

**Symposium on Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SAMOA Pathway in Small Island Developing States (SIDS):
Equipping public Institutions and mobilizing partnerships**

21-23 February 2017

Nassau, Commonwealth of the Bahamas

Opening Remarks

by

Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director, OHRLLS

Excellency Prime Minister of the Bahamas, Mr. Perry Christie,

Honourable Minister, Khaalis Rolle, UN Undersecretary General Wu, Secretary General Kituyi,

Excellencies, Ambassadors, UN Colleagues

Distinguished representatives from small island states,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I wish to thank the government of the Bahamas for organising with the support of DESA this timely meeting on integrating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SAMOA Pathway. Let me also express my gratitude for the gracious welcome and warm hospitality extended to us on this beautiful island of Nassau.

I am the Director of the Office of the High Representative for least developed countries, land-locked developing countries and small island developing states. I bring you warm greetings from USG Acharya, who unfortunately could be in attendance today. Among the many functions of our office, we mobilise international support and resources for implementation of the Samoa Pathway,

and make sure that small island state issues are mainstreamed in a coherent manner across the UN. We also provide support to small island states in the context of Agenda 2030 and the sustainable development goals.

As you know, there has been large number of new UN processes addressing small islands issues since the adoption of the Barbados Programme of Action over 20 years ago.

We recognise that this increased UN attention to small island issues brings greater expectations for support. At the same time, the resulting monitoring, review, and follow-up mechanisms required also pose significant burdens to many small island states, given their resource constraints. As we move forward, we need to make sure that the implementation takes place in a coherent and streamlined manner.

Within the UN system, we are considering ways to improve our support to SIDS in order to deliver on these global commitments. This is done for instance through the Quadrennial Comprehensive Programme Review, which takes place every four years. The most recent one which was completed in December last year recognised the specific vulnerabilities of SIDS, and requested UN entities to better integrate and mainstream the SAMOA Pathway fully into their operational activities.

Recognizing the importance of genuine and durable partnerships in delivering the sustainable development goals in small island states, my office, OHRLLS has also been increasing its advocacy efforts to encourage key stakeholders, including the private sector. A private sector partnerships forum was convened in the margins of the Samoa Conference, and another one in Aruba in 2016. Private sector partners have been encouraged to scale up their development solutions for small island states – in areas such as renewable energy, sustainable fisheries, agriculture, tourism and connectivity.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is increasing recognition by the international community that small island states need continued support even as they reach middle income status, due to vulnerabilities that do not just disappear as per capita income rises. Currently, our Office is working together with the World Bank and other partners to better define climate vulnerability and to further refine our analyses of the multi-dimensional aspects of small island state vulnerability, in order to better understand the continuing development needs of small island states.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that the SAMOA Pathway, and the SDGs require enhanced coherence and coordination of key stakeholders, mutually agreed strategies and cost effective programming. It is therefore timely and appropriate that this conference aims to build greater coherence and coordination of our mutual efforts in support of small island states. OHRLLS stand ready to take this journey with you, to realize our common agenda for shared prosperity.

Thank you,