Oceans and Climate Change SDGs and Timor Leste in its support of an SDG on peaceful societies and effective institutions.
5. At the UN Secretary-General's Climate Summit in September 2014, the SAMOA Pathway was moved a step further by focusing solely on the launch of new climate initiatives, partnerships, and national commitments ahead of the 2015 COP 21 in Paris.

SIDS are however aware that concrete follow-up on the US\$1.9 billion in pledges made in Samoa during the Partnerships Dialogues is still a distant goal given the uncertainty over details of the specific review mechanism.

Implementation, Monitoring and Follow Up of the SAMOA Pathway

a. Initiatives to implement the SAMOA Pathway and other commitments

1. The initial findings of the Joint Inspection Unit concerning **the comprehensive review of UN system support to SIDS** mandated by the General Assembly made 6 key recommendations which are summarized as follows:

The General Assembly should ensure that the comprehensive review_

- **Addresses** the necessary linkages between the SAMOA Pathway and the United Nations global mandates on related key issues with a view to strengthening system-wide coherence and ensuring effective system-wide support for the sustainable development of SIDS through adequate provision of resources
- **Evaluates** the current allocation of resources as well as their effective and efficient use, at the United Nations Secretariat at Headquarters, with a view to improving governance and effective coordination in the delivery of the mandates given by the General Assembly to DESA and OHRLLS to support SIDS
- **Identifies** all relevant entities of the United Nations Secretariat and the Regional Commissions, contributing to support for the sustainable development of SIDS and that it proposes effective ways for the Secretariat to strengthen its programmatic coordination and integrated reporting.
- **Assesses** the role and functioning of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group on SIDS (IACG) and proposes concrete measures to strengthen its effectiveness as a coordinating forum, involving all the relevant institutional partners, to foster the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and to facilitate its monitoring.
- **Analyses** the institutional set-up in place in accordance with relevant paragraphs of the SAMOA Pathway and the coordination process aimed at monitoring and reporting on its effective implementation, with a view to preventing overlap and fostering synergies across the United Nations system.

- **Addresses** institutional and managerial mechanisms for strengthening coordination between DESA and OHRLLS in performing the tasks related to their respective mandates on support to SIDS, in order to avoid overlap and enhance the effectiveness of their work and to increase transparency in their communication with Member States.

In this regard we look forward to the report of Comprehensive Review of UN system support to SIDS and their “impact” on SIDS.

2. U.N. SECRETARIAT [UNDESA]

- The SIDS partnership platform has been expanded and adapted and will serve as a key tool for monitoring and reporting on progress toward implementation.
- The relevant Offices and Divisions in DESA have been directed to further strengthen DESA’s technical and capacity building support to SIDS and its ongoing collaboration with UN system organizations and with SIDS regional organizations to be intensified.
- As the Secretariat Department responsible for the substantive support to the General Assembly, the ECOSOC, the High-level Political Forum, and the ongoing process for the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda and the Financing for Development Conference, DESA will support Member States as they incorporate SIDS priorities and aspirations in intergovernmental deliberations and decisions.
- DESA will also continue to provide annual reporting to the relevant bodies on progress in the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, the Mauritius Strategy and the SAMOA Pathway.

1. REGIONAL U.N. COMMISSIONS

- At the 70th UNESCAP session, Samoa introduced a resolution which was endorsed by ESCAP's governing body to give UNESCAP a mandate to support the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway.
The resolution called for support in the three areas identified in the SAMOA Pathway for involvement of the regional commissions including as part of the UN system i.e., **(i)** national capacity building and institutional strengthening and National Sustainable Development Strategies [NSDS] (paras. 109 and 116); **(ii)** enhancing the voice and participation of SIDS in regional and global processes (para 117); and **(iii)** monitoring and reporting of SAMOA Pathway (para 122).
- The resolution also makes references to the post-2015 development agenda given the focus of the SIDS in NY on developing appropriate national indicators that not only contextualize SDGs but also help in implementing and reporting on the SAMOA Pathway. It notes that the Regional Commissions have roles re. the High Level Political Forum [HLPF] and the post-2015 development agenda that can be dovetailed with their roles re. the SAMOA Pathway.

2. **DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS**

- At country level we are in regular contact and dialogue with our development partners on initiatives undertaken by them towards the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway.
New Zealand through its bilateral program, or regional initiatives or in partnership with other stakeholders has consistently provided support directly or through partnerships to address the challenges of all the priority areas of the SAMOA Pathway for eg.
- The IFC Pacific Partnership and ADB Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative which supports the growth of the financial services sector to drive private sector development.
- Working with UNDP, OECD, Australia, CARICOM and PIFS to surface ideas on
 - Eligibility for access to concessional finance
 - Enhancing SIDS' access to development and climate finance;
 - Supporting debt sustainability and greater use of innovative financial instruments
- Pacific Energy Partnership with IRENA, European Union and ADB
- Invest in Aid for Trade through productive capacity building in priority sectors (agriculture, fisheries and tourism), economic infrastructure (energy, ICT, transport), trade facilitation and private sector development.

Institutional support for Small Island Developing States (p 117)

- During New Zealand's UN Security Council presidency in July 2015, Samoa's Prime Minister will be joined by leaders from the other sub-regions of SIDS to profile in the Security Council the peace and security challenges facing SIDS.
- The Security Council aria formula meeting yesterday organized by Spain and Malaysia on the security implications of climate change especially on SIDS is one other useful effort to translate some of the asks made in the SAMOA Pathway.

3. **Multi-lateral agencies**

- Green Climate Fund Board decision to aim for a floor of 50 per cent of the adaptation allocation for particularly vulnerable countries, including Small island developing States, and we note the importance of continued support to address gaps in the capacity to gain access to and manage climate finance.
- The UNDP Multi-Country Office based in Samoa has integrated the SAMOA Pathway into its programmatic framework (UNDP sub-regional programme). Follow-up on the Pathway is one of its three priorities for 2015: "Expanded communication, and partnerships, as a response to the SAMOA Pathway". Examples of such activities include: development of communications and joint outreach initiatives/events focused on the SAMOA Pathway, the MDGs/SDGs and/or the vulnerability/exclusion indicators; implementation and analysis of a partnership survey; as well as establishment of innovative alliances

4. **Pacific Regional level agencies:**

Pacific Framework for regionalism – platform for the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. Continually advocating for making the links between regional

programs by all development partners and SAMOA Pathway implementation in alignment with the PFR eg EU Regional Indicative Program of Euro 136 million.

Let me now share with you one or two recommendations which Samoa feels are critical to our ongoing effort to translate the vision in the SAMOA Pathway to action.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✚ **That SIDS in collaboration with DESA that has completed a mapping of the Partnership framework as well as an implementation matrix are encouraged to maintain contact with partners identified and who launched partnerships in Samoa to determine how these can move forward.**
- ✚ **That the review mechanism for the SAMOA Pathway be finalized as soon as possible if not integrated within the SDGs given the similarity of the focal areas and inclusive of an Ocean SDG.**
- ✚ **In the context of the High Level Political Forum and the proposed Global Partnership Framework, should a dedicated day be allocated to SIDS as was done under the previous Commission on Sustainable Development [CSD], Samoa would recommend strongly to turn such a "SIDS Day" event into a "SIDS Partnerships Dialogue Day". This would provide a platform for partners who launched partnerships in Samoa to report back to SIDS, the UN community and interested stakeholders on progress of their partnerships, their impact on SIDS, important milestones to be achieved and lessons learned and best practices to be shared and for replicability in other SIDS,**
- ✚ **Turning the SIDS Day into a Partnerships Dialogues avoids the pitfalls of recent SIDS Days where SIDS were basically talking to themselves and amongst themselves. It was a sure recipe for boredom, frustration and in-action. A Partnerships Day on the other hand adds colour, life, a sense of purpose and an element of certainty both to SIDS and their partners. It replaces rhetoric with "action" and provides a marketplace for SIDS and the wide array of their partners to dialogue, report on progress of partnerships launched, and "launch" new ones for SIDS continued sustainability.**
- ✚ **While all words in the SAMOA Pathway acronym "*SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action*" are important, the critical ones are "accelerated" and "action".**

So my concluding call to SIDS, their partners and the wider UN membership, let's accelerate the integration of the SAMOA Pathway into all the global processes and turn them in to on-the-ground action as the only way to ensure that SIDS sustainable development for now and the future will be truly durable. Thank you.